



A BUCKET IS SET UP TO COLLECT DONATIONS FOR SMALL POTATOES WHEN THE DUO PERFORMED A RECENT HOUSE CONCERT.



AUDIENCE MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN A FOLK SONG AS SMALL POTATOES PERFORMS FROM ITS CD "WALTZ OF THE WALLFLOWERS."

THE CONCERT SCENE IS AS CLOSE AS YOUR LIVING ROOM

# HOUSE MUSIC

Story by DAVID STEINBERG ■ Photographs by ROBERTO E. ROSALES ■ *Of the Journal*

**A**t about 7 p.m. on a recent evening, 50 casually dressed people gathered in the living room of Jeff Hanson's Albuquerque home near Old Town.

They chatted, snacked on cookies and veggies, sipped wine and soda.

Then they sat down on a conglomeration of seats pushed together — a couch, loveseat, padded chairs and 36 folding and plastic stacking chairs brought in from the garage.

They were ready for the main living room attraction — an evening of acoustic music with Albuquerque's C. Daniel Boling, who opened for Small Potatoes, an Illinois-based singer-songwriter duo whose music runs from "cowboy to Celtic."

But this evening was no small potatoes. It was an anniversary event — the 30th in a series of house concerts that Hanson and his longtime friend Neal Copperman have been organizing in Albuquerque for the last two

years.

House concerts have been a happening thing nationwide for some years. Similar scenes have been repeated in private homes from Berkeley, Calif., to New York City.

The local house concerts differ from shows held in clubs, concert halls and amphitheaters in several respects:

- The Hanson-Copperman house concerts aren't promoted; you won't see paid advertisements for them.

- Patrons learn about them mostly via the Hanson-Copperman e-mail list — abqmusic@att.net — which notifies recipients of their upcoming house concerts. The concerts have become so popular that sometimes names are placed on a waiting list.

Hanson and Copperman use the Internet to see who's touring where. "Without the Internet this would be so much more difficult," Hanson said.

- Tickets aren't sold to house concerts. They are, really, free, though those attending

are asked to put a \$10 suggested donation in a bucket.

And significantly, all donations go straight to the artists. That's because there's no rental and no fee for promoters. Even the snacks and drinks are provided at no charge.

Though the take-home pay isn't grand, the artists seem to groove on the concept.

Being closer to the audience means "we're more involved with the audience and they're more involved with the music," said Rich Prezioso, half of Small Potatoes.

"In a theater with bright lights in your face you can only see four people in the front row," added Jacquie Manning, the other half of the duo.

"And (making) \$500 on a Tuesday night. That's a good gig."

Small Potatoes was planning a Western tour from its base in Carey, Ill., when Prezioso and Manning contacted the Albuquerque house concert organizers.

They had heard about Albuquerque from

another musician and knew that it could fit in with their tour.

They played in Albuquerque after performing at folk festivals in San Diego and Tucson.

Copperman said the acoustic music at the house concerts is mixed, ranging from folk to Celtic to blues. Most of the musicians seem to be female vocalists, he said.

## 'Up close and personal'

An estimated half of the patrons keep coming back.

Stephen Garcia, a local property manager and a music lover with eclectic tastes, said house concerts offer an environment different than the halls where he hears hard rock, classic rock, techno rock, pop and classical.

"It's great to have a venue where you're up close and personal with the artists. They're new. They're fresh," said Garcia.

Jeanne Chaney said a house concert "is like being back in time. There's such a home feeling about it."

Chuck Banks said the concerts give him "an opportunity to get exposed to different music." He also enjoys chatting with the musicians.

For Leonard Jaramillo, the chance to talk with performers and fellow patrons is a nice sociable element.

Jaramillo, a hairdresser, has also found that "it's a great place to network for business." The networking develops from "And what do you do?" conversations with other patrons.

"It does help business, but it's great to have the experiences of meeting new people," Jaramillo added.

Hanson and Copperman have hosted mostly touring musicians. They've included Amy Denis of Seattle, Eleni Kelakos of Los Angeles, Erica Wheeler of Northampton, Mass., Sonya Heller of New York City and Dana Cooper of Nashville.

This is the lineup of artists for upcoming Hanson-Copperman house concerts — June 23, Stacey Earle and Mark Stuart; July 23, Tanya Savory; Aug. 4, Albert & Gage.



RICH PREZIOSO, LEFT, AND JACQUIE MANNING PERFORM SONGS FROM THEIR LATEST CD AT A HOUSE CONCERT NEAR OLD TOWN.