

## mapsadaisical

found sounds for lost minds

# Maximum Black Festival, Kentish Town Forum

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Tags: [alexander tucker](#), [dirty projectors](#), [final fantasy](#), [frog eyes](#), [six organs of admittance](#), [stephen o'malley](#)



Let's get this straight right from the start: five bands doth not a festival maketh. It just makes a logistical nightmare with vast potential for overrunning. Still, those funding the event probably wouldn't have known that - for they are in fact the Vienna Public Utility Company. This is not their field, really. For the confused, a bizarre tale: a couple of years ago they were denied permission to use one of Final Fantasy's tracks in an advert. So they commissioned some music which sounded *just a little* too like FF's for them to get away with it. Instead of a lengthy court case and damages and so on, a most novel solution was agreed upon: they would fund some events which Owen Pallett of Final fantasy could curate. Genius. Imagine all disputes were solved that way. We could have had a Diana inquest "festival" curated by that rotund Egyptian (well, he ain't gonna get the British passport now) explosion of accusations Al-Fayed. We could have Microsoft letting the EU commission do similar, with the role of curator rotating between member states every five seconds, just long enough for someone to shout out "Manu Chao!" or "Johnny Logan!".



The aforementioned tighter-than-me-at-the-bar schedule meant that I arrived during the first band, who had been requested to play in the almost mid-afternoon 7.20 slot. Even if I hadn't missed half of it, I still think I would have struggled to come up with anything useful to say about Frog Eyes. It was, I suppose, indie rock. From a distance the lead singer looked like my

friend Dan. That, really, is about it.



Even Six Organs of Admittance would have had time to play their set and get back to their hotel in time for *Lily Allen and Friends*. Their half-hour set included a couple of songs from the excellent [Shelter From The Ash](#) album. The title track and "Strangled Road" were both stretched out to near breaking point, exploiting the great chemistry between Ben Chasny's long winding guitar ragas, and his partner-in-crime Elisa Ambrogio with her license to kick noisy hell out of the songs. Unfortunately it felt like a little like wrong time, wrong venue, wrong crowd for Six Organs tonight, a constant battle against hubbub.



Dirty Projectors were a little too easily pegged as New York No Wave. They had their scratchy Talking Heads guitar rhythms, and a singer who didn't just sound like, but actually looked a bit like Arthur Russell to my ever-unreliable eyes. That was taking hero-worship a little too far I thought, something I mulled over on my journey to the bar.



Just minutes after Stephen O'Malley and Alexander Tucker had positioned themselves on stage (I could just about make out their arrival amongst the inordinate amount of smoke), with Tucker sawing at his cello, and O'Malley dropping the first of his long, weighty notes, a confused young girl asked someone next to me at the front: is this Final Fantasy? Erm, not exactly. With two films at either side of the stage showing whirling, morphing grit and filings, this transatlantic twosome produced a noise of similar description. Over a backdrop of drones, O'Malley rified glacially, while Tucker played cello, and violin, adding some chanting into the mix. They filled the massive space, and O'Malley raised the internal pressure at the end with some voluminous doom. I would happily have listened to this for the duration of the evening, but by the looks on the faces of some of those around me, that probably wasn't a unanimous verdict.



Owen Pallett took time to thank his new friends at the Vienna Public Utility Company for allowing him to play with people he likes, as opposed to "the years he has spent playing with those he doesn't". Cheeky. The first time I saw him play was at Adem's [Homefires](#) Festival (two days, about twenty bands...probably qualifies) a couple of years ago, when he dashed in, rather late and flustered, unpacked his violin, a pedal, plugged in and played a set which was all the more special in the circumstances. He takes a bit longer to set up these days, with a keyboard and a laptop too, but not to any noticeably greater effect (and still with essentially the same set of songs from the *He Poos Clouds* album). The pleasure is in his ability to build up these little symphonies from loops of intricate violin playing, displaying remarkable talent, and a remarkable haircut too (looked like some sort of new romantic thing, most odd). The ovation at the end indicated that the opinion on him was much less equivocal. Although it was his day, I would have to say that it was O'Malley and Tucker who put the black into Maximum Black.

