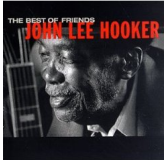


John Lee Hooker – The Best Of Friends (1998)

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 28 October 2009 17:59 - Last Updated Wednesday, 10 March 2021 12:09

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1. *Boogie Chillen* 2. *This Is Hip* 3. *The Healer* 4. *I Cover the Waterfront* 5. *Boom Boom*
6. *I'm in the Mood* 7. *Burnin' Hell* 8. *Tupelo* 9. *Baby Lee* 10. *Dimples* 11. *Chill Out (Things Gonna Change)* 12. *Big Legs Tight Skirt* 13. *Don't Look Back* John Lee Hooker, Van Morrison (vocals, guitar); Bonnie Raitt (vocals, slide guitar); Eric Clapton, Ry Cooder, Carlos Santana, Jimmie Vaughan, Roy Rogers, Ben Harper, Robert Cray, David Hidalgo, Cesar Rosas, Danny Caron (guitar); Charlie Musselwhite, John "Juke" Logan (harmonica); Gil Bernal (tenor saxophone, background vocals); Steve Berlin (baritone saxophone); Eric Barber (bass saxophone); Johnnie Johnson, Ike Turner (piano); Booker T. Jones (organ); Chester Thompson (keyboards, synthesizer); Bill Payne, Jim Pugh, Charles Brown (keyboards); Reggie McBride, Nick Lowe, Maurice Cridlin, Richard Cousins, Juan Nelson, Conrad Lozano, Benny Rietveld, Samuel Taylor (bass); Jim Keltner, Scott Mathews, Kevin Hayes (drums).

John Lee Hooker's recordings for Virgin/Point Blank may have varied in quality, but never in formula. Once *The Healer* earned reams of praise and, more importantly, solid sales upon its 1989 release, it was pretty much set in stone that every future Hooker album would be painstakingly constructed and boast a plethora of superstar cameos. The guest stars were designed to bring in a larger audience, who would hopefully be impressed enough to stick around for Hooker's solid stuff, which was usually better than the attention-grabbing, star-studded tracks. Of course, the names are what sold, and Virgin did not overlook that fact, choosing to assemble a collection of highlights titled *The Best of Friends* in 1998. The title refers to the superstar duets, and while this very well may be the best of those cuts -- well, almost all of the duets are here, including both the sublime ("I Cover the Waterfront," with Van Morrison) and the mediocre -- this stuff still isn't as good as Hooker's solo recordings from this era. Which means this disc is primarily for listeners who like to think they like Hooker, but they really just want to hear Eric Clapton wail away. ---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, allmusic.com

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