

## The Corduroy Road celebrates EP with show

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For a couple of years, Kentucky natives Drew Carman and Dylan Solise had developed a nice musical niche in Athens as the acoustic duo the Corduroy Road, performing what Carman terms as "traditional, old-time mountain music." But when Carman (vocals, banjo and harmonica) and Solise (guitar and vocals) added drums and bass to their folkie style, things definitely started picking up.

"It was quite a change from what we were originally doing," says Carman. "But a good band is always progressive. We had developed our style as a duo but picking up the low end added a rock feel to what we were playing. We'd been coming from a bluegrass feel and we've now gotten into the folk-rock or Americana style. It seemed like a natural progression for us. And now we can play larger venues and fill the whole room with our sound."

Carman says that despite the abundance of musicians in the Classic City, finding the right rhythm section was a little more arduous than he and Solise expected. "We'd been looking for bass and drums for quite a while," he says. "They're not a dime a dozen like you might think. It was hard for us to find people that would be committed to what we were doing, would be able to travel and were into the music we were playing. We weren't having much luck at the beginning."

With drummer John Cable and bassist Tim Helms now firmly part of the landscape, the Corduroy Road will celebrate the release of "The Corduroy Road EP" tonight at The Melting Point. The six-song collection, which is an independent release, was recorded at Dreamlab in Winterville. "Our original intention was to release a full-length album, and we recorded 16 or 17 songs at Dreamlab," says Carman, who moved from Kentucky several years ago to attend graduate school at the University of Georgia and eventually convinced Solise to join him here. "But we caught the ear of Mule Train Records, which is affiliated with Dreamlab. They liked what we were doing and after talking with them we decided to rework and re-record some old songs and then add some new ones."

The result will be a full-length album, with production set to begin in November at John Keane's Studios. Keane, who has a considerable background of collaboration with artists like R.E.M., Widespread Panic, The B-52's and Randall Bramblett, mastered "The Corduroy Road EP." "We're so excited to be able to work with somebody of John's caliber," says Carman. "It's a neat opportunity for us."

Although the Corduroy Road is primarily restricted to weekend performances due to the day jobs of its members (Carman is a landscape architect and Solise works at UGA's Veterinary Teaching Hospital), an expected January release of their first Mule Train-sponsored album could signal the band's full-time attention to its music.

"All of our material is either written by me or Dylan," says Carman. "With my songs, I try to reflect on my experiences, relate those experiences with the listener and make a connection. We're excited about the prospects of going on the road full-time because it will give us a wealth of new experiences to write about."

Carman admits the band seldom works up a set list, preferring instead to go where their audience takes them. "We like to feed off the energy the audience gives us," he says. "Everybody needs to be a participant, not just the guys on the stage. ... We write about our hearts and what we're feeling, which can be embarrassing at times, but if we can connect with just one audience member, that's all that matters to us. We've played big sold-out shows back home in Lexington and we've played in places where the only person there was the bartender. We always try to connect with whomever we see."

The Corduroy Road's CD release party will be enhanced by the recently announced show opener, former Vigilantes of Love leader Bill Mallonee, whose sterling musical reputation is well deserved and who is making a rare appearance in his hometown. "It's great to have Bill with us," says Carman. "He's a staple in this town and it will be a really special night. We're lucky he agreed to do the show."