



Slim Harpo: Blues King Bee of Baton Rouge

Martin Hawkins

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As Louis Armstrong forever tethered jazz to New Orleans and Clifton Chenier fixed Lafayette as home to zydeco,

Slim Harpo established Baton Rouge as a base for the blues. In the only complete biography of this internationally renowned blues singer and musician, Martin Hawkins traces Harpo's rural upbringing near Louisiana's capital, his professional development fostered by the local music scene, and his national success with R&B hits like *Rainin' in My Heart*, *Baby Scratch My Back*, and *I'm A King Bee*, among others. Hawkins follows Harpo's global musical impact from the early 1960s to today and offers a detailed look at the nature of the independent recording business that enabled his remarkable legacy.

With new research and interviews, Hawkins fills in previous biographical gaps and redresses misinformation about Harpo's life. In addition to weaving the musician's career into the lives of other Louisiana blues players—including Lightnin' Slim, Lazy Lester, and Silas Hogan—the author discusses the pioneering role of Crowley, Louisiana, record producer J. D. Miller and illustrates how Excello Records in Nashville brought national attention to Harpo's music recorded in Louisiana.

This engaging narrative examines Harpo's various recording sessions and provides a detailed discography, as well as a list of blues-related records by fellow Baton Rouge artists. *Slim Harpo: Blues King Bee of Baton Rouge* will stand as the ultimate resource on the musician's life and the rich history of Baton Rouge's blues heritage.

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