Renowned author and environmentalist Rick Bass returns to Portland's Mechanics' Hall on Wednesday, August 11. Program will include a performance by Halcyon and a to-be-announced special musical guest.

The event marks a cautious return to some live public programming at the Hall.

**Portland, ME:** Rick Bass, best known for his fiction and non-fiction story collections, will read from his recent work and discuss efforts to protect an ancient rainforest from the Black Ram logging project in northwest Montana’s Yaak Valley.

Speaking on the phone from his home in Montana, Bass stated, "This forest has been in existence for nearly 1000 years and is key to carbon sequestration efforts, not to mention the survival of one of the most endangered grizzly bear populations in North America."

Bill McKibben, founder of the grassroots climate campaign 350.org and a contributing writer to The New Yorker, interviewed Bass recently for the magazine. "We need to protect the great lungs of our country, the northern tier of inland rainforests," Bass told him, "which still offer some hope for sequestering carbon in the old spruce and subalpine fir forests, which can hold 60 percent more carbon in the soil than the drier pine forests."

Bass, who teaches at the University of Southern Maine's Stonecoast MFA program, has been encouraged by Maine's leadership on environmental issues and is hopeful that Mainers will succeed in their efforts to flag this project as a significant environmental concern.

"Mechanics' Hall has welcomed great thinkers, robust debate, and conversation for nearly 200 years. We have deeply missed the ability to gather in person, share ideas, and spark thoughtful dialogue," said Mechanics' Hall Executive Director Annie Leahy. "We’re hopeful that we can cautiously return to at least some in-person programs and are thrilled to welcome Rick back to the Hall to share his knowledge about critical environmental and climate issues and raise awareness within our community."

Alyssa O'Brien, a co-founder of protectancientforests.org, has identified the entire Maine congressional delegation as uniquely influential in their ability to put a stop to the Black Ram logging project.
“Congresswoman Chellie Pingree, representing Maine’s 1st Congressional District, is Chair of the House Appropriations subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, which controls the Forest Service’s budget,” said O’Brien. “Mainers are therefore in an influential position to defend our public lands.”

Details & tickets are available on Mechanics’ Hall’s website, https://mechanicshallmaine.org/programming/

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ABOUT MECHANICS’ HALL: Mechanics’ Hall is committed to the innovative vision of our founders, the Maine Charitable Mechanic Association: to make knowledge, ideas, and arts accessible. We engage our community through cultural events, educational programs, and affordable instruction. We are stewards of a landmark building that houses the 8th oldest membership library in the country and a grand ballroom. We continue to guide the historic preservation of the Hall as a place to gather, celebrate, and learn.

ABOUT HALCYON: Halcyon is a Maine-based ensemble that uses music and the arts to promote environmental stewardship and respond to the urgency of climate change. Through interdisciplinary public performances that combine music and other art forms, Halcyon draws attention to the daily challenges, rewards, and realities facing Maine communities. Halcyon acknowledges the need for creative and diverse communication that harnesses the power of cultural traditions, storytelling, music, and visual art to translate numbers and facts into something tangible and human. For more information about Halcyon and upcoming performances, visit: halcyonstringquartet.com.

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