

@PLAY

Your daily survival guide to sports, recreation and outdoor news in Colorado's High Country

THAT'S MY



JAM!

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Face it — we are never going to all agree on what is good music. As a loyal, dedicated and die-hard Phish-head, I have accepted that not all people will understand the beauty and artistry of my favorite band. I gave up trying to convince people Phish is hippie poetry that is for you. Let me be clear: I am not musician, just a lover of music.



Drew Mikita
Dear Drewbie

Phish might not be your jam, and that's OK, 'cause it is my jam! I could use up my 1,200 words on a single Phish song, but that would be a waste of everyone's time. I know my jam. Do you know your jam?

SACRED MUSIC

Music is sacred to me. It is an art that has a place in all people's lives. Phish has gotten me through the darkest times in my life. They were always there for me, with words that may seem silly, juvenile and goofy to some, yet they "shock and persuade my soul to ignite!"

Masked in this oddity is beauty that reaches into the inner working of my spirit. Am I being extreme? Not in the least. If anything, I am understating the value of music.

At one of my most dependent moments years ago, suicide was at the forefront of my mind. Three things have had the power to prevent this horrific tragedy: One, my family (mom, dad and sister). Two, my dogs (Cali, Lucy and Linus). Three, Phish.

One exceedingly dark

time, I didn't think I would survive. I was on a hike contemplating the end of my existence and in tears. Death seemed inevitable.

A Phish lyric in one my all-time favorite jams, "Harry Hood," was playing. In true Phish fashion, the lyrics repeated about 20 times. The lyrics may not seem like much to you, but, on that day, they were life-saving: "You can feel good about

Hood!"

Explaining what or who "Hood" is requires far more words than my editor would ever give me. If I could feel good about Hood, I could feel good about something, and that was a start.

Hood saved me. Catastrophic to you? Well, frankly, I don't care. I still feel good about Hood.

FIND YOUR JAM

What is your jam? Do you know? Is it Britney Spears? The Justin Beepers? Mozart? Showtunes? Country? Rap? It doesn't matter to me. I ain't judgin', as long as it invigorates your soul. Does it touch that part of you that no one else sees or knows about? If yes, then you have your jam! Congrats! Jam on!

A good friend of mine, Max, whom I have recently been exposing to my jam, was in on a conversation I was having with a fellow Phishhead, Mike. I asked Mike to name three Phish songs that have had the biggest impact on his life. The newbie-Phish Phan thought this peculiar. Mike

quickly rattled off a list of songs that have touched his soul and why. Max said that he had never had such a relationship with music, but he was fascinated at the hippie-dialogue that ensued.

A deep, emotion-filled dialogue supervened. It sounded much like many of the therapy sessions I have with clients. Mike gets the connection, while Max was curious and seems to be a Phish convert. Got another one!

THE JAM CONNECTION

Music is an expression of your feelings, emotions and

spirit. Like writing, painting, or other art forms, music is our soul's scream of passion, be it beauty, anger, love, frustration, confusion. Whatever our soul speaks, music articulates.

It is a way for us to connect with other people, like a good book. "Catcher in the Rye" peered into my deepest, darkest sense of self and confronted it. Music does the same. Literature and music help us know that other people DO understand. We are not alone. There are others who are much like us — vulnerable, self-conscious, scared, dark, lonely. Whatever it is, we are not alone, and connection is unbelievably important for humans.

Find the music that speaks to you. My wife listens to Taylor Swift, and I don't understand it. She sounds like a computer-enhanced, whiny, entitled adolescent singing about teeny-bopper issues. I don't get it — likely never will — just like my wife will never understand the way Trey's guitar (lead singer for Phish) speaks to me. Phish sounds like rambling, untalented nonsense. But that's OK. Her jam, my jam.

I am not asking you to dread your hair, get a sundress with Birkenstocks and come to a Phish show. Instead, find whoever it is that musically touches your soul. You have to seek it. Listen to a variety of music. Most radio hosts (sans Jonny at KSMT) will force pop music down your throat at the urging of

giant record labels. If that music connects with you, awesome! Jam on! If not, keep listening.

There is a world of music out there, hidden. It's not on mainstream radio — it's nestled in the underground. Someone once said to me, "I hate Phish. Too much jam. I like my music to have words." My response: "I guess Beethoven wouldn't do it for you either?" To me, a Phish show reads more like a musical or a rock opera than a concert. Words optional.

Lyrics can be overrated in music. Instruments can speak, allowing your soul to create the feelings, words or ideas during the song. Sometimes, we need to find the appropriate expression, as guided by a piano, guitar, drums or other sound-making device. It can be more of a musical journey. Music allows us to project and process our lives.

LET IT GO

People look at me funny when I talk about the spiritual experiences I have at shows, often being brought to tears in front of tens of thousands of hippies. Generally, this is some sort of emotional self-projection guided by the artists on stage, a connection of their sounds to my soul, taking me to a place in myself that I didn't know existed or was apprehensive to explore.

A Phish concert allows me to let loose, with no worries about judgement, how

ridiculous I look dancing, how horrific I sound singing. It doesn't matter because it's accessing a part of my being that I actually like. I'm with a group of people doing the same thing, trying to enjoy life and explore our inner beings, "To feel the feeling I forgot ... FREEEEEEEE!!!!"

Music can be an escape, a spiritual experience, but it has to be the right music, determined by you. You will know it is your jam when you begin experiencing different emotions. People often say to me about my jam: "I don't get it." Once defensive and offended, now I just tell them, "Cool, you don't have to." You might never "get it." But, I just hope you have music in your life that touches you like Phish resonates in me, spiritually.

I know I connect with people who share the same jam as I. We have a similarity of character, much as I assume that Taylor Swift fans have with one another, or at least I hope they do.

Your jam should at times support you, bring you out of funks, challenge you. I am fearful to listen to certain Phish songs because it can tickle a part of my soul that may need not be presently activated. Nonetheless, finding your jam engages your spirit, awakens your soul and enhances the person you are.

Your jam, my jam — doesn't matter. Just jam, Summit County!

SKY'S THE LIMIT



SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

Who's go the Golden Ticket? This season marks the 50th anniversary for Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, and, to celebrate, the founders want anyone and everyone with a pair of skis to enjoy Jackson on the cheap through the Golden Ticket promotion. Here's how it works: From Jan. 11-31, any current season pass holder (yes, that means you in Summit) can get a single-day lift ticket for 50-percent off. It drops the price from \$125 to about \$63 for an adult. You have to buy the ticket in person (no online sales), and there's no limit on the number of discounted tickets. Aside from that, the sky's the limit. We'll see you out there.