

B.B. King shows Eugene he's still the King of the Blues



On Stormy Monday, Sept. 24, Eugene audiences were treated to a marvelous study in contrasts at a concert featuring the best and the worst of the blues — a double-bill with BB King and opening act, The Paul Delay Band.

You should have been there.

if only because of the sheer power, drama and glistening beauty of BB King's soulful sound. If you went, you had to pay a high price for tickets and then had to listen to the Delay band for an eternity or so, but after the intermission, blues ecstasy was in command and on stage until midnight.

When BB King and his orchestra finally strode on stage to a thunderous standing ovation,

everyone agreed that their spellbinding music was well worth the wait.

After his band warmed up the crowd nearly to melting point, B.B. himself emerged in a column of fire and opened up with "Every Day I Have the Blues." He continued cooking with a jazzy instrumental, and then shazam, burst into a steamy siege of "I Believe to my Soul, I've got Some Outside Help I Don't Really Need."

Honestly, I threw away my pen and just shook with joy for the rest of the concert. I never thought that anyone, even B.B. himself, could surpass the dazzling genius of his 1972 recording of that song — the one with Red Callendar helping out B.B.'s incredible vocals with a hilarious and funky horn section featuring his bouncy tuba.

But Monday night, the Ambassador of the Blues, fresh from a world-wide tour, proved

me completely wrong. He created an extraordinary musical cyclone that breezed beyond the past into a fertile new soundscape of jazz-rock-blues fusion.

The audience loved it. It was hard to keep the enthusiastic crowd off its feet and out of the aisles, whooping and calling out encouragement to the man on stage who, lord knows, doesn't need to be incited into singing the blues with feeling. He gulped Scotch whiskey, boogalooed around roaring and bellowing like an old bull walrus on the beach, then coaxed and caressed liquid amber solos from his guitar, Lucille.

He simply blue'em away. In fact, B.B. and his band blew up two of their amps in the course of the concert, with fiery riffs and solos, great ensemble playing, and amazing musical majesty.

Yet another dimension of King that the appreciative au-

dience lapped up was his consummate skill as an actor and mime. He portrayed hurt women and bitter men — dripping with lust for revenge, drenched with sexual jealousy, damned for awakening on the wrong side of the bed.

Since being born 59 years ago on a cotton plantation in Indianola, Mississippi, King has shown himself to be wide-open to all kinds of musical influences. As he says, "There's never been any type of music, including New Wave, where I don't hear something that I like and try to use in my music." His early idols included blues greats like Blind Lemon Jefferson, Lonnie Johnson, and T-Bone Walker. He was also crazy about jazz giants like Lester Young, Duke Ellington and Count Basie.

As King has said, "For us blacks, the blues is almost sacred — it's part of our culture and part of us."

The current lineup in the traveling King orchestra is very talented. Young Russell Jackson on rhythm guitar was fairly bursting with energy and motion. A shy but sparkling Leon Warren got some ravishing riffs and licks in on bass and solo guitar. James Bolden was a bouncy round, blatty trumpeter with style. Eddie Synigal played a proud panther on the tenor saxophone. The solid professional polish of pianist Eugene Carrier on piano and organ, and drummer Charles Empre gave terrific excitement to the music.

From the beginning of the concert to the sizzling final encore "The Thrill Is Gone," B.B. and his band played about 20 numbers including raunchy versions of "Rock Me Baby" (with audience participation), and a delicious suspense-filled musical drama woven around the "Tombstone Blues," which featured some beautiful solo work.

I really was sorry when bedtime rolled around. As the incomparable King put it "When it all comes down, look for me and I'll still be around."

Blue Ears

AFTER THE GAME GREAT BURGERS & BEER!
OPEN 'TIL 9 MON-SAT

M-F 7am-9pm
Sat 8am-9pm
Sun 9-5

Hamburger Terry's
"best burgers, omelettes... and more"
downstairs at the 5th St. Public Market • 683-8196

TINO'S SPAGHETTI HOUSE PIZZA

TINO'S

- Full dinner menu
- 23 varieties of Pizzas
- Whole wheat and white crust
- Pizzas to go-cooked and uncooked

15th and Willamette

New Hours:
Mon.-Thurs. 11:00-Midnight
Fri. 11:00-1:00 a.m.
Sat. 5:00-1:00 a.m.
Sun. 5:00-11:00 p.m.

342-8111

Jo Federigo's CAFE AND BAR

Featuring:
Seafood-Pastas & Salads
The Original Spaghetti Bar

Live Jazz
Seven Nights A Week

Across From The 5th St. Public Market
259 East 5th Avenue • Eugene, Oregon • 343-8488

THINKING OF A NEW BICYCLE BUT ON A TIGHT BUDGET?

Shogun '100'
10 speeds

139.95

- Lt. wt. Alloy components
- Super good Brakes
- Best Buy in years
- Shogun 200 & 300 Also On Sale

Last Two Days Fri & Sat!

960 Charnelton
Eugene, OR 97401
345-7521

On Sale!

ALSO EXTRA SAVINGS ON ALL OTHER SALE BICYCLES

- Schwinn
- Miyata
- ✓ On Sale

Hutch's Bicycles

Nina's Submarine
Some Call Them "Hoagies"
They Are Different!
510 E. Broadway • 343-6235

DIM SUM
Every Sunday 11 am - 9 pm

\$1.95

Lunch Special
Sushi or Dim Sum

Now Available:
Won Ton Noodle Soup

And Try Us For Dinner

CHINA BLUE Restaurant

879 E. 13th. 343-2832