

## THE GOLDEN AGE OF SAN FRANCISCO ROCK: THE SUMMER OF LOVE

### Week Four: San Francisco Rock of the late 1960s/early 1970s in the African-American and Latino Communities

#### Recommended Listening:

**Azteca, *Azteca*** (Columbia, 1972). Founded by Santana percussionists Coke Escovedo and Pete Escovedo, Azteca were much more oriented toward jazz-rock fusion than Santana, or for that matter another Santana-related band that were jazzier than Santana, Malo (led by Carlos Santana's brother Jorge).

**Cold Blood, *Cold Blood*** (San Francisco, 1969). The first and best album by this large, horn-oriented blue-eyed soul band. Lead singer Lydia Pense has sometimes been unfairly accused of being a minor league Janis Joplin, and while there are similarities, she was a respectably gutsy vocalist on her own merits. There are also echoes of both gospel and the San Francisco free-loving vibe in "I Wish I Knew How to Be Free," as well as early feminism in "I'm a Good Woman" (actually a cover of a song by soul singer Barbara Lynn). Note that the name of the label was indeed San Francisco Records, and that another good version of "I'm a Good Woman" was previously recorded by Pense's earlier band, the Generation (as heard on the *San Francisco Nuggets* box set).

**Darondo, *Listen to My Song: The Music City Sessions*** (BGP, 2011). Eccentric East Bay soul singer Darondo released barely anything in the 1970s, and most of these 1973-74 recordings were not available until this compilation. He sometimes sounds like a raw Al Green, his vocals sliding from grainy lower registers to sensual falsetto. Even the liner notes admit that some of the cuts are "song sketches," adding to the air of hearing something that's more the basis for a possible album than a completed work.

**Malo, *Malo*** (Warner Brothers, 1972). With Carlos Santana's brother Jorge on lead guitar, Malo understandably were similar to Santana in many respects. But though they also fused rock and Latin music, they were considerably more tilted toward the Latin part than

Santana, and less toward blues and psychedelia, though they also incorporated jazz influences. Their debut album includes their hit single "Suavecito." Not so easy to find, but worth tracking down if you like Malo's sound, is the four-CD box *Celebracion: The Warner Bros. Recordings* (Rhino Handmade), which has the four albums they did for Warner Brothers between 1972 and 1974, as well as some bonus material from the same era.

**The Pointer Sisters, *The Pointer Sisters*** (Blue Thumb, 1973). The debut by this Oakland group featured their eclectic, slick, and snazzy brand of harmony soul, including the Allen Toussaint-written hit "Yes We Can Can" (first done by Lee Dorsey) and their jazzy version of Howlin' Wolf/Koko Taylor's blues classic "Wang Dang Doodle."

**Santana, *Santana*** (Columbia, 1969). One of the most impressive debut albums of all time, unveiling Santana's original and unprecedented synthesis of psychedelic rock, Latin music, jazz, and blues. Includes some of their most famous songs ("Evil Ways," "Jingo," and "Soul Sacrifice"), though "Soul Sacrifice" would really come alive in its more famous Woodstock performance. The expanded 2004 two-CD version on Columbia/Legacy adds some outtakes and most of their Woodstock set.

**Santana, *Live at the Fillmore '68*** (Columbia/Legacy, 1997). Recorded in December 1968 prior to the release of their debut album the following year, this two-CD set is a good document of Santana at a slightly more formative stage, including long versions of some songs from their first LP ("Soul Sacrifice" among them). A few CDs of pre-debut album studio demos/rehearsals are always floating around on various labels, though there's so much repetition of different, less impressive versions of familiar songs that they're only recommended to Santana fanatics.

**Santana, *The Woodstock Experience*** (Columbia/Legacy, 2009). An eccentric release that puts Santana's first album on one CD, and their Woodstock set on the second CD. The 2004 expanded version of *Santana* is preferable, but this is noted here just so you don't get confused by the availability of so much of similar material in two packages with different titles. The 2004 *Santana* has everything on

this release except, annoyingly, the Woodstock version of "Evil Ways."

**Santana, *Abraxas*** (Columbia, 1970). Though Santana's first album had broken them as superstars, their second was yet more popular, topping the charts. In part that was because of the inclusion of the smash single "Black Magic Woman" (which segues into a cover of jazz musician Gabor Szabo's "Gypsy Queen"), with "Oyo Como Va" also becoming a substantial hit. The 1998 CD adds three previously unreleased live songs from a Royal Albert Hall concert in London in April 1970, including "Black Magic Woman/Gypsy Queen."

**Santana, *III*** (Columbia, 1971). It might have been impossible to maintain the momentum of Santana's first two best-selling albums, and *III* was a bit of a letdown in comparison, showing them more in consolidation of their style than as groundbreaking innovators. Includes the hit single "Everybody's Everything," with the 2006 expanded two-CD edition adding outtakes and an entire CD of recordings from a concert live at the Fillmore West on July 4, 1971.

**Sly & the Family Stone, *Greatest Hits*** (Epic, 1970). As their early albums are erratic, *Greatest Hits* is a good distillation of their best and most popular pre-1971 tracks onto one disc, although the two-CD compilation on this course's general listening list (*The Essential Sly & the Family Stone*) is considerably more extensive. This has two major hit singles (1969's "Hot Fun in the Summertime" and 1970's "Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)"/"Everybody Is a Star") that didn't make it onto any of their early albums, though take note it's missing their big post-1970 hits "Family Affair" and "If You Want Me to Stay."

**Sly & the Family Stone, *In the Studio: Precious Stone with Sly Stone 1963-1965*** (Ace, 1994). Before forming Sly & the Family Stone, Sly Stone was a producer at Autumn Records, most notably for the Beau Brummels, also using some studio time to cut recordings of his own. This compilation has 28 of them, and is noted not so much for its quality as its indication of Sly's roots in more conventional soul music, with quite a distance yet to travel to his much more innovative recordings as leader of Sly & the Family Stone. Also of some interest, if similarly peripheral to Sly Stone's

principal achievements, is the Ace compilation *Listen to the Voices: Sly Stone in the Studio 1965-70*, with little known tracks he produced during that period (some featuring himself and/or the Family Stone as the artist).

**Sly & the Family Stone, *Stand!*** (Epic, 1969). Though their first three albums (*A Whole New Thing*, *Dance to the Music*, and *Life*) have material worth hearing, *Stand!* was Sly & the Family's best 1960s album. "Everyday People" was the big hit single, but "I Want to Take You Higher" (made as popular as a hit single by its inclusion in the *Woodstock* film), "Don't Call Me Nigger, Whitey," and "Stand!" were other high points in their blend of soul, psychedelic rock, and socially conscious lyricism.

**Sly & the Family Stone, *The Woodstock Experience*** (Epic/Legacy, 2009). Like other volumes in *The Woodstock Experience* series, this combines a Woodstock set with the album the artist released closest to the August 1969 Woodstock festival. In Sly & the Family Stone's case, that means disc one is *Stand!*, and disc two has their Woodstock performance, including their famous performance of "I Want to Take You Higher." Another Sly & the Family Stone concert recording of interest, from the Fillmore East on October 5, 1968, can be heard for free on [wolfgangsvault.com](http://wolfgangsvault.com).

**Sly & the Family Stone, *There's a Riot Goin' On*** (Epic/Legacy, 1971). Though this was a #1 album, it was fairly dark and inaccessible for a chart-topper, aside from the #1 hit "Family Affair" and the smaller hit "Runnin' Away." In hindsight, some critics viewed this as Sly & the Family Stone's statement of disillusionment with the utopian hippie dream they had helped embody, with wary suspicion replacing hopeful anthems. More funk-oriented than their previous albums, sometimes sluggishly so, it also boasted the mixed blessing of some of the first use of drum machines.

**Tower of Power, *East Bay Grease*** (1970, San Francisco). Although Tower of Power's debut showed a slightly raw-at-the-edges Oakland funk band with brass, there were traces of the San Francisco sound in their long and loose songs (all six of the tracks here are between five and ten minutes) and some lyrical reflections of the social changes rocking the area ("Social Lubrication").

Tightening their sound and changing lead vocalists would lead to greater success a few years later with hits like "So Very Hard to Go."

**The Two Things in One, *Together Forever: The Music City Sessions*** (BGP, 2011). As a self-contained African-American soul-rock band from the East Bay that began releasing records when they were in their mid-teens, the Two Things in One were an unusual act even for the early 1970s. This combines both sides of their three rare 1971-73 singles with ten outtakes from the era, sometimes sounding as much like Traffic, the Allman Brothers, and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young as Stevie Wonder and the Meters.

**Various Artists, *Chicano Power: Latin Rock in the USA 1968-1976*** (Soul Jazz, 1998). Double-CD has material from all over the country, not just the Bay Area, though it does have representative songs by Santana, Malo, and Azteca. However, as a whole it's evidence of Santana's huge influence on Latino rockers throughout the US (especially as heard in the Antiques' "Chauca"), as well as how the Chicano Power movement impacted rock and popular culture in general.

**Various Artists, *The Music City Story*** (Ace, 2011). Three-CD compilation of tracks recorded by the Music City label in Berkeley between the mid-1950s and mid-1970s. All permutations of rhythm and blues music from the period are covered here: electric blues, early rock'n'roll, doo wop, soul, funk, instrumentals, and more. With a few exceptions (Lou Rawls, Little Willie Littlefield, Johnny Heartsman), the performers remained virtually unknown, and it's more a historical document than an outstanding listen, with much of the music reflecting trends rather than initiating them or coalescing into a regional sound. Still, much of this has raw spontaneous energy, and the Four Deuces' mid-1950s vocal group single "W-P-L-J" was covered by Frank Zappa.

**Various Artists, *Street Sounds from the Bay Area: Music City Funk & Soul Grooves 1971-75*** (BGP, 2012). A single-CD compilation that, unlike the more extensive survey listed above, covers the Music City label's output of the early-to-mid-1970s. It's thus of more direct relevance to this course, incorporating influences from soul, funk, and some jazz and rock trends of the

time, including Sly & the Family Stone's sound, though otherwise it doesn't show many ties to the San Francisco rock scene.

### **Recommended Books:**

*Listen, Whitey!: The Sights and Sounds of Black Power 1965-1975*, by Pat Thomas (Fantagraphics, 2012). The relationship between black power movements and soul, funk, rock, and jazz music between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s, with many illustrations of rare records and posters. This covers black power from all over the US, not just the Bay Area, but inevitably has substantial Bay Area (and especially Oakland) coverage, as the Black Panther Party was founded in Oakland. The companion CD (on the Light in the Attic label, not included with the book) has related music from all over, but does have a few rarities from the Bay Area by Elaine Brown, the Lumpen, and Eldridge Cleaver.

*A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story*, by Elaine Brown (Pantheon, 1992). Lengthy memoir by Black Panther activist (and eventually Chair of the party) carries some specific interest for the purposes of this course because she was also a singer-songwriter who released albums informed by black power sentiments.

*Sly & the Family Stone: An Oral History*, by Joel Selvin (Avon, 1998). The absence of a first-rate Sly Stone biographer is a true disgrace, especially given how interesting his story is from many angles. This relatively slim oral history does have quotes about Sly & the Family Stone from several band members and associates.

*Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin): A Memoir*, by Sly Stone with Ben Greenman (AUWA, 2023). Stone autobiography isn't not as lively as might be expected, telling the basic story of his amazing rise from producer/DJ/sporadic recording artist to superstar in the late 1960s and early 1970s. That's about the first half of the book; the second half details his rather spectacular fall into both professional and personal abysses, and like many such memoirs loses considerable momentum as his life hits the doldrums.

*The Universal Tone: Bringing My Story to Light*, by Carlos Santana with Ashley Kahn and Hal Miller (Little, Brown, 2014).

Santana's autobiography can meander into sections on spirituality, family, and superstars he's known, but has a lot of detail about his improbable journey from Tijuana teenager to San Francisco rock star, and how he and his band hit upon the unusual psychedelic-blues-rock-jazz-Latin sound of Santana in the late 1960s.

### **Recommended DVDs:**

*The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975* (MPI, 2011). Vintage Swedish television footage of interviews with famous and obscure black power activists, including Angela Davis, Stokely Carmichael, and Bobby Seale. This material was rarely seen in the US prior to this film's release last year. Like a DVD recommended earlier in the course (*Berkeley in the Sixties*), this isn't directly music-related, but is valuable for setting some of the context in which Bay Area music was made.

*Soul to Soul* (Rhino, 1971). Though this documentary of a 1971 concert in Ghana features mostly African-American soul performers, it does have some footage of Santana doing "Jungle Strut" and "Black Magic Woman/Gypsy Queen." Santana also appears in the *Woodstock* film, of course, as well as *Fillmore: The Last Days*; the 1970 TV special *A Night at the Family Dog* (now on DVD); and in the much more obscure *Stamping Ground*, a documentary of a 1970 Dutch rock festival.

### **Notable Figures (Excluding Star Musicians):**

**Ray Dobard:** Owner of the small R&B-oriented independent label Music City in Berkeley from the 1950s to the 1970s.

**David Kapralik:** Manager of Sly & the Family Stone.

### **Notable Places:**

**Inspire to Aspire: Tribute to Carlos Santana:** Mural of Carlos Santana in the Mission district where he lived as a teenager, on the corner of 22<sup>nd</sup> & South Van Ness Streets.

**KDIA:** San Francisco soul station where Sly Stone was a DJ shortly before forming Sly & the Family Stone.

**Mission High School:** Alma mater of Carlos Santana, who returned there for the first time in about 45 years to speak and perform for students on October 24, 2011.

**Notable Labels:**

**Music City:** Small Berkeley label where a considerable amount of the East Bay's most obscure and earthy soul was made in the late 1960s and early 1970s.