



# Behind the scenes: 'Bill Graham and the Rock & Roll Revolution'

MONICA WEYMOUTH

New retrospective arrives next month at the National Museum of American Jewish History.



Jimi Hendrix was one of the artists Bill Graham made even more famous.

*Photo: Robert Wedemeyer*

If you're a casual rock fan, you might not know Bill Graham's name. But you almost certainly know the names he helped to make not only famous, but immortal: The Grateful Dead, Cream, Jimi Hendrix and Bob Dylan, for starters.



Bill Graham (left) tells Beach Boys' management: "Your band is late."

Photo: Robert Altman

Born in Nazi Germany, Graham immigrated to the United States as a child, spending his teenage years in New York City's foster system and eventually serving in the Korean War. By the time he landed in San Francisco in the '60s, the counterculture current was strong and the time was ripe for a young, ambitious entrepreneur with a unique understanding of social justice. What followed is documented in "Bill Graham and the Rock & Roll Revolution," a touring exhibit organized by [L.A.'s Skirball Cultural Center](#).

Swinging through Old City's National Museum of American Jewish History in September, the retrospective features concert posters, memorabilia, photographs and video of Graham's career as one of rock's most influential, socially-conscious concert promoters. After making a name for himself at San Fran's Fillmore Auditorium, he went on to produce iconic shows on both coasts, including [Live Aid](#). The massive 1985 benefit concert — which included sets from Led Zeppelin, Mick Jagger and Madonna — was a landmark even not only in music history, but in Philadelphia history.

"Live Aid was a huge event for Philly — it put us on the international stage, in front of millions and millions of people," says WXPB host and program director [Bruce Warren](#). "It was the coming together of some of the biggest names in music and laid the groundwork for festivals to come in the future."

#### **IF YOU GO**

Bill Graham and the Rock & Roll Revolution

Sept. 16-Jan. 16

The National Museum of American Jewish History

101 S. Independence Mall

[nmajh.org](http://nmajh.org)