

They play music, too!

By KEITH POWERS

The sculpted blonde stares me down with her gorgeous blue bedroom eyes. Other than her stilettos, all she has on is a small leopard-print bikini, which hides none of her assets. She holds a leash with a tiger at the end of it — a live tiger — as if to say to me, "If

Music

I can tame this,
I can tame you,
too."

I'm starting to like the idea.

What's going on here? Some lurid 50-something fantasy? Hell no, boss, I'm just doing my job. The all-female string quartet Bond comes to the Paradise in Boston tonight and I've got to get the details right. The inch-thick, four-color soft-porn press kit literally lays the story bare.

Never heard of Bond? Shame on you, boys — it's the best-selling string quartet of all time. (The publicist wouldn't lie about that, would she?) Bond's press kit is definitely not the typical package that arrives in a classical music critic's mailbox. In photo after photo, the foursome goes for the, um, jugular, posing alone, posing with animals (that horse looks awfully happy) and posing in faux-lesbian fantasy duos and foursomes.

Cellist Gay-Yee confesses, "I need to eat more carrots. So I can see better in the dark." And violist Tania relates, "We were in this bar in Bulgaria and the strippers were doing lap and pole dances to our music."

Who knew? We're talking about serious artistic issues here. Like the time the Bond girls posed nude for their first CD cover. (The women changed their minds before releas-

ing it, but not before the photos made it into the British tabloids. Ugh, pirates.)

"The violin can be very sexual," gushes first violinist Haylie Ecker. She's called me on her cellphone from Hyde Park in London, but I'm looking at a photo of her in a blue microdress, spray-painted on, and knee-high boots.

Ecker sounds very little like a dominatrix though, and more like an attractive young lady with some violin chops and a good record deal. She laughs when I ask her whether the Bond girls take their clothes off because they can't play

their instruments.

"We get asked a lot about the image thing. Don't miss the point. What we're doing is like a pop band. Our concerts are like rock concerts, with a real light show, and we don't sit down, we move around the stage. And besides, nobody accuses Joshua Bell of being a bad violinist just because he looks good on photo shoots."

Well put.

Guys night out with Bond, tonight at the Paradise, 967 Commonwealth Ave., Boston. Call 617-562-8800 for tickets, \$17, and information.



STRINGS ATTACHED: The talented members of the quartet Bond are classically trained musicians who also, uh, look pretty good.