

REAL LIVE

SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO

Richard's on Richards

April 23

Simian Mobile Disco is a live act worthy of a concert on the sun. If it were possible, they'd be certain to rock that shit hot.

The duo—James Ford (the producer behind Arctic Monkeys' *Favourite Worst Nightmares* and Klaxons' *Myths of the Near Future*) and James Shaw—used to be part of Simian, an English psych pop band. Now, the two have immersed themselves in the dance world, most notably on SMD's 2007 album *Attack Decay Sustain Release*—a dance record embedded with such raw energy and attitude that rock fans were keen to shimmy on the bandwagon.

On stage, four columns of 15-foot scaffolding support vertical bars of lights, and cabinets of innumerable input-output channels are placed carefully at the centre of the stage. The first absent-minded peeps of "Sleep Deprivation" pop out the giant speaker hovering above my head. The momentum builds and SMD eventually throw out beats with such frenzied intensity I look to my friend and grin as I find myself flailing. An absolute circus of lighting accosts the crowd. Vertical bars flash intermittent red, green, yellow and blue. Giant white lights move around Ford and Shaw. It's like looking right at a 100-watt bulb through a kaleidoscope.

The duo's silhouettes tweak knobs and push plugs into the cabinets on stage. Something about this seems wildly futuristic yet paradoxically archaic: the plugs and knobs resemble both an emerging visual and auditory art form, and an ancient phone connector. The light show starts altering my mind, bringing on a haze typically reserved for the drug-imbued. And the crowd is among the most energetic I've seen, writhing, thrusting and squinting toward the blinding lights.

Each sneaky acid house build flows perfectly into the next. Live renditions of "It's the Beat" and "Tits and Acid" are thrown down with gratifying care. The sound

is watertight. When SMD's 2006 hit "Hustler" starts up, the mood becomes manic. The song's climax has all the build-up and draw-out I could ever wish for. I feel completely bad-ass.

Much to my surprise, the encore brings on a slower, industrial NIN-inspired track. I get totally into it as I break out some dusty '90s moves. It is nostalgic. It is progressive. It is accosting. It is everything I could want out of a live electronic act. I go home feeling dazed and special. It's nice to witness two DJs with such a blinding love for their fans.

Lena Ross