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The Monks *Demo Tapes 1965* PLAYLOUD!!
MUNSTER CD As a supplement to the recently released Monks tribute compilation *Silver Monk Time* (The Compiler, *The Wire* 279), this collection of early demos underlines the raw primitivism and minimalist experimentation that the group created during the recording sessions for their 1965 debut album *Black Monk Time*. To the basic guitar/bass/drums line-up, The Monks add banjo (as a percussion instrument), filling in any gaping sound holes with sporadic bursts of electric organ. This is used to great effect on the demos as a device to open each song, where an ecclesiastical church organ drone flourish provides the cue for the group to launch into one of their three minute garage rock assaults. Punctuated with a manic warbling vocal and occasionally ripped wide open with a feverish fractured guitar solo, songs like "Boys Are Boys" and "I Hate You" are stripped right down to produce a sound that falls somewhere between The Sonics and La Monte Young. Elsewhere, "Space Age" (a song that never made it on to their record) is the kind of futuristic statement that (had they heard it) would have made Joe Meek and Sun Ra beam with pleasure. As an introduction to The Monks' psychotic big beat, these demos are essential.
EDWIN PONCEY