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Flipper "Love/Fight" (Flipper 2009)

Few bands have been able to incite anger and hatred from audiences at their shows as San Francisco punk band Flipper did. Flipper practically made it into an art form. By the same token, few made noisy punk rock that stuck with you better than tracks like "Sex Bomb," "Sacrifice," or "Ha Ha Ha." Somewhat amazingly it's been sixteen years since Flipper released "American Grafishy" through Rick Rubin's American and now they're back. With Jack Endino at the controls and Krist Novoselic playing bass, Flipper has a new studio album, "Love," as well as a live record, "Fight."

"Hi, we're a band. Are you an audience?" Bruce Loose snarls, coming out swinging at the opening of "Fight." "About three of you answered yes, the rest of you are bystanders." "Fight" merges performances from two shows from 2007 in Seattle and Portland. With about half of the album's nine tracks made up of new tunes from "Love," the band do dust off the dense "Shine" from their debut, "Album – Generic Flipper," before blowing, albeit with practice and expertise, through "Ha Ha Ha" and a rough sounding "Sacrifice."

"Love," meanwhile, sounds crisp and the band tight as the mix pops instead of getting muddy with all the low tones. "For it is hard to do something/That is real/And different/And new in this world today," Loose poignantly observes on the relatively bouncy "Learn To Live." Messages of being real and original pop up more than once throughout the album. The slow driving "Why Can't You See" digs in deep for six-plus minutes while the noisy jam on "Only One Answer" reminds why Flipper are still relevant.

Whatever happened within the band between "American Grafishy" and now, it's, apparently, all water under the bridge because on "Love" and "Fight," Flipper put up a united front. Where "Love" is missing the grit and the attitude, "Fight" delivers with the live aggression; when "Fight" isn't the cleanest live recording, studio album "Love" picks up the slack. Call it yin and yang (or aptly timed marketing if you're more cynical) but the two records clearly complement one another. Flipper hasn't lost much of their edge through the years and still knows how to pack a punch when it comes to making music.

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