

GarciaLive Volume Eight: November 23rd, 1991 Bradley Center
Liner Notes & Essay

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JERRY GARCIA BAND

JERRY GARCIA guitar, vocals GLORIA JONES vocals

JOHN KAHN bass

DAVID KEMPER drums JACKLYN LaBRANCH vocals MELVIN SEALS keyboards

RECORDED LIVE AT BRADLEY CENTER, MILWAUKEE, WI NOVEMBER 23RD, 1991

Original Recordings Produced by JERRY GARCIA

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GarciaLive Volume Eight presents the Jerry Garcia Band's complete performance from this snowy fall evening in Milwaukee, WI. Originally captured to two-track digital audio tape straight from the board, the enclosed recordings have been meticulously mastered for release. While the fidelity of this release may not compare to multi-track recordings, the transcendent spirit of the performance greatly overshadows any remaining flaws. Listen comfortably with our promise that every effort was made to produce this performance for release in a manner which honors the spirit of its creation.

www.jerrygarcia.com

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LINER NOTE ESSAY

As Jerry Garcia completes the first verse of “My Sisters and Brothers” at the Bradley Center in Milwaukee on Saturday, November 23, 1991, the crowd erupts in spontaneous applause.

*Let us take our fellow man by the hand
Try to help him to understand
We can all be together
Forever and ever
When we make it to the promised land*

This sentiment encapsulates the spirit of the Jerry Garcia Band, then touring with the longest continuous lineup in the group’s history, and the reciprocal sentiment of its audience congregating on a Saturday night in Wisconsin.

“That was the magic band,” reflects Melvin Seals. The keyboard player, whose work with Garcia spanned from 1980 through the JGB’s final performance on April 23, 1995 and included some slight roster shifts (although bassist John Kahn was a stalwart), adds, “It’s not that the other scenarios didn’t work out but once we got to that level of the band with (drummer) Dave Kemper, John Kahn, Jerry, myself and the singers, Jackie (LaBranch) and Gloria (Jones) we all knew we had something special. That was *the band.*”

The crowd at the Bradley Center clearly concurs, and one can hear their energy and enthusiasm through the board feed of this gem from the group’s fall 1991 tour. Beyond an animated performance that finds the 49 year-old Garcia in fine fettle, the assemblage likely felt blessed that the six-piece had even landed in Brew City on this late fall evening. In 1990 the Jerry Garcia Band never traveled west of San Francisco and through the first half of 1991 it gigged exclusively before hometown enthusiasts at the Warfield Theatre. The Jerry Garcia Band hadn’t embarked on a proper fall tour since 1984, back when the definitive version of the group first came together. But on November 6, 1991 the sextet took to the road, opening with two dates at the Cap Centre in Landover and then routing through the Northeast and the Midwest before closing things out at the Target Center in Minneapolis on November 24. The 1991 Jerry Garcia Band tour also came hot on the heels of a strong fall outing from the Grateful Dead (although, alas, just days after the Dead appeared at the memorial for promoter Bill Graham in Golden Gate Park).

A *Rolling Stone* interview with Garcia published in October 1991 had provided consternation for Deadheads, as he expressed some qualms about the state of the Grateful Dead but the guitarist remained altogether sanguine about his work with the JGB. One can hear it in his performance at the Bradley Center, which captures his joy and comfort within a musical environment that grants him the freedom to explore more spiritual expressions in his performance and repertoire. If at times the Grateful Dead could be something of a turgid Russian novel: convoluted and labyrinthine yet mostly rewarding, the Jerry Garcia Band during this era was more of an Elizabethan sonnet: breezy, emotive and luminous.

By the time of the Milwaukee gig, Seals had been performing with the JGB for over a decade yet his initial impressions of the group’s aesthetic still held true: “Jerry knew I was fresh out of the church and he wanted that soulful sound. Merl Saunders had been

there before me and I wanted to hear what he had been doing so I could dial into that vibe but they didn't want me to hear anything. They wanted me to be raw and figure out what I had to offer because I didn't know what was supposed to be there. Soul, Motown and gospel, that's where I came from and that's what Jerry wanted."

With all of the encumbrances extrinsic to the music that accompanied Grateful Dead tour, performing with the Jerry Garcia Band offered a reprieve and a tonic for Garcia. Singers Jackie LaBranch and Gloria Jones had been plucked by Seals from the choral pews of the church and had no experience with touring bands (Garcia, the affable bandleader, had delegated their selection). Seals himself had no knowledge of Garcia back when he first

auditioned (His invitation came via John Kahn then Maria Muldaur's paramour as Seals had joined her for some performances, although Garcia had also seen him and taken note). The keyboard player recalls arriving at the band's rehearsal space a few minutes before everyone else only to discover that "every backdrop had a skeleton, which was a little freaky for me. There was a skeleton holding a violin, a skeleton with a rose in his hand, a skeleton here, a skeleton there. I was this little church boy and I wasn't sure whether this was some kind of devil cult. I was afraid for a minute."

Seals settled down after his fellow musicians arrived and following some all-too-brief introductions, they ran through a few songs. Seals liked what he heard and told the guitar player, whose name he couldn't recall, "Man you really play some nice guitar." He recalls, "Everybody just busted up laughing because they knew I had no clue who he was. Then he said, 'You play some pretty good organ yourself.' And that was the beginning of my playing with Jerry."

Over 11 years later at the Bradley Center, the group opens with the Jerry Garcia/Robert Hunter original "Cats Under The Stars." Seals remembers it as "a signature song developed in the Garcia Band and whenever we started with it, the crowd just went wild." Such was the case on November 23 at the outset of a honeyed, melodious "Cats," in which Garcia's bright guitar tone helps to set the mood. "They Love Each Other" follows, a Garcia/Hunter composition shared by the Dead which takes on a new life in this setting via euphonious harmony vocals and spirited interplay between Garcia and Seals. The same can be said of "Reuben and Cherise," the beloved JGB staple that appears later.

Beyond a buoyant closing "Deal," the first frame also includes four covers that reflect Garcia's aims and intentions. Eric Clapton's "Lay Down Sally," which the group debuted the previous fall, is a brisk, playful romp and a true crowd-pleaser. Garcia's reading of the Band's "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down" captures the deep, mournful nature of the song, with Seals wringing every drop of emotion from his instrument. The group's dexterous version of Clyde McPhatter & The Drifters' 1953 R&B chart-topper "Money Honey" is a throwback to Garcia's formative years. "My Sisters And Brothers," embodies what Seals characterizes as "the gospel side of Jerry. He had a great love of that music in the same form where you'd hear some of those traditional songs in the church."

Although Garcia was not writing songs for the JGB during this era (in the *Rolling Stone* interview he joked that he'd rather go feed the cat) he was still keen to introduce new material. The second set opens with "Bright Side of the Road," the ebullient Van Morrison tune they premiered on the second night of the tour. Sadly, it would slip out of rotation following this show, as the song, like most of Morrison's work, is well-

suited to the temperament and talents of the band. This is also true of The Mannhattans' "Shining Star," which joined the rotation earlier that spring and the vibrant 13 minute take at the Bradley Center is a true show-stopper. Norton Buffalo's playful "Ain't No Bread In The Breadbox" is another tour debut, introduced during an era in which Seals explains that some tunes came in through soundcheck jams that reminded Garcia of songs he knew and would later bring to the stage before supportive audiences who welcomed such efforts.

This evening also includes additional Garcia Band staples, culminating with the vivid, volcanic set-closer "Tangled up in Blue." Earlier on, "Think" written by underrated Bay Area blues staple Jimmy McCracklin, offers some blistering Garcia licks and burning counterpoints by Seals, supported by the sturdy rhythm section of Kahn and Kemper. Bruce Cockburn's "Waiting for a Miracle" effectively masquerades as a gospel classic while "That Lucky Old Sun" is a bona fide gospel classic masquerading under another name, as Seals first knew it as "Walking Around Heaven." It was through such songs of greatest familiarity to Seals that he received an enduring lesson: "I had to learn that it's not about how precise and perfect it is, it's about what leaves your heart. Dotting the I's and crossing the T's are less important than the vibe and feel and tone. Jerry taught me that it's all about breathing, relaxing and then diving in there."

There's no encore at the Bradley Center on November 23rd (nor on most of the fall 1991 shows). This suits the occasion as Jerry Garcia Band performances felt less like recitals than assemblies of like-minded music enthusiasts. Just as one would not perform an encore while sitting around one's living room playing for kith and kin, the Jerry Garcia Band experience was so inclusive that there was no need to indulge in the formalities of a strict artist/audience relationship.

So too as we listen back on this marvelous evening of music from a man and a band who passed too soon, we can abandon all pretense and ceremony. We're not hearing the echoes of a concert that originated from a Milwaukee auditorium in November 1991, we've arrived somewhere else completely. We've made it to the promised land.

DISC ONE // SET ONE:

1. CATS UNDER THE STARS [9:44]

(Jerry Garcia/Robert Hunter) Universal Music Corp. o/b/o Ice Nine Publishing Company (ASCAP)

2. THEY LOVE EACH OTHER [8:39]

(Jerry Garcia/Robert Hunter) Universal Music Corp. o/b/o Ice Nine Publishing Company (ASCAP)

3. LAY DOWN SALLY [8:47]

(Eric Clapton/Marcy Levy/George Terry) Unichappell Music, Inc. (PRS/ASCAP/BMI)
-- Dean Budnick

4. THE NIGHT THEY DROVE OLD DIXIE DOWN [10:46]

(Robbie Robertson) WB Music Corp. o/b/o Canaan Music (ASCAP)

5. REUBEN AND CHERISE [8:41]

(Jerry Garcia/Robert Hunter) Universal Music Corp. o/b/o Ice Nine Publishing Company (ASCAP)

6. MONEY HONEY [6:44]

(Jesse Stone) Walden Music, Inc./Sony/ATV Tunes LLC o/b/o Mystical Light Music (BMI)

7. MY SISTERS AND BROTHERS [4:02]

(Charles Johnson) Songs of Universal, Inc. (BMI)

8. DEAL [8:06]

(Jerry Garcia/Robert Hunter) Universal Music Corp. o/b/o Ice Nine Publishing Company (ASCAP)

DISC TWO // SET TWO:

1. BRIGHT SIDE OF THE ROAD [5:57]

(Van Morrison) Essential Music (BMI)

2. WAITING FOR A MIRACLE [6:23]

(Bruce Cockburn) Rotten Kiddies Music, LLC. (SOCAN)

3. THINK [7:48]

(Jimmy McCracklin/Deadrice Malone) EMI Unart Catalog, Inc. (BMI)

4. SHINING STAR [13:22]

(Paul Richmond/Leo Graham) Songs of Universal Inc. (BMI)

5. AIN'T NO BREAD IN THE BREADBOX [9:34]

(Norton Buffalo) Moon Valley Music (ASCAP)

6. THAT LUCKY OLD SUN [12:03]

(Haven Gillespie/Beasley Smith) Larry Spier Music LLC o/b/o Haven Gillespie Music Publishing Co./Larry Spier Music LLC o/b/o Beasley Smith Music (ASCAP)

7. TANGLED UP IN BLUE [11:16]

(Bob Dylan) Ram's Horn Music (SESAC)

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