Carlos Santana – Abraxas (1970)

01. Singing Winds, Crying Beasts 02. Black Magic Woman / Gypsy Queen 03. Oye Como Va 04. Incident At Neshabur 05. Se A Cabo 06. Mother's Daughter 07. Samba Pa Ti 08. Hope You're Feeling Better 09. El Nicoya Personnel: Carlos Santana – guitar, vocals, producer Gregg Rolie – keyboards, lead vocals David Brown – bass, engineer Michael Shrieve – drums José "Chepito" Areas – percussion, conga, timbales Mike Carabello – percussion, conga + Rico Reyes – percussion, vocals Alberto Gianquinto – piano on "Incident at Neshabur" Steven Saphore – table

The San Francisco Bay Area rock scene of the late '60s was one that encouraged radical experimentation and discouraged the type of mindless conformity that's often plagued corporate rock. When one considers just how different Santana, Jefferson Airplane, Moby Grape, and the Grateful Dead sounded, it becomes obvious just how much it was encouraged. In the mid-'90s, an album as eclectic as Abraxas would be considered a marketing exec's worst nightmare. But at the dawn of the 1970s, this unorthodox mix of rock, jazz, salsa, and blues proved quite successful. Whether adding rock elements to salsa king Tito Puente's "Oye Como Va," embracing instrumental jazz-rock on "Incident at Neshabur" and "Samba Pa Ti," or tackling moody blues-rock on Fleetwood Mac's "Black Magic Woman," the band keeps things unpredictable yet cohesive. Many of the Santana albums that came out in the '70s are worth acquiring, but for novices, Abraxas is an excellent place to start. --- Alex Henderson, AMG

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