

TV ON THE RADIO
FOX THEATRE
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DIRTY WHIRL

Managed to snag a piece of TV on the Radio, the latest offering to the "brainrock" genre, at the Fox last Friday in a fever of swineflu and exhaustion. This time around we secured balcony tix to see if the sound quality of the venue had changed at all. It had not. Last few visits to the Fox revealed an extraordinary visual environment particularly cursed by specially awful acoustics. TV on the Radio probably sounded pretty good to fans who knew the material and the lyrics. To us, the sound was atrocious, badly mixed, way too

much bass and drum-heavy and lyrically unintelligible until the drums and bass took a break. Both lead singers -- the band enjoys two -- could only be comprehended in those moments when the one singer shifted from basso to tenor.



According to the presskit, “**TV on the Radio** is a New York City avant-garde indie-rock vocal band formed in 2001 whose music spans genres as diverse as free jazz, a cappella/doo-wop, trip-hop and electro.

The core members are Tunde Adebimpe (vocals/loops), Kyp Malone (vocals/guitars/loops) David Andrew Sitek (guitars/keyboards/loops), along with Jaleel Bunton (drums) and Gerard Smith (bass). . .

TV on the Radio is one of the favorite active bands of rock icon David Bowie, who also contributes backing vocals on the track "Province" from the latest effort, Return

to Cookie Mountain. The album was released July 6, 2006 worldwide (except the United States and Canada) by 4AD. . .

"They have a strong link with the great body of American poetry, especially Beat poetry," Bowie says. "The sampling, multitracking and mashing identifies them as the spawn of a techno-industrial society. I love the new record. I play it about three times a week, which is, . . . saturation level for me."

This is a fairly complex band with a brass section, two keyboardists plus the front man on synth, rhythm guitarist, drummer, guitarist/bassist/vocalist, lead vocalist, and various percussion instruments. None of this was well served by the sound at the Fox, as the mix all turned into sonic mud. Moments of relief came when one performer did a long tenor sax piece absent drums and bass and general background noise.

Now this is a band with two lead singers, one of which shifted from basso to tenor and then whistling with ease. In other words, this band requires and demands attention and far better sound than what they got. Eventually we just left before the set completed, longing for an opportunity to hear what the band can do in a better environment. Sure, they were exciting from a rock and roll standpoint, launching into pieces the fans already knew well without a hitch, driving up the energy and getting the pit roused into a huge pogo arena, but rock 'n roll and music are sometimes two different things. Friday night, TV on the Radio proved exactly that point without intending to do so.

Friday night did introduce us to a new band doing some exciting, creative, challenging new stuff, so we end up saying that TV on the Radio is well worth

watching for the future. Very reminiscent of Joy Division and the more energetic David Bowie, with jumpy cuts that savored of Gang of Four, while still retaining a sort of Afro-pop suggestion, the band definitely has a place in the New Order of music, possessing a sound that is all their own and a drive that is propulsive and infectious in a positive way. We were left wanting to buy the CD, which is probably just what a good concert should manage to accomplish in the end anyway, notwithstanding stage buzzes.