

BEHIND THE DOORS

Behind The Doors. The Story Of A Legendary Band's Road Manager

First edition December 2022

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Front cover design Fred Baggen

Book design and typesetting Aldus Boek Compagnie

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Vincent Treanor III

Behind The Doors

The Story Of A Legendary Band's Road Manager

CLASSIC ROCK MUSIC MEMOIR

[uncorrected proof print]



Aldus Boek Compagnie

2022



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THE END 000

This book, and all the adventures therein,
is dedicated to my faithful band boys
who selflessly shared my experience

and

The boys whose stories i heard
your stories will be told as well

and to

Donald Dreischmeyer
The last band boy

Thanks for the memories
I miss you all

Prologue

It should be understood that this is not the usual tale of the activities and problems of and with the four people who comprised The Doors. There have been enough stories about those 4 people, their biography, history and the events they were involved in from beginning in 1966 to their unfortunate demise, 1972.

This is the story and reflections of one person who, through the strangest of events and twists of fate, spent four years, December 26, 1967 to March 1972, working for The Doors as road manager.

The dates provided for various events in this story are reasonably accurate. The names of those people directly involved with the group are about as accurate as memory will permit. There are many Band Boys who helped with the task of moving in and out of performing locations, recording sessions, and rehearsals who are not named herein. It is not lack of appreciation, respect or dislike. It is not an oversight either, There are just too many to name them all. Memory and missing records have lost their identity. Those whose names are guessed at or just given for identity purposes are in Blue. The names in the Acknowledgements are in approximate order as I met them or they were involved in activities that lead to my involvement with The Doors.

Ray Manzarek, John Densmore and Robby Krieger have all written autobiographies. To learn more about each of the individual members, I strongly suggest you read about them in their own words. After all, they know a bit more about themselves, their motivations and history, than those who wish to sensationalize and perpetuate the scandals and gossip that exists.

Read on. I hope you enjoy the journey as much as I did. It is a shame it all had to end in a double tragedy: the failing and demise of Jim and the alteration in the format of the group. Had they gone on with the addition of a singer with the qualities of Jim, I guess I would be the oldest road manager in the business.

1 Cathedral Of Music

In the gloom of darkness, the high arched ceiling can be sensed rather than seen. The vast open reaches of the building vanish into a darkness broken only by the strange brightness of small red and green signs marking points along the hidden walls, where Doors gave enthusiastic devotees entry and reluctant exit from this cavern.

From the floor came a sound, more animal than human, that rumbled through the vast open space. At times, a soft murmur ran like ripples from one place to another. Then a muttering, a growling, punctuated by the husky sound of laughter.

As far as the eye could see, down near the floor, hundreds of little red lights glowed in the darkness, occasionally flaring bright for a moment and then dimming. The air was filled with a strange smell, like piles of gold, red and brown leaves, raked, dried and set alight in the cool days of Autumn. The pungent smoke thickened the warm air like a London Fog.

Occasionally there was a bright flash of light as someone far away made a futile effort to capture the vastness of the sanctuary and population spread across the floors in ghostly image. It was a wasteful effort as the feeble glow of flash cubes was absorbed by the inky darkness and distant reaches of this hallowed place.

The focus of attention, the very purpose of this huge building, was a vast, wide, deep stage some four feet above the main floor. This grand platform was built in a time gone by when theaters were for entertainment of the general public; the significant focus point of a community, once upon a time, monuments of public pride. It was amazing to see the great banks of lights (borders) hanging over the stage. In the long unused fly loft set pieces and great fabrics were still hanging. Across the front, magnificent thick burgundy draperies hung, now pulled back to open the stage front for a most unusual kind of theatrics. Certainly a performance no one envisioned when this palace was built.

In a long line across the rear of the stage stood rows of silent shapes; tall, dark amplifiers, almost menacing in their size and bulk. Dimly, in the near darkness of the stage, vertical rows of shining discs could be seen at intervals down the face of these great looming structures. Speakers, like eyes, looking out to the audience from the columns, silent now, waiting for the signals that would turn electricity into powerful waves of sound. Little orange pilot lights told all that they were alive and waiting to fill this now quiet place with the sound of music.

There were long minutes of anxious waiting. The bodies of the restive crowd

stretched out across the floor. Moon-like faces looked down from the surrounding balconies. The jumbled murmurs began to turn more vocal, the low rumbling becoming a louder and higher pitched cacophony as the anxious minutes passed.

Suddenly, without warning or fanfare, behind the monoliths there was activity, something was moving. One could not be certain, but as shadowy figures appeared to move toward a place in front of the great black columns, an expectant hush came over the dark mass. The sound of a single note floats over the crowd. An echoing sound came from the other side of the stage as a guitar began to tune. Quickly, quietly the guitar was tuned, as always without fuss. The Doors were about to open.

A shadow hidden in the loom of the tall columns, moves slowly across the stage and stops near the front. Almost casually, he puts one foot on the microphone stand base and in a slow movement cups his hands over the microphone and waits, looking out into the audience.

Then, from the long row of columns came the wail of sound unlike any that had been heard in this place before. The lights flare up revealing the giant stage. On it, four people, who were about to mesmerize the crowd, begin the ritual of the performance. As the crowd recognizes the first notes of the piece, the mild and disorganized noise became a collective roar as the voices of thousands of people blended into one sound of welcome and approval.

For more than an hour, the air pulsed with the throb of guitar, organ, bass and the hypnotic soft silky sound of a singer's voice. After each piece would come a wave of applause. The excitement from the crowd was matched by the intensity from the Group, an energy storm feeding upon itself, growing, swelling to a dynamic force. It was an experience that those who participated could not have described, knowing only that something had happened. They had been there but no one knew exactly what it was that made them so excited, feel so different.

At last it was over, with a wave of hands the four performers left the stage. For a few moments the thunder of applause came from the audience in the hopes that those who created that magical sound might come back, perhaps to tell them the meaning of the incredible event. But no, it was over, the end. Slowly, reluctantly the mass of people began to move through The Doors marked by the still-glowing red and green signs. The noise, smoke and dust slowly settled and that air became still.

As the crowd thinned, a lone figure moved along the rear of the amps. Silent, swiftly, the great line of amps went dead. The lifelines of power were pulled, folded and packed. A couple of people came up to the stage and offered help. Piece by piece, the amps, drums, and other parts and pieces of the vast array of equipment were

boxed and packed into a truck. The Helpers received their token payment in the form of drumsticks. They never knew that John had never touched them. Maybe this did not matter. They had drumsticks from The Doors. That set them aside as special. It gave them bragging rights when they attended school and told their friends and classmates about the night spent mesmerized by The Doors.

Now the hall was empty, still, peaceful. The last of the security guards checked for people who might be hanging back, hoping to make use of darkness for other activities. But there were none. They left as well, relieved that the night had been uneventful. Riots were always a messy business.

The crowd had been noisy but there was no trouble. Just another night gone by. Those damned kids had been smoking something they shouldn't. But that was none of their business. Now they too could go home. Their steps faded into the darkness.

An old man walked slowly across the stage to the giant switchboard. With hands made certain by long years of familiarity, he maneuvered the levers. The hall darkened until a single bulb glowed like a distant star to light the worn path to the stage door. A soft click, echoes of a slamming door reverberated through the ancient structure.

The building stood, dark, silent, old and tired. It would never again know the glory of the theater. That night, after one last spectacular event, the Doors were forever closed.

2 The Players

Ray Manzarek - Keyboards

Ray was born and raised in Chicago. His family was not wealthy but they managed. Ray loved music. He studied piano. Most important, he studied Classic Piano for many years. With proper guidance and interest, it might well have been possible for Ray to become a professional concert pianist. Ray was talented, creative and he loved to play.

There was an influence in his musical life that was to follow him into the world of rock and roll; Chicago Blues. He learned all he could about it and those famous musicians of elder days who brought this somewhat localized form of music to the public.

Ray was a natural player, well trained, innovative and talented. In his career with The Doors he used a strange combination of organ, having a continuous sound, and

piano-bass, somewhat imitative of the bass guitar but sounding like a piano, a sound that, by manipulating the mechanical aspect of the instrument, could approach that of the bass pipes of a String stop in a Pipe Organ.

Ray was good. Generally, working with Robby, he was the arranger of the music. He would draw the organ line and the piano bass so they were almost contrapuntal in design.

Jim Morrison - Singer

Son of a High Ranked Naval officer, Jim met Ray in UCLA film school. Also in this group of friends was Frank Lisciandro and Paul Ferrara. Ray found in Jim a kindred spirit in music. At that time Ray and his brother Rick, had a band called “Rick and the Ravens”. Ray asked Jim about his poetry. He was struck with the strange images that Jim portrayed in his various poems.

One of these Moonlight Drive was particularly fascinating. Ray invited Jim to join the Ravens and sing. Rick didn't like this idea too much so the thought of a band lay dormant for a time. Then, Ray met John Densmore, drummer, at a meditation gathering. At about the same time Ray's brothers - who played Lead and Rhythm guitar, decided to leave. They felt that The Doors, as a group, would not be successful.

John Densmore - Percussionist

John was a small person, He was not tall or muscular. It is unlikely that he weighed much over 90 pounds soaking wet. But one thing was certain, his size had no relation to the quality of the music that he was capable of creating. In fact, it was incredible that a person of so little weight could create the tremendous range of dynamics that he could produce while playing drums. Even more important, his ability to keep time was almost metronomic.

John began his music career by studying classic Piano. That provided a lot of understanding of music structure, theory and performance. But he became interested in another form of percussion instrument - Orchestral Tympani. He undertook to study this form of musical accent for some time. He learned the expression, the dynamics, the tonal quality of percussion as well as the wide range of the type of drums that one could use to provide accents to more continuous instrumental music.

John, like many of the youth of his day, was caught up in the movement of Rock music and the variety of expression provided by this relatively new form of music. He became interested in Jazz and took formal training in the art of playing drums for jazz accompaniment. The size of the instruments were quite different. But what

John had learned in these three forms of music all came to bear on his ability to obtain some of the most incredible rhythms of any drummer in any Rock Group that existed at that time. Perhaps, even for all time. Ray asked John to join the proposed group. Fortunately, John agreed.

Robby Krieger - Guitarist

A young man from a fairly well off family, Robby liked to play Guitar. He had begun by studies with a professional instructor in the art of the Classic Spanish Flamenco style. He learned rapidly. He enjoyed it. He was a natural player. Had he continued his studies it is likely that Robby would have become a professional classic performer. Instead he went to another style, Rock 'N Roll.

For anyone who has studied the techniques involved in Classic Guitar, rock music is primitive. More so if you use the same technique of plucking the strings. Most rock players used a plectrum or "Pick" as it was called. This limited them to strumming or picking single notes. But Robby, with his dexterous fingers, could play several notes at once and that made all the difference in the music he could make with any guitar.

Robby was a quiet guy. He was the youngest member of the group. He liked the comfortable life that he had with his parents as he progressed through years of school. They gave him a good education and hoped that he would become a professional in some field. But Robby was walking his own path and it led to creating and performing popular music.

Robby was a friend of John Densmore. It was John who invited Robby to join the group. When Robby first met them he played some of the tunes they had developed with Ray's brother. Ray, Jim and John realized that they need look no further. Robby was the best there was.

Bill Siddons – Equipment Handler

People who go to concerts don't think about the incredible logistics required to put on a performance. It is all orchestrated by - The Road Manager and his staff. In this case it was just one guy. William Siddons, age 18. He took on an enormous task and managed to make it work.

1967 they went on the road as a result of some very good Public Relations work orchestrated by their Managers B&D. They began by playing several locations in the Greater Los Angeles area in the spring of 1967 to promote the release of the single, Light My Fire. To help them prepare for these concerts they had Robby's twin

brother Ronald and his friend, Rich Linnell as equipment handlers. One night, Rich brought Bill Siddons to a performance.

Bill was a big, strong, good looking, California surfer boy. Because of his size, his bearing and personality, he appeared to be much older than he was. Bill was usually a happy guy. An easy smile and good bearing gave him an air of confidence and purpose. He was attractive and had no trouble making conquests of the ladies.

There is no doubt that he liked surfing more than school. In reality he was, like most surfers, inexperienced and immature in the ways of the world and dealing with people.

As usual, after the show, Rich and Ronny had to pack up and put the equipment in a Volkswagen bus owned by Ronny. Bill was carrying two amps when the others were struggling with one. John and Robby, seeing this, decided to have Bill as their full time Equipment Handler. When they started making longer trips around the country, during the Spring and Summer of 1967, Bill was their constant companion. For a boy who had just turned 18, Bill had a lot of responsibility. He had to get everyone and everything to the airport and on the plane. When they arrived in the city where they were to perform, he had to shepherd the group to their hotel, get the equipment to the location where they were performing, set it up, go back to the hotel for the group and get them to the hall. He had to take care of ticket counts, and collecting the monies due The Doors.

With business taken care of, and the performance over, he had to pack the equipment, load it into a truck and try to get some sleep. The next day, this schedule would be repeated. Often as not, he would pick up some stray groupie and take her to bed as well. There is one thing that must be said – he managed to do it all and he never failed.

He won the respect and trust of The Doors and their financial Manager, Bob Green. Generally, at that time, these road trips were confined to Friday, Saturday or Sunday nights. This would mean leaving on a Thursday and not returning to Los Angeles until Monday. This situation obtained all through the Spring and early Summer of 1967. Bill was to graduate from High School.

This was a time of war for the United States, the quagmire of Vietnam. The draft and Viet Cong bullets were eating up the nation's youth. Bill was faced with the draft. As long as he was in college with a minimum number of class credits and proper grades, he could maintain an S-1 deferment. He enrolled in College and received a deferment.

Bill, like thousands of young men, believed that this nasty, useless little fracas

would end before he completed college. During the summer, the tour schedule had no effect on his military status. What he had not considered was the growing popularity of The Doors and the time required for him to help them. He entered college in September of 1967 assuming he was safe. To promote their new album, The Doors went on tour in August. Bill went with them. He entered college in September. The Doors still had commitments for many more performances through the end of the year. The Doors performing schedule meant that he had to miss classes on Friday and often Monday. As the semester continued, his frequent absence from class, lack of scholastic enthusiasm, and a preference for surfing rather than classing resulted in a serious situation.

His grades dropped because he was not studying. He was dropped from one class as a result of poor attendance. As time progressed, things became worse. As a result of his problems in school, scholastic or otherwise, he had to cease his involvement with The Doors or face the army in a time of a shooting war, And so it was on a fateful night of December 9, 1967 in the City of New Haven. An event occurred there that would change Bill's life. It would also change the reputation of the lead singer.

Sal Bonafede & Asher Dann – Managers

Sal and Asher were middle aged gentlemen and partners in a major real estate company. Their offices, located on the north side of Sunset Boulevard near the famous 9000 building, were modest though welcoming and comfortable.

In addition to their being successful, in the real estate market, they were also Managers for The Doors. How this came about and why is not important. It is not relevant to the story. They were in the music business to make money. To do so, they had to make The Doors famous and wealthy (Maybe). They were successful. During 1967 they brought The Doors from an obscure but popular club band to national notoriety with the release of their first album and the single – Light My Fire. To further promote the band and the music they arranged for photo sessions, interviews with music critics, various newspapers & magazines as well as the curious. The Doors became popular and very busy.

3 The Eccentric Organ Builder

I have been asked many times over about the manner in which I became associated with The Doors. It is of little wonder when one learns of my background, that such

a question should be asked. I shall try to explain the strange twists and turns that led to my transformation from sheltered farm boy to famous road manager.

Like many things which seem to work out so well in the entertainment industry, it is more a case of being in the right place at the right time than any grand plan or great knowledge I used to impress the group. In fact, I didn't impress the group. It was a chance meeting with an obscure surfer boy and the Vietnam War which made it all happen.

I was born in Lawrence, a sprawling Mill town, home of the largest worsted mill in the world, in the early hours of 1935, October 4th. My Uncle, Dr. Richard Neil brought about my delivery. Obviously it was successful - or I am a real ghost writer. After I voiced my outrage at having my backside slapped, I had a meal at the milk bar and went to sleep. Being born is difficult and exhausting, not to mention traumatic. I can tell you from experience.

I my first home was on the Western shores of Cobbett's Pond in New Hampshire. My first memories are of the early morning sun glittering from wind ruffles on the placid waters of the pond. We moved to a more citified house in Salem for a time. One day an ancient farm in Andover came available and in July of 1939, my Father bought it. 65 acres and an old farmhouse built in 1809 became my home for the next 28 years.

Living on a farm is a daily adventure, There were horses, snakes cats, chickens, frogs, a deep forest full of trees to climb, a Victory garden, weeds to pull each summer's day, dogs, tractors, mowing hay, picking apples in the orchard, driving farm trucks and other wonderful things to do. Yes, life was exciting but it was also isolated.

I lived with my family in Andover, Massachusetts. My mother and father were musical. We had a custom built red piano which my mother often played for parties and dances which were the usual form of entertainment when I was young. Guests would sing, dance and have a great time drinking rum & Coca-Cola.

It was natural for me to have an interest in music. My first lessons were from my mother. I learned to play some of the popular music of the times. Sheet music was readily available for all the popular tunes back then.

A trip to a wedding and the reception which followed, exposed me to the music of a very talented young man from Andover, Roger Johnson. He played the Accordion. I was bound and determined to join those who could bring forth music from this "Squeeze Box" as it was often referred to. An accordion was purchased and the les-

sons began. I progressed rapidly, thanks to my ability to read music and use of proper fingering learned from my piano lessons.

On more than one occasion I was asked to play at school assemblies and for the weekend parties hosted by my parents. I didn't like to be trotted out like a monkey on a chain for the entertainment of family friends. This dampened my enthusiasm a bit. Still I kept on.

In the summer of 1949, a strange turn of events brought a change in my musical interests. My father, long involved in trotting tracks along the east coast, was instrumental in founding Scarborough Downs, a race track in the small town of Scarborough, Maine. I accompanied my father, and his close friend & associate, Bill Martini, to Scarborough just prior to the grand opening of the track. We stayed at the Prouts Neck Country House. This huge old house, overlooking the wild North Atlantic shore, was owned by a widow who rented rooms by the week, month or season. I suppose in today's reference, it was like a B&B. Unfortunately the second B was not provided so we had to eat out.

Pinedale Restaurant was located by the side of Route 1 going to north to Portland, Maine. It was in an ideal location - right opposite the road leading to the track. The fashion was to have dinner at the restaurant then go to the races, which started at about Seven PM. This was a night time trotting track.

The proprietor of the restaurant, an elderly man and his wife, collected and restored Melodeons. These are reed organs, like a giant accordion, with a single keyboard and 8 or 10 stops. They were pumped by treadles while playing. Melodeons are often seen in movies dealing with the old west or even in some remote churches and homes.

The proprietor of the restaurant had a Melodeon in the private dining room. Bill knew it was there. I have no idea what prompted him to reveal this thing to me but it opened up a whole new world of music.

Thus the invitation - "Junior, come on, I want to show you something".

Bill led me to the inner sanctum and suggested that I play this beautifully restored melodeon. It was the first of any such instrument I had ever seen or played. It sounded much like my accordion but had a much larger keyboard. I could play pieces I had learned to play on the piano. It was a revelation.

While I was involved with the organ in the dining room, unknowingly entertaining patrons in the main dining area, Bill went to the kitchen to fetch the elderly gentleman who had restored this amazing instrument. He left the kitchen and came to watch me play.

When I had finished he sat down and played Just a Song at Twilight. This was followed by Moonlight and Roses. What I heard was so overwhelming. I was convinced that, tuneful though the accordion was, it did not adequately express my musical interests. I was instantly overwhelmed by a determination to learn to properly play a pipe organ. I was enveloped by a passion that continues even to this day, 73 years later.

I was just 14 when my enthusiasm for Pipe organs began to dominate my life. I was in Junior high school. I was considered somewhat of an eccentric genius by my teachers. In another time I probably would have been in advanced classes for the gifted. Through Junior High School, Mr. Weiss, who recognized my interest in science, guided and nurtured my interests in all things scientific. I made models of atoms and rockets, built amplifiers, oscilloscopes and even lectured class-mates in 8th grade science classes.

Through high school, I was fortunate enough to have teachers who were devoted to education. I was so far advanced in science studies that, under supervision of a gifted teacher, Arthur Danforth, I was a student instructor of physics and chemistry classes. I was often called upon to act as substitute teacher when instructors of science, chemistry and physics classes were absent.

Miriam McArdle, the music teacher in high school, told me to seek out Arthur Howes, concert organist and director of music at Phillips Academy. On the advice of Mr. Howes, well known organist and founder of The Andover Institute, I met Tom Byers, who had founded Andover Organ Company. Over the next two years, I spent many Saturdays in his factory and visiting churches to tune and service the organs therein. I learned to tune and how mechanical action organs worked. Perhaps the greatest thrill came when I tuned the Walker organ in Serlo Hall.

With instructions and training by Mr. Byers, George Reed, my youthful friend and I built a small tracker organ in the cellar of my home. We began in the fall of 1952. It took two years to complete this 11 Stop, 2 Manual and Pedal organ containing 640 pipes. When it was finished, it was initially set up in an unused barn that was modified to provide the required height.

In 1955 George and I, with help from a willing accomplice, Bill McCullom, set the organ up in the high school chemistry lab as a science project. For this, and my somewhat brilliant performance during my years in high school, I was nominated for, and presented with, the Bosch & Lomb National Science Award.

As a result of the Organ project and several newspaper articles written about this and other exploits, George and I became somewhat famous in the surrounding area.

We began to receive inquiries regarding the maintenance of local organs in churches.

While George, who was 4 years younger than I, remained in school, I began my freshman year at Boston University. I was enrolled in the Liberal Arts field of study. Essentially an extended version of High School. Except for Chemistry and Geology classes, it was boring. After classes, I began to tour the city and visit many churches in the area.

A visit to Marsh Chapel at the University, brought about a meeting with Robert Morell, the service representative for Casavant organs. I made it known that I would be available to assist him when he came to tune or service the organ in the Chapel. Thanks to Mr. Morrell, I learned much about the Casavant chest action and console mechanics.

A chance visit to St. Cecelia's church in Boston resulted in meeting Roy Carlson. Roy maintained about 200 organs in the greater Boston area. He needed skilled help. He invited me to join his staff. I had the good fortune to put my knowledge and skills, gleaned from many Saturdays spent with Tom Byers. While working for Roy I tuned and serviced some of the most famous organs in the greater Boston area.

I studied tonal theory and the structure and purpose of harmonics in the strange mutation and multi-rank "Mixture" stops for more than 7 months with one of America's most famous organ builders. Unfortunately this was done at the sacrifice of class time in Boston University. An even greater tragedy occurred when my mentor died of a heart attack. My studies were cut short. So was my dream of working for Aeolian-Skinner.

In 1957, George and I established our own business. By 1967, we had built six organs, rebuilt several others and were maintaining some 65 churches in Maine, New Hampshire, Lowell, Lawrence and the greater Boston area. This included the famous Welte organ in the Church of the Covenant in Boston, It was the last organ this company built. I learned much from servicing this amazing organ.

In the Spring of 1967, I was 32 years old, living a quiet life in the town of Andover, attending to the needs of organs under our care. Of course, everyone knew of Bill Haley, Elvis Presley, and those strange, long haired Beatles. But awareness and interest are not the same thing. I was an organ builder. I had inherited a love of music, but it was a far cry from the new sounds sweeping the world.

My musical interests were limited to classical music, symphonic, concertos and, of course, the majestic sounds of the King of Instruments, the Pipe Organ. I did not listen to or have any interest in popular music. In fact, I disliked most of it, especially that which was then considered to be "Rock 'n Roll". But in the spring of 1967,

while restoring an Austin organ for a church in Waterville, Maine, all that was to change.

In the summer the devil takes a holiday, particularly in the protestant denominations. With people away on vacations and temptations abounding in the wonderful summer weather, church attendance was minimal. In fact many churches closed so they could do maintenance and renovations to the buildings, pipe organs and heating systems.

It was our practice, as with others in the same business, to undertake major cleaning and repair jobs during the summer when use of the organ was at a minimum. We hired kids, who wanted to earn money for summer fun, to help with cleaning, restoring and other types of simple yet vital work necessary to restore an organ to reliable performance.

It was inevitable that, with 16 to 18 year old kids working in an organ factory, there would be a culture clash - and so there was. Two of the boys happened to be "Rock 'n Rollers". They didn't much fancy the strange sounds of classic music. Organ music was even more difficult to comprehend. As a result, it seemed that no matter how many times the radio previously a stranger to the thump and twang of drums and guitars was set to the Boston classic station, WBZ, it always seemed to drift toward the more "Popular" music stations. I was compelled to listen to a type of music which was as foreign to my interests as it was generally condemned by the adult public.

But that spring a new and very different sound was heard on the "Pop" stations. Light My Fire become an instant hit. It catapulted an obscure club band from Los Angeles to national attention. This was my introduction to the music of The Doors. To this strange music, I listened with interest.

This music was different. It was almost as though the group really knew what music was all about. Aside from the words, it was almost classic in its arrangement. Of course you had to hear the words and these were even more interesting. They spoke of wallowing in mire...Getting higher and being on fire. Walking in halls, Mother & fathers and the End of all things. There were crystal ships, a thousand thrills and many ways to spend your time. Strange, indeed but interesting as well. I found myself enjoying it. An entirely new and completely unfamiliar experience.

But these were strange days. Young men in the military were being slaughtered and maimed in the distant jungles of Vietnam. Their goal was to slaughter and maim the people who lived in that tortured infant nation. The objective was to save Vietnam from the Vietnamese. Does that make sense??

A president had been assassinated. The mere mention of communism made strong men pale and women faint. The threat of nuclear holocaust was ever present. Children were brainwashed into thinking they could survive a nuclear blast by ducking under desks while the building that protected them was vaporized. The people of the USA were convinced by clever propaganda that more bombs, guns and dead boys would win over an ideal. That never works. The counter culture realized this and a raising storm of believers in peace begin to dominate the land.

Hippies dedicated to free love and going with the flow abounded in many areas. Drugs, made popular by famous groups, became all the rage. Kids were no longer interested in getting drunk on the weekends. Now they wanted to “Get High” on pot, acid and crystal meth. They wanted to “Find Themselves” and “Open their minds” in a chemically induced stupor. How ridiculous that concept was. Many kids paid for it with their lives.

The adult population was horrified, frightened and made every attempt to stop the radical change in the attitudes and behavior of the nation’s rebellious youth. Forgive me. In my attempt to describe the upheaval society was going through I have digressed somewhat. But I was also destined to change with the times.

I was listening to Light My Fire. As the music progressed through those three incredible minutes I realized I was hearing something that was unique. What I discovered was interesting. The first impact was hardly passed when DJ’s began to play the B side of the recording - “Crystal Ship”

It struck me, a devotee of Classical music, that this was no ordinary Rock and Roll. In fact, when one dissected the structure of the arrangements, it was based on classical divisions of melody, harmony and bass lines, weaving and interchanging as the music of no other group did. I became fascinated. I bought the First album and greatly offended my stereo system by playing the new sounds as often as tracks of classical Organ and Orchestral pieces.

My sudden interest in the music of The Doors was only the beginning of my head-long plunge into a strange new world. Andre, one of the Summer Boys, heard that the Turtles were going to play at the Hampton Beach Casino on August 2, 1967.

Hampton Beach Casino

Let me digress a moment and tell you a bit about the Casino. Hampton Beach is a summer resort town at the mouth of the Merrimac River. In winter, it is shuttered and all but abandoned. Only a few hundred people lived there full time. It was almost deserted between Labor Day, through the winter until May 30th when the

summer tourist season opened in New England. At the height of the season, thousands of people came for vacations, crowding the modest beachside hotels and bungalows that lined the narrow streets. Many came simply to enjoy a day in the sun and relax on the warm white sand on the beach.

The beach was a mecca for kids who wanted to enjoy the sun, sand and entertainment provided by the small beach community. Bowling, pinball, shooting galleries, hot-dog stands, bumper cars and great expanses of sandy beaches brought kids from afar. But so did the sounds of the new music.

In this community was a place of entertainment called the Hampton Beach Casino. This huge building was originally constructed, around 1890's as a Victorian style dance hall and entertainment center when dancing was a real social event. This was a time before busy-bodies decided it was inappropriate to touch your partner and you could speak without having to apologize to every minority on the planet. But I digress in an outburst of righteous passion.

It had a matched strip hardwood floor which shone like a sheet of glass. The sides were open to the evening airs. Electric lights had replaced the original gas lighting. But times had changed and for a time the ancient ballroom had stood boarded up and abandoned. Somehow, it had survived the years, changes in activities of the summer visitors and the wrecking ball.

Suddenly, it became fashionable for the young crowd to attend performances of Rock bands. Places like the ancient Casio were ideal locations to present this form of entertainment to the public. Restored to a semblance of its original splendor, it now echoed with the sounds of Rock bands which brought crowds of people to the weekend performances of popular groups all summer. It also brought prosperity to the businesses along the beach.

4 A Revelation – The Turtles

It was August 2, 1967 when the Turtles were scheduled to play at the Casino. Andre suggested that he and I go to hear them. It seemed strange that no one else wanted to go. They didn't know what they were going to miss.

This was a group that was definitely not rock and roll. They used the new instruments to sing a sort of melodic gentle music. Maybe it could be classed as "Folk Music". Whatever it was, with Mamma Cass as the front figure, they had fun on stage. They were entertainers as well as singers. It was infectious within the audi-

ence, who enjoyed the performance immensely. So did I.

A group played before the Turtles. It was possibly a local band. Perhaps winner of some Battle of the Bands which was a popular event during this time. Often the reward for the winner was to play as the opening group prior to a famous band that was headlining. But I also noticed something which in some ways spoiled an already dull performance. The instrumentalists of both groups had a battle of the volume knobs. There was a constant effort by each of the players to be dominant in the performance. This led to a serious if not annoying imbalance between the musical instruments. In the end the sheer volume of guitars and keyboards over-rode the drummer and the singer.

At that time drums were not provided with amplifiers. It was thought that the percussive effects of the drums and cymbals would cut through everything else. That was fine for small clubs and auditoriums. But that mode of thinking did not take into account ever more powerful amplifiers being introduced by Marshall, Fender, Acoustic and other instrument amplifier manufacturers.

There were several incidents of technical problems in the back-up group's equipment. In an effort to keep up with the increasing volume of the instruments, the vocals had to be turned up as well. But there were limits to this equalizing tactic. Feedback brought howls and squeals from the Vocalists amplifiers.

To add to the confusion, it became apparent that the cords connecting the instruments to the amplifiers were not in good condition. On two occasions cords failed resulting in the instruments being silenced. The performance was further upset by some helper rushing on stage to deliver a replacement cord and the distraction of plugging in. Any quality these second rate groups had was far overshadowed by the constant distraction of equipment failures and lack of co-ordination between the performers.

Having one very pleasant experience with the Turtles and becoming more deeply involved with the music of The Doors, it was inevitable that something was going to happen. There were lessons to be learned from this initial experience as well. I was convinced that there had to be a better way to manage the balance between the instruments and singers. Certainly better cords and some effort at maintenance would have eliminated equipment failures. Control of the sound was paramount to presentation of a good performance. Proper equipment was the foundation of a trouble free performance.

The following week, an event was to happen that was to lead to some drastic changes in my life. The Doors came to the Hampton Beach Casino.

5 The Doors Open - August 1967

I suppose you could say the second step I took was the first Doors concert. The release of a new album by any group brought with it extensive promotional tours. The Doors went on the road for a tour of major centers across the country. They played more than 250 performances in 1967. Being on the road is difficult enough but having to play two sets each night made it even worse.

One of their scheduled stops was the Hampton Beach Casino. The Doors were scheduled to play at the Casino on August 9, of 1967. Plans were immediately made to go to the performance. We were to hear these people from California who had suddenly crashed into the music scene in a live performance. This was an opportunity too good to miss.

Andre and I arrived at the Casino early and were able to get near the stage in a standing room only crowd that spread over the surrounding beach like an amoeba. As usual there were two groups performing. The first was a local group with little talent. They were a copy-cat band playing their interpretations of the top forty songs that were popular at that time. They were not very good at their job, as I remember.

The first group played for about 30 or 40 minutes. The lyrics were mediocre and music boring. Once more the battle of the instruments ensued. This eventually resulted in the wailing of feedback in the vocal microphones as the tech crew attempted to keep pace with the ever louder instruments. Bad results for the audience. The performance was also plagued with hums and honks of electrical problems and broken instrument cords. More lessons learned.

The first group completed their performance. There was an intermission while the members of the band dragged their equipment off stage. When the stage was cleared, one rather tall, blond guy proceeded to bring The Doors equipment on stage. He began with setting up the drums. I wondered why he put a bright orange rug on the floor first. With that task completed the audience waited while he carefully connected the amplifiers to power outlets and ran the signal cords from the organ, piano bass and a third one apparently for the guitar. He tapped a key on the organ and another on the piano-bass and left the stage.

The whole set-up took about 20 minutes. During this time the audience drifted off to get snacks or drinks from various vendors surrounding the area in which the Casino stood. For a time the crowd milled about without much purpose. Suddenly, without any signal or announcement, the crowd seemed to draw inward towards the

stage. A few moments later the lights went OFF leaving the entire building in nearly total darkness. A strange hush settled over the audience as they waited for the next event.

What was this? In the dusky gloom created by lights from the street and nearby buildings, three people could be vaguely seen coming on stage. A low rumbled spread through the crowd as a single note was heard from the organ followed by the sounds of a guitar being tuned. There was a moment of silence and suddenly The Doors began to play. A fourth figure came leaping on stage. He grabbed the microphone and began to sing. This was their famous singer, Jim Morrison. The lights came on and a performance unlike any other had begun.

This was not really a performance. It was an experience. This was The Doors, live. We were impacted by the power of their playing and transfixed by the dynamic voice of the singer. The music was fascinating; so different than all other groups at that time. The lyrics were strange, leading you to think about dreams, nightmares and weird experiences.

I suppose you would suggest that this was my first experience at a live rock concert. I was unfamiliar with rock music and the atmosphere created by a crowd of young kids. I was too used to older, more sophisticated audiences attending organ concerts and orchestral performances in places like Serlo Hall and Boston Symphony Hall. No! No, to all these suggestions. This was different, a whole new type of music presented by four talented people who worked together to present strange new thoughts, experiences and a philosophy of freedom from convention.

The performance continued for more than an hour. It was stunning. It was an experience that could not be described. Mysterious, hypnotic, fascinating, dynamic. The group was recalled to the stage by a cheering, shouting clapping audience. They wanted more. They wanted the world and they wanted it now.... Now....NAH-wwooooo!!

But the show was over. The tall blond boy appeared once more and began to dismantle the wiring, drums, and instruments. They had other places in which they were to perform and a schedule that could not be changed. They had given me a taste of their music and strange imagery in words. I was fascinated by it all.

The crowd began to disburse, spreading out over the beach, the boardwalk or streaming like ants toward the parking lots and byways. Andre and I drifted off without saying too much. We were deeply absorbed just thinking about what we had seen and heard. Instinctively I knew they were good. In fact, they were very good. On the long drive home we discussed what we had just seen and heard. The record-

ings of their songs gave only a hint of the real meaning, the energy, the dynamics of a performance. There was much to learn about the mystique of the music created by The Doors.

The next day many kids who knew Andre and I had attended the performance made a pilgrimage to my factory to learn of what we had seen and heard. To those who had chosen not to be present at the event I could only speak of my conviction: “These are the next Beatles. This group is going to be the biggest thing in the U.S...” (Or something similar).

Besides a great interest in the music, lyrics and fascinating performance of The Doors, I took with me an idea. It was the result of the seemingly endless efforts by each player to drown the other guys out. The disquieting sounds of feedback when the vocal system was driven into a state of feedback and the apparent inability of groups to maintain their equipment.

As an organ builder, and devotee of classic orchestral music, I was acutely aware of acoustics in a building and the effect it has on the quality of sound. Balancing the various tonal groups of a pipe organ was little different than balancing sound levels between the amplifiers. Though the sound was, in one case produced by wind in contrast to amplified electrical signals, the end result was the same.

Certainly it was possible to have some arrangement where the instruments and microphones could be plugged into a central control station. With this system, someone could control the tone & balance of the instruments and the balance between the vocalist(s) and the instruments. This would assure that the audience would hear high quality sound and prevent the group from fiddling with sound levels. Of course the curse of poorly maintained equipment could only be dealt with by purchasing quality equipment in the first place and caring for it while in use. I proceeded to design such a system. I also considered designing a group that would be able to play the type of music that was quite popular at that time – acid rock.



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