

San Francisco Chronicle

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA GUIDE TO ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT ♦ FEBRUARY 20-26, 2000

DREBROOK

SUPER, NATURALLY

**CARLOS SANTANA
IS THE GRAMMYS'
GOLDEN BOY AFTER
ALL THESE YEARS**

PLUS:

**MADONNA PRODUCER
WILLIAM ORBIT**

**ACT'S 'TWO PIANOS,
FOUR HANDS'**

**BERKELEY REP'S
'THE ALCHEMIST'**

BOOK REVIEW: THE NEW CHRONICLE BOOK CLUB SELECTION

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

SANTANA'S YEAR

Dear Readers:

This time last year, who would've predicted that Carlos Santana would be the story of the 42nd Grammy Awards? Not many of us, most likely. But there's something almost inevitable about his "Supernatural" CD, especially the single "Smooth."

Santana didn't give many interviews after the nominations were announced — "he got burned out on them," explains Pop Music Editor Joel Selvin — but he did talk to Chronicle Staff Writer James Sullivan.

"The thing that struck me is that he seems extremely relaxed right now," Sullivan reports. "I've interviewed him a bunch of times, and he can often seem a bit distracted or a

little impatient. But this time he was smiling and making jokes. It was nice to see. He's feeling pretty good. If he wins a bunch of awards, great. But he's not going to sweat it."

Sullivan's story on Page 34 includes what Santana was wearing when he got the news of his 11 nominations, and how the name of the record

Carlos Santana in 1972.

was changed at the last minute.

"It's a great album," Selvin says of "Supernatural." "Carlos obviously had to mature in order to bring this out. It's not so much him rediscovering himself as it is Carlos finally being himself."

"Think about 'Abraxas,' his second album, which came out in 1970," continues Selvin, who has followed Santana's career from its start. "There was hard-rock guitar, real proto-heavy metal right next to stone salsa music and a Gabor Szabo cover. He expressed himself, and it all seemed to flow together."

So this isn't simply a case of a bunch of celebrity guests jump-starting the career of an older star?

"It got him attention, but geez, if it was that easy you'd see 10 of these things come out every year," Selvin says, shaking his head. "His artistic identity emerges out of the different contexts that he's in. The thing that's the same about each of these tracks is Carlos. He's what pulls it all together and makes it work."

For more Grammy coverage, check out Daily Datebook this week. On Wednesday, you'll find a Grammy ballot, perfect for following the awards. And on Thursday, we'll tell you who won what, and Sullivan will report on how Santana spent the night.

L

LIZ LUFKIN
EDITOR

CAL PERFORMANCES

99 | 2000 SEASON

THE ONLY PLACE TO BE

TODAY

EMANUEL AX, PIANO

3 PM, ZELLERBACH HALL \$28, \$36, \$42



MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP

L'ALLEGRO, IL PENSEROSO ED IL MODERATO

PHILHARMONIA BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

NICHOLAS MCGEGAN, CONDUCTOR

CHRISTINE BRANDES, SOPRANO

DOMINIQUE LABELLE, SOPRANO

IAIN PATON, TENOR

STEPHEN SALTERS, BARITONE

UC CHAMBER CHORUS

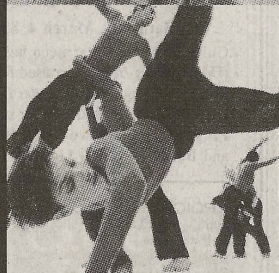
MARIKA KUZMA, DIRECTOR

WED-SAT, MAR 1-4, 8 PM; AND SUN, MAR 5, 3 PM

ZELLERBACH HALL \$34, \$44, \$52

Based on a text by John Milton and set to Handel's glorious music, this rarely performed *tour de force* is quintessential Mark Morris: breathtakingly musical, touchingly funny, brilliantly inventive, and profoundly human "among the happiest and most endearing works American dance has seen," says the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "There is no question it is a masterpiece."

SIGHTLINES: PRE-PERFORMANCE TALKS: MAR 1, 7 PM AND MAR 5, 2 PM BY CONDUCTOR NICHOLAS MCGEGAN; AND MAR 4, 7 PM BY MUSICOLOGIST WYE ALLANBROOK. CHAIR, UC BERKELEY DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC.



TRISHA BROWN COMPANY

FRI & SAT, MAR 10 & 11, 8 PM
ZELLERBACH HALL \$18, \$24, \$32

Award-winning experimental choreographer Trisha Brown returns to Cal Performances for the first time in many years with the West Coast premieres of *Canto/Pianto*, based on her critically acclaimed production of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, and *Five Part Weather Invention*, a new collaboration with jazz composer/trumpet player David Douglas and painter Terry Winters. The program also includes Brown's classic *Set and Reset*, performed to a score by Laurie Anderson, with sets by Robert Rauschenberg.

CALL TODAY!

510.642.9988

Cal Performances

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY
www.calperfs.berkeley.edu

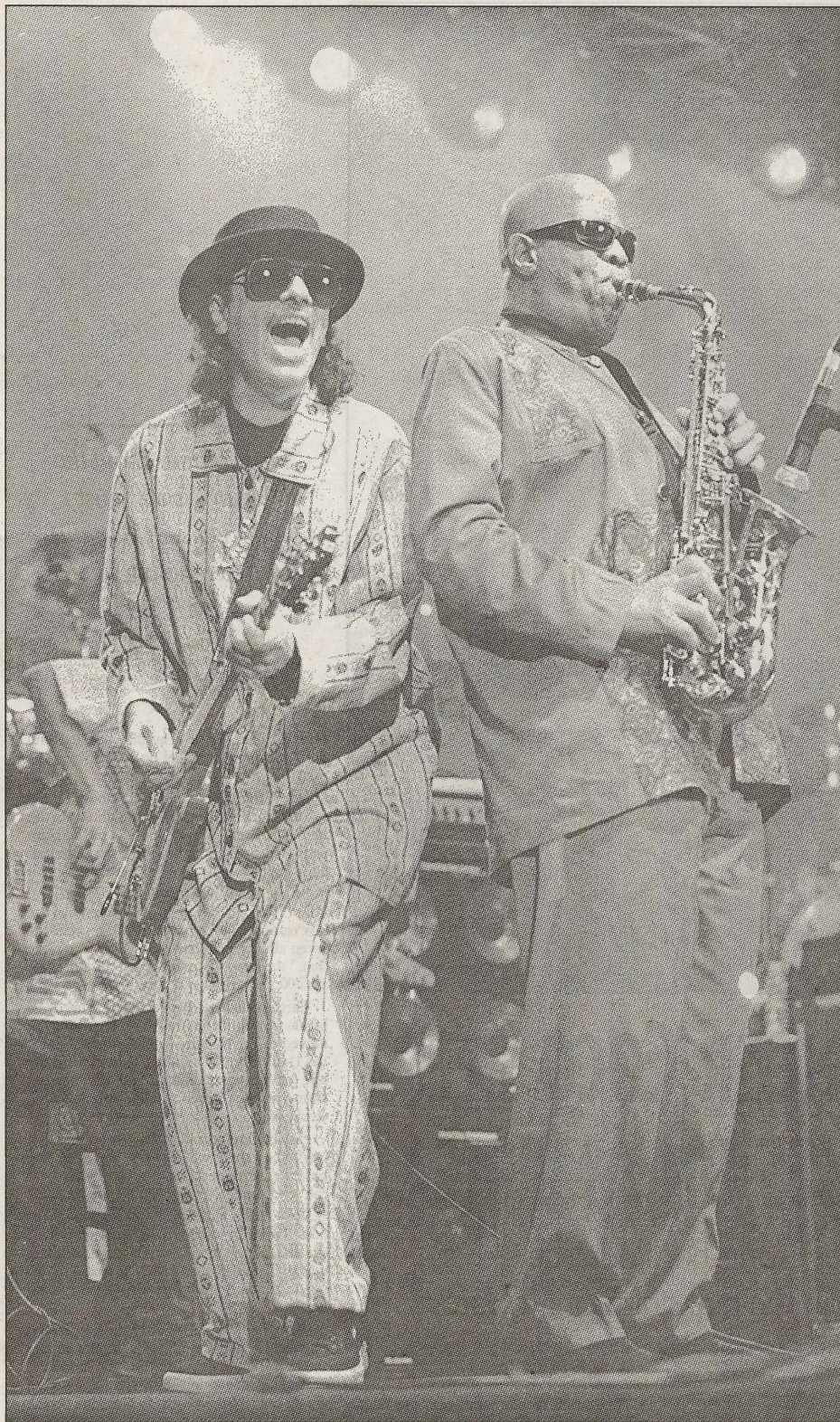
MEDIA SPONSORS

San Francisco

CLASSICAL
102.1 KDFC

CCN
CONTRA COSTA NEWS PAPERS

Cal Performances Ticket Office is located in Zellerbach Hall on the UC Berkeley campus. Open Mon-Fri 10 am - 5:30 pm; Sat & Sun 10 am - 2 pm. Order by voice mail during non-business hours. Groups of 10 or more save 15%. Program subject to change.



PETER DA SILVA / The Chronicle 1997

SANTANA'S STAYING POWER

'Supernatural'
living up to its name,
should sweep Grammys

By James Sullivan
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

Carlos Santana was caught with his pants down when this year's Grammy nominations were announced. "I had just gotten out of the shower," he recalled. "My wife had this beatific smile. She said, 'Hey, Mr. 11 Nominations!'"

"Here I am, all butt-naked and wet." He laughed, pushing back his familiar felt hat. "I said, 'You're kidding me.' That part still hasn't hit me yet."

Airbrushed teen idols aside, the pop story of 1999 was Santana's "Supernatural" ability to attract three generations of listeners. With an amazing 6 million copies sold in the United States to date, according to SoundScan, the album has hovered around the peak of the charts for several months. Each time a blockbuster debut steps down after its cursory week on top, the Santana record reclaims its No. 1 position.

On Wednesday, Santana will cap an extraordinary year with the Grammy Awards ceremony, where the 52-year-old guitarist and bandleader is all but certain to win at least a few of the 10 or 11 Grammys (depending on who's counting) he has been nominated for, including album of the year, best rock album and record of the year for "Smooth," his smash single with Rob Thomas of Matchbox 20. The nominations put Santana among the all-timers; Michael Jackson and Babyface share the record with 12 nominations apiece in 1983 and 1992, respectively.

Weirdly, this year's 10 Grammy nods are twice as many as Santana's entire previous haul — five minor nominations meted out over a remarkable 30-year career, one that includes two other No. 1 albums (1970's "Abraxas" and 1971's "III"), working relationships with some of the best in the business (John Lee Hooker, Miles Davis) and a 1998 induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Plenty of theories have been floated about the key to "Supernatural's" success. They range from Santana's reunion with Clive Davis, the industry bigwig who first signed the band 30 years ago, to the new album's well-manicured parade of guest artists (Thomas, Lauryn Hill, Dave Matthews, Eric Clapton) to the recent pop commotion over all things Latino.

Actually, much of the credit can be traced to a simple choice of words. Just weeks before the release of the new album last spring, Santana was still telling visitors it would be called "Mumbo Jumbo." At the last minute, he changed the

THE GRAMMYS

Rosie O'Donnell hosts the 42nd annual awards show at 8 p.m. Wednesday on Channel 5.

Carlos Santana performed with jazz great John Handy at the 20th annual Bay Area Music Awards in 1997.

title to "Supernatural."

To Santana, it was a minor adjustment. The term "mumbo jumbo" has African origins implying supernatural powers. Over the years, however, those words have come to mean something very different: Malarkey. Gibberish. The illusion of competence rather than the competence itself.

There is nothing misleading, on the other hand, about "Supernatural." Obviously, the album had no choice but to meet its destiny.

To put the "Supernatural" story into perspective for himself, Santana said a few days ago in the conference room of his management office in San Rafael that he thought about retired 49ers Joe Montana and Ronnie Lott. Both were just elected to the NFL's Hall of Fame.

He saw them on TV, holding hands, thrilled to culminate their careers together. "That was the max for them," Santana said. "The band did that two years ago" — got inducted into the Hall of Fame — "and now it's like we're in the Super Bowl again."

As effortless as he is with those signature sustained guitar notes, Santana certainly knows how to sustain a metaphor, or two or three. Over the course of a relaxed, hourlong conversation, he compared making and selling records to pumping gas and dealing cars, promoted interracial compassion by invoking news images of civilians directing traffic after the 1989 earthquake and talked about people validating their existence by signing their own checks at the bank.

"You can't play tennis by yourself," he said, referring to all those "Supernatural" guest artists. "You can't play hide-and-seek by yourself."

"You can't play all the instruments and write all the songs. What are you going to do, buy all the records, too? Nobody's relating to that except you."

By most accounts, the all-star approach to "Supernatural" came at the suggestion of Santana's old mentor, Davis, and his associates.

"I'm pretty sure the company wouldn't have hired me without (Davis)," Santana said. "They probably told him he was losing his touch." Santana floundered through most of the '90s. His 1992 debut on Polygram went nowhere; most of the attention he could muster in recent years came for nostalgic reasons, such as the "Dance of the Rainbow Serpent" boxed set and an archival recording from the Fillmore.

But suddenly Carlos Santana is as happening as the Old Navy lady. And "Supernatural," he suggested, has the staying power of some of the greatest rock records. "When you put it next to Jimi Hendrix's first three records, or Cream or the Doors, it's going to stick around. I know. I've tested it. I've played it next to those records until 3 in the morning."

"Each song flows, and of that I am really proud."

The music industry agrees. Many of his friends and collaborators sent congratulatory flowers the day after the Grammy nominations were announced; the tidy San Rafael office, located on a nondescript row of light industrial businesses, was full of them.

"I got a standing ovation from the people in the office when I came in. I tell you — it's great to be alive and smelling the flowers, instead of dead and smelling them from down there." He smiled.

"I'm just grateful you don't see me on those 'Where Are They Now?' shows. Like anybody, you have valleys and deserts, and you step in doggie doo-doo in the park. But I want my life if possible to be a triumph, not a tragedy."

The commercial success of "Supernatural" has already been a validation, he says. A few Grammy wins would add to the excitement, but he is not counting on them.

"To me success, or progress, is when you make people dance, cry and laugh at the same time. If you're drunk, the music should make you sober, and if you're sober it should make you drunk. That's the test of real music to me."



FREDERIC LARSON / The Chronicle

Grammy-nominated producer Walter Afanasieff: "Eventually the Susan Lucci syndrome kicks in. You can't keep losing."

MAN WITH THE MIDAS TOUCH

This may be the year for producer Walter Afanasieff

By Joel Selvin

CHRONICLE POP MUSIC EDITOR

Always a bridesmaid, not yet the bride, Walter Afanasieff has been nominated for the producer-of-the-year Grammy six times.

But this may be his moment, considering that he made records last year with Ricky Martin, Barbra Streisand, Kenny G and Babyface, not to mention winning a Grammy last year for his part in the Celine Dion "Titanic" smash, "My Heart Will Go On." He is currently topping the charts with the Australian group Savage Garden.

"It's a process of elimination," said the 42-year-old record producer. "Eventually the Susan Lucci syndrome kicks in. You can't keep losing."

Whether he wins the Grammy or not, Afanasieff, who cut a No. 1 hit the first time he stepped into the studio as a producer just 10 years ago, is the most successful record producer working in the San Francisco music scene. His records with acts such as Mariah Carey, Michael Bolton, Dion and Kenny G have sold more than 300 million records, and, for better or worse, his hand has helped shape the sound of American pop. It is somehow fitting that Afanasieff produced the Kenny G version of "Auld Lang Syne" that rang out the old at the historic Times Square celebration on New Year's Eve.

Afanasieff lives and works on a lavish four-acre compound on a San Rafael hillside, where the French doors in his recording studio open onto a tennis court. The all-digital studio itself contains two separate control rooms so that

recording work and computer programming can take place at the same time. Computers flank the main 90-track mixing board. Behind it sits an ominous bank of electronic keyboards on a work station. The adjacent guest house contains a cozy digital demo studio of its own. Last week, MTV heroes Train were in the exquisite studio, working on a couple of songs with the man with the Midas touch.

Afanasieff is a quiet, soft-spoken gentleman with a diamond stud in one ear who was born to Russian emigres in Brazil but raised in San Francisco. He started taking piano lessons at age 3 and studied classical music at the Conservatory of Music in San Mateo. He was playing fusion jazz at local clubs when producer Narada Michael Walden had him audition for a band.

He didn't get the job, but before long he was playing keyboards on sessions produced by Walden. He became part of Walden's studio cadre, playing on hit records by Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston, George Benson and others. He played on the first solo album by a saxophonist fresh out of the Jeff Lorber Fusion, a project with low expectations that Walden handed off to his associate producers. On the album, Afanasieff wrote "Don't Make Me Wait for Love," the second hit single off the million-selling 1987 first album by Kenny G.

But Afanasieff grew unhappy with Walden. He didn't think he was getting proper credit for his contributions, and he wanted to share in the publishing royalties of songs he co-wrote. About this time, Sony Records President Tommy

► **PRODUCER:** See Page 36

THE GRAMMY NOMINEES: TOP CATEGORIES

Record of the year

- "I Want It That Way," Backstreet Boys
- "Believe," Cher
- "Livin' La Vida Loca," Ricky Martin
- "Smooth," Santana featuring Rob Thomas
- "No Scrubs," TLC

Album of the year

- "Millennium," Backstreet Boys
- "Fly," Dixie Chicks
- "When I Look in Your Eyes," Diana Krall
- "Supernatural," Santana
- "Fanmail," TLC

Song of the year

- "I Want It That Way," Andreas Carlsson and Max Martin, songwriters (Backstreet Boys)

- "Livin' La Vida Loca," Desmond Child and Robi Rosa, songwriters (Ricky Martin)
- "Smooth," Itaal Shur and Rob Thomas, songwriters (Santana featuring Rob Thomas)
- "Unpretty," Dallas Austin and Tionne "T-Boz" Watkins, songwriters (TLC)
- "You've Got a Way," Robert John "Mutt" Lange and Shania Twain, songwriters (Shania Twain)

Best new artist

- Christina Aguilera
- Macy Gray
- Kid Rock
- Britney Spears
- Susan Tedeschi