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San Francisco's Grateful Dead: An Alternate Record

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San Francisco's Grateful Dead:
An Alternate Record

ROBERTO RABANNE

In January 1967, I got the word that the Dead were recording their first album in Los Angeles, at one of the Warner Bros. studios. I hitchhiked down with my camera and equipment and made my way to the studio. The band was pleased to see me—they knew that this was important, if not historic, and having a photographer record the proceedings was an acknowledgment that what they were engaged in, what they were creating, deserved to be recorded for posterity, and not just on tape.

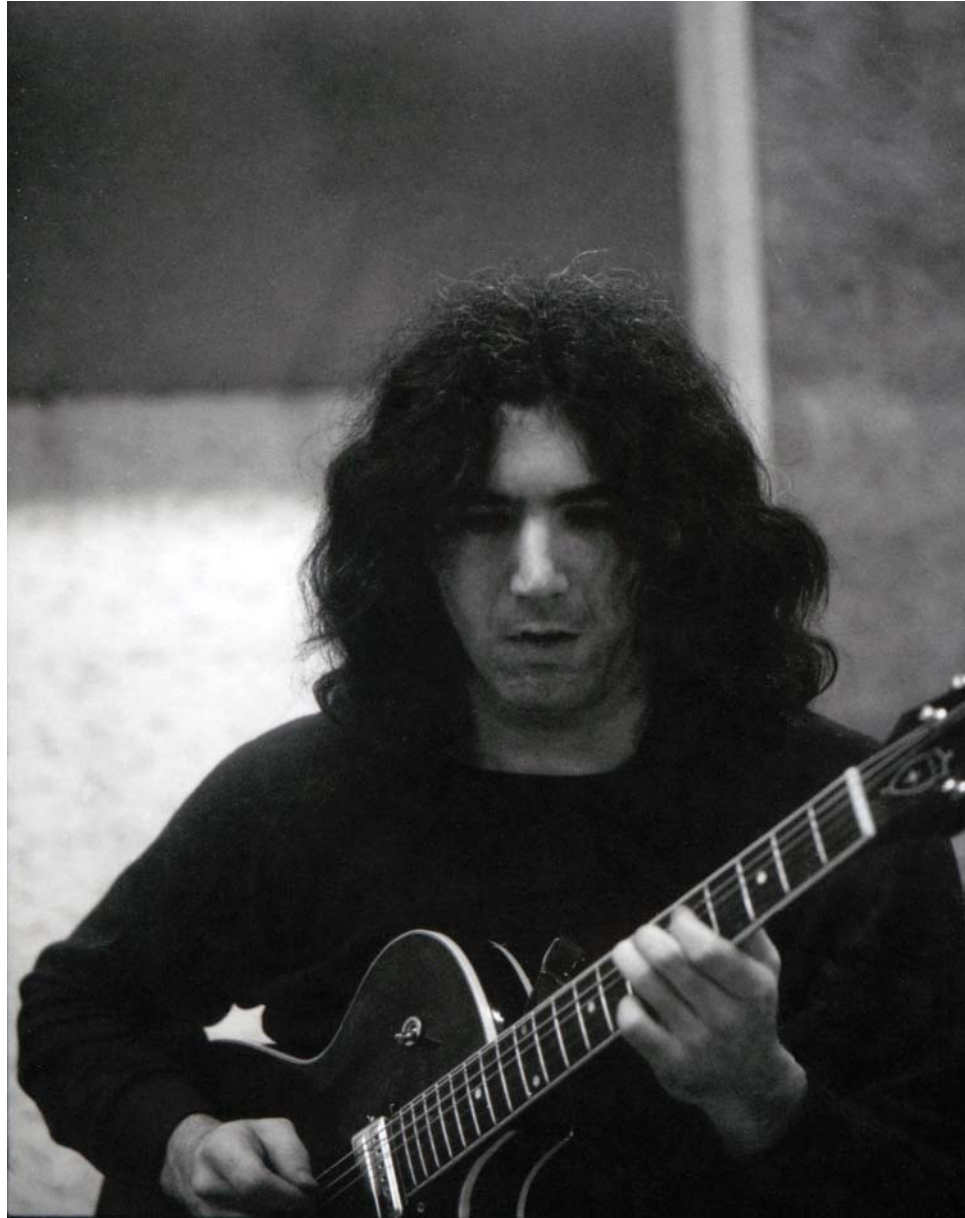
I remember the sessions clearly, despite their pace. Every night went late, lasting into the early hours of the next day. The music was very intense and powerful, so much so that I think the engineers were overwhelmed. Of course, Jerry had definite ideas of how the band wanted their sound captured; his precision and sophistication were impressive. But everyone was excited to be in a real studio, and they all played their asses off.

When the album was released, I remember that it gave me a deeper appreciation of the Grateful Dead's power—their ability to take listeners on a musical voyage, into previously unexplored levels of emotional and

spiritual consciousness. It was an enormous paradigm shift at the time, and it remains so today.

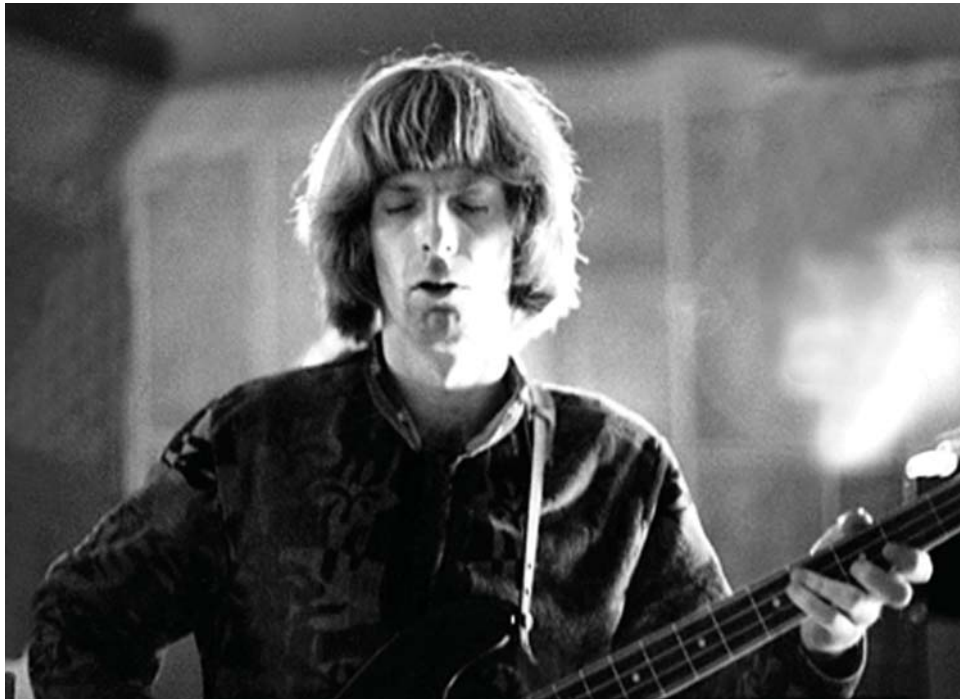
For me, that time in LA was deeply transformational. I knew this was a serious unique cultural and historical moment. I'm just glad that some of the pictures came out. Indoors under dim lights made for the most challenging circumstances a photographer could face, especially with the limitations of the equipment of the era, but the graininess and the blur are also evocative, a sign of what the musicians were feeling and the effort they were making. You can see the concentration on their faces, and the occasional flash of rapture when the Muse responded. The results still echo today.

ROBERTO RABANNE has been a professional photographer for more than four decades, concentrating on music, fashion, and art. His first client was Jimi Hendrix, and he went on to photograph the Grateful Dead, Cream, Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones, and the Beatles, among others. His fashion clients include Yves St. Laurent, Givenchy, Fiorucci, Versace and John Paul Gautier. Rabanne's photographs have appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *Down Beat*, *NME*, *GQ*, *Vogue*, and many other publications. His work has been featured in exhibitions in Chicago, Miami, New York, San Francisco, Barcelona, Japan, and Paris.



Jerry Garcia, January 1967

Roberto Rabanne



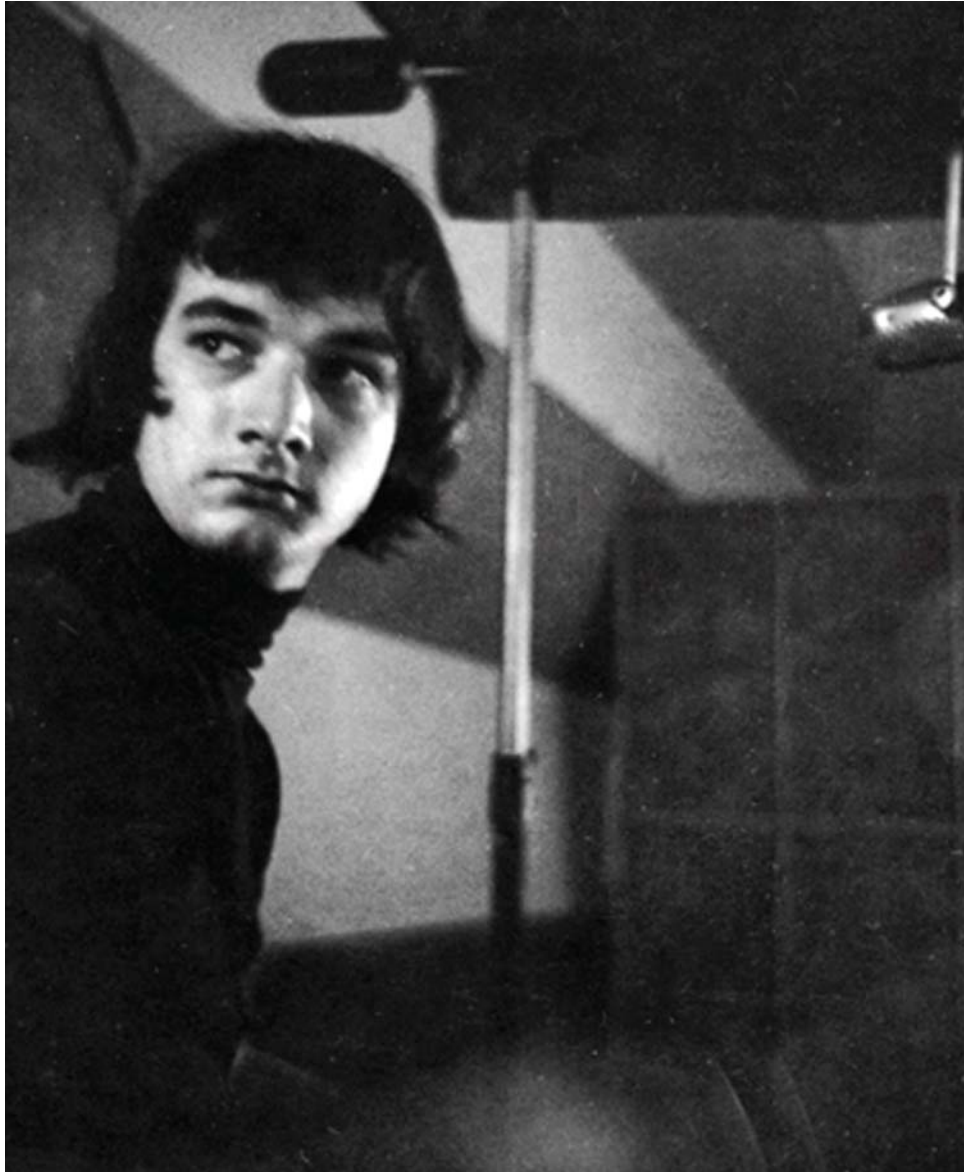
Phil Lesh

Roberto Rabanne



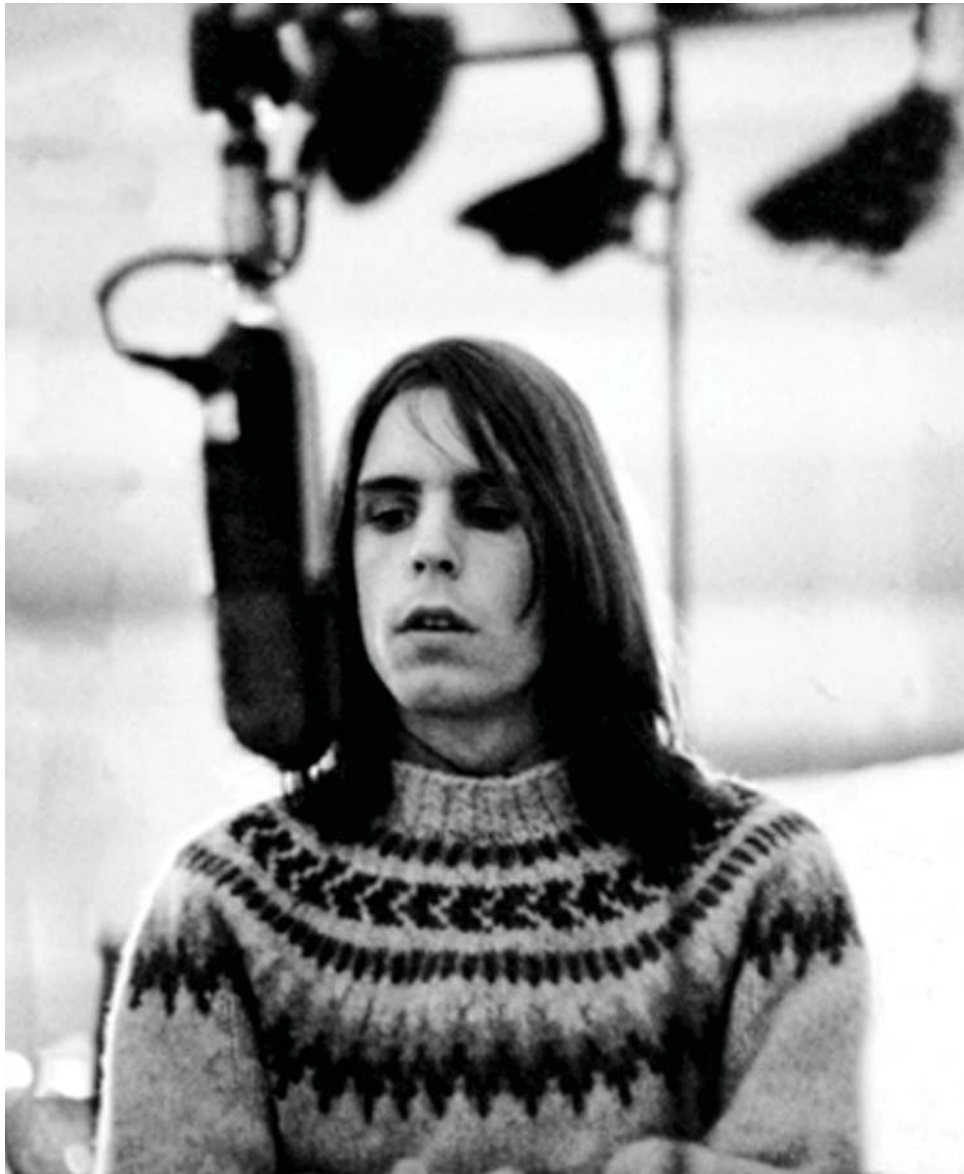
Jerry Garcia, Bill Kreutzmann

Roberto Rabanne



Bill Kreutzmann

Roberto Rabanne



Bob Weir

Roberto Rabanne



Jerry Garcia, Bill Kreutzmann

Roberto Rabanne



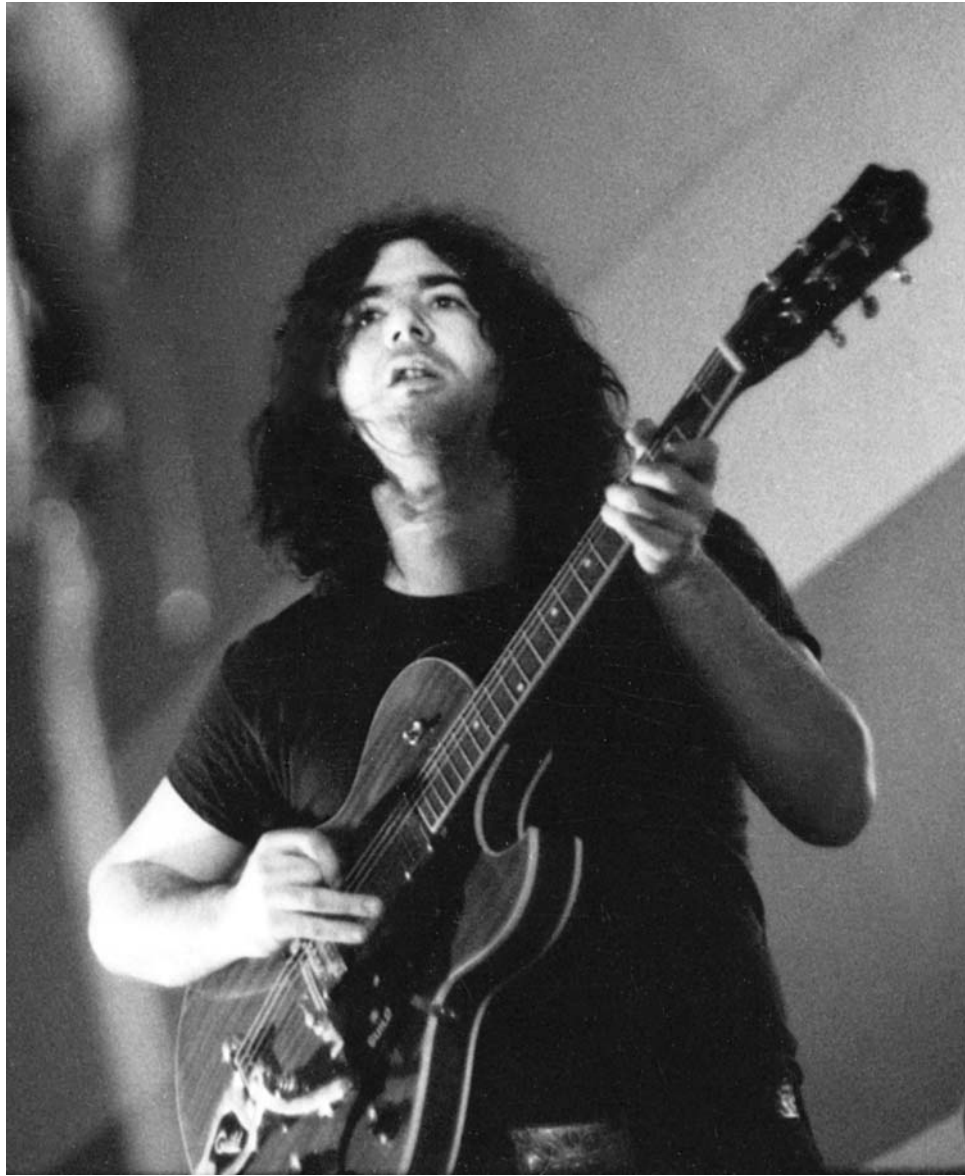
Ron "Pigpen" McKernan

Roberto Rabanne



Bill Kreutzmann

Roberto Rabanne



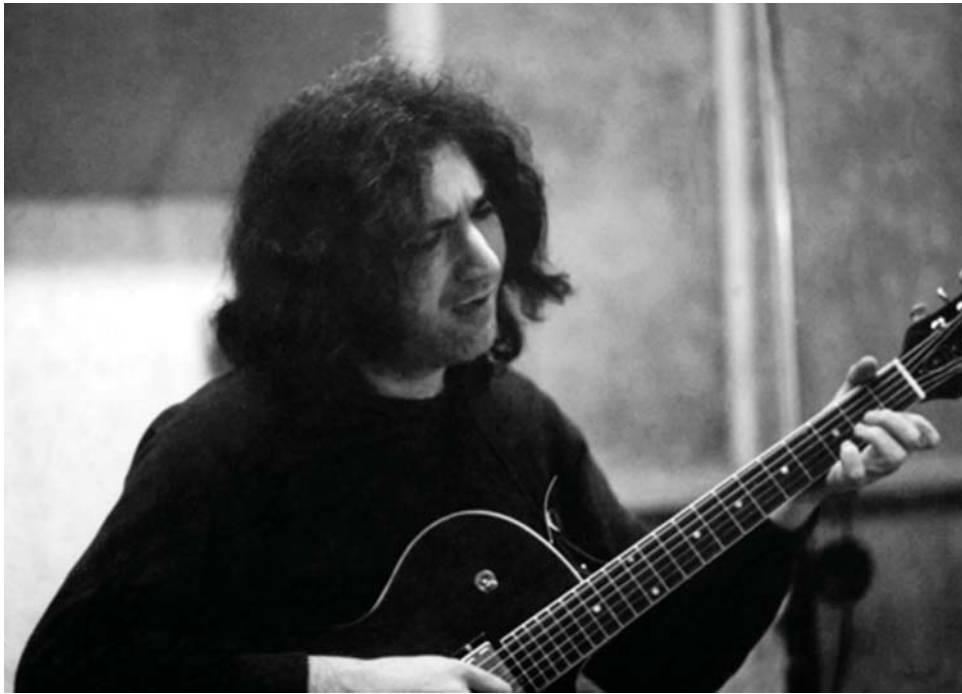
Jerry Garcia

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Bill Kreutzmann, Bob Weir, Phil Lesh

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Phil Lesh, Bob Weir

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