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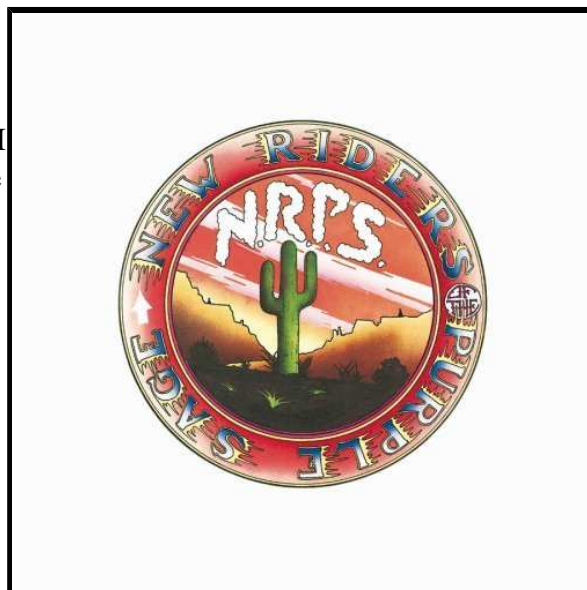
NRPS: 'Where I Come From'

Written by Sanjay Suchak

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It's a curious sight; the art on the cover is by **Stanley Mouse**. The liner notes include songs written by **David Nelson** and **Robert Hunter**. The first song clocks in at nearly eight minutes. When I opened the envelope that contained "Where I Come From" I admit I was a bit puzzled. Surely this had to be a best of compilation or a live recording? However to my surprise, it was neither, it was a new studio album from the **New Riders of the Purple Sage**.



Why was I surprised? Flash back for a moment to 2007 when they had this to say:

Grateful Web: *So I've got to ask, is there any hope of a new studio record now that you've got both a live CD and DVD under your belts?* NRPS: 'Where I Come From'

David Nelson: *Oh, now you're talking some real dough. Oh we'd love to do that, if anyone has some benevolent benefactors that would like to sponsor us.*

Michael Falzarano: *All I can say is that it won't happen this year, because we're booked out until the end of this year.*

Buddy Cage: *I do a show called Jam-On on Sirius, and let me tell you man; they don't want to hear a whole bunch of studio stuff. They want to hear mostly live stuff, so who the hell wants to make a studio album these days.*

David Nelson: *I think I'd love to make a studio record, but then sometimes when you get back into the studio you think. Ah now I remember... and forget it, forget it. It's a labor of love and a lot of work. There's a lot of pressure on you when you're in the studio. And you always end up staying there all night to fix what you did. It just goes on and on...It's crazy.*

So overcoming my obvious surprise I immediately had to listen and in my CD player it has remained ever since. It is undeniably classic **New Riders**. Wikipedia says the band peaked in 1973, but by the sound of this record they're just getting warmed up after 38 years together.



Michael Falzarano

interesting.

Opening with the title track “Where I Come From,” an unapologetically rambling biographical ballad written by **Nelson** and **Hunter** which has long distinctive guitar solos from both **Buddy Cage** and **Michael Falzarano**. This song is pure **New Riders**. At just under 8 minutes, it certainly isn't a pop standard, but at this point in their careers I don't think the **New Riders** were looking in that direction.

The following two tracks “Big Six” and “Barracuda Moon” are extraordinarily reminiscent of the early **New Riders** songwriting with **Dylan**-esque lyrics and delivery that rivals or exceeds what **Garcia** did with the first incarnation of the band.

“Higher” is arguably the most country-flavored track on the album. Written and sung by drummer **Johnny Markowski** it is one of my favorite tracks on the album. The twangy guitar solos prove that the **New Riders** can adapt to many sounds while still sounding fresh and

With “Them Old Minglewood Blues” the **New Riders** offer their take on this classic piece of musical Americana while leaving plenty of room for a slice of **Buddy Cage**'s dynamic pedal steel solos.

With other standout tracks including “Olivia Rose”, “Blues Barrel” and “Carl Perkins Wears The Crown”

there is honestly no bad track on this album.

The basis for a studio album was conceived when last year upon his return from a tour, **David Nelson** found song lyrics in an email from Robert Hunter. The collaboration between the two grew and eventually “Where I Come From” was born.

Produced by **Michael Falzarano**, who last year released his fantastic solo debut “We Are All One,” the album is meticulously crafted with each band member having their own distinctive voice and mark on the album.

Buddy Cage was quoted as saying “Everything we’ve done together over these 38 years has come to a sweet point with [this album].” I would have to agree wholeheartedly with that statement and without a doubt this album is a must have for any **New Riders** fan, or even any fan of southern rock, jam bands, or even country. This is a good down-home listen in an era where that is becoming harder and harder to find.

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