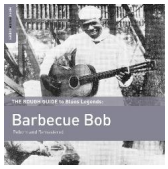
## Barbecue Bob – The Rough Guide To Blues Legends Barbecue Bob (2015)




*01 Poor Boy A Long Ways From Home 3:01 02 Barbecue Blues 3:09 03 Honey Your Going Too Fast 2:59 04 Motherless Chile Blues 3:12 05 She Looks So Good 2:58 06 Thinkin' Funny Blues 3:22 07 Honey You Don't Know My Mind 3:08 08 Going Up The Country 3:11 09 Atlanta Moan 3:03 10 It Just Won't Hay 3:05 11 Chocolate To The Bone 2:49 12 When The Saints Go Marching In 3:07 13 She's Coming Back Some Cold Rainy Day 3:01 14 Spider And The Fly 3:33 15 It Just Won't Quit 3:13 16 Yo Yo Blues 2:54 17 Brown-Skin Gal 3:03 18 Jesus' Blood Can Make Me Whole 3:03 19 She Moves It Just Right 2:55 20 Midnight Weeping Blues 2:55 21 It Won't Be Long Now - Part 1 3:29 22 It's Just Too Bad 3:12 23 Doin' The Scraunch 2:54 24 How Long Pretty Mama 3:21*

Barbecue Bob was one of the best-selling and most innovative blues artists of the late 1920s before he died at the age of just 29. Undoubtedly some of the most engaging early blues that you are likely to hear, his original and witty compositions had a huge influence on many of the blues greats that followed.

Very few names in the history of the blues capture the imagination quite like that of Barbecue Bob. Don’t be fooled by the quirky pseudonym and gimmicky publicity photograph of him posing in his chef's whites with guitar in hand, as he was an incredibly influential figure whose records helped pave the way for many of the important bluesmen that followed.

One of the unsung heroes of the Piedmont blues style, Robert Hicks, aka Barbecue Bob recorded over sixty sides for Columbia Records and became one of the best-selling artists on their ‘race series’, outsold only by Bessie Smith, Ethel Waters and Blind Willie Johnson. With his original and witty compositions he was one of the real pioneers of the Atlanta blues scene of the time, but his career was tragically ended by his death from pneumonia at the age of just 29.

Born in Walnut Grove, Georgia to a family of sharecroppers, Hicks learned to play the guitar from his brother Charley and Savannah 'Dip' Weaver, the mother of his friend Curley Weaver. He teamed up with Charley, Curley and harmonica player Eddie Mapp to perform at dances, parties and picnics in the Atlanta area. After leaving the group in 1926, Hicks became a chef in a barbecue joint where he would cook, serve and sing to the customers. He soon became something of a local celebrity and was noticed by a talent scout from Columbia Records, who gave him the opportunity to record under the catchy title of Barbecue Bob.

Characterized by a heavy percussive guitar style, he often used a bottleneck and played with a frailing technique that is more often associated with the claw hammer banjo. His twelve string guitar gave a rich accompaniment to his warm nasal singing voice which, compared to the morbid and foreboding songs of the Delta blues, created a vibe which was jaunty and upbeat.

With a huge repertoire of songs ranging from hokum to slow blues and spirituals to traditional songster tunes, his music is imbued with a special warmth typical to the East Coast blues. Even from the opening few measures of his very first record 'Barbecue Blues', Hicks signature sound of a bright and trebly twelve string guitar combined with his expressive voice is instantly accessible and almost 'pop' sounding in comparison with other blues singers of the time. His debut song was a huge success and led to a prolific recording career over the next four years when, it is said, he lived fast and enjoyed the high life. Hicks frequently recorded with his brother Charley, who was known as Laughing Charley Lincoln, and would later record several sides in 1930 with Buddy Moss and Curley Weaver as the Georgia Cotton Pickers.

Largely due to his life being tragically cut short in 1931, his music has been sadly overlooked and has therefore not received the respect proffered to other East coast players such as Blind Willie McTell and Buddy Moss. He was however a true innovator in his time, and this compilation gives proof that his music is undoubtedly some of the most engaging early blues that you are likely to hear. ---worldmusic.net

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