

Harmonica legend, and the reigning “King of The Chitlin Circuit,” Bobby Rush has created a unique sound that he calls “folk-funk.” Rush has been doing things his way for over fifty years, and when it comes to live performers, there is no one quite like him. For Bobby, it all comes down to three little words: show-man-ship. Some fans have told Rush that watching him is like seeing the spirit of Muddy Waters in the body of someone like Prince or Tina Turner. Rush’s live shows (which includes tongue-in-cheek lyrics, costume changes, and dancing girls) were featured in Richard Pearce’s film “The Road To Memphis,” which aired last fall on PBS as a part of Martin Scorsese’s film series “The Blues.” He serves up his blues with a heaping side of burlesque, always riddling his tunes with bawdy banter. Bobby’s blues are truly “blue,” and that is why he chose to gig extensively on the “Chitlin Circuit” (an old series of clubs strung between east Texas, north Florida, and Chicago), and to stay away from the mainstream blues market in the north. Born Emmitt Ellis, Jr., Rush adopted the stage name out of respect for his father, who was a preacher. A ham by nature, a teenaged Rush would don a fake mustache to sneak into juke joints to perform. In the mid-1950s, Rush found his way to Chicago to jam with masters like Luther Allison, Freddie King, and

Friday 5:25 - 6:40 p.m.

Leinenkugel Beer Stage



The Bobby Rush Revue

Earl Hooker. He would sometimes disguise himself to emcee his own shows and draw two paychecks from unsuspecting club owners! When he would make trips back to Louisiana, he would stop along the way to sit in with the legendary Elmore James and his cousin. During his days in the “Windy City,” Rush was in such high demand that his recording career suffered. He made up for lost time by recently establishing his own record label, Deep Rush Records. Bobby still packs houses in places with names like Smackover, Arkansas, but his blend of blues, funk, soul, and even hip-hop has brought him to the world’s most prestigious halls and festivals.