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Flipper - 'Fight' and 'Love' (MVD Audio)

CD Reviews

Written by Johnny H

Wednesday, 22 August 2012 04:30

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FLIPPER



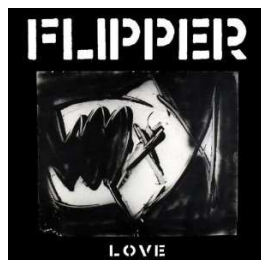
FIGHT

It's amazing what polar opposite reactions certain band names can illicit from certain individuals here at Uber Rock. Take Reckless Love for example the mere mention of these guys will either have some of us immediately hiding for fear of our musical sanity or otherwise bouncing around like some glam rock Tiggers loving every minute of their banal garbage (I guess you can tell which side of the fence I sit on with regards to that debate).

This brings me rather neatly to this pair of reissues from San Francisco sludge rock mavericks Flipper, and a long story involving a certain uber scribe who went to see them in Newport's Legendary TJ's back around the time of them recording their 'American Grafishy' album for Def American Recordings. Said scribe attended that show on my advice given that they thought they sounded a lot like Nirvana and were on Def America, and lets face it at the time in question that label had no bad bands on its roster. To this day that gig has mentally scarred said scribe, so much so that when 'Fight' and 'Love' was playfully dropped onto his desk as a childish prank by yours truly recently his immediate reaction was one of abject horror. Such was the lasting impression that Flipper left on our man that fateful night back circa 1993.

So I guess it's rather fitting that I should pick up this review not only by way of restoring some sort of personal karma between me and this mysterious unnamed scribe but also because both these releases feature the four string talents of one Krist Novoselic so now in hindsight I also seem myself as some sort of grunge Nostradamus. 'Fight' also just happens to a live recording made back in 2007 in two venues in Portland and Seattle, "So what exactly was it about Flipper that was so frightening that night in 1993 I wonder?" this thought did immediately flash through my mind as I drop the CD into my player, well I'm just about to find out.

Could it be the confrontational nature of singer Bruce Loose, or the sludgy bass driven mess of noise that makes up tracks like 'Shine', ("A fucking old classic off the first album" according to Loose and quickly reaffirming point 1), 'Why Can't You See' and 'Sacrifice', or perhaps it's the almost improvisational nature of the band's approach to live performance? Or could it have been all three of these and then some? Well I'll hazard a guess it was the latter as this really is grunge to the power of ten, sludge rock in it's purest form if you will, and I can totally understand why bands like The Melvins cite these guys as an influence. Plus with Jack Endino putting his name to this release you pretty much know this is not going to be an easy listen, even before Loose gets to open his gob and introduce opener 'Way Of The World'. 'Fight'. This most definitely is not for the casual listener, but for those who are willing to stick with it most certainly paints a clear picture of what it must be like to spend the night in the company of this infamous live band.



LOVE

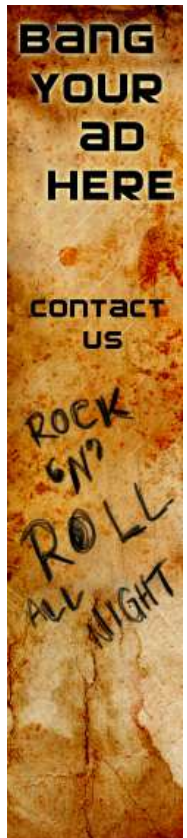
Immediately more accessible and as good a starting point as any for someone interested in finding out what Flipper sounded like in the recording studio is 2009's 'Love', the band's first studio album in 16 years. Recorded at Novoselic's Murky Slough Studios this 10 tracker brings singer Loose, guitarist Ted Falconi and drummer Steve DePace together into a much more focussed unit with an almost commercial direction especially on the likes of the excellent 'Learn To Live'.

Endino is once again at the helm for this release and his uncanny knack for turning white noise into melody is used to full advantage on tracks like 'Love Fight' (The grunge Batman theme?) and 'Night Falls', which here is trimmed down to a searing 3 minutes in length rather than simply replicating the 6 minute racket that is included on 'Fight'.

Where 'Fight' took me a few listens to get my head around the tunes (you do have to dig deep with this bastard), 'Love' actually found itself on repeat because I wanted to listen to the set of songs again, and in places it magics up a sound almost akin to what The Stooges must have sounded like jamming on Mandrax, even if the last track, the epic 8 minute drone of 'Old Graves' was every now and then more than prone to a skip.

With Flipper have recently once again graced our shores playing a series of intimate live dates and me managing to miss them playing locally yet again, it seems I'm destined to never see this legendary band live and in the flesh. Until I do I'll keep these reissues filed away as a reminder of how difficult and god damned special a band they can be in equal measures.

A phrase to sum this review up? "Investigate with care, or prepare to be scarred for life!"



Strike Twice - 'Self Titled'
(Eonian Records)

<http://www.flipperrules.com/>

Buzzov*en - 'Violence From The Vault' (Relapse)

[To visit the Flipper store on Amazon.co.uk - CLICK HERE](#)

Zico Chain/To The Bones/Thick Black Theory - Bristol, Thekla – 26th January 2010

All Time Low - 'MTV Unplugged' (Hopeless Records)

Japanese Voyeurs - 'That Love Sound / Blush' (Slimeball Records)

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