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Fuck Buttons

@ ICA, London, 30 January 2008

★★★★★



Fuck Buttons

A last piece of stage direction from an irate pantomime director, struggling to get the requisite theatrical magic from his troupe of performers? A lactose intolerant child's enraged response to the birthday present they've received from his multi-millionaire aunt? The motto of the national institute of koumpounophobiacs?

No. No. And no. Fuck Buttons are, in fact, a Bristolian two-piece, who, judging by the amount of items they cart on stage covered in the things, do in fact rather like buttons.

But not as much as they like noise. Euphoric noise which envelopes and sweeps and crashes into you like a really loud wave. That said, as noise goes, it is surprisingly non-abrasive – it doesn't jar or attempt to grate down your ears like some kind of sonic angle grinder. In many ways, it's a quite welcoming. Less imposing oceanic movement, more big fluffy blanket.

Helpfully, it also provides a nice Velcro-like surface on which the Buttons can stick some bits you may not have been expecting to find. Delicate little pieces of cut-glass melody, fragile and pretty, and glistening against the soundscape supporting them. Then there are the screaming vocals, filtered through what appears to be a Fisher Price tape recorder and the thumping, trance-like, tribal beats, all deliberately positioned on this backdrop of drone.

All of which translates into a show which goes from Vangelis writing a soundtrack to contemplate human existence while clad in a pair of hemp slippers, and ends in a full on [SimianChemicalMobileDiscoBrothers](#) freak out with enough BPM to make you feel like breaking a sweat, and no glow sticks to make you feel like striking a twat.

You can't say it doesn't work. In full-on, head down, party starting mode it's difficult to fight the urge to throw your hands in the air. But then again, there are definitely moments, buried deep in some of the more expansive parts of their set, where Fuck Buttons lose your total attention.

Almost as if they drop that thread which connects what they are doing to a point. However, given the way tonight is structured, with those drifting moments coming in the first half, it certainly isn't the overriding memory.

No, that should be that Fuck Buttons are a hell of a lot more interesting than yer normal, run-of-the-mill electro band. A band with the potential to

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not only be good on the dancefloor, but also when you crawl home at 5am to listen to the stereo. And that ain't easy.

– *Tim Lee*

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