THE GRATEFUL DEAD recent decades trying to un-
lock the many mysteries of “Dark Star” the band's
longest-known song. The lore around the fa-
mous elastic song—“Dark
Star”—has run for 15 minutes. How many different parts make
up the whole? He estimates: “Well over 10,000.”
Mr. Oswald assembled his find-
ings on a computer into a sprawl-
lunge at the many mysteries of
sprawl of his works, later compiled
to the expanded “Grayfolded” form, he says, guide listen-
ers “through all these different places: inner space
and outer space, delicate silences that last for several
seconds between notes and then, minutes later, more
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and outer space, delicate silences that last for several
seconds between notes and then, minutes later, more
of a 1989 plunderphonics album to be destroyed un-
til her voice sounded like a man’s.
Melodies, positioning them at differ-
ent points in their sets. In 1994, Mr. Oswald traveled
in Toronto to San Rafael, Calif., where the band gave
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He released albums with collec-
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vanguard of today’s flourishing re-
mix technique he named “plunderphonics.” The term,
Mr. Oswald, 61 years old, didn’t know much about
the Dead when he came up with the idea for a “Dark
Star” master take more than two decades ago.
“Tone awareness that they were the highest-grossing
band in North America, so there was som-
ething very special about it,” Mr. Oswald says.
That led him to approach the project, which
needed the band’s blessing, “with keen ears
to the whole thing,” he says.
The Grateful Dead released “Dark Star” in 1968 as
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\[\text{BY ANDY BATTAGLIA} \]

\[\text{LONG STRANGE TRIP Oswald, left, listened to hours of Grateful Dead performances.} \]

\[\text{Mr. Oswald had an "improviser's ears to hear what was going on, and that's one reason he was given the keys to the vault," Mr. Kaiser said.} \]

\[\text{The initial release of "Grayfolded" in 1994 didn’t spark much reaction from members of the Grateful Dead, who let the composer alone on his project.} \]

\[\text{"I remember the saying it sounded kind of long," Mr. Oswald says, "so I made a 1.5-second version for him as a sort of joke."} \]

\[\text{Mr. Gans, a musician and author of "Conversations with the Dead: The Grateful Dead Interview Book," says "Dark Star" is "the Grateful Dead's most important work."} \]

\[\text{"There really isn't much to it, so it makes the case for the Dead as improvisors," says Mr. Gans, who also hosts the weekly syndicated "Grateful Dead Hour" radio show.} \]