

The Cozy Tea Cart in Brookline redefining what it means to be a tea shop

By TERESA SANTOSKI Staff Writer

Courtesy photo. Boston-based musician Shadwell will headline The Cozy Tea Cart Cafe's Tea and Tunes live music series at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 14. The Cozy Tea Cart Cafe is located at 104A Route 13, Brookline.

IF YOU GO

The Cozy Tea Cart Cafe's Tea & Tunes Series, featuring Shadwell

WHEN: 7:30-9 p.m. Friday, Dec. 14.

WHERE: The Cozy Tea Cart Cafe, 104A Route 13, Brookline, in the plaza next to TD Bank.

COST: Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased in advance at the cafe. Limited tickets may be available at the door.

MORE INFORMATION: Visit www.thecozyteacart.com or call 249-9111. To learn more about Shadwell, visit www.shadwellmusic.com.

Some revolutions happen quietly, with changes taking place in little pockets of the country before they sweep through society as a whole.

Such changes are brewing in a small plaza on Route 13 in Brookline, where Danielle Beaudette, owner of The Cozy Tea Cart Cafe, is redefining the modern tea room.

With a menu that offers hearty options like vegetable lasagna alongside the more customary scones and clotted cream and décor that eschews lace tablecloths in favor of warm earth tones and a cushy couch, it only makes sense that The Cozy Tea Cart Cafe's events calendar would encompass more than the traditional afternoon tea.

The next performance in the establishment's Tea and Tunes live music series will be held at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 14 at The Cozy Tea Cart Café, 104A Route 13 in Brookline. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at the cafe.

The featured performer will be Boston-based musician Aaron Shadwell, a heartfelt singer-songwriter armed with an electric guitar who headlined the series' inaugural event back in August.

For more information, visit the tea room's website at www.thecozyteacart.com or call 249-9111.

"I wanted to support the arts, and we were already doing Tea and Canvas," Beaudette said of her inspiration for Tea and Tunes.

Tea and Canvas is a series of classes with local artists, hosted by The Cozy Tea Cart Cafe.

Customers asked Beaudette if she was planning anything similar with musicians. Though she had been considering such a series, Beaudette did not have the same level of familiarity with the local music scene that she had with the visual artists.

"I didn't have the connection with the musicians," she said, "which is why I got in touch with Karen and Phil."

Karen and Phil Johnson, of Brookline, are regulars at The Cozy Tea Cart Cafe. Their son Andrew is a musician based in New York City, and they're acquainted with a number of talented performers from New Hampshire and beyond.

When Beaudette approached them about doing a live music series at her establishment, the Johnsons recommended Shadwell.

Karen first met him at the Keene Music Festival in 2010, and she and her husband recently invited him to perform a house concert at their residence.

The four of them worked together to launch the first Tea and Tunes event, which has since grown into a full-fledged series.

"To see this carry on is tremendous," Shadwell said, expressing his admiration for the commitment Beaudette and the Johnsons' have shown to quality, independent music.

"You could conceivably go a whole career in music and never meet people like that, and I just met three of them," he said.

Shadwell, who uses his last name as his stage name, is celebrating his 10th anniversary as a professional musician by recording an EP – both in the traditional sense, as music, and recording the entire studio session on video to release as a DVD.

To learn more about this project, which also involves Andrew Johnson, visit www.shadwellmusic.com and click on the Kickstarter logo.

During his career, Shadwell has performed at a variety of venues. He's played at the Comcast Center (formerly known as Great Woods and the Tweeter Center) in Mansfield, Mass., and clubs like Pianos and Arlene's Grocery in New York City.

In the Boston area, he's done shows at the Lizard Lounge, T.T. the Bear's Place, the Paradise Rock Club and the Middle East in both its upstairs and downstairs performance spaces.

For Shadwell, however, the most important aspect of a venue is not its size or how well known it is, but how well it enables him to connect with the audience.

"When you can tell that everyone is collectively experiencing the music being played, there's nothing like that," he said.

"That's kind of the whole reason I do this."

The Cozy Tea Cart Café offers the right level of intimacy to make that audience connection.

Shadwell described the atmosphere as warm and inviting, "almost like going to somebody's house."

"It's the non-traditional venues like The Cozy Tea Cart and private house concerts where you really connect and build fans that will stick with you through thick and thin," he said.

"I've played with big acts, and I've been at big places and stuff, and I'll take The Cozy Tea Cart any day," Shadwell said.

The audience response to Tea and Tunes has been equally enthusiastic.

"The people that have come love it," Beaudette said.

"They're really pleased with it and keep asking who the next musician is going to be."

For those who are already curious, Beaudette has booked Keene-based classical musicians The Tick Tock Trio to play at the series' January event. Two members of the trio, along with Andrew Johnson and vocalist Kelsey Berry, opened for Shadwell at the August event.

"I'm trying to mix it up each month so that it's different types of music," Beaudette said.

Beaudette and Shadwell share similar aspirations for Tea and Tunes, and for The Cozy Tea Cart Cafe in general.

"My hope was to really make it a place to go in the community," Beaudette said, noting that Brookline doesn't really have a venue like this.

"She could become a resource in the area for people to come see great original music," Shadwell said.

“The best shows come about in the context of community.”

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[Judy Larkin "The Tea Lady"](#)

As an international tea specialist it is good to see "a tea shop" become such an innovative venue for both tea lovers and artists.

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I'm not surprised at this innovation from Danielle Beaudette! She is creative and brings her canvas to life in many forms! Congrats on something more than Tea & Scones!