

### First Time I Met the Blues

On his 1960 debut single for Chess Records, blues master **Buddy Guy** begs for his life: "Blues, don't murder me," he pleads. "You know you'll be with me every mornin', every night and every noon." He wails like a man who grudgingly accepts his fate, which is quite the cross to bear as he drags the blues from the Delta to Chicago and on to the rest of the world. It's not hyperbole when people call Guy the bridge between blues and rock 'n' roll – he is the person who gave Stevie his swagger and Hendrix his flair (where do you think Jimi got the idea to play behind his head and pick with his teeth?). Put it this way: The Rolling Stones show up at Guy's Legends club for late-night blues jams whenever they play in Chicago. If Clapton is God, Guy is his older brother. If the blues were Greek philosophy, Guy is Aristotle (with his mentor Muddy Waters as Plato and Robert Johnson as Socrates). If Muddy gave the blues teeth, Guy gave it claws. His shadow weighs a ton.

The term "living legend" is one that's often carelessly bandied about, but for Guy the shoe fits, and it's the size of the Sears Tower. You can learn more about his life by reading his recently released autobiography *When I Left Home*, or you can just sit down with a stack of LPs from the last 50 years – the music tells the same story.

Buddy Guy plays with Jonny Lang 7 pm Tuesday, Aug. 14, at Cuthbert Amphitheater, 2300 Leo Harris Drive; \$35-\$55. – *Mark Sullivan*

### Jammin' Jeffersonians

**State of Jefferson** is a diverse group of musicians who pride themselves on possessing an array of influences and a varied sound. This group is fun, it's upbeat and it's got all of southern Oregon buzzing.

Ryan Redding and Joe Ginet founded the band in 2002 and it's been growing ever since. Six members now travel the West Coast and frequently gig the Hawaiian Islands.

"We come from a small town so we're a band made of friends and family," keyboardist and vocalist Erik Vestnys says. "The age group of the band is from 28 to 52, so there's a lot of diversity when it comes to influences."

State of Jefferson's live show looks different on any given night because these guys are true showmen. "We try to cater toward our audience; our show depends completely on the vibe of the environment we are in," Vestnys says. "Sometimes we play for a winery; sometimes we play for a loud festival; it just depends."

But these guys are more than just musical mercenaries taking any gig that comes their way: The band hosts the Jefferson State Hemp Fest, which features more than 50 other bands and is considered to be southern Oregon's largest music festival. "It's about community and creating community together with our friends," Vestnys says. "It's fun and it's a way of life for us."

State of Jefferson is like a perfectly planned mural, drawing together artists young and old, with every kind of instrument and many different influences – and the group's music still manages to come out sounding brilliant. Blending reggae, funk, hip-hop and jazz, State of Jefferson is one band that always has its listeners begging for an encore.

State of Jefferson plays 4:20 pm Friday, Aug. 10, at the Northwest World Reggae Festival; for ticket info go to [www.nwwrf.com](http://www.nwwrf.com) – *Ali Enright*



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