



FEATURE ARTICLE FROM ALWAYS BEST CARE

Some Aging Musicians Still Rockin' Out

At an *Aging in America* conference held recently, three panelists talked about rock stars' attitudes toward aging, as gleaned from YouTube videos. Here are a few sample quotes:

Ringo Starr, 73: "As long as I can hold the sticks, it [making music] can go on forever; it's something you don't have to retire from."

Keith Richards, 70: "I'm still an apprentice. There's always stuff to learn. I wouldn't be surprised if [I] were doing this in 10 years and Mick [Jagger, age 70] will still be able to do amazing pirouettes."

Phil Lesh, 74, a founding member and bassist for Grateful Dead, who has been playing with the band Further, alongside Dead bandmate Bob Weir, 66. Lesh spoke about the joy he gets these days performing on stage with his sons. A liver transplant and prostate cancer survivor, Lesh finishes his concerts urging audience members to fill out organ donor cards.

Joni Mitchell, 70, who has struggled with vocal nodules, a compressed larynx, lingering effects of childhood polio and Morgellons syndrome: "It's hard to tell what is age decline and what is disease." She has "a lot of things I still want to accomplish and savor" but laments that her singing is "probably permanently gone," saying: "I don't have an instrument I can control. . . . I've had a very challenging life with disease after disease after disease. I shouldn't be here, but I have a tremendous will to live; a joie de vivre alternating with debility."

Jefferson Airplane's **Grace Slick**, 74, has a medical condition that prevents her from standing for more than 10 minutes at a time. "We're decaying as we get old. . . . I don't like to see old people flapping their wings around on stage. It's kind of hard on the ego and the pride. I'll look in the mirror and say, 'Oh _____!' That's the way it is. What are you going to do? You might as well be ugly and happy; a lot of young people are ugly and happy."

Adapted from "Older Rock Stars Reflect on Aging," March 17, 2014, [Next Avenue](#)

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