

San Jose Mercury News

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# eye

WEEKEND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

A '60S SURVIVOR  
ROCKS INTO  
THE '90S WITH  
A NEW ALBUM  
AND A UNIVERSAL  
MESSAGE

viva

# Santana



**MOVIES** Whoever killed Laura Palmer didn't do a very good job. She's back.

**MUSIC** Emmylou Harris and Ricky Van Shelton fiddle around.

**THEATER** The life and good times of a cowboy philosopher.



## FRONT LINES

BY MICHAEL ORICCHIO  
Mercury News Staff Writer

**T**O GUITAR legend Carlos Santana, his late friends Bill Graham and Miles Davis are anything but departed.

The spirits of the influential rock promoter and the great jazz trumpeter, both of whom died last year, touch everything Santana does — from his new album "Milagro," dedicated to Graham and Davis, to his current world tour, which includes a stop Saturday at Shoreline Amphitheatre in Mountain View.

"They are in my dreams. They are trying to get me to do something and to see myself," the 45-year-old San Rafael-based bandleader said Wednesday during a telephone interview from a Santa Fe, N.M., hotel room. "Both Bill Graham and Miles Davis represent tenacity at its fullest. They didn't finish an agenda, and they want me to finish it for them."

Simply put, Santana feels he must keep Graham's social conscience alive. That seems an easy fit for a musician who has played benefits for everyone from Nicaraguan earthquake victims in '73 to the survivors of the devastating Loma Prieta quake in '89.

But it'll be Santana's commitment to his music that'll be on the minds of his fans tomorrow night — one that Davis' memory helps to make even stronger.

"In his music he didn't want to kiss anybody's behind," Santana said of Davis. "Miles Davis was interested in making music at the level of Picasso or Stravinsky — not like McDonald's and Madonna. Real art is going to be for yesterday, today and tomorrow."

Santana discusses his music with the single-minded earnestness of a true believer. Although he's sold more than 30 million records and still packs concert halls and stadiums around the world, he's been able to do it while constantly experimenting with his sound and expanding the limits of his music.

That's what has kept the Jalisco, Mexico, native's music fresher, quirkier and more vibrant than that of almost any of his contemporaries from the heady days of the '60s San Francisco rock scene.

As it has spanned the decades, Santana's music has also spanned countless genres and styles, incorporating rock, jazz, blues and Latin and African rhythms. That distinctive Santana sound has found its most assured expression in years on the four-month-old "Milagro," Santana's first release on the Polydor label after a 22-year association with Columbia Records.

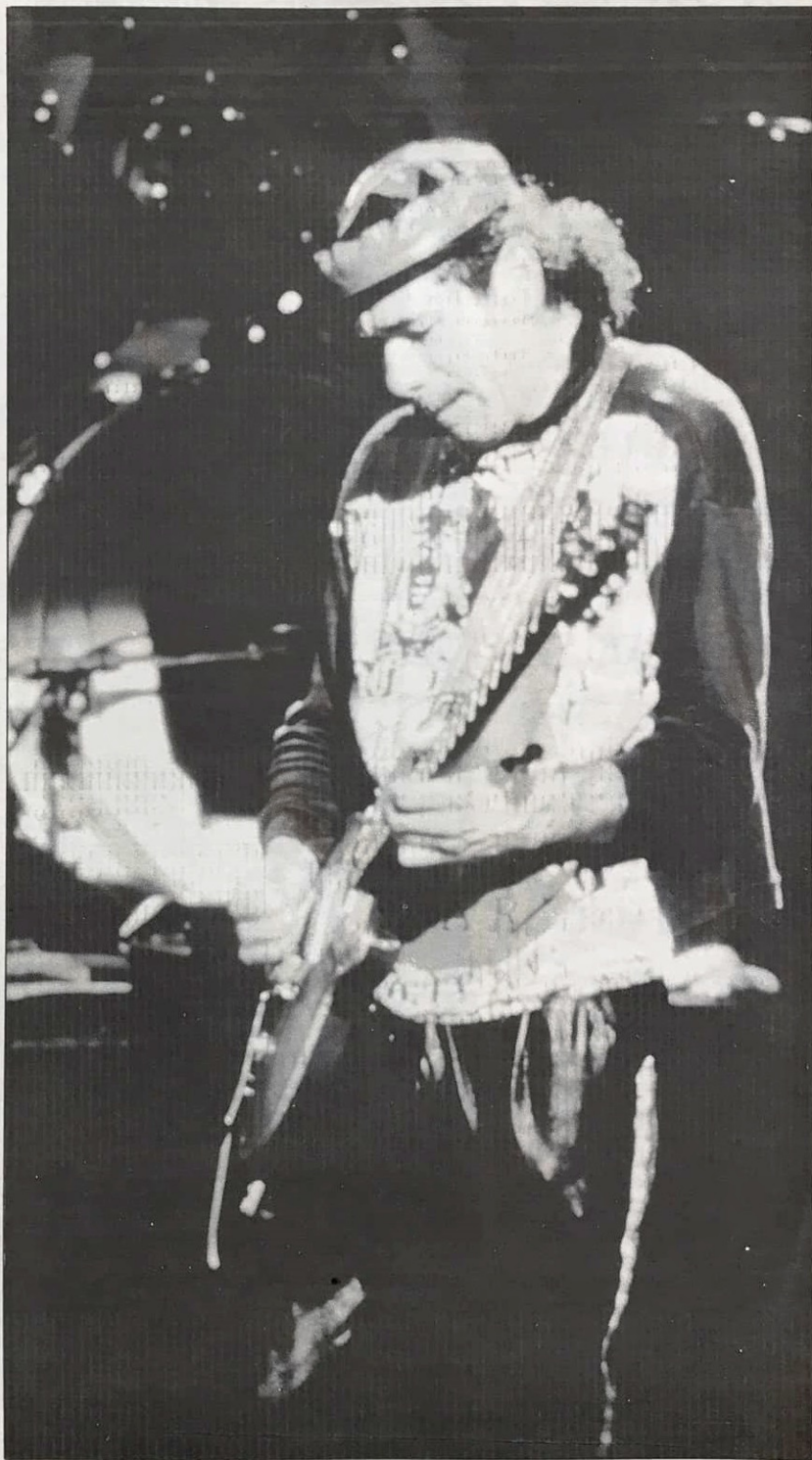
"The new record is a nice bouquet of everything in my art. If the roses smell better, it's because of the pain from when Bill Graham and

### INTERVIEW

# Black Magic Man

*Even after decades of playing jazz, funk, fusion and rock, Santana still casts a spell*

See **SANTANA**, Page 22



Carlos Santana dedicates his music to the memory of late legends Bill Graham and Miles Davis.



# Santana: Growing and moving in music

## ■ SANTANA

from Page 3

Miles Davis left," he says.

"That is what made the music more effervescent," he adds. "I start laughing and crying at the same time. That's when music is at its real best."

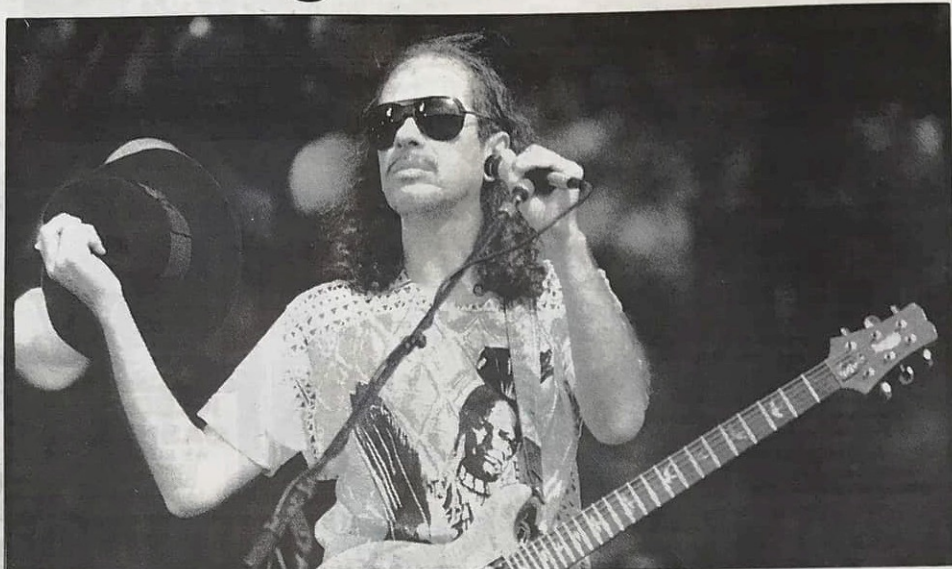
This desire to keep his music moving, growing, stretching has been with him since childhood. When he was 8 years old, Santana traded in a violin for a guitar and abandoned the mariachi sound of his musician father to emulate the styles of bluesmen B.B. King, T-Bone Walker and John Lee Hooker, all of whom remain strong influences.

In 1966, he formed the Santana Blues Band in San Francisco, eventually playing the Fillmore West and Winterland and then bursting onto the national music scene at Woodstock. From there he went on to record his classic album "Abraxas," a monster hit.

Not content to stick with a single, popular sound, Santana spent much of the '70s expanding the jazz influence always present in his work. Those years produced ambitious collaborations with guitarist John McLaughlin and pianist/harpist Alice Coltrane, widow of sax giant John Coltrane, another Santana idol.

With the next decade came more refinement and exploration, this time further into African, Indian and American Indian rhythms. At this point, Santana considers his sound "world-beat music," and defies anyone to try to slap an easy label on his work.

"Bill Graham said my music was spiritual and sensual at the



MERCURY NEWS FILE PHOTOGRAPH

When "I start laughing and crying at the same time," says Carlos Santana, "That's when music is at its real best."

same time. I think there is room to do both at the same time," Santana said. "Music can be utilized to transform, to make humanity evolve into a higher consciousness."

Maybe that consciousness has helped him sustain a solid personal life while pursuing a successful professional one.

In a business where the stars change spouses as often as guitar picks, he and his wife, Deborah, have been married for 19 years. While touring, he breaks up his

concert schedule to spend time with their three children — Salvador, 9, Stella, 7, and Angelica Faith, 2 — sometimes bringing the whole family on the road.

Or maybe it's a pronounced lack of ego that keeps everything on track. His audiences have grown through the years. And in the crowds that come to his concerts, there's a distinct mix of generations, ethnic backgrounds and musical tastes.

"I would quit music if I only saw country-and-western people

or Hispanic people or whoever. I play music from the heart and for the heart. That way I don't have to be put into a cage," Santana says.

"The other night after I was playing, a lady touched my hand on her way out. She started crying. She said, 'Your music touched me like I've never been touched before.' That's it. That's it. You want your music to touch people. Then you can come home and go to bed. You've done your job."

## Santana

With Phish

■ Where: Shoreline Amphitheatre, Mountain View, 1 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View

■ When: 7:30 p.m. Saturday

■ Tickets: \$22.50 reserved, \$12.50 lawn

■ Call: (408) 998-2277, (510) 762-2277

# Harris: Meeting and singing with heroes

## ■ EMMYLOU

from Page 16

for bluegrass and honky-tonk music, which he heartily stamped with a rock 'n' roll attitude. She inherited Parsons' aptly named Hot Band (featuring James Burton on guitar), added Rodney Crowell on rhythm guitar, and took the torch to clubs on both coasts and in-between.

When asked about her role as inspiration to a generation of country singers, Harris passes the credit on to Parsons.

"Gram opened up this whole world of music to me; so if I can help someone else see the beauty of the Louvin Brothers or Bill Monroe or some other great artist, I know what it means," she says.

Although the 44-year-old singer has a 21-year-old daughter and

has been married three times, the continued vitality of her music makes it seem just yesterday that she was riding on the back of Parsons' Harley. Through the years, she has lost strength in her voice, however, which elicited her latest stylistic change.

Recently, she went full-circle with her web of influences by recording the bluegrass-tinged "Live at the Ryman Auditorium" at the original home of the Grand Ole Opry. After 15 years with the electric Hot Band, Harris opted for a more acoustic sound with a new band called the Nash Ramblers, featuring Randy Stewart on acoustic guitar, along with the better-known Sam Bush and Al Perkins.

"I can't tell you what an amazing experience it has been playing with those guys," Harris says.

## Emmylou Harris

With Ricky Van Shelton and others in Country Fest '92

■ Where: Concord Pavilion, 2000 Kirker Pass Road, Concord

■ When: 8 p.m. Saturday

■ Tickets: \$22.50 reserved, \$18.50 lawn

■ Call: (510) 671-3100, (408) 998-2277, (510) 762-2277

Also: Shoreline Amphitheatre, Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, Sunday noon, \$20 or \$17.50 advance, (408) 998-2277, (510) 762-2277

In addition to performing newer songs from the live album, Harris and the Ramblers have worked up new arrangements of her older hits.

"To me, the test was to see if the songs played so wonderfully

by the Hot Band all those years could be played with the Dobro and mandolin replacing the electric guitar and pedal steel," Harris says. "And it works! The perception may be that acoustic means less, but I've discovered limitless possibilities with this band."

As if to underline that point, Harris recently received yet another award to put up on the mantel with her five Grammys. Partly because of her heartfelt homage to the Ryman and partly because she's devoid of enemies after so many years in the music business, Harris was given this year's Minnie Pearl Award at the TNN-Music City News Country awards. All previous winners have been in their late 60s or 70s.

"I don't feel like an elder stateswoman of country music. Maybe it's all this gray hair,"



Emmylou Harris is part of Country Fest '92 in Concord Saturday.

Harris says, laughing. "I do feel very fortunate that I've been able to meet my heroes and work with many of them, like Bill Monroe (who makes an appearance on the live album). It's also nice when someone comes up to me and says they started listening to country music because of me."