

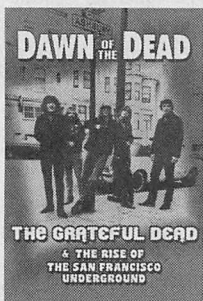
# REVIEWS

Acts ranging from Hugh Masekela to Ravi Shankar to Laura Nyro to Janis Joplin to Jimi Hendrix (to name just a few) took part in what was later billed as "The happiest event of the '60s."

"A Perfect Haze" has been compiled with both the seriousness of a historian and the devotion of a fan. It's largely an oral history, with some linking text, covering the festival's inception, the preparations and the festival itself, through the release of the film "Monterey Pop." Assembling all the interview material from the dozens of interviewees (including not only those directly involved with the festival – the performers, production crew, and filmmakers – but also the lucky attendees) would be impressive enough. But the book also features plenty of photos, and a lot of terrific documentation: Magazine and newspaper clippings, contracts, telegrams, promotional materials (including the press release that had The Beach Boys listed to perform on June 17) and other ephemera. An especially nice touch are the complete set lists provided for every act.

This is a great scrapbook that really brings the flower power era of the '60s alive again – especially if you're playing the soundtrack album as you flip through the pages.

– Gillian G. Gaar



## GRATEFUL DEAD DAWN OF THE DEAD: THE GRATEFUL DEAD AND THE RISE OF THE SAN FRANCISCO UNDERGROUND

★★★★★

Sexy Intellectual

After 45 years, the story is well known. It resides in a tale that finds focus during the so-called Summer of Love, a multi-hued look at San Francisco as the Mecca for all those who believed in the '60s dream.

The musical undertow is vital to the narrative; how, in the midst of this renaissance, the Grateful Dead morphed from their early incarnation as a jug band into a cover outfit called the Warlocks and ultimately embraced off-killer avant-garde experimentation while gaining prominence alongside the Jefferson Airplane, the Charlatans, Big Brother and the Holding Company and Quicksilver Messenger Service as the musical minstrels for a new generation of those willing to turn on and tune in.

Happily then, "Dawn of the Dead" offers intriguing new insights into this dramatic trajectory, thanks in large part to incredible archival footage, rare interviews, live performance video

and commentary by those who were there.

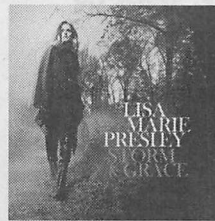
The rise of San Francisco as the destination of hippies and harbingers of America's counter-culture still holds fascination even now, several decades on. Not that it was ever an unlikely contender as a catalyst for change. As the documentary points out, the city helped to nourish the beat poets and their beatnik followers in the '50s, and those hipsters and non-conformists easily set the stage for the rebels and outcasts to come. With its idyllic environs and freewheeling attitude, San Francisco and its surrounding locales were the ideal setting for the acid tests, the human be-ins, the free concerts in Golden Gate Park, venues like the Fillmore and the Avalon Ballroom and eventually, Monterey Pop, where L.A. and San Francisco's major talent converged and found their way to the world at large. It was a place where unusual characters like Bill Graham, Ken Kesey, Stanley Oswald, Chet Helms and, of course, the members of The Grateful Dead could find a voice and make their own indelible impact.

"Dawn of the Dead" explores each of these fascinating individuals – these self-described Merry Pranksters – mostly revealing them in their own words. Many appear posthumously. Here, Jerry Garcia reflects on the Dead phenomenon and how the band provided a soundtrack for an audience that became the true stars of the show. Bill Graham affirms his tough-as-nails image and no-nonsense personality. Janis Joplin dances backstage with carefree abandon. And, in one particularly revealing piece of footage, Dead manager Rock Scully trades barbs and profanity with an irate Graham as the two nearly come to blows.

Apparently, peace and love wasn't all it was cracked up to be.

There are also plenty of subplots, each of which prove vital to the story. There's Garcia's penchant for bluegrass and bassist Phil Lesh's involvement with experimental music converging to fuse the Dead's early direction. There are revelations on how certain bands refused to be filmed at Monterey, and how a single song, Scott McKenzie's "San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Some in Your Hair)" helped inspire an influx of starry-eyed young migrants to the corner of Haight and Ashbury – which eventually helped to put an end to the utopian dream. In the span of two hours and 18 minutes, "Dawn of the Dead" manages to encapsulate this period in modern American culture that still resonates a lifetime later. Well researched, well documented and well narrated – with such notable commentators as Dead publicist Dennis McNally, journalists Anthony DeCurtis and Richie Unterberger, Scully himself and various veterans of San Francisco's musical community offering their recollections – it's also a tale well told, as rich as it is revelatory.

– Lee Zimmerman



## LISA MARIE PRESLEY STORM AND GRACE

Universal Republic/  
XIX Recordings

★★★★★

Apparently, the name of Lisa Marie

Presley's last album, 2005's "Now What," was more than just another title; you could also see it as an admission that Presley didn't know what direction to go in next – which makes her new album, "Storm and Grace," that much more of a pleasure. By waiting until she was absolutely sure of what she wanted to do, Presley has made her strongest album to date.

By her own admission, Presley has had a difficult time over the last few years, watching the sad decline and death of her former husband, Michael Jackson, as well as being surrounded by people who she now says did not have her best interests at heart. She relocated to England, working with musicians like Richard Hawley (from Pulp), and Fran Healy (from Travis), but the biggest turning point came when T-Bone Burnett became the album's producer. Together, the two have come up with the kind of warm, organic sound that insinuates itself on first listen.

There's a haunting broodiness to the album (the words "smoky" and "swamp rock" have frequently popped up in reviews) that makes it utterly beguiling. By stripping away the pop sheen of her previous albums, Presley has really been able to dig down into her heart and soul. There's a darkness throughout the record – it couldn't be otherwise, with songs that deal with troubled relationships and betrayal – but Presley's is the kind of anger that's all the more powerful for being low key. When you take the time to listen to the words, they really sting.

A terrific album from a singer who's finally coming into her own.

– Gillian G. Gaar



## JOHNNY CASH BOOTLEG VOLUME IV: THE SOUL OF TRUTH

Columbia/Legacy

★★★★★

Johnny Cash fans have been well served by the

"Bootleg" series, with plenty of rare and previously unreleased tracks on each two-CD release. Volume IV in the series is no different, with more than a quarter of the 51 tracks previously released.