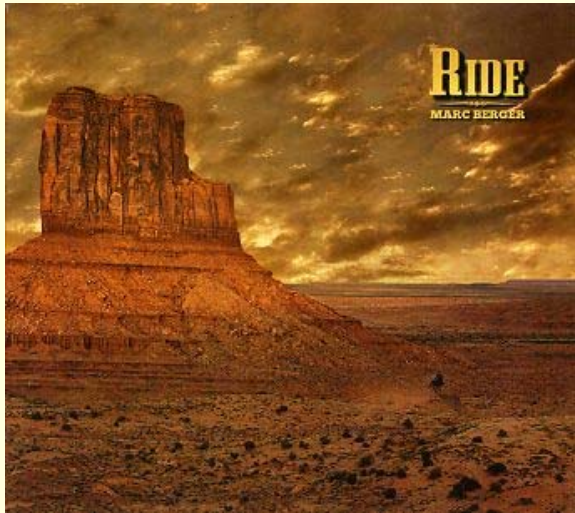


FAME Review: Marc Berger - Ride



Ride

Marc Berger

Available from [Marc Berger's Bandcamp page](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange
by **Mark S. Tucker**
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The red rock country of the Colorado Plateau is my favorite place on Earth, reminds me of home (Mars). It's the true heart of the Southwest, and I've hiked a hell of a lot of it. You name it—Zion, Bryce, Arches, Capitol Reef, San Rafael Swell, Canyonlands, Calf Creek, Goblin Valley, Natural Bridges, Moab, Kolob, a lot of places that don't even have names—and I've probably been there and tramped around. I even hit the bottom of the nearby Grand Canyon nine times. In the last decade while working in SoCal aerospace (Northrop, where the bennies used to be pretty good), I took an entire month off each year and headed to the high, wild, arid beauty where one could, if one wished, hike solo all day and never see another human being. Thus, when I caught sight of Monument Valley, petroglyphs, and one of those lone, majestic, red-rock "steamboats" in the liner for *Ride*, I thought "Hmmm...I wonder if this cat Marc Berger really caught what's what out in the back country?" As soon as *Nobody Gonna Ride on the Railroad* swam out of the speakers, I smiled and sat back. Yep, he's been there, he knows.

There's a quietude to the Four Corners territory that has to be experienced to be understood. Burr Trail, especially the back side just before it lowers down a treacherous cliffside (which I hear has been paved over since I drove through a long time ago) into Glen Canyon to end up at Lake Powell, is probably the epicenter of that, and I can picture Berger and a small klatsch of cowboys perched on the overlook and playing these songs after supper as a dusty day of hard work flickers away and stars float up in the sky. Nothing on *Ride* is brash, no need to shout and stomp: though there's a couple or three vivacious cuts, this is country folk music wrought by a working philosopher who's missed nothing, kept a lot inside for a time, and captured the land. He knows the hills and he knows the cities and is ready to slowly wind it all back out again.

Yeah, this *Ride* milieu could even be Old Laredo or The Great Plains, but it ain't, it's the breathtaking grandeur of the high desert and plateaus suspended between the pioneer days and ten minutes ago (listen carefully, you'll hear mention of Jimi in *Time Waits for No Man*). It's also the towns, shanties, and elsewhere but what pervades the disc is a very Knopfleresque composure with some Randy Newman and others laid atop a writing hand with wiry sinews and leathery skin, sun and wind, a blood pulse that beats in time with owls and snakes...and a night at the honky-tonk or maybe just a rustic bar. Thus, don't play this at home. Jump in the car and head for somewhere that isn't the city, anywhere nature still holds sway. Do it at night. Then open the doors, all of them, and let the dark satiny sky in. Sit back, relax, and grant the 11 songs license to breathe themselves into your skin, up into the clouds, let 'em wander where they will, and when everything finally goes silent after the fifty-four minutes, you too will know what Marc Berger knows. Welcome to the club.

Track List:

- Nobody Gonna Ride on the Railroad
- Take It on the Chin
- Ride
- Time Waits for No Man
- Montana
- Twister
- Heavenly Ancients
- Object of my Affection
- Long Way from Vixenburg
- A Bottle of Wine, a Suitcase
- An Umbrella

All songs written by Marc Berger.

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