

**CIRCUS**

Special - 1975 DATE-TRIPPER - 12 Page

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NO. 103

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# RAVES

## grand funk

OPENS HUNTING SEASON WITH  
'ALL THE GIRLS BEWARE'

## johnny winter

WILL THE REAL 'JOHN DAWSON  
WINTER' STAND UP?

## electric light orchestra

ZAPS ON THE WATTAGE  
AT 'ELDORADO'

INTERVIEW

## santana

"I TRY TO RAISE  
CONSCIOUSNESS  
WITH MY MUSIC..."

## david bowie

"WHO WILL I BE NOW?"

## elp

THE NIGHT THE SHOW  
ALMOST ENDED

## plus

LITTLE FEAT

TANGERINE DREAM

MORE ROCK & ROLL QUIZ

SPECIAL  
REPORT —  
THE BASS  
ROCK'S #1  
INSTRUMENT —  
RIFFS WITH  
GREG LAKE  
JACK BRUCE  
BTO  
GEEZER BUTLER

## jim dandy

"THE GALS IN  
EUROPE ARE  
CLIMBING  
THE WALLS"

## stones

BEHIND THE  
GRAFFITI  
MYSTERY

## todd

FLETCHER  
PROBES  
'UTOPIA'

MARK FARNER



# CIRCUS RAVES

VOL. 2, NO. 2

NO. 103 FEBRUARY, 1973

## COVER STORY



- GRAND FUNK** ..... 4  
Let it all hang out on  
"Girls Beware" . . . by  
Steve Gaines.
- DAVID BOWIE** ..... 14  
Loses himself again . . .  
by Ron Ross.
- SANTANA** ..... 26  
Guruizes and sermonizes  
with the Q.A. ace, Scott  
Cohen.
- 1975 DATE-TRIPPER** ..... 33  
Color pullout calendar.

- the BASS** ..... 48  
Rock's numero uno axe and  
how it works . . . by  
Gordon Fletcher.
- ELP** ..... 61  
How they made it through  
the night . . . by Joe  
Bivona.
- JOHNNY WINTER** ..... 64  
Finds himself with "John  
Dawson Winter III" . . .  
by Dan Neeger.
- JIM DANDY MANGRUM** ..... 68  
Photo-riding on BOA's  
singing stud.
- ELECTRIC LIGHT  
ORCHESTRA** ..... 70  
Gets a bright idea at  
'Eldorado' . . . by Ellen  
Mandell.



## DEPARTMENTS

- TOP 20** ..... 11  
If you want your group to  
score, vote now.
- LETTERS** ..... 19  
Separate but equal time  
for your thoughts.
- FRONT PAGES** ..... 20  
Simultaneous simulcasts  
bounced off our satellites.
- UPSTARTS** ..... 32  
Little Feat patter, Snafu,  
and Tangerine Dream.
- ROCK & ROLL QUIZ** ..... 46  
Can you answer more  
questions this month than  
last?
- LONGPLAYERS** ..... 54  
Fletch Gordon lands on  
Utopia and throws kisses  
at the Stones.
- SHORTCUTS** ..... 56  
Tiven tiptoes with Lennon  
& Kevin Ayers; tramps on  
Bowie.
- MOVIES** ..... 58  
Madden takes you to the  
great directors: Bresson,  
Ophuls.
- BOOKS** ..... 58
- CONCERT GUIDE** ..... 59  
Genesis is coming, so is  
Tracy Nelson and J. D.  
Winter.

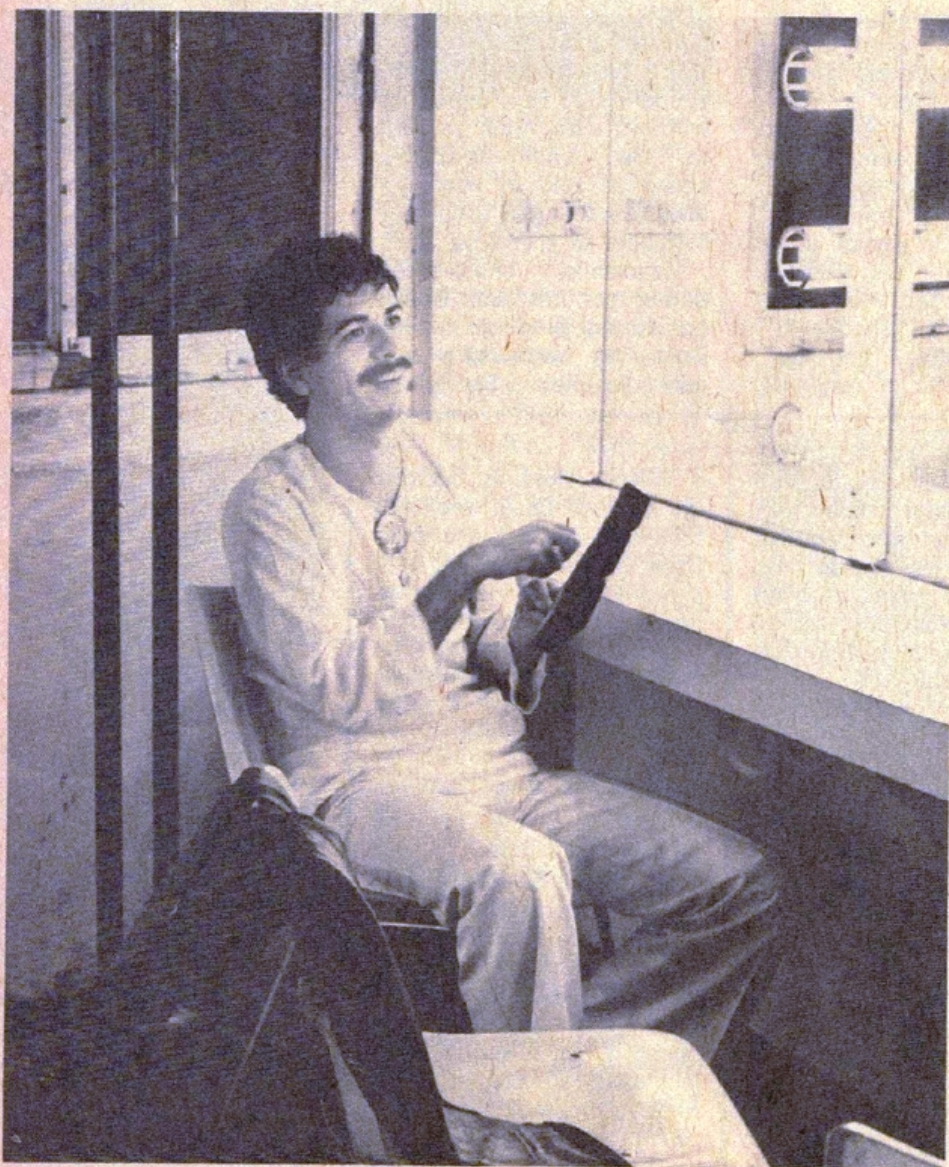
Photo Credits: P. 4, 5 Mark Farner by NEAL PRESTON; P. 6, 7 Grand Funk by LYNN GOLDSMITH; P. 8 Grand Funk by LYNN GOLDSMITH; P. 9 Grand Funk by LYNN GOLDSMITH; P. 14, 15 Bowie by CHRIS MAKOS; P. 16 Bowie (2) by BILL GREEN; P. 17 Bowie (top) by SAL DIBENEDETTO, Bowie (bottom) by BILL GREEN; P. 20 Queen by MICK ROCK; P. 21 Stones by BARRY SCHULTZ; Slade by M. PUTLAND/LFI; P. 22 Jackson Browne by M. JULIUS BAUM; Sgt. Pepper by FINN COSTELLO; P. 24 Maria Muldaur by ANDY KENT; Keith Moon by ROBERT ELLIS; P. 25 Alice by ARTHUR POLLOCK; Ringo by GALAXY PHOTOS; P. 26 Eagles by RICH KWASNIEWSKI; P. 28 Santana by RICH KWASNIEWSKI; P. 29 Santana (group) by RICH KWASNIEWSKI; P. 30 Santana (group) by RICH KWASNIEWSKI; P. 31 Paul McCartney (top) by LFI; Paul McCartney (bottom) by ROBERT ELLIS; P. 50 John Entwistle by BOB GRUEN; P. 51 Jack Bruce by BOB GRUEN; P. 52 Emerson by NEAL ZLOZOWER; P. 54 Stones by JEFFREY MAYER/RAINBOW; P. 56 Wizard by BARRY SCHULTZ; P. 57 Emerson by NEAL ZLOZOWER; P. 62 Carl Palmer, Greg Lake (2) by LYNN GOLDSMITH; P. 63 John Entwistle by NEAL ZLOZOWER; P. 64 Johnny Winter by LYNN GOLDSMITH; P. 65 John Entwistle by NEAL ZLOZOWER; P. 66 Johnny Winter by BOB GRUEN; Mrs. Edwina Winter by LFI; P. 67 Johnny & Edgar Winter by LFI; P. 68 Jim Dandy (3 B/W) by BILL GREEN/SPECTER; P. 69 Jack (bottom) by ANDY KENT; P. 70, 71 ELO by CHRIS WALTER; P. 72 ELO by HELEN MANDALL; P. 73 ELO (2) GRAY/ZLOZOWER.



# Santana

## SERMONIZES ON GUITARS, GURUS AND GOOD MAGIC IN THE CIRCUS RAVES INTERVIEW

by Scott Cohen



Santana were the last band to play the Fillmore West. They were the first band to fuse the complex textures of Latin percussion, with its "salsa" rhythm and talking conga sound, to the electric slipstream of wired rock. Santana started in the streets, joined together by a Mexican kid whose Christian name was Carlos, and rose straight to the top where they remained by virtue of such hits as "Evil Ways," "Black Magic Woman," "Soul Sacrifice," and more. In the rainbow-painted world of San Francisco circa 1968, Carlos with his huge billowing afro, was a rallying figure for all the punk Chicanos and Latin brothers. He was a rebel with a rock 'n roll cause. And he was also accessible to white consciousness, since he explored the outer regions of acid sound and experience along with his fellow bands, the Jefferson Airplane, the Grateful Dead and others who danced through the brilliant halls of the Fillmore.

Then, as the dream of the Flowers began to fade, Carlos met the crisis of consciousness in 1972, in a fortunate rendezvous with Mahavishnu John McLaughlin. The two guitarists began to play together, recorded an album, *Love Devotion Surrender* and studied with the same guru, Sri Chinmoy. Carlos cut off his afro and added Devadip to his name.

If it appeared as if Carlos was abandoning his name-sake band, it was only an outward impression. Carlos may have moved beyond the Haight-Ashbury lifestyle but his band was still his center of expression. In 1973 Santana became



the first major American rock band to tour the Latin and South Americas. They transformed the visions of millions of listeners as they played the gigantic soccer arenas of the Andes, the Honduras and the Amazon. Devadip, however, continued his spiritual-musical development, uniting with Turiya Alice Coltrane, the widow of his jazz sax mentor, John Coltrane, to record *Illuminations*. Most of his band, meanwhile, contributed to Santana percussionist Jose "Chepito" Areas' further exploration of Latin magic rhythms on his own LP.

At the heart of it all was the band Santana. On the liner notes of the group's newest release, Carlos puts aside religious Devadip and returns to the Latin rhythmic frame of his most popular LPs. *Borboletta* (on Columbia Records), is an attempt to integrate the Chicano fire of *Abraxas* and other earlier albums with his newer spiritual expressions.

The album opens with sound effects of the morning, birds, breeze in the palms, etc. and leads directly into an MJQ-type electric vibe. On "Canto de los Flores," Carlos plays percussion and the asonic modulation sends you straight into the up-beat "Life Is Anew" where echoplex and keyboards backtalk to the percussion in a Stevie Wonder of Latin America dialogue.

"Give and Take" liquidizes a rich Moog background that serves as bottom for Jules Broussard's sax wails. Timbales cut through the fluid wall of sound which is intermittently stabbed by Carlos' guitar. The tune grows into what may well be the most interesting soldering of Latin, spiritual, Coltrane jazz and funky soul yet committed to vinyl. The other cuts on the disc continue the fluid Coltrane (both John and Alice) inspired top, flayed by quick drum texturing by percussionists Airtio Moreira, Ndugu and Armando Peraza. "Practice What You Preach," though, opens with a forthright blues riff and, with its organ back and simple choral lyrics, it's like being back in church again singing the gospel. Santana is coming home, getting down closer to the basic, the mainstream of his inspiration with a religious lantern to light the way.

The *Raves* Interview with Devadip took place at the Gramercy Park Hotel in New York on a beautiful Indian Summer day. He was dressed all in white and softly and patiently answered our worldly questions.

**Circus:** Is it all right to call you Carlos?

**Santana:** Yeah.

**Circus:** What name do you introduce

yourself with?

**Santana:** As Divadip.

**Circus:** What does your name mean?

**Santana:** "The light, the eye and the lamp of the Supreme."

**Circus:** Most disciples have to wait much longer than you did to receive their name.

**Santana:** It's a secret that only my spiritual master and the Supreme know. It's not based on anything that I can tell.

**Circus:** What does Santana mean?

**Santana:** "Desert Wind"; Jones and Smith, to others.

**Circus:** Who were you in previous incarnations?

**Santana:** I really don't have any idea. Sometimes I feel that I was a cat, or a Japanese. Definitely a cat in my last animal incarnation.

**Circus:** When and where did you first meet your spiritual master?

**Santana:** I met Sri Chinmoy through Mahavishnu, first through Larry Coryell, but I never came in contact with him in the "physical" until Mahavishnu (John McLaughlin) introduced me to him at the United Nations Center Church in 1972.

**Circus:** Were you convinced immediately?

**Santana:** I was very, very excited, excited beyond meeting any priest or anything. I remember I was there and feeling very restless so I went around the corner to get some flowers to give him, to bring him something because I didn't want to go in empty handed. When I came back the Guru was there. He was looking down and when he looked up, just the smile on his face convinced me. No other human being could have a smile like that.

**Circus:** How often do you see him?

**Santana:** I am very lucky. Sometimes I see him seven or eight times a year, in Puerto Rico, San Francisco, sometimes in New York.

**Circus:** Why Sri Chinmoy and not someone else?

**Santana:** Because I knew my "father" would take a deeper concern in "taking me home." My uncle could take me home, but it wouldn't be the same. He would take his own sons first. Sri Chinmoy is my father, and he will take me home to god the fastest.

**Circus:** Did you reach a point where you had to choose between Sri Chinmoy and music?

**Santana:** Before I met Guru I was going through my values, and what I'm into now is the ultimate for anyone, whether they accept it or not. Everyone needs water whether they accept it or not and sooner or later they'll take a drink. I felt music and what it was doing to me, taking me away from what

I really needed. I felt fame and certain other things music was providing, was taking me further from what I really needed. I told this to Guru and Guru said this: "The Supreme has given you a mango, and this mango is called music. Now, people can be monks, but in your case, god has given you something and if you hide in a cave somewhere, this is greedy, you'll be eating it all by yourself. You have to share it." So that took care of that.

**Circus:** Why doesn't the average guy on the street have any spiritual consciousness?

**Santana:** Actually they do. I see them as seeds inside a sack that hasn't been thrown into the ground yet. They won't be thrown into the ground until musicians make them aware, poets make them aware. Painters like Michaelangelo, these people make you aware of the soil around you and what you're supposed to do. On the whole, your art is god's art. It's timeless. It is god moving through you.

**Circus:** What do you feel is your purpose on this planet?

**Santana:** First, at the foot of the tree, my reality is to serve my master, in whatever way I can. As a whole, I guess my purpose is to reveal, to manifest, to serve god.

**Circus:** In what way do you serve your Guru?

**Santana:** By making the attempt of bringing the best out of myself and out of the audience. To raise people's consciousness rather than act crazy.

**Circus:** What's the most amazing thing you've seen your guru do?

**Santana:** Bless me. When he blesses me, he touches me and my whole system acts as a fuse, god coming down through him and charging me with light. Whatever you need, he's charging you with it.

**Circus:** How much longer do you think you'll be bound to this planet?

**Santana:** Until I catch the Supreme. It's like playing hide-and-seek with god. It's god's favorite game. Each time you get close to touching him, he's someplace else. But if you look back, you're someplace else too. Whenever I know everything there is to know, then maybe I'll stop karma. Some people come close to god but they still choose to come back, because they want to inspire their brothers and sisters.

**Circus:** You don't know if you'll get out of the karmic cycle this time around?

**Santana:** I'm not responsible for my karma, my master is. For example, Mahavishnu got into a bad accident, fell really bad and hurt his back, and Guru said that it had nothing to do with his karma, it had to do with the hostile forces that are around. Darkness wants



## MUSIC

to rule. A true sincere spiritual master takes care of all your past deeds. He's responsible for them.

**Circus:** Do you ever reach a point when you don't need your guru?

**Santana:** My gratitude towards Sri Chinmoy is that he'll always be number one with me, because in him I see the Supreme. What our spiritual master does is help you find your inner treasure. Once you open it, it's yours.

**Circus:** Men from all parts of the world, from the most primitive to the most sophisticated, are looking towards the stars, as if we had a built-in homing device in each of us and no one of us is really comfortable here. As if we're not really from here.

**Santana:** Guru says that there are other beings on other planets. To a certain extent they enjoy a little more perfection than we do, but Guru says that even they themselves cry, and go through everything that we go through, but earth is the only place where you can be totally at one with god.

**Circus:** Have you ever heard music you're positive is from out of this world?

**Santana:** I relate to it as inner world and outer world. When a child sings, he sings very soulful, very sincere. This is the inner world and it surpasses Caruso or anyone who got chops, who exercises to sing very well. This child never had any training, but he sings soulfully. This is what we call the beyond.

**Circus:** You actually went from being a Latin sex symbol to what you are today.

**Santana:** First of all, I never considered myself anything like that. I know from my own experiences and from the way I feel about other musicians whom I admire very, very much, like Miles Davis, Aretha, Ray Charles, John Coltrane, that evaluations make you transform. Evaluating myself made me look for the Supreme. In the old band, for instance, it was very educational when we first started. In one hotel room we'd have seven guys in the band, some listening to Miles, another cat to John Coltrane, another cat to the Stones, Sly, the Beatles. After awhile it came to me to ask who's got the music that's timeless? Who's gonna remain? It's John Coltrane and Miles.

**Circus:** Where did you grow up?

**Santana:** I grew up in Tijuana most of my life and then moved to the Mission in San Francisco.

**Circus:** Were you influenced by Tito Puente?

**Santana:** Not at all. I only like one song by him. My main influences when I first started would be B. B. King, Bobby Bland. I didn't become aware of the Latin music until '67, '68. I was always looking for people who listened

to Jimmy Reed, that was my crowd, and it was very hard to find them, but they were around.

**Circus:** Were you into the political scene then at all?

**Santana:** I was political in the sense back when I was into drugs and would see so many blacks and Latins being butlers and not taking other positions, but soon I realized that it was beyond me. I don't relate to myself as being Mexican, which I am. I relate to myself as a musician above all. Most political people are into the love of power, where we are into love, two different things. The people who rule are very temporary, and after awhile you know them as schmucks, because they never did anything to change the world. They didn't bring perfection to the world, they only brought their name. But a spiritual man will bring more perfection, less violence and more harmony.

**Circus:** Why did you cut your hair?

**Santana:** I cut my hair as the first step towards surrender. This is a word that scares a lot of people in the outer world. For me to surrender is for me to pay a fee. Now I feel much better with my hair short, because I spend less time with my outer self and more with my inner. It's the fee, the price, for the ultimate treasure, my real self.

**Circus:** Why did you have to surrender your hair?

**Santana:** It's different for each person. A true parent will treat each child differently because each one is an individual. Most of Sri Chinmoy's disciples have to cut their hair. We have to wear white, eat certain foods and cut out things that stimulate your outer life. When I cut my hair that was the last thing for me to really surrender, because before I met Guru I had cut out eating meat, quit smoking, so my hair was the only thing.

I was thinking that there was Sri Chinmoy and he's the one, but maybe if I go see Swami Sachadananda, maybe he won't make me cut my hair. I was going back and forth and I had a book, a Sri Chinmoy book, and something inside told me to open it and I opened it up and it said "surrender." It was as beautiful as that. And I did see Sachadananda this year and he's a very, very spiritual master, but I felt he's my uncle. Sri Chinmoy is my true father.

**Circus:** When you were in San Francisco the big bands then were the Grateful Dead and the Jefferson Airplane. . .

**Santana:** And Paul Butterfield. When he came to San Francisco there were bands, but they weren't bringing in crowds. Paul Butterfield's made the Fillmore what it was.

**Circus:** How did you fit into the scene?

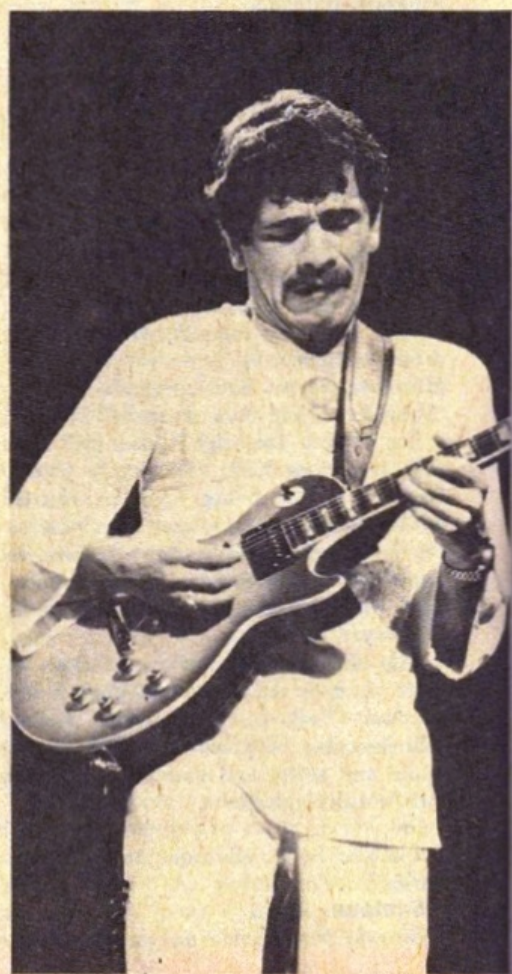
**Santana:** I used to hang around there, smoking dope and stuff. I was a hippie and I was looking for a freedom from the program of society, which is a good step, but a bad step if you have to turn to drugs.

**Circus:** Bill Graham liked you so much he had you close the Fillmore. Santana was the last band to play at the Fillmore. Why did he like you so much?

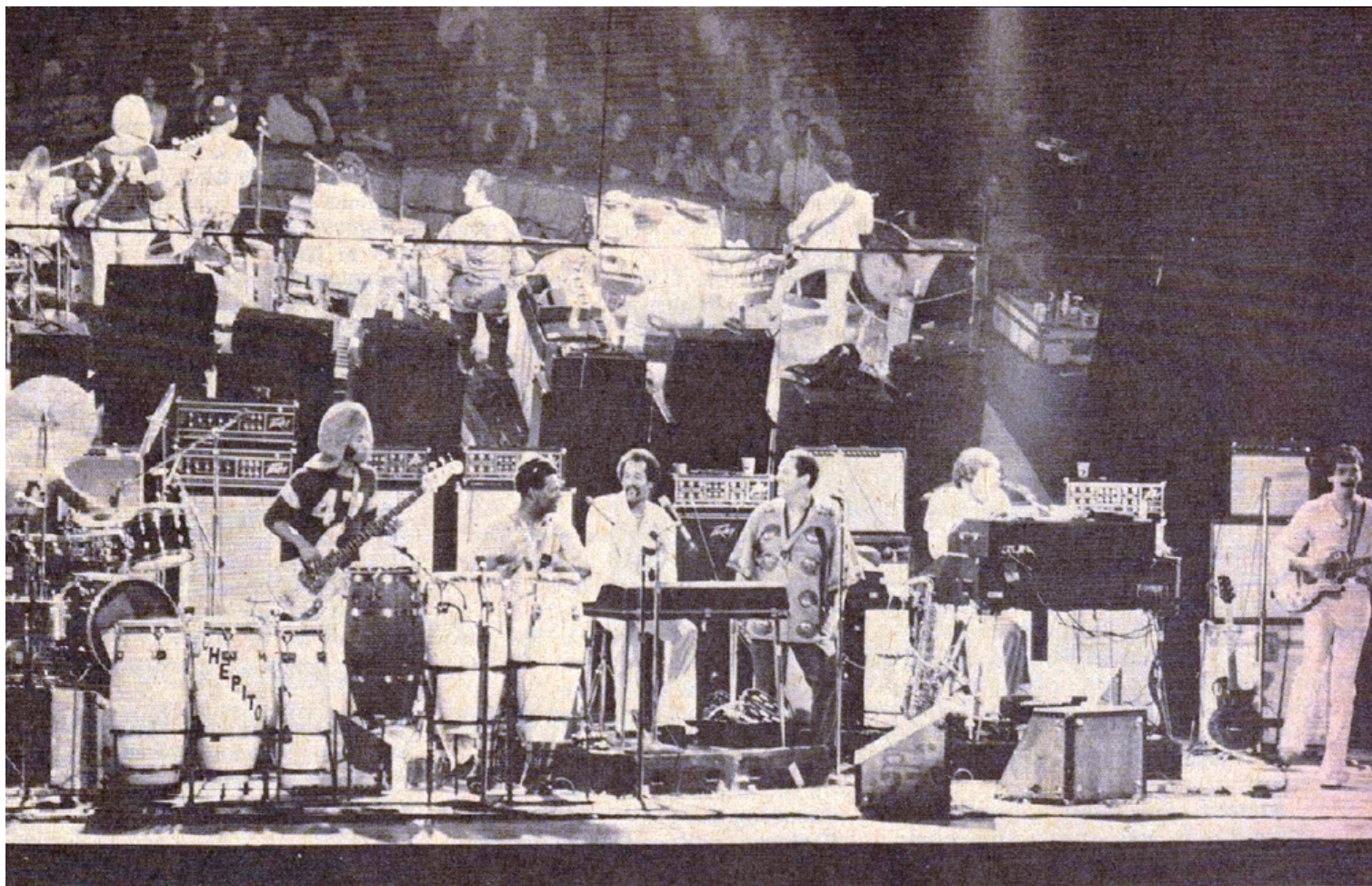
**Santana:** Because we played the Latin music and because he listened to Tito Puente when he grew up. My old manager took me to see Paul Butterfield because they were jamming, Mike Bloomfield, Elvin Bishop, all those people were jamming, and my manager told them I could play and Bill heard me and he took it upon himself to look for me for months to audition the Fillmore. Bill Graham really helped us.

**Circus:** How do you relate to Maharishi Ji?

**Santana:** I relate to him the way I do to an Indian from the Amazon praying to a rock. If he sees god in that rock, then god's in that rock. If Maharishi's disciples see god in him, then god must be in him.







The Santana band rivets a Chicago audience with an amazing line-up of south-of-the-border, Latin, funk and jazz musicianship. Below: Jules Broussard takes an alto sax lead from key-

boardman, Tom Coster. Right: Armando Peraza lays down a conga rhythm that bounces off the four walls of the mind.





# "I try to raise consciousness with my music... not to act crazy."

**Circus:** What about Mick Jagger?

**Santana:** I think he's a beautiful person. Onstage he's very vital, he instigates a lot of outer world confusion. This is human rock 'n roll music. There is divine rock 'n roll music, Weather Report, Miles, John Coltrane, Mahavishnu.

**Circus:** Who is "black magic woman?"

**Santana:** From what I heard from Peter Green, who was in the band, she was a girl in England. Some of the other members in the band met her, but I never came in contact with her.

**Circus:** Do you believe in black magic?

**Santana:** Yeah, it's a power, like some musicians have the power to play music and bring harmony. It's occultism. Some people might call what I'm into as white magic, because I'm working to bring people closer together, to cry for the light. Black magic people use their power to gain power, to make other people suffer. This is the lowest form of occultism.

**Circus:** Do you spend much time alone?

**Santana:** Yeah. My mother says this is weird on my part, but I think I like to be alone more than anything else, and take the time to evaluate my vision. A lot of people are afraid to be alone. They turn on the radio or the TV. People who are afraid to be alone I think doubt god.

**Circus:** Do you watch TV?

**Santana:** Yeah.

**Circus:** Do you relate to Kung Fu?

**Santana:** Yeah. Very, very much. I relate to his teacher. I always relate to the light and the love in that program.

**Circus:** Do you watch "Rhoda?"

**Santana:** No. What's that?

**Circus:** Do you watch 'Chico and the Man?'

**Santana:** No, never heard of it.

**Circus:** What other programs do you watch?

**Santana:** I like old movies, Cagney

and Bogart. My wife has finally won. When I used to watch TV it used to make her sad, and I always want to be with her, so I said well . . . I started cutting down.

**Circus:** When's the last time you smoked a joint?

**Santana:** Oh, I think I was still a disciple of Sri Chinmoy and I was curious to see what it would do to me. I didn't smoke the whole joint, just a couple of tokes, just to see what it would do. Strangely enough, I became very paranoid so I took a shower, full blast, until I thought I was coming back. That was approximately a year and a half ago.

**Circus:** Do you exercise every day?

**Santana:** No. I should, though. Once in a while I do push-ups, sit-ups.

**Circus:** What depresses you?

**Santana:** My own mouth. My own mouth is my truest disgrace. We all regret a lot of things we say.

**Circus:** What are your favorite vegetables?

**Santana:** Fresh ones. Since I don't eat meat, they're my only meat.

**Circus:** Incense?

**Santana:** Guru's making incense now and it's called "India."

**Circus:** Do you have a motto you try to live by?

**Santana:** Strive, strive to conquer myself. The more I surrender, the more I conquer myself.

**Circus:** What's your biggest fault?

**Santana:** Besides my mouth, it probably would be that I need a lot of attention. I need a lot of attention from my wife, from Guru. A smile from them gives me strength. When my wife smiles, I don't see flesh and bones, I see a divine smile.

**Circus:** What's the name of your restaurant?

**Santana:** Diptonivas, it's our child. It means "abode."

**Circus:** What's on the menu?

**Santana:** Different curries, casseroles, sandwiches, vegaburgers.

**Circus:** Do you live in San Francisco?

**Santana:** I live on Mt. Tam in Marin County. I'm close to the last house on top.

**Circus:** What does your wife do?

**Santana:** She takes care of our child and she sings in our choir. Her life is devoted to being a disciple. I wish I was so fortunate. Some day I will. It helps you to have a lot of disciples around you.

**Circus:** Do you still relate to a game of pool?

**Santana:** Oh sure. Ping pong, pool. Most of the disciples play ping pong. Mahavishnu is one of the greatest. But Guru can take all of them. He PLAYS! He was an athlete in India. He constant-

ly transcends himself. He started by writing poems. First he wrote fifty poems a day, then a hundred, then two hundred. I don't know if he reached a thousand poems a day. I'm not sure.

**Circus:** What would the ideal manager be like?

**Santana:** Some day I'll be completely blessed with a manager who has two qualities, spirituality and compassion and the sharpness to deal with the sharks, the undivine people who only look at you as a pack of Marlboros to be exploited.

**Circus:** What do you see as your destiny?

**Santana:** Before I had any spirituality I thought I was doomed to lose a finger, because music was my life, but now I think to be a dishwasher or a street cleaner is enough as long as I serve god in the best, most sincere way possible. That's my destination. ♦

*"The Supreme has given you a mango," the guru said to Santana, "and this mango is called music, and if you hide it in a cave you'll be eating it all by yourself."*

