



# No Simple Highway: A Cultural History of the Grateful Dead

*Peter Richardson*

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For almost three decades, the Grateful Dead was America's most popular touring band. *No Simple Highway* is the first book to ask the simple question of why—and attempt to answer it. Drawing on new research, interviews, and a fresh supply of material from the Grateful Dead archives, author Peter Richardson vividly recounts the Dead's colorful history, adding new insight into everything from the Acid Tests to the band's formation of their own record label to their massive late career success, while probing the riddle of the Dead's vast and durable appeal.

Arguing that the band successfully tapped three powerful utopian ideals—for ecstasy, mobility, and community—it also shows how the Dead's lived experience with these ideals struck deep chords with two generations of American youth and continues today.

Routinely caricatured by the mainstream media, the Grateful Dead are often portrayed as grizzled hippy throwbacks with a cult following of burned-out stoners. *No Simple Highway* corrects that impression, revealing them to be one of the most popular, versatile, and resilient music ensembles in the second half of the twentieth century. The band's history has been well-documented by insiders, but its unique and sustained appeal has yet to be explored fully. At last, this legendary American musical institution is given the serious and entertaining examination it richly deserves.

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