

VIC GODARD & THE SUBWAY SECT

TWENTY ODD YEARS – THE STORY OF...

(Motion)

PUNK gunslinger, mod soul boy, the hip kids' Sinatra and, just maybe, Greatest Living Englishman, Vic Godard is proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy.

This double-CD compilation shows the full extent of Godard's gift. The Subway Sect's 1978 debut single, "Ambition", is nervy rock'n'roll spray-painted with sophisticated soul. They then played on their backs at a Yves St Laurent party in Paris and no-one could touch them.

As is so often the way, the masses didn't want this entertainment. During his career, Godard shunned monotony and bandwagon-jumping in favour of innovation. He merged Northern Soul with firebrand guitars, post-war swing with big band; he did it first and this is your chance to hear it done best.

In terms of blazing creativity and purity of intent, Godard's only contemporary rival was Kevin Rowland. Godard's latter-day material, however, burns brightly and confirms his status as one of the greats.

BEN CLANCY

★★★★★

'Twenty Odd Years – The Story Of...' is out now

M.M.

Vic Godard: Since his days fronting cerebral punks Subway Sect, Godard has turned his hand to everything from jazz and swing to Northern Soul, winning a huge cult following — including Edwyn Collins, who joins the backing band here. Godard is about to release a retrospective, *Twenty Odd Years*, so expect the show to be a heady trip through the finest moments of the back catalogue. **Dingwalls, NW1, doors 7.30pm, £7, 0171 267 1577.**

THE EXPRESS. FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1999

Vic Godard

There are a thousand contenders for the crown of Pop's Lost Genius - Peter Perrett is an obvious such character - but next to Godard they're nothing more than pretenders. The man's got more tunes in his cupboard than, I don't know, Backstreet Boys, more ideas than a man with a lot of ideas. Godard first came to notice in 1977 with intellectual art punk terrorists Subway Sect, a band who were simply too pure to last. Fantastic songs. Songs that burnt into the soul. On their last great song, *Ambition*, Godard sang "And I won't be tempted by vile evils, because vile evils are vile evils". And he wasn't. He mutated into a Francophile musical raconeur, then into a lounge lizard then a Radio 2 style crooner... Whenever Godard adopted a style it became a genre and when it became a genre... and he did something else. The good news is that there's a new compilation *Twenty Odd Years* (Motion) charting his career and a rare gig. Buy the record. Go to the gig. Listen. You want more incentive? Edwyn Collins (another contender for the crown) is supporting. **Dingwalls, Camden Town, London NW1, 0171-267 1577, October 5.**

meric sense of gruff bastard noise-rock.

★ **Vic Godard** Dingwalls, 8.30pm; £5. Launch party for a great new compilation album - *Twenty Odd Years* (Motion) - tracing Godard's mighty, stumbling and twisted path from 1977 punk splendour through to the present day. And a rather splendid 44 track, two CD affair it is too - all for just £11.99! Get it, and go to this. All hail the old Vic!

T.O.



££ Vic Godard & The Subway Sect

20 Odd Years MOTION

Vic Godard finally gets the compilation he deserves; a 2-CD, 45-track trawl through some of the most wilfully eclectic and melodic back pages of the post-punk era. Tantalising glimpses of the shelved 1978 Sect LP (*Exit/No Return*, a lost New Wave milestone) reveal how much of a loss that great band's demise was. There's most of 1980's *What's The Matter Boy?* debut, remastered and now, at true speed, sounding better than ever; highlights of Vic's swinging and crooning years (*Stop That Girl*, *Hey Now I'm In Love*) and Edwyn Collins-sponsored '93 comeback (*Won't Turn Back* and its Dennis Bovell dub version). There are also 10 bonus cuts including the heart-rending *Place I Used To Live* with the late Matthew Ashman, and a shambolic, searing *Sister Ray* from the White Riot tour. Best of all there's the remixed *Johnny Thunders 45*; a joyful, raucous epitaph that must have had Vic's hero slamming in his sarcophagus. SR

MOJO

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AMBITION

From the Motion double-CD, *Twenty Odd Years - The Story Of...*

Vic Godard and Rob Simmons were R&B musicians from Mortlake, south west London, when they saw The Sex Pistols at The Marquee in early 1976. "We loved their image, but weren't mad on the actual music," recalls Godard.

Under the guidance of the Pistols' manager and later The Clash's supremo, Bernard Rhodes, The Subway Sect became a regular supporting feature on the early, seminal punk bills. But even in the era of the outsider, the Sect's angular monotone sound and uniform grey stage clothes were at odds with the caustic speed and outlandish garb of their peers.

The Sect's purist stance reached its peak on their second single. Released in October, 1978, "Ambition" was Godard's withering assessment of the lust for stardom that he perceived was present all around him in the so-called era of DIY culture.

It was The Sex Pistols' nihilism taken to the next level.

"I thought The Sex Pistols were the end of rock'n'roll," says Godard. "But they weren't. Someone else had to finish the job."

Twenty Odd Years - The Story Of... is reviewed on page 108

UNCUT

VIC GODARD & THE SUBWAY SECT TWENTY ODD YEARS – THE STORY OF

Motion Records ★ ★ ★ ★ Career-spanning set from punk iconoclast MANAGED by Clash *svengali* Bernie Rhodes. Godard's original Subway Sect are the forgotten men of Seventies Britpunk. Combining a ferocious oppositional stance with twitchy neurotic power and attritional monotone dinges, Godard's songs captured the spirit of the times as well as their more celebrated peers.

Though the singles, "Ambition" and "Nobody's Scared", were instantly revered, their first album was never released (Rhodes sacked the band). Released here for the first time, it confirms Godard's seminal power.

The second CD, drawing on his erratic Eighties swing-influenced work is less convincing, but the early sides easily live up to his reputation among punk cognoscenti.

Gavin Martin



UNCUT