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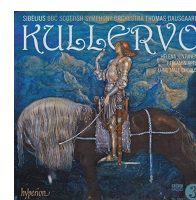


Santana – Caravanserai – Speakers Corner Records

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by Audiophile Audition | Sep 11, 2019 | [Jazz CD Reviews](#), [Pop/Rock/World CD Reviews](#) | 0 comments

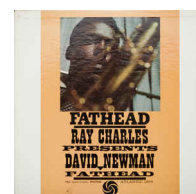
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**Santana – Caravanserai –
Columbia Records KC31610
(1972)/Speakers Corner
Records (2008) 180-gram
stereo vinyl, 51:07 ****1/2:**



**Pure
Pleasure /
Speakers
Corner**



For three years (1969-1972), including the iconic appearance at Woodstock, Santana took the rock world by storm. Radio-friendly hits like "Evil Ways", "Black Magic Woman" and "Oye Como Va" defined the rhythmic ferocity and accessibility of Carlos Santana. Instrumental jams like "Jingo", "Soul Sacrifice" and "Samba Pa Ti" expanded their musical style and development. One observer referred to Santana as a rock version of Dizzy Gillespie's Latin-oriented bands and ensembles. In the early 70's jazz, blues and rock tenuously combined to form a genre named *Fusion*. Each artist in this discipline distilled a unique instrumental approach. These bands included Weather Report, The Mahavishnu Orchestra and Return To Forever. All three groups had working ties to Miles Davis who inspired *Fusion* and generated more respect for this trend. Santana had many influences (and among them Davis). He was ready for an evolved vision for the band and for himself. Santana became a spiritual being and gradually incorporated these elements into the Santana Band.

The public was eagerly awaiting the release of the 4th Santana album, "Caravanserai" The group was partly intact. Original members Dave Brown (bass) conga player Michael Carabello were replaced by Tom Rutley and James Mingo on bass and congas respectively. Shrieve, Rolie and Schon were joined by two additional percussionists, Lenny White and Armando Peraza. This was the unit assembled for Santana's fourth studio album. "Caravanserai". The album would serve as an important transition for Carlos Santana. The tracks are filled with exotic motifs, and fewer vocals. Each conceptual track flows into the next one. No one knows what to expect as chirping crickets open "Eternal Caravan Of Reincarnation. A free jazz, slightly atonal saxophone (Hadley Caliman) gives way to a flowing acoustic bass (Tom Rutley). Santana doesn't even play guitar on this cut, Neal Schon does. The meditative piece with delicate percussion gives shape to the visual theme of the evocative camel procession cover. Without the trademark frenetic arrangement, Carlos cuts loose on "Waves Within" with a piercing, distorted lead guitar with chord modulations. Rolie's organ shading serves as a perfect counterpoint. Mike Shrieve (who co-produced and contributed to the songwriting) drives the temp in tandem with Jose Chepito Areas (timbales) and James Mingo Lewis (congas). "Look Up To See The Sky" has a funk vibe, soaring guitar licks and stellar percussive timbales. The band shines on "Just In Time To See The Sun". After a intro flourish, Rolie's soulful vocals and Santana's unbridled intensity are framed with assorted tempo breaks. The innate chemistry is evident. In a change of pace, "Song Of The Wind" represents Santana's more lyrical approach to *Caravanserai*. The melody (Rolie, Santana Schon) glides with a hypnotic core. Regardless

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of musical direction, the tone and specificity of Santanas guitar playing is always present. This is certainly a highlight. Returning to a *Fusion*-like landscape, "All The Love Of The Universe" alternates a driving classical Spanish guitar with r & b influenced vocals. Rolie has a great organ solo as the jam manages to build potency before returning to the classical first part.

Side 2 starts off ("Future Primitive") with an airy intro, then explodes into a propulsive double congas, bongos and timbales jam, thanks to Areas and Lewis. They immediately segue into Antonio Carlos Jobim's "Stone Flower". With a dual-edged electric guitar (Santana, Schon), the band brings a harder edge to this swaying bossa nova number. It transforms into a newer Santana take with highly defined percussion breaks and tasty jazz-infused organ fills by



Carlos Santana

Rolie. There is still some awareness of Jobim nuance on the bridge. With electric piano (Tom Coster), the ensemble injects a salsa-fused resonance into "La Fuente Del Ritmo" that could have been part of Santana III. Santana and Schon interact with harmony (and the left and right channel separation is exacting). Shrieve, Areas, Lewis and Peraza create a relentless wall of breathless rhythms. The new artistic statement by Carlos Santana is epitomized in the glorious 9-minute finale, "Every Step Of The Way". It initiates with a sustained, pulsating groove with jazzy chord changes. Santana's screeching guitar riffs invoke the vision of John McLaughlin (someone who Santa would collaborate with in 1973). There is an inevitable break that shifts to a swelling, grandiose movement which features orchestrated strings (though understated), horns and woodwind. All of this is anchored by the unabating rhythm section.

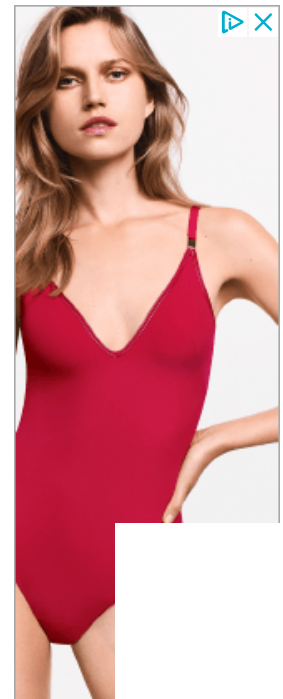
Speakers Corner has done a masterful job in re-mastering *Caravanserai* to 180-gram vinyl. The stereo separation is flawless, and the overall mix is balanced. The instrument layers are integrated evenly. (Note: This album is best enjoyed with good headphones at increased volume.) Joan Chase's stunning front/back gatefold cover shimmers in the glossy finish.

This is a great album!

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Musicians:

Carlos Santana - guitar, percussion; Hadley Caliman - saxophone; Greg Rolie - organ, piano; Wendy Haas - piano; Tom Coster - electric piano; Neal Schon - guitar; Douglas Rodrigues - guitar; Douglas Rauch - guitar, bass; Tom Rutley - bass; Mike Shrieve - drums; James Mingo Lewis - congas, percussion; Jose Chepito Areas - timbales, percussion; Lenny White - percussion; Armando Peraza - bongos, percussion)

TrackList:*Side 1:*

Eternal Caravan Of Reincarnation
Waves Within
Look Up (To See What's Coming Down)
Just In Time To See The Sun
Song Of The Wind
All The Love Of The Universe

Side 2:

Future Primitive
Stone Flower
La Fuente Del Ritmo
Every Step Of The Way

—Robbie Gerson

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