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# Bill Graham Presents: My Life Inside Rock And Out



## **Synopsis**

The late rock promoter recounts his life as a refugee from the Holocaust, his rise to fame in the recording industry, and his launching of such stars as Janis Joplin, Otis Redding, and the Grateful Dead. 75,000 first printing. \$75,000 ad/promo. Tour.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This is a fascinating look at the brilliant, innovative and inspiring rock entrepreneur Bill Graham. He was almost an archetypal figure, a rugged-individualist self-made millionaire who started out as a penniless immigrant and created magic through his intelligence, courage and integrity. This 2004 edition includes a (let's just say) 'strange' new Preface by Pete Townshend, a new Afterword by Graham's son David, AND a magnificent new introduction by Robert Greenfield, the writer who completed the book after Graham's death. Greenfield perfectly captures the essence of Graham's greatness and the values he lived by, which we should all live by. It's the best tribute to Bill Graham that I've ever read. Highly recommended.

'My Life Inside Rock and Out' is a very interesting account of the great rock'n'roll impresario Bill Graham, documenting his rough beginnings from the East Coast to San Francisco, where he really settled in to sink his teeth into putting on some amazing shows such as Jimi Hendrix, Jefferson Airplane, the Doors, etc. Bill Graham was perfect for the budding psychedelic rock and blues industry because he had a strong business sense but also a tolerance for the absurd- and you will read more than a few absurd accounts in this book. What Mr. Graham did with BGP, the Fillmore,

and the Shoreline, to name but a few, was so enriching to the Bay Area musical community, not to mention he also put on shows in the far reaches of the world. He was an agent/producer before things became so commercialized and calculated, and his tragic death struck a very deep and elegaic chord which still now resonates off the walls of corporate-sanitized America. But I Ratmouse will NEVER forget him.

I truly can't say enough about this book. It's an incredibly informative piece of work, insightful in so many ways other than simply the rock industry--although it has a lot to say about that too. But the story of Bill Graham's life is far more entertaining than any self-indulgent 'memoir' you can possibly think of. You don't have to be a music fanatic to love this book; just a human being is enough. But for a behind-the-scenes look at Woodstock, Altamont, Live Aid, Amnesty Internation, the Stones various tours, CSNY, Santana, the Dead... you can't get anything that compares to it. RIP Bill. You definitely deserve it.

Bill Graham is the rock promoter most famous for operating the leading rock and roll theaters of the late sixties and early seventies, including the original Fillmore auditorium in San Francisco, the Fillmore East in New York, and the Fillmore West, (a different building in San Francisco.) The Fillmore period was sort of a golden age of rock and roll. Graham was able to present virtually all the cutting edge bands of the time, including some acts, like Santana and the Allman Brothers, before they even had their first record out. Rock and roll shows had never received the kind of attention to detail and respect for performers and audiences that Graham brought to the Fillmores. Graham presented a variety of music, including blues and jazz, although the headliners were almost always top draw rock and roll acts. Many artists took advantage of the Fillmore's reputation to record live albums there. In fact, according to this book, 58 albums were recorded at the Fillmores and 17 of them were certified gold. The Fillmores also became gathering places for the music industry. Graham was more than just a first hand witness to this era, he helped to create it. The Fillmore sections of this book are a fascinating examination of how the Fillmore came into existence, how the musicians felt about playing for Bill Graham, how the booking policy of the Fillmore evolved, and finally why Graham closed the Fillmores at the peak of the their success. In addition to Graham's own memories, there are memories of his contemporaries as well which round out the story. Italics are overused in attempt to make the writing sound like a transcription of someone talking, but this is only a minor irritation. Consider the following quote from Pete Townsend which is taken from the book: "(Graham) gave us dignity. We felt we weren't the pop plebes we had been

when we went out with Herman's Hermits and we were told to shut up and get in the back of the bus. We were dignified people. We were artists."Graham's opinions are fun to read. Who was the best act he ever saw? (Otis Redding) Who was the biggest pain in the neck? (Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young).Of secondary importance, but still fascinating, an added bonus really, are Graham's memories of his childhood escape from Nazi Germany. Most biographies are boring when the subject's childhood is discussed, but in this case, Graham's family was broken up during the Nazi era. Graham was a small boy and the only member of his family to escape to the United States. He was reunited with his surviving sisters after the war.

As a former roadie, this book gives a very accurate depiction of what it was like in the last 20-30 years in the concert tour industry. My experience comes firsthand, as well through the lore that is passed down from seasoned veterans. Bill Graham was an inspiring, hard-headed, revolutionary and daring character that made the concert experience what it is today, both for punters and roadies.A must read for rock or any music fans.

I am impressed with the stories in this book. First and foremost, there is Mr Bill Graham. Surviving the Holocaust, arriving in the US with less than nothing he was to become not only a successful entrepreneur, but also an icon. He is the promotor who developed the stadium concert format in the late sixties and early seventies. In addition to his own story, there are the stories of the bands who have become household names. If a rock band toured the US, Mr Graham was probably involved, especially if they played in either New York or San Francisco. This book is chock full of stories which make many a rock idol much more human. Unfortunately, it also reveals some of them as "scum buckets". If you are interested in a real-life, rags to riches story, or in popular music, this book will be interesting to you.

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