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# CLASSIC ROCK REVISITED



*Classic Rock Revisited presents an exclusive interview with...*

## **Backstage Auctions Owner Jacques van Gool**

*Jacques van Gool is back with another fascinating interview about his incredible business Backstage Auctions!*

*"The Rock Art Poster Auction" features hundreds of timeless rock relics. The bidding starts on August 14th and ends on August 28th, 2005. You can visit [www.backstageauctions.com](http://www.backstageauctions.com) or you can download: The Rock Art Poster Auction Catalog here.*

*This is one of the most unique and fascinating auctions in all of rock music. Read on to learn more about it and the man behind the auction, Jacques van Gool.*

*- Jeb Wright, August 2005*



**Jeb: Where did the idea come to do a historic rock art auction come from?**

Jacques: Well, concert and rock-art posters have rapidly and significantly increased in value over the past years. While we would normally not do a 'non-musician' type auction, the idea started when we first met up with Stanley Mouse in California. At the same time we were approached by one of the largest poster collectors in the world (Kevin Phillips) with whom we also met. One led to another and after some 'brainstorming' we decided that this was too good of an opportunity to pass up.

**Jeb: Who all did you contact to do this? Did anyone say no?**

Jacques: Kevin Phillips introduced us to Mark Powers who is one of the few people in the world who has complete collections of all original and variant prints of both the Bill Graham Fillmore West and Family Dog Avalon numbered series. Mark recently decided to stop collecting and was interested in the auction. Between his complete series, several signed prints from Stanley and a mind-numbing 1000+ lots from Kevin Phillips we felt that we had the perfect 'harmony' in place for a poster auction. It basically covers all 4 corners a collector could be interested in: Venues (such as the Fillmore, Avalon or Grande Ballroom), Artists (such as Mouse, Griffin or Kelley), Genres (such as rock, punk, grunge or jazz) and Bands (anything from A-Z). In other words, we've got it covered. So, when we had Stanley, Kevin and Mark, we felt that we had a great combination and had no need to look any further. That's not to say that we couldn't but this auction is already big enough as it is.

**Jeb: Tell me more about Stanley Mouse.**

Jacques: An amazing artist and a kind and gentle human being. He showed me some of his art in San Francisco and took me to his house north of the city. He lives in a beautiful orchard and his studio overlooks a valley. Very peaceful by the way. Anyways, in my mind, he's one of the most significant artists in the history of music. Not only is he known for his decades of art for mostly the Grateful Dead and to a lesser degree Steve Miller, Journey and Jimi Hendrix to name a few but more so, I believe, he was part of a relative small group of artists that for ever connected art with music. The core group from San Francisco (Mouse, Kelley, Griffin, Wilson, Singer, Moscoso and a few others) inspired other artist around the country which spilled over to the 70s, 80s and on. And what started off as poster art later on became album art, t-shirt art, stage-art etc. Up 'til the mid 60s, album covers were in most cases illustrated by photos - and so were concert posters by the way. These artists created an alternative and took advantage of the fact that 'imagination' can go further than a camera lens. So, to make a long answer short, Stanley is an amazing artist but at the same time, an icon who deserves a permanent place in the history of music.

**Jeb: As you are going through these amazing pieces what runs through you mind as a music fan?**

Jacques: That I should have been born in 1950 and lived in San Francisco...hahaha! Man, I tell you, if you see these weekly line-ups at these venues, it just makes your head spin. Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother & The Holding Company, The Doors, The Byrds, Buffalo Springfield... one after the other, week after week, performing 3 or 4 days in a row. And then when you get to 1968 you see a sudden increase -or invasion if you like- from British acts; Pink Floyd, The Who, Led Zeppelin, The Stones, Fleetwood Mac, you name it. And maybe what gets me the most is that it has this 'garage' feeling to it. Like it's all no big deal. Small venues and if you miss 'em this week, oh well, come back next week or go 3 blocks down and you'll catch 'em there. Can you imagine if you would have The Doors, The Who, Led Zeppelin, Grateful Dead and Janis Joplin now playing on a bill? You'd need a 500,000 capacity field for that. You just can't help to be overwhelmed by the history and significance of what was taking place. San Francisco -and in particular the Fillmore and Avalon- was the US birthplace to a scene that so many of us now wish there was. It happened and happened so fast (basically it was over in a good 4+ years) but it has never been replaced by anything of similar significance.



**Jeb: How many items will be in this auction?**

Jacques: We have exactly 1077 auction lots. Most lots have multiple items and 90% of the content is posters, handbills, flyers, postcards and mailers. That said, there are also phenomenal tour books and promotional items from the late 60s and early 70s. I haven't counted all the pieces individually but there are likely around 5,000 pieces all together.

**Jeb: How many are original and how many are reproductions?**

Jacques: 99.5% is original and the reprints that are in the collection are 'collectible ' reprints' only. Trust me, you will not find anything that you can buy online or at the mall for that matter.

**Jeb: Tell me what you think are the cream of the crop?**

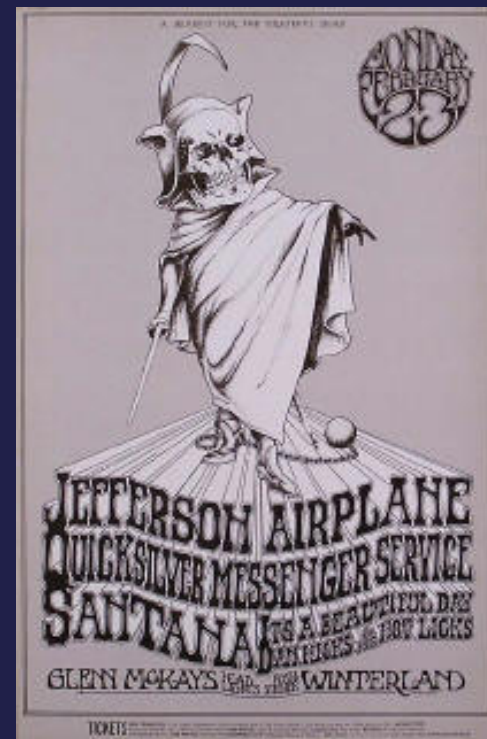
Jacques: It's hard to deny the auction lots from Mark Powers. He has the complete, numbered original print series of both the Family Dog and Bill Graham posters. Those are '6-figure' auction lots by the way but -believe it or not- the opening bid price is well below the actual value. That said, Kevin has brought absolute museum pieces to the table as well that will be auctioned off individually such as many US tour posters and handbills from the late 60s from Led Zeppelin, the Who, Pink Floyd, Jimi Hendrix, Grateful Dead etc.

**Jeb: Explain to our readers the significance these pieces had at the time they were created?**

Jacques: At the time they were created they had little significance. They were nothing more -or less- than show announcements. Heck, if you went to an Avalon or Fillmore show you would even get a poster at the end of the night. But after a while, the promoters noticed that people started collecting them. In part that was also because these posters were all sequentially numbered. And then the first poster shops opened up in San Francisco and from there, it slowly but surely turned into a 'collectible'. That in itself opened the door to also creating 'non-concert' poster art and before you could blink twice, the craze was on. I think it all tapered off a little bit after the 70s but since the mid to late 90s (in part obviously due to the domestication of computers and the internet), concert posters have revived and are now arguably the hottest collectible in the market.

**Jeb: Did you have to do a lot of research on what items were sought after for this auction?**

Jacques: Not really, I believe we all have a pretty good understanding of what's collectible and what not. That said, I did learn an enormous amount about all the minute detail from one poster to another but even now, I am not even close to being an expert. In working with Kevin and Mark you can tell what it takes to truly 'master' the knowledge and discipline of collecting posters and we have also worked with two of the absolute top authorities for this auction -Paul Grushkin and Dennis King- to make sure that we were on the right track. Speaking of Grushkin and King by the way, they have released what I consider the 2 most comprehensive and informative books about music posters. Grushkin wrote 'The Art of Rock' and together they wrote 'The Art Of Modern Rock'. I'd say that if you ever wanted to start collecting posters, buy these 2 books first. It'll be the best money invested.



**Jeb: Tell the people the price ranges and what they can get for different amounts.**

Jacques: As always, we have worked hard to create attractive lots at every level. We have a significant number of lots starting as low as \$50 and going up to \$300. Even for those dollars, you can get yourself a really nice late 60s poster or most anything from the 70s. Then we have a large number of lots from anywhere between \$300 and \$1,000 which obviously are the more signature posters. And then -in a league by its own- we have several poster, handbill and card collections from the Avalon, Fillmore and Grande Ballroom that are anywhere between \$25,000 and \$120,000. Needless to say, these are opening bid prices and we expect some serious bidding on a large number of these posters but with such a huge offering, you're bound to 'get lucky' on some really, really nice posters.

**Jeb: Who is the Rock Poster Society?**

Jacques: The Rock Poster Society is an independent, non-commercial organization, comprising of serious and dedicated collectors and alike who -collectively- aim to preserve the knowledge and historic significance of poster art. They meet periodically and exchange information through newsletters about new discoveries, updates and what have you. I'm not a member but we did contact the TRPS to inform them about this auction. We were pleased to receive their endorsement which once more further underlines that what we are offering through this auction is authentic and historically significant.

**Jeb: How important do you feel these items are to rock history?**

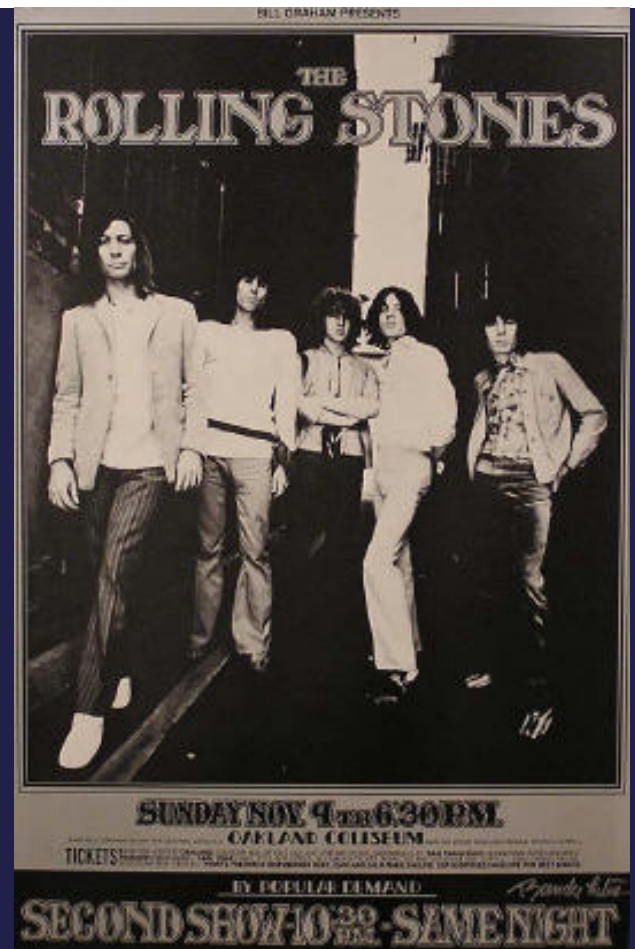
Jacques: I think it's important in many ways. Concert posters mirror popularity and by that I mean that if a band or musician was 'hot', it was reflected through these posters. In a way they tell a story, a time line of you wish of what was happening those days and all you have to do is look at them to pick up that vibe. Maybe it's just me but it doesn't take much imagination from my end to actually "feel" the scene by looking at these posters. Then, posters are also important for historic purposes. Record keeping was not necessarily high-up on the 'to-do' list of many people in the late 60s so in many instances, these posters are sometimes the only 'reminder' of who played where and when. These days everything is logged-in and double and triple documented but those were the days of 'Love and Peace'. It was all about getting together and celebrating life, music, art etc. so who cared that Janis Joplin played at the Matrix on Tuesday, January 17th, 1967? And in all fairness, if you were there, you probably didn't but most of us were not part of it and to have dates, times, venues, line-ups etc. helps us visualize those wonderful years a lot better.

**Jeb: Be sure to plug Backstage Auctions... How is the company going? What are your goals? Why do you do it?**

Jacques: Backstage Auctions is doing great. As you know, we did a very successful auction for Ted Nugent which was a fun adventure. Everything we could expect from the Nuge (and then some). We have 2 more auctions coming up later this year which I will share with Classic Rock Revisited as soon as I can. For now, we're just entirely consumed with this thrill ride which is going live on August 14th and will run for 2 weeks. Our preview will go up on August 7th so people will have a week to pick through the online catalog. Overall we are following our principles which is to continue to offer auctions directly on behalf of musicians and music industry professionals. For us - and our many customers- its all about authenticity. We constantly receive request to auction off private collections and while the items generally are impressive, that's not what Backstage Auctions is about. We just want to create these unique events between a musician on one side and their loyal and dedicated fans and collectors on the other side. Our auctions feel more like a party where we celebrate the legacy and achievements of a band or an individual. And we do that by offering 1st hand, personal items directly from the individual's home, storage, warehouse or studio. It all goes back to being collectors ourselves and wanting to do the type of auctions true collectors and fans want to see. At the same time, our auctions are also the most fun for the musician because they will stand directly in front of an appreciate crowd.....indeed, it's like playing a gig. Anyways, we will continue to host impressive, exciting and unique auctions and are already working at our 2006 line-up. Meanwhile, anybody who hasn't been to our site should take a couple minutes and stop by; [www.backstageauctions.com](http://www.backstageauctions.com)

### Jeb: Is this mostly about 60s rock?

Jacques: I would say that most posters are from the mid 60s through the mid 70s, with a few from the 50s and a decent number from the late 70s through current day. Sure, the psychedelic rock' era plays a significant role in this auction but all your classic rock bands are represent as well. We've got great posters from BTO, Allman Brothers, Johnny Winter and Ten Years After, to Ted Nugent, Heart, Journey and Lynyrd Skynyrd to name a few. There are many items from all the big names such as Led Zeppelin, The Who, The Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, Frank Zappa, Grateful Dead, Jimi Hendrix, The Doors and Janis Joplin but there are 3 names that in a way jump out a little bit. We've got multiple lots on The Runaways, which you certainly don't see every day. The we have a few dozen lots on Stevie Ray Vaughan, including a poster on which he wrote the date and venue himself. And maybe one of my favorite groupings are 6 individual Van Halen handbills, including one from 1974, when they just changed their name from Mammoth to Van Halen. It's not even at a venue but in someone's backyard. In addition, we've got a great Punk & Grunge collection, some modern rock and then just about any other genre under the sun. And if you are into venues, there is an awesome series from the Armadillo World Headquarters in Austin, probably the largest collection ever offered publicly (all from the 1970s by the way). I can hardly imagine that this auction doesn't represent at least a couple of lots of anyone's liking.





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