

Poster FAQs



by Michael Erlewine

The FAQs Of Poster Collecting

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INTRODUCTION

This is not intended to be a finely produced book, but rather a readable document for those who are interested in in this series on concert poster artists and graphic design. Some of these articles still need work.

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Here are some other links to more books, articles, and videos on these topics:

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HOW DO I START COLLECTING?

Most people start by collecting posters for their favorite bands and put them on the wall, either tacked up or matted and framed. It could be that poster on the telephone pole you grabbed coming out of a concert. Or, you might just want to browse through a site like this, looking for a great poster with your favorite group on it. Once you get that special poster on the wall and see how much you enjoy it, you may want others. In my case, I found myself taking down some abstract modern art prints (copies, of course) and putting up original concert posters. And I like that better and so do my friends.

I SEE SOME POSTERS ARE WORTH REAL MONEY. HOW IS THAT?

Music posters started as pure nostalgia, memorabilia from that once-in-a-lifetime concert you took in, something to remember that time. But unlike promotional posters, which are endlessly reprinted, there are only so many original concert posters printed for an event and most of them get torn down and trashed after the show. The ones that remain fall into the hands of fans and later are passed on to collectors. Since there are a limited number of these posters, and that number never increases, their value starts to go up, in particular if it is a favorite artist like Jimi Hendrix or the Grateful Dead.

Nostalgia is only as good as those that can remember. As fans pass away, the posters are no longer pure memorabilia, but become objects that also have a certain value and are collected. In the last analysis, many of these early rock and roll posters are now considered as representative art of the 20th Century, much like the posters of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec in France are now rare, much collected, and valuable. The same thing is happening with that old Jimi Hendrix Poster. Some posters are now not only nostalgia, not only art, but are something that has monetary value and are invested in.

WHAT POSTERS SHOULD I BUY?

As mentioned above, buy poster for bands that you love or with art on them that you want to put on the wall. Buy something fun and affordable. I spent years trying to find various art prints for my home, always to be a little disappointed in what I managed to put up, and they were just reproductions of famous art. Something was missing. But as soon as I started putting up concert posters for my favorite groups, all that was history. Concert posters look great on the wall and made the statement I had been trying to make. So get something that expresses the music you love. If you are looking at posters as investment, read about that below.

ARE POSTERS A GOOD INVESTMENT?

Posters, at least the early posters for certain bands or certain venues, are very much collected and rising in value. Don't get me wrong. Not every poster that you tear from a telephone pole is going to appreciate in

value, at least anytime soon. But a careful investment in posters, just like collectors invest in stamps or coins, is now a pretty safe bet. But remember, an investment in posters is not liquid, like cash. You may have to wait to get your money out of them, should you decide to sell them. But in the meantime, not only can they appreciate in value, but they are also fun to look at and put on the wall.

For many of the posters that are currently collected, we have tried to put approximate prices on our web site. These give you a rough idea on what a mint (perfect) copy of that poster might be worth, but these prices fluctuate, yet over time have on the average increased. If you would like to read more about collecting posters as an investment, check out these two articles.

Article: "Collecting Posters as Investments"

Article: "A Tale of a Poster Investor"

WHAT ARE MY OLD POSTERS WORTH?

Everyone wants to know what the stash of old posters they have under their bed or in their closet is now worth. Posters have sold for \$50,000 and more. It all depends on finding a buyer who wants it that badly. In today's market, many posters have become a commodity that you can invest in. The first step in finding the value of your posters is to have them appraised. We have done our best to list approximate prices for many collectible posters on our web site. This may help some, but remember that a lot depends on the condition of the poster. The prices we list on

our site are for MINT (perfect) posters, and most show some wear the moment they are touched by human hands. We also can help you appraise your posters. Email us at info@ClassicPosters.com and place "APPRAISAL" as the subject heading. We will send you more information.

HOW DO I SELL MY OLD POSTERS?

Once you have appraised your posters, so you know what they are worth, you can approach any poster dealer or sell them yourself on a site like ClassicPosters.com.