

Pop

JOHN LEE HOOKER CHILL OUT

Pointblank 7243 8 40107 2 0 1995

It's nearing 50 years since blues master John Lee Hooker first committed to disc, but the seventysomething's latest, "Chill Out," is as potent and relevant as any grandchild effort currently on the charts. Similar to Buddy Guy's move on "Slippin' In," Hooker mostly drops the star collaborations that dominated his previous release, "The Healer." He does team once again with **Carlos Santana** and **Chester Thompson** on the album's title track (they also teamed to write the title track to "The Healer"), with Santana's stinging guitar blending effortlessly with Hooker's famed delivery. Another regular contributor, **Van Morrison**, sounds 20 years younger on "Serves Me Right To Suffer/Syndicator" (check out Hooker's brilliant work on Morrison's 1993 album "Too Long In Exile"). Otherwise, "Chill Out" is all JLH. The opening five tracks are mostly combo-based and up-tempo, but starting with "Tupelo," the album moves into the other-worldliness of Hooker's private blues. These are the blues of the Deep South, of spirituality, mystery, love, danger and a bit of voodoo, blues that Robert Johnson chased to his death, and blues that obviously haven't left the lifeblood of John Lee Hooker ... 9

BELLY KING

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Elvis Costello once said, "I think it's genuinely funny to watch someone go through that moment when they wanna be real, and the moment when they resist fame, and the moment