

Strike A Chord

Develop Skills Through Songwriting Circle



Dennis Drew poses in his home music studio where he and fellow musicians have begun sharing songwriting skills.

P-J photo by Joe R. Liuzzo

ized the venue of a bar would not work for the project.

He approached James Colby, Community Cultural Center director at JCC, with the proposition of playing their music in a coffee-house style setting. But he had some reservations.

"I was afraid just to play for an hour. I've never done these songs in public, and I didn't know if it would be that interesting," Drew said.

From there, Colby and Drew developed it into a songwriting circle so that others could learn from each other about writing lyrics.

Peterson said an event such as this may give musicians more

motivation to perform some of their own music.

"It's realizing there are ears that like to hear real stuff, not the run-of-the-mill top 40 stuff," Peterson said. "It's more interesting, especially for musicians interested in music."

Drew said song writing cannot take place in a vacuum. That is, a musician cannot lock himself or herself into a room and emerge a genius.

"It's a social medium. It's hard to hear yourself sometimes. If you write a lot of songs, they sound different to you because you know the inner aspects of them, the tiny workings," Drew said. "But to someone else they

might sound exactly the same. Sometimes you need another perspective."

Drew and Erickson explained that by listening to how other people play and to their story behind a song, a musician expands upon his or her style and improves it.

"The more you learn, you can tailor it to your style," Erickson said.

"People think they have a style, but they don't really develop it until they learn more. Jeff's style has gotten 100 percent better," Drew said about his time of working with Erickson.

Those interested in attending

the workshop, which Drew hopes to continue in the future, should bring their song materials and guitar. Sound equipment, such as keyboards, will be available.

To end the series, a concert will be held at 7 p.m. April 26 at the college's Scharmann Theatre. A performance by the MIGHTY WALLOP!, Drew's newly-formed band including Erickson, Steve Gustafson and Ryan Seekings, is planned for half of the show. The other half will feature artists participating in the songwriter's circle.

Concert tickets are \$2 for JCC/FSA individuals and \$4 for the general public.