

MUSIC

Ideal 'Dark Star' shoots from Dead's music vault

By J. Daniel Pearson
Freelance Reporter

Imagine the second set of a Grateful Dead show consisting of nothing but "Dark Star."

The three-note intro hits, the crowd roars its approval, and there you are right in the middle of The Zone.

"Dark Star" weaves through the air landing on your mind's middle ear like a butterfly — hovering, breathing — before taking flight with everyone's vision into the night sky.

The song begins to grow and pulsate, fed by the 16,000 balls of energy dancing around the room, spinning, flowing, weaving, and suddenly exploding in a dripping sea of color and light, melting all it touches, watering the roots of the spirit.

And now the river is flowing — flowing and growing — down to the sea, with no end in sight and nothing familiar to grasp. Cartoons dance about your vision, sounds take on color, chaos tosses reason about like a rag-doll, before the waters settle in a crystalline pond, mixing with the new channel without a ripple in sight.

Grayfolded is very much capable of presenting such visions as these, because "Dark Star" is such a long, spacey piece, and it really takes the listener on a trip through the mind's eye.

The CD's producer, John Oswald, with the help of Grateful Dead bassist Phil Lesh, has employed the use of a sound engineering technique called plunderphonics to manipulate more than 25 years of Dark Stars and mix them down into two, one-hour discs.

The result is a recording that very much produces the ideal "Dark Star," or "Dark Stars" — the one you always hoped they would play.

The two discs, though ultimately only one song, are radi-

CD REVIEW



Grayfolded
Grateful Dead

★★★★

cally different in make up. Disc one, titled "Transitive Axis" uses a variety of editing techniques to cut and fold the 40-plus hours of music Oswald

compiled from the Dead's tape vault.

But outside of folding and the straight ahead editing of material, the disc has only a few instances of manipulation.

For instance, when Garcia starts singing the first verse, the opening syllable of the word dark is stretched for more than a minute, with several older and younger Garcias from a number of different performances overlaid, creating something of a Jerry Garcia choir.

Disc two, "Mirror Ashes" uses much more manipulation techniques such as speed alteration, repeats of material, and backwards sounds.

One section titled "73rd Star Bridge Sonata," which ended up being left untouched because Oswald decided it worked fine by itself, might sound familiar to those well acquainted with the Dead's music.

That's because it's the "Feel-in' Groovy Jam" from Feb. 13, 1970 at the Fillmore East in New York — considered by many to be the finest "Dark Star" ever played.

The CD ends with the band members suggesting various places to go. Traces of "The Other One," "St. Stephen," and "Eyes of the World" can be heard.

Deadheads often say the best part about the Dead is there is always new music to hear. *Grayfolded* should keep ya'll happy.

OFFERED WINTER TERM 1996

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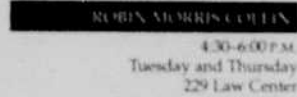


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