

COFFEEHOUSE SERIES:

"SINGER SONGWRITERS"

April 4, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

UPCOMING COFFEEHOUSE SERIES:

"CLEVELAND'S RICH MUSIC HISTORY"

July 25, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Marous Brothers Outdoor Stage

38660 Mentor Ave.

Willoughby, Ohio 44094

www.fineartsassociation.org/calendar.html

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After the first year of coffeehouse events, Lawrence, high on the events' "artistic quality," suggested obtaining a financial backer to cover publicity, including mailed postcards.

The call for publicity was what initially led Wareham to join the scene. Her first experience with Carleton's performances left her thinking: "I can't believe how good this is." Wareham got behind the shows enthusiastically. And the enthusiasm paid off, as the next show brought in 170 to 180 people, a substantial increase in guests.

"Sometimes people are practically hanging from the rafters. You never really know, as people come and go," Wareham says. "We're just always looking for ways to give back to the community."

One way of giving back is providing the shows for free, thanks to the sponsors — two Wareham business associates.

"We needed some money to market this and to pay Denny a stipend. We found our benefactor in Lisa and Eric Barbe," she says.

Beyond the publicity, Carleton and Lawrence discussed ways to improve future performances.

"The first year I was doing everything, including announcing. That just wouldn't work in the long run," Carleton says. As a result, FAA hired someone to handle professional sound. In addition, Carleton has a brother who records DVDs as a hobby. "That way people in the performance can obtain a fantastic demo," he says.

In addition to the technical planning that goes into each show, food and refreshments are now available for purchase from a local coffeehouse, Bear Creek.

Lawrence has since left FAA to join the

Cleveland Institute of Music, but Carleton says he was "instrumental in helping to change the existing gallery into a coffeehouse feel."

MUSIC NITTY-GRITTY

Currently, Carleton's latest music ideas are pitched to James Mango, who took over for Lawrence. They brainstorm on concepts for future performances.

Carleton's first such concept performance was a Bob Dylan show. "The entire coffeehouse had all artists playing Dylan while a PowerPoint and film were running at the same time."

An upcoming concept-inspired show will be a singer/songwriter event on April 4 in which songwriters will swap songs with other singers. This summer's concept will be based on Cleveland music.

Carleton says, "This stuff just sort of happened. The FAA positioned me no longer as the person who plays music, but I'm the person who can bring the coffeehouse to your event. I can do this because of my overwhelming amount of contacts."

Carleton says the real fun is putting together future performances. "I have a lot of friends I can call on," he half jokes.

"Without sounding politically correct, I like to have a variety of voices as my friends: an older person, younger person, females, and different nationalities. I like to stretch the audience," he says.

Through FAA's efforts, Carleton says they've "cultivated an environment where musicians want to play because they know they're free to be who they are." □

For more information:

www.fineartsassociation.org