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FLIPPER – Fight / Love (www.MVDAudio.com)

Fight and Love see the return of the seminal early 80's hardcore pioneers Flipper with the special addition of Krist Novoselic (you know, from Nirvana). Fight is a live recording that gives a great overview of Flipper's brilliant yet tragically underappreciated career. Opening with the sardonic line, "we're a band, are you an audience?", Bruce Loose and the guys tear into "Way of the World" and "Shine", two old gems from Flipper's early days. Fight is an ideal primer for all types of Flipper fans, both the old and the very new, for there are a number of cuts from their latest release, Love, including the biting "Be Good, Child!" Other dusted off nuggets include "Ha, Ha Ha", "Sacrifice" and the closing noise-fest "The Lights, The Sound". The heavy low end of Novoselic and drummer Steve Depace carry this sonic extravaganza, while guitarist Ted Falconi shines on all songs, particularly "Triple Mass" and "Night Falls".

Having missed Flipper in their earliest inception, and really only being introduced to them through Kurt Cobain's choice of t-shirts, it is a pleasure to hear this band back with such ferocity. The thick sludge of "Why Can't You See" from Love is a punishing, meandering effort that accentuates Loose's gruff, pained vocal delivery and Novoselic's melodic and recognizable bass work. Recorded and produced by legendary Jack Endino, Fight is a flawless live effort from a band that is not a nostalgia act, but still very much a viable musical force.

Love, a new recording, proves this to be true with a collection of ten thunderous tracks. The closing "Old Graves" is bruising as it crawls along, dragging the listener through broken glass as it travels. This is a deafening compilation of force from a band that proves that one can age gracefully and angrily, for Love is a groove-heavy, hook-rich record.

"Transparent Blame" rolls and rumbles with unstoppable force, while "Live Real" could teach modern punks how real racket should sound. The years have been good to Flipper as they sound energized, youthful, and angry on Love, and despite its comforting title, there is nothing that connotes images of relief or warmth here. Novoselic is a welcomed addition and his bass is featured prominently and with good reason, his bass lines are the backbone for such highlights as "Love Fight" and "Night Falls". Sadly, however, he will not be on tour when flipper takes their madness on the road. Love reestablishes Flipper as a band of critical importance.

Hopefully, they will stick around bask in the glory they so richly deserve. - Rich Quinlan