



The Corduroy Road promotes 'Love' on busy tour schedule

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The four Athens-based bluegrass rockers of The Corduroy Road are clocking a lot of mileage this summer as they thoroughly tour seven southeastern states to promote their first full-length album, "Love Is A War," released in June.

The Corduroy Road recently released two projects the "Just One Drop" EP and a full-length album, "Love Is a War."

The well-loved 2006 Ford E-150 passenger van that gets the band everywhere will pull into Ron's Home Team BBQ on Sullivan's Island tomorrow. July will be the band's busiest month yet, with 16 shows.

Founding members Dylan Solise (guitar) and Drew Carman (banjo) grew up in Kentucky and started playing and writing music together the summer Carman moved home after completing his undergraduate degree. Both musicians created, and still create, their songs individually by working with sparks of melody or phrases before sharing it with the other for tweaking. When Carman moved to Athens for graduate school the pair kept in contact, e-mailing lyrics back and forth and playing together every couple of months.

Eventually Solise moved to Athens, a southern music Mecca, and the dynamic duo toured part-time together for a year and a half. When a recording opportunity came along last summer they decided to add some auxiliary instrumentation. The result was the addition of John Cable on drums and for a time his roommate, bass player Tim Helms. In January the band recorded material for their five-song EP "Just One Drop," released in April, and "Love Is A War" with local legend, producer John Keane. Pedal steel, electric guitar, fiddle and harmonica rounded out the sound in the studio. Helms bowed out shortly afterward and The Corduroy Road added Elijah Neesmith on upright bass and hit the road with a fuller, more fleshed out ensemble.

Though Solise and Carman are still the primary songwriters, the collaboration process is now more pronounced.

"Every person adds their own take on the song," Solise said. "There's freedom to express themselves in a song that's already been written."

The Corduroy Road has great versatility with some songs slow sweet with epic storytelling lyrics like "The Wind and Water," while others have such a high energy tempo and expert banjo picking that listeners feel like they're on a high speed road chase. The lyrics are always heartfelt, sometimes sad, and clearly come from a country tradition, without falling into the faux pas of blow-by-blow stories of women and misfortune. They are delivered by Carman's charming voice, which frequently harmonizes with Solise's, both complete with demure southern accents, not indecipherable back woods twangs. With a bluegrass, folk, old time rock and roll mishmash, and even the occasional hint of blues inspiration, The Corduroy Road, like many bands, does not fully adhere to one genre label.

If you go

"It's really more American music than Americana," Solise responded to the band's most common heading. "It is a blend of all those different forms that were begun and flourished here."

The Corduroy Road even takes inspiration from Athens contemporaries of other genres.

"We listen to a lot of music in the van. A lot of CDs go in and out to pass the time," Solise admits. "We hear a lot of Drive By Truckers. They are amazing song writers even though they're quite different."

If you can't make the Friday show, The Corduroy Road will have three additional performances in the area before the month is out.

Visit thecorduroyroad.com for details.