



Raining Down

Blues society breathes life back into Eugene's blues scene.

When he was 7, **Johnny Dyer** found a harmonica in the fields of the Stovall Plantation in Rolling Fork, Miss., where he lived. He'd hide under his bed and play it, thinking his mom couldn't hear him. And when he got older, he'd stand out amidst the crops breathing life into that old harp, the music floating across the same fields where Muddy Waters once worked.

Thursday, April 21 the **Rainy Day Blues Society of Oregon** brings Dyer, along with fellow harmonica player **Mark Hummel**, to Eugene. **Jerry and the StageHogs** will open, with special guest, saxophone player **Paul Biondi**.

The show is just one of the many events the blues society has organized since they got together about a year ago with the mission of bringing blues back to life in Eugene.

Back in the '70s, this town had a hot little blues scene. John Belushi was here shooting *Animal House* and met blues musician Curtis Salgado, who, as legend would have it, inspired the characters of *The Blues Brothers*. Robert Cray was here getting his start and gigging regularly along with Bill Rhodes (now of the Party Kings) and Paul DeLay, all of whom moved out of Eugene and went on to bigger things.

"It was this cool little phenomenon," said Jerry Zybach, guitarist for Jerry and the StageHogs. "Blues never goes away. There's always an audience for it."

Johnny Dyer, Mark Hummel, Jerry & the StageHogs w/ special guest Paul Biondi
Cozmik Pizza, 7 pm
Thursday, 4/21
\$8 adv/\$10 dos/\$5 under 21 and Blues Society Members
www.rainydayblues.org

And that's what the blues society is all about — reviving the blues scene in Eugene and putting on shows for the people who

love the music. The society's first major event was the blues stage at Cozmik Pizza during the 2004 Eugene Celebration. Hosting one of the few free stages at the Eugene Celebration, the Rainy Day Blues Society packed more than a dozen area blues bands into those two days and drew larger

crowds than many of the bigger names on the official stages.

Since then the society's 30-plus members have continued to promote the blues in town. "Blues is the foundation of all American music," Zybach said. "And in Eugene, people still want to hear the blues." **CW**

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