

THE SOCIETY OF SEVEN

A high caliber act of music and laughter

THE Society of Seven has successfully created their own niche as America's premiere showband. This is no easy task to achieve, since there are thousands of bands performing all over the USA but very seldom have you come across a band as strong as this one.

The Hawaii-based original band even conquered the most discriminating types of show habitués who only have praises for the SOS. The band was even inducted and honored with a star on the Walk of Stars with their name embedded in concrete on Las Vegas Blvd. The criteria for this distinction states: Honorees must have by their presence in this area, contributed to the charm, worldwide prominence and name recognition of Las Vegas, Clark County. The Society of Seven was joining the ranks of icons such as Sigfried and Roy, Liberace, and Wayne Newton.

Each number that SOS does is carefully thought of—making each song a production highlight. Equipped with costumes, props and seasoned musicians and singers, the Society of Seven is truly a must-see and an experience to beat. Come Aug. 15, Saturday, the SOS will celebrate their 40th year anniversary with a bang! The concert will be staged at The Grove of Anaheim. It is produced by Rosy Cheeks Entertainment in cooperation with Stonebridge

Special guests include Jasmine Trias, American Idol season finalist and Roberto "Bert" Nievera, easily considered as the Johnny Mathis of the Philippines.

The founding members of SOS are Tony Ruivivar and Bert Sagum. They had weathered everything from performers going solo to untimely death, bouncing back time and again. When asked, Ruivivar calculated SOS as having performed some 25,000 shows.

Fran Kirk, CEO of Outrigger Entertainment in Hawaii, and the group's original manager took everyone back to Hong Kong when she and her partner produced The Fabulous Echoes, the original name of SOS. She explained, *A Little Bit of Soul* was No. 1 (in Hong Kong) for thirty-two weeks—surpassing even the Beatles. "They became very popular and we used them as an opening act for such stars as Pat Boone, Patti Paige, Louis Armstrong, Sammy Davis, Jr., Ella Fitzgerald, and many more."

In 1964 the Fabulous Echoes got a four-week contract at the Thunderbird in Las Vegas. "Two weeks into the engagement a middle aged

couple came into the show," Kirk continued, and our lead singer went down and sang to the lady.

"After the show there was this tremendous commotion backstage, and apparently the couple turned out to be Mr. and Mrs. Ed Sullivan and they invited the Fabulous Echoes to perform on the *Ed Sullivan Show*."

"Well, going to New York was very expensive and we were very short of money. So to help us out they got us a great gig at the Copacabana, but we couldn't cash our check until Monday. I counted all our money, and on New Year's Eve we had thirteen dollars left. So, I went and bought the cheapest thing I could find—egg sandwiches at the deli. We sat around, passed the egg sandwiches out, and I bought a small bottle of brandy and we each took a swig and drank to a happy New Year."

Kirk explained that a Canadian group called the Echoes threatened to sue Ed Sullivan as well as the Hong Kong Echoes. "There wasn't much we could do about it, so we came to the realization that we would have to change our name. We were sitting around a table writing names of groups, and nothing clicked. Then I wrote down "Society of Seven" and I passed it to Bert (Sagum). He looked at it and said, "That's it!" He passed it to Tony (Ruivivar). He looked at it and he said "That's it!" It went all the way around the table and we had unanimous agreement and that's how the Fabulous Echoes became the Society of Seven."

Don Kelly, another longtime associate of the Society of Seven had finally figured out the group's secret of success. "It's the laughter! It's their laughter, it's their outstanding, unique ability to make others laugh that is the link that bonds them so tightly together."

"They approach life, each other, and most importantly their audiences through laughter and laughter is the music of their soul. And Tony and Bert evidently you learned very early in life that not only is music understood around the world but that everybody smiles in the same language."

Mufi Hanneman, the Mayor of Honolulu, a young, tall Harvard educated politician have nothing but praises and respect to the SOS. He looks up to the the them as "America's greatest showband".

After having become so important

to the islands, Hanneman complimented the second Hawaii-based SOS for continuing the group's thirty-five plus years at the Outrigger Waikiki. He presented each Las Vegas member with a key to Honolulu, and proclaimed November 28th Society of Seven Day in Hawaii.

Mendrei Leelin, president of Rosy Cheeks Entertainment Group joins in as one of the group's formidable producer in the Las Vegas strip as well as shows around America. Along with wife, Cecile—they spoke about the group's unique brand of showmanship, musical virtuosity, and sense of comedy.

The show of the Society of Seven has been hailed by most critics as always fresh, always funny and always thoroughly entertaining. The talent is real. Hoku Low uses his falsetto voice to bring Franki Valli to life.

He also plays bass and horns. Wayne Wakai is a virtuoso caliber musician, giving Kenny G a run for his soprano saxophone and also playing

guitar, and keyboards.

The special 40th Anniversary concert of the Society of Seven is produced by Rosy Cheeks Entertainment Group, Inc. and The Stonebridge Company in cooperation with Goldilocks Bakeshop. *Asian Journal*, Gano Excel USA Inc., Seafood City Supermarket and Asian American Peoples Journal. Tickets are priced at \$39, \$49 and Limited VIP seats at \$88. Tickets are available at Stonebridge Co (949) 690-4412; KATZ Entertainment (562) 219-7235, The Grove of Anaheim (714) 712-2700, at all So. California Goldilocks Bakeshop, and Ticketmaster.

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Jasmine Trias



Society of Seven

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