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## REVIEW

# Music DVD Review: *Loose Grooves - Funkin' Live In England 1980* by War

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On April 9, 1980 at the Civic Center Theater in Halifax, England, the jazz-funk group War performed live, and *Loose Grooves - Funkin' Live In England 1980* is a recording of that concert footage.

War, the brainchild of Eric Burton, ex-lead singer of the top British band The Animals, was born in the racially mixed ghettos of Los Angeles in 1969. Brave enough to take on the name War when everyone was demanding peace, they played a style of music that crossed ethnic lines. According to singer/keyboardist Lonnie Jordan, "Our instruments and voices became our weapons of choice and the songs our ammunition. We spoke out against racism, hunger, gangs, crimes, and turf wars, as we embraced all people with hope and the spirit of brotherhood. It's just as apropos today." This DVD includes three of War's best known songs "Low Rider," "Cisco Kid," and "Why Can't We Be Friends" among its eight total tracks.

The first song is listed as "Spill the Wine/All Day Music." They play about 45 seconds of "Spill the Wine" and transition into "All Day Music." This song was from their days after Eric Burton left the band. It brings back memories of days at the beach with the music playing: slow with the warm breeze blowing. Track two, "All My Sorrows," has a nice staccato beat, Caribbean feel, and the traditional War chorus vocal while they jam.

Track three, "Low Rider," the Latino street-cruiser ditty, is a real live set jam that works with the horns blowing. Track four, "Cisco Kid," has a loping Caribbean beat tied to a Hispanic rhythm. It always sends me back to Spanish California and the old TV series. Track five, "Gypsy Man" is progressive blues with a low unyielding rhythm. This is one of their jam traditions. Track six, "I'll Be Around," has always been a favorite, it starts off slow, almost a Marvin Gaye feel, blending into a great sax solo by Pat Rizzo that begins to boogie. Here you can see that this is a band who likes to work together and play music.

Track seven, "Me and Baby Brother," brings the band back to their cutting edge stomp sound that they are so famous for. It really boogies and takes on the chorus vocals once again. Track eight, "Why Can't We Be Friends," has the brass sound and the reggae beat that we all know and love. This is how they finish the show by improvising the lyrics using lines such as "When we left home we didn't file our tax, that's why were hiding out in Halifax."

The film itself was shot with available light which makes it sometimes hard to watch, but the sound is pretty good and this video really shows War in their element. The show came at the end of a long English tour and is fairly short at only 58 minutes.

In its tradition, War does not emphasize vocals and lyrics. They focus on the music, and it really shows. They operate as an instrumental group that fills in the sounds with lyrics. I think that this really shows off their strengths.

Being one of the most popular funk groups of the 1970s, they were also one of the hardest to categorize. They melded soul, jazz, Latin, blues, reggae, and rock. At this point in their career they had been together for a decade and it shows on how seamlessly they interweave the music into fluid movement.

If you like the Music of War, like seeing what they were like closer to their prime, then you'll put up with the gaudy colored lights to experience the polish and passion you will find on *Loose Grooves - Funkin' Live In England 1980*.

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 All My Sorrows  
 Low Rider  
 Cisco Kid  
 Gypsy Man  
 I'll Be Around  
 Me & My Baby Brother  
 Why Can't We Be Friends?

