

David Gans

David Gans @ Tate Street Coffee House

by Tim Cripe

On Thursday April 6, about forty of the Greensboro **Grateful Dead** faithful were treated to an evening of song packed full of the tunes we all seem to crave endlessly as well as exposure into the modern day compositions from one of the scene's biggest supporters.

David Gans is probably best known as the host of the internationally syndicated radio show **The Grateful Dead Hour** which has for years been the voice in the wilderness of backwoods America bringing the music and the vision of the Grateful Dead to the masses. In addition to keeping the radio vibe alive, Gans writes and records his own material as demonstrated by his 1997 CD with **Eric Rawlings, Home by Morning**. Hitting the road in true singer/songwriter fashion, he has traveled all across the land to festivals like **MagnoliaFest** in Florida and numerous bars and coffee houses in the ever-growing folk/ old time/ bluegrass scene. Besides all of those activities, David Gans remains one of the foremost scholars on the music of the Grateful Dead. He has authored many essays and three books on the experience of Grateful Dead music and most recently co-produced the **So Many Roads** project from **Grateful Dead Records** which features five CDs of material spanning the thirty years of the band.

With all of that said, you can understand the excitement I felt when I heard Gans was coming to **Tate Street Coffee House** in Greensboro. He has played numerous dates throughout NC in the past, but this was the first Greensboro show I had heard about. Although I had seen Gans many times at the MagnoliaFest and **Suwannee Springfest** in Florida, I was looking forward to a smaller, more intimate setting. [Shameless Self Promotion - There are photos of David Gans & **Tom Constanten** sitting in with **Crazy Fingers** posted at www.lonelygoat.com in the MagnoliaFest gallery.] Many thanks go out to **Matt Russ** of Tate Street Coffee House and **Rebecca Adams** for making this show possible. By the way, the noted Grateful Dead sociologist and UNCG professor Rebecca Adams has a new book out featuring essays and papers on the Grateful Dead culture. Lonely Goat will be featuring it soon.

After a few cups of that TSCH java and hanging out a bit with some old friends, the evening's purpose emerged clearly as Gans started into an extensive first set. His interaction with the crowd was comfortable and he worked without a set list

and often played the requests of the audience. Starting out with a trio of Neil Young tunes, Gans moved forward at a comfortable pace intermingling well chosen covers with his originals and collaborative efforts like 'Down to Eugene' featuring lyrics by **Jim Page** of Seattle. He closed the set with a continuous four song Dead salute that left us all feeling the spirit of the event and the performer. The appreciation Gans shows for other strong songwriting artists is evident in the craftsmanship of his own material which nicely complimented the road proven cover selections of the first set.

Set I

Birds, Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere, On the Way Home, Normal, Black Peter-> Blue Roses, Down to Eugene, Trying, Rubin and Cherise-> Autumn Day, Brokedown Palace, Popstar, Return of the Grievous Angel, I Bid You Good Night-> Things We Said Today-> Leave Me-> Terrapin-> Mason's Children-> Attics of My Life

The set break was short, but informative. As much as I am embarrassed to admit, I did not recognize all of his selections from the first set. Mr. Gans was kind enough to help me update my setlist without the slightest hint of irritation that the only songs I really got were Grateful Dead tunes.

Second set started with **Gram Parsons, James Taylor, Hunter/Garcia, and Jimmy Cliff**. The middle of the set showcased Gans's own material with four successive originals punctuated by an emotional 'River and Drown.' Gans then presented **Lowell George's** 'Willin' and **Townes Van Zandt's** 'Pancho and Lefty.' Progressing with more Grateful Dead

and **The Beatles** 'Within You & Without You,' Gans chose to close the show with two originals serving as a closing statement that 'sometimes the songs that we hear, are just songs of our own.' I thank him for sharing them with the Greensboro folk on this comfortable evening.

Set II

Sin City, Sweet Baby James, Wharf Rat-> Sittin' in Limbo-> Scarlet Begonias, Wherever I Am, River and Drown, Falling Star, An American Family, Willin', Pancho and Lefty, Scene of the Crime, Stella Blue, Loser, Bird Song-> Cassidy, Within You Without You, Travelin' Man, The Minstrel.

You can find a multitude of materials about David Gans and his various projects over the years on the world wide web at www.trufun.com.

