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F\*\*k Buttons : ICA, London, 30/1/2008 Author: Chris O' Toole Published: 11/01/2008

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The noise was unnerving – an incessant hiss piercing into the conciseness without hope of reprieve and accompanied by the most distressed of high pitched hollers – and the staring was unbearable. People gazing seemingly afraid and dumbfounded in equal measure.

And that was just in the packed commuter train on the way to the venue.

You know you are in for an evening of esoteric quality when your business commuter companions begin shuffling nervously in their seats and moving gently away from you - hiding the pale smiles painted on their faces behind their free copy of 'The London Lite'.

This is the effect pure, unadulterated noise can have on some people – they will just never be ready for this form of visceral assault; preferring to take comfort in their Prince records, early nights and celebrity gossip.

Fuck Buttons, the purveyors of this rare musical commodity, seem to have this effect on crowds of the

They, Andrew Hung and Benjamin John Power, have been scatter gunning it into hordes of believers for a number of years now – since forming above a pub in Bristol a few years ago – and are finally preparing to release their debut album, 'Street Horrrsing', later this year.

Even this audio warm-up, however, cannot prepare the listener for the live sound. Emerging onto the stage with the minimum of fuss, Power introduces the group in a polite, even foppish accent before launching into a barrage of shrapnel style noise and throat shredding vocals.

The duo employs Tomy style toys, miniature keyboards and a number of mixing desks, as well as the ubiquitous Apple Mac, to create their primitive, bass driven noise. Their set is one continuous piece, broken only by mild breaks in the storm. It is filled with glistening, twinkling keys, drone-filled landscapes and berating bass lines - all carefully constructed into a single unified force. Key to the sound is Power on a toy microphone, screaming out indecipherable lyrics in a distorted inhuman style.

There is tremendous variety to their onslaught, but it is a touch controlled. Rarely do the duo break into a sweat, even when launching the most aggressive of their pieces. Instead their machines bare the load.

When Hung steps up to the mic he utters the most miniscule of noises before amplifying and looping it at nauseum – without truly engaging with the sound he is making.

It is also disappointing when the group return for an encore. After a smattering of polite applause the lights half come on, but the duo returns for a final piece which would have fitted perfectly at the end of the set.

They have no hits, so it is not as though they have been holding the best for last – and this really smoothers the

The group's album is out on the ATP imprint in February and will be well worth checking out. But, while loud and confrontational, the live show its not the temple of noise it purports to be.

Online Magazine If you would like to get in touch, please contact John Clarkson, the Editor.

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