

## **Americana enthusiasts find their way down The Corduroy Road**

By: Steve Wildsmith  
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There's a new day coming for bands like The Corduroy Road, Dylan Solise believes.

The Kentucky native and resident of Athens, Ga., is preparing for a busy year with The Corduroy Road, and everywhere his band tours, it seems, fans are gravitating toward the group's brand of heartfelt Americana with the same fervor previously reserved for jam bands a decade ago.

"I've heard a lot of people say that this sort of music is taking the place of where jam bands were 10 or 15 years ago, during the heyday of Phish and Widespread Panic," Solise told The Daily Times this week. "I think part of it is the inclusive vibe that comes through this music, which is similar to what jam bands were doing. It's all about positive energy, and with this music also comes a certain idea of honesty and integrity.

"It goes back to those old folk songs we draw from -- they're about life and experiences, and what we do just translates to a modern take on it. We're singing about family and friends and love, and all of those are things people can understand. It's not as obtuse or cloying as a lot of pop music can be."

The Corduroy Road, which just released a six-song EP and is preparing for a full-length album to drop before summer, traces its roots back to 2006, when Solise and band co-founder Drew Carman drew upon the music of their home state and combined it with their love of modern interpreters of Old Time music -- bands like The Avett Brothers, Ian Thomas, Paleface and more. It's a soulful-sounding genre of music, full of earnest enthusiasm and a fervor that's borrowed from punk rock, but with mandolin and banjo and pedal steel, it's distinctly rural.

"We started out, just Drew and myself, as a backporch picking kind of thing, getting together and playing a lot of cover songs that we were both listening to at the time -- the Avett Brothers, Old Crow Medicine Show and those bands that are reviving roots music but with a more modern take on it," Solise said. "We were both getting into that, and from there, we kind of traced back and realized we were both interested in some older stuff like Neil Young and Bob Dylan."

Shortly thereafter, the pair began writing their own songs. Carman left for graduate school in Athens, Ga., and Solise stayed behind, working a job in Kentucky. The two communicated frequently, sharing lyrics back and forth via e-mail and singing melodies over the phone. They would collaborate when they could, until Solise decided to move to Athens two years ago.

"The idea was that we were going to make a push with the music, and so for about a year and half, Drew and myself toured around the Southeast, worked and went to school whenever we could cram it in there," he said. "But we wanted a fuller sound than what we had been working with, so we asked a couple of friends to sit in on drums and bass, and we decided to push forward with the idea of a four-piece.

"That really revitalized the whole deal. With just guitar and banjo, you're somewhat limited, but with John (Cable on drums) and Tim (Helms on bass), it expands our power and frees us up. We just finished recording the new album, and it's even more different than before. The sound has really broadened, and it's really interesting to hear."

The instrumentation, he added, has a way of pushing the music in different directions, and having more instruments to draw from is like an artist being handed a bigger palette of paints. The end result is always something beautiful, and if the six songs on The Corduroy Road's debut EP are any indication, there's a lot more beauty to come from this band.

"It's almost indescribable to be able to create music with your best friends and then perform those songs for people," Solise said. "We're always having fun, and if you can connect with the audience and communicate that, then you're accomplishing something."