

bums, and his recent jazz gigs include appearances with bands led by Randy Brecker, John Clayton, David "Fathead" Newman, Rich Perry and Rufus Reid.

This threesome works very well together. Allee shows lots of imagination in his solos, with Horner spurring him to new heights with his traps artistry. Rewarding the listener, the diverse tunes provide for plenty of creative interplay and fine solo work.

Nancy Ann Lee

CHRIS BARBER PRESENTS THE BLUES LEGACY: LOST AND FOUND SERIES

MVD AUDIO

Trombonist Chris Barber has been a mainstay of the British trad jazz scene for over five decades. With Lonnie Donegan, he helped launch the skittle music scene with 'Rock Island Line,' while his own band backed numerous legends including some from the world of blues and gospel. Not long ago he came across some old magnetic tapes of some of the legendary blues artists he brought over to England in the '50 and '60s. The result are three volumes, "Chris Barber Presents The Blues Legacy: Lost and Found Series" (MVD Audio).

Volume 1 opens with Barber introducing **Sister Rosetta Tharpe**, the legendary gospel singer and guitarist. When she arrived in England with her arrangements from her days with Lucky Millender's Big Band, Barber and his combo were flustered, but were able to back her on a variety of her classic sacred repertoire including 'Every Time I Feel the Spirit,' 'Didn't It Rain,' 'Up Above My Head I Hear Music In The Air,' and 'Old Time Religion,' with the backing provided by Barber and his band matching the exuberance of her performance, even if the overall sound of the performances occasionally sounds messy and chaotic. 'This Train,' is performed solo with some fine guitar featured and her effectively dramatic vocal. Vocalist Otilie Patterson joins her for one of two renditions of 'Old Time Religion,' and 'When the Saints Go Marching In.' The rest of this volume is devoted to performances by **Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee** who mostly perform without a band and are in typical form for the two, opening with 'Midnight Special,' 'Climbin' on Top of the Hill' (a reworking of 'Sitting on top of the World'), the remarkable harmonica feature 'Fox Chase,' 'How Long How Long Blues,' another harp solo 'Callin' Mama Blues,' and 'Betty and Dupree.' While the repertoire will be familiar, these concert performances are strong ones. Also included is a joyous duo version of 'When the Saints Go Marching In,' followed by 'Little Light of Mine,' on which Barber and band and accompaniment are playing somewhat more restrained here. Chris Barber and Band close with another gospel number with Otilie Patterson taking the front stage.

Volume 2 opens with Chris Barber's contemporary recollections of the 1958 recordings by **Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee** that open this volume. There is a nice duo of 'Poor Man Blues,' while Otilie Patterson takes lead on the vocal backed by Barber and the duo on "When Things Go Wrong," and 'How Long Blues.' Barber provides another spoken introduction to the performances

by **Muddy Waters** with **Otis Spann** presented here, which he noted was an amazing experience. Muddy and Spann were terrific and Barber's band does a credible job in support although the drummer on several tracks is a bit stiff and tad heavy handed. Repertoire played included 'Hootchie Kootchie Man,' 'Blow Wind Blow,' 'Baby Please Don't Call,' 'Long Distance Call,' 'I Can't Be Satisfied,' 'Blues Before Sunrise' (interesting to hear Muddy refer to this as originally made by a friend of his before he died), and 'Walking Through the Park.' Muddy goes solo on 'Rolling Stone,' and revisits 'Feel Like Going Home.' Spann is exceptional here, and the band tries to be unobtrusive in supporting Muddy, who certainly sounds fine. Perhaps not indispensable, but these tracks are a nice addition to Muddy's discography in any event. Next up are fine three tracks by **Champion Jack Dupree** including a nice Christmas blues, a humorous lament about his mother-in-law, and his own very distinctive rendition of Tampa Red's 'When Things Go Wrong.' The disc closes with a 1962 performance by the great **Louis Jordan** with whom Barber's traditional jazz band provides nice support for a nice duet between the saxophonist-vocalist Jordan and Otilie Patterson on 'T'aint Nobody's Business. There is a nice mix of performers and some genuinely good performances on this volume.

Sonny Boy Williamson opens the final volume, **Volume 3**, with some performances from 1964. Barber mentions the great shows presented by Lippman and Rau which led to his performance that opens with 'United Blues/ Help Me' as the band plays the melody before Williamson enters with his harp and launches into the song. Then Barber recalls some of the performances of his including some jazz songs like 'C-Jam Blues,' as well as staples of his repertoire as 'So Sad to Be Lonesome,' his reworking of Robert Lockwood's 'Take a Little Walk With Me,' 'Bye Bye Bird,' 'Your Funeral, My Trial,' and 'Pontiac Blues.' Like Brownie and Sonny, he closes his set with some gospel songs, 'Saints,' and 'This Little Light of Mine,' with Otilie Patterson sharing the vocal.' The music does get a bit chaotic but still remains fun with the joyful sound and Sonny Boy's harp blends well with the trad jazz backing. **Jimmy Witherspoon** came over in 1964 and played at a festival Barber helped organize, and Spoon sounds terrific on his first trio of tunes, although the backing remains a bit rough on 'Times Getting Tougher Than Tough,' and 'Roll 'Em Pete.' The backing behind **Howlin' Wolf** with **Hubert Sumlin** seems a bit tighter as Wolf howls through 'Howlin' For My Darling,' 'Dust My Broom,' and 'May I have a Talk With You.' Sumlin sounds really good, if a bit underamplified, while Wolf's vocals are ferocious, and the backing band almost sounds like a urban blues band as opposed to a Dixieland group. Jimmy Witherspoon has five more vocals to close this set, and the backing is a bit more together here as he reprised 'Everyday I Have the Blues,' and 'When I've Been Drinkin'.'

There are some very good performances on all three volumes although I give the nod to those on the latter two discs. One would be hard-pressed to call any of these essential but fans of Muddy, Sonny Boy, Wolf and Spoon will especially find performances that may merit their consideration.

Ron Weinstock