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Home > Reviews > Album

Jay Reatard: Singles 06-07

8 votes ?

by [Mike Diver](#)

Type: Album
Release date: 28/07/2008
Label: In The Red



"All zombies are useless / all zombies are wasted... all zombies are useless to me."

It doesn't take long for the most casual of listeners to suss that **Jay Reatard** doesn't exactly take his music – lo-fi garage rock dripping in catchy hooks and instant melodies – completely seriously. The above quote comes from a track called 'All Wasted'; it's one of 17 here, and each is enjoyably feverous of pace and jolly of swagger. They're not all about zombies, mind.

And now would be the perfect time to draw a parallel between Jay's frenzied, scratchy pop and the further-out sounds of *The Zombies*, given how the formulas evident on *Singles 06-07* – yes, a collection of singles from the years 2006 and 2007, assembled here prior to Memphis-based Jay's first LP for **new label Matador**, whenever that drops – have been present in popular music for some 40 years. But, annoyingly, no such luck: while there's a '60s vibe to a number of songs here, their stripped-back structures make the most obvious comparisons more modern ones, namely Black Lips and, surprisingly perhaps, Supergrass. Sure there's some of The Sonics in there too, obviously. If you're in a garage rock band, you owe The Sonics props.

But *Supergrass*? Sure, just listen to 'I Know A Place' (a ringer for '*Strange Ones*'), 'Feeling Blank Again' and 'In The Dark' and don't detect echoes of the Oxford trio in their early years. And the Black Lips nod: 'All Over Again' opens in such a relaxed scruffy-punk fashion you're sure Cole Alexander's about to crack a vocal atop its slowed-down surf guitars. Beyond the rambunctious rockers there are a few surreal surprises: 'Searching For You' is an effects-drenched acoustic tale of time killing a loved one slowly, and 'Let It All Go' almost serves as a nod to Devo – it features aspects of the seminal art-popsters' signature dancefloor fever, albeit with Jay's irrepressible character seeping clearly through the foggy mix.

As with any collection of this nature there are a few disposable thrash-arounds – '*It's So Easy*' is a late-album example – but they sit neatly enough beside more esoteric offerings. Jay Reatard is a musician who seems to make the very best of whatever he has access to; as such his obvious ambition is stifled rather by some of the production here, but even at its most red-raw the studio capturing of these songs can't mask their accessibility and cheeriness.

Singles 06-07 is a listen to enjoy for its no-bullshit attitude, chirpy sing-along choruses and fuzzed-out jagged motifs, and its maker's amazing productivity: if this represents basically a year of releases, then Matador are going to have to purchase a whole new pressing plant to keep up with Reatard's alarming appetite for creativity. He's **always wanting more**.

Jay Reatard

7 / 10

Words: Mike Diver

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Jay Reatard

is phenomenally talented; I just get the feeling that although some of these songs work and some don't, that there is a brilliant artist developing.

[kickaeed](#) | 31 Jul '08, 17:05 | Send note | Report this | Reply

I'm not all that convinced

I'd be more inclined to round*up* to 6/10.

[oceanRain](#) | 31 Jul '08, 17:08 | Send note | Report this | Reply

i bought this and always wanting more

and i wasn't sure whether i'd like them but they're both really good. Night Of Broken Glass is a bit of a masterpiece

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