

GERAINT WATKINS MOOD SWINGS

(Jungle)
3-disc version of 2008 album.

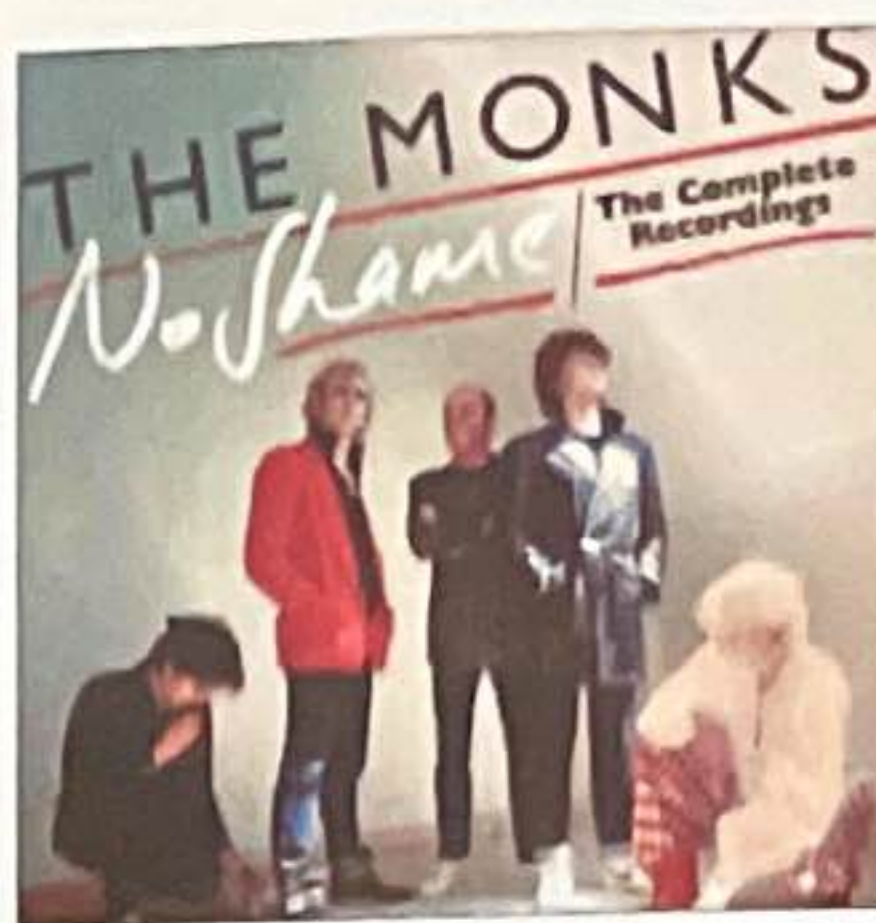
6/10
Pub rock veteran Watkins will be familiar to many for his keyboard work with the likes of Nick Lowe and Dave Edmunds, not to mention stints with Red Beans & Rice, Juice On The Loose and South London swamp-rockers The Balham Alligators. If you like it loud, beery and swingin' though, you might want to give this the swerve. The maestro's 2008 album 'In A Bad Mood', expanded here across three discs, is strictly late-night fare as he croons through a series of touching, introspective originals and well-chosen covers - 'We've Only Just Begun', 'What's Going On', 'Crazy Arms', and an unexpectedly sprightly 'Dedicated To The One I Love' - mainly accompanying himself but also with friends like Lowe, Jools Holland, drummer Robert Treherne and bassist Matt Radford. Lovely stuff, of a strictly non-rockin' stripe.
Gerry Ranson



KIRSTY MACCOLL SEE THAT GIRL 1979-2000

(Universal)
Comprehensive collection of the much loved and missed singer/songwriter.

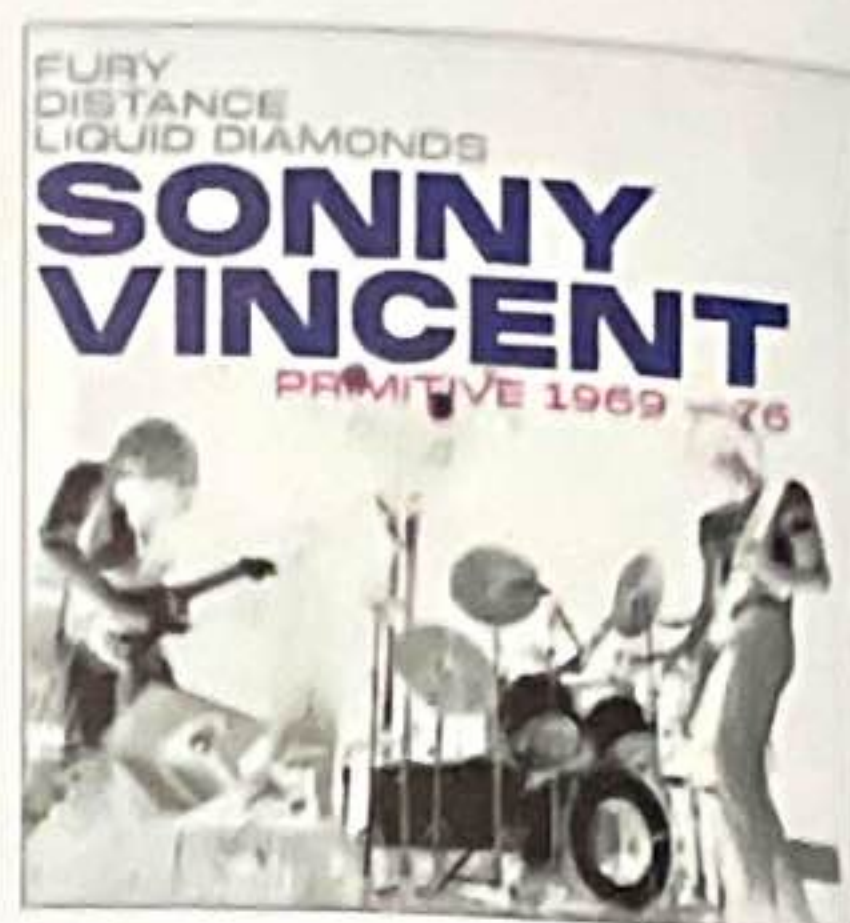
8/10
Arguably best known for her celebrated duet on The Pogues' evergreen perennial 'The Fairy Tale of New York' and remembered for her gorgeous singing voice and sharp, witty lyricism, MacColl remains a respected but somewhat under-celebrated artist. This lavish 8 CD boxset, consisting of 161 tracks recorded between 1979 and 2000, 47 of which are previously unreleased, provides context and overview of a remarkable recording career. Perhaps the most interesting inclusion is MacColl's second album, 'Real', recorded in 1983 but unreleased until now. All of the singer's singles are included, along with key album tracks, b-sides, unreleased demos and live performances from the 1992 Glastonbury Festival, the Jazz Café (London) and BBC radio and TV appearances.
Gus Ironside



THE MONKS NO SHAME - THE COMPLETE RECORDINGS

(Cherry Red)
Flat as a can of Watneys Red Barrel.

1/10
It's easy to review the past through a modern filter and lose context - but even at the time (and I was there), The Monks were an tumbleweed summoning, novelty act. 'Bad Habits' is a shonky time capsule of aged clichés in questionable territory riffing on pubs, drugs 'Drugs in My Pocket', booze and birds 'Nice Legs etc' 'I Ain't Getting Any'. A bundle of B-sides, demos and (rightly) unreleased tracks just adds to the dragging agony. Disc 2 'Suspended Animation' from 1981, staggeringly, manages to outdo their debut for sheer-awfulness overload. The cornball observations 'Suspended Animation', political twaddle 'Don't Want No Reds' are almost sufferable but 'James Bondage' 'I Can Do Anything You Like' and 'King Dong' can get in the bin. Agonising slop-pop. Avoid.
Dave Collins



SONNY VINCENT PRIMITIVE: 1969 - 76

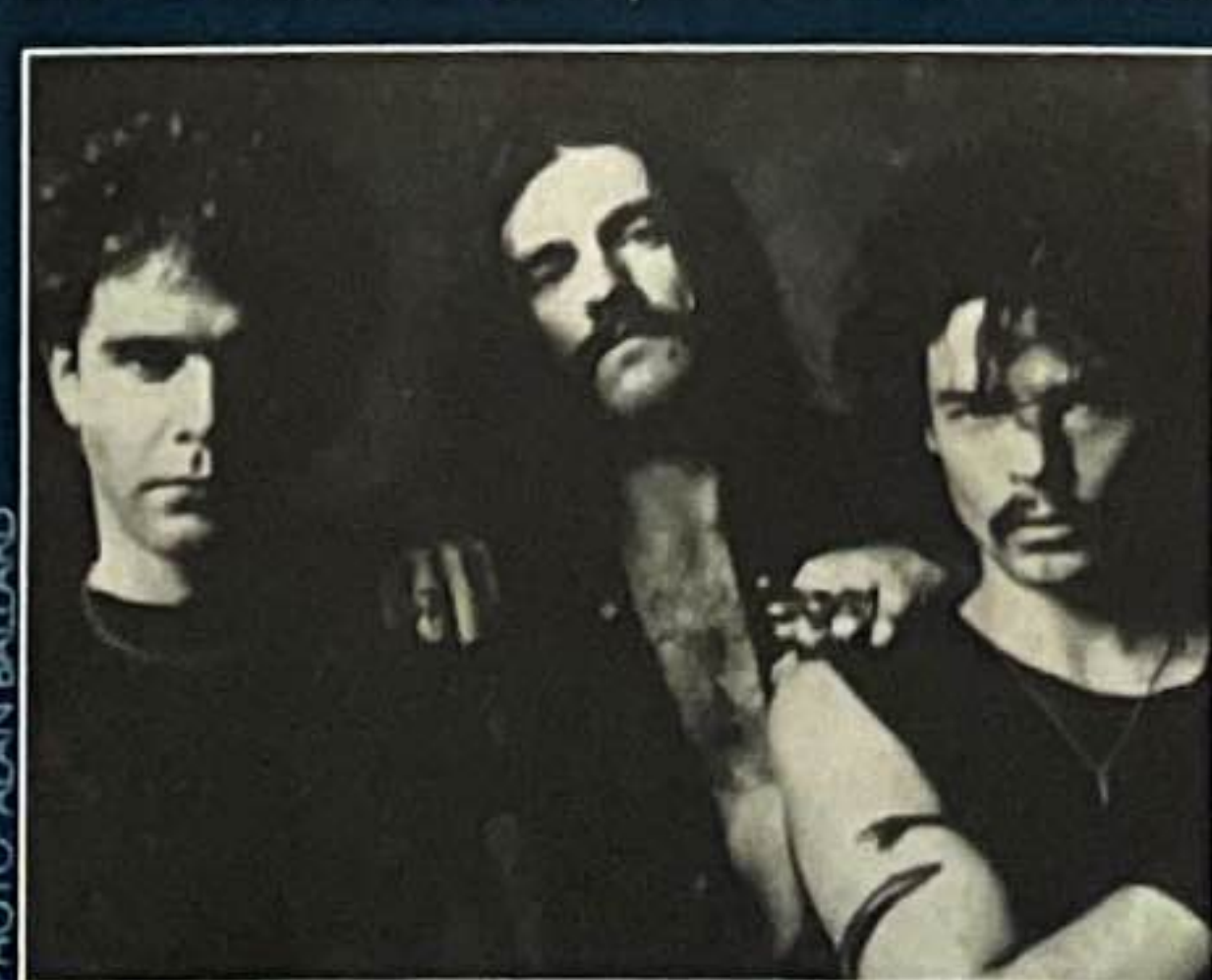
(Ripple)
Artefacts of NYC garage punk icon.

8/10
This album deep dives into rock 'n' roll vagabond Sonny Vincent's formative musical adventures, its dozen tracks capturing unearthed material that are a super-vital view into the shit Sonny was kicking up in NYC during the pre-punk years. There's immediate lift-off with 'Flying' by his '72 act Fury, a real-beaut hi-octane rocker, twisted hard riffage and Ozzy-ish vocal styling. That's followed by '100%' smoking in a more Sonic's Rendezvous groove. Mighty fine jams! Represented with three strong cuts are his first band Distance. 1969's 'She's Like Hiroshima', loaded with dark-psych, was written by Sonny whist on a furlough from serving in Vietnam. 'Liquid Diamonds' carried on from Fury, ratcheted up menacing razor-sharp hard rock, and prelude to his primordial punk act The Testors, whose 'Scary' is lifted from an early demo.
Pete Craven

MOTÖRHEAD ANOTHER PERFECT DAY - 40TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION (BMG)

The one with Robbo...

8/10
Well this certainly put the cat among the pigeons. When Fast Eddie Clarke walked out of Motörhead in April 1982, and Brian Robertson walked in, it broke the spell. Nothing would ever be the same again. But did it have to be? Why fear change? When 'Another Perfect Day' surfaced a year later, some mourned and turned their backs on it. Others wondered and thought, You know, this isn't that bad. Everybody kind of expected it to be not as good. That's what happens when you mess with a formula isn't it? But rather than hating it, perhaps people were more shocked at how refreshing it sounded; from the crispness of Lemmy's bass intro on 'Back At The Funny Farm', as ferocious as anything they'd done, through the chiming intro to 'Dancing On Your Grave' and the Dire Straits blues on the title track, to Robbo's Psychedelic Furs guitar figure on the closing 'Die You Bastard'. The story goes that their label boss saw the line-up reshuffle as a chance to make Motörhead more commercial, making them more palatable to a whole new audience in the all-important US market, as ZZ Top's 'Eliminator' did a couple of years earlier. But



commercial or not, it didn't make them any less heavier. Just better. The downside, as underlined by the additional live set with this edition, was Robertson's refusal to play the older material, effectively sealing his fate and denying the band a chance to explore this incredible new direction.
Gerry Ranson



THE RUBETTES THE SINGLES 1974-1977

(Cherry Red)
Glam gets a mid-70s makeover

5/10
The Rubettes were way too late for the first wave of glam that propelled the careers of artists like Bowie, T-Rex, and the Sweet to stratospheric levels. However, they were still happy to embrace the glam/pop moniker: 'Sugar Baby Love' was an instant hit - it spent four weeks at number one and found success in multiple countries. It's fair to say the glam image was a bit lacking - replaced with white suits and floppy hats - but there's little doubt they plowed a very successful furrow for a while. More top ten successes followed, but their career soon began to wane with the onset of punk and new wave. This album is just about everything you could have ever asked for and more: hits, misses, spin-offs, and more. However, it's probably only for serious die-hards and those who want to deep dive every possible glam-related rabbit hole.
Neil Anderson



SUPERCHUNK MISFITS & MISTAKES: SINGLES, B-SIDES & STRAYS

(Merge)
Odd'n'sods from indie champs

9/10
It goes to show just how prolific Superchunk have been over their 30-year career, given 'Misfits & Mistakes' is the group's fourth such collection of songs. It's perhaps worth acknowledging that the group's current run of albums, which started with 2010's incredible 'Majesty Shredding' and includes last year's 'Wild Loneliness' mean this collection is drawing from a particularly inspired well. The singles are uniformly fantastic, but it's this year's off-cut single 'Everything Hurts' that's the real standout, but you'd be hard pressed to spot which are the more esoteric b-sides as the general standard remains high throughout. Of particular note, however, is the extended forays into The Misfits back catalogue for an array of entertaining covers, including 'Where Eagles Dare' and 'Horror Business'.
Rob Mair