Detroit Blues Masters Vol. 7 – Baby Boy Warren



01. My special friend blues 02. Nervy woman blues 03. Lonesome cabin blues 04. Don't want no skinny woman 05. Forgive me darling 06. Please don't think I'm nosey Robert Henry Warren (Baby Boy) – vocals, guitar Charley Mills – piano Milt Larkin – bass Detroit, Mi. 1949 *07. I got lucky 08. Let's renew our love 09. Taxi driver 10. Bad lover blues*
Robert Henry Warren – vocals, guitar Boogie Woogie Red – piano Calvin Frazier – guitar Curtis Foster – drums Detroit, Mi. 1950
11. Sanafee 12. Not welcome anymore 13. Hello stranger 14. Bring me my machine gun 15. Chicken 16. Chuck a luck 17. Baby boy blues
Robert Henry Warren – vocals, guitar Sonny Boy Williamson (Rice Miller) – harmonica Washboard Willie - washboard Detroit, Mi. 10 january 1954
18. Mattie Mae 19. Santa Fe
Robert Henry Warren – vocals, guitar Boogie Woogie Red – piano Calvin Frazier – guitar Detroit, Mi. march 1954
20. Somebody put bad luck on me 21. Stop breaking down
Robert Henry Warren – vocals, guitar Johnny Hooks – tenor saxophone Boogie Woogie Red – piano Little George Jackson – guitar Jimmy Tarrant – drums Detroit, Mi. july 1954
22. Too many drivers 23. She's fine
Robert Henry Warren – vocals, guitar Boogie Woogie Red – piano + band Ann Arbor, Mi. 1973

Baby Boy Warren is another major name of the post-war Detroit blues scene and his recording output (between 1949 and 1954) has gained some kind of a "classical" status.

Born on August, 13th, 1919 at Lake Providence (La), Robert Henry Warren has in fact been raised in Memphis, learning the guitar with his elder brother with whom he formed a duo, Big Boy Warren and Baby Boy Warren, a nickname that would stick to him forever. During the late 1930's he plays regularly with local bluesmen Little Buddy Doyle and Willie Borum while being

strongly influenced by the recordings of John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson. He is rumoured to have recorded two titles at that time but no evidence of this has never surfaced. In 1941, he is for a few months a featured member (alongside the other Sonny Boy (Rice Miller) and Robert Lockwood) of the popular radio programme King Biscuit Time broadcasted from Helena (Arkansas).

1942 finds him in Detroit trying to make a better living at General Motors and playing the blues in the clubs. He finally makes his first known recordings in 1949, visiting sporadically the Detroit studios for the next six years, issuing records on small local labels, some of it stirring enough interest to be also issued by labels with national distribution like Federal or Excello. Baby Boy is backed by the best Detroit bluesmen (Calvin Frazier, Boogie Woogie Red) but this is his January, 1954 session that generally is better known because he is in the company of his old mate Rice Miller who, coming from the South to Chicago, made a stopover in Detroit, living for some months at Baby Boy's place and playing with him at some Hastings Street's clubs. In fact, Chicken/ Chuck a luck is mostly a Rice Miller instrumental. The other titles are of the same high standard, particularly Sanafee and Hello Stranger/ Mattie Mae, a reworking of a John Lee Williamson's hit.

But, despite an essay to modernize his sound with the add of Johnny Hooks' saxophone on a last 1954 session, the very downhome blues of Baby Boy with a strong late 1940's flavor seems already out-fashioned and Warren won't record anymore, playing less and less outside private parties.

He was making a modest comeback in the 1970's with appearances at the 1971 Detroit blues festival, the 1973 Ann Arbor festival (where he recorded two "live" titles) and a European tour alongside Boogie Woogie Red (he may have recorded an album during this tour but nothing has been issued insofar) when he died of a massive heart attack on July, 1st 1977. --- Gérard Herzhaft, jukegh.blogspot.com

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