

RECORD COLLECTOR



Chris Barber Presents The Blues legacy: Lost & Found Volumes 1-3

★★★★★

Classic Studio T/Blues Legacy, various cat nos

British jazz legend brings his American blues friends

The jazz trombonist and blues devotee Chris Barber (RC 346) brought all manner of blues singers to Britain in the late 50s and early 60s. His genius move was not only to expose British audiences to such great and then-unheard talents as Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee, Muddy Waters and Jimmy Witherspoon, but he also had his band provide much of the backing, lending a joyously jazzy vibe to the songs. Here Barber introduces the artists and recalls anecdotes with a very 50s gentility.

The three discs in the set are packed full, taken from six live shows and four studio sessions. Eighteen Terry & McGhee tracks are well worth the price of entry, and the full 11-track set by Sonny Boy Williamson is a gem. Gospel singer Sister Rosetta Tharpe performs mostly solo, filling the room with her huge voice and proto-rock guitar, so when the band joins her the music erupts into rapture. Elsewhere, Champion Jack Dupree's brilliantly mischievous Mother-In-Law Blues supplies a stream of insults that will have you searching for someone to hurl them at.

As you'd expect, the sound varies, but even the hairiest, such as Howlin' Wolf's four feral tracks, have character, atmosphere, and plenty of humour. *Mat Croft*