

Leinenkugel Stage • Sunday 7:30 p.m.



## Blues Traveler

The four original members of Blues Traveler started jamming in high school under the name “Blues Band” in 1988, practicing in their parents’ basements. John Popper was considering a career as a comedian, but after hearing the likes of the Blues Brothers and Jimi Hendrix, he picked up a harmonica intent on making it sound like Hendrix’s guitar.

After playing small clubs, frat houses and street parties up and down the East Coast, the band was discovered by promoter/manager Bill Graham and a recording contract with A&M Records soon followed. The band’s first album *Blues Traveler*, contained “But Anyway,” a single still played around the world. Their next records, *Travelers and Thieves* and *Save His Soul*, both registered gold. One of the keys to their success has been touring and live performances. So committed to touring, John Popper started the H.O.R.D.E. Festival in 1991 (*Horizons of Rock Developing Everywhere*). What began as two one-week festivals had grown to 42 cities in 64 days by 1998. Touring and live performance has been the root of Blues Traveler.

In 1994, the group released *Four* and brought the band the commercial success they had worked nine years for.

“Run-Around” stayed on the Billboard Top 10 throughout the summer of ‘95 and earned a Grammy for Best Rock Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal. Following all this, the band released a double live record, *Live From The Fall*, recorded during their extensive Fall ‘95 tour. Their next effort, *Straight On Till Morning*, was released in July of 1997. Both achieved Platinum sales.

But as is life, all things change. After a year and a half of straight touring, sad news followed when founding member and bass player Bobby Sheehan passed away in New Orleans, LA in August 1999. After dealing with the shock, the survivors took a hard look at what this would mean for their future. “Brendan, John and I talked about whether to go on...” said lead guitarist Chan Kinchla. “After losing someone so close to us, we realized that breaking up the family would only compound the tragedy. So, without a doubt, we decided to carry on.” John Popper adds, “We knew that what we were doing was worth surviving for. We didn’t want to become stuck trying to recreate a happy time in our lives—we wanted to keep growing. The best music comes that way.” The challenge was to find a new bass player. After auditioning a number of candidates, they found right guy in their own backyard – Chan’s brother Tad. His friendship with everyone in the band was an obvious plus. Not only that, he was a killer bass player in his own right. He didn’t try to imitate Bobby, he played his own style that helped the band grow.

An energized Blues Traveler completed their newest album, *Bridge*. This album is the band’s most emotionally complex album, with a punchier delivery and tighter arrangements complementing their familiar, jam-happy feel. Each lyric relates to the developments of these past two years. *Bridge* is a crossing with Blues Traveler toward even greater things and an invitation to join them on the journey.