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MARIN'S BEST EVERY WEEK

JULY 13 - JULY 19, 2007

## MUSIC

### Ladies of the evening

*Whoreshoes bring their bag of tricks to the Sweetwater*

BY MATT KRAMER

A safe and fortunate Friday the 13th to everyone. I don't know how prevalent superstition is around here, but I attempt to skirt around misfortune by generating good karma and seeking out beneficial symbols—like the horseshoe—present in and on everything from breakfast cereals to saloon walls. Putting a creative twist on that good luck charm is a Bay Area band riding into the Sweetwater on Wednesday as part of the Bluegrass Gold series.

When I first read the name Whoreshoes a couple of years ago, I found it punny, but akin to the blockheaded bias I'd built against Chrome Johnson, the spelling of the first syllable of Whoreshoes put me off. So I purposely put off listening to their music. What a horse's ass I am sometimes.

Recently I received an e-mail from the band, which delivered a powerful mule-kick of a catalyst. Turns out the Whore-

shoes is an all-female band, and not (as I had incorrectly assumed) a bunch of males horsing around. What's more, one of these multi-instrumental lasses worked briefly for the *Pacific Sun*, back during the Mill Valley era, when I wrote "After Dark." This belated discovery demotes me to jackass.

For the past few weeks, I've been wrapping my elongated ears around the Whoreshoes' harmonies and their mix of bluegrass, honky-tonk, country and everything else involved on their CD, *Get Lucky*. What it sounds like is five talented musicians playing at least a dozen instruments—from banjo to ukulele (and a few things that don't have strings) on their CD—and doing so in a footstomping way that's got them in demand everywhere from Amnesia to Smiley's. You can get yourself an earful at [www.thewhoreshoes.com/sounds/](http://www.thewhoreshoes.com/sounds/). And you can make Wednesday a lucky day with

the Whoreshoes live at the Sweetwater.

After the ladies get the place rocking, the Roadoilers roll onstage, and this time (more good fortune!) they're hauling along their new CD for the occasion. Luthier, banjo (and more) player John Pedersen and the rest of this all-male band have been fiddling around with old-time, square dance, contra dance, country, ragtime, traditional Irish music and everything entertaining for more than 30 years.

Band founder Pedersen is the owner of Amazing Grace, the li'l musical instrument paradise that sits like an island in the stream of traffic in my San Anselmo hometown. Besides crafting and repairing stringed instruments, Pedersen builds sets of Uilleann pipes, which we'll most likely hear Wednesday night. He also has worked his magic on the black Yamaha acoustic guitar that occasionally suffers my unpracticed playing. And, rumor has it, at Amazing Grace you can pick up a copy of *The Roadoilers* before Wednesday night's CD release celebration at the Sweetwater. You can listen to samples at [www.cdbaby.com/cd/roadoilers](http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/roadoilers).

A few weeks ago, I was at a square dance and can attest that the music there was nowhere near the level of what I



Luck be a lady tonight: The Whoreshoes.

have heard and seen the Roadoilers do. This string quartet is a hell of a lot of fun and, despite their sometimes self-deprecating comments, these guys are all accomplished musicians. They also perform some vintage tunes that receive little light elsewhere, sometimes unearthing educational nuggets in accompaniment. If my university professors had whooped, hollered and entertained like the Roadoilers, mayhaps I'd have paid more attention in class and consequently developed better horse sense. ●

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