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# NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

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HELLO  
HELLO

## WE'RE BACK AGAIN

**EMERGENCY 3-DAY  
CANDLELIGHT CRISIS  
SHOCK SCANDAL ISSUE**

**Jethro/Mott/Lennon  
Sayer/Santana/ELP**

# BYRON FERRARI: PRINCE OF SLEAZE

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**Phd PENNIE SMITH**



# From drugs to divinity

Or  
'I didn't expect  
The Spanish  
Inquisition'  
Believer  
CARLOS  
SANTANA  
under fire from  
non-believer  
ROY CARR

"HEY MAN", drawled Dava Dip Santana, "I remember you. The last time we met, I was completely stoned outta my head".

Indeed he was, and he's still very high, but this time it's not on drugs, but on good ole reliable God. In Santana's own words: "I have surrendered myself completely to the Supreme".

Carlos Dava Dip Santana is the latest in a long line of rock musicians to have dramatically switched from drug dependency to divinity — yet his train of thought is still as hazy as when he was all strung out on artificial stimulants.

Both the man and his music may have improved beyond all physical recognition, but at times one is given the impression that he has been totally conditioned to one cerebral computer print-out.

I'm not attempting to put the man down by his beliefs. He is, at all times, an amiable and well-meaning person. It's just that there are numerous instances when one becomes somewhat disturbed by his programmed replies.

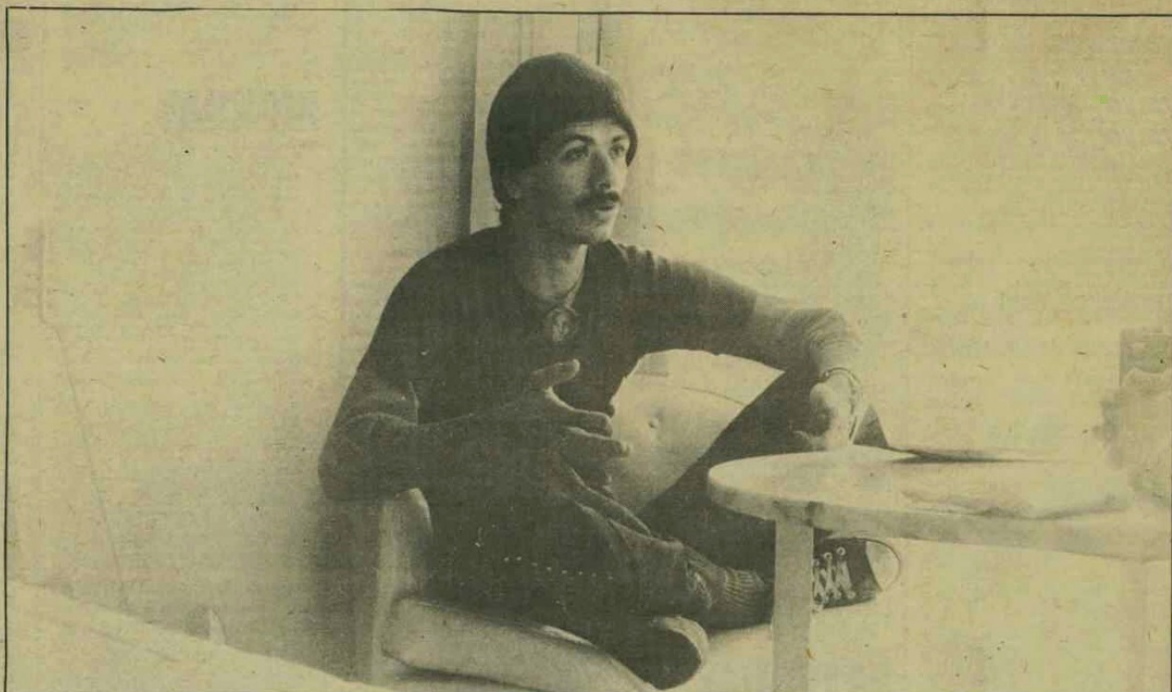
Sitting cross-legged in his chair looking out over the mid-afternoon London traffic, Dava Dip spoke while the mild aroma of incense from a small portable shrine graced with images of Christ and Sri Chinmoy filled his hotel room...

When did you first decide to "surrender" yourself?

Well, man, there were many things involved, but the main one was spirituality... seeking the Supreme, for the Supreme had revealed itself to me in many ways to invite me to get right away from the life that I was leading. The first person I remember was Peter Green. I went to Peter's house and he gave me this book about Jesus which I was already into at the time. But just into Jesus, not totally devoted to his teachings. You know, just aware of him. You become aware of Jesus like you become aware of the Sun... you take it for granted. Now when I heard that Peter Green had given everything away just to serve the Supreme it impressed me. After that, the highest inspiration I received was when I heard John Coltrane play, then Larry Coryell and Mahavishnu.

Did you originally come when a deeply religious background, and if so, did this have any direct influence upon your formative years?

I always knew that there was God, but I just took it for granted until I became aware through Martin Luther King of what God meant to me. I realised that God is not Santa Claus, it's not a thing manu-



SANTANA: We'll Dip, Dip, Dip

factured by the system to make money. I never took the time out to get down on my knees... see, when you pray and you meditate what you do is to bring yourself and all your ignorance — which embraces a lot of evils like vanity, insecurity, fear — and pull it into yourself and illuminate yourself. God is light and when people realise that God is light and the mind is darkness, then men become aware that it is ignorant to try and fight religion. God is light man, and look at all those windows. This one is Jesus, that one is Buddha, that one over there is Krishna... the light is more important than the actual window itself. So you can't say that one window is better than another.

Your decision, as you put it, to surrender... was this motivated by a feeling of disillusionment with your life-style?

I became disillusioned because I was losing my friends. You see, they thought that I was actually something that I wasn't, just because I'd earned a lot of gold albums and received a lot of public attention. That was just one aspect. Also I was watching the band decay on the wrong energy flow. I myself would be seeking God and the next moment I was in bed ballin' this chick and that chick and feeling that I wasn't being what I really wanted to be. I realised that every temptation that came to me I was grabbing and experiencing it and it wasn't doing me no good, man. I just wanted more. So I realised that human pleasure is endless and would only lead to the destruction of a man. What I really was seeking was illumination not satisfaction.

Did you reach the point where you became disgusted and despaired such things?

No, I despised my weakness, but not myself. I knew that I had some very high qualities within myself. I was disappointed in my weakness, but I felt that if I found my spiritual teacher I could overcome these things.

How did you become associated with your guru, Sri Chinmoy?

Well, at the time my hair was

still very long and my vanity still got in the way of my logic and I thought that if I saw another spiritual teacher I might not have to cut my hair. I soon realised this was foolish. It was my mind thinking. After I met Sri Chinmoy I had no doubt that I needed him more than any other thing because in his eyes I see my spiritual father. I see the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. I see Christ. Everything I need to live. Regardless of all the talent that God gives you, your life is useless unless you have a divine direction. You need someone to take care of you.

Does it concern you that many musicians who have embraced such spiritual guidance have, for the most part, lost their sense of purpose, their creative energy to a point where they become a self-parody?

Well, The Beatles didn't lose direction because of their connection with Eastern religion, they lost their direction because they didn't keep up with it.

What about George Harrison?

To become spiritual is not just to wear a spiritual badge, you've got to live it. I mean, what good is the Bible to a person who has it in his house but doesn't live it every day? I believe that if the Beatles had actually surrendered and devoted themselves to God they'd still be together.

But what about falling foul of a bogus guru? Don't they do more harm than good?

Even if a spiritual master is phoney it doesn't always matter.

Do you really believe that?

Yes and I'll tell you why man. Take a savage Indian from, say, the Amazon jungle. He ain't never heard of Jesus Christ or Buddha or no guru, but he sees God in a rock. God is in that rock 'cause God is everywhere and will listen to his prayers. If you see God in, say, The Beatles' guru and you have faith in him, then God is there, man.

O.K., but the facts are that many of the gurus who have set themselves up in business in the West and yet are regarded back home in India as nothing more than spiritual quacks. They

never have Indians among their disciples — only rich or very disillusioned Westerners. Aren't you worried that, in your quest for a spiritual teacher, you could be vulnerable to such people?

No, it hasn't worried me because I see God in Sri Chinmoy and the light to fulfil my purpose. Now if he is an imposter, God himself sees for himself just how much I am devoted to this guru and he will not harm me, man, because I see him through that person. The Beatles were a perfect example of people looking to a guru as a kind of hospital — a rehabilitation centre for dope addicts and weirdos. It's not. When you look through a guru it's like you're facing the highest reality to surrender your ignorance to the light within that person.

But aren't most self-styled gurus only followed by brain-washed ex-dopers and paranoics?

For many people what they're doing is their own Karma. The only thing that really matters is how much faith you have in that person. Even if he proves to be a phoney, you're bound to receive the highest spiritual wealth.

So exactly what has your guru given you?

Spiritual enlightenment, which is a divine purpose. A feeling of I-don't-care. And really, man, I don't care about making 500,000 people dance. The music is secondary. I care about maybe inspiring one person in that 500,000 to seek a path and I don't ever care if he finds it through a phoney guru.

What do you give your guru in return?

Only my devotion. I don't give him any money. It's up to the individual's capacity to give, which is to meditate at certain times and control myself not to yield to temptation. I subscribe as much as I can through my mind.

So you don't give him any money?

He never asks, but he has a little box and it's up to your own conscience if you want to give.

You must be aware of the commercially-orientated gurus

and how they've duped musicians. With this in mind, what was your initial reaction when you first confronted Sri Chinmoy?

I never doubted him for one moment. Within my soul I even feel this for certain other gurus, even though in my mind I may think they are kinda phoney. You know what I mean... being driven around in a Rolls Royce and wearing very expensive wrist watches. But it's not for me to judge if that's how they wanna conduct themselves. God has given me lotsa things, but the Supreme doesn't want me to become attached to 'em. Like saying this is my guitar and you can't touch it.

I don't think it's altogether harmful in that there are these gurus who may take advantage of a person's spiritual hunger. Everybody has a different spiritual path. Some people don't need a master, but I know I need mine. You see, man, when I look into his eyes I see something much greater than I've ever seen. I don't see his face, I don't see hypnosis... nothin' like that. I see the Sun and it doesn't hurt me when I see it, 'cause it's feeding every little cell in me.

So in what way has spiritual guidance altered other aspects of your life?

Things are bound to get better when you aren't surrounded by people loaded outta their minds. The same thing happened to Jimi Hendrix. People say he was shy. Jimi wasn't shy, he was paranoid out of his mind — and I know 'cause I was there with him myself and was also outta my mind.

Drugs make you paranoid, because they amplify insecurity and fear. If you're straight then you're really high. The highest high I aspire to is when you touches me and I don't feel or see nobody. Humanity is the physical body of God. The second best thing I feel is when I'm on stage playing my guitar and if I feel the Supreme's presence I don't try and impress, say, Eric Clapton 'cause he might be listening. But if I yield to temptation and try to impress someone I hit wrong notes like crazy because then it's my mind that's playing. If I have this selfishness, I feel like a

hose sprinkling water on everyone or a candle giving light. What would have happened to you if you hadn't surrendered yourself to the Supreme?

I'd have probably got lost in cars and chicks and dope or eventually found him in some other way. A physical body is a mirror to reflect what you put into yourself. If you drink or take drugs or have bad thoughts you only reflect sadness through your soul. Like I said, if you wear spiritual clothes and a badge and have spiritual friends it doesn't mean you're on the right path. I mean George Harrison is like any other person — a genius. If his mirror gets blurred by his own vanity, fear, ignorance and insecurity, it will show in his music.

So how do you avoid such temptations?

Only man can destroy himself. See, I find lately that my temptation is like after a show. I might see a beautiful chick and she'll wanna go to bed with me. I get a flash and I start seeing guru and the pretty chick and the guru again and I don't wanna take something holy and dirty it up. I don't wanna go to bed with my guru. I don't see this most beautiful chick as an instrument to fulfil my animal body. I see in her my mother... my sister... something holy. I wanna give her something far more greater than human love. Human love binds you up and finally destroys you. If I have three or four beautiful chicks in one bed, that's it. Just try and play guitar after that. I'd rather make divine love on stage to 500,000 people.

When you listen to your old records, what do you hear?

Two things, man. I hear a battle between egotism and selflessness. Good qualities and bad qualities. A lotta things I can't stand 'cause there was a lotta cocaine around and ignorance. But there's still some good virtues in that music. Someone hearing my music may ask what kinda chick does he ball or grass, does he smoke to get those notes. If he likes the way I'm playing he'll find out that I'm not into those things any more. I'm into the Supreme. Anyway, man, I gotta get ready now for the show, 'cause I always wear white.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT ELLIS