

c) THE YELLOW DOOR COFFEE HOUSE

Principles and ideals of the Yellow Door Coffee House
and its history "Good evening ladies & gentlemen and welcome to the yellow door", is of
admittedly out of context, but still my favorite introduction. The Yellow Door as a Coffee House has been in continuous operation for $5\frac{1}{2}$ years, having
opened its doors in October 1967. Its primary features have remained the same;
Hootenanny every Sunday, coffee 10¢, seating for about 70 people and presenting
primarily Folk Music. The term, 'folk music' is best represented however by a statement accredited to Kevin Head "this is folk song; I wrote it yesterday and I'm a folk". The primary objectives of the Yellow Door are:

- a) to give persons a place to perform their music, and
- b) to provide inexpensive, informative entertainment to starving college students and members of the working, or non-working class. In these it has been very successful.

The YD spans the stages in performing between living room and concert hall. The sunday night extravaganza "twelve performers to get on stage, three hours to do it in, therefore three songs each and don't make them long" is for many the first opportunity to do their music for other than themselves. The next stage is to work Monday-Tuesday & Wednesday nights, for small, intimate groups of people and get PAID 50% of the admissions. From there, and after a great amount of polishing and useful hints from others in the area, one has a chance at the BIGTIME; playing a WEEKEND when the place is likely to have anywhere from 40 to 140 warm bodies apoloauding furiously, and the pay increases tremendously. For Montrealers, the YD is a performers workshop, the audience is receptive, the freebies have good ideas, and there is also lunch daily for 35¢. Many of the young people performing acoustic guitar/banjo/etc music are aware of the standing rule - you'll never get rich at it, but it's a lot of fun.

Besides being a showcase for locals, the YD gets cards, letters, phone calls and messenger-messages from a great variety of people from all over the place. Due to its comparative longevity and the fact that it doesn't have to make a great deal of money to remain in operation, the word has spread across the land, and all those people who find 9-5 distasteful and have decided to make it on the basis of what they can do themselves come looking for to play.

There is a whole sub-culture connected with 'folk', with the people who play preferring to live pastorally, not just singing the traditional songs to keep them remembered, but living the parts. Most tend to blend the traditional with the contemporary to whatever degree suits themselves. After the big boom in folk in the early 60's, folk having surfaced on a par with Rock & Roll, a good many people found it to be a more meaningful expression than the mindless All radio boy-girl music that still pollutes the airwaves. Folk was and is more individual and more diverse, but still doesn't pay as well, when it pays, as Rock/pop....

To many of the young people I know, the coffee house is a meeting place, an alternative to the corner store of yesteryear, and far more hospitable than the local bar or restaurant. The music, while enjoyable, is of equal or less importance than the purely social and essentially formative aspects of interpersonal relationships and observation of same.

Around 4:30, when the telephone starts to ring in earnest, the standard conversation goes:

Can you tell me who's playing tonight,

Ayup!

(pause) well, would you ,

So and So.

What does he/she play?

Guitar.

No, no I meant what kind of music?

Folk.

Yeah, but what kind, y'know; blues, country (ad nauseum).

Good, and for 75¢ get down and find out for yourself.

Oh!

Chuck Baker

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"Bonsoir Mesdames et Messieurs, soyez les bienvenus à la Porte Jaune". Vous constatez n'est-ce pas que j'emploie toujours la même formule pour mes accueillis.

Le Yellow Door existe depuis $5\frac{1}{2}$ ans ayant ouvert ses portes en 1967. Les spécialités sont les mêmes qu'à l'ouverture: Hootenanny chaque dimanche, café .10, capacité d'accueil pour environ 70 personnes auxquelles on présente de la musique folklorique.

Nos premiers objectifs sont:

- a) de procurer aux personnes qui le désirent un endroit pour exécuter leur musique;
- b) de procurer aux étudiants affamés ainsi qu'aux membres travaillants et aussi à ceux qui ne le sont pas, un divertissement peu couteux tout en étant instructif.

Le Yellow Door offre beaucoup d'avantages aux jeunes qui, s'ils le désirent, peuvent se perfectionner dans leur domaine respectif soit vocal ou instrumental.

La soirée "extravaganza" du dimanche permet à 12 personnes de monter sur la scène durant trois heures et d'interpréter chacune trois brèves chansons ayant ainsi l'avantage de se produire pour la première fois devant un public attentif.

Les lundis, mardis et mercredis, durant la soirée, ils peuvent travailler pour de petits groupes et recevoir 50% du prix d'admission. La grande chance peut arriver après une période de perfectionnement; souvent, ces jeunes reçoivent une invitation à se faire entendre au cours de toute une fin de semaine devant un auditoire sympathique qui applaudit à tout rompre. Cette jeunesse s'amuse en faisant de la musique tout en étant conscients qu'elle ne fera jamais fortune.

Pour de nombreuses personnes que je connais, le Yellow Door est un endroit de rencontre hospitalier qui leur rappelle l'ancien magasin du coin si accueillant.