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"A sinister cabal of superior writers."

Music Review: Various Artists - Bar-B-Cue'n Blues

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Author: Jack Goodstein — Published: Jan 02, 2012 at 3:09 pm

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Lovers of traditional blues will want to check out Bar-B-Cue'n Blues' one-off series of compilations of remastered recordings by some of the great blues masters. Originally scheduled for release last fall from Catbone Unreleased, the album, like others in the series, features fifteen previously unreleased tracks by the likes of John Lee Hooker, Howling Wolf and Muddy Waters as well as some lesser known names, eight different artists in all. And while there will be those who may have preferred complete albums devoted to the individuals, it is hard to complain about the opportunity to listen to some very fine blues that might well have gone under the radar otherwise. It's no use looking the proverbial gift horse in the mouth.

These are lovingly restored recordings worth checking out either for aficionados looking to fill holes in their collections or casual listeners seeking an introduction to the genre. If there is anything to complain about, it is probably the liner notes. Aside from a photo and some sketchy information about the performers—some of whom are not even represented on the respective album, there is no information about the specific tracks, either about the songs themselves or the performances. A word or two about the date of the original and the musical accompaniment would have been welcome. Still, it is the music that's important, and there is a lot of good music.



The album opens with Chicago bluesman Billy Boy Arnold's "Catfish." Arnold, who has worked with the likes of Bo Diddley, is also represented by "Dirty Mother Furriers," an almost seven-minute, swinging electric romp with lyrics that won't make it on NPR, and "Sweet Miss Bea." Harmonica virtuoso James Cotton—"Superharp," according to his website—has two tracks: a sweet blues, "So Glad I'm Livin" and the uptempo "You Know It Ain't Right." There's some boogie-woogie from Jimmy Reed, "Boogie in the Dark" and an old home "Gone Fishin'." Trumpeter Jack Milman's "Tom and Jerry" is an easygoing instrumental, although this is one of the tracks where it would clearly have been nice to have the names of the members of the ensemble. Rock and roller Little Richard shows up with "I Don't Know What You've Got," which is not quite as flamboyant as some of his pop hits.

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#### 1 - Johnny Blue

Jan 03, 2012 at 6:53 pm

I bought a few CD's out of this compilation, The first one was Saturday Night in Shankletown, then Belly Full Of Blues, then Mean Street. Man was I in for a great surprise. I purchased the first and liked it a lot, I purchased the second and liked it a lot, I purchased the third Mean Street, and I am sold on this lable, Catbone, I even like the name and logo. YOu naield it, I wish they would put more liner notes, but I read that they were doing as a box set originally and the distributor changed it, and the liner notes got left out, by mistake. So hopefully it will be corrected in the next releases. The great thing I love about this label is the restoration of sound, sounded like it was just recorded, and sounds fat, not think like the rest of the restored albums I have heard. I would recommend any one to pick this up. It reminds me of a jukebox in a joint whether a juke joint, cafe or truck stop. These ROCK !!

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