

Bull Goose Rooster is Now Shipping!

Don't miss this incredible new CD from Watermelon Slim & The Workers. Now available at your favorite retailer, Amazon and on iTunes, Bull Goose Rooster is destined to become a blues classic.

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"I may be a toothless, 64 year old bluesman, but I put on a hell of a show," Bill Homans declares. He ain't just woofin'. As Watermelon Slim, Homans comes across badder than a junkyard dawg, snapping at the end of a chain that barely restrains him from taking a few chunks outta your ass.

The title cut from his latest on the NorthernBlues Music label sets the tone. Channeling Dave Dudley, Slim is the cock of the walk, big and bold, strutting around ruffling feathers, preening for his competition. Slim says the song is based on a territorial rooster in Key West who dominates the post office parking lot there.

"If I could do my job half as good as him/they'd have to call me Watermelon Rooster Slim," the singer/guitarist proclaims, punctuating his remarks with some hackle-raising slide work.

Slim turns in a performance on Slim Harpo's "Scratch My Back" that's somewhere between Sleepy La Beef and Little Walter, a place where Louisiana backwater guitar converges with uptown Chicago harp for a boiling blues stew. He tackles Harpo's "I'm a King Bee" as well, sneaking up on you with that Sleepy voice then stinging lustily with his harp like the head of the royal hive.

"Blue Freightliner" melds a Mississippi hill country drone vocal with a blistering slide as Slim hurtles his big rig down the road, tires screaming.

"The Foreign Policy Blues" is not Slim's first turn at protest music. The guitarist/vocalist/harpist is proud of his activist status. "I've fought in a war and against a war," he says of his service as a Vietnam vet and his subsequent time protesting in Vietnam Vets Against the War. The "Furrin' Policy Blues," as Slim pronounces it, denounces Bush and his Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, promising them "you're gonna have to reap just what you sow," jabbing at them with his greasy slide.

Slim goes uphill again for "I Ain't Whistling Dixie," sliding over the North Mississippi terrain like Luther Dickinson jacked up on a pot of Cuban coffee.

You can't put Slim in a box- he'd kick it to pieces in seconds. He's a fence jumper as well, so that's out too. A free ranging Slim is the only way to keep this Watermelon rooster fresh and tasty. Turn him loose and enjoy.

By Grant Britt

ROOTS MUSIC VISIONARY WATERMELON SLIM RETURNS WITH AN EPIC MASTERPIECE THAT DEFIES BOUNDARIES VIA POWERFUL SONGWRITING AND PERFORMANCES

Bull Goose Rooster reunites the blues legend with his dynamic, award-winning band Watermelon Slim & the Workers

CLARKSDALE, MS — Legendary singer-songwriter [Watermelon Slim's](#) 12th album *Bull Goose Rooster*, set for release on NorthernBlues Music on June 25, is an expansive masterpiece that stretches his deep blues-based roots in a multitude of directions. The disc's 16 songs, most buoyed by the powerful sound of his reunited veteran touring and recording band the Workers, delve into the worlds of Chicago, Delta and Hill country blues, country, rock and folk. And they bristle with Slim's sheer artistic command of all of those genres.

"I promised myself that I would make this the best and biggest album I've ever made," Slim explains. "At the bottom of it all, I'm a bluesman. I started playing and writing songs because I was interested in playing blues, but when I perform I play all kinds of music that came out of the American South. In the interest of reflecting that, the 16 songs on *Bull Goose Rooster* comprise my broadest, most ambitious recording to date."

The set also captures the most visceral and elegant guitar and vocal performances of Slim's studio career. "I'm playing the best guitar of my life right now," Slim attests. And the proof is in tracks like the incendiary "Foreign Policy Blues," which delivers its pointed message about our violent times and the leaders behind them over a grinding, slippery slide guitar riff that evolves as Slim testifies like a bawling bar room preacher. Similarly, he kick starts the emotionally broiling "Prison Walls" alone with his wailing slide, and then — as the Workers jump in — commences to deliver one of the most emotionally wrenching vocal performances of his career, perfectly capturing the agony, frustration and helplessness inside a prisoner's mind within the rising arcs of his heart-wrenching melody.

Of course, the album's songs plumb more than melodrama. "Bull Goose Rooster" celebrates an encounter with an actual wild rooster who rules the roost at the U.S. Post Office parking lot in Key West, Florida, with royal plumage and an iron claw. "This is a truly majestic bird," says Slim, who also acknowledges that the number's lyrics are ripe with enough double-entendre to also refer to two cocksure human males sizing each other up. And the a cappella "Take My Mother Home" is pure African-American gospel — a prayer for easy deliverance of a loved one.

Watermelon Slim & the Workers exploded into the national blues scene in 2006 with the release of their eponymous debut on NorthernBlues Music. Slim's inimitable deep-as-shale voice, expert guitar and harmonica, and colorful songwriting drawn from the former MENSA member's insights and experiences as a child musical prodigy, Vietnam War veteran, truck driver, watermelon grower, painter, writer, getaway car driver, preacher and, of course, world traveling musician led to six Blues Music Awards nominations. At the 2008 awards Slim and the Workers scored another six nominations and won the prestigious Album of the Year — for *The Wheel Man* — and Band of the Year categories. *No Paid Holidays* also received an Album of the Year nomination in 2009 and, among three other nods that year, Slim was nominated for "B.B. King Entertainer of the Year," the highest honor the Blues Music Awards can bestow on an individual performer. *Mojo* magazine also anointed Slim with top blues album of the year honors in 2006 and 2007, and in the latter year the Independent Music Awards did the same.

Slim released his debut country music album in 2009. *Escape From the Chicken Coop* was his first recent CD without the Workers and it rose up the Americana radio chart. *Ringers* followed, along with the *Live At Ground Zero Blues Club* DVD, although the Watermelon Slim & the Workers concert filmed at that landmark room in Slim's adopted hometown Clarksdale, Mississippi, was actually shot in 2007.

Slim ardently pursued his solo career. He also continued to expand his lifelong creative momentum by beginning to show his paintings and making the 2011 album *Okiesippi Blues* with his good friend and fellow Clarksdale musician Super Chikan. The latter disc's title reflects Slim's previous residence, Oklahoma, and Super Chikan's lifelong home, now also Slim's, in Clarksdale, Mississippi.

Slim's story actually begins in Boston, Massachusetts, where he was born Bill Homans, but his formative musical experiences occurred in North Carolina, where he moved with his mother after his parents divorced. There, Slim was first exposed to the blues by one of his family's housekeepers, who sang John Lee Hooker tunes while she cooked, cleaned house and took care of Slim and his brother. "I didn't realize she was singing blues at the time, but her singing had a profound effect on me," he notes.

Slim's own vocal prowess was revealed in church, where the youngster's abilities quickly distinguished him. He began to take piano lessons at age nine, but was frustrated. ("My poor little hands couldn't play all of the music I was hearing in my head.") Harmonica proved more rewarding, and by the time he enlisted to fight in Vietnam he was already composing songs. While combating an illness in a military hospital bed, Slim acquired a battered guitar and began his first steps toward mastering slide, using a Zippo lighter for a slide bar. After returning from his tour of duty Slim became a social activist and joined Vietnam Veterans Against the War. He has remained an outspoken patriot and dedicates *Bull Goose Rooster* to "the whistle blowers of America," specifically naming Frank Serpico, Ralph Nader, Daniel Ellsberg, Ann Wright, Richard Hayes Phillips and Bradley Manning in his liner notes for the album. Slim's first LP, 1973's *Merry Airbrakes*, was a protest-focused collection of songs.

In addition to the vocations mentioned earlier Slim has also worked as a forklift operator, firewood salesman, sawmill and collection agent. He's completed two undergraduate degrees and a master's, learned to speak four languages, started a family, married twice, and developed a passion for fishing and bowling. But in 2002 he experienced a near-fatal heart attack, which added a sense of urgency to his creativity. He returned to recording with 2003's *Big Shoes To Fill*, followed by the next year's *Up Close And Personal* and the 2005 DVD *Ripe For the Picking*.

"Everything I do now has a sharper pleasure to it," he says. "I've lived a fuller life than most people could in two. I've got a good education, I've lived on three continents and I've played music with a bunch of immortal blues players. I've fought in a war and against a war. I've seen an awful lot and I've done an awful lot. If my plane went down tomorrow, I'd go out on top."

Indeed, the diverse and dynamic *Bull Goose Rooster* affirms Watermelon Slim's status as one of the guiding lights of contemporary American roots music and, with the Workers reassembled to provide their muscular support, the leader of one of the world's finest modern blues-based bands.

"At his point I'm at the absolute top of my game," Slim attests. "I can sing my heart out every night and I've developed a unique style on all of my instruments. I may be a toothless 64-year-old bluesman, but I put on a hell of a show."

For more information, please visit www.watermelonslim.com OR www.northernblues.com