John Lee Hooker – Endless Boogie (1971)



The black blues legends playing with the white up-and-comers. I guess Sonny Boy Williamson II started it all about six years ago with his Live With the Yardbirds album. Successive years have seen a record-rack full of similar efforts ... from Muddy Waters, Lowell Fulsom, Furry Lewis and Otis Spann .. all resulting in quasi-successful albums that at times effectively blended the old urban, Texas/Chicago post-war Fifties sounds with the post-wah-wah generation. The best of them allowed the old bluesmen a lot of up-front playing and singing space (the Sonny Boy and the Spann) while the rest suffered from a distasteful updating attempt — Muddy Waters and Fulsom got drowned out and psychedelized upon.

This album falls distinctly into the former class John Lee Hooker, a 54-year-old blues legend in his own right, is sympathetically accompanied by the likes of Jesse Davis, Carl Radle, Steve Miller, Gino Scaggs and Mark Naftalin and the end product is a double-album set of unadulterated Hooker portraits in blues.

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Wpisany przez bluesever Środa, 28 Październik 2009 17:49 - Zmieniony Piątek, 12 Marzec 2021 09:36

I use the word "portraits" without hesitation. Hooker has long been a master at the extended built — around — a — foot — stomping-beat kind of blues as well as the quick, boogie-based instrumental. He nearly outdoes himself here on "Pots On. Gas On High." "A Sheep Out On the Foam" as well as the tersely effective "Kick Hit 4 Hit Kix U (Blues for Jimi and Janis)," all solid, rambling tunes. Examples of the more mainstream "Boogie Chillun" Hooker approach include the title song, the harp-studded "House Rent Boogie" and the blues gospel shortie "Doin' the Shout." Throughout, it's Hooker all the way he makes it his brand of blues with the case and dexterity of the genius he is all the textures and highlights paced with his ever-churning, heavy-bassed clectric guitar and his rough down-and-out voice. ---Gary Von Tersch, rollingstone.com

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