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

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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 fifteen15 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.

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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.



Then there's the big three. Muddy Waters does "I Feel So Good" and "All Aboard," a song that echoes a train. Howlin' Wolf's "Louise" is a classic and he adds a playful "Built for Comfort." The album is rounded out by John Lee Hooker's "Sally Mae," introduced with a throbbing guitar and a six



-and-a-half-minute blast of blues improvisation on "Should Have Been Gone."

What *Bar-B-Cue'n Blues* lacks in depth, it certainly makes up for in variety, offering listeners a nice mix of representative, artistic home cooking. These are the folks that have worked in the roadhouses and the bars; they know the fields of Mississippi and the streets of Chicago. They are the "blues" collar workers, and it is a shame that some of these names are not even better known. An album like this only serves to illustrate how large the field of really fine blues musicians is.

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