



ROSS WILLIAM HAMILTON/THE OREGONIAN

One of the highlights of the Saturday's schedule at the Safeway Waterfront Blues Festival was a tribute to the late Ray Charles by a Portland all-star blues band, which included Duffy Bishop (left) and Andy Stokes. The festival continues today at Tom McCall Waterfront Park.

# Rockin' the river

At the annual Safeway Waterfront Blues Festival, the community gets in tune with music, food and the view

By **MARTY HUGHLEY**  
THE OREGONIAN

At times during the annual Safeway Waterfront Blues Festival, it can seem as if everyone in the city has ambled down to Tom McCall Waterfront Park, happy to boogie to the music, gab with pals over a beer or just plop down in a sand chair and relax. It's a convivial example of community in action, folks pursuing a good time in support of a good cause — in this case, the Oregon Food Bank, the event's producer and beneficiary.

But for a moment Saturday afternoon, you might have thought everyone in town was on stage. At least everyone in Portland's vibrant blues and jazz community.

Saxophonist Patrick Lamb and trumpeter Thara Memory assembled a band of Portland-area all-stars, some 20 strong, to pay tribute to the late, legendary Ray Charles, "the Genius of Soul" who died a little more than a year ago. And with a brilliant blue sky above and a sea of folks in the park's south bowl below, it sounded as though Charles' spirit had bestowed, if not genius, at least inspiration upon everyone on the stage.

Soul, a musician once said, is the ability to

## MUSIC REVIEW

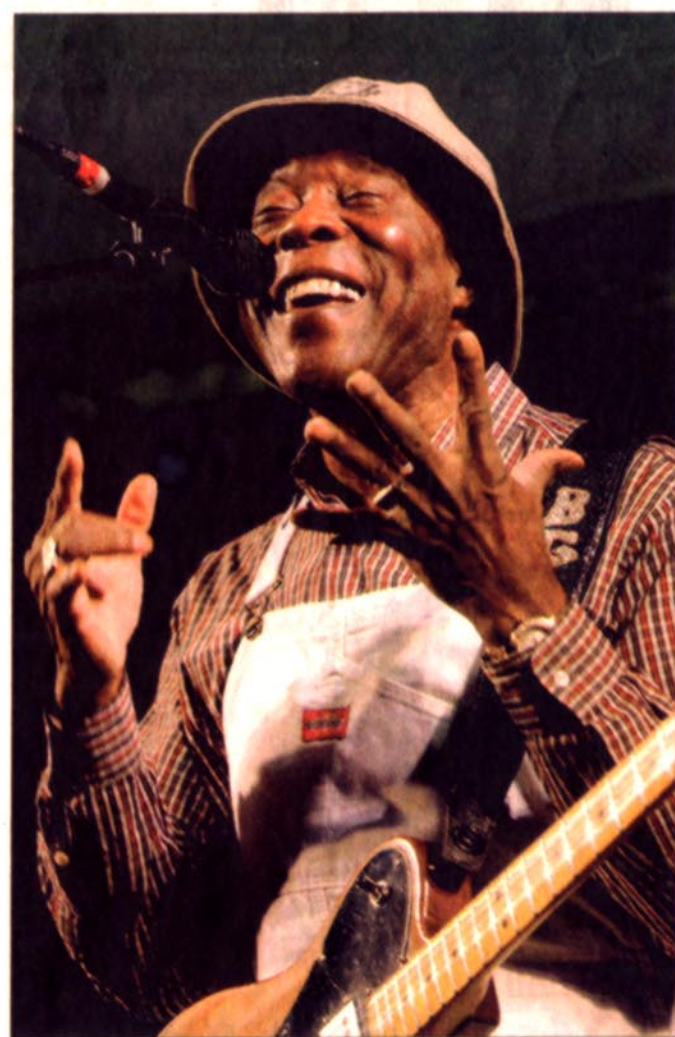
make other people feel better than you do. By that equation, Lamb and company still could have felt fantastic.

They must have, the way the band's leaders blew passionate solos full of both refined technique and raw expression. The way a rhythm section anchored by the funky young drummer Anthony Jones nailed the deep yet rollicking rhythmic feeling of a trademark Ray Charles groove. And especially the way the powerhouse vocals came in waves, with the likes of Andy Stokes, Duffy Bishop, Curtis Salgado and Sweet Baby James Benton testifying on such classic songs as "I Got a Woman" and "What'd I Say."

Whether storied veterans such as singer Lee Garrett (who, with Stevie Wonder, co-wrote such hits as "It's a Shame" and "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours") and guitarist Eddie Martinez (who's worked with Robert Palmer among countless other big names) or a relative newcomer such as young Vancouver singer Kristina Michelle, everyone made a mark in one of the 18th annual festival's highlights.

And there are highlights still to come as the festival continues today. A variety of acts —

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JOEL DAVIS/THE OREGONIAN

Legendary bluesman Buddy Guy headlined Friday night's blues festival opener, which attracted one of the 18-year-old festival's largest crowds. Friday's stars included Eric Johnson, Charlie Musselwhite and Geno Delafosse.