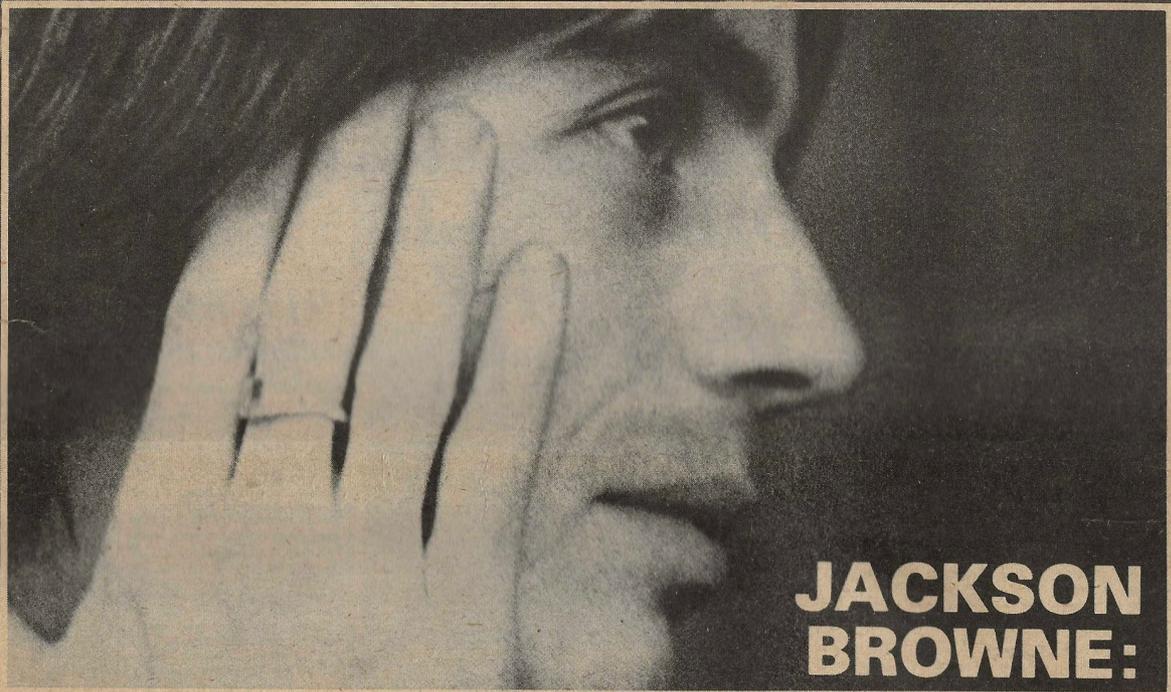


# new MUSICAL EXPRESS

**WHAT WE'D BUY FOR CHRISTMAS**  
(if we were as rich as Elton John)  
**THE NME GONZO GIFT GUIDE**



**JACKSON BROWNE:  
SKY'S UP**

Page 5

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PIG PENNE SMITH

# "ROOM SERVICE? SEND UP BRIAN WILSON, PLEASE."

**BRIAN WILSON IS** the Beach Boys.

Healthy in his Plaza Hotel suite the afternoon before the first of the Beach Boys' sell-out Madison Square Garden shows, he wasn't talking to anyone except his wife, his shrink and his bodyguard. No press no how.

The two dozen hacks milling round the hotel lobby caught the drift and resigned themselves to a non-event. It was quite clear that a rap with Brian was as unlikely as a lunch date between George Wallace and Idi Amin.

In the mood for adventure, I began to explore the environs of the lush Plaza. Taking the elevator in search of food I lucked onto two enterprising groupies with a room in the hotel. They had checked in for the sole purpose of meeting The Beach Boys, and upon regaling room-service discovered that their waiter was none other than he who had just catered for Mr. Wilson. Reanne and Doris were delighted and pressed for more hot gossip, with yours truly grabbing a pen and Plaza stationary.

Mr. Wilson was being interviewed, revealed the waiter, and seemed to be in pretty good spirits and very anxious to please the newsmen.

Just fine, thought this reporter, but how about me and two dozen jerks waiting downstairs? The waiter recoiled Brian saying he enjoyed interviews and had written a dozen songs in two weeks.

For Brian the first move had been to get out of bed. His psych had diagnosed the case as schizophrenia,



"You called sir?" The Greta Garbo of surf materialises on Joey's TV screen.

with which Brian felt able to cope. Life was now a series of disciplines, with the gradual withdrawal of the shrink, with whom he'd won a fist fight, but he lost because he cried, the release of his hostility due to the exorbitant fees charged by the doc.

Brian takes algebraic lessons for discipline's sake, plus a daily gym workout to reduce the tyre around his waist acquired during his years of inactivity. Net result is two albums of new material, the titles of which Brian named — but the waiter couldn't recall. A press officer later revealed that they are "New Album" and "Brian Loves You".

Brian says he doesn't do drugs, though a little speed once in a while might stimulate his creative urge, not to mention his sex drive. But acid is out; all he trips on now is positive life.

A waiter at the Plaza Hotel knocks down a nice living so when our friend noticed this scribe taking hurried notes he insisted on anonymity. Reanne assisted him with the room service cart and we thanked him for an enlightening chat whereupon he departed, leaving Reanne and Doris and I alone.

East Coast girls are hip — very hip. **JOE STEVENS**

**CARLOS SANTANA** — or "Devadip" according to his red satin band jacket — was sitting alone in his dressing room, next to a large framed colour photograph of his Guru, Sri Chinmoy, and a bouquet of flowers from a fan.

We were at the Winter Gardens in Bournemouth. Outside it was dark and raining and there had been a lot of fog on the motorway on the way down. It was the exact opposite of the outdoor festivals in the California sun that I've always associated with his music.

He now has a completely new lineup (with the exception of keyboards man Tom Foster) and so the first thing I asked was how he had decided on it.

"I think I just aspired for certain musicians with certain qualities — and they came along. In reality I just absolutely feel that Sri Chinmoy's doing it. I told him what I need. People were going in and out of the band, they were going in and out over a period of about three months, different drummers, different this, different that, until the right one came along who had the right qualities: no dope, very consistent, very clean, open minded, a lot of dynamism, a lot of fire, and most of all, a lot of sincerity — which is very hard to get nowadays."

Santana seems to be moving in a more consciously Latin direction and I asked if he chose this lineup specially to achieve this. The answer was yes.

"I like to branch out and play different forms of music. Right now I feel that I'm using, not abusing, the Latin music as a tool — to express what I learnt from Mahavishnu (John McLaughlin). Latin music is very contagious, you know. Mahavishnu chose Indian music to express his mission or duty here on Earth. I'm choosing Latin music for right now. Tomorrow I may be into funk or Brazilian music — but right now I'm into Latin."

"I don't necessarily want to make anybody meditate or cram it down anybody's throat — even if they don't clap I wouldn't really mind — as long

## LOWRY



"I can't tell whether or not I like it until I've heard it lying on my back stoned out of my crust."

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# GOD FLOWS FROM EVERY MOUTH AND THAT DON'T MEAN GOBBIN' ON PEOPLE, WARNS SANTANA

as they've been dancing. I like people to dance."

I wondered if the rapid growth of interest in Salsa in the States was in any way responsible for his swing back towards Latin.

"I don't even like Salsa music, man, to be quite honest. To me it's very binding. Very few people do anything new with it aside from Eddie Palmieri — everything is reshaped. What I do, since I know very little about it, is use it the best way I can to express all the things I'm learning from other people, like Miles (Davis)."

On stage he seemed to be very concerned with giving signals to the group. Does he normally keep everything under such tight control or was it because it is such a new group?

"I feel that eventually it'll just be eye-contact. We'll all know what's happening. But right now it's a very young band. I like it because there's a lot of fire and people don't question my motives as much. I feel very reassured and I'm not gonna take a back seat anymore. With the other bands I did — because I wasn't sure what I was doing. That doesn't mean I'm gonna be a dictator, it just means I'm gonna fight more for what I want, and if it's wrong they have to show it to me."

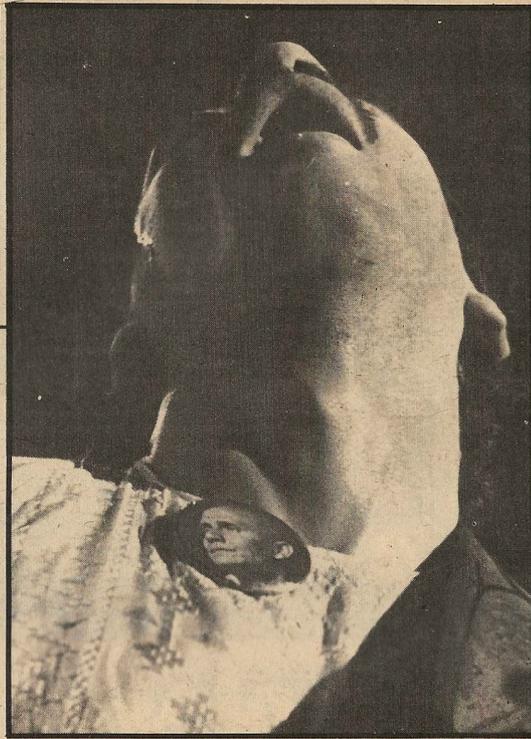
The new band wasn't well received by the critics at Wembley who thought that Santana had retreated

from the progressive direction of "Caravanserai" and "Welcome" back to the commercial safety of "Abraxas" and his recent "Amigos." With a band as new as this, there is no way he could have attempted anything other than standard repertoire plus greatest hits until they are more together. Also in his case, a swing toward Latin can be claimed as a return to roots — something regarded as quite acceptable to rock bands, so why not for latin-rock bands?

The band was under-rehearsed. In fact Luther Rabb replaced Greg Walker on vocals only two weeks before they left for England. Drummer Graham Lear joined at the same time. "... not till a week ago did we actually come onstage as a band."

I asked him if he thought the artist had a role in society and he responded with enthusiasm: "Exactly. He has a role to perform 24 hours a day. I mean, a good musician does. A great-musician is great on stage for maybe two hours and could be extremely obnoxious for the rest of the 24 hours. A good musician is good 24 hours."

"He tries to inspire, he tries to be in tune with God. Just try for that. It's hard but it's not impossible. It's getting easier for me because drugs don't appeal to me and temptation with women... is almost a thing of the past now."



"It's all done by discreet manipulation of the throat muscles and the Sri Chinmoy button," Senor Santana informs an awestruck CHALKIE DAVIES.

I would have thought that he must experience some conflict between his spiritual life and his life in the rock business which is so full of drugs, sex, cussin' and corruption — at least it's supposed to be.

"There would be a conflict if I were to treasure thoughts of being alone, of chicks, or of sneaking off on the side and smoking pot or whatever. It would bind me, but since I've been

through all that I'm aware of what binds you and what makes you free. Anything that makes you nervous, paranoid or insecure, like drugs do, possesses you.

"There's a few musicians around who are really struggling with their minds to truly manifest God in their own way and to reveal him and build him in their own way. It's hard. I have to say that it is very very hard..."

This seemed like the appropriate time to ask what he thought of Automatic Man, since Michael Shrieve and the whole band had expressed a very similar view when I interviewed them. It seems that Santana doesn't really think all that much of them...

"I thought their philosophy was very mental myself and anything that comes from the mind, it's an illusion you know." Well, you can't get a heavier put-down than that. Santana tried to qualify it a little.

"I love Michael Shrieve. I respect Michael Shrieve. But I can tell the difference between being and trying to be. It's two different things. Anyway they already broke apart."

This must come as a bit of a shock to Island Records, who allegedly invested a cool £100,000 in the group. They should have asked Carlos about them before they signed the cheque, he knew... "See, I knew this wasn't gonna work — because Michael and Pat (Thrall), the guitar player — are the only persons that have dynamism. Bayete has an incredible amount of imagination but is very hollow — to me, and I have to say that (I hope he'll forgive me). There's some music, man, that is like a hollow pumpkin. It looks good on the outside but take a bite and the substance is really not what you need. I like some of his imagination, but like I said, what I need is to feel sincerity — and I didn't get that vibration from him, period."

"Michael Shrieve — to me Michael Shrieve is like a little kid, man, he's looking for it and I respect that. He's a wanderer and he's seeking. I don't feel like I've found it yet but I'm a little closer. We're both seekers of the truth, the transcendental truth, man."

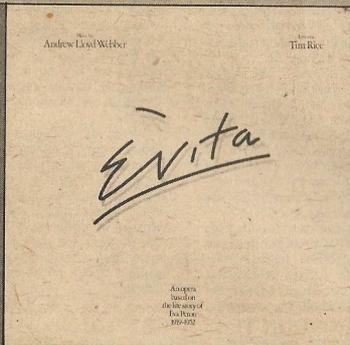
Whatever else Santana's doing, and whichever way his music is tending, the most obvious development is the greater economy in his actual playing. He uses hardly any notes.

"I'm learning from Miles Davis and Wayne Shorter, man, because a lot of times I listen back to my sounds and I think, 'God, it sounds like I'm choking somebody, whaaaat...' cramming in so many notes in one place."

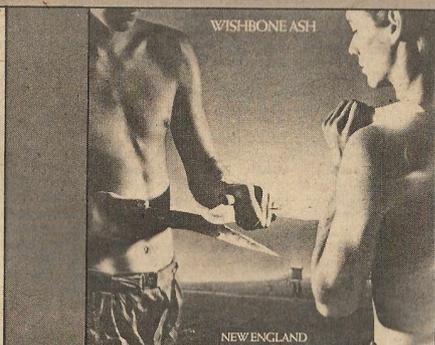
"Just say 'I love you.' Don't say 'Why?' or 'How?' but just say 'I love you' in a phrase. Miles and Wayne Shorter — they can say three notes, man, and they could go home..."

MILES

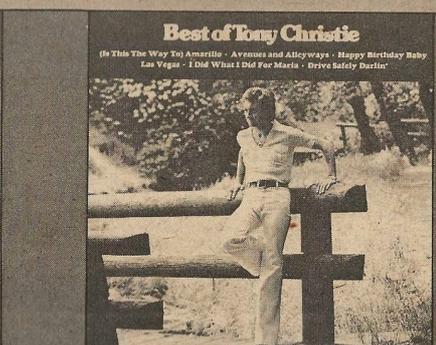
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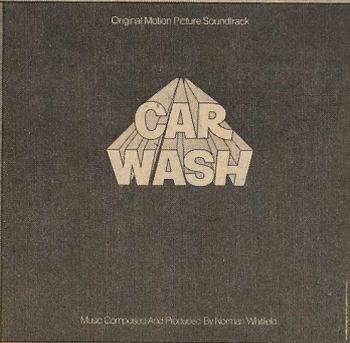
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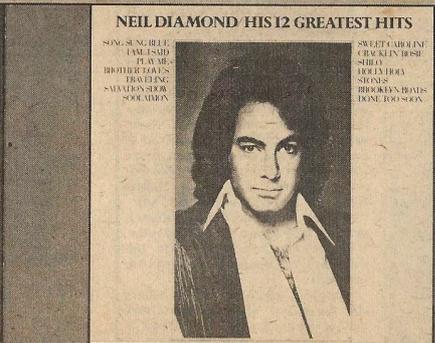
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