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Watermelon Slim: Authentic, original blues

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Posted by **Daryl Nerl** at 8:02:28 AM on August 9, 2007



They call me the Bloviator and I wish I was a catfish, swimmin' in a deep, blue sea.

One of the great things about [Musikfest](#) is the serendipity of finding a musical performer you had never heard of and becoming an instant fan.



[Watermelon Slim and The Workers](#) gave me, and probably a lot of other people, just that kind of experience at Americaplatz on Wednesday night.

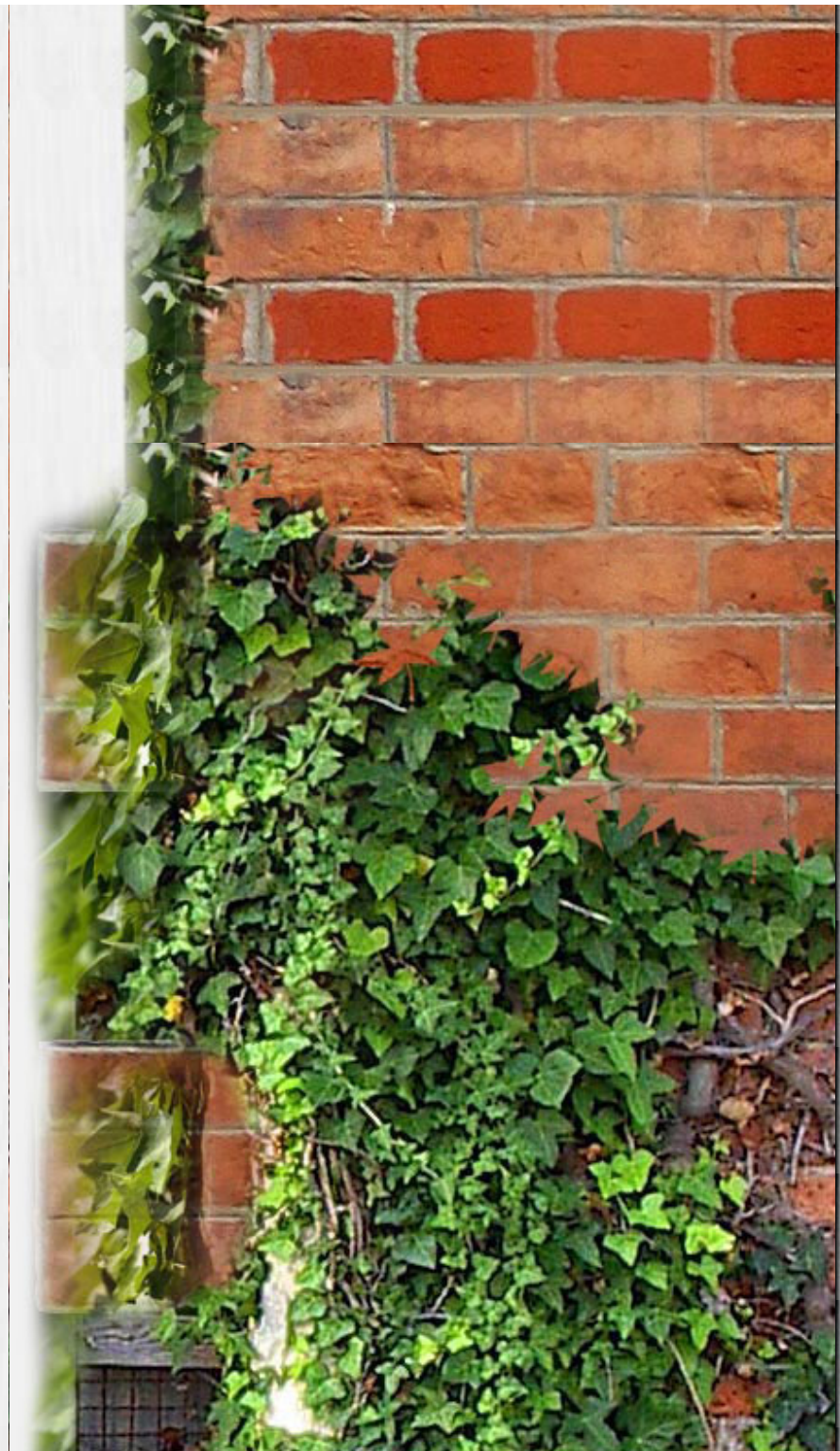
His sound can best be described as classic electric blues. But Watermelon Slim (aka William P. Homans) has his own unique take on the music that made his performance fresh and exciting.

That may be because, like the men and women who laid the foundation of electric blues and rock n' roll 60 years ago, Watermelon Slim had to live the blues before he got paid to play them on a stage. His life experience generates true blues authenticity.

His [biography](#), which can be found on his Web site, mentions that he fought in Vietnam where he first taught himself to play guitar in a hospital bed. Back home, he lost part of a finger laboring in a sawmill, he operated a forklift and worked as a small-time criminal, providing some of the inspiration for his new CD, "[The Wheel Man.](#)"

"Crime was just a piece of education for me," he told the Americaplatz audience. "My only regret is that it took a long time for me to learn the lesson."

He has also been an Oklahoma watermelon farmer (hence the stage



name) and a truck driver, which also provides considerable inspiration for original songs like "Truck Drivin' Mama," "Blue Freight Liner," and "Dumpster Blues."

Watermelon Slim plays his guitar in a lap slide style, using items like spark plug sockets and salt shakers as his slide. His harmonica playing is also unique in that he sometimes switched instruments in the middle of solos. There are "lots of moving parts" in his performance, he said.



In between songs, Slim professed his love of [Mack](#) trucks and working people, told stories about his life, gave small bits of wisdom and performed some comic shtick.

In the middle of the show, one of The Workers hands him a cell phone. It's a call from [Muddy Waters](#), "from a very far area code." The legendary blues man has been dead 24 years. But "from where he is" he can tell Slim's woman has been cheating on him.

It turns out to be an introduction to "Long Distance Call," a Muddy classic. I think Muddy would have approved. Slim also paid tribute to [Little Milton](#) and [Magic Slim](#), who made an appearance on the new CD, a stamp of approval in the authenticity department.

By the end of the show, he had the crowd calling out for more and lining up for CDs.

Photos by Morning Call photographer Michael Kubel.

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