

New Band, League, Hopes to Enrich Local Culture

By Riley Luskey

SHAWNEE, Okla. — “Cultivating the culture in Shawnee” is the mission statement Ethan Morris named for the newly founded Shawnee-centric band, League.

Ethan Morris, a senior philosophy major at Oklahoma Baptist University, recently gathered a group of local artists to form League, hoping to enrich the music culture in Shawnee.

“I like to play live music . . . I think the world needs more of [it],” Morris said when asked where the idea for the band originated.

Morris said he hopes for League to play at local venues, both on the OBU campus and off, to help the culture of the area flourish. With Shawnee being home to thousands of college students every year, this need exists.

“[It] gives people a reason to gather,” said OBU piano performance senior and League keyboard player Cailey Morris.

She said she believes events with League could promote community among the young adults of Shawnee and surrounding areas.

“This is important now more than ever,” she said.

With one event already played and another just on the horizon, this Christian-adjacent indie rock group hasn't wasted any time starting their mission.

League's first live performance occurred at the OBU Welcome Back Party on August 23.

The group consisted of five musicians. Ethan Morris played bass and vocals, Eric Wall and Zachary Ware played electric guitar, Judah Skelton played drums and Cailey Morris played keys.

"It was a great debut of League the band," Morris said shortly after he left the stage.

Their set lasted eight songs—five of which were original songs by Morris.

"I write the songs and have some demo recordings [they] use to learn them," Morris said.

He views songwriting as an "outlet" and he shared that other members of League use the band as a creative outlet for themselves, too.

"However they choose to play the songs live is completely up to them," Morris said when he explained the integration of League 'originals' into the set lists.

Though the members learn the songs through the demos, they can incorporate their own visions for the songs when they play on stage.

“We like to keep it original,” Morris said.

League plans to release their original songs on music platforms Spotify and Apple Music. Morris said he would like to see a studio and live recording of the songs that they will release.

“The studio versions would be closer to the demos I make,” he said.

“The live recordings could be posted so the variations and in-the-moment changes could shine.”

Offering both versions allows the musical and creative expression of all the members of League to be exhibited. Displaying the artists’ unique variations would showcase their talent.

“A league of great musicians” is how Morris described the band and its members. He later said this was where the name of the band originated.

Morris explained that the members of League will change continuously. Instead of the same five or six musicians performing at every gig, the artists will change based on their availability and location, along with a few other factors.

However, making these live events run smoothly requires more than just the musicians. In order for League to enrich Shawnee’s local music culture in the way they hope to, they collaborate with many other types of artists.

“Writers, videographers, photographers [and] producers” were only a few of the positions Morris listed as crucial to League achieving their mission.

Morris is working closely with audio and visual specialists in regards to League’s next performance that will take place October 4 in the Lower GC on OBU campus. This event is another step in League’s mission to enrich local music culture.

“We’re excited to share this new journey with everyone,” Morris said.

“It’s only going to get better.”