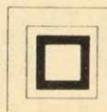




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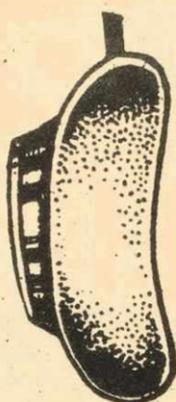
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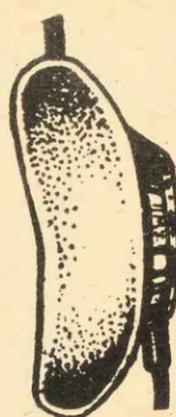
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# SOUND TRACKS



**NEW RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE - "Brujo" [Columbia].** In The increasingly cluttered-up field of country-rock, the New Riders still stand out as a special band offering some relatively unique music, fine playing, and good vibes. And while their last few albums have enjoyed a moderate degree of commercial success (Top 30), the group have not let this distort their perspectives or sour their music. Like their former mentors - the Grateful Dead - the New Riders are primarily a working band who realize their true potential in front of a live audience. Even so, they have done all right by their albums, which generally have a spirited, natural sound full of spontaneity and feeling. "Brujo," their 5th studio LP, finds them turning back to their roots and putting more emphasis on the country side of the blend.

After the more mainstream rocker Adventures of Panama Red, their studio outing of last year, such a musical shift is all the more welcome. "Panama Red" was OK as an album, showing off the group's more upfront, harder side, but except in a few cases the material was pretty ordinary and sounded too much like any other California country-rock outfit. Side 2 of "Red" also **sagged badly**, something which "Brujo" doesn't come close to doing. In this respect the latest LP approaches the group's excellent initial album of '71, though it's doubtful whether they'll ever equal that classic. For all-round brilliance-meaningful lyrics, distinctive material, and a clear unaffected sound with some of the mellowest licks of record (on a par with the Dead's earlier artistic pinnacle, "American Beauty") - it's a hard one to top. How do you follow up searing pieces like "Dirty Business" and "Garden of Eden," or **disarming ballads** like "Portland Woman" and "Louisiana Lady," brimming over with a sense of joyous innocence that is rarely felt these days?

So while "Brujo" is infused with this earlier spirit, sound-wise it seems closer to some of the lighter tunes found on "Gypsy Cowboy" such as "Whiskey" and "Sutter's Mill." It appears as if the new bassist Skip Battin, formerly of the Byrds, is largely behind the new shift towards Nashville-oriented material. His bass work fits in well with the group's loose style, and imparts a **fresh momentum** that makes even an average track like "Ashes of Love" generate more interest than it otherwise would. Battin has also, together with Kim Fowley (a true unknown legend), written 4 good

songs for the album. One of these, the deep, brooding "On The Amazon" is quite unlike anything else on the album - a good sign that the band is not afraid to take chances. All this must come as something of a surprise to those folks who found Battin's writing with the Byrds less than inspiring (the same people are apt to overlook the fact that he wrote a stunner like "Come Back Home").

But the group's **real ace** is Buddy Cage, their virtuoso pedal steel man. Cage brings a delicate sensibility to his accomplished playing that conveys a sense of warmth and peace on more laid-back tracks like "Old Man Noll" and "Singing Cowboy." "Crooked Judge," a real spirited C&W rocker written jointly by lead guitarist David Nelson and Dead lyricist Robert Hunter, finds Cage in lightning form, playing with precision at breakneck speed.

Rhythm guitarist John Dawson has always been a mainstay for the group in the writing department (he wrote **everything** on that first album) and aside from "Noll," he contributes "Instant Armadillo Blues" (country chugger with good guitar interplay) and the haunting "Parson Brown," which could have fit on the first album. This sad tale ("Parson Brown/Was discovered in the well/Dead as hell") is bathed in a soothing mellow sound generated by friend Ed Freeman on mellotron. Cage's steel slides right in here and Battin's bass work balances it all nicely. Dylan's "You Angel You" is also covered quite handily, via tasteful arrangements and fine vocals (Battin?) supercharged with compassion.

The group really shines on 2 Battin-Fowley numbers bracketing Side 2. "Big Wheels," a tribute to natural highs, is a rough 'n tumble country rocker full of contagious energy, Battin's solid bass lines and Spencer Dryden's drumming providing the right cushion for some dexterous pickin' from Nelson, Dawson, and Cage. "Neon Rose" closes the album on a real upper note, with the vocals (presumably Skip's) sounding like Dylan crossed with Lou Reed. After a lurching verse, the rising chorus line lays it on the line: "She's Neon Rose/With the frozen rose/Who's only out for fun/A Neon Rose/Who always glows/A lady with a gun." A true raver.

It's obvious that the group really got off on making this album, and that in turn makes listening to it all the more enjoyable. Deal yourself in on some escapist Mill Valley/Marin Country fun where there's always some fun. "Brujo" ("Wizard").



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## Gallery Relocates

The Anna Leonowens Gallery, part of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design campus on Coburg Road, officially closed its doors on the 16th of January, and will re-open on January 20th in an unrestored, temporary location in the former Miller Piano Building at 1889 Granville Street. The move was scheduled as part of the relocation of the entire college, and the provincial government will now occu-

py the vacated space, continuing to use it as an art gallery. The gallery, was originally opened on Dec. 6th, 1968, by Mrs. Joan Fairlie, the great-granddaughter of Anna Leonowens, one of the college founders who became famous as the governess to the children of the King of Siam in the 1860's. It is hoped to re-dedicate the gallery when restoration of the new quarters is completed in the

summer. The first part of the opening exhibition will be of a showing of paintings by students of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, in the new quarters of the gallery on January 20 to 24, followed by a showing of sculpture by Mr. Dennis Gill, Jan. 27 - 31, a graduate of the college. The second part of the Students Paintings will be shown from Feb. 3 to 7th. Gallery hours are from 12 noon to 5 p.m. daily.