

Mississippi  
 Alberta  
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 East County  
 Beaverton

# Making People Boogie

## Old-time musician returns to Oregon

BY MINDY COOPER  
 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Old time blues musician L.C. Ulmer returned to Oregon for the first time since 1955 to perform at the 12th annual Pickathon Festival at the Pendarvis Farm in Happy Valley east of Portland.

Ulmer instantly captivated the crowd at his performance on Saturday, where young and old fans watched in excitement as the dancing 82-year-old played his guitar, doctored with duct-tape, behind his head.

Born and raised in southern Mississippi, Ulmer, who will celebrate his 83rd birthday this month, is known throughout the world as a man who can make people boogie.

"I've been playing music for 72-years," he said.

Performing the blues, however, was not what brought the multi-talented musician to Oregon for the first time.

"I was cuttin' logs and sawin' down timber," he said, about a life he had in Oregon more almost 60 years ago. "A whole lot done changed."

Back stage at the festival, Ulmer did anything but blend in. Sitting with his guitar case and his beige luggage bag filled with several harmonicas and a kazoo, his face alone told a story.

"This is a glorious time to meet folks," he said.

As a 20-something white female, I asked him how his life, as an African American musician, has changed over the years.

He smiled, as though I asked the funniest question in the world and then shook his head. "This is going to make you mad," he said. "Back in that time I couldn't talk to you. I could work for you, but I wouldn't talk to you."

But as time moved on through into the 1960s, Ulmer said that's when things changed. "Dr. Martin Luther King fixed that."

Ulmer, a true story teller, reflected back to the day his brother James gave him his first harmonica when he was six-years-old. Since then, he said he always knew he would be a musician.

Music, Ulmer said, helped him express himself throughout his life.

"I can play all day, by myself," he said. "I play 12 pieces."

Remembering his latest performance with a grin, his eyes smiled as he said, "I did a whole lot of tricks today. I blew a hillbilly song, and then I turned around and played the blues."

Although Ulmer said his favorite part about the festival was "all the pretty women," there was no doubting his words when he said, over and again, "Music is my date."



PHOTO BY MINDY COOPER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER  
 At 82-years-old, blues vocalist and guitarist L. C. Ulmer made it from his home state of Mississippi to delight crowds at the annual Pickathon Festival in Happy Valley east of Portland.

# Guns Down, Mikes Up for West Coast Rappers

## Concert to unite hip-hop community

BY CARI HACHMANN  
 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Many music-listeners are well aware of the irony surrounding Portland's hip hop scene.

It seems like local talents from all genres are generating quality music from every other garage or basement studio in town, but the only songs heard on the radio are mind-numbingly mainstream tunes washed out with the same synthesized, robotic undertones.

Though a few independent radio stations are making the effort to play local and diverse music, thanks

to hip-hop veterans like Cool Nutz and Mic Crenshaw, most stations have not.

If the lyrics involve the harsh reality of a minority of the population, say gangs, --getting shot, going to jail, or being killed—it is unlikely to be aired on the radio. Since the mid-1990s, Portland rappers have been speaking to the stories of the street that their peers can relate to, but the music is very much "underground."

Eager to hear the kind of rap he embraced as youngster in Oakland, Calif., where the bay area's hip-hop



'Spice 1'



'Kokane'

emerged amid the influential rhetoric of the Black Power movement, respected local promoter Octavius Miller brings some of West Coast's favorite rappers of this underground hip-hop back to Portland.

Hosted by Spice 1, Kokane, and the mouth piece Tay-Capone, the 4th annual West Coast Hip Hop Awards: United in the City returns to Portland's Roseland Theater on Friday, Aug. 19, from 7 p.m. until midnight, with special tributes to Nate Dogg and M-bone.

Other performers include Andre Nickatina, C-Bo, Celly Cel, Domino,

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