

# Extreme Sport

## BRISTOL PAIR PUSHING ALL THE RIGHT FUCK BUTTONS

**SAMUEL STRANG**

**Euphoria** is a feeling that can be explored within dance music or power electronics, or anything else for that matter," says Fuck Buttons' Benjamin John Power when asked how he and fellow noisnik Andrew Hung manage to integrate such rapture into their deranged electronic sprawl. Their beats are bleak and they shriek nihilistically through Fisher-Price microphones, but this is music that delivers elation and, although they're indebted to both Wolf Eyes' industrial decay and Black Dice's fractured dance patterns, they're fast marking themselves out as a unique proposition.

The duo grew up in Worcester, but it was as art students in Bristol that they started writing material together after Hung approached Power about writing a soundtrack for a conceptual film he had produced. "We wanted to make some really horrible noise at first, which we did," says Power. "We satisfied that urge and now we're not as confrontational as we first intended."

Indeed, Fuck Buttons have moved some way on from the antagonistic noise heard on their 2006 limited EP release, *Let's See If Any Ghosts Are In Here, Yeah?* As events developed, edges started to soften. Their new music shares a stark methodical grandeur with Mogwai and fittingly their forthcoming debut album, *Street Horrring*, was produced by John Cummings of the band, alongside Part Chimp's Tim Cedar. "This whole year has been mind-blowing for us," starts Hung. "We were asked to think about studios and producers and Ben thought about [Mogwai's Glasgow-based studio] Castle of Doom. We weren't able to use it in the end, though, so we stayed in London and did the album at Part Chimp's place."

The record was created, they say, "in a bubble of unreality" over the space of a week and mastered by Shellee's

Bob Weston in Chicago. "Bob seemed to hit the nail on the head almost straight away," recalls Power. "It sounds glorious."

Rather than the usual signpost to corduroy-clad twee nonsense, Fuck Buttons' incorporation of children's instruments is perceived by the pair as a defining component to their droney soundscapes. "There's a huge amount of freedom when you're not playing with conventional instruments," says Hung. "It's about sound purely, whereas with a conventional instrument there's an element of competition with the history of how that instrument should be played."

Problem is, children's toys aren't usually made with such scything tendencies and jarring electronics in mind. "We've started buying back-ups actually, especially for the vintage Casio's," continues Power. "The MT-11 that I use on stage is particularly important to what we're doing. I paid a quid for that keyboard originally, but when it came to buying a back-up I forked out £40 on eBay."

One of the most imposing aspects to Fuck Buttons' ferocious performances comes from their insistence on setting up their stall of electronics in the middle of the crowd. "I guess the idea was that if we were subjecting the crowd to some excruciating noise then we should be subjecting ourselves to it as well," explains Power. "That and the practical issues."

And what of their album's name? *Street Horrring* takes its dues from a suitably obscure reference, and one that the act is keen to draw parallels with: "Streethorsing is an extreme sport which may or may not be a myth," says Power. "It's show jumping in urban areas... highly illegal. Some believe it's an actual cult sport; some believe it's amazing use of Photoshop. But I think the idea of it is incredible, if not a little cruel - the idea of taking such a grand creature that belongs with nature and putting it in an industrial, built-up area is really something. I think there are comparisons to be drawn with our music."