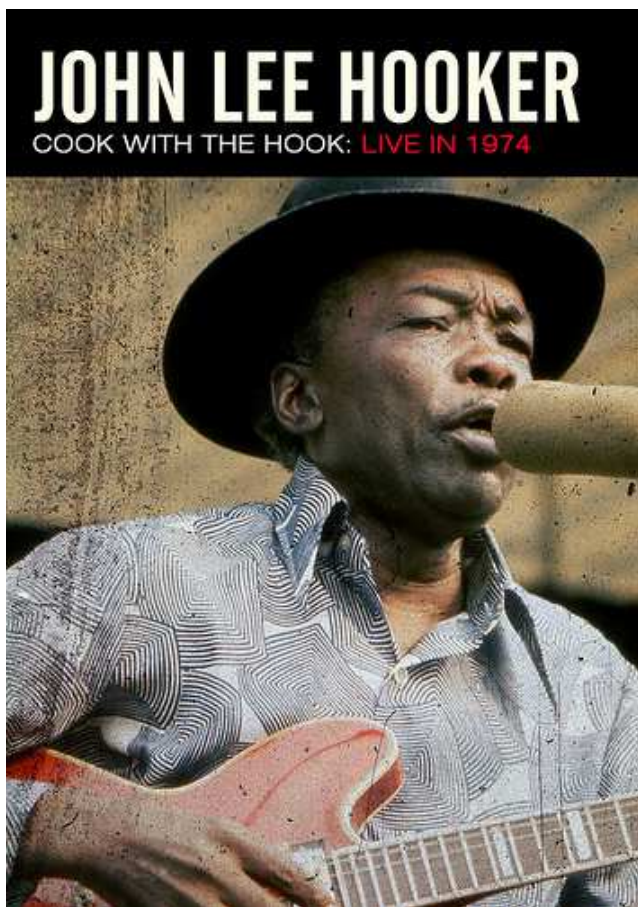




John Lee Hooker: Cook with the Hook: Live in 1974 DVD Review: It'll Serve You Right to Watch This

Cook with the Hook: Live in 1974, a restored film version of a John Lee Hooker concert in Gardner, Massachusetts, is one of the latest MVD Visual DVD titles. Best known for releasing quirky films and lesser-known titles by popular artists and directors, MVD has released over 2,000 titles since 1999.



Cook with the Hook, a 45-minute black and white concert film, was recorded at a music festival, held in a landfill area in Gardner, Massachusetts. Thus, the concert series was named "Down in the Dumps." It's a weird setting for a concert, but the crowd of 6,000 didn't seem to mind.

Hooker, who recorded over 100 albums during his career, famously appeared in the original Blues Brothers movie. Hooker, along with Muddy Waters, B.B. King, Robert Johnson, et al, have influenced generations of rock musicians. Elvis, the Who, the Stones, Led Zeppelin, and many alt- and hard-rock bands owe a debt of gratitude to the influence of artists like John Lee Hooker.

Backed by the Coast to Coast Blues Band, Hooker gives performance of some of his iconic tunes starting with "It Serves You Right to Suffer". Tapes of the show, filmed with three cameras and broadcast on a local public access channel, remained in storage until recently. The show transfers well to DVD, and the occasionally grainy footage doesn't distort the view. During "Sweet, Sweet Thing," the video

cuts between shots of the band onstage and audience reaction shots. By 1974, the hippie threads were gone, but the long hair and unwashed looks of music fans remained the same. By the time the band segues into “Boom Boom”, those quick back-and-forth jump cuts get a little exasperating, but such was the style for low-budget concert films of the time.

Hooker ‘s trademark “talking blues” style is especially evident during the last half of the video. He gets up from his chair at the 20-minute mark for a long jam on “Boogie” as the audience and those dancing onstage get high off the blues. The five featured songs and the encore build into a full-blown blues jam, as Hooker improvises while the band plays.

Cook with the Hook contains no extras, but the insert includes a bio of Mr. Hooker and a copy of a local Gardner, Massachusetts newspaper article from 1974. It is a welcome addition to any avid blues fan’s collection.

<http://cinemasentries.com/post/latest/10>