



Nearly 40 years ago, producer/director Robert Boyd asked John Lee Hooker for permission to videotape an upcoming local concert. Hooker readily green-lighted Boyd's suggestion, offhandedly commenting that folks weren't exactly beating down his door to tape his shows. Thanks to Boyd's foresightedness and Hooker's agreeableness, this 45-minute DVD documenting a Hooker performance on July 6, 1974, is now available to music fans.

*Cook With The Hook: Live in 1974* spotlights the legendary guitarist-vocalist backed by the five-piece Coast To Coast Blues Band. Wearing his wide-brim hat, sunglasses, and a long-sleeve print shirt in the outdoor summer heat, Hooker sings and plays "Boom Boom," "Whiskey & Women," and "It Serves You Right To Suffer." The bluesman puts down the guitar and prowls the stage for an extended version of his classic "Boogie," as the band improvises and the crowd claps and dances.

In his liner notes, writer Joe Viglione notes that the all-day festival was held in Gardner, a small Massachusetts town, and he points out, "Luckily, very luckily, Hooker's performance was captured on a three camera shoot." For preserving that event, Viglione praises Boyd as a pioneer and visionary in local programming on cable television. The black-and-white program possesses all the historic charms, as well as the technical limitations one might expect from such a nascent medium.

*Cook With The Hook: Live In 1974* reproduces an entire six-song Hooker concert, and it reflects the post-Woodstock hippie vibe that still dominated the music world. At the show's end, the emcee shouts to the crowd: "He's in his 50s and he's doing rock 'n' roll. Can you imagine that?" Well, in today's era of worldwide sellouts by Paul McCartney, The Rolling Stones, and The Beach Boys, that sentiment has the nostalgic echo of an innocent, youth-soaked rock 'n' roll counter-culture. Today, what is more difficult to imagine is that this entire 1974 concert was videotaped at the time and faithfully preserved subsequently. For that, we can only say, "Thank you Mr. Hooker. Thank you Mr. Boyd."