

# **FUCK BUTTONS**

## **PUSH LONDON**

### **INTO STATE OF**

#### **DEEP BOREDOM**

**FUCK BUTTONS: THE I.C.A., LONDON VILLAGE**

Words **NIALL O' KEEFFE**  
Photo **RACHEL LIPSITZ**

**R**emember when Holy Fuck's album came out, and it seemed quite intriguing at first, before you realised it was totally hollow and you promised yourself you'd never listen to it again? Well, Fuck Buttons are pretty similar to Holy Fuck, except that you don't get the honeymoon period.

A duo from Bristol, Fuck Buttons are an experimental noise band: 'experimental' in the sense that their songs are aimless and poorly structured; and a 'noise band' in the sense that they don't have any tunes. It's going to be a long night.

They open the set with 'Sweet Love for Planet Earth', an endlessly repeated piece of music-box tinkling that is presumably intended to build suspense. It doesn't. Ninety seconds in, you find yourself bored stiff, desperate for something to happen - for a beat to kick in, perhaps. But no: eventually the tinkling gives way to a repetitive bass loop, and when that's been utterly exhausted, Ben Power tries our patience further by screeching into a distorted microphone on a low volume setting. As cathartic expressions of rage go, it's the equivalent of an e-mail typed in capital letters.

### **Ridiculous Yodels**

When Andrew Hung takes the mic, he at least looks the crowd in the eye and throws himself about a bit. However, his ridiculous yodels sound like samples from a wildlife documentary, and it's actually a relief when he goes back to hunching over a suitcase full of gadgets, opposite Power, who's doing the same. In the absence of a visual spectacle, you scan the crowd. There's very little movement. A couple of drunken girls attempt to dance along, but they fail: there are no beats, and Fuck Buttons' machines aren't operating in time with each other. Soon, one of the girls is

yawning, while next to me a couple are making out so passionately it seems sex might break out at any moment. I start to wonder if I've plunged into hell.

All the while, Power and Hung thrash about in search of ideas but, mostly, they conjure only featureless ambient electronica. Even when they try something more interesting, such as when Power sets about a drum kit to assay a tribal rhythm, the 'gig has the feel of a live rehearsal, devoid of drama or dynamics. Admittedly, 'Bright Tomorrow' sounds pretty good, but this is mainly a contrast effect. The recorded version did, after all, make for a strikingly one-dimensional debut single. Live, Fuck Buttons are, at their best, mildly diverting. At their worst, they're Black Dice lite.

### **Unwanted Encore**

'Bright Tomorrow' gives way to a straightforward beats'n'bleeps workout. Though overlong, it brings the set to a fairly respectable end, or would do, if they didn't return for an encore hardly anyone requested. As they play the wildlife-documentary song for a second time, some questions spring to mind. Should bearded

men in hoods and tight jeans be banned from making music? Has electronic music turned into a refuge for the terminally passive aggressive? How long can Holy Fuck and Fuck Buttons and Does It Offend You, Yeah? be sustained by their napes alone? Who signs these bands? What are they for?

