

Coffee House musicians look to provide Aurorans their moment of Zen



By Brock Weir

Do you ever have those weekend moments of standing by the window, coffee in hand, watching the snow fall, or watching the sunrise, completely at peace with the world?

For musician Jared Stafford, that feeling can be summed up as 'ambedo' and it is a feeling he hopes to share with his fellow Aurorans one note at a time.

'It is that feeling you get when you are in a trance moment,' says Mr. Stafford, 24. 'It is tranquility, you become at peace, and time almost stands still. [My music partner and I] liked that concept, especially for a Sunday because at the end of the week, people want to relax and enjoy themselves and get lost in a moment. We hope we can provide that experience through music.'

You are invited to come out and experience your own sense of the feeling at the second Ambedo Coffee House Jam, which will take place this Sunday, January 31, beginning at 7 p.m. at the Second Cup, located on Bayview Avenue just south of Hollidge Boulevard.

The Open Mic night is the brainchild of Mr. Stafford who has been looking for a local open mic night outside of the typical pub and bar scene that would be family friendly and have an appeal to people of all ages and musical tastes.

'I felt in our area there is a little bit of culture missing with regards to the availability of events for people who just want to go and perform,' or some young people who have never performed before, to have that outlet,' says Mr. Stafford, who says his own musical heart lies in alternative rock, with splashes of the classics and show tunes. 'This Coffee House concept is something I feel is appealing to a lot of different people and different performers. It is a lot more intimate, it is lower-key, and you can bring your kids or grandparents and they can enjoy it too. It's not going to blow the roof off the place!'

Forming the Coffee House at the Second Cup began with cultivating a good relationship with the owner. A regular customer at the location, Mr. Stafford says its bright, open concept design provides the perfect atmosphere.

'As a performer, it can be pretty intimidating to go and perform in front of a bunch of people you don't know who may be a little tipsy and getting pretty loud,' he says. 'It is a lot less intimidating when people are sitting, relaxed, paying attention, are quiet and are actually listening to you. That is the vibe we got on our first Sunday performance. Everyone was really interested in hearing the musicians and they were really respectful of that.'

At that first go-round, Mr. Stafford says everything went according to plan. They took what they liked from other open mic nights in the area and tailored it to the venue, while some of the rowdier elements were left firmly at the door. Looking back, he says he was

?quite pleased? with the song choices offered by the various performers, including a lot of selections atypical of open mic fare.

?People were willing to try it because the setting allowed it,? he says. ?I am going to [measure the success of this] through the enjoyment of the people who are there. I am big on feedback. I will be the guy who will ask everybody I get the chance to how they enjoyed it and what they would like to see. I have a whole strategy for the future, but for now this is definitely the starting venue. It is one I would like to keep going as long as possible with support. If the reputation gets out there, that will be possible.?

For more information on the Ambedo Coffee House Jam, visit www.facebook.com/AmbedoJamNight. If you are interested in performing, drop Mr. Stafford a line through their Facebook page or come out to speak to him at the event itself.