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REVIEW

Music Review: The Mooney Suzuki - *CBGB OMFUG Masters: Live June 29, 2001, The Bowery Collection*

Written by [Donald Gibson](#)

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The Mooney Suzuki scored a radio hit (and, curiously, an endorsement deal with Suzuki automobiles) in 2004 with "Alive & Amplified," a song that – in its title and irreverent disposition – pretty much describes their sound. This New York City garage-rock band had already carved out its niche a few years before, though, as evidenced on *CBGB OMFUG Masters: Live June 29, 2001, The Bowery Collection*.

Given the hallowed (albeit grimy and dilapidated) ground of the now-defunct Lower East Side haunt, it's refreshing (and appropriate) to hear this concert in the context of its setting rather than some overdubbed or polished version thereof. What's documented here captures the unadulterated spirit of a club gig, rife with late-night chatter, indiscriminate racket, and rambunctious rock and roll.

Led by singer/guitarist Sammy Jones, Jr., the band bashes out swift blasts of raw guitars, bass, and drums. Thick riffs with a backbeat abound, as songs like "Everything's Gone Wrong," "Half of My Heart," and "Make My Way" rumble forth like locomotives running off the rails.

Almost half of the songs come from *Electric Sweat*, their second (and hitherto unreleased) full-length studio album. Of those, "A Little Bit of Love" and "Oh Sweet Susanna" translate particularly well, the climbing guitars of the former and the melodic lift of the latter distinguishing them among the straight-ahead rock that characterizes much of the other material.

One can hear Sammy Jones, Jr. working the room, energizing and engaging the audience as his bandmates take a much-needed breather between songs. "It wasn't too long ago...we couldn't even *get* a show at CBGB's," he says before "I Woke Up This Mornin'" brings the concert to a rousing and cacophonous end. On this edition of *CBGB OMFUG Masters*, the Mooney Suzuki not only make the most out of playing the landmark music club; on this night, they rock the joint, sounding unabashedly alive and, yes, amplified.



A graduate of the University of South Florida with a B.A. in English, Donald Gibson writes about music as well as on film, books, and various pop culture topics.

He is a regular contributor to [Blogcritics Magazine](#) and he publishes his own [website](#).

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