

CUFFS AND COLLARS— FUCK BUTTONS BLAST THEIR NIHILISTIC BEAT WAY PAST 11

By Tom King

"WE," SAYS ANDREW Hung of Fuck Buttons, "are sound fascists." As the name of his band suggests, he isn't entirely serious or indeed accurate – if a controversial label must be applied to its approach to sound, it's clearly "white-noise supremacists." Formed in Bristol in 2004, the duo, consisting of Hung and Benjamin John Power, plays what Hung describes as "nihilistic noise," a ferocious mix of drone, shoegaze and post-rock.

Like most successful fascists, they are disdainful of the practical conventions of their contemporaries. Among their many laptops and electronics, the pair's only traditional instruments are charity-shop kids' toys with circuits bent, broken and wired through distortion pedals. Vocals, when they appear, are distorted beyond recognition. Though Ben lists only "the loud and the free" as an influence, they are clearly caught somewhere between My Bloody Valentine and Sum 41. Fuck Buttons sound like God blowing his nose in slow motion.

What sets Fuck Buttons apart is an ability to express this sweeping abrasion as euphoria, not dread. The recent single "Bright Tomorrow" starts with a sleazy sheet-metal of feedback, then opens up into a yawning chasm. A melody is eventually revealed, a simple battered nursery rhyme that repeats throughout. "There's definitely an emotional element to it," says Andy. "An idealism."

This idealism is amplified beyond belief through a live sound system. On stage, facing each other over a table messy with gadgetry, the two perform more by telepathy than eye contact, creating a deafening noise that resonates with captured, looped screams. It's simultaneously uplifting and chaotic, a bizarre half-pig, half-club atmosphere that leaves the audience torn between dancing and covering their ears. As Ben says, they play "as loud as it'll go."

Having quit their day jobs and signed to ATP Recordings, 2008 is looking increasingly bright for the boys, with their debut LP, *Street Horning*, out this month. Produced by members of Part Chimp and Mogwai, it is sure to be as loud as it is weird.

A live Fuck Buttons track is available to download exclusively from Radio Tank. *Street Horning* is out March 17 on ATP. www.myspace.com/fuckbuttons



HOUSE PARTY, ST JOHN'S GROVE, LONDON, JANUARY 9, 2004