



## War: Loose Grooves: Funkin' Live in [England](#) 1980 ★★

★★★ Label: Cherry Red/MVDvisual

Released: 2007

One of the most popular funk crossover groups of the '70s, War was also one of the most diverse, effortlessly blending soul, Latin, jazz, blues, [reggae](#) and rock in a mix that yielded more than a few hit singles. After hooking up with rock legend Eric Burdon (of Animals fame) in the late '60s, the group's multi-ethnic lineup, pan-musical hybrid and lyrical themes of brotherhood and hope quickly found a large audience, thanks in no small part to the Burdon-led, spacey Latin-vibe of "Spill the Wine," an almost immediate worldwide hit.

Over the next few years, incessant touring across the US and Europe and another album release with Burdon (before his departure for parts unknown) cemented the band's reputation with critics and fans alike (among them [Jimi Hendrix](#), who jammed with the band the night he died)...and all this before releasing an album on their own, *sans* Burdon. The next few years and albums found the band churning out hit after hit, including such FM radio (and film score) staples as "All Day [Music](#)," "Slippin' Into Darkness," "Cisco Kid," "Why Can't We Be Friends" and of course, the ubiquitous and instantly recognizable "Low Rider." War (an acronym for "Wild and Reckless," incidentally) has sold 25 million records to date, and still sells about 80,000 records a year, decades after their last bona fide hit.

For War's first home video ever, though, "Loose Grooves" is a dog, an almost unwatchable, unlistenable mess beset with numerous video and audio problems. A pure concert [DVD](#), filmed April 9, 1980 by Jeffrey Kruger at the Civic Center Theatre in Halifax, England, the only available lighting seems to be the stage lights (think warm reds, deep blues, etc.), which does not make for good concert footage, and detail is sacrificed. Indeed, there are times in the DVD when, if the foreground (the soloist, for instance) is in focus, the background (the drummers) are a complete blur. And the less said about the sound quality, the better. The instruments lack clarity, the vocals are almost muffled at times, and the level of hiss is a nuisance.

Still, the DVD features a band at the height of its powers presenting faithful versions of all of its biggest hits, as well as more than a taste of the extended improvisations the band was known for. The audio and visual problems that plague this release aren't a sign of someone trying to cut corners to make a quick buck; they're simply a result of having no other source material to work with. And although it clocks in at just under an hour, it may very well be the only live visual document of a once formidable – and obviously still compulsory, given that they still sell a hell of a lot of records – band.

~ *Una Persson*

*una@bullz-eye.com*