MAX'S Classic Crooner Productions—10pm; karaoke, n/c

O BAR Karaoke w/Jared—9pm; n/c

SAM BOND'S GARAGE Bluegrass Jam—9pm; n/c

TUGMAN PARK Corwin Bolt 7 The Wingnuts—5:30pm; n/c

WHITE HORSE SALOON Karaoke w/Slick Nick—9pm; n/c

WILDCRAFT CIDER WORKS Reed Mathis Trio—7pm; $12

WEDNESDAY 6/20

AXE & FIDDLE Barna Howard, Taylor Kingman,—8pm; $10

BREW & CUE Crystal Harmony Karaoke—9pm; n/c

COWFISH Local DJ Review—9pm; n/c

DRAKE BAR Music w/ Connah Jay—10pm; n/c

HI-FI LOUNGE The Midnight Cypher—11:30pm; n/c

ISLAND HUT Karaoke w/Jared—5pm; n/c

JERSEY'S Karaoke w/Sassy Patty—8pm; n/c

MAC'S My Band ft. Darlene Jackson—6pm; n/c

MAX'S TAVERN Lonsome Randall—7pm; n/c

MOHAWK TAVERN Karaoke w/ Caught in the Act—9pm; n/c

MULLIGAN'S PUB Open Mic—8:30pm; variety, n/c

OLD NICK'S Grex, Megan Johns, Mood Area 52—9pm; $5

THE POKER LOUNGE DJ'd Party Nights—8pm; n/c

WEST END TAVERN Karaoke—9pm; n/c

CORVALLIS AND THE REGION

AIRLIE WINERY - Corvallis

SU Nancy Hamilton Trio—3pm; $10

BALD HILL FARM - Corvallis

SU Corvallis-OSU Symphony—5pm; $15-$20

BOMBS AWAY CAFE - Corvallis

TH Jazz Jam—9pm; n/c

CENTRAL PARK - Corvallis

TU Corvallis Community Band—8pm; n/c

WE Hilltop Big Band—7:30pm; n/c

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH - Corvallis

FR Chintimini Chamber Music Festival—7pm; $25-$85

CLOUD & KELLY'S PUBLIC HOUSE - Corvallis

TH Free Range Open Mic—8pm; n/c

SU Celtic Jam Session—3:30pm; n/c

IMAGINE COFFEE - Corvallis

MO Bryson Skaar—7pm; n/c

TU Celtic Jam—7pm; n/c

MUSIC BY KELSEY ANNE RANKIN

BY THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT

Hi-Fi's Funk Jam gives local musicians an audience

JULIAN OUTLAW
PHOTO BY ADAM GRAVES

The best event will leave the taste of foot in a skeptic's mouth — mine, to be exact. Funk Jam, an open-mic show hosted by Hi-Fi Music Hall every Wednesday night, seemed to be another event I wasn't high enough for.

Funk Jam, though, has that sort of Cinderella magic in the air and hosts local performers who bring an impressive talent to the stage with an energy that makes it irresistible to let your body do the talking.

Hi-Fi's smaller lounge is where the show goes down: Cyan and magenta lights flitter across the cozy, darkened nook, and bodies slowly fill the intimate space by 10 o'clock. The performers — a mix of amateurs and established regulars, each accompanied by the house band — churn out a concoction of soul, hip hop and, of course, funk.

Head bobbers stand on the sidelines of the dance floor, which becomes a writhing and swaying mass as the night ticks on. The more adventurous folks dance blues and homestyle swing in the midst of the crowd's pulse.

"It's my exercise, my cardio," says Johnnie, a regular attendee and evident aorta of the dance floor.

Funk Jam has two realms: a softer soul half of the evening that blooms into the Midnight Cypher, which is an open-mic hip-hop portion of the night. By the stroke of midnight, a spell is cast over the grove of sweaty bodies. "Yo yo yo. Y'all fuck it up for me, y'know what I'm sayin'," chimes Julian Outlaw, facilitator of Funk Jam and local hip-hop artist from Houston.

Outlaw is the jack of all trades behind Funk Jam's curtains, and he's a circus leader on stage. He works the sound and plays off of the crowd's energy with an innate ability to create a contagious hype.

"I really try to get the room loose, warm, get people dancing. I start free styling like it's not serious," he says. "Keep it high quality but maintain an air of jam. I mean, come on, it's a Wednesday night in Lane County. Come up here and have fun, that's what you came out for anyway."

When Outlaw takes the mic and guides the crowd into the Midnight Cypher, the head bobbers lining the room pour into the dance floor.

"The best outcome is when people are not afraid to come up front, to get close to each other — like when I see sweat glisten off of people," Outlaw says.

The most alluring draw of Funk Jam, Outlaw explains, is that it provides Eugene's musicians with a vital creative outlet. No matter what point in their career, all performers are welcome. It's a space to experiment, push creative boundaries and ultimately put on a damn good show.

Many local musicians use Funk Jam as a platform to promote themselves and practice being on stage. "When I moved here from Houston I heard about it," Outlaw says. "I started going to it and I was going up on stage spittin' like a sixteen and gettin' hoppin' off."

His consistent stage presence eventually lead to Hi-Fi's approaching him about Funk Jam's facilitation.

Funk Jam, Outlaw explains, gives Eugene's artists a vital tool to further their career, whether that means practicing a new song, getting over stage fright or networking with fellow artists and venues, which he has seen flourish during his time hosting the event.

"Eugene could use as many outlets for creation as possible. Why not? That's the whole reason I moved here, I heard about such a flourishing music scene. Everywhere I look, I meet talented people. It's ridiculous how much talent is in this town," he says. ■

Come jive to some local talent at Funk Jam 10 pm each Wednesday night at Hi-Fi. The event is free. However, tips and donations are encouraged for the fantastically funky house band; 21 and up.

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