

My Rascal Memories and Their Influence on My Life

By: Bob Powers

My girlfriend and I first saw The Rascals in 1968 at the Singer Bowl in Flushing, New York. They were playing with The Vagrants (featuring Leslie West) and The Nazz (featuring Todd Rundgren). I will never forget it, they truly rocked the place. It was in the round and it was the first chance I had ever had of seeing Dino Danelli play. Forget it!!! There is no other drummer on the planet like him. Felix Cavaliere was tremendous, the most soulful guy I had ever heard, and there is nothing like a B-3. Eddie Brigati's voice and showmanship made you think you were in small nightclub, not some huge arena. Gene Cornish was and is the most underrated guitar player around. *People Got To Be Free* had just been released and when they hit that song the crowd went berserk. It was beautiful.

The show was so great and we were so knocked out by them, we said forget it to our 12:00am bus ride back to Allentown Pa. and just stayed for the show. We ended up sleeping in Port Authority that night and didn't care. I had seen what was to be the biggest influence on my life I to this day would ever come across.

At first I liked them cause they could rock like nobody else. Then they started making me think about things I hadn't given much thought to, this is when I began to change how I looked at the world around me. I am ever indebted to them for that and have never stopped listening to their music. It gives me my perspective.

I truly did get to meet Dino in 1971. I had been to about a million concerts since the the Singer Bowl and had just seen them at Carnigie Hall with Laura Nyro (what a bill!!). My buddy Kenny (a drummer) and I were standing outside after the show just talking about great they were when this girl named Maria (if you're still out there let me know) came up to us and started talking to us. We kind of hit it off talking, we were having fun. It was a great night. Then she says to us that she knew Dino and would we like to meet him? We really didn't buy this, but we traded numbers and the next time we were in the city, we connected with Maria and she took us to this brownstone on 71st and Lexington where she says Dino lived. We were still not quite sure, but Maria was just great to hang out with anyway.

Anyway, she rings the bell and sure enough Dino answers. I was, needless to say, amazed. He was great, he invited us in, we sat in his kitchen, drank tea, and talked about various things. I was really amazed that , one -- he was taking the time to treat us so graciously. And two -- that he was as easy to be with as he was. I was studying art at the time and mentioned that I really liked the Magritte painting he used on the *See* album. He handed me from on top of his refrigerator the biggest book on Magritte I had ever seen. He was and is very into art and very good.

He mentioned that he and Ritchie Havens were trying to put together and art show in Central Park, but that it wasn't working out for reasons I can't remember anymore. I told him that I really like th assemblages he did for *The Once Upon A Dream* at which time he asked me if I would like to see them. I walked up a siralk type staircase to the second floor and bam, they were right there, one on top of the other. I always thought Dino had such creativity. He used some real interesting Wolfgang Hutter paintings for the *Search and Nearness* album.

We stayed for a while longer and then decided not to overstay our our welcome. We said our goodnights and he actually said give a call anytime. If he was free, we could come over. We knew this was Dino probably just being polite, but we felt great. Maria was right. We had a ball that night just walking and talking and laughing (I miss those days).

We saw the Rascals again at a college concert in PA and met with Dino backstage. I got to meet Felix, Eddie, and Gene. I was struck at what a peaceful and calm person I thought Felix was, Eddie was jumping around on these huge rolled up mats being the basic wildman he was, and Gene was sitting strumming his guitar and was real easy to to talk with. I really remember *Nubia*, *Death's Reply*, *Cute*, *Groovin'*, and *How can I be sure* from that night. What a wall of sound they had !

We saw them together one more time before they broke up at the Felt Forum at Madison Square Garden. They were playing with Little Anthony and the Imperials. We got to spend a little time with Dino, and briefly met Little Anthony and Murray the K (New York legendary disc jockey) who hosted the show.

I saw Dino one more time in Quakertown PA when he and Gene had a band called Bulldog. We talked backstage and then visted him at the Hotel they were staying at. Somebody took a picture of him and I backstage that night, I really wish I knew who has it. Bulldog was a good band and Dino was in great form as always. I remember he had his fingers taped up from playing longer and more sets than they had gotten used to in concert. Gene really called the shots on stage and played great. The year of this was probably 1973.

Ther next time I would see the Rascals would be in 1988 at the Universal Amphitheatre in Los Angeles where I now live. When I heard that they were doing a reunion tour I went nuts. I took my new girlfriend who had never seen them and they were fantastic!. It was like all the years that went by never happened. They were all tremendous, great musicians, great vocals, (sadly missing Eddie however), real pros. I couldn't bring myself to try and see Dino backstage, I just felt that too many years had passed and he might not even remember me. I was quite content to see my musical heros, minus one again. It brought back, like can happen sometimes, just how exiting those days were.