

Music

Key West Trio brings island flavored pop music

By Amanda Savio
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Parrotheads, take note: there's a Connecticut band that caters to your musical tastes: **The Key West Trio**.

The trio plays primarily **Jimmy Buffett** and **Beach Boys** tunes, what guitarist and vocalist **Ed Gerosa** calls "island flavored pop music."

"The Caribbean beat is more laid back and relaxed," said keyboardist and vocalist **Tom Violante**. "There's a huge Parrothead following out there. There are really no Buffett tribute bands," said the New Haven resident.

But don't expect strictly Buffett music if you see the **Key West Trio**. They also include a sprinkling of Beach Boys and other 50s and 60s tunes to keep it interesting.

The Key West Trio is made up of three area musicians: Gerosa, who is from Wallingford; Violante, from New Haven; and **Joe Zukowski** of Northford, as drummer. Area fans may remember Violante, Gerosa, and Zukowski as members of the locally-popular group, **The Shags**, founded in New Haven in the sixties.

Though they now have three members, "The trio thing kind of stuck," said Violante. "We were not opposed to having more players."

Joe joked that it has always been that, when there are four people in a band, the unrecognizable one is the drummer. "It hasn't changed," he said.

They don't always play as a trio. **The Key West Trio** is really several bands in one name, said Gerosa, sometimes performing as a duo or quartet. "We tailor the sound for the room, for the event," he said. On special occasions, they add Joe "Cigars" Salvati on lead guitar and vocals.

The Key West Trio uses sequences on computer disks, each one orchestrated and played into the computer one at a time by Violante, to provide the sounds that their on-stage instruments can't. All Violante has to do is pop a disk into his keyboard, and soon instruments like maracas, steel drums, and organs are part of their songs. Violante said it takes up to 10 hours to program each song until perfection is achieved.

"Modern technology adds to what we are playing," said Gerosa. "It allows you to do a bunch of stuff you couldn't do before," said Violante. "It's a studio in a PC, which is amazing. We can sing our parts live – that's what's important."

Part of an occasional series

All the members pointed out that a lot of other bands have used sequences, like **Queen** and **Boston**, and believe that some current acts totally rely on technology to replace talent. "Today, you get a keyboard, you get a computer, and you don't have to have the instruments live on the stage," said Tom.

That's not to say that they don't appreciate any of the music out there. Violante cited teen faves **Hanson** as a truly talented group, and Joe likes **Green Day** and **Matchbox 20**. "But a lot of what you're seeing now is a repeat of what we're doing," he said.

And the band finds that it's a younger crowd that comes to appreciate their music. As **The Shags**, playing just 50s and 60s music, "It was a very narrow audience," said Violante, adding that they would primarily draw older audiences. Now, as a result of the Buffett songs, they see lots of teenagers and college students.

All the members have been playing music since the 60s, and are doing what they love. They are all employed at other daytime jobs and said they do not look at the local music scene as the road to wealth.

"You'll never get rich doing this," said Joe.

"It's for enjoyment," said Gerosa. "We're not doing it for the money. We do it to spread the word and entertain folks with the great music of Buffett and The Beach Boys," added Violante.

You can check out the **Key West Trio** on the Internet at <http://www.keywesttrio.com>. Their email address is: mail@keywesttrio.com. For bookings, call 203-466-7286.



Joe Zukowski, Key West Trio's drummer.



Members of Key West trio from left: Ed Gerosa, guitar; Tom Violante, keyboard; and Joe Zukowski, drums.



Key West Trio members Ed Gerosa, on guitar, left, and Tom Violante, on keyboard, rehearse.

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