

Legend: Touring, drugs took their toll

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a system slowdown. There is an influx of the Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia." The Grateful Dead, with its roots in the Bay Area's psychedelic scene of the 1960s, and folk, bluegrass, blues and folk influences into a unique stew. Garcia was lead guitarist, composer and sometime vocalist.

Among the band's best known songs were "Truckin'," "Casey Jones," and "Friend of the Devil." Its only top 10 hit was the 1987 song "Touch of Grey," with its refrain "I will survive." But the Dead were almost more a way of life than a band to thousands of "Deadheads," many of whom followed the group from concert to concert.

They made the band one of the most popular concert draws in the United States, grossing tens of millions of dollars each year.

"You need music," Garcia once said. "I don't know why; it's probably one of those Joe Campbell questions, why we need ritual. We need magic, and bliss, and power, myth, and celebration and religion in our lives, and music is a good way to encapsulate a lot of it."

In concert, Garcia was either spotty or spectacular. In the 1980s and 1990s, he would forget lyrics and sing slow-tempo standards such as "Sugaree," "Althea" and "Ship of Fools."

But his searing, improvised solos breathed new life into even the band's most over-worked numbers, sending dancing Deadheads into paroxysms of glee through the paroxysms of jam.

He rarely spoke on stage, reportedly because he feared how his words would be interpreted by rabid fans who analyzed every nuance.

The bearded, rotund Garcia had a history of health problems that occasionally caused breaks in the Dead's grueling concert schedule. In 1986, he entered the hospital in a diabetic coma.

Garcia slimmed down, stopped smoking, cut down on drugs and hired a personal fitness trainer after falling ill with exhaustion in 1991.

But the years of constant touring took their toll.

"It was a meltdown. Too many cigarettes, too much junk food and too little exercise," band spokesman Dennis McNally said last year.

As fans heard of the death Wednesday, a crowd gathered at the corner of Haight and Ashbury, the heart of the San Francisco neighborhood that incubated the Dead.

Josh Cranford, 18, of Elkin, N.C., said he had planned to spend most of the fall following the Grateful Dead.

"The tour wasn't so much about the shows, it was all about being with family. That'll all change, but it can't be forgotten," said Cranford, who was wearing a tie-dyed shirt. "The band made their mark and it's here."

In Columbia, Mo., businessman Arnie Fagan, whose shop Cool Stuff sells merchandise hailing the band, had his workers lower the American flag out front to half staff.

"He was the leader of a band that was more than a band. It was a scene, it was a lifestyle," said Fagan, 30. "It's a family thing, so Jerry's death is like losing your grandfather to a whole lot of people. He was the most loved member of the Grateful Dead." Fagan said he got his start in business selling tie-dyed T-shirts and other items as he followed the band around.



Fans of the late Jerry Garcia gathered around a photo and created a memorial with incense, tapestries, candles, and jewelry.

Garcia did a bit of merchandising himself, marketing his artwork and a line of colorful neckties.

Even a line of ice cream was named after him — Ben & Jerry's Cherry Garcia.

McNally said he didn't know why Garcia was at the treatment center.

"It was news to me," he said. "I thought he was going to Hawaii. Apparently he was paying increased attention to his health." He said he had seen Garcia recently, so he could not have been in the center for more than a couple of days.

Problems at several recent concerts drew headlines. At a concert in Indiana, a crush of gate crashers led to a series of arrests and the cancellation of the following night's show. A few days later after a concert in St. Louis, a deck collapsed during a rainstorm at a campground used by Deadheads, and more than 100 were injured.

The Dead's most recent performance was July 9 at Chicago's Soldier Field.

Garcia was born Aug. 1, 1942, in San Francisco. His Spanish-born father was a musician, playing reed instruments and leading a swing band; his grandmother, who largely raised him, founded a union for laundry workers.

He became interested in electric guitar and painting as a teenager, taking classes at what is now the San Francisco Art Institute. He also spent hours in the coffee bars of North Beach, reading Beat writers like Jack Kerouac

and soaking up the beatnik atmosphere.

After a brief stint in the Army, Garcia formed several folk and bluegrass bands. In 1964, he founded a band called the Warlocks, which also included Bob Weir, Bill Kreutzmann, Ron "Pigpen" McKernan and Phil Lesh. But there was already a band by that name. They found another name in the dictionary.

"We never decided to be the Grateful Dead," he told *Rolling Stone*. "What happened was the Grateful Dead came up as a suggestion because we were at Phil's house one day; he had a big Oxford dictionary, I opened it up and the first thing I saw was The Grateful Dead."

"It said that on the page and it was so astonishing. It was truly weird, a truly weird moment."

A grateful dead is a type of traditional British folk ballad in which a human helps a ghost of someone who has died recently find peace. "They're about karma, which is apt," said McNally.

The band itself lost several members over its many years. McKernan died in 1973 of the effects of alcoholism. Keyboardist Keith Godchaux died in 1980 in a car crash a year after he left the band. Another keyboardist, Brent Mydland, died in 1990 of a drug overdose.

Garcia is survived by his third wife, Deborah Koons Garcia, a Marin County filmmaker, and four daughters; Heather, 32, Annabelle, 25, Teresa, 21 and Keelin, 6. Funeral arrangements were not immediately announced.

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