

WILMINGTON MORNING STAR

By: AMY HOTZ

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[MUSIC]

Slide's love of blues crosses international lines

By Amy Hotz
Staff Writer

Many blues musicians believe you have to live the blues in order to play the blues. What they don't say, however, is that you don't have to live in the Deep South of the United States.

Axel "Dr. Slide" Humbert was born in Potsdam, East Germany, in 1963. That's an unlikely place to acquire an insatiable appetite for American blues, but in spite of a gov-

ernment that didn't promote freedom of cultures, his hunger flourished.

"I've always been interested in all styles of the blues. Seeing Muddy Waters as a child is what made me want to play guitar," said Dr. Slide, via e-mail from Germany.

He gradually began playing his music in public venues, but "a series of events criticizing the government" soon had the young musician on the secret police's hate list, he

said. So, like so many other musicians and artists at the time, he took refuge in churches.

"They were the only places at the time (where) the secret police would not disrupt performances," he said.

Here, his shows grew even more. One even drew more than 3,000 people. But the restrictions were still confining, and Dr. Slide wanted to expand his talents. So he made the life-changing decision to jump the Berlin Wall.

"When the machine gun fire started shooting at me and sweeping the wall area, I ran back into the East and hid in a tree, with guards and dogs searching the area for days. After three days, I was able to sneak back to my apartment where they came and arrested me," he said. "Eighteen months later, after prison, solitary confinement and release, they came and got me. After more interrogation, they seized my papers and expelled me from the country without any notice to say goodbye to my parents or get my guitar or anything."

In West Germany, Dr. Slide's music began to take off. He formed

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Dr. Slide

American Roots & Blues

WANT TO GO?

WHO: Dr. Slide.

WHEN: 9 p.m. today.

WHERE: The Rusty Nail, 1310 S. Fifth Ave.

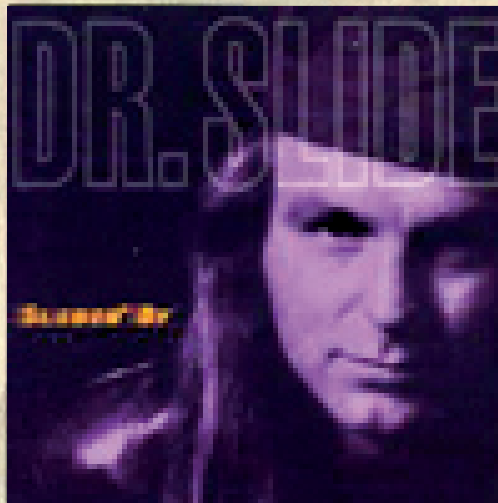
DETAILS: 251-1888.

his own band and played with some top-notch groups such as Bo Diddley's Louisiana Red's and Luther Allison's European touring bands.

But, again, life began to change. The wall came down, and Dr. Slide wanted to further his blues education, "to go from being academic to authentic," he said. He decided to go to the music's source.

Between tours, he traveled to the United States and explored the back roads of the Mississippi Delta region, where he learned all he could from local blues players. Sometimes, he even slept in rental cars.

"Everything I do gives me more understanding of the life of a bluesman," he said. "That feeling of the blues is in your soul, as I sing in my song."



Dr. Slide is touring in support of his second CD, 'Slidin' By.'

Today, Dr. Slide lives in Florida, but he makes regular trips to Europe. He's performed in many prestigious blues festivals such as the Guinness Blues and Booze Festival in Waterloo, N.J. and Blues Bash in Charleston, S.C.

"I am touring in support of my second CD, *Slidin' By*. The shows in Stuttgart and Munich were particularly good audiences," he said. "My manager is negotiating with several labels about the release of CD No. 3."



Dr. Slide - 2000
Slidin' By

Feeling Blue - MP3

Wasn't Born Here - MP3