

**Jefferson Airplane, Grateful Dead**

**Two established groups sprout offshoots**

By STEVE GELLER

Perhaps it all started with Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young. These four artists decided that they no longer wanted to be tied down to the contracted obligations of a formal musical entity. Instead, they wanted to develop their own material, have it recorded with competent supporting musicians, and still retain the right to perform when and with whom they wanted. As a result, Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young are not a group; rather, they are individuals who are able to musically support and respect one another's tastes and preferences.

The evolution of this kind of working arrangement was the result of a phenomenon that has indirectly changed the pop music scene over the last few years and is beginning to have direct effects upon certain members of what are generally regarded as established groups.

There is presently emerging a tendency for musicians to present their material either with their original group, singly, or with some other musicians as a separate band. Thus, one's desire to diversify his writing styles or to vary from a characteristic musical trend does not necessarily lead to tensions with other group members regarding the type of music to be recorded. Consequently, two of pop's greatest groups, The Jefferson Airplane and the Grateful Dead have sprouted "offshoot bands" which reflect some of the divergent musical directions pursued by some of their original members.

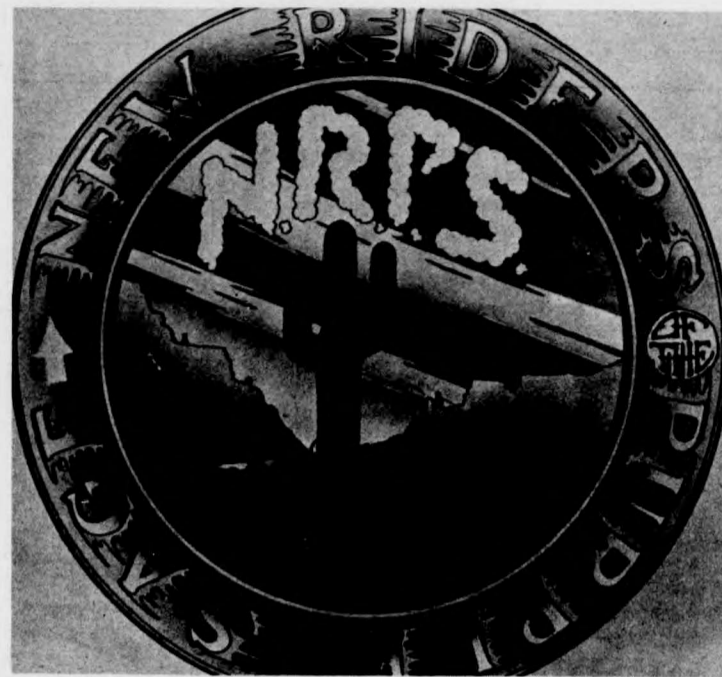
About a year ago a group which called itself Hot Tuna was formed. Its main premise was playing some down-to-earth acoustic blues. The guitar and bass work seemed to fit together unbelievably for a new group. Also, some of the guitar riffs sounded vaguely familiar. It was

soon discovered that Hot Tuna was a trio consisting of the Jefferson Airplane's lead guitarist Jorma Kaukonen, and bassist Jack Cassidy. Will Scarlett was the third member and played harmonica.

Hot Tuna emerged at a time when the Airplane were rethinking their musical personalities. Marty Balin was considering leaving the group (and eventually did), Paul Kantner and Grace Slick were working on the Starship album and Kaukonen and Cassidy thus decided to follow their blues interests while still retaining their membership with the Jefferson Airplane. Needless to say Hot Tuna's material was drastically different from that of the Airplane's tradition of acid rock. Both types of music were (and still are) of a high quality and Kaukonen and Cassidy saw no reason to end Hot Tuna's career when the Airplane re-formed.

Today Hot Tuna is a thriving five piece band with two solid albums under their heads. Drummer Sammy Piazza has been added as has Papa John Creatch who has added another side to the group with his violin work. Creatch has recently joined the New Jefferson Airplane and along with Kaukonen and Cassidy will share loyalties with two groups.

For about as long as Hot Tuna's emergence became rumored there have been whispers of a group called New Riders of the Purple Sage. This group had been in the process of being on record for quite a while before the actual release of their



first Columbia L.P. entitled, oddly enough, New Riders of the Purple Sage. John Dawson and David Nelson, personal friends of the Grateful Dead who have played on a few of the Dead's albums, comprise the base of the group's existence. Jerry Garcia plays banjo and appears to have helped out in the arrangement and production of the album. Ex-Airplane drummer Spence Dryden also seems to be quite satisfied with his transplanted position in the new group.

NRPS's material is similar to that of the Dead's. The country sound is more acoustic and has just enough western influence to make the sound distinct. This first album is nothing less than fantastic and can only indicate that there will be more heard from the New Riders in the future.

Jerry Garcia will undoubtedly remain with both groups while Dawson and Nelson will most likely continue to appear with the Grateful Dead while directing most of their time to their own band.

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