

LIFE

DILLON ANTHONY: THE STORIES BEHIND THE MUSIC

Theatre New Brunswick
presenting *Four Stories Live*
– Dillon Anthony & Friends
on Friday, Jan. 15 in the TNB
Studio Theatre

LORI GALLAGHER
THE DAILY GLEANER

Dillon Anthony is a modern-day troubadour.

The local man tells the stories of our time, weaving in music and imagination and leaving enough space between the layers for the listener to add their own experiences into the mix.

On Jan. 15, Theatre New Brunswick is welcoming Anthony and friends into the theatre space on Whiting Road for a performance and discussion of the music and lyrics behind his debut EP, *Four Stories*.

For Anthony, this journey began more than two years ago with what he describes as a personal challenge.

"I'm usually a side man in bands, I'm usually just accompanying singer/songwriters or playing in rock bands or what have you," he says.

A multi-instrumentalist, engineer, and producer who enjoys working in many different styles of music, Anthony has been described as a "utility musician," playing guitar, banjo, pedal/lap steel, piano, bass and drums on various recordings and in a number of bands. He's currently a member of Kill Chicago, and Fredericton songwriter Cedric Noel's band.

"When it came to lyric writing, it was more comfortable for me to write stories than to just free-verse sort of thing. My



Musician Dillon Anthony shows three sides of his personality in this photo. Those who come out to *Four Stories Live* – Dillon Anthony & Friends on Jan. 15 at the TNB Studio Theatre will get to learn more about this local talent. Reserve your tickets today. PHOTO: SUBMITTED

only literary experience was high school English class and I enjoyed writing short stories, so I figured that's how I would approach it," he says.

The stories he crafted were inspired by different events, not just things that happened to him.

"Let me give you an example. The last tune called 'The Vagrant,' I met this homeless man that had been travelling across Canada for decades," he says. "Every town he's gone to that whole time, he finds an object or buys something that he finds

interesting, buries it in the woods and marks it on a map to be sent to his children after he passes on, to show them that he always cared about them."

Anthony wrote a song about that story. "Where I don't know the man and just had a short interaction, I had to draw from some personal experiences, and I had to come up with some reasons why that may have happened to him," he says.

As the stories and songs began coming together, Anthony called on many of his musical friends to be part of the project.

"I wanted to do a collaborative effort because you really get a sense of community and this town is great for that," he says. "I feel that everyone in the music scene, and the arts scene as a broader thing, is really supportive and wants everyone else to succeed."

Anthony ended up working on the project for two years, then released *Four Stories* digitally in July 2015. It wasn't long before people began to take notice, including Thomas Morgan Jones, the artistic director with Theatre New Brunswick.

"I didn't initially intend to perform it live, but an opportunity like that, I couldn't pass it up," says Anthony.

Jones heard the finished EP thanks to his co-worker Matt Carter, the director of development and communications with TNB and a fellow music lover.

"Theatre is a meeting place of all art forms. Music, fine art, dance, opera. That's why it's so powerful," says Jones, noting that listening to *Four Stories* felt like

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listening to a piece of theatre. "So the next thing Matt said to me is that it's never been performed ever live. It was just made for this EP."

Part of the reason for that is the number of people involved with the project, says Anthony.

"Thirty people involved with the recording/art. And then there would be a dozen or more in the actual performance," he says. "Some names people might know of bands, you have members of Grand Theft Bus, you've got members of a band called Before the War and then there are members of the reggae band Dub Antenna, as well as a few other people."

Jones thought the EP would be a good fit for Studio Fridays, something they've

begun at the TNB Studio Theatre on Whiting Road. The plan is that he and Anthony will sit together and talk, about the songs, their creation and more.

"Then I will read the lyrics, so the audience will take in the story lyrically first," says Jones. "The next thing that will happen is Dillon gets up and goes to sit with the band and they play the whole song. Now the audience is primed to receive the music in addition to the story."

Adding to the artistry of the EP, Dillon went to Owl's Nest Bookstore and found four books that looked interesting, but had blank covers and backs.

"I got four local artists to do album artwork representative of each song. There are four storybooks, one with each title. Then a photographer took a picture of the books for the album artwork," he says.

The covers will be on display during

the performance on Jan. 15, with different pieces highlighted as the discussion moves from one song to the next.

Anthony hopes that those who come to the show leave with a greater awareness of how the art scene in Fredericton works.

"Everyone is very loving, caring, collaborative and I hope there is a lot more crossover," he says.

As with everything they do at TNB, Jones hopes that people will be inspired by the art and the individuals who make it.

He also hopes that anyone who isn't already familiar with the local music scene or these players can have the same experience he has had.

"Which is to be introduced to these jaw-dropping musicians and then to realize how interconnected they are," says Jones. "That they watch this and they

go, 'Oh, they're in other bands. What are those other bands?' And maybe new people will engage with the live music scene in this city more than maybe they have in the past, which would be amazing."

Four Stories Live – Dillon Anthony & Friends is being presented at the TNB Studio Theatre, 55 Whiting Rd, at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 15.

There are only 98 seats available, so you need to reserve your spot by going to www.tnb.nb.ca, finding *Four Stories Live* and clicking on the Eventbrite link. There is no charge to reserve a seat, but the suggested donation at the door is \$10.

"The music is available online as well, the same concept, it's by donation," says Anthony.

The *Four Stories* EP is available through www.dillonanthony.com.