

Folk artist to perform at Foundry Hall

BY KRISTIN HAY

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SOUTH HAVEN -- "YouTube is the new coffeehouse, for young musicians," said Mark Dvorak.

Dvorak, who will be performing at 7:30 pm Friday, November 13, at South Haven's Foundry Hall, has been called a modern-day troubadour who has never stopped performing writing and recording since 1981. He has an encyclopedic knowledge of traditional songs, and many artists have recorded his songs. He plays authentic country blues guitar and picks old-time banjo.

As a member of the faculty of the Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago, Dvorak has a lot of opportunity to observe the talent of emerging folk artists. He said he is excited by the talent he sees coming out of younger musicians.

But he sees a difference between young musicians today and those who sprang up during the turbulent 1960's. He said he thinks the music being written today by young artists is socially significant, but not yet mature. "In the 60's, young people were united by the Civil Rights movement and by the draft," he said. "Today, young people are facing a world of impending catastrophes."

Instead of writing protest songs, they are expressing themselves in a different way. "I have to struggle sometimes, to know what they are trying to say," he said.

He thinks the web of modern technology has helped young musicians to connect with each other, but that they are also sometimes distracted by it.

"Although we're all hooked up through the internet, it can be a very isolating experience," Dvorak said.

"On YouTube, it is common to see an individual sitting in their room performing alone for their video camera, playing to an audience they will never see," he said.

"YouTube is the new coffeehouse. In the 60's young musicians started out by performing in coffee houses."

There is still a difference between then and now, Dvorak continues.

"Performers like Bob Dylan found a way to refine their art at a very early age." Pete Seeger, Dylan and



MARK DVORAK

Phil Ochs laid the groundwork for an entire generation, Dvorak said. He said their success was due to several factors. Record companies and radio stations recognized their talent, their music became woven into the social fabric of the time.

Today, there are so many young musicians with a lot of talent who can write and sing and play, but there aren't so many gathering places for the music to take hold. There aren't as many places for people to hear each other, Dvorak said young people tell him. "I think we have yet to see and hear the impact of the old music as it settles on the new generation," he said. A venue like Foundry Hall is such a place where real artistic values can find their home, where the old and the new can come together."

This will be Dvorak's third performance at Foundry Hall. The folk artist spices his performances with jokes and personal anecdotes and often adds comments to explain the social context of the songs.

The show starts at 7:30 pm Friday, Nov. 13. General admission tickets are \$8 and are available at

www.brownpapertickets.com, (800)

838-3006, and at the door. For more information, call the South Haven Center for the Arts at (269) 637-1041 or visit

www.foundryhall.com.