

Watermelon Slim and The Workers have taken the blues world by storm over the past few years. Slim (AKA Bill Homans) has received a record 16 Blues Music Award nominations in the last four years. More recently, Slim has ventured over to the country side of blues with his last couple of releases, but NorthernBlues Music has released a DVD of a masterful performance by Slim and the band at the Ground Zero Blues Club in Clarksdale, MS from 2007.

/Live At the Ground Zero Blues Club/ captures the band in an ideal setting, with an enthusiastic crowd. There are sixteen tracks on the DVD, with a lot of songs from Slim's first four albums (/Big Shoes To Fill/, /Up Close & Personal/, /Watermelon Slim and the Workers/, and /The Wheel Man/)., plus some often performed/never recorded gems ("My Babe," "You Ain't Gonna Worry My Life No More," "Long Distance Call").

Slim's work on the dobro is second-to-none, as is his harmonica, and his craggly, weathered vocals are perfect. The Workers (Ronnie McMullen, Jr. - guitar, Michael Newberry - drums, Cliff Belcher - bass) are rock solid in support. There are also a few guest stars involved, including guitarist Jimbo Mathus ("Peaches," "Who's Gonna Pay?" and "My Babe"), Charlie Musselwhite ("Buick Fifty-Nine") and the sartorially splendid Big George Brock, who takes the vocal on Little Walter's "My Babe," and Slim's "Who's Gonna Pay?"

The DVD production is simply incredible. The picture and sound are so clear; it's almost like being there in person. The Special Features included on the disc are also worth a look. There's an interview with Slim by Chip Eagle of Blues Revue and Blues Wax, an introduction to the Workers, and a couple of behind-the-scenes glimpses of Slim at the club.

/Live At the Ground Zero Blues Club/ provides an interesting look at one of the driving forces on the current blues scene and is well worth checking out. If you've never experienced the force of nature that is Watermelon Slim, this is a mighty fine place to start.

Graham Clarke

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