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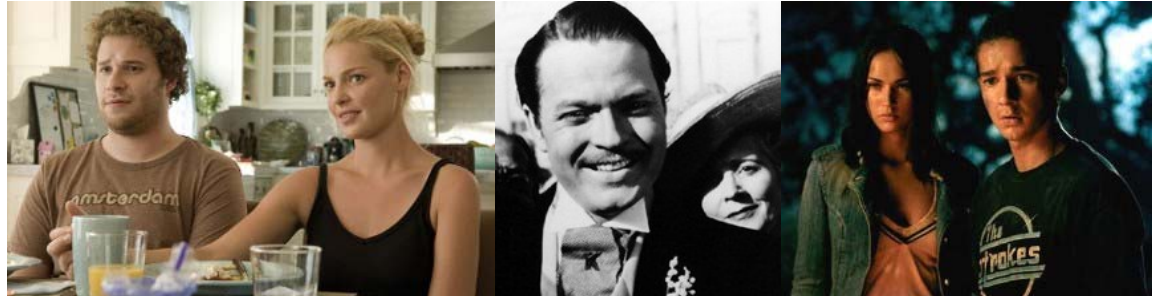
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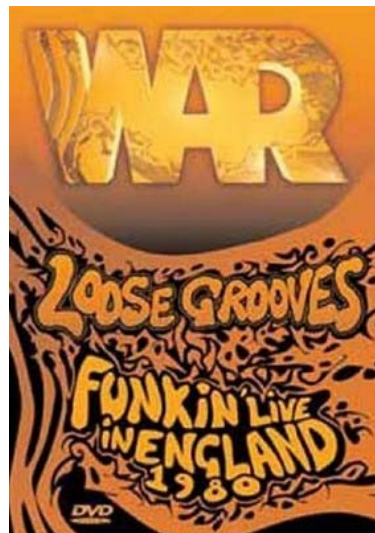
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War: Loose Grooves



This entry was posted on 5/8/2007 7:52 AM and is filed under [DVD Reviews](#).



“Low Rider” was of course the song that first keyed me into War, one of the more popular funk groups of the 1970s. A soundtrack staple, the song achieved **pop cultural lastingness** via heavy rotation on TV shows, movies (including *Dazed and Confused*) and classic rock radio, but it doesn’t really do War’s full canon justice. The group was, after all, one of the most eclectic of its era, freely melding soul, Latin, jazz, blues, reggae and rock influences into an effortlessly funky whole.

The concert DVD *Loose Grooves*, shot by Jeffrey Kruger during an April, 1980 show at the Civic Center Theatre in Halifax, England, perfectly illustrates the above description. **Faithful versions of big hits like “Low Rider” and “Cisco Kid” stand alongside extended instrumental improvisations**, presenting a picture of a rangy, musically gifted band able to adapt its sound for different environments. Animals frontman Eric Burdon was War’s first lead singer, but he gave way to guitarist/vocalist Howard Scott, who sings here. Most of the group’s original members, though, were still with the band in 1980, including drummer Harold Brown, keyboardist and co-lead vocalist Lonnie Jordan, harmonica player Lee Oskar and maestro percussionist Papa Dee Allen. They’re joined on stage by drummer Ron Mammon, multi-instrumentalist Pat Rizzo and bassist





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Luther Rabb.

Running a brisk 51 minutes, this title shortchanges a number of songs included herein, presenting only a snippet of “Spill the Wine,” the group’s first real hit, and other tunes. If the medleys were better known or smoothly integrated, this tack might work, but the transitions come across as abrupt and less than artful. In addition to the funky “Low Rider,” other highlights include “Gypsy Man,” “I’ll Be Around” and “Me and Baby Brother.” One of War’s other radio hits, **“Why Can’t We Be Friends?,”** **pops up in encore form, giving me shuddering memories of *Lethal Weapon IV*.**

Presented on a region-free disc and housed in a regular Amray case, *Loose Grooves* comes with an uncompressed, two-channel, linear PCM audio track — which captures the show in only so-so fashion — and a transfer that does little to mitigate the poor source lighting of the original concert. Granted, one doesn’t expect tip-top audio-visual clarity from older shows like these, but this fair-warning disclaimer makes this title worth a look chiefly for big-time fans of the band. There are unfortunately no supplemental extras included herein. **C+ (Concert) C- (Disc)**

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