



Side 1

1. **Jingo** (9:48)
(Olatunji)
2. **Persuasion** (5:11)
(Santana/Brown/Shrieve/Rolie)
3. **Let's Get Ourselves Together** (2:02)
(Santana)
4. **Soul Sacrifice** (4:51)
(Santana/Brown/Rolie/Malone)

Side 2

1. **As The Years Go By** (3:49)
(Santana)
2. **Evil Ways (Live)** (7:48)
(Zack/Henry)
3. **La Puesta Del Sol** (10:23)
(Weiss)
4. **Travellin' Blues** (4:40)
(Curcio)

When Carlos Santana made a guest appearance with Eric Clapton at a festival in Hyde Park in July 2018, it marked a special celebration for both guitarists. It was almost fifty years since Santana had made his historic breakthrough at the 1969 U.S. Woodstock Festival, and as many years since Eric launched Blind Faith at a free concert, also in the peaceful London park.

The unifying power of rock enables artists from different backgrounds to join forces in the quest to perform exciting, satisfying music together. Santana and Clapton were old friends and it was the blues that formed the basis of their joint passion. The genre was certainly an early influence on the young man who began his career south of the border, down Mexico way, en route to becoming a global superstar.

Carlos Santana (born 20 July 1947, in Jalisco, Mexico), pioneered a fusion of blues, rock and Latin American rhythms that unleashed a dynamic new sound in the late Sixties. Over the coming decades his band, Santana, would sell millions of albums, and Carlos, rated as one of the greatest guitarists of all time, won ten Grammy Awards.

Classically trained, Carlos learned to play the violin as a child. Growing up in Tijuana he heard blues records by John Lee Hooker, Jimmy Reed and B.B. King, and switched to the electric guitar when his father bought him a Gibson in 1957. As a teenager he played in strip clubs, backing blues singers to earn some money. When the family moved to San Francisco he took an evening job washing dishes, while still at school.

His breakthrough came when he sat in on a Sunday jam session at Bill Graham's Fillmore West alongside Jerry Garcia (Grateful Dead) and Mike Bloomfield (Butterfield Blues Band/Electric Flag). Impressed, they offered the young guitarist encouragement and when Carlos was approached by singer Gregg Rolie, they formed the Santana Blues Band. Having built up a strong following, the band was offered a contract with CBS after A&R men saw them supporting The Grateful Dead.

The band's early line up included Carlos, Gregg Rolie (Vocals and Organ), David Brown (Bass Guitar) and Marcus Malone (Percussion). Now known simply as Santana, the band was

recorded live at Woodstock. Their rendition of *Soul Sacrifice* was a highlight of the festival and was included on the triple soundtrack album from the Woodstock movie. Now the world would discover Carlos's fleet finger guitar playing, supported by Michael Shrieve's drumming, and augmented by exotic Latin, Cuban and African rhythms.

Carlos would enjoy great success with 1969's *Santana*, 1970's *Abraxas* and the Number 1 million seller *Santana 111* the following year in 1971. The latter introducing new member, guitarist Neil Schon. Following the 1972 release of *Caravanserai*, Carlos would venture into Jazz-Rock for an experimental period.

The 8 tracks on this LP provide a perfect storm of thunderous excitement that captures the mustachioed guitar hero at his early, creative best. Side 1 opens with *Jingo* from the 1969 album *Santana*, grabbing our attention with a flurry of conga drums and snare drum rhythms. Carlos leaps into the fray with an anguished cry from his Gibson SG, displaying the sustained, melodic blues notes that became his signature sound.

Elsewhere on Side 1 Carlos does that voodoo thing that he does so well on a studio version of *Soul Sacrifice*, launching his cosmic guitar into outer space. *Persuasion* opens with a groovy organ build up before the band burst in. *Let's Get Ourselves Together* has a nicely constructed arrangement, going from loud, busy passages to quitter ones, then back again.

Side 2 features *As The Years Go By*, a tasteful blues ballad that has Santana caressing the strings with expertise and passion. Followed by a live performance of *Evil Ways*, one of Santana's greatest hits that reached Number 9 in the U.S. Billboard chart in February 1970. *La Puesta Del Sol* opens with organ and percussion creating a sizzling groove before Carlos's guitar joins in. Lastly comes *Travellin' Blues*, a slow blues number to close the album.

Carlos Santana remains one of rock's finest musicians and an inspirational icon.

Listen and learn.

Chris Welch

