

reviews then

Reissues, anthologies and compilations

Invasion Of The Body Snatchers

ANDY MORTEN wishes it could be 1965 again

THE KINKS

In *Koncert 1965*

★★★

THE ANIMALS

We Gotta Get Out Of This Place

★★★

Both Rhythm & Blues LPs

THE WHO

Ready Steady Who Two EP

★★★

THEM

Them EP

★★★★

BOTH RHYTHM & BLUES

It's 1965 and the British Invasion of the American charts is reaching something of an apex. The artists that represent the true beating heart of Britain's brief musical hold on the States - Beatles and Stones notwithstanding - aren't grinning goons like Freddie & The Dreamers or malleable pop puppets like Herman's Hermits. No. The real action - the stuff those provincial kids wanna hear, wanna see, wanna BE - lies in the scuzzy, amped-up R&B being peddled by Them, The Animals, The Kinks, The Who and The Yardbirds: long-haired, acne-scarred, scowling uglies with Jimmy Reed and Bo Diddley fixations. Between them, these five bands are responsible for igniting America's homegrown response, garage-rock. The rest is history.

While The Kinks were, surprisingly, the most commercially successful in the US at this point (three Top 10 hits), The Yardbirds were arguably the most influential of the bunch; their patented "rave-ups" becoming a garage signature. Yet their perceived middle-class origins placed them to one side of the other acts celebrated by these 2016 Record Store Day releases,

whose provenances were distinctly working class and consequently more authentic and contextually thrilling. More relevantly here, there's no Yardbirds product this year.

The Kinks and The Who would go on to enjoy a lifetime of success, navigating and redefining the musical landscapes of the '60s, '70s and '80s in their own idiosyncratic ways. Back in '65, the two quartets shared not only their hometown of London, but also fledgling world-class songwriters and internal power plays that threatened to undermine them at any minute. That both groups came close to splitting up barely two years into their existences speaks volumes.

In Koncert 1965 finds the Muswell Hillbillies rampaging through a selection of singles and key early album tracks captured live for French and German TV in April and November. 'You Really Got Me' appears in both sets, the six months between performances demonstrating how aggressive their treatment of the song had become in such a short time. The likes of 'Long Tall Shorty' and 'I'm A Lover Not A Fighter' would soon be gone forever, supplanted by 'A Well Respected Man' and 'Til The End Of Day', both present here; the former shaky and incongruous, the second raucous and assured. Sonically, there's little between this and *Live At Kelvin Hall*, recorded just 18 months later and similarly populated with *passé* covers and hits.

The optimistically-titled *Ready Steady Who Two* is also sourced from TV performances (*Shindig* and *Ready Steady Go*) and sounds as though it was lifted straight off YouTube. Consequently, it suffers from the sonic limitations of the era's live TV recordings, but that doesn't detract from the ramshackle excitement of 'Daddy Rolling Stone', 'Shout And Shimmy', The Everlys' 'Man With Money' and an abridged 'My Generation' (with all

the key changes but without the last verse and climactic freak-out).

Meanwhile, in another galaxy seemingly light years away from Ray Davies and Pete Townshend's conceptual aspirations, five Geordie lads took the art of peddling authentic blues to screaming teens to a whole new level. *We Gotta Get Out Of This Place's* 14 tracks derive from UK and US TV and radio and straddle The Animals' Alan Price and Dave Rowberry line-ups equally; the former banging out hits and covers of 'Club A Go-Go' and 'CC Rider', the latter more reigned-in on Ray Charles' 'Drown In My Own Tears' and two stabs at the title track, their biggest hit of the year.

Them and The Animals shared more than non-conformist, purist lead singers from the wrong side of the tracks - they both became regular visitors to the higher echelons of the charts with commercially-orientated US pop songs while spending their evenings belting 'Bright Lights, Big City' at sweaty club audiences. 'Here Comes The Night', written and produced by former Atlantic staffer (and future Van Morrison foil) Bert Berns was released in March, reaching #2 here and #24 in the States. The live version on the three-track *Them EP* probably comes from the NME Pop Winners Concert but without any annotation to back this up, we're left to simply enjoy its raw majesty, sandwiched between a suitably frantic 'Baby Please Don't Go' and an extended 'Turn On Your Love Light'.

Points must be deducted across all four of these releases for their inevitable audio shortcomings (the Them EP is by far the most listenable) but instantly re-gained for adding valuable insight into four of Britain's best-loved and most vital '60s forefathers. Their differences and similarities have rarely been so vividly exposed.

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