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The Garbage and the Flowers

*by*[STEPHEN CLOVER](https://wellingtonista.com/author/stephenclover/)*on NOVEMBER 1, 2007 in*[EVENTS](https://wellingtonista.com/category/events/), [MUSIC](https://wellingtonista.com/category/music/)

The Garbage and the Flowers (formerly of Wellington and now based in Sydney; [Myspace](https://www.myspace.com/thegarbageandtheflowers)) are touring NZ.

They’re playing tomorrow night (Friday Nov 2nd) at Happy with [Birchville Cat Motel](https://www.myspace.com/birchvillecatmotel" \t "_blank) and Panel of Judges.

Coming out of Sonic Youth-drenched Wellington, NZ in the early nineties, The Garbage & the Flowers were always going to be an anomaly. Denounced as the fifty-thousandth band to sound like the The Velvet Underground, and even as a Christian band in the local street press, the five-piece nevertheless built up a solid gang of devotees, who claimed their sound to be “unique, fractured, and psychedelic” and ideal to take acid with and get stoned to. Championed by songwriter Alastair Galbraith, they released a critically acclaimed first single, ***Catnip/Carousel***, and double album, ***Eyes Rind As If Beggars***, both on US labels. The latter, with its “sun-burning” and lyrical improvisations found them a secure place in the noise-pop canon.

Former drummer Torben Tilly, now of Berlin based electronic duo Minit, described their sound thus:

In The Garbage & The Flowers (TGATF) there’s this crystalline structure of a song with its architecture of chords and idiomatic vocal melody. It’s something quite arcane and folkloric, owing a lot to Helen and Yuri Frusin’s song-writing and Helen Johnstones’ sapphirine voice. Being a part of this 5-pronged entity has been something I have really enjoyed and has definitely been influential on my approaches to making music. If all the musical parts work together in an almost mechanical kind of way to create a song it can be really satisfying. Sometimes however, through our own hazardous doing as a band, these songs would become unhinged and collapse into fractured shards of noise and disunion, leaning heavily like wine. This was especially the case when playing live, even if it was intentional or accidental. Part of its beauty was that almost at the same instant that it was falling apart it was beginning to fall back together again, creating a counterpoint of melancholy and joy. I quite like it when it is so chaotic and entangled. Somehow it feeds the imagination and the music takes on a life of its own, revealing secret patterns and ghosts in the recordings.

Based in Sydney since 1997, The Garbage and the Flowers, now a three-piece, are returning to their homeland with revered Melbourne band, Panel of Judges for a five date tour. They will be playing songs from recent albums ***Coronation*** and ***Stoned Rehearsal***, and to celebrate their forthcoming NZ tour, a limited edition split Panel/Garbage & the Flowers 7″ will be pressed.

Tagged as: [the garbage and the flowers](https://wellingtonista.com/tag/the-garbage-and-the-flowers/)

Stephen Clover

* [Posts by Stephen](https://wellingtonista.com/author/stephenclover/)

Stephen Clover swears too much, drinks too much, and is frequently being sent not-safe-for-work weblinks by his amusing friends. He lives for music and art. He also worships at the same church as Tom Beard.