

'Sup

Fuck Buttons

# 'SUP MAGAZINE



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Interview by Josh Jones  
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Fuck Buttons is entirely the fault of Andrew Hung and Ben Power. The two friends met three years ago at university in what is probably Britain's most creative city, Bristol, and formed Fuck Buttons in 2004. Home to the likes of Tricky, Portishead, Goldie and Massive Attack as well as graf kings Banksy, Inkie and Nick Walker, the pair have taken on the mantle for innovation and originality. Fuck Buttons create whirls of sound that totally engulf the listener. More than just music, their sets are huge monuments of noise.

Since signing to ATP Records (the label of event and festival organizers All Tomorrow's Parties) in 2007, they've been in demand around the globe, with their debut album *Street Horrrsing* recorded with the aid of Mogwai's John Cummings, and mastered by Bob Weston of Shellac. Clocking in at 50 minutes with only six tracks, the album is an epic exercise in experimental noise punk. When we met up with the softly spoken, laid back and incredibly friendly pair in a boozer in Trafalgar Square, they'd literally just got their feet back on English soil after most of the year in foreign lands. After pleasantries were exchanged, the talk rather bizarrely, turned immediately to ping-pong and how the tables at a leisure centre in Finsbury Park, North London were going to take a battering from Andrew straight after this interview.

*What's with the ping-pong then?*

Andrew: I like to play table tennis, but I'm yet to convince this young man.

Ben: I'm not into it. I've got enough things to do.

*What's the allure of the paddle?*

Andrew: I guess I used to play quite a lot when I was younger, and I kind of stopped because, well you obviously need two people to play a proper game, but recently I've just really wanted to get back into it. It's good for switching off

and taking your mind off stuff.

*Enough about that, it was just an incidental question. Let's start properly. How have you been?*

Ben: Not bad. We've just finished touring a few days ago after an eight-month stint. It's been great. The shows have consistently been pretty great. We've been lucky in that sense. Of course in that time, there have been a few that haven't been perfect, but on the whole we've had a really good time.

*How was touring with Mogwai?*

Andrew: We got on really well with them. Although I haven't had an experience where I haven't got on with anyone that we've toured with. It certainly seems to be the norm that everyone gets on. I wasn't expecting any kind of animosity or anything, plus we're friends with them anyway. We've toured with bands that we don't know, like Caribou who we'd never met before and we spent two months with them on tour and got on fantastically well.

Ben: We're still in contact with all the people we've toured with.

*Didn't Caribou's drummer break his wrist when you were on tour with them?*

Andrew: Yeah. Bert broke his wrist up a ladder when he was trying to put up a projector.

Ben: Yeah, he fell off that stepladder. I said he should have fallen on his head. Drummers don't need their heads. They do tend to need their wrists though. I feel like we've been a bit of a curse on drummers so far.

*Why?*

Andrew: Well, when we were on tour with Mogwai, Martin their drummer's heart started popping out. When I say heart, I mean his pacemaker. The tour had to stop and he was rushed to hospital. It was the drummer curse I guess.

That's why we don't have anyone else in the band. They're all dead.

*According to the Internet, which is always true, you started off making music because you wanted to hurt people's ears.*

Ben: We first made music together to soundtrack a movie that Andy had made. There wasn't ever any intention to hurt or maim people with it. It was just to soundtrack a movie that Andy had made.

*So you're not particularly malicious people?*

Ben: No. I would say we're quite funny. *I've heard people describe your debut album Street Horrrsing as the "sound of the end of the world"? To me it sounds more like the beginning of the world. What are your thoughts about that?*

Andrew: Wow! Okay!

Ben: I think that's great.

Andrew: They're both the same thing though aren't they? The end is the beginning is the end. With things as big as the universe, things that can span further along than the human psyche, I think that beginnings and ends become irrelevant. The only other analogy I can think of that compares with that is if you take a photo of dawn, then it can also look like dusk and vice versa. I guess in the way that you go about expressing that situation tells if you're a-cup-half-full or a-cup-half-empty type of person. Is it a good thing or a bad thing?

*[Ben's phone starts to ring in his bag and so he starts to punch it to make it stop]*

Andrew: Does doing that actually work?

Ben: No. Not really.

*Is that what you did to Martin from Mogwai's pacemaker?*

Andrew: (laughs) Yep, that's how we fixed him.

Ben [still punching his bag]: This sometimes works with computers and things. There, it's stopped. *Back to you guys, some of your songs sound really junglistic - as in the big foresty place, not the music genre. Does it influence you?*

Ben: I think we're both really interested in different aspects of nature. I watch a lot of Planet Earth and stuff. I don't think we outwardly strive to recreate that kind of thing. Saying that, if there are sounds that we do enjoy, then we'll use them.

*While you were on your tour all over the world, you took in a few festivals. I heard you killed it at ATP.*

Andrew: I love ATP. I have to say I've loved it since way before we signed to them. It was a dream come true for us. We've been going to all the ATP festivals for ages before that. We were absolutely ecstatic to be able to do it. It was so exciting playing ATP for the first time. *Ever get a bit homesick when you're away for such a long time?*

Ben: There are aspects of being at home that you miss when you're on tour. But then when you get home and you realise you don't have to travel anywhere to do a show, you find yourself at a bit of a loose end and you

have to keep yourself busy with other stuff.

Andrew: I would go as far as to describe both our mindsets as nomadic. The idea of either of us settling is quite alien at the moment.

Ben: It does feel nice though, being home at the moment.

Andrew: Yeah, but I'm pretty sure that within a month I'll be missing being on the road. There was already a pang of retrospect as soon as we finished that last show for me.

Ben: I think we're in a nice situation though as we can now really concentrate on writing our new material, get that record in full swing, and get busy with the artwork and videos.

*I had my iTunes on shuffle listening to your song "Bare Ribs", and Oasis' "Don't Look Back in Anger" came on after. How does that make you feel?*

Andrew: Did it work? I'm trying to imagine it.

Ben: It's the one that starts with the piano that sounds a bit like John Lennon. It could work.

Andrew: I might try that.<sup>tee</sup>



