

# RELIX™

music for the mind

Vol. 21, No. 4

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW  
**CARLOS  
SANTANA**

ON TOUR  
**PINK FLOYD  
TRAFFIC  
PHISH**

**WOODSTOCK  
'94**

**JANIS JOPLIN  
SKIP SPENCE  
ALLMAN  
BROTHERS  
DRUMMERS**



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# RELIX<sup>TM</sup>

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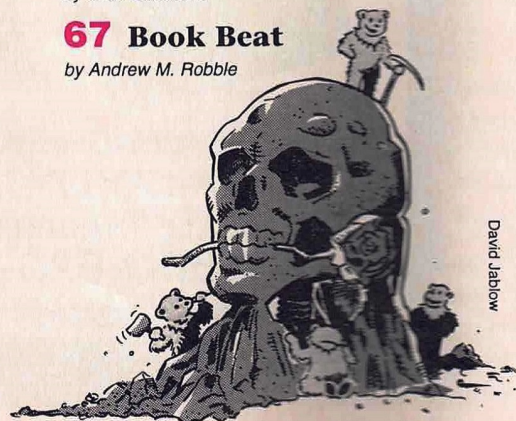
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Woodstock. What images come to mind? Mud? Madness? Music? Snoopy? That rainy, bizarre weekend back in mid-August, 1969, brought a nation of dazed music fans and musicians together for what has since been known as the "ultimate" rock festival. For Carlos Santana, the Woodstock Arts & Crafts Festival must surely capture a lot of meaning about both past and future.

During a brief dry segment of the festival, the Tijuana-born guitarist led his band through an explosive set, one of the most magical moments of the historic three-day festival, and unleashed to the world in one fell swoop all things Santana. One of the brightest moments in the history of rock music, Santana's appearance at Woodstock was captured on film by an Academy-Award winning documentary of the event, and the band's explosive version of the instrumental "Soul Sacrifice"—a 20-minute jungle rhythm built around a charged blues riff—is one of its highlights.

Reflecting on that historic moment in his career, Santana recalls its significance.

"It's important to connect to people's hearts something that's not even of me, but through me," says Santana. "When I was there...I didn't have an iota of what it means to be in a position where you can touch people in a constantly effecting domino theory." During the ensuing 25 years, Santana has brought a whole world of listeners together with his powerful, heartfelt musical transmissions.

Previously known as the Santana Blues Band, Columbia Records released *Santana* two months after Woodstock, and the debut album went on to sell more than four million copies. The guitarist and his band expect to return to upstate New York this month to participate in the planned 25th anniversary concert of the original event, effectively titled Woodstock '94.

Having just finished a month in the Orient including Singapore, Bangkok and Hong Kong, Santana settles into his San Rafael studio and reflects on various vibes around the globe.

"(The Orient) is pretty intense," he says. "In some places it still feels like it's '69. There's a certain fire and a certain enthusiasm. Here, it feels like there's a big regurgitating of I-don't-know-what. But over there, it's still fresh. The youth over there have begun to get a taste of what we got in Berkeley in 1969. Actually, it was a really nice experience because most people were gracious."

Santana's entire career has been a boon to guitarists worldwide. His highly distinct tone screams emotion one minute and soothes the soul the next. Countless guitarists reel off blazingly fast notes with the distortion turned

# carlos santana

## believing in dreams

ROGER LEN SMITH



up to 11, only to come off as poseurs. The sharp, fluid tone from Santana's Paul Reed Smith electric rings out his emotions, and his familiar "jungle stance" crouch on stage epitomizes authenticity.

"If I come to Woodstock," Santana continues, "or wherever I play, in front of Macy's, man, I don't care, as long as the people are ready to pay for my rent and feed me—hey, you know, I'm gonna give it my best. I'm not so exclusive that I only play for these kind of people or those kind of people. You know, if they have a heart...I have to play."

Santana, who makes his home in Marin County, has recorded over 25 albums of percussive jazz and blues-fused rock, selling more

than 30 million copies and winning dozens of musical and humanitarian awards. In the process, Santana has become one of the twentieth century's most recognizable guitarists.

The Latino six-stringer also has the ability to capture that elusive live energy on record. *Abraxas* from 1970, *Amigos* from 1976, *Moonflower* from 1977 and *Zebop!* from 1981 are all standouts from a standout career.

Another noteworthy release is Santana's last studio effort, 1992's *Milagro* (Spanish for miracle), a powerful recording dedicated to the lives of promoter Bill Graham and jazz legend Miles Davis. To get as close to that sacred spirit as possible, Santana recorded *Milagro* live in the studio. (Graham, also Santana's manager, was responsible for putting the talented guitarist on the bill at Woodstock.)

"(Graham) made young people aware of Miles Davis," said Santana in an earlier interview. "If you wanted to listen to the Grateful Dead, you'd have to listen to Miles Davis first. His place was like an institution. If you wanted to listen to Ten Years After, you'd have to listen to Buddy Rich. He was very stubborn about making people get more latitude than just the same thing. In other words, if you wanted some ice cream, you had to get some vegetables." Santana's one chance to jam with the notorious trumpeter Miles Davis came at a 1986 Amnesty International bash at Giants Stadium in New Jersey. The concert was an amazing finale to a six-city tour for the human rights organization that also featured Sting with and without the Police, U2, Peter Gabriel, The Neville Brothers, Lou Reed, Joan Baez, Reuben Blades and Bryan Adams.

Santana's most recent release, *Sacred Fire* (on Polydor in compact disc, video and laserdisc form), was recorded live throughout the band's '93 South American spring tour.

"I went to (South America) in '73," Santana says. "It was pretty much like a Fellini movie on LSD or something. It was out. I didn't

necessarily want to go back there ever again; it was pretty intense with the government thing. They would position (themselves) with limousines in front of the stage, and half the soccer field was empty (of people) but filled with machine guns and bodyguards and then half-a-block away, there's the people trying to get into your music. So, in '73, it was pretty weird. But over there, they're just more up front about it.

"Anyway, this time when we went to Santiago, Chile (Christmas, 1992), we played a day or two after Guns N' Roses. We had 90,000 people, they had 45,000. In all honesty, we charged half the ticket price, and we let anyone under 13 in for free. It was two or three hours of just like a spiritual orgasm. And when we saw how



Dave Patrick



Bill Graham &amp; Carlos Santana

the band connected with the people in South America, we felt it was important to capture. It's kind of like the Grateful Dead on New Year's Eve, you know, there's certain points that stand out. In the old days, with the Grateful Dead or Quicksilver, it was for free at the park, you know—nothing could top a free concert. See, musicians play their best that way. It was that kind of atmosphere. So we wanted to capture that in Mexico City. We lucked out."

With luck and a healthy dose of skill, *Sacred Fire* shimmers with precision and clarity. The band burns on energy and celebration. The current membership includes longtime bandmates Chester Thompson on keyboards, Alex Ligertwood on vocals, Raul Rekow on percussion and Karl Perazzo on timbales and percussion. Bassist Myron Dobe and drummer Tommy Bradford are the most recent recruits.

Dedicated to the life of labor leader Cesar Chavez, *Sacred Fire* opens with Santana speaking to the crowd in his native Spanish and then the band breaks into a buoyant version of "Vive La Vida," featuring a chorus of lead vocals. The collection also includes sped-up romps through "No One To Depend On," "Black Magic Woman," "Oye Como Va" and a new version of the pristine "Europa." *Sacred Fire* is Santana's first live album since the vibrant *Lotus*, a three-record set from 1974 that documented the band's Japanese tour.

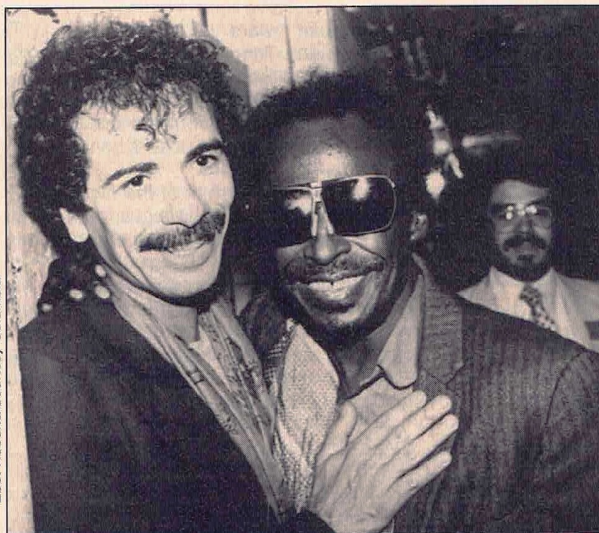
The spirit that was captured on the *Sacred Fire* collection seems to have buoyed the guitarist into an even greater sense of community over a discussion about the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival.

"We should do (a festival) over here," muses Santana, "by Point Reyes (at the tip of Marin County). We need to find people who are adventuresome like Bill Graham, and go out there and bump heads in a positive way. We need Point Reyes once in a while just to get the Bay Area to let off some steam. There's a lot of good places over there 'cause it's flat and you don't bother anybody. It'd be great to do concerts over there, I think. I really feel that here in California we need to unite. All of us need to consolidate and continue where the '60s used to be. San Francisco used to be kind of like the

Olympics without the competition. You know, we have Ali Akbar Kahn, the greatest musician on this planet. I don't see why we don't get together. I still dream of doing things that the Bay Area has in its guts, but it's not doing it.

"What I liked about the '60s," he continues, "was that you were allowed to carry your bumper sticker. And the bumper sticker for me on this last tour was: 'to be is a blessing, to live is holy.' And I said, 'yea, that's a good one, I'm gonna stay with this one.' Because it makes you see more clearly what you should be doing, for whom you should be doing it and how you should be doing it."

Likewise, Santana has always been involved in humanitarian causes. His career has been marked by his participation in several 1972 Nicaraguan earthquake relief concerts, as well as shows in 1989 to help San Francisco recover from a big one. The 1982 US Festival; the huge LIVE AID famine relief show in 1985;



Carlos with Miles Davis

CRACKDOWN, an anti-crack show in New York in 1986; and the first-ever U.S./Soviet rock concert in 1987 in Moscow were all graced by Santana's presence. In January, 1988, Santana organized and headlined the "Blues For Salvador" concert with Jerry Garcia and several other Bay Area musicians, raising \$100,000 for the children of El Salvador.

"Jerry Garcia affected my life as much as Bill Graham," Santana comments, "as far as making me dare to go and jump for what I believe in, my dreams. Instead of just talking about it in the kitchen with coffee and telling everybody in the

room—go out and do it."

Fulfilling one dream, Santana has finally started his own recording company, Guts & Grace, distributed by the giant Polydor label. *Brothers*, an instrumental project with his brother Jorge, will be released late this year. Carlos has long been known for his rock-jazz fusion, while Jorge's style is more straight-ahead rock. The album also debuts Santana's nephew, Carlos Hernandez, on guitar.

"I'm grateful I had the opportunity to let my brother and my nephew run with it," says Santana. "They did great. They wrote some songs, some of them sound like Jeff Beck with the Police or something. Some of them sound more like Jimmy Page. Some of them sound very romantic."

"When it's all from the heart, it hits me the same way. I think that very few people can crystallize diversity. They only got a Ph.D. on one thing. That's the only thing they do. It's cool, as long as they do it to the max."

With Guts & Grace, Santana now has the power to put out whatever music he wants. "Not everybody at a record company is a moron," he says. "They have a lot of great people in there. Unfortunately, most of those people don't have any power. So, the real moronic people who—they couldn't tell a note if it bit 'em in the butt—they're the ones who're making the dumb decisions."

Another Guts & Grace release sacred to Santana's heart, and definitely not a dumb decision, is *Live & Forever*, a collection of classic live performances by some of the guitarist's favorite people: Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughan, John Coltrane, Marvin Gaye and Bob Marley. With the exception of Hendrix, all of the cuts are from the artists' last-ever gigs.

"See, what happens is," Santana says of the project, "people pretty much know that I love everybody and so there's always cassettes coming in from Japan or Los Angeles or London or wherever, on Bob Marley, Jimi Hendrix or Miles. So there's always traffic here. I send them, they send them to me, I send them to somebody else."

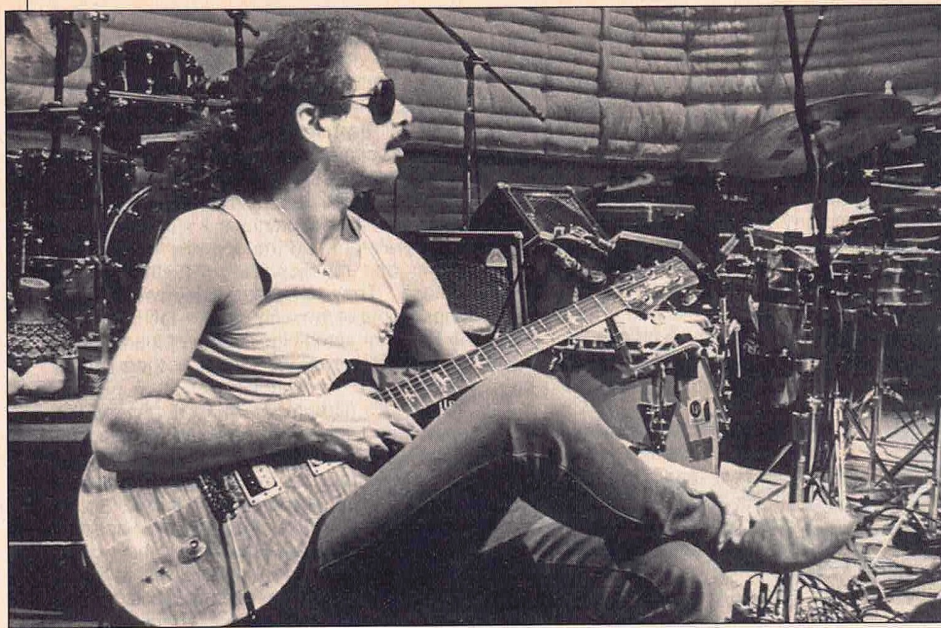
I was really, really grateful that I got the chance to put this Guts & Grace label together, because to me that's where the future's at. It's on



Jerry Garcia with Santana at The Blues For Salvador concert in 1988

Jay Blakesberg





the streets, you know, some kid walking around, from all that is gonna come the next Jimi Hendrix, the next diamond. That's why I think it's important for us to consolidate again. Bill Graham was a great instigator. People would agree or disagree, but at least we were going forward. We weren't standing still. The only person left like that, that I feel is a great motivator, is Mickey Hart. He gets a lot of things done. Just the fact that he can motivate something like 'Planet Drum.' It takes a lot of grace, but also it takes a lot of enthusiasm."

Hart has incorporated his global percussion studies into musical therapy sessions, a process that could be used to describe the celebration of a Santana concert.

"(Mickey) did a special at the College of Marin," Santana recalls, "with nothing but drums, and I really encourage that. People should do that more frequently because when people go to a place and they bring their own drum, they're allowed to express themselves. By the time you finish, after 45 minutes or an hour, you don't have that anger or that violent spirit about you. You have more of a clear and compassionate rationale from a different point of view than just: 'you hit me, so I'll hit you back.' In other words, it lets out your aggressions. It's a spiritual release."

Santana's voice grows animated.

"I called Mickey the other day when I got (back)," he says. "I had this dream, but it had two halves. One was with Miles Davis, the other was Bill Graham. The one with Miles Davis was really funny because I was at the Concord Pavilion and somebody said, 'Hey, Miles knows you're here. He wants you to go backstage and talk to him.' So I go over there. Sure enough, he says, 'Go get

your guitar because I want you to play. And don't tune to the piano. Tune to my trumpet. It's gonna be in the middle of the afternoon, the piano's gonna get hot and it's gonna go out of tune. But my trumpet's not gonna go out of tune.' Those are like specific instructions," laughs Santana.

"So that goes like that for half of the night, and the other half (of the dream) was a special event at the Fillmore West, and it was called: 'The Grateful Dead presents Bill Graham at the Fillmore.' And it was like all the memorabilia that the Grateful Dead have compiled with Bill, you know, at the New Year's Eves and when Bill was on LSD or mescaline or something and he went in and was conducting the Grateful Dead band like Leonard Bernstein, right? But

he's gone on mescaline. Somebody got him. And when he's finished conducting, he walks out really exhausted like he's just conducted the Grateful Dead and Pavarotti, you know. He walks up to the microphone, and he goes—I swear to you, man, this happened—he goes (Santana almost whispers) 'You are me and I am you.' (More laughter) And he walks out very sheepishly, which is really unlike Bill Graham. And everybody's cracking up, but they're not laughing at him.

"And then it goes to a whole other kind of thing. And what I was seeing was that Mickey Hart was conducting all these kinds of holograms, things about Bill Graham. Special moments that just touched people's hearts. So I go, 'Damn, I gotta get up and write this dream because I have this feeling that Bill Graham wants me to tell Mickey,' 'Hey, man, I presented the Grateful Dead so many times, why don't you present me one time?'" So, I immediately called him. I left it on his message machine. But to me, my imagination and reality are pretty much the same at this point as far as my friends. They're teaching me that time and space are irrelevant anyway where they're at. Yea, you know, we sure miss (Bill), but then again his spirit is very, very strong."

As the generously long interview winds down, Santana once again becomes prophetic, looking wide-eyed towards the future. "I'm enjoying doing this interview with you knowing that right now, you and I are living in fantastic times; the Berlin Wall is down, Nelson Mandela is in, Cuba is next and the American Indians on the reservations are next. Everybody's healthy and happy, you know, what else? It's not a political thing; it's a consciousness thing. I like the things that Bob Dylan says: 'I'll let you be in my dream, if you let me be in yours.' That is the best way for us to enter into the future without flags and borders. Those are the horns of the devil that separate brother from brother and sister from sister. It's coming. It's just around the corner. I really feel positive about it." ■



Jack Murphy



Jack Murphy



# CARLOS SANTANA STANDING UP

BY DAVID MINKOW

People are either conscious or unconscious, according to Carlos Santana. Unconscious people simply do whatever they want regardless of consequences, while conscious people understand that whatever happens to one happens to all.

"My heart goes out to people who say, 'Hey, I don't feel so good about this planet. Instead of doing what my mom and dad did, which was dedicate their lives to being richer and richer, I want to go down to El Salvador and teach people how to dig a well.' Those are my heroes today. My heroes are not musicians anymore, with the exception of Coltrane, Bob Marley, people like that. There are very few musicians who are conscious like Sting, Peter Gabriel or U2, who put their careers on the line for something that they believe will benefit the whole."

Carlos calls colors and sounds healing medicine. Over the years, his guitar has brought fans to concerts benefiting Nicaraguan and Bay Area earthquake victims, prison inmates, school sports programs, starving people in Africa, the family of slain bass player Jaco Pastorius, community development projects in El Salvador, crack awareness programs and people working for world peace. He gives his all

every night, but reaches for, and finds, something extra special for benefits. "My heart feels better than if I would have won a zillion platinum albums or if they would have given me ten awards at the Grammys."

That was especially true last fall in Tucson at the Santana benefit for the Traditional Circle of Elders and Youth. It was a grand thank you to American Indians for what they have taught Carlos over the past several years.

"The American Indians are the real healers of the land because they understand. They can grab the dirt, smell it and tell you whether it's going to rain or not. We have to look at the weather report. We're out of touch," he explains. "Every time I ask them—Apaches, Comanches, Navajos, Cherokees from Canada to Brazil—'What is it you want?' they say, 'We want three things: clean air, clean water, clean consciousness.' That's a real revelation to me. Sure, a lot of them are bitter, but most of them want to replenish, to help alleviate the land and then people's hearts. When we heal the land, we heal ourselves."

The message is simple, but not everyone gets it. Carlos says he tries to pinch Americans to wake up and look around.

"If you and I are allowed to go on the space shuttle, we're not going to see any borders and flags. We're just going to see one beautiful womb, which is the planet and we are the baby. We are all separated by the Roman Empire mentality of divide and conquer. When we come together, then you really, really put pressure. They don't have enough bullets to shoot everybody who stands up for something righteous."

Carlos says he first learned consciousness in the 1960s in the Haight-Ashbury. Since then, he has tried to spread it around and get people to change their evil ways.

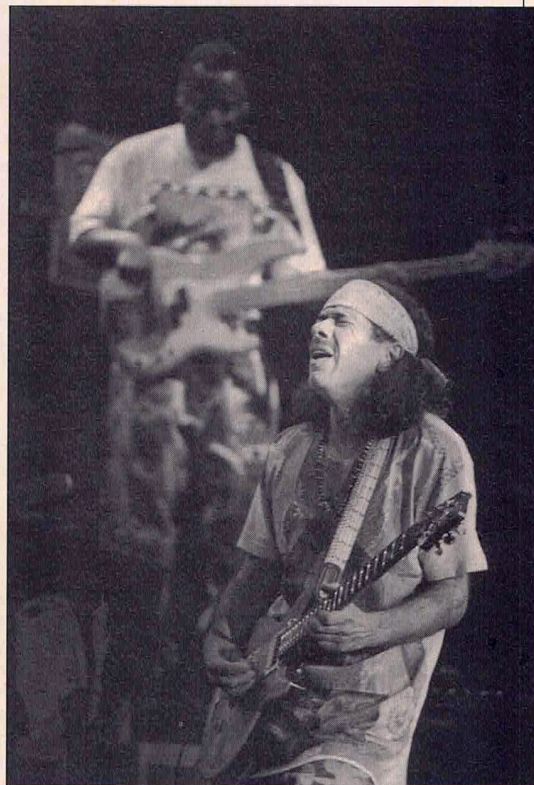
"Each person can help the whole, not just by giving money and hoping somebody will do it for you, but doing it directly...Even if it's just picking up dirty dishes from someone who left them at McDonald's, what it comes down to is what you're doing now is either a service or a disservice."

Many performers retreat into their private lives once they leave the stage, but not Carlos Santana. His actions offstage touch many people who have never experienced his inspirational and caressing guitar, from American Indians to Mexican street children.

Whatever Carlos does, you can be sure it involves one thing. "Healing. That's the key word that I'll zero in on with the rest of my life until I die. I want to be able to heal people in Tijuana and I don't mean like a doctor," he explains. "If we choose to, we can cause and effect in mass quantities."

Throughout his career, Carlos has chosen to act both locally and globally. He invites Rainforest Action Net-

work and Greenpeace on every U.S. tour, he sponsors foster children at Child Reach (formerly Save The Children). He supports at-risk youth through Cities In Schools, is spokesman for the California Hispanic High School Dropout



Carlos at the Indigenous People's Benefit in 1992.

Prevention Project, speaks with Spanish-speaking homeless clients at the Larkin Street House in San Francisco and gives money to Ciudad de los Niños (City of Children) for homeless children in Mexico.

Carlos, who recently donated a concert video to the Public Broadcasting System for a pledge drive, even writes letters to Ted Turner requesting more dignified programming on CNN.

"Elvis Presley and Howard Hughes had to take a lot of drugs to go to sleep, basically because their consciences were bothering them. I snore every night," he says. "I don't have to take pills to get up, to go to sleep because I'm doing whatever I can with my money."

Carlos' concern for the poor and oppressed is motivated by his childhood in Mexico and San Francisco's Mission District.

"I could be in Tijuana tonight hiding in the bushes to cross the border. I started there so that's where my psyche is," he says. About his comfortable life today, he adds, "This is great, but I'm not attached or possessed by it."

Not everybody can be bought, Carlos insists. In 1984, he was among many celebrities offered big money to perform in South Africa for a white-only audience. Although some did—and Carlos remembers who they are—others refused.

Standing up to apartheid is an example of what Carlos calls angelic qualities. "We as angels have only two wings, our enthusiasm and our vision. If you don't have either of the two, you're grounded and at the mercy of whatever scraps the world is going to throw at you. But if you have real effervescent enthusiasm and vision, people want to get close to you." ■



Carlos Santana receiving honorary membership in Dakota Indian Tribe at Indigenous People's Benefit.