


Half Moon Bay Review

Keller Sisters rock General Store

Americana group draws from a lifetime in harmony

By Sarah Griego Guz Jun 21, 2016  0



The San Gregorio General Store was a hub of activity on Saturday morning. Capping off the start of the day were the Keller Sisters, sitting in a sun-drenched corner of the rustic store.

Their harmonic sound and original songs were tight yet fun. It was the kind of effect only achieved from a lifetime of practice.

“The main focus of our sound has to be the harmonies,” said band member Kerry Carranza, “because we were raised on that. Even from the time we were really little, we’ve always just bounced off each other with harmonies.”

“It was one of those things where your parents trot you out at Christmas Eve and you don’t get your presents or dinner until you sing,” joked Sheryl Thirlwall. “We have pictures of that, of us standing there doing our little ‘We Three Kings’ or whatever the song was.”

Sheryl Thirlwall and Kerry Carranza, known on stage as the Keller Sisters, are an American folk pop group whose repertoire ranges from humorous songs about a fizzling romance to the morose, about a child prostitute during the Gold Rush.

Thirlwall pens most of the songs. The tune “You Still In There?” is a humorous peek into a long-term relationship.

“I was inspired to write ‘You Still In There?’ after looking at my husband, sitting in his Barcalounger,” said Thirlwall with a laugh. “Actually, he’s a blues guitar player; he’s out all the time. During the day, he sits in that chair and works in that chair. That chair inspired that song a very long time ago.”

Carranza adds a bit of icing to the musical concoction in a most unusual way. During one song, after announcing that she was about to do a solo, she whipped out a kazoo and buzzed through a few stanzas.

“We like to laugh,” said Carranza with a twinkle in her eye.

“Sometimes it gets out of control,” added Thirlwall.

While it’s not all fun and games when it comes to the music, the pair skillfully toggles between the serious and silly.

Immediately following “You Still In There?” they moved into a heart-wrenching song about a child prostitute living above a salon during the Gold Rush.

“‘The Ballad of Varla Jean’ is a story of a young girl whose parents died on the wagon train,” said Thirlwall. “I wrote that while reading about the California Gold Rush.”

Regardless of the material, the Keller Sisters put their heart and soul into every tune, resulting in a whimsical harmony inspired by artists such as Joni Mitchell, the Everly Brothers, the Beatles and Bonnie Raitt.

“We get things from all over,” said Thirlwall. “We go out and watch a lot of music. We love to go to shows and concerts. Inspiration is really everywhere.”

The Keller Sisters will be performing all over the Bay Area during the summer months. For more information, to listen to their music or to purchase albums, visit thekellersisters.com.

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