

G Whiz: Can GBV-C/HIV Coinfection Promote Long-Term Survival?

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Memory Loss

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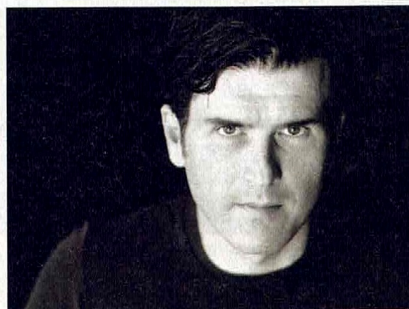
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PHOTO BY HAL MILLER

Rainbow Warriors

CARLOS AND DEBORAH SANTANA JAM WITH A&U'S DANN DULIN ABOUT CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING AND RAISING KIDS, HEALING OUR CULTURAL DIVIDES, AND ZEROING IN ON AIDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

I dare you. Spin some Santana music. If your body doesn't begin to groove, then you're dead! This music has soul, rhythm, heart, and honesty. The consummate musician, Carlos Santana has been a master of guitar licks for over three decades. He's "smooth"—like the name of his 1999 Grammy-winning Song of the Year, the Latin-pulsed collaboration with Rob Thomas from the Grammy-winning Album of the Year, *Supernatural*. Santana's honors include eight platinum and eight gold albums, a star on Hollywood Boulevard, and induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Santana has sold over ninety million records. In 2003, he won yet another Grammy (to date Carlos has garnered thirteen) with Michelle Branch for Best Pop Collaboration With Vocals for the song, "The Game of Love," from Santana's current CD *Shaman*. He does it all: jazz, classical, African, rock, rap, pop, hip-hop, Latin, spiritual, and R&B—and he loves to share the spotlight. Santana's music is not easily categorized, and, indeed, crosses generational barriers.

It's hard to label his music but you can

definitely label the man: Carlos Santana is a humanitarian. Less visible by choice, but no less committed and compassionate, is the other half of the Santana team, Carlos's wife, Deborah. In 1998, they established The Milagro (Miracle) Foundation, which provides financial aid for education, healthcare, and other pressing needs for disadvantaged children. Over the years, Carlos has donated his talent to such charitable causes as the San Francisco Earthquake Relief, Tijuana Orphans, education for Latino youth, and the rights of indigenous peoples. Recently, their humanitarian spirit has perhaps shone most brightly on the AIDS crisis.

In the summer of 2003, the Santanas announced that all proceeds from Santana's twenty-three-city Shaman Tour would be donated to Artists for a New South Africa (ANSA) to help battle AIDS. "Join us in spreading a spiritual virus—a masterpiece of joy on this planet," Carlos said last year at a news conference,

with Deborah and Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu by his side. This was a landmark event—the first time an artist has ever donated the net proceeds from an extended concert tour to charity. The total revenue generated was \$2.5 million, which helped to establish the Amandla AIDS Fund ("amandla" means "empowerment" in several South African languages), an ANSA grantmaking arm that provides urgent and much-needed support to front-line AIDS service organizations.

ANSA was founded in 1989 by a group of artists, including Alfre Woodard, Danny Glover (A&U, June 2002), Blair Underwood, CCH Pounder, Mary Steenburgen, and Robert and Donna Brown Guillaume (who lost their son, Jacques, to AIDS). ANSA's mission is two-fold: first, to combat HIV/AIDS on the African conti-

"Deborah and I both have a serious need to share whatever God, life, and people share with us....so for us it's natural to want to share that with the ground zero of AIDS, which is South Africa."



"A lot of people don't want to see the reality of AIDS," says Santana. "...It takes courage to see yourself in everything and change it."

nent, and second, to support democracy in South Africa and to strengthen the civil rights movement in America. "The Santanas' extraordinary generosity is making a significant difference in South Africa," explains Sharon Gelman, executive director of ANSA. "Thus far, \$500,000 in grants has been distributed to NGOs that provide treatment and comprehensive medical care to PWAs. Funds were also provided for pivotal AIDS advocacy and education programs. We are now in the midst of allocating an initial grant of \$250,000 for the development of a collaborative project, which will be based in KwaZulu Natal, ground zero of the global pandemic. We are working with a team of local experts and child welfare NGOs to

Santana offices, which are located in a warehouse district adjacent to downtown San Rafael, California, for a moment I am transported back to high school days when I was introduced to Santana music. I'd mosey past my sister's bedroom and she'd be playing "Oye Como Va" from the *Abraxas* album. When I heard that spirited yet haunting beat, I was hooked. At that time, it was racy music, especially to a guy who had only listened to the Tijuana Brass, the Ray Conniff Singers, and the Carpenters!

Surrounding the non-descript Santana building are the lush hills of Marin County, and directly across the street is a huge school playing field. With its typical coastal climate, the sky is drizzly-sunny. Inside Santana's offices, on the other hand, I find a different climate. The friendly and attentive staff members greet me, and offer a hot cup of herbal tea. Santana's many awards and honors are displayed on the walls, including a triple platinum plaque for the *Supernatural* CD. A conga drum dominates one corner,

filled with a freshly cut colorful bouquet of irises and marigolds, hang three enlarged framed Woodstock ticket stubs. Who could forget Santana's milestone breakthrough performance at this historic 1969 event that introduced Santana to the masses?

Shortly, I am led through a maze of hallways and offices to the studio where I wait briefly for Carlos and Deborah to arrive. The rehearsal room is soundproof, and the entire ceiling is slanted from one end to the other. It is dimly lit with amber-toned studio lights, scattered with percussion instruments, guitars, sound mixing equipment, amps, and mikes, and the air is infused with incense, which elicits a tranquil effect. With the ethereal ambience, I am swept away into fantasizing who has likely jammed in this space: Rob Thomas, Wyclef Jean, Lauryn Hill, Dave Matthews, Musiq, Macy Gray, and on and on, when...

Carlos and Deborah enter quietly and gracefully. They are low-key, somewhat shy, but friendly. We shake hands warmly, and slowly take our prearranged seats. Although the Santanas appear calm this afternoon, Carlos, fifty-six, and Deborah, fifty-three, are both profoundly upset by the increasing apathy of Americans and the current administration toward the AIDS crisis. "You have to pass a test to be a brain surgeon, or a plumber," Carlos reasons, "yet you don't have to pass a test to be a politician—but there should be a test. We've had politicians like Ronald Reagan and Bush, and now this Arnold [Schwarzenegger] guy. They don't know anything about anything. Why can't a politician say, 'Damn the rules. This is what is in my heart and in my consciousness?' The last time I heard that was when [former President Jimmy] Carter said, 'I'm gonna win because I'm tellin' ya what ya wanna hear; I'm gonna lose because I'm tellin' ya what ya need to hear.'"

"The struggle I have every day is to seek justice and live in peace," asserts Deborah, who is seated beside her husband. "The struggle to combat AIDS, to fight for human rights, and to live free in a country that says it's a free democracy. I get fired up and I have to fight for these things. Then I go home, meditate, and try to put it in perspective because ultimately our souls are all free. But I find that every day it's a real dichotomy



ANSA rep Alfre Woodard (middle) presented the Santanas with a beaded guitar strap and a necklace and bracelet set, created by a KwaZulu Natal artist, to honor their contribution of Shaman Tour proceeds to launch the Amandla AIDS Fund.

identify a particularly hard-hit community with scant resources. This project will provide comprehensive assistance to AIDS orphans and vulnerable children."

For years, I only knew Carlos Santana's music, and so little about his attitudes, beliefs, and personal life, partly because he rarely gives interviews. As I walk up to the

beautifully decorated in bright red and orange lacquer tones—Carlos's own artistic handiwork. I sit on a bronze-colored couch with Miro-esque design motifs, and drink my tea from a cup bearing the Make-A-Wish Foundation logo. Little stuffed animals hang on the partitioned workplace cubicles. In the spanking-clean bathroom,

PHOTO BY ARNOLD TURNER

for me, and I'm sure you experience it, too. My goal is to continue to work for justice, equality, and healing for everyone, and to still do that with a sense of peace."

I ask, Where did you two get such an open heart and a fervent sense of justice? "We're sixties babies!" Deborah shouts, proudly cheering with raised fists. We all laugh as she specifies, "Well, he was a hippie, I was a cheerleader." Deborah is an exquisitely attractive biracial woman (her father was black; her mother, Irish-English). She is dressed casually in a smart salmon-colored sweater blouse and black slacks, with black leather slip-on pumps. She wears a necklace that alternates pearls with tiny gemstones. Her medium-sized jeweled earrings dangle from each lobe. Deborah grew up in San Francisco where her father was a jazz blues musician. Her biracial background led Deborah, at an early age, to

passion for life. At fifteen, in 1962, he moved to San Francisco (several years later he would suffer from tuberculosis). Carlos was now at the center of the counter-culture revolution. He played his music on the streets and in the parks, including Hippie Hill.

"San Francisco was the greatest blessing that transformed my existence," proclaims Santana, who looks cool in a black ribbed cotton pullover shirt, black sweatpants, woven leather burgundy slip-ons, and a black Hugo cap. Around his neck is a large gold chain with a star-shaped angel pendant that hangs mid-chest. "The hippies I hung out with were probing some serious, profound questions beyond government, beyond religion, beyond the status quo. Hippies represented the highest good for people on the planet—not for blacks, or whites, but for the whole thing. The real hippies, I feel, are like reincarnated American Indians that we call

"It's so great in this country now," Deborah says, "because there are many people who are living with HIV....But in South Africa, 1,600 people die every day."

Carlos looks down, then raises his eyes directly into mine. "Deborah and I both have a serious need to share whatever God, life, and people share with us. We've been in a position where we can write volumes about the beautiful people around us. We've been really blessed in many, many ways, so for us it's natural to want to share that with the ground zero of AIDS, which is South Africa."

"It's so great in *this* country now," Deborah says emotionally with a slight break in her voice, "because there are many people who are *living* with HIV. It has become a chronic illness rather than a death sentence. But in South Africa, 1,600 people die every day. You can see the disparity. Many in this country have a definite ignorance of and a detachment from other cultures. You have a country in complete and total denial. The remedy is education and participation. You have to educate yourself, your family—everyone you can. Accept the reality and then take action." Carlos nods in agreement.

Usually, when one of them talks, the other person has their arms folded and legs crossed, yet focused on the person who is speaking.

"Ever since we made that donation last year to ANSA, it's important for us to be more visible and to participate more in the AIDS issue," emphasizes Deborah, as she momentarily plays with her earring. "Until you travel outside California, you don't realize how different it is out there. The government promised to spend five billion in how many years? We spend seventy billion on pet food alone in this country!"

Carlos follows Deborah's lead. "If more people, like those I see on the covers of *A&U*, can come together, we can create the architectural tools for healing AIDS, healing cancer, and healing the most sickliest sickness there is—fear and anger. That's worse than AIDS!" He looks over the magazines and spots a cover story from October, 2002. "Susan Sarandon is brave," remarks

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Salvador, Deborah, Stella, Carlos, and Angelica Santana

activism (her memoirs, *Space Between The Stars*, will be published next year). "Our friends were not only multiethnic, they were multigender and multi-everything. We grew up around protesters, like the Black Panthers. My parents were married when anti-miscegenation laws were still in effect. It was not even legal for them to get married in the State of California."

For Carlos, relocating to San Francisco from Tijuana, Mexico, realigned his life. Born in the Mexican village of Autlan (halfway between Puerto Vallarta and Guadalajara), Santana learned to play guitar by age eight. His father, a mariachi violinist, taught him "how to get inside the note." Through his mother, he developed a deep

Rainbow Warriors."

Carlos and Deborah have both explored many spiritual paths. Deborah presently attends the Unity congregation, a non-denominational church that embraces all religions. Not only does she meditate but Carlos does as well. "I have friends who are Buddhists, like Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter, and whenever I'm around them we chant. It's unbelievable after fifteen minutes what happens—your saliva changes, your thoughts change," Santana notes with a childlike wonder. "All paths are good. Whatever works, just get it." Deborah, who has been listening intently, politely interjects: "Yes, whatever works but [also] allows you to remain free."

Santanas

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Santana. "A lot of people don't want to see the reality of AIDS. They change the channel. It takes courage to see yourself in everything and change it. Most people want to compartmentalize and say, 'That's them and it's not me.' I think Americans who travel extensively around the world change their attitudes immediately because they become aware that everything they see really is a part of them."

"I've often wondered: If the Pope caught AIDS, would people have a different kind of passion to combat this disease?" asks Carlos. "It's hard to comprehend when people say, 'They deserve it.' I go, 'What?! That's sick, man!'" he yells in disgust. "I just don't

remember that talk we had about waiting to have sex?" And she said, 'All I remember is you said, Use a condom.' I said to myself, 'Okay, well, they remembered something.'" At one point, the family assembled and watched a video about the AIDS crisis in South Africa that was sent by Sharon Gelman at ANSA. "It was really profound. And what struck my kids was that it follows the lives of a few people who end up being buried."

Deborah has other thoughts on family involvement in prevention and intervention. "The public school system is great. They're informing the kids, handing out condoms, and giving classes, but the inde-

pendent schools are still at the point of denial. They're still influenced, in some respects, by parent groups that don't want their kids to have information. It's the same battle of getting the adults to accept the reality and then to teach their kids." Deborah is emphatic, articulate, and passionate. "We have to take the ANSA kinds of videos into the schools, into the homes, and let kids understand the sta-

tistics." Peer mentoring, she stresses, is extremely important; indeed, the Santanas' Milagro Foundation has worked with organizations that have sponsored mentor programs.

"I see Milagro as the hand of God, picking us up when we fall," explains Carlos about their foundation. "Milagro raises consciousness, heals, and gives people hope. I want kids to be able to spread their wings fully." "Yes," agrees Deborah, "We want to give love to these children who don't get it at home. I was raised with love and want to share that." In 2001, Deborah and Carlos were recipients of the UCLA Cesar E. Chavez Spirit Award for their work with the Milagro Foundation. This summer, a limited edition Santana CD will be sold countrywide through Baja Fresh restaurants to benefit the Milagro Founda-

tion. Milagro funds are distributed locally, nationally, and internationally. Since it began, Milagro has granted over \$1.1 million to grassroots organizations.

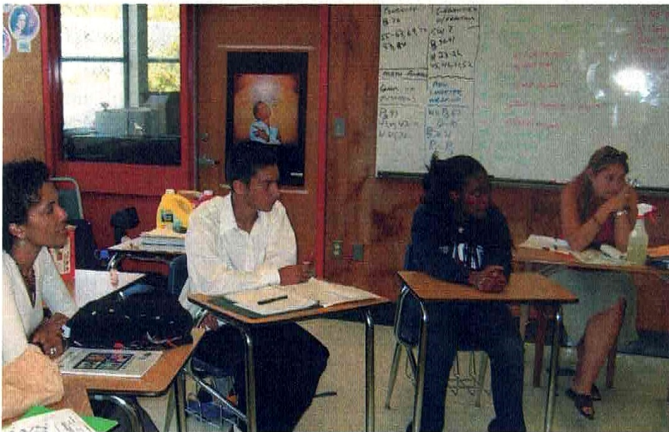
What's next for these two activists? They will be honored alongside Archbishop Tutu and others in a special ceremony held at The Greek Theatre in Los Angeles on October 2, a benefit for ANSA that marks the tenth anniversary of the end of Apartheid, and the fifteenth anniversary of ANSA. Santana will also perform. In September, Deborah and Carlos will receive the Pioneer Achievement Award from Youth AIDS in New York City, and, presently, Carlos is in the studio cutting his thirty-ninth album.

As our time together draws near, I ask if they have any parting words. Deborah speaks up. "Though I respect the gravity of the pandemic, I would encourage *everyone* who's not yet involved in some way, to give a donation to a reputable organization, or to educate themselves or someone else about HIV so that we stop the [silence]." Carlos drives it home. "Congratulations to you and everyone involved with the magazine for continuing to share information, passion, and joy in this journey of healing. We're all in it together."

Deborah and I hug. When Carlos and I embrace, he puts his hand on my head and holds it there for a moment. It's a supportive, heartfelt, and gracious gesture. As they depart, Carlos expresses a desire to connect with Susan Sarandon. There's no telling what these three powerhouses and kindred spirits could accomplish *together*.

Read the full interview on A&U's Web site: www.aumag.org. For more info, contact the Milagro Foundation by mail at P.O. Box 9125, San Rafael, California 94912; by phone at (415) 460-9939; or log on to its Web site at www.milagrofoundation.org. Contact ANSA by mail at P.O. Box 1616, Los Angeles, California 90034; by phone at (877) 4-AFRICA (423-7422); or log on to www.ansafrica.org. Jam with Santana at www.santana.com. Many thanks to Davidd Batalon, Michael Jensen, Kitsaun King, Shelley Brown, and Sharon Gelman.

Dann Dulin interviewed Connie Francis for the March issue.



On behalf of Milagro, Deborah Santana (left) visits Fremont High's Global Education Partnership in Oakland, California.

understand why some people think other people are disposable like Kleenex. All people are precious."

Indeed, Carlos and Deborah's world-view extends into the home. They have been married for thirty years and live in San Rafael with their three kids, Angelica, fourteen, Stella, nineteen, and Salvador, twenty-one (who plays keyboards in his band, Salvador Santana Band, which will open for Santana in Montreux, Switzerland, during their July European tour). And since apples don't fall far from the tree, the Santana kids are globally aware, and have a variety of friendships. "We talk a lot with our kids," Deborah points out. She stops, then begins to smile, which shows off a beautiful set of ivories. "When I said to one of our children, I won't mention which one," she laughs, "'Don't you