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Monks – Demo Tapes 1965 (Play Loud! / Munster)
Various - Silver Monk Time (Play Loud!)

The Monks had such an impact from their one album proper that this reissue of their demos is a welcome addition to their sparse catalogue. Unpolished versions of songs on Black Monk Time manage to be both grittier and less raw than on the finished album, the trademark proto-motorik überbeat and pre-punk angst sparking into urgent life.

There's even a hint of the future electronic garage of Silver Apples in "Blast Off!"; so it's appropriate that the tribute album has them plus Alan Vega making merry with the Monks sound, along with a bunch of the expected - The Fall, 5,6,7,8s, Jon Spencer with Solex - and more eclectic cover artists like Psychic TV and Faust. There's ambient (Nista Nije Nista), electronic (Cycle, Gudrun Gut) and surprisingly rocking (Mouse On Mars) versions, and contributions from various Monks themselves - including a belting techno punk collaboration between Gary Burger and Alec Empire, updating Vietnam War anger for Iraq and Afghanistan. It really is Monk time again.

Richard Fontenoy
(Plan B)