Mayor Bud Clark offers this suggestion for those suffering from pedestrian gridlock at this year's fifth annual Mayor's Ball:

``I like to get way up high in the main arena seats and check out the action,'' Clark said. ``I get too much attention otherwise. I'd have more fun if I put a sack over my head.''

Fortunately, the 15,000 fans expected at this year's musical extravaganza at Memorial Coliseum on Saturday won't have to resort to sacks over the head. And the opening up of the Exhibit, Assembly and Convention halls should make the foot-traffic flow problems of former balls a thing of the past.

Extra room means extra stages (12), and more bands (86 are scheduled) means extra music. The admission price of $11 works out to about 12 cents a band -- one of the best musical bargains going.

As charity events go, the Mayor's Ball will bring needed cash to the coffers of four local charities, including the Oregon Fund for the Homeless and Hungry, Outside In, Burnside Projects' Youth Shelter House and the St. Francis Dining Hall. The event raised $45,000 last year.

``The ball has two purposes,'' said Peter Mott, the Mayor's Ball coordinator. ``It's a charity fund-raiser, but it's specifically geared to showcase Portland music not only to Portland but the rest of the nation. I don't know of any other city that does it quite the same way.''

Mott said staging the ball has always been a ``mind-boggling'' job, but the assistance of 400 workers and more than 450 musicians has made this year's preparation a cooperative effort.

``It seems as if everyone is diving in headfirst to make it a success,'' Mott said.

Sometimes the best fun to be had at the Mayor's Ball comes by chance: stumbling into one of the smaller venues such as the Plywood or Weyerhaeuser Rooms just when a band you've heard about but never seen is turning in a killer set.

Past balls have featured many of these thrilling moments, including last year's sterling vocal performance by the Streetcorner Singers in the Fountain Room, and Alf Rider's rock cabaret set in the Weyerhaeuser Room in 1987.

But even with the expanded space allocation at this year's ball, it's agreeable to escape to the main arena for some elbow and dancing room, where this year the best in local music -- the blues of

Lloyd Jones, the jazz of Mel Brown and the rocking funk of Cool'r -- will hold court.

And for the first time a national act, hard rockers Royal Court of China, will perform at the ball, although with the time slot allocated (11:45 p.m. in the Exhibit Hall), it's doubtful many fans will hear them.

This year organizers have split up the music (as best they could) by room and category, giving patrons an idea upfront of what they are most likely to encounter.

But the true fun to be had at the ball is taking musical chances. Country fan? Check out the Blubinos' retelling of rockabilly blues in the Convention Hall at 10:35, after catching Tenley Holway and Cayuse in the Plywood Room from 9:55 to 10:35.

Rock fan? Tune into the Killing Field's acoustic folk-rock at 10 p.m. in the Assembly Hall, and then run and hear the last 15 minutes of **Napalm Beach**'s hardcore rock in the Exhibit Hall.

Jazz fan? Listen to Jim Beatty's swinging ``licorice stick'' tunes at 6 p.m. in the Georgia Pacific Room, and then go and immerse yourself in the Lloyd Jones Struggle's honest retelling of R&B and historic blues on the arena stage at 7 p.m.

Take chances -- and enjoy the best in Portland music.

PREVIEW The Mayor's Ball Where: Memorial Coliseum When: 4 p.m. to midnight Saturday (music starts 5 p.m.) Featuring: 86 bands on 12 stages Tickets: $11 at all G.I. Joe's/Ticketmaster outlets.

CITATION (APA STYLE)

TOMLINSON - of the Oregonian Staff, S. (1989, April 21). VOLUME FIVE PORTLAND'S FIFTH ANNUAL MAYOR'S BALL HAS MORE STAGES, BANDS AND MUSIC. *Oregonian, The (Portland, OR)*, p. F04. Available from NewsBank: America's News – Historical and Current: https://infoweb-newsbank-com.proxy2.multcolib.org/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/0EB0857C0FE95D29.