

## Brainwashed - Fushitsusha

Written by John Kealy

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Between gaping black holes of guitar noise and almost embarrassing acts of *prima donna*-isms, seeing Fushitsusha in the flesh was a bewildering but fantastic experience. Keiji Haino, accompanied by Ryosuke Kiyasu on drums and Chiyo Kamekawa on bass, fulfilled all my expectations before destroying them through successive acts of virtuosity, anarchy and heaps of volume.

9th October, The Village, Dublin.

Although the start time was delayed to the point where I was fearing we would only get an hour or so out of them before the venue's curfew came into effect, I luckily got to hear most of their soundcheck from the hallway in the venue. So before the concert even started, Fushitsusha had already won me over (and let's face it, short of cancelling the gig there was little they could do to disappoint). When they finally began their set properly, the sheer power took me by surprise, even considering the pre-conditioning of the soundcheck. The opener was a surging rocker which was classic Fushitsusha all over. Haino's guitar cut through my senses like a scalpel while Kiyasu and Kamekawa drove home a rhythm that pushed the audience back and forth like a small boat in a storm. As good as they are on record, this performance was a glimpse into another world entirely.

The set continued down this path veering between monster Blue Cheer-inspired face-melters and quieter, atmospheric pieces until Haino broke a string on his guitar. Normally, this would not be a massive issue on its own but it seemed to start a chain reaction which threatened to end the concert. Haino covered for his lack of guitar by plugging the microphone into his effects board, creating a loop of his vocals while he changed the string. Eventually he gave up and got the roadie to fix it only to find that there was a problem with the amps that resulted in Haino storming off stage. Haino ended up returning in order to throw a tantrum and aim a kick towards the roadie who, despite the abuse, got everything working again.

It took a while to get back into the zone after this display though eventually they steered the music back on track (though I must say, Kiyasu and Kamekawa kept the music on the boil for the duration of the technical difficulties). The highlight was a terrific blast of jamming where they almost sounded accessible, until the screaming anti-solo kicked in that is. The music eventually drifted into a more abstract areas with some unusual but fascinating rhythms being explored; Kiyasu seemed to be a master of taking very simple snare techniques and turning them into something far greater than someone just banging a stick against a skin. However, unlike the impression I formed of them performing as a singular unit while [reviewing their album \*Hikari to\*](#)

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### Nazukeyo

, here was a group that was being conducted tightly and methodically. Through barked commands and gestures, Haino manipulated the band like he was playing them as an instrument.

Upon reflection, I have mixed feelings about this Fushitsusha concert but my main impression was one of an unparalleled band that cannot and will not fit in any neat boxes. Haino's frustration with unforeseen events does not surprise me (especially after his meltdown [performing with Merzbow in Geneva that I bore the brunt of](#)) but it seems strange that someone who is renowned for his ability to improvise gets so flustered by surprises. Yet, despite the unpleasantness, this was a performance that did something almost impossible by combining the beautiful and the ugly to form something which was total catharsis through euphoric, painful art.