

ENTERTAINMENT

Sanborn, Sample, Crawford, jazz up MTV-hyped Palms

By Dianna Saffold
Sentinel-Voice

The breeze was reminiscent of a relaxing Swedish massage.

Palm trees stood majestically over the moonlit pool, creating an ambiance of an evening in Miami.

This was the most perfect setting for David Sanborn and the Crusaders, featuring Randy Crawford, at the beautiful Palms Hotel & Casino.

Alto saxophonist, rhythm and blues crossover Sanborn and his five-piece band opened the star-filled evening. Sanborn, a 20-year veteran in music, played a wide range, including the theme from "Peter Gun" to "Tequila," an oldie featured on his new CD: "Samba."

Listening to the talented saxophonist makes one wonder how his small frame creates such air creating such a strong sound. The secret behind Sanborn's horn strength is his ability to focus on using his throat to create his unmistakable sound, making it unnecessary for his face to become a human balloon.

Sanborn brings pop, R&B and jazz together, creating a commercially successful sound.

Playing many crowd favorites, "Soul Serenade" was a noted preference. Sanborn and his band went from



Sentinel-Voice photos by Ramon Savoy

Tenor saxophonist Wilton Felder (top left) belts out ear candy during a talent-rich concert night at the trendy, youth-focused Palms hotel-casino. Highlighted by performances from crossover star David Sanborn, the multifaceted Joe Sample (bottom left) and the diva-esqe Randy Crawford (top middle), the night featured smooth melodies and sweet lyrics, mostly drawn from the soulful '70s.

smooth, sassy to low down and funky - all in one riff. When the group played "Blues Jazz" written by Sanborn and Marcus Miller, the group used many percussion instruments taking us straight to the salsa rave.

The bass was very interesting, an elongated triangle with strings propped on what appeared to be a tripod.

The six men on stage opened an evening of talent in its purest form.

If you are a Sanborn fan, you know he never gives a bad show.

After a short intermission once again the music began. The stage now occupied by the Crusaders.

The group of artists, including pianist Joe Sample

and guitarist Ray Parker Jr., played as if each tune told a detailed story.

Each musician began to groove, intensely opening with 1970's hit "Spiral."

Wearing a fisherman's hat and dark glasses, the trombonist was splendid. The energy he exuded lifted him from his stool as he delivered hit after hit. From the recent

CD, "Rural Renewal," came "Viva the Funk."

The energy from this tune lifted the leg of the trombonist and he passed it on to the pumped up crowd.

"Ray Parker was better than ever," said local jazz enthusiast, John Cardoza.

The band has been a stopping place for some of the greatest musicians in the in-

dustry, beginning in the mid-1950s. Sample started out with tenor saxophonist Wilton Felder, drummer Stix Hooper, trombonist Wayne Henderson. Later, flutist Hubert Laws and guitarist Larry Carlton joined him. The list goes on.

The group played as many hits as time permitted, including "Ballad for Joe" and "Carnival in the Night."

Frequently sharing tidbits of the groups past, Sample vowed, "He would never let Randy Crawford out of his life." This brought on "Rio De Janeiro Blues" and the Jill Scott of the 1980s, Randy Crawford. Pop, soul, jazz and R&B making up her distinctive sound began in the late 70s.

From the Joe Sample-Leila Hathaway CD, Crawford sang "I'll Fly Away."

Singing only a couple songs, she ended with "Street Life." Crawford recorded the single hit in 1979, but for the adoring audience, it was timeless.

On this eve, the good things in life included hanging around the pool in a very mellow atmosphere at the Palms Hotel & Casino, enjoying the melodic successes of Sanborn and the Crusaders, featuring Randy Crawford.

Adaptation of '70s TV show suffers from cliché-ridden script

By Kam Williams
Special to Sentinel-Voice

S.W.A.T. was a short-lived television series which enjoyed an abbreviated, 34-episode run between 1975 and 1976. That action cop show revolved around the heroics of the highly-trained Special Weapons and Tactics Division of the Los Angeles Police Department, a unit called upon to handle the City's most highly-explosive, crisis situations.

The program flopped because it followed a fairly predictable format virtually indistinguishable from that of a host of other interchangeable police series of the era, such as Starsky and Hutch, Adam 12 and The Rookies. Nonetheless, Columbia Pictures has now decided to revive S.W.A.T. for the big screen, most likely because of the studio's successful adaptation of Charlie's Angels, another cop series from the Seventies.

The new S.W.A.T. stars Oscar-nominee Samuel L. Jackson (for Pulp Fiction), no stranger to retreats, since he played Shaft in the remake of that blaxploitation classic from 1971. Here, as Sgt. Hondo Harrelson, Jackson's job is to fashion a polished team of crack commandos out of a rag-tag team of misfits.

Unfortunately, Sarge's recruits are a stereotypical assortment of Department outcasts who have somehow offended their pencil-pushing higher-ups.



(Left to right) Colin Farrell, Brian Van Holt, James Todd Smith (a.k.a. LL Cool J), Michelle Rodriguez and Samuel L. Jackson portray members of an elite Los Angeles police team on a dangerous assignment in Columbia Pictures' action thriller, "S.W.A.T."

Officers Jim Street (Colin Farrell) and Brian Gamble (Jeremy Renner) are disgraced partners who had been demoted after mishandling a hostage standoff. Deacon Kaye (LL Cool J) is a streetwise cop from the block while Chris Sanchez (Michelle Rodriguez) is a tough rogue who takes the law into her own hands. The crew is rounded out by the wise-cracking Michael Boxer (Brian Van Holt) and the itchy-fingered TJ McCabe (Josh

Charles).

The plotline is promising enough, revolving around the team's assignment to help relocate mob boss Alex Montel (Olivier Martinez) from jail to a maximum security Federal facility. What creates the tension is the drug kingpin's widely-circulated offer of a \$100 million to anyone able to spring him from prison. The dangled reward money, as one might expect, proves to be irresistible,

and an elaborate conspiracy is entered to free Montel.

As interesting as that set-up might sound, there's no reason to waste two hours watching the ensuing lame excuse for pyrotechnics, gunplay and general mayhem. The action sequences are so poorly-staged and sloppily-edited that the production has the look of a woefully under-budgeted Hong Kong, chopsoy flick. Meanwhile, the film's undeveloped, two-dimensional characters remain wading pool-shallow throughout, all crippled by cliché-ridden dialogue. And S.W.A.T.'s Swiss cheese plot, which never pretends to make a lick of sense, isn't even as engaging as the average episode from the original TV series.

Furthermore, I must reiterate my almost weekly new pet peeve, namely, a needless villifying of the French. Not only is S.W.A.T.'s bad guy another sneering Frenchman, but he is referred to by the slur "frog" on more than one occasion.

It doesn't help that the director failed to call for a second take to eliminate several, very obvious, inarticulate utterances, such as the use of the word "freshmens" instead of "freshmen."

An asinine, B-movie you wouldn't watch for free on television.

Fair (1 star). Rated PG-13 for violence, profanity and sexual references.