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Banjoist Drew Carman and guitarist Dylan Solise couldn't help but combine their respective musical preferences on their debut recording project.

For the two former Lexingtonians and Henry Clay High School grads now living in the vast musical haven of Athens, Georgia, that meant blending Carman's interest in old time string and mountain music, especially the kind chronicled by the Whitesburg-based roots music co-op June Appal, and Solise's enjoyment of indie pop, particularly the type cultivated by the celebrated Elephant 6 collective that was inspired by late '60s psychedelia.

The catalyst for the duo's music, though, was the progressive string music of acts like Old Crow Medicine Show and The Avett Brothers that pumped new generation drive into decades-old acoustic sounds.

"When we first went into the studio, it was supposed to be a smaller project - just a self-financed thing," Solise said. "We wanted to get as much for our time as possible, so we ripped through it and cut about 17 songs over about 2 or 3 weekends. It came out to about 5 days of recording. We planned to put what we had out ourselves and sell it on the road. Then, thru the studio, we got in touch with a record label here in Athens (Mule Train Records) that really wanted to help us to expand what we were doing."

The result is a new six-song EP disc and the subsequent addition of bassist Tim Helms and drummer John Cable. While Carman and Solise have performed locally as a guitar/banjo duo, the most recent instance being a summer show at Al's Bar, this weekend marks the local debut of the full quartet lineup as well as the release of the new EP. The name of the band, as well as the recording, is *The Corduroy Road*.

"As Dylan and I started out as a duo, it was very limiting with just guitar and banjo and our vocals," Carman said. "Now with some of these other instruments, we can really start to put meat on that skeleton that we worked up with our songs."

The instrumentation and vocal harmonies of *The Corduroy Road* suggest bluegrass. But on tunes such as *Desperate Man*, a blend of piano, banjo and pedal steel guitar create a far more evocative and atmospheric presence.

"When it was just Drew and myself playing, we got pegged as a bluegrass band quite a bit," Solise said. "A lot of that just had to do with the fact we have banjo in what we do. Obviously our sound is indebted to bluegrass in a number of ways. But I've never really tried to adhere to that tradition strictly. While I definitely respect that, I'm more interested in combining all those influences to create something different."

To put that combination into practice, the full quartet lineup of *The Corduroy Road* have begun work on a full-length album with help from producer/engineer John Keane, a fabled member of the Athens music community who has worked with, among many others, *Widespread Panic*.

"I've got tons of his records here at the house that I listen to," Solise said. "This is a really neat opportunity for us to be able to work with him for our next record and bridge that gap a little more between modern music and that great music from the past".

*The Corduroy Road* performs at 10 p.m. tonight at *The Fishtank*, 500 E. Euclid. Cover charge is \$5. Call (859) 254-3474