



Amber McNamara Freelance Photographer

Jonny Flash plays at Cafe Paradiso's open mic night April 27. Its Tuesday night open mic events have been running for nine years.

Local amateur open-mic nights provide venues for might-bes

Many Eugene venues host open mic nights, which offer musicians the chance to showcase their talents

By **Natasha Chilingerian**
Pulse Reporter

When night falls in Eugene, local acts set the after-dark scene with rockin' music at popular venues such as Samurai Duck, Luna Jazz Club and John Henry's.

But every successful musician had to start somewhere with a tad lower profile. One way to get a musical career off the ground is to appear at the breeding ground for new musicians — the open mic. A slew of regular open mics abound around town to invite music lovers to share and observe new talent.

The longest-running open mic in Eugene is held every Tuesday at 8 p.m. at Cafe Paradiso, located at 115 W. Broadway. Cafe Paradiso began hosting amateur artists nine years ago. Host and singer-songwriter Jeremy Works said a variety of styles and talent levels grace the cafe.

"I see mostly singers with guitars, but we also get bagpipes, trumpets, and we've had a whole jug band," he said. "There isn't one specific music type, but it's mostly folk."

Usually, Cafe Paradiso turns into a bar after 9 p.m.; however, their open mic welcomes all ages throughout the night. Tonight, Works will host the venue's first "best of" open mic show, which will feature four regulars — acoustic guitarist Vince McGinly, jazz vocalist Natalie Olson, ukulele player Jonny Flash and bluegrass band The Ordinary Flies.

Mac's at the Vet's Club, located at 1626 Willamette St., features a bi-monthly open mic. The event is hosted by musician Pete Christie, half of the guitar duo Christie and McCallum. The open mic runs every other Thursday at 8 p.m. beginning May 6, and invites all ages to participate for the first hour; the venue is 21 and over starting at 9 p.m. Christie said he tends to attract "semi-folky, acoustic rock" from budding musicians and songwriters.

"There's always musicians in this town looking for a place to play," he said.

Jo Federigo's, located at 259 E. 5th Ave., hosts a 21-and-over open mic Mondays at 6:30 p.m. that attracts fans of smooth jazz and classical guitar. Owner Jerome Seljan said one of their regular acts, guitarist and vocalist Mark Alan, was discovered at open mic.

"Some musicians are exposed at our club and we say, 'let's give them a weekend spot,'" he said.

Works also said Cafe Paradiso's open mic is used by musicians to begin their careers. He mentioned performers often sell their CDs at the show and take the opportunity to practice their crafts in front of an audience.

"It's a good way to get used to performing in front of a crowd," Works said. "We get a crowd of non-performers who just come to see the show."

He said since Cafe Paradiso's open mic is the oldest in town, local musicians equipped with regular gigs were likely first seen there.

"People have gone on to bigger and better things," he said. "A lot of local performers that have gotten big probably started out at this open mic."

Eugene music enthusiasts have a few other options for open mic nights. All ages are invited to Planet Goloka's open mic Mondays at 6:30 p.m., and The Buzz Coffeehouse's eclectic all-ages open mic is held Fridays at 8 p.m. Planet Goloka is located at 679 Lincoln St. and The Buzz Coffeehouse is on the ground floor of the EMU. Another venue for the 21-and-over crowd is Tiny Tavern, located at 394 Blair Blvd., which hosts Monday open mics at 9:30 p.m.

Contact the Pulse reporter at natashachilingerian@dailyemerald.com.

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