

SANTANA ★ SANTA ROSA ★ VANCOUVER ★ BOSTON

THRASHER



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MEET THE
BOUNCE BOY
BOUNCE BOY

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CARLOS SANTANA likes five things in his music: soul, heart, mind, body and cojones. On his new album *Brothers*, written and recorded with his brother Jorge Santana and his nephew Carlos Hernandez, Santana lets it sing with powerful and luminous melodies that ring with his trademark wall. Hanging out at his practice pad in San Rafael, California, Santana explained how a good note can really drive it home. —Brian Brannon

How does music convey such emotion?

It's all about getting the right tone. The tone is the key to opening people's hearts. Even rednecks, man, when a certain note hits them, even their mind cannot deny it, because it goes all the way to their souls, and they can't justify their ignorance. The tone is the key to people's hearts. That's just what it is.

How do you feel at this point in your life?

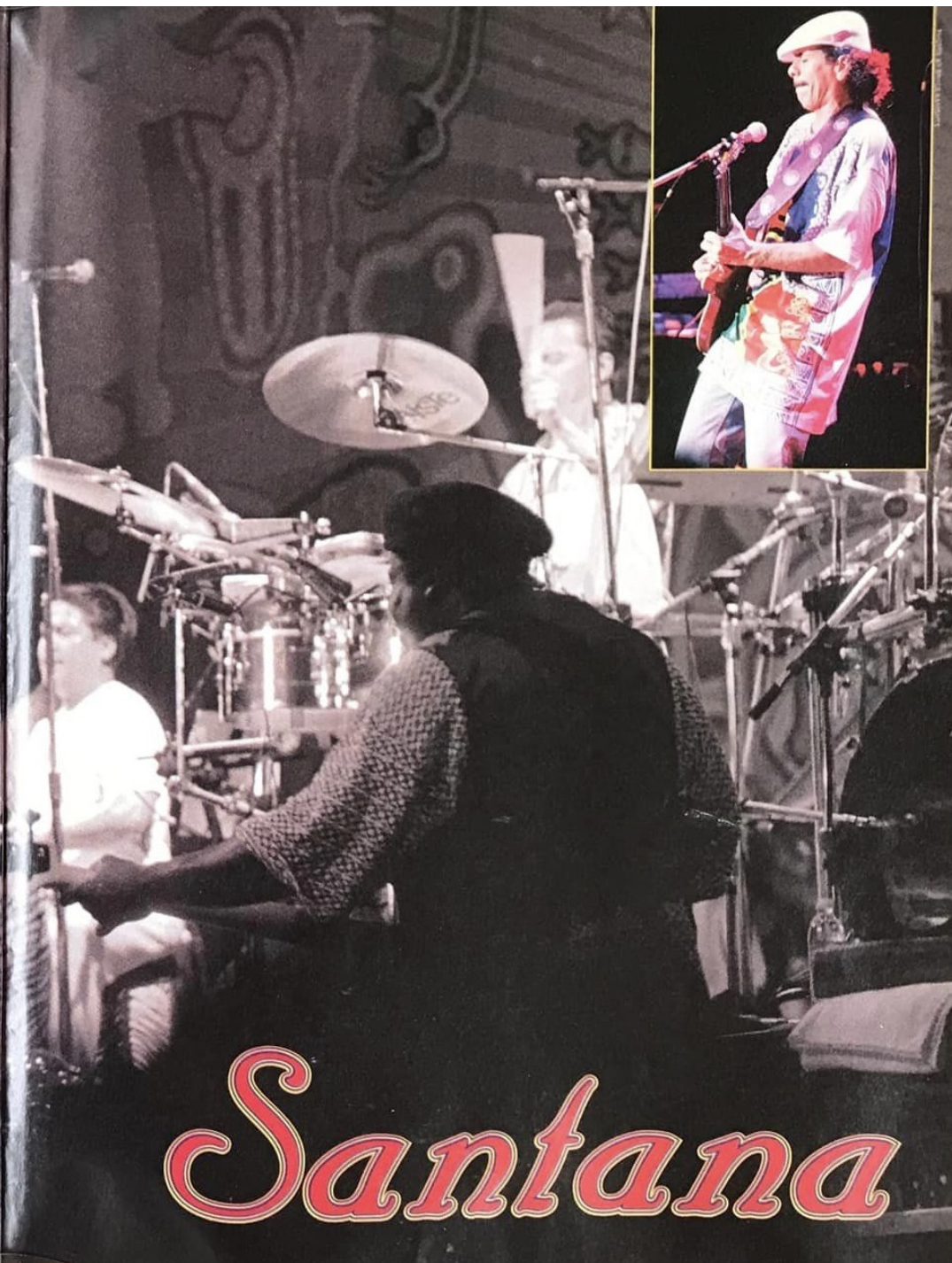
I'm just really grateful, man, that I'm forty-eight years old, forty-seven, whatever, and I feel like a kid who senses that I have a lot of passion to wake up tomorrow morning, and I'm drooling. I guess you'd call it spiritually horny for music, and it's okay to be that. It's bad when you're flat, spiritually or horny flat. When there's no passion, when there's no momentum, you should just find something else. But for me, I'm grateful for this house, my children, my wife, all of it, but I'm grateful that I still have that passion to get to the next note and get chills and give chills. Because that's what's important. All the people that I ever hung out with, from Bill Graham to Miles Davis and John Lee Hooker, I have never seen those guys bored. They're always looking at life, whether it's nice legs or whatever, or the moon

or the stars or clouds, but they're always looking with the same passion, and I think that that's what we have to guard that we don't lose. Because once you lose that, man, you can't buy it with money. You won't be able to arouse yourself anymore. Once your mind convinces you that you've seen it and done it all, shit, you should just die then. There's nothing else left. The passion that I have besides music, with *Thrasher* or whatever, is to let the young people know: Don't be fooled by the system. Look at things from your heart, and that way they won't fool you. They won't give you that superiority or inferiority complex. That way, everywhere you go, you won't be wrong, and you don't have to change your walk, and you have peace. I can go to anywhere in Africa and I know the people are going to share whatever they have to eat with me because I'm not a tourist in Africa. People trust my heart's contention and they know what I'm about. I hope that the younger people today won't be programmed to go to Vietnam or Iran anymore to fight for a so-called Uncle Sam, you know what I'm saying? And that's real important for *Thrasher*. We can talk about shoes, or we can talk about tutti-frutti and this and that, but this is what's important, to empower the young people who have all this, because it comes down to energy and how to balance it.

I was noticing that the name of your record company, Guts and Grace, embodies the same things a skater appreciates in good skateboarding, somebody that can do something really crazy, but still do it gracefully.

Yeah, there's a certain peace in being crazy. When you're crazy, you have more latitude. Just looking at *Thrasher*, I can see that these cats, they're not conventional kids, they don't want to go with the same mold, the same cookie cutter.

They want to get their own personality and whatever it takes, whether it's skating or whatever. The most beautiful thing that the Creator gave all of us is uniqueness and individuality. And I know that this magazine probably caters to a lot of young folks, and young folks are very raw. When you get older, you get more refined. Hopefully, you won't lose your rawness, you'll just refine your rawness, you'll still keep your rawness like John Lee Hooker. You lose it when you go to the army and you just start saying, "No, sir," and "Yes, sir." I don't take authority from just anybody. You have to convince me to my soul that this is what I need to be doing. I always question a lot of people, even my mom, and I used to get in trouble a lot. I still get in trouble. But now I'm paying for it because my kids ask me the same things. But it's okay. There's something beautiful about standing up for what you believe in and not just accepting the truth from somebody else giving it to you. I took my mom to London one time, and I took her to King's Road where they had a lot of guys with big ol' platform shoes and the big mohawks and spikes, and my mom was really cool. She said, "You know, those guys, I really admire them." I go, "You do, mom?" She goes, "Yeah, because not one of them has the same hairstyle or the same color, they're all unique." And I looked at her and said, "Wow, I'm really surprised with you, mom." But she was right, and I never looked at that. To me, they were just a whole bunch of punks trying to make a statement or get even with their parents or whatever the hell they were trying to do. But what she picked up on, it was really valid. She said, "Each one, if you look at them, has their own thing happening." The tattoos or the rings in their noses, not one had the same style for hair, and that made me respect them even more. ■



Santana