

Gans turns
to tunes
Journalist
pens songs



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Longtime music journalist pursues solo performing career

By Ron Wynn, rwynn@nashvillecitypaper.com
 July 20, 2005

David Gans has developed an international following since the early '70s due to his work as a writer and broadcaster. Gans began writing articles for various publications about the emerging jam band scene almost from its inception, focusing in particular on the Grateful Dead, but also interviewing such performers as Randy Newman, Joe Walsh, Fleetwood Mac, Warren Zevon and the Doobie Brothers. But his close association and friendship with various Grateful Dead members eventually led to the creation of a syndicated weekly radio show the *Grateful Dead Radio Hour*, which he's hosted since 1985.

But since longtime friend Jerry Garcia died in the mid-'90s, Gans has concentrated more on his own performing career, having issued three complete albums and a 2003 DVD. He will present material from his recent discs tonight in a show at Windows on the Cumberland, and said his own work is quite different from the music he airs on his radio show.

"I'm kind of a honky-tonk hippie," Gans said. "My songs tend to be upbeat and socially conscious, kind of a blend of psychedelic and country-folk material. I like a lot of different types of things personally, but as a songwriter my main influences are people like Bob Dylan and John Prine. The lyrics are often more direct and they can be very political, but I also do some romantic material as well. For me, the major emphasis always comes in the storytelling."

Gans' music can be heard online at Dgans.com/tunes.html. His CDs are available at www.cdbaby.com.

Gans is also known as one of the world's foremost collectors of Grateful Dead material, particularly rare concerts and recordings that are regularly heard on his show. He's quite aware that the Dead is a band that people either extremely love or hate and understands why there's such passion around the group.

"There's a general cliché about 'deadheads' (Grateful dead fans)," Gans said.

Getting there

What: Singer/songwriter David Gans with N. Lyndsay Wojcik
When: 9 tonight
Where: Windows on the Cumberland, 112 Second Ave.
Cost: \$5
Info: 251-0097



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"The stereotype is that they become maniacal and they dress funny, all that business. But there's a lot of diversity among deadheads. They have many other interests, and that stereotype doesn't do them justice. The thing that many people don't understand about the Dead's music, and I didn't get it at first, is just how different and diversified it is. They really covered a lot of bases, and you have to appreciate a lot of different things to really understand and enjoy their music. But once you get into it, you find out how great they really are as musicians."

While compiling material for a solo electric project that he hopes to complete in the next couple of months, Gans is continuing his tour and combining entertainment with advocacy and education.

"I've learned through my experiences with the Dead how much music can inspire and encourage people," Gans said. "I'll always enjoy doing the radio show, but it's now just as important for me to get my own songs out there and let people see another side beyond the broadcaster or the journalist."

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