

**Saturday, 20 June 2009**

**[Flipper – 19 June 2009 - Bacco Room - Auckland](#)**



**Flipper yukking it up at the Bacco Room - photo by Stu Schmidt**

**Right up until Flipper's first distorted notes I was asking myself what the hell I was doing in yet another cold basement club as the drinkers got drunker and the glass smashed inside and out.**

Don't get me wrong. The pre-gig company was good so it wasn't that. I hadn't seen Andrew in a few years, and Duncan, who I hadn't met before was amusing and informed and a nice guy. Brother Stu was there as well. No. It had to do with age and relevance. My age (46) and post-punk music's relevance to it.


I hadn't thought about Flipper for years. I'd been a huge fan of their early to mid 1980s albums *Generic* and *Public Flipper Limited* as well as the timeless single Sex Bomb and key compilation track Ha Ha Ha. We'd named our fanzine and first band after the latter. Ha Ha Ha the group played Ha Ha Ha the song. We loved its sarcasm and simplicity. The musical and verbal repetition. We'd even spent an illicit evening in Hamilton spraying Flipper and Ha Ha Ha on the skating bowl. So they were real important once. I'd also owned post-reunion recordings and found them surprisingly good.

The other (related) question is how could I have drawn so much motivation from a group I'd never seen and read remarkably little about. And why Flipper? Was it just because their songs were often simple and their music suitably shambolic in line with my own limitations. That could easily have described a lot of other groups from the era. Was encountering Flipper just an accident of fate?

I'm thinking on it still as I find a position square in front of the stage. Something I rarely do. The group – three surviving members' Ted Falconi (guitar), Steve dePace (drums) and Bruce Loose (vocals) with new bassist Teresa – look much as I'd expect although Bruce's cream slacks and white collar shirt confuse and amuse.

After a few precious seconds of song all questions cease. They've got me already as they play Way Of The World, one of my favourites. Their sound is bass and drum heavy with Ted's guitar throwing distorted noise around. Bruce Loose is furious, sarcastic and confrontational and will be all night. He knows where the line is though. It's at the front of the stage. Stay off. He tells one fan. Loose holds the crowd all evening as he calls for ever more liquor (and water and towels) for the onstage crew as Flipper grind out their substantial set. I recognise them all just about – Ha Ha Ha, Sex Bomb and Life included - although I'm out on the edges of the crowd by then as the mosh pit heaves and screams.

This is my first show for a while. I have always been a selective gig attender. Live shows are a moment in a much longer chain of records and media for me. A special moment. They are a calling to the temple. A time to reflect on how that chain has wound through and connected with my life. And because I am sober tonight the emotions invoked are real and coursing through me. First anger - punch someone in the head anger - which when it ebbs leaves a clearheaded peace which I take as validation for having seen something real and motivating when only a handful in New Zealand had heard of Flipper, and then acting upon it. There are few better feelings than that.

Posted by Andrew Schmidt at [11:54 PM](#) 

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