

Fort Collins natives A Brother's Fountain marked the release of their debut album, a live compilation entitled Pine Needles and Streams, with a diverse, two-set performance at Hodi's Half Note Saturday.

The band consists of husband and wife Ryan and Lasha Guillen, on mandolin and ukulele, respectively; brothers AJ and Justin Fountain, on bass and acoustic guitar, respectively; cellist Bret Rindi and drummer Roel Calvillo.

The family ties extended beyond the stage and fostered an intimate camaraderie between the band and the crowd. Many members of the audience were personal friends of the band who have been following the music for years.

Rindi's cello and Lasha Guillen's ukelele lent fresh, welcome textures to the otherwise traditional string band instrumentation. Rindi favors slow, sustained rhythm lines that give the music a cerebral, orchestral dimension. The cello's range allows it to function just as capably in the bass register as in the treble spaces a violin sometimes occupies.

Justin Fountain's vocals bore a sort of folk-reggae timbre that invites comparison to the likes of Barefoot Truth. Ryan Guillen's mellow bass voice adds harmonies. Occasionally, AJ Fountain reels off a rap.

AJ Fountain also contributes sporadic harmonica licks. One piece featured a call-and-response sequence between his harmonica and his bass.

Set two began with just Ryan Guillen and Justin Fountain on stage. Fountain explained the pared approach as a throwback to the band's early days.

Graham Good of Graham Good and the Painters joined ABF for a handful of numbers, alternating between mandolin and banjo.

The second set also featured a few tunes the Guillen pair wrote together. As one might expect, such songs developed around mandolin/ukelele interplay. Ryan Guillen took the lead vocal duties on these numbers.

The only cover of the night was a rendition of The Traveling Wilburys' "End of the Line." It was the first of three pieces with which ABF encored, and it underscored the hopeful vibes that ran throughout the night.

A Brother's Fountain's diverse instrumentation gives depth to singalong folk pieces, and allows the band to explore unique improvisational territory. The end result is an uplifting, accessible performance that rewards those who listen closely.