



THE CIRCUIT

conversations between performers & audience

By Russ Disotell

The Circuit is described by its founder as “conversations through music and poetry”. Physically, it is a traveling tour of musicians and poets performing their craft around a central theme or subject specific to the evening, with an open mike segment that allows the audience to fully participate in the experience. Nel Coloma-Moya, the creative force behind The Circuit says, “It’s a different experience when the audience is included in the performance. It allows the audience to find their voice in the process.”

The Circuit was launched in February this year. The first monthly theme was, predictably enough, Love and Longing. With two stops on the tour, performances take place on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month in Kingston and Brockville respectively. Kingston events take place at the “Queen’s Grad Club”, while the Brockville venue is at the “From Here to Infinity Gallery”, at the corner of King St. and Perth. All events begin at 7 p.m. and run until approximately 9 p.m. There is no charge for admission.

Nel hopes to add two more evenings to the tour to fill the monthly schedule. “Gananoque is a strong likelihood for the spring. I’ve talked

to the owner of a local venue who is very interested in hosting The Circuit. However, the logistics just didn’t mesh for the winter.” Coloma-Moya is excited about the possibility of adding a Gananoque stop because of what the vibrant artistic community in and around the town can bring to the mix. “It could be quite interesting.”

A typical evening begins with a short introduction on the evening’s theme and the schedule of presenters, followed by the open mike section of the program. After the open

mike session there is a short ten minute break, after which two Circuit artists will further develop the evening’s theme in words and music.

Members of the audience have an opportunity to sign up for the open mike session before the beginning of the evening. Coloma-Moya stresses that this section of the evening is not restricted to just music and spoken word in its various forms. “If someone is invested in any type of art form, they are welcome to present at open mike.” She remembers a presentation by a group of rug hookers at The Circuit’s forerunner, In To Texts, that was well received and a real eye-opener. “It placed a spotlight on creativity in people’s everyday life and had people realizing that art isn’t confined to galleries and studios. If you have a garden and grow flowers, then take the flowers indoors to make floral arrangements, this is a form of self-expression, a creative outlet, and yes, an art form.”

Coloma-Moya firmly believes this format breaks down the artificial divide between the audience and the performers. “It allows those attending, an opportunity to evolve in their own art form. The open mike segment can be a spark to the audience’s own creativity.” She firmly believes that diverse groups can share and learn from each other. The Circuit fosters this by promoting conversation between not only poets and musicians but also artists and the audience.

However, the true measure of success is that The Circuit provides a wonderful evening of entertainment. To achieve this, she plans to make full use of the abundance of talent available in the area, from all of the different artistic disciplines. “We are building an audience for live entertainment, bringing together diverse groups for cross-promotion. Experimentation is the name of the game, but in its own way, it is a community building exercise, for the benefit of everyone. LH

