

# Mp3 Anton Barbeau - Antology Vol. 1



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Irreverent pop genius, Anton Barbeau delivers a limited edition CD of rare, homespun pop/rock classics. 17 MP3 Songs ROCK: Modern Rock, POP: Power Pop Details: Reviews of Antology, Vol. 1 TOAST Magazine (Minneapolis, MN) by John F. Butland Invariably the dB's were described as a quirky pop band. They had nothing on Anton Barbeau; he's quirky in the extreme. He's also psychedelic, arty, experimental, and above all, fascinating. Initially the disc was rather off-putting, too ambitious and seemingly too clever, but it just keeps drawing you back and before you know it you're craving it. He takes the willful oddness of Robyn Hitchcock and marries it to the hook-laden pop smarts of Marshall Crenshaw. "Surfboard Song, " with nary a surf lick in earshot, recalls Nirvana, Pink Floyd and Tommy Keene. The disc contains some of the sharpest barbed pop hooks around and is fascinating and riveting. An acquired taste, unquestionably, but one worth acquiring. BUCKETFUL OF BRAINS by Fernando Naporano Following two good, albeit uneven in its songwriting, albums these leftovers and unreleased tracks by this Sacramento resident show a fully realised songwriter, and one wonders why most of these tracks did not get a place in his full length albums. The only down side of this 17 tracks collection is the lo-fi sound of some of the songs recorded in 4, 8 and 16 tracks. Barbeau himself is conscious about it when he states on the sleeve notes that he is "neither proud nor ashamed" of these recordings. The "anthology" will appeal to all fans of multifacetated compositions with a quirk approach, surreal lyrics, and a nod to glam rock and 60's Brit sike pop. His inspiration shines--in a mysterious way--disguised on each track. In "Nature Look Me In The Eye" we see Robyn Hitchcock wearing a Television Personalities mask; "You And I" is Syd Barrett doing a space-gospel; "Keeping Pace With Pidgeons" carries a XTC secret wandering through an unreleased Close Lobsters song and "Nobody Adores A Vacuum" brings a Bolanesque ghost who produces a falsetto voice that Brett Anderson would die for. His music evokes a

truly visionary genius, and, by the way, "Sula" is the very first afro-psych song penned in the annals of pop history. LUKE Magazine by Danny You ever get the feeling music isn't as much fun as it used to be? Anton Barbeau will sort you out. Antology Vol. 1 may be a collection of his finest moments or just a new album, I've no idea. What I do know for certain is that Mr. Barbeau has a keen sense of humour, is an extremely talented wordsmith and has the good sense to know that if you're going to sing funny little songs you'd better place them with bloody great tunes. This he does with a lot of skill, so instead of a collection of tiresome novelty songs, Antology Vol. 1 is instead a spiffing collection of off-kilter, quirky lo-fi pop that comes across as charming and witty. For all that, it's not an album that you want to hear all the way through on heavy rotation, but if you dip into it on a regular basis, it will keep you smiling for weeks to come. Beat that Radiohead! SORTED magAZine by Anne-Louise Foley No, before you ask, it's not a misspelling, but rather a pun, and not a collection of greatest hits, but in fact a collection of demos. Anton Barbeau is a character subject to many misgivings. Not a French talk show host or brand of cheese (though there are similarities), Barbeau is actually a bespectacled Californian. Antology is a collection of Barbeau's demo reel over the past four years and a brave endeavour clocking in at over 70 minutes. Though this album has the initial feel of garage/basement rock, it transcends the likes of Ash or Weezer with its tongue in cheek factor. "A girl like that treating me like this/ better hope I miss when I try to run her over" ("A girl like that"). Vocally, Barbeau is all over the place, sounding at times like Buddy Holly on speed or Elvis Costello. He ranges from the normal to the falsetto, the baritone to the squeak factor. Antology is chaotic yet completely focused; quirky yet heartfelt; complex but simple: in some ways the perfect pop album. Fuzzy throwaway choruses one minute ("Whippy Diane") and atmospheric expressions of ardour the next ("Surfboard Song," "No More Love Guitars"), Antology's length gives it the chance to prove cynics wrong and develop its sound with each track. Heavily guitar-based at moments, this is the geeks laughing in the face of cock rockers. But it's more than just catchy chord sequences, it's laid back reggae beats ("The Battle of Anna K") and bum wiggling anthems ("Sula"), it's revamped jangly British rock ("Land of Economy"), it's affinity with a household appliance ("Nobody Adores a Vacuum"). Brilliant, intelligent, hilarious... It's all been said about Anton Barbeau and it's all true. Get your hands on this. AMPLIFIER, vol.4, no. 3 by Bill Holmes Anton Barbeau writes songs that will never get on the radio, but in his case that's a compliment, Despite the odd cover photos and song titles like "Whippy Diane" or "Please Look At My Teeth," Barbeau is an inspired artist who chooses to use Crayola's large box of

crayons, thank you very much. These demos, alternate takes and short bursts of whimsy were recorded over an indeterminate period of time, although those familiar with his earlier work *Waterbugs* and *Beetles* and *The Horse's Tongue* will recognize a few bits. First-timers will make comparisons to Robyn Hitchcock and Scott Miller, two other artists pushing the envelope, but Anton steals from everyone. He could write formula pop if he wanted to; "No More Love Guitars" was probably scrawled on a cocktail napkin. Hit single? I dare you to listen to "Girl Like That"--once--and not sing along. But he'd rather dance along the musical ledge and write about jelly, porcupines and umbrellas, which is a welcome relief, isn't it? So along with the unorthodox but solid melodies you will travel through the "Beautiful Bacon Dub" and share the gut-wrenching emotion of "Nobody Adores A Vacuum" as part of your package. There are artists you cannot avoid and then there are the ones you must seek and find. Anton Barbeau demands your immediate attention.

**SPLENDID E-Zine** by George Zahora In a packed program, Barbeau introduces us to 17 of his best songs -- reputedly merely the tip of a veritable musical iceberg. Barbeau's work sports a distinct quirky-British-pop aesthetic; though I've no idea if he's actually British, songs like "Whippy Diane" and "Beautiful Bacon Dub" have more in common with Robyn Hitchcock, XTC et al than with most stateside purveyors of surrealist pop. There's a retro flavor here, too -- the fun and frivolity of early eighties new wave is alive and kicking on *Antology*, along with a Bowie-esque penchant for willful obscurity. In other words, unless you only listen to love songs, you'll find *Antology* distinctly entertaining.

**AUDIOCAFE E-Zine** by Brian Baker **Alternative Pop Release of the Week** There are pop geniuses toiling away in backyard sheds and basement studios in every community in this country, pursuing their pure dream in the complete absence of anything resembling promotion or publicity. While a good many of them have established a healthy support base in their local scenes, a scene presence does not always constitute a career. We can only guess at the size and scope of Anton Barbeau's fan data base, but even money says that they are, to a person, XTC fans as well. It would certainly follow that Barbeau counts himself among that number, judging from his liner note exhortation for listeners to buy enough of his CDs to relocate he and his girlfriend to Swindon, presumably to be fence neighbors with Andy Partridge. Geography is pretty much the only distance between Anton and Andy, because sonically they're living no more than a street apart. Barbeau has previously released a pair of truly impressive pop discs on his own *Idiot Records* in 1992 and 1995. The discs, *The Horse's Tongue* and *Waterbugs* *Beetles*, are marvels of atmospheric pop music that rise well above their obviously limited recording budget. The thing that sets

Barbeau apart from most of his lo-fi home recorded brethren is a knack (pardon the power pop pun) for songs, in composition as well as in arranging and composing, a quality that he shares with the estimable Mr. Partridge, who recorded a similarly lo-fi pop excursion under that very name back in 1980. *Antology* is an odds-and-sods collection of Barbeau's demo reel over the four years since the release of *Waterbugs*. Setting aside the often thin, trebly basement mix, there are more than a few moments of crystalline pop perfection in Barbeau's songcraft. "Land of Economy" is a jumping rocker that indicates an influence of perhaps equal importance, namely Roy Wood (ex-Move/Wizzard), yet another British pop icon. As a matter of fact, there are as many Woodian references here to my ear than Partridgian, but there's no denying Barbeau has learned well from both, regardless of how the lesson is translated.

Vocally, Barbeau is all over the pop map. When he goes for his falsetto range, he sounds like a blend of Marc Bolan and the long-lost Michael Fennelly (ex-Crabby Appleton). On "Surfboard Song," he tosses off phrases, both vocally and melodically, that nod toward Roger McGuinn, while "No More Love Guitars," "Whippy Dianne," and "Marshmallow Man" offer a few of the XTC phrases that Barbeau obviously holds dear. "Nature Look Me in the Eye" could be a lost Smithereens demo, and "Sula" offers up a twisted take on the joyous Zulu pop of Johnny Clegg. It almost doesn't matter who Barbeau namechecks as an influence on his amazing homemade pop confections. He has quite obviously absorbed all of the best pop that the past three decades has produced and processed it ably in his head, heart, and home studio. It's been said many times about many lo-fi musical mad scientists, but it's no cliché with Anton Barbeau: somebody rich and smart needs to bankroll this guy's pop ambitions in a studio big enough to fully realize the brilliance that he hears in his soul's ear. *SHAKE IT UP E-Zine* by Claudio Sossi Restless, frantic, sometimes frustrating, and always daring are descriptives that all come to mind when listening to this collection of demos and outtakes from Anton Barbeau. Truly one of the bolder artists making music today, Barbeau may be an acquired taste for some, a way of life for others, and someone to be avoided for still more. Responsible for perhaps the most talked about and debated track on 1997's *Yellow Pills Vol. IV* compilation ("Octagon"), Barbeau instantly staked his claim as a distinctive voice in the world of pop. While I ended up liking "Octagon" quite a bit, it took more than a few listens to really get to that point. Anton Barbeau is "work". Sometimes the rewards are great, and sometimes they may fall short, but his work is impossible to ignore. With tracks like "You And I," which falls somewhere within Twin Peaks-like borders, and the odd "Beautiful Bacon Dub," Barbeau exhibits two drastically different experimental

approaches. Reggae gets a turn ("The Battle Of Anna K."), quirky Devo-like numbers appear (notably "Marshmallow Man"), and "Sula" could have been an outtake from Paul Simon's Graceland. I'd be hard pressed to find a single CD that reaches the diverse points that this collection does. Yeah, but do I like Antology Vol. I? Well, about half of it would have to be my answer. When Barbeau "plays it straight", he delivers solidly as on "Land Of Economy," the echoey "Surfboard Song," and the hard pop of "Whippy Diane." Make no mistake, there's a large talent at work here. Of course it's worth noting that these are indeed demos--material that wasn't intended initially for release. While I don't feel particularly enlightened to have them see the light of day, I can see how some would. I may not be a huge Anton Barbeau fan, but I'm certainly glad he's there. Someone has to push the boundaries, and I'm glad it's someone as genuine as Anton Barbeau.

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