

SEPTEMBER 11-17, 1997

THE WEEKLY GUIDE

# NIGHT & DAY

TWO SISTERS AND 100 YEARS OF BLACK HISTORY

UP FRONT

LIFE MAGAZINE'S LOVING LOOK AT AMERICA

CENTERPIECE



## the GOSPEL of Carlos Santana

POP MUSIC

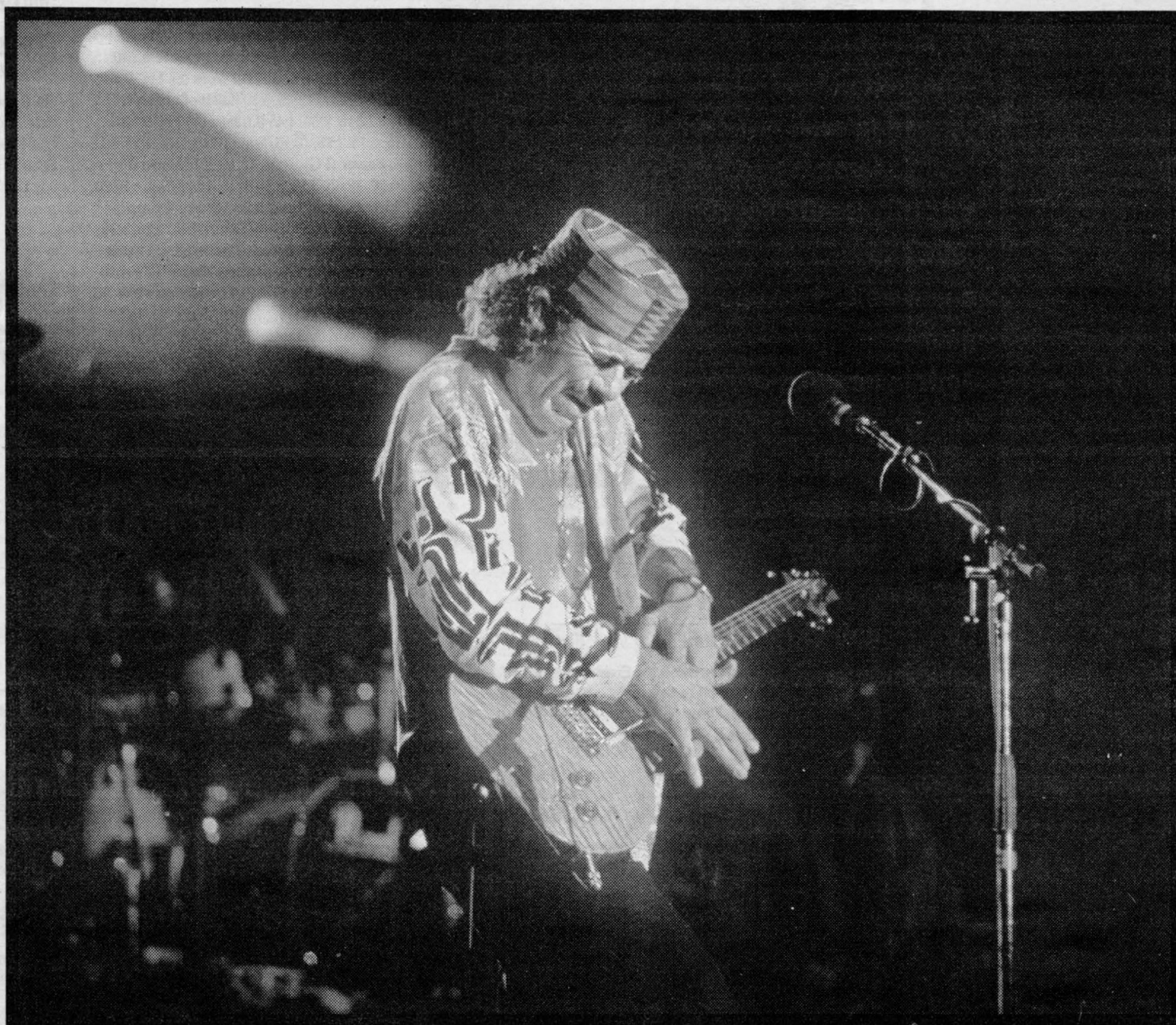


POP



MUSIC

**Carlos Santana, shown here at Los Angeles' Greek Theatre in 1996, has earned a winning reputation for his original guitar playing and his musical integrity and independence.**



KEN FRIEDMAN

## LEGENDARY GUITARIST RIDES AGAINST 'ELEVATOR MUSIC'

**'W**hen I was young, I respected my elders," Carlos Santana said. "Well, I'm 50 now, and I'm an elder, so I speak my mind."

In fact, the veteran guitarist has regularly spoken his mind since rising to stardom in the late 1960s as the leader of the pioneering Latin-rock band that bears his name.

Over the past decade, he has made statements, often provocative, about a wide variety of issues. They have ranged from the United States' declining aesthetic standards and the greed of corporate America to Santana's formative years in Tijuana and his abiding love

for the music of Miles Davis, Bob Marley, John Lee Hooker and other legendary artists who inspired him.

But there is one issue that confronts the Grammy Award-winning musician almost everywhere he goes — much to his distress. And that is Muzak, that ubiquitous brand of soporific background music heard in countless shopping malls, elevators and office buildings.

"Muzak is bland, emotionless — like they shot you with Novocain," charged Santana, in a 1988 *San Diego Union* interview.

"We have to change Muzak. We have to

abolish it ... I'll try 'til my last breath. Because we need to do it for your children and my children."

Alas, the mustachioed musician's quest to stamp out Muzak remains, at least for now, an unfulfilled dream. But Santana, who performs Tuesday and Wednesday at Hospitality Point, has become more outspoken of late when confronted with Muzak while dining or shopping.

"When they play it in a restaurant, I'll ask them: 'Why are you playing this?'" Santana

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### DATEBOOK

**Santana, with Rusted Root**  
7 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday;  
*GTE Summer Pops at Hospitality Point, Quivira Basin, Mission Bay.* \$23-\$49; (619) 220-TIXS.

BY GEORGE VARGA / POP MUSIC CRITIC

# CARLOS SANTANA'S CRUSADE



## CARLOS

From page 14

said in a recent interview from his Bay Area office. "And they'll say: 'My boss is making me play this.' And I'll say: 'Well, your boss isn't even here — he's probably out fishing — so change the channel and play some Roberta Flack or Marvin Gaye. If I go to a shopping center, a carwash, any place that plays Muzak, I get in their face and say: 'Will you play something that puts wings in my heart, instead of something that makes me feel like a toad?'"

## Change your evil ways

This crusade against Muzak is very much in character for Carlos Santana, the proud son of a noted mariachi violinist and band leader.

He firmly believes music should elevate and inspire its listeners, not lull and numb them. And if he has to agitate to make his point, so be it.

"Anywhere they play (recorded) music, it should be gorgeous, not torture," declared Santana, who was born in Autlan de Navarro in the Mexican state of Jalisco. "Because whether you have green hair or wear a suit like Wynton Marsalis, we all know if music is sincere. Just make it sincere and honest, and then it's not pollution.

"And there's certain music that (lasts) forever, whether it's Beethoven or John Lee Hooker. And that leads me to the point that, in San Diego as much as any other city, classical-music radio stations should play Hooker and Billie Holiday, because that's classical, too — unless the stations state that they are only going to play (music by) Caucasian composers. Otherwise, they're being racist and elitist."

Santana is one of only three artists to have performed at both the original Woodstock Festival in 1969 and at Woodstock '94. Many of his views have roots in the free-thinking, hippie-fueled 1960s in general, and specifically in the one-time flower-power capital of San Francisco, where he moved from Tijuana early in that decade.

"The main thing about the '60s," Santana said, "was that the hippies were presenting options to the square, plastic society. They were saying things like, 'You're part of the problem or you're part of the solution.'"

"When we take responsibility with our thoughts and actions, then that means you're going to create a constant effect, and that in itself is love. The '60s was the most important decade in this century because it gave birth to the consciousness revolution."

Some cynics might dismiss such statements as cosmic hyperbole. But to those who know him well, Santana's words ring as true as the piercing guitar solos and percussion flurries that are his musical trademarks.

"Carlos stands for that kind of integrity and independence," said jazz sax great Wayne Shorter, a longtime friend.

"He doesn't depend on others for his destiny. He is a self-contained

## WHAT DECADE IS THIS?

*Huey Lewis to Loggins, current tours celebrate rock's old news*

By George Varga  
POP MUSIC CRITIC

**O**ld soldiers may fade away, but not aging rockers. They just keep touring, with or without benefit of a new hit single or album, performing their old hits to audiences craving a quick dose of musical nostalgia.

The most popular of the bunch, the Rolling Stones, will do a stadium show here in February. Meanwhile, at least seven Jurassic-rock acts are set to perform here just in the next six days.

Why, it's enough to make aging baby-boomers whistle Jethro Tull's "Living in the Past" as their children roll their eyes, gag and begin lobbying for the mandatory retirement of all dentally challenged (read: long-in-tooth) rockers. Speaking of which, get ready for . . .

■ **Saturday:** It's been 21 years since Loggins & Messina split up, and 28 years since Kenny Loggins toured as a member of the Electric Prunes, but he still is plying his California-bred brand of slick, blue-eyed soul. He's also hawking a new nonfiction book, "The Unimaginable Life," co-written with his wife, Julia.

The first 100 concertgoers to bring the book and their tickets to the Hospitality Point box office, which opens at 6 p.m. Saturday, will get a voucher to meet Loggins and get their books signed after the show. (**Hospitality Point; 7 p.m.; \$20-\$40; 619-220-TIXS.**)

Also on Saturday, Three Dog Night performs in Oceanside. Considering the longtime absence of one of its three original lead singers, Two Dog Night would make a more accurate moniker. But that shouldn't deter fans who long more for the band's old hits than mathematical accuracy. (**Oceanside's Pier Plaza Amphitheater; 8 p.m.; \$15; 619-220-TIXS.**)

■ **Sunday:** Huey Lewis & The News' 1994 album of pale R&B retreads, "Four Chords & Several Years Ago," was a deserved flop, and it's been six years since the Bay Area band's last top-40 appearance. But if it's still hip to be



Huey Lewis &amp; The News



Kansas



Kenny Loggins

square, as Lewis sang in 1986, you can expect an enthusiastic response at the group's gig at Humphrey's Concerts by the Bay on Shelter Island. (**Humphrey's; 7:30 p.m.; \$45; 619-220-TIXS.**)

■ **Monday:** Robert Palmer's career has faltered, both with and without Power Station, the now-reunited Chic/Duran Duran offshoot band he briefly worked with in 1985. But the "Simply Irresistible" English singer is still capable of memorable music, and his commercially failed 1994 album, "Honey," easily lived up to its name. Still, it remains to be seen (and heard) how Palmer will fare at 4th&B with the revamped Power Station. (**4th&B; 8 p.m.; \$20; 619-220-TIXS.**)

Fans have another option Monday in the form of Chicago, whose days as a pioneering brass-rock band are at least 25 years in the past.

Regardless, Chicago's back-album catalog sales still average a staggering 600,000 a year, and San Diego singer-bassist Jason Scheff has proved to be an adroit replacement for Peter Cetera, who left in 1985. True, the band's 1995 album of ersatz big-band covers, "Night and Day," was a commercial dud despite its inspired title. But no matter, because Chicago's concert at Humphrey's has been sold out for months.

■ **Tuesday:** Dinosaur week ends with a probable thud when quasi-prog-rockers Kansas, never-say-die singer Eddie Money and once-notable country-rock group the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band team for a show at Sycuan Casino. Can Ultimate Spinach or Spinal Tap be far behind? (**Sycuan Casino; 8 p.m.; \$27 to \$42; 619-220-TIXS.**)

musical entity, and he is an entity unto himself. He's one of my best friends in this world. He's family."

Santana was both flattered and stunned when Shorter's comments were repeated to him.

"Wow," said the guitarist. "How can I get (a copy of) that quote?"

With absolute earnestness, Santana then proposed a trade to his interviewer: "I'll come wash your car!"

## Welcoming the millennium

Santana's current tour features the latest edition of the band he has led for nearly 30 years.

It features longtime members Raul Reckow on percussion, Chester Thompson on organ and Benny Rietfeld on bass, and comparative newcomers Tony Lindsey on vocals, percussionist Karl Perazzo and Cuban dynamo Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez on drums. For this leg of

the tour, the band is being augmented by former Miles Davis/Trouble Funk drummer Ricky Wellman.

"We're experimenting," Santana said. "Right now I'm married to the idea of creating a sound picture, rather than a visual picture. Because I want to not force, but forge, a sound vibration that can be very instrumental in bringing in the new millennium in a grand way. I want to be part of a band that brings in something completely different in the year 2000.

"I know Prince has a patent on 1999, but we want to be there on New Year's Eve, playing music that everyone of all races and denominations can laugh, dance and cry to at the same time. So I'm putting together the foundation."

And what does Santana do in those instances when his artistic inspiration falters?

"Fortunately, I'm in a profession where, when I don't have anything to say, I can go home; instead of being ridiculous, redundant or regurgitating — all the R's!" he replied.

"I can go home and take out the garbage, or take my son to his first day of high school, like I did today. That's more important than being 'King Kong, the fastest guitarist.' That never attracted me (to music). What attracted me was whatever little capacity you can bring to people to claim a piece of love and joy, so that they can rejoice and feel good about life.

"It's (creating) 'one love.' And it's not a contradiction to favor uniqueness and multiplicity."

But how do such sentiments apply to current events?

Did Santana feel a responsibility to speak out, for instance, against such politically charged issues as state Propositions 187 and 209?

Both were attacked by Latino and non-Latino groups alike for promoting discrimination.

"I have my antennae up all the time, and when I receive something God wants me to do, I'll call somebody from, say, the (United) Farm Workers," Santana said. "And there are enough people with passion who, if they need me, they'll call me.

"I try not to overextend myself. I wasn't born to do a lot of things beyond maintaining my heart center, which is my family. Because whether you want to be the next Dalai Lama or Pancho Villa, you are nothing if you don't take care of your family. Ever since I came to this country, people have been nothing but gracious to me, from Miles (Davis) to John Lee (Hooker) to Bill Graham."

"I'm 50 years old, but I still feel (I have) the innocence of a child."