

# The Jupiter Courier

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## **Santana Tribute Band captivates Abacoa audience**

By *James Russell*, Music Review

Many people who decided to stay until the end of ArtiGras Saturday evening found themselves “trapped” at Abacoa Town Center in Jupiter.

But it wasn't traffic congestion or thick crowds of art lovers that held them captive. What kept hundreds of people in Abacoa around 6 p.m. where the infectious tunes being generated by the Santana Tribute Band in the Town Center amphitheatre.

South Florida music lovers and fans of Carlos Santana throughout the nation are already familiar with the Delray Beach base Latin rock band, which has played such venues as the Kravis Center and Sunfest in West Palm Beach.

At the nearly four-hour long performance Saturday, young and old Jupiter residents and held over ArtiGras attendees discovered why the six-piece group goes far beyond being just another “cover” band and deserves the title of “tribute” band.

“We hope you're feeling the positive energy and the love in the air tonight,” said Galo Rivera, lead guitar player and founder of the Santana Tribute Band, just before the group launched into it's first set of music.

The audience of about 300 people answered Rivera's comments during the next few hours by dancing , shaking and even cart-wheeling at times on the grassy area in front of the stage.

Kicking off the evening with some of Santana's older tunes, The Santana Tribute Band nailed covers of “No One To Depend On” and “Sweet Like Cherry Pie”.

Donning a baseball cap and seemingly going into a trance-like state during solos, Rivera did an incredible job of recreating the signature Santana licks on the electric guitar.

“It's all about locking yourself into the heartbeat of the music and surrendering to it totally,” Rivera said, “I started listening to Santana when I was in high school in about 1969, and it just got into my blood.”

It was easy to believe that Santana music is flowing through Rivera's veins as the recording engineer, who already bears a physical resemblance to the legendary guitarist, closed his eyes and dove right into beautifully melodic solos that were almost indistinguishable from what you would hear on a Santana album.

Although missing one percussionist, the group's rhythm section filled every musical niche with groove-inspiring Latin beats. Drummer Jose Martinez laid down a rock-solid back beat, while Ruben Canales and Joe Collado added inflections and accents on the congas, bongos and timbales. Keyboardist Noel Torres proved himself a master of tickling he ivories, and Bill Rabon impressed the crowd more than once with his rhythms and solos on the bass guitar.

I'm very fortunate to have such a great group of musicians working with me, “Rivera said. “Those guys make me look good.”

Displaying their wide range of abilities, the Santana Tribute Band also featured some of Santana's more recent hits, such as "Smooth" with Rabon providing the vocals.

Rivera said the band prefers to play "feature events" such as the weekly Concert on the Green series in Abacoa. "We've got a lot of instruments and equipment to set up on stage, so we try to stay away from playing small bars and clubs," Rivera said. "Every time we play, it's a major production."

Tere Muniz, coordinator of Abacoa's Concerts on the Green, said the Santana Tribute Band is one of the favorite groups that perform at the Town Center amphitheater. She said the band is usually featured at one of the weekend events about every three months.

Rivera said, aside from paying tribute to the music of Santana, the band also writes and records its own original songs. He said hints of this music can be heard during the improvised jams that the band plays in between Santana songs. "I like to call that our enhanced music," Rivera said. "You can hear the Santana influence, but we are all about going beyond that."