

The Music Collector's Magazine

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Bill Graham exhibit now on display in Philadelphia



— Bill Graham (Photo courtesy of the National Museum of American Jewish History)

By Chris M. Junior

During his long, colorful career as a concert promoter and booker, as well as an artist manager, Bill Graham left his mark in several cities across the United States.

Among them is Philadelphia, the site of 1985's star-studded, Graham-promoted Live Aid benefit concert at John F. Kennedy Stadium. And that achievement alone makes the City of Brotherly Love a fitting place for "Bill Graham and the Rock & Roll Revolution."

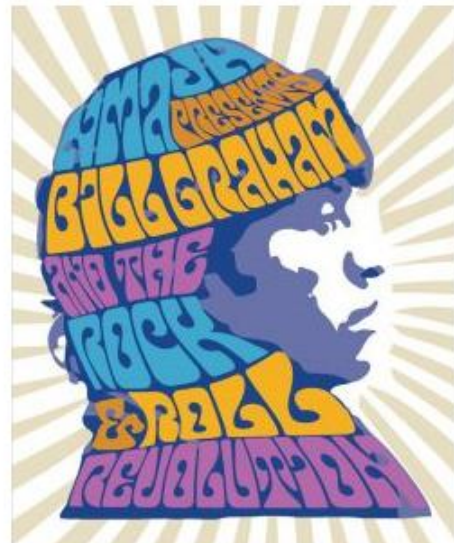
The comprehensive exhibit opens Sept. 16 at the Smithsonian-affiliated National Museum of American Jewish History. Many items will be on public display for the first time, according to Josh Perelman, the museum's chief curator and director of exhibitions and collections. They include a Janis Joplin tambourine, a Pete Townshend guitar and concert

posters from Graham's Fillmore venues in San Francisco and New York, as well as Graham's personal scrapbooks. (Graham died in a 1991 helicopter crash near Vallejo, Calif.)

"Most people know all about the musicians Graham helped promote," Perelman says, "but they don't know the back story of the promoter himself. Graham was a Jewish refugee of Nazi Germany. His mother perished in the Holocaust, and 10-year-old Graham was sent to New York as part of a Red Cross effort to help Jewish children escape the Nazis, eventually being taken in by a foster family.

"Even after experiencing such tragedy and loss as a child," Perelman adds, "Graham built an inspirational career helping musicians, bringing unforgettable experiences to audiences nationwide, and mounting massive charity concerts to help those in need. He saw an opportunity, pursued it passionately and used it to create a career that impacted the world."

"Bill Graham and the Rock & Roll Revolution" will be on display through Jan. 16, with related programming also taking place into early December at the NMAJH.





— This Yamaha guitar, signed by Carlos Santana, is on display as part of the "Bill Graham and the Rock & Roll Revolution" exhibit in Philadelphia.
(Photo by Robert Wedemeyer)



— A battered pair of Keith Richards boots, now on display in Philadelphia as part of the "Bill Graham and the Rock & Roll Revolution" exhibit. (Photo courtesy of the National Museum of American Jewish History)