



WATERMELON SLIM

The Wheel Man (Southbound)

BILL HOMANS (aka Watermelon Slim) may have lost out to Charlie Musselwhite in four out of the five categories they were both nominated for at the US 2007 Blues Music Awards but he signalled himself as an artist worth following. Slim has been around since the 70s but it was his 2006 release which seemed to arrive from nowhere and made the blues world take note. England's *Mojo* made it Blues Album of the Year. This follow-up is a foot stomping, sing aloud, aggressive rocking album with a nod to the past but with a foot in the future of the blues movement. Slim, who sings as if all his teeth are missing, evokes the past with tracks *Sawmill Holler*, an a cappella track that harks back to prison work songs. A nod to the future are tracks like *The Wheel Man*, a song about his time as a petty crook driver of a getaway car, and *Newspaper Reporter*, where "they wouldn't let me drink beer on the job, I had to drink water". Fourteen untamed blues tracks that fair rattle the cage. Watermelon Slim and the Workers play with Rod Piazza at Wellington's Opera House, September 23. ★★★★★

Colin Morris