

Bach guests shaken and stirred

Bond songs prove popular

By Sarah Griego Guz

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Musicians Akiko Tsuruga and Akira Tana perform at the Bach Dancing and Dynamite Society on Sunday. Photo courtesy Brian McMillen

The summer season at the Bach Dancing and Dynamite Society is coming to a close with only one more concert to go.

On Sunday, the Secret Agent Band returned to the Miramar venue with works from James Bond flicks. Half Moon Bay residents Dave and Barbara Karlin sponsored the event.

“Yesterday was a great concert. It was very, very fun,” said Bach Dancing and Dynamite Society owner Barbara Riching. “The leader of the band, Akira Tana, is a very well-known, loved drummer.”

The Secret Agent Band is a quintet featuring Akiko Tsuruga on the Hammond B3 organ, James Mahone on tenor sax, Jeff Massanari on guitar, Akira Tana on drums, as well as vocalist Annie Sellick.

According to Riching, the songs performed started out a bit cheesy, as one would expect from James Bond songs from the 1960s and '70s.

Once the music took flight, improvisation kicked in and that's when the fun really started.

"They started out with a beloved James Bond tune like 'Gold Finger' and 'Diamonds are Forever,'" she said. "Once underway, they started to improvise. It kind of took it to a new level."

In addition to the show inside the venue, a pod of whales also put in an appearance outside.

"It was kind of fun because the musicians actually had a better view of the whales," said Riching. "When you're on stage you only see the ocean, so you feel like you're on this wooden ship. The musicians love coming to the Bach because it's so beautiful."

Closing out the summer season will be Crossing Borders. Although the band's appearance corresponds with a member-appreciation event, all are welcome to attend.

Crossing Borders is an international jazz group that artfully reworks standards, presents new takes on classic pop tunes, and performs original music.

Featuring Canadian vocalist-pianist Jennifer Scott and Bay Area saxophonist Kristen Strom, the ladies are backed by a solid rhythm section.

"The band is called Crossing Borders because the singer-pianist and her husband are from Canada," said Riching. "The rest of the group, the sax player and drummer, are local Bay Area musicians.

"The singer is really good," she continued. "She has a beautiful voice, one would describe as Diana Krall (-like)."

The concert is coupled with a member-appreciation event that includes a free drink and appetizers for members only.

For more information on upcoming concerts or to become a member, visit bachddsoc.org.