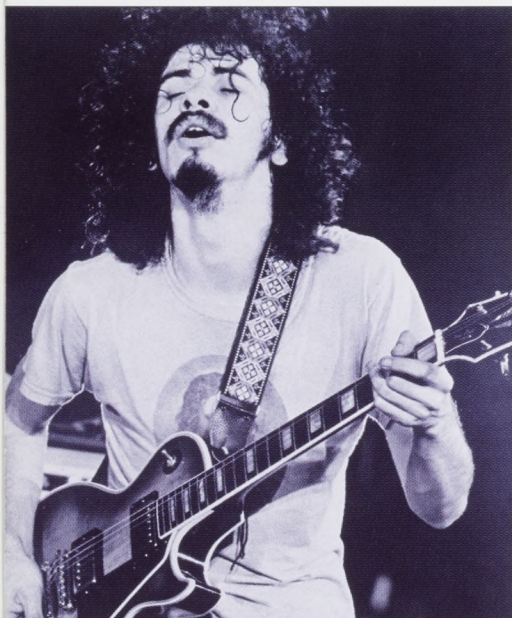


SANTANA

CRRRRRRRRRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAANNNNNNNNNNG! BRRRRRANNNNG!
Brrrrrrannng! Brrrrrr-rrrrannng! ☞ When Carlos Santana's guitar wails, the whole world nods with recognition. His unmistakable tone – fat, long and thick with a sustain that seems to sail on for light-years – is one of the handful of trademark guitar sounds in rock & roll. ☞ If that sound were the only gift that Santana had given to rock music, he'd be well deserving of the place he's about to assume in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. But there's much, much more to celebrate about the contributions of Carlos Santana, the musician, and Santana, the band. It's been more than thirty years since Carlos, keyboardist Gregg Rolie, bassist David Brown, drummer Michael Shrieve and *congueros* José Chepito Areas and Mike Carabello got together for jam sessions in the warehouses of San Francisco's Mission district. In those three decades, most of the other Summer of Love bands that burned so brightly faded from memory. Santana endures. More than that, Carlos Santana became a driving force behind not just one, but three new genres of music: jazz rock, world music and rock en Español. Few, if any, rock bands have packed such inspirational power, across generations and across international borders. ☞ But don't take my word for it – just go to the Dominican Republic or Mexico or Colombia or Argentina and talk to local-hero *rockeros* like Juan Luís Guerra, Luís Días, Alex Lora or Charly Garcia. You'll get, more or less, the same story that Guerra – a multimillion-selling Latin pop artist in his thirties – told me one afternoon in Santo Domingo. “When Santana's records came out, they changed everything, it was like a revolution in music. You could walk down the street in my neighborhood and hear Santana coming through

Santana '69: Michael Shrieve, Carlos Santana, José Chepito Areas, Gregg Rolie, David Brown, Mike Carabello (from left)





the window of every teenager's room."

Santana, quite literally, brought a generation of Latin-American kids into the rock & roll community. The band's Afro-Latin rhythms, combined with the Spanish flamenco fire in Santana's *sostenutos*, translated what had been an Anglo-American phenomenon for a whole new audience, and spread rock's reach to South America and Africa. Now, rock en Español, propelled by MTV Latino, is a multimillion-dollar segment of the music business. Would this have happened without the seeds sowed by Santana? I doubt it.

Look and listen beyond Latin America, and you keep bumping into the Santana legacy. It's all over the world-music map. Echoes of Carlos's guitar sizzle in every guitar solo by Haiti's vodou-rock stars Boukman Eksperyans, and the spirit of Gregg Rolie's funk-charged Hammond organ pulses through the Afro-Beat rhythms of Nigerian superstar Fela Anikulapo Kuti, who died in 1997.

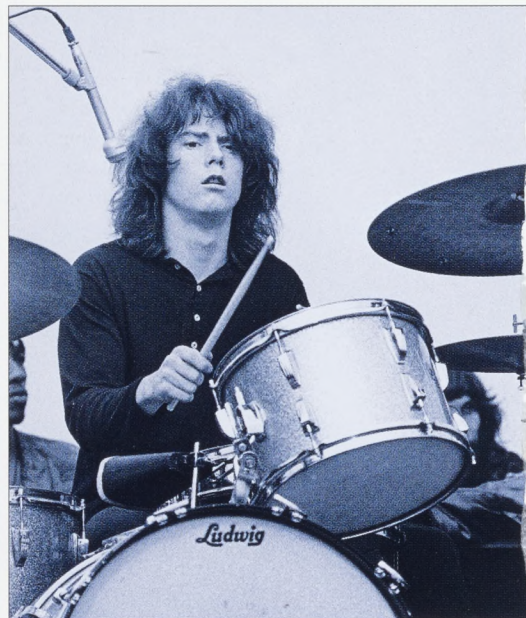
Mike Carabello, José Chepito Areas and Michael Shrieve (from left)

Afro-pop stars like Youssou N'Dour, Salif Keita and Angélique Kidjo all cite Santana at the top of

their pantheon of influences. Whether Santana is performing in Rio or Hungary, in Abidjan or Madrid, the band can count on a sold-out house.

Santana members attacking the stage: Carlos Santana, Gregg Rolie and David Brown (from left)

What is it about the Santana sound that has captivated so many music fans from so many different backgrounds? A big part of the appeal comes from Santana's groundbreaking blend of musical traditions from two worlds, a fusion that sounds fresh and new today, but that in 1968 was downright revolutionary. Back in the Sixties, Afro-Latin rhythms and rock were two separate musical communities that didn't connect, except briefly in the boogaloo experiments of New York salsa cats like Joe Cuba. If Carlos Santana's family had migrated from Autlán de Navarro, Mexico, to New York, instead of to San Francisco, it's possible that he would have ended up a sideman in New York's rich salsa scene (though he'd have had to change instruments, since there are basses, but no guitars, in salsa!). Fortunately, though, he landed in a spot that provided fertile ground for his musical inclinations: San Francisco had lots of rock





musicians, an aesthetic that favored guitar-based bands and audiences that wanted bands to give them a soundtrack that would allow them to dance and groove all night (or at least as long as the drugs lasted).

In this environment, the young, soulful guitarist who'd cut his teeth playing in the red-light-district clubs of Tijuana thrived. He knew how to hang with the rock players, but by virtue of who he was and where he came from, he also pulled into the mix solid Latin percussionists like Nicaraguan whiz José Chepito Areas. He could take a rock tune like Peter Green's "Black Magic Woman" and transform it by adding a hint of salsa clave rhythm. Or take a salsa standard like Tito Puente's "Oye Como Va" and translate it for rock listeners with some delicious brush strokes from that magic guitar. No wonder Santana's magical fusions were like a revelation for listeners in the third world: His music said that you didn't have to choose between imported American pop music and local sounds. With every exclamation of "Sabor!," with every smoking guitar riff over that chugging African conga, Santana's records proclaimed that you could have it all, in one stunning and soulful package.

The strength of this vision was so powerful that it sustained Santana long after the Summer of Love and the San Francisco sound had faded. Carlos Santana's overflowing fountain of creativity led him straight into the center of yet another musical scene—jazz rock. In the Seventies, his guitar playing matured and became more subtle, more spiritual (he had, by then, begun a decade-long commitment to the teachings of the Indian guru Sri Chinmoy), and he

recorded a series of albums—including a best-selling collaboration with John McLaughlin, Jan Hammer and Billy Cobham—that now stand out for their artistry and restraint in a

genre that all too often devolved into flashy displays of pyrotechnics. Whether he was playing jazz or rock, Santana displayed an uncanny ability to place himself in the center of the action, performing and jamming with musicians of the highest caliber, from Wayne Shorter and Miles Davis to Living Colour's Vernon Reid, and even Willie Nelson.

At a time in his life when your average rock star has either retired or is milking past glories, Carlos Santana is still out there innovating, taking chances, cutting through the trend-driven thickets of the music business with a sense of purpose as sharp as his guitar solos. His repugnance for mediocrity led him to head a battle to ban Muzak in public places, and his extraordinary and wide-ranging musical tastes moved him to establish his own label in 1993, to release music that he loves from all over the world. The name of the label could be a nickname for Santana himself: Guts and Grace.

But he really needs no nickname, for his own name, like his guitar sound, now resonates in every corner of the world where there are people who love music. He's the closest thing rock has to a lingua franca, and that's why we honor him, and his band, here tonight. Say it now, and celebrate his music in Spanish, English, Wolof, German, Arabic or Yoruba: Santana!

Santana at Woodstock, 1969: Shrieve, Rolie, Santana, Carabello, Areas, Brown (from left)

