

John Lee Hooker – Travelin' (1960/2003)

Written by bluesever

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1 No Shoes 2:10 2 I Wanna Walk 2:15 3 Canal Street Blues 2:30 4 Run On 2:10 5 I'm A Stranger 2:35 6 Whiskey And Wimmen 2:10 7 Solid Sender 2:30 8 Sunny Land 2:15 9 Goin' To California 2:20 10 I Can't Believe 2:37 11 I'll Know Tonight 2:35 12 Dusty Road 2:09 13 Nightmare 4:24 14 Drive Me Away 2:53 15 Love Me All The Time 3:11 16 Bundle Up And Go 2:28 John Lee Hooker – guitar, vocals Lefty Bates - guitar Sylvester Hickman - bass

When I started to get interested in music in the middle 1960s, this was one of the Albums everyone who was serious was supposed to have. Jazz musicians and Blues lovers alike would take me aside and tell me to listen seriously when they played these sides for me because this was education.

Hooker benefited in these sides from being on Vee Jay records, a fine, sadly defunct, black owned label that provided him quality production and recording and presentation. You have the feeling that compared with a lot of his other recording companies, Vee Jay treated Johnnie Lee as a serious artist, worthy of good sound, enough time in the studio to get the take right, and tasteful accompaniment usually just drums and bass.

Here we have Hooker recorded in a special time in his career right in between the time that RB labels were milking him for a different recording every month, sometimes under different names, and the later period when the folk and the folk blues revivals got him into do one recording it seemed every week.

In 1960 when these sides were cut Hooker still had an audience in the Black base blues

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community and was also known to a lot of Jazz lovers as well. He's not jiving or being a caricature of himself as on some of his last CDs, sad to say.

Johnnie had "something in him that's got to come out." It's so far inside that it evades even the heart and the mind. It's deep down in our bones, fear of loneliness, isolation, poverty, and defeat, love hunger in the brick and concrete squalor of the Black ghettos that were about to explode in revolt.

There is such a feeling of despair here in blues songs that blend together: "No Shoes," "Whiskey and Women," "Canal Street," "I'm a stranger."

Wow, just typing these titles today 40 years after the first time I heard them still moves me, still make me wonder why I don't keep this permanently on the CD player

"No food on my table no shoes on my feet my children crying for bread they ain't Got nothing to eat" "Night life night life, it ain't No good for me. If it weren't for whiskey and women and night life, I'd have a happy life."

Plain simple words, but delivered by John Lee Hooker deep from inside him, plunging out with the music, across all the years, he emerges as such a poet, such a poet!

The words are still ringing in my ears. Let them ring in yours. ---Tony Thomas, amazon.com

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