

A photograph of two men standing in a forest. The man on the left is wearing a black t-shirt with a graphic of a forest scene and black pants. The man on the right is wearing a light blue zip-up jacket over a black hoodie, a tan baseball cap, and black pants. They are standing on a mossy log. The background is filled with large trees and green foliage.

horrrsing around

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Fuck Buttons

Street Horrrsing (ATP/R)

As anyone paying attention will know, noise, as a genre, has been around long enough for a handful of clear sub-forms to emerge. Sure, most of the music that falls within this nebulous category shares a desire to avoid the obvious, choosing texture and sensation over strict form or the fascistic tyranny of the riff. But, obviously, there's a world of difference between the eviscerating, razorback onslaught of Merzbow, the lunkheaded, fist-pumpin' gonzo-goonery of Wolf Eyes, the circuit-bent, weirdoid excursions of Black Dice and the mystical, psychedelic sound-art of Blood Stereo. Now, with this debut from Fuck Buttons – a nice-faced and perfectly-haircutted pair of young men from Bristol – we've wound up with a wholly unexpected evolution: melodic noise with extra teen-appeal. Could this even be mainstream crossover noise? For certain, the album's got big-name indie credentials. Recorded with help from Mogwai's John Cummings and Part Chimp's Tim Cedar, and with finishing production touches from Shellac's Bob Weston, it's gunning for a big audience. And the thing is, it sounds like it too.

Make no mistake, it is noise. The bedrock sound of *Street Horrrsing* is a deep, rumbling power-throb – the kind that induces nosebleeds and/or rushes of pure, ecstatic, bodily euphoria at a live show with amps cranked up in a tiny venue. It's there throughout pretty much the entire, unbroken 50-minute duration of the album. It's the natural nest-bed out of which other tendrils of exploration grow and unfurl: gnarled, feedback-shriek vocals; echo-reverb screams and yelps; juddering, rhythmic shudders of power; and the clickety-clack, insectoid rim-shot percussion of Animal Collective (which was stolen from Adam And The Ants anyway, duh). Accumulation is the key – an obvious but powerful technique: a layering of sounds to create a rich, overwhelming stew that's greater than the sum of the parts. When it's done right, it can really take you places.

But there's something else going on with *Street Horrrsing* too. Just when you're ready to close all three eyes, let the sound disrupt your cellular integrity and melt into a pool of disincorporate, ever-living bliss – just, that is, when it sounds like it's turning into pure, transcendent noise, the Buttons give you riffs. Not crunching head-nodders but melodic, conventional, three-note keyboard figures that seem like they're aiming for grand simplicity but come over like Pink Floyd's 'Echoes' without the psych-swoon vocal pay-off, or Ultravox's 'Vienna' without the candelabrum and sideburns. Where, you ask yourself, have you heard these hooks before?

The answer, maybe, is the dancefloor. Those who have seen a live Fuck Buttons show will tell you it's a party, it's a celebration, that's precisely what they're trying to achieve through their good-time noise: dance music's mad euphoria without the repetitive beats. Maybe live, with the volume way up, energy rolling off the stage and the right friends around you, this ghost-trance techno can send you over the edge into abandon. But this here's a CD review. And 50 minutes can seem like a very long time when you're sitting at home with your headphones on.

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