

slant, especially on a uniquely arranged version of "When the Saints Go Marching In," the disc's only cover. Terry's talents as a singer, guitarist, and songwriter gel on the opening title track with a strong soul-blues melody that's instantly memorable. The guitar/sax interplay is heartfelt and perfectly executed in a low-key yet forceful performance that immediately clicks.

Little else on the album rises to the level of the title cut, but this quality music does often find easygoing, soulful grooves, and there's plenty to enjoy in Terry's measured voice and fine material, such as the stinging "If I Die," featuring Christian Marsh's tough, Chicago-influenced harp solo. Female background and duet vocals, especially on "Talk to Me Darlin'," push adequate tunes into hotter territory, aided by Andy Thompson's growling, Clarence Clemons-styled sax. But other songs sound like rewritten versions of standard blues changes without lyrics or performances powerful enough to make them stand out.

As an independently released disc, *Soul Searchin'* shows pluck and promise. If Terry can capitalize on his vocal and melodic strengths and mold them around material that isn't quite so derivative, he'll be a talent to watch.

— Hal Horowitz

VARIOUS ARTISTS

A Tribute to James "Yank" Rachell

Yankville Records

The mandolin was a prominent, if not dominant, instrument in jug and string bands during the early days of recording. But it almost disap-

peared from blues after the great migration north to Chicago and the arrival of electric instruments and amps. Johnny Young cut excellent material for Vanguard and Testament in the late 1960s and 1970s that put a mandolin in front of plugged-in players, but with Young's death in 1974, only the grand master of mandolin blues, James "Yank" Rachell, was still around to champion the tradition. Rachell, who began performing with Sleepy John Estes in the 1920s, was still pleasing audiences only weeks before his death in 1997.

Proceeds from this tribute album benefit the Rachell family. Foremost among the able performers here, at least in terms of name recognition, is Rachell's late-career benefactor, John Sebastian, the Sixties mainstay of the Lovin' Spoonful who has had a distinguished career since those tie-dyed days. Also onboard are bluegrass star Tim O'Brien, *Blues Revue's* own Rich DelGrosso, folk stalwarts Peter Rowan and Mike Seeger, and various other players and pickers. Most of the 21 tracks are songs that Rachell either wrote or played frequently over his nearly 70-year career, including "Moonshine Whiskey," "Divin' Duck," "Depression Blues," "Cigarette Blues," and "She Caught the Katy," the latter the only one for which Rachell is said to have received royalty checks (courtesy of Taj Mahal and the Blues Brothers). There's also a terrific song about Rachell, "Bluesy Little Tune," by singer/guitarist Stanley Smith.



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Most of these recordings come from studio sessions, but Sebastian's version of "Tappin' That Thing" — featuring David Grisman on mandolin — is a live concert recording that includes a funny, warm introduction. Sebastian sounds like an excited kid as he explains how he and the late Fritz Richmond (of the Jim Kweskin Jug Band) hooked up with Rachell during his last years. It's a rare man who's worthy of such kind words and a tribute as fine as this one.

— *Bill Wasserzieher*

JOHN LEE HOOKER

50 Years: John Lee Hooker Anthology

Shout! Factory

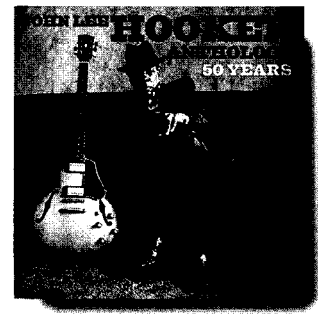
Boiling down John Lee Hooker's mammoth recording exploits to two CDs must have been a daunting task. This anthology is basically a compact version of Shout! Factory's exemplary 2006 four-disc boxed set *Hooker*, which contained 85 tracks. This collection has only 32, but two of its selections — the funky, horn-leavened "Jealous" from the dawn of the 1980s and 1991's "Boogie at Russian Hill" with Albert Collins on guitar — weren't included in the boxed set.

The career-spanning 2006 box did a fastidious job of digging deep to cross-license overlooked gems from the earliest days of Hooker's tangled history, when he cut sessions for any label with sufficient upfront money (and used a myriad of aliases in the process). The first disc of *50 Years* loses the revealing obscurities but covers

many of the seminal 1948-1961 highlights of his Modern ("Boogie Chillen," "Hobo Blues," "Crawlin' King Snake," "I'm in the Mood"), Sensation ("Huckle Up Baby"), and Vee-Jay ("Dimples," "I Love You Honey," "Boom Boom") catalogs, when the Boogie Man was at his artistic peak and, during the first few years, his commercial apex. 1960 covers of Rosco Gordon's "No More Doggin'" and Barrett Strong's "I Need Some Money" on Riverside, along with "Teachin' the Blues," a 1961 outing for Miami producer Henry Stone, round out the first disc.

A tasty cross-section of Hooker's mid-to-late 1960s output for Vee-Jay, Impulse! Chess, and ABC-Bluesway occupies the first half of the second disc, and his 1970 Liberty teaming with the boogie-obsessed Canned Heat is referenced with "Peavine." After that, the collection focuses on the all-star collaborations that made up a bit too much of Hooker's latter-day studio activities. Hobnobbing with Carlos Santana, Bonnie Raitt, Robert Cray, and Van Morrison in a high-gloss environment is far removed from the contents of the first disc, when John Lee's tapping foot and lonesome guitar — or a snarling little combo from Detroit or Chicago — were all he required to make the superior blues that will eternally define his legacy.

— *Bill Dahl*



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Blues Revue!

The following are the most listened-to recordings in Blues Revue's offices during the making of this issue:

LITTLE WALTER <i>The Complete Chess Masters (1950-1967)</i> Hip-O Select	MICHELLE MALONE <i>Debris</i> SBS Records
LADY BIANCA <i>A Woman Never Forgets</i> Magic-O Records	LOUISIANA RED <i>Back to the Black Bayou</i> Ruf Records
KING CLARENTZ <i>Day of the Supermodel</i> Super Sweet Records	BEX MARSHALL <i>Kitchen Table</i> House of Mercy
PAT THOMAS <i>His Father's Son</i> Broke & Hungry Records	BILLY PRICE & FRED CHAPPELLIER <i>Night Work</i> Dixiefrog Records
ZORA YOUNG <i>Sunnyland</i> Airway Records	LUTHER KENT <i>The Bobby Bland Songbook</i> Vetter Communications