

Lazy Lester - True Blues (1967)

Written by bluesever

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1. *I'm a lover, not a fighter*
2. *I hear you knockin'*
3. *Sugar-coated love*
4. *I'm so glad*
5. *If you think I've lost you*
6. *Bye, bye, baby*
7. *Lonesome highway blue*
8. *I made up my mind*
9. *Because she's gone*
10. *Pondarosa stomp*
11. *The same thing could happen to you*
12. *Lester's stomp*

Lazy Lester - Guitar, Harmonica, Percussion, Vocals, Washboard

Contrary to his colorful sobriquet, (supplied by prolific south Louisiana producer J.D. Miller), harpist Lazy Lester swears he never was all that lethargic. But he seldom was in much of a hurry either, although the relentless pace of his Excello Records swamp blues classics "I'm a Lover Not a Fighter" and "I Hear You Knockin'" might contradict that statement, too.

While growing up outside of Baton Rouge, Leslie Johnson was influenced by Jimmy Reed and Little Walter. But his entree into playing professionally arrived quite by accident: while riding on a bus sometime in the mid-'50s, he met guitarist Lightnin' Slim, who was searching fruitlessly for an AWOL harpist. The two's styles meshed seamlessly, and Lester became Slim's harpist of choice.

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In 1956, Lester stepped out front at Miller's Crowley, Louisiana studios for the first time. During an extended stint at Excello that stretched into 1965, he waxed such gems as "Sugar Coated Love," "If You Think I've Lost You," and "The Same Thing Could Happen to You." Lester proved invaluable as an imaginative sideman for Miller, utilizing everything from cardboard boxes and claves to whacking on newspapers in order to locate the correct percussive sound for the producer's output. Lester gave up playing for almost two decades (and didn't particularly miss it, either), settling in Pontiac MI in 1975. But Fred Reif (Lester's manager, booking agent, and rub board player) convinced the harpist that a return to action was in order, inaugurating a comeback that included a nice 1988 album for Alligator, Harp & Soul. His swamp blues sound remained as atmospheric (and, dare one say, energetic) as ever on subsequent releases including 1998's All Over You and 2001's Blues Stop Knockin', featuring Jimmie Vaughan. ---Bill Dahl, allmusic.com

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