

sectiontwo

breakers

Not the Typical Duo, Bill and Andy Shine At SCH Beach Club

Redefining 'Acoustic' – With Kazoos

BY KRISTIN BENZINGER

Where can you go to hear a symphony of kazoos and a drum machine named Bob, and experience a fully interactive show? Surf City Hotel on Sundays for the Bill and Andy Show, of course.

"Sunday in Surf City – that's just what you do," said Anne Wolmarn of Medford.

Wolmarn was at the Bill and Andy Show this past Sunday to celebrate her birthday. She said has been vacationing on LBI for 12 years and always makes sure to see the show. Bill and Andy made sure to wish Wolmarn a happy birthday with the help of the entire bar when they sang a very special version of "Happy Birthday" for her.

Bill Hadam and Andy Hladek have been friends for 30 years and have been performing together for the last 10. Five years ago they were asked to take the Sunday slot at the Surf City Hotel, but at first they had some reservations.

"I said if this starts feeling like a job, then we won't do it next year," said Hadam. "It's our fifth year, so obviously we're having a good time."

Hadam and Hladek really treat their music as entertainment not only for their crowd, but for themselves as well. They both work high-stress day jobs, and when they play music, they want to relax and have fun.

"With us, it's all about having fun, so we don't mind looking foolish," said Hladek. "How many people can have fun together after that period of time – better than most marriages?"

Their camaraderie comes across very clearly during their shows with their constant, witty banter. At the show Sunday, Bill informed the crowd that Andy's mom still pays him \$20 a week to be Andy's friend. And it is that kind of jokes and playfulness that makes the show so enjoyable.

Bill and Andy are not your typical acoustic duo. For one, they are fully wireless, which gives them more freedom to roam about the bar and get the patrons involved. They also play more than just guitar. At one of their shows, be prepared to hear harmonica, mandolin and, as Hladek put it, something he straps on that is very, very small, his ukulele.

One way they make sure to keep it fun is by making their shows very interactive. There are very specific rules at the Bill and Andy Show. Rule number one is singing is encouraged; rule number two is dancing is encouraged; rule number three is they take requests; and the fourth and most important rule is the more you drink, the better they sound.

During the show Sunday, Hadam and Hladek made sure the crowd adhered to the rules.

"If you think you're really good – or really drunk – we have the extra mike," Hadam announced to the

Set List Snippet

"Daydream Believer" by The Monkees

"Folsom Prison Blues" by Johnny Cash

"If You Want to Be Happy (For the Rest of Your Life)" by Jimmy Soul

"Hey Soul Sister" by Train

"Runaround Sue" by Dion

"Follow Me" by Uncle Kracker

"Margaritaville" by Jimmy Buffett

"Who Says You Can't Go Home" by Bon Jovi

"Last Kiss" by Pearl Jam paired with

"December 1963 (Oh What a Night)" by

The Four Seasons

crowd after going over the rules.

Audience members definitely warmed up to the interactive air. During one song they asked an audience member to sing for a bit and pass the mike along, and he ended up singing almost the whole song before Bill and Andy reminded him to give others a chance.

While they were getting ready for the show, Hadam and Hladek remembered how much smaller the crowds were when they first started. As soon as 5 o'clock rolled around this Sunday, all of the seats at the main bar were taken.

This Sunday was particularly special because there was also a party for Surf City lifeguard Ryan Bonanni,

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Photographs by Jack Reynolds

SING ALONG: (Top, from left) Andy Hladek and Bill Hadam encourage the audience to sing and dance along during their performance. The duo also stresses that 'the more you drink, the better we'll sound.' (Above) Audience members fully immerse themselves in the fun of the show by complying with the enforced 'rules.'

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sectiontwo Bill and Andy

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who, after nine years of protecting the waters, is leaving to teach English as a second language in Korea. There was standing room only, but that did not take away from the fun one bit; it only added to it.

Hadam and Hladek are also very excited this year about the addition of some sponsors. First Land Shark Lager is sponsoring them, and they will be raffling off some great prizes. Next week they will have a drawing for two tickets to see Jimmy Buffett on Aug. 19 in Jones Beach, N.Y.

To enter the drawing, all you have to do is order a Land Shark at the Bill and Andy Show and you will receive a raffle ticket. They will still be accepting entries at next week's show, and for those who don't win the tickets, they will have another drawing on Labor Day for the complete Jimmy Buffett CD catalog.

Their second sponsor is SurfFlight Theatre. From now until the end of the season, Bill and Andy will give away tickets to a SurfFlight event. This past week they gave away three tickets to see comedian Mike Marino.

They joked that they have really made it big with the Bill and Andy show, available at the Surf City Hotel; it's comprised of raspberry Stoli, dark crème de cacao, and 43. Hladek claims that the shot tastes like a chocolate-covered jelly ring candy, but he warns to be careful how much you have before you make a stop at Sonic.

"If you put enough tater tots with Bill and Andy shots, see which comes back to haunt you first."

"If you put enough tater tots with Bill and Andy shots, see which comes back to haunt you first," Hladek said, laughing.

Bill and Andy they don't take breaks. They come in and play their full 3½- to four-hour set without stopping.

"When you're singing for 3½ hours and getting people involved, it's like going to the gym for three hours," Hladek said. "You're exhausted."

They both went on to joke about what happens when they are done. They warned that no one should attempt to talk to them when their show is over because it will have been hours since they visited the men's room.

With a 300-song repertoire, the duo is always ready to handle the large number of requests they get. Hladek explained that about 75 percent of their set list comes directly from those requests scribbled on bar napkins - all of which they keep. One of their favorite songs that they play every show is "American Girl" by Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers.

"It's not like it's my favorite song, it's the way we do it," Hladek said. "You forget that you are listening to two acoustic guitar players, and I think that's why we have fun with it and the crowd gets into it."

And the crowd definitely felt the song when they performed it because almost everyone was singing along. The entire night was high-energy singing, dancing and general shenanigans. The whole bar seemed to be having a great time and was letting loose with Bill and Andy.

Every good thing must come to an end, even the four straight hours of the Bill and Andy Show. They have a tradition of always ending their performances with "Good Riddance" by Green Day. They explained that although their sentiment is different than the song's intention, they find it to be the perfect ending to the night.

"Hopefully you're coming prepared to have fun," said Hadam. "We're hoping that when people come out to see us, they're ready to participate and sing along and just not take it too seriously, us or them."

The Bill and Andy Show is every Sunday from 5 to 9 p.m. at the Surf City Hotel. For additional dates and information, visit www.billandandyshow.com or find them on Facebook by searching "The Bill and Andy Show." ♦

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