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ARTICLE


DVD Review: John Lee Hooker: Cook with the Hook: Live in 1974


by [Chris Delloiacono](#)


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My first exposure to John Lee Hooker, as well as many other Blues legends, was from "The Blues Brothers". This was a seminal film of my childhood which packaged Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, James Brown, Cab Calloway, and Mr. Hooker into a highly entertaining and wonderful sounding film. Many of my favorite musical artists were strongly influenced by the Blues or influenced by bands that were influenced by the early Blues performers. The Doors, The Who, The Rolling Stones, Elvis and Led Zeppelin wouldn't sound the same if not for John Lee Hooker, BB King, or Robert Johnson. Performers like KISS and Bruce Springsteen took cues from the those blues-influenced rockers, so the circle comes into sharp focus.

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Rating: **NOT RATED****Country:** USA**Release Date:** June 19, 2012**Distributor:** MVD Visual**Cast:**

• John Lee Hooker

Grade: B-


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"Cook with the Hook" was recorded in 1974 at the Down in the Dumps music fest in Massachusetts. It's pretty amusing that the fest was held in an old garbage dump turned land fill. There may have been piles of garbage beneath Mr. Hooker's feet but what was exhibited on stage was pure treasure. The only reason this DVD is available to us today is thanks to a local public access station broadcast and the program director, Robert Boyd, taped the show for posterity. Thank you, Mr. Boyd!

With a running time of $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour the show is over far too soon. If you don't know a lot about the Blues, you may be surprised there are really only five songs during the show. That's not because Hooker likes to talk instead of play. The tunes aren't meant to be flown through. They are musically intense and each one is meant to be savored as it unfurls before you.

Hooker sits throughout the performance, but he commands the audience merely through the power of his voice and his guitar acumen. This is a simple three-camera setup and the footage is quite grainy. Considering this was recorded outside, in a literal dump, the camera work isn't bad. It does a nice job of establishing the raucous crowd and tremendous energy on the ground. The footage may not look wonderful, but more importantly you can crank your home entertainment speakers up and enjoy because this disc sounds excellent.

There aren't any special features on the disc. You do get a double-sided paper insert. One side offers a short history of John Lee Hooker and this show in particular. The other side is a large picture of Mr. Hooker and a reprinted newspaper piece from 1974. Both are nicely written pieces and give a bit extra for your money. Extras would have been a nice bonus but the music speaks for itself and you will enjoy each minute.

Track Listing

It Serves You Right to Suffer

Sweet Sweet Thing

Boom Boom

Whiskey and Women

Boogie

Encore/Medley

