

Papa John Creach

Papa John Creach (born John Henry Creach; May 28, 1917 – February 22, 1994)^[1] was an American blues violinist. He played for Jefferson Airplane (1970–1975), Hot Tuna, Jefferson Starship, Jefferson Starship - The Next Generation, the San Francisco All-Stars (1979–1984), The Dinosaurs (1982–1989), and Steve Taylor. Creach recorded a number of solo albums and was a frequent guest at Grateful Dead and Charlie Daniels Band concerts. He was a regular guest at the early annual Volunteer Jams, hosted by Charlie Daniels, which exposed him to a new audience that was receptive to fiddle players

Life and career

Creach was born at Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. He began playing violin in Chicago bars when his family moved there in 1935. Later, he joined a local cabaret band called the Chocolate Music Bars, and toured the Midwest with them. Moving to Los Angeles in 1945, he played in the Chi Chi Club, worked on an ocean liner, appeared in several films, and performed as a duo with Nina Russell.

In 1967, Creach met and befriended drummer Joey Covington. When Covington joined the Jefferson Airplane in 1970, he introduced Creach to them, and they invited him to join Hot Tuna. Though regarded as a session musician, he remained with the band for four years, before leaving in 1974 to join Jefferson Starship and record on their first album, *Dragon Fly*. Creach toured with Jefferson Starship and played on the band's hit album *Red Octopus* in 1975. Around 1976, Creach left to pursue a solo career. Despite this, he was a guest musician on the spring 1978 Jefferson Starship tour.

A year later, Creach renewed his working relationship with Covington as a member of the San Francisco All-Stars, as well as with Covington's Airplane predecessor, Spencer Dryden, as a member of The Dinosaurs. He also continued occasional guest appearances with Hot Tuna, and was on stage at the Fillmore Auditorium in 1988 when Jack Casady and Jorma Kaukonen of Hot Tuna reunited with Paul Kantner and Grace Slick for the first time since Jefferson Airplane disbanded.

In 1992, he became one of the original members of Jefferson Starship - The Next Generation and performed with them until he succumbed to congestive heart failure on February 22, 1994. A heart condition had been causing bouts of pneumonia from continual fluid build-up in his lungs. He was 76