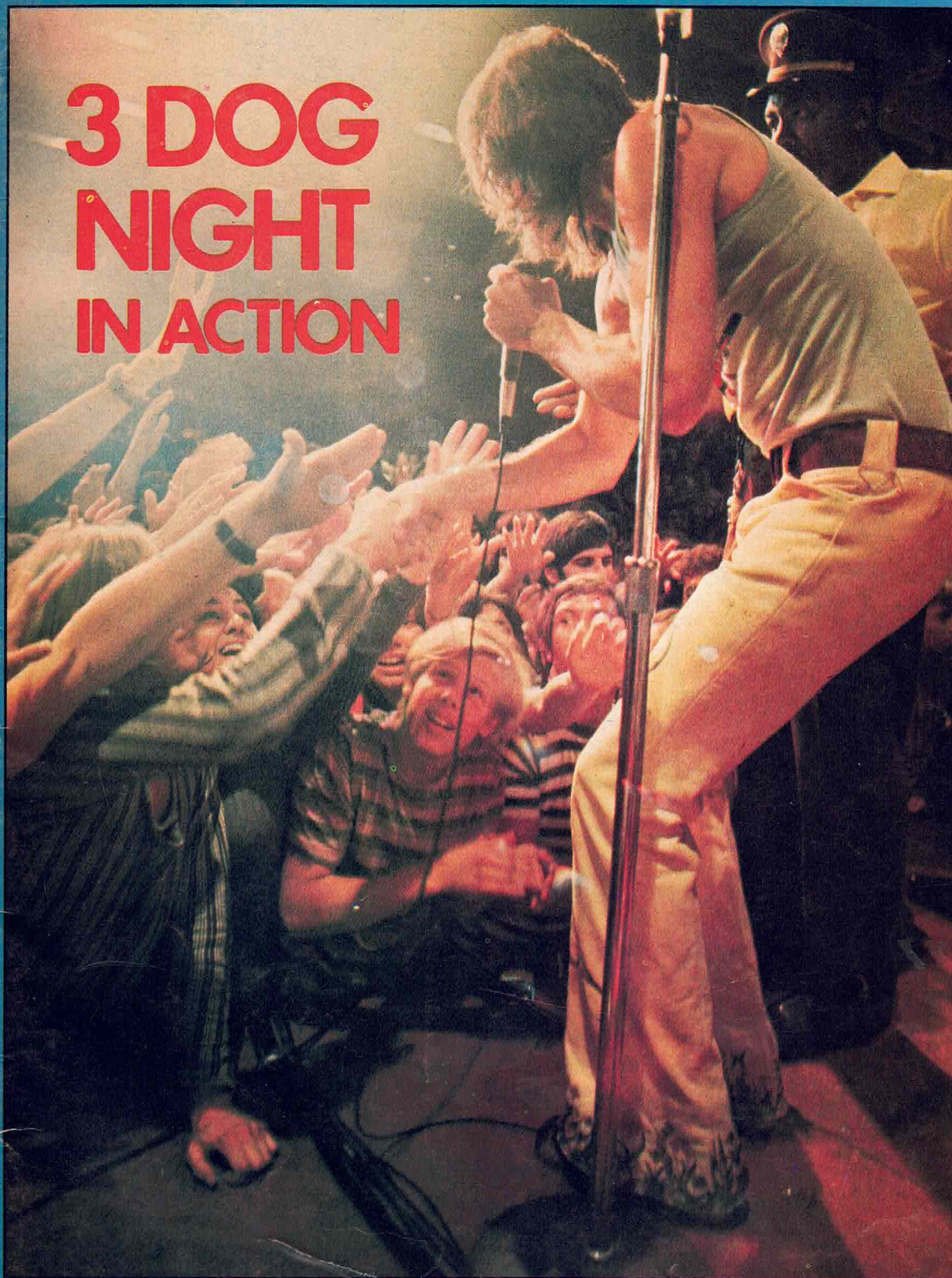


HIT PARADER

DETROIT & ROCK POLITICS
SANTANA • THE BAND

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HITS

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LIAR

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SURRENDER

SPANISH HARLEM

SLIP, TRIP AND FELL
IN LOVE

SMILING FACES
SOMETIMES

HOW CAN I UNLOVE
YOU

WOKE UP IN LOVE
THIS MORNING

I HEAR THOSE CHURCH
BELLS RINGING

WON'T GET FOOLED
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- 6/THE SCENE Being exploited
- 8/WE READ YOUR MAIL
- 9/ELTON JOHN Not retiring
- 11/LINK WRAY Guitar distortion
- 14/DETROIT and rock politics
- 18/THE BAND Still togetherness
- 20/CAT STEVENS Lost ego
- 22/NOEL REDDING Starting again, broke
- 25/SANTANA No personality trip
- 27/POCO Relieving the Tensions
- 31/THREE DOG NIGHT in action
- 37/HERMAN'S HERMITS and John Paul Jones!?
- 39/CREAM Postscript
- 43/ARRIVALS: John Baldry. . .Steel River. . .Chase. . . .
Shawn Phillips. . .Holy Moses
- 53/READERS' REVIEWS
- 54/BLOOD SWEAT & TEARS Public acceptance
- 58/COMMUNICATION By Dom Petro
- 60/ALBUMS IN REVIEW
- 64/THE SHOPPING BAG

THIS MONTH'S TOP TUNES COMPLETE SONG INDEX ON PAGE 45



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SANTANA

They don't know how they came to get their distinctive sound.



not into that Personality Trip

{Continued on next page}

SANTANA

SANTANA - Not Into That Personality Trip

Carlos Santana doesn't speak much. A few jokes or mumbled pleasantries -- nothing at all to the Press. He isn't aloof, he just prefers his music to act as his own unofficial spokesman. But he is a fine guitarist, one of the few possessed with a highly distinctive style that sets him apart from the ever multiplying plagiarists.

However, when we met up on the shores of Lake Geneva in Switzerland -- Santana were appearing in the Rose D'or there -- both Carlos and the other band members stepped out from behind their anonymity and sat and chatted.

Not one to mince words, Carlos cocked his head to one side and said: "I guess it would be true to say that all our music relates to the sexual thing. Like, eh....making music is just like making love. It's all down to true emotions.

There's no denying that basically Santana's Latinesque music has a deep primitive undercurrent of raw sexuality, yet it is presented with subtle gesture, not the bump and grind routine of the overly camp Rolling Stones, not the exhibitionism of the Doors' Jim Morrison.

"Santana set a trend without realizing it," said Coke the Mexican timbale player who has become the semi-permanent dep. for the ailing Chepito Areas. "Until Santana came along people's ears weren't open to what he was putting down. He's blazed a whole new trail in Latin music....I mean you only have to look around and see all the rock bands who are now using congas and timbales in their line ups. Santana made these instruments popular again."

Making it a point to avoid being trapped in the personality cult Santana have become much respected international pacesetters purely on the strength of their music...full stop. On stage they have no preconceived visual image, which pleases each and every one of them -- they wouldn't want it to be any other way. Santana must be one of those rare phenomena

who have achieved so much more than they anticipated, yet are still motivated by the prime factor that originally brought them together: the sheer joy and personal satisfaction of making good music. But not for one minute will they allow themselves to be cajoled into playing against their will. They enjoyed the gig in Switzerland, in Montreux actually, so much that a last minute decision was made to hold an extra concert. Little time was left to advertise it but word of mouth drew a large crowd. And then various members of Santana were seen jamming in the small clubs in the area with local musicians.

As Carlos put it: "I tell you this, I'm a whore...If I like you then I'll play with you.

"Gregg Rolie, organist-vocalist elaborated: "We get on so well together. There's a lot of brotherly love in this band. Again it's all down to emotion and feeling. You gotta enjoy it--if you don't enjoy what you're doing, you ain't doing much--right?"

Gregg, along with bass player David Brown, was a founder member of Santana. He talked about their origins: "When we started the band up we were playing real hard blues and rock music. The congas had always been there in the band, however, it was to be some time before we evolved this style.

"Funnily enough I don't know how we came to get such a distinctive sound, because like I said, it just kind of happened.

"One of the first tunes we ever rehearsed that featured the congas was 'Chim Chim Cheree' from 'Mary Poppins' which was played in 6/8. We used them some more -- along came 'Jingo' -- suddenly it became more Latin in its concept."

In the foreseeable future Santana intend to pursue this direction even further. I asked Carlos how personally involved he was in Latin Music?

"Oh, man, I'm really into it, but I tell you I haven't played with a Latin band."

Carlos talked about the doyens of Latin music Tito Puente and Ray Barretto. "I once saw Tito Puente go up

to this band of Soul Brothers who were really into this afro thing. Now can you imagine this...he went up and tapped one of the drummers on the shoulder and said, 'Listen man, you're out of time. Can you dig it? Actually saying something as heavy as that to a Soul Brother.

"It could well be that later this year we'll do a concert with Tito and his band. Now that would be something I would really dig doing."

Though Santana have been in existence for just under four years, Carlos has been involved in music much longer. Born to a poor Mexican family 23 years ago, he first started studying the violin at age four under the guidance of his father who played in a mariachi band.

He recalled: "When I was just into my teens, I played bass guitar in some local Tijuana night clubs and, to help the family, I also played in a Tick Tock, a kind of hamburger joint."

His fourteenth birthday found him in San Francisco the year was 1962 and Carlos was just playing with some friends before he teamed up with Gregg and David to form the genesis of what has become one of the most successful and most respected bands of this generation.

Conga drummer, Mike Carabello was also a charter member, who split, only to return to the fold. Like all members of the band he just happened along.

He said: "I was just hanging around the beach doing nothing before I joined the band. I dig it. . . .because we're not into that whole personality trip. The kids dig us just for our music and that's fine by me.

Santana are a cooking band -- even their wildest moments are performed with taste and precision, yet they are loose enough to avoid becoming mechanical, tending to underplay rather than overstate their individual roles.

Gregg Rolie summer up: "It's not so much what you play, it's what you don't play.

"It's the spaces that count."

□ ROY CARR