

= Fuck the Millennium =

" Fuck the Millennium " , sometimes spelled " \* \* \* K the Millennium " , is an electronic protest song that was released as a single in 1997 by 2K ( Bill Drummond and Jimmy Cauty , better known as The KLF and The Justified Ancients of Mu Mu ) . Based upon The KLF 's acid house track " What Time Is Love ? " , it was promoted as a comeback single and released to mark the tenth anniversary of Drummond and Cauty 's first collaborations ; however , it was also in part intended to mock the notion of the comeback . It remains the only commercial release by the duo since The KLF 's 1992 retirement . The single reached # 28 in the UK Singles Chart in October 1997 .

Drummond and Cauty 's campaign to " fuck the millennium " also involved an appearance by 2K at London 's Barbican Arts Centre and a number of outlandish proposals to ' commemorate ' the millennium under the moniker " K2 Plant Hire " . These activities were intended to culminate in the construction of " The People 's Pyramid " , a 150 @-@ foot ( 46 m ) -high structure built from recycled bricks , but the pyramid was never built .

= = Context = =

From 1987 to 1992 , Bill Drummond and Jimmy Cauty released music under names including The Justified Ancients of Mu Mu ( The JAMs ) and The KLF . Following a run of five consecutive UK top @-@ five singles , The KLF executed a high @-@ profile retirement from the music business and deleted their entire back catalogue , declaring that " For the foreseeable future , there will be no further record releases from any past , present or future name attached to our activities . " Drummond and Cauty 's subsequent art project , the K Foundation , disposed of The KLF 's earnings , including by burning one million pounds of it , money which was originally provisionally earmarked by the duo for millennial celebrations . Bill Drummond : " Originally we were going to invest the whole lot in some capital growth fund and spend it all on one big event , maybe at the millennium " .

In the four years following The KLF 's retirement , Drummond and Cauty 's musical output consisted only of a limited edition single released in Israel and Palestine ( " K Cera Cera " ) , and a contribution to The Help Album ( " The Magnificent " ) .

In 1997 , British artist Jeremy Deller pioneered the Acid Brass concept , collaborating with the Williams Fairey Brass Band to interpret and perform classic acid house tracks as brass arrangements . Deller was described by one source as a prankster , a notion frequently applied to Drummond and Cauty themselves . In February 1997 , Drummond was contacted by his former Big in Japan bandmate Jayne Casey , who was helping to organise an arts festival in Liverpool and had noticed that Acid Brass ' repertoire included The KLF 's " What Time Is Love ? " . Drummond attended the festival performance and heard " What Time Is Love ? " performed as the encore , during which he telephoned Cauty . Cauty and Drummond together attended a 19 April Acid Brass performance at the Queen Elizabeth Hall , London . Collaborative work ensued between Drummond , Cauty , and Deller , in which the Acid Brass rendition of their track was incorporated into a composition designed to mark the tenth anniversary of Drummond and Cauty 's first work .

A comeback of The KLF was implied by two black @-@ and @-@ white full @-@ page adverts placed in the 21 August 1997 issue of Time Out . The first proclaimed " They 're Back . The Creators of Trance . The Lords of Ambient . The Kings of Stadium House . The Godfathers of Techno Metal . The Greatest Rave Band In The World . Ever ! 2K . For 23 minutes Only " . The second stated " ' Jeremy Deller presents ' 1997 What The Fuck 's Going On ' " , a reference to The JAMs ' debut album 1987 ( What the Fuck Is Going On ? ) . It continued , " Jimmy Cauty and Bill Drummond invite you to a 23 minute performance during which the next 840 days of our lives will be discussed " . The Independent looked forward to the event , saying that " It was just a matter of time before Jimmy Cauty and Bill Drummond hatched another prank and put a grin back on the face of pop music . " " You just ache for them to be No. 1 again .... " , they said , but " One hopes they are not about to shoot themselves in the foot " because " the idea walks the tightrope between lunacy and brilliance .... the pop world 's countdown to the millennium surely starts here " .

= = Performance = =

" 1997 ( What The Fuck 's Going On ? ) " was performed by 2K as a one @-@ off event at London 's Barbican Arts Centre on 17 September 1997 with Acid Brass , the Liverpool Dockers , the Viking Society , and Drummond 's creative associates Mark Manning and Gimpo , who appeared , respectively , as " an axe @-@ wielding " salvationist " in a vicar 's collar and gold lame suit , and a shop steward character in a white coat with a megaphone " . The performance began with a screening of This Brick , a short 35mm film of a brick made from the ashes of the K Foundation 's million @-@ pound bonfire . Following an introduction by Factory Records founder Tony Wilson , Drummond and Cauty were then unveiled as pyjama @-@ clad , wheelchair @-@ using pensioners with grey hair and , strapped to their foreheads , prominent horns that had been used regularly in The KLF 's promotional videos . Drummond was also seen plucking feathers from a dead swan . According to a press release issued by Mute / Blast First ( Acid Brass ' and 2K 's record label ) , " Two elderly gentlemen , reeking of Dettol , caused havoc in their motorised wheelchairs . These old reprobates , bearing a grandfatherly resemblance to messrs Cauty and Drummond , claimed to have just been asked along . " The duo wheeled around the stage to the sound of Acid Brass ' " What Time Is Love ? " . They were supported variously by a male choir 's rendition of " K Cera Cera " , joined by opera singer Sally Bradshaw ; the Viking Society in costume as lifeboatmen ; and the politically topical Liverpool Dockers chanting " Fuck the Millennium " . Following the performance , every audience member received a " Fuck the Millennium " T @-@ shirt , poster , and bumper sticker in a carrier bag .

In a comprehensive assessment , The Observer rationalised the spectacle : " They did what they always do : too many things at the same time . Their points are lost along with the plot . So , just to explain : ... Bill and Jimmy were dressed as old men as a comment on elderly pop groups making a comeback . The brass band playing house music tunes was organised by Jeremy Deller as a comment on class culture ( working @-@ class band playing working @-@ class music ) . The dockers were asked along because their cause is important . " The Guardian called the performance " a glorious , jaw @-@ dropping mess " , and The Times commented that " the strongest point in its favour was its brevity " . Select said , " There was no press furore the next morning ? merely the anticlimactic aftertaste left by 40 @-@ year @-@ old men miming to a seven @-@ year @-@ old song .... 2K was unquestionably a failure . "

= = Composition = =

A single , " Fuck the Millennium " was subsequently released , a studio @-@ based recording falsely promoted as an edited version of the Barbican performance . Comparing the single with the live performance , The Times said that " On CD , things become more orthodox , though no less entertaining , comprising an acid brass version of their classic , What Time Is Love ? and a young man shouting rude words . "

The unedited studio recording of " Fuck the Millennium " is a 14 @-@ minute composition , a protest song based around The KLF 's house music track " What Time Is Love ? " , drawing additionally on musical refrains and concepts from throughout Drummond and Cauty 's canon . The track contains three main segued parts : a house section led by the brass band Acid Brass , a choral rendition of the English hymn " Eternal Father , Strong to Save " , and a rhythmically hardened remix of " What Time Is Love ? ( Pure Trance Original ) " . The lead vocals before and after the hymn consist mainly of angry chants , with hundreds of instances of the word " fuck " . Apart from a small number of chord changes during the segues , " Fuck the Millennium " contains no new music . However , the lyrics and brass arrangement are not found elsewhere in Drummond and Cauty 's output .

The track is opened by Gimpo screaming " It 's 1997 : what the fuck is going on ? " . There follows a brass band version of " What Time Is Love ? ( Pure Trance Original ) " , with a house rhythm added , along with samples from The JAMs ' 1987 recordings " All You Need Is Love " , " Don 't Take Five (

Take What You Want ) " , " Whitney Joins The JAMs " and " Burn the Bastards " . Drummond leads a crowd of Liverpool Dockers in angry chants : " Fuck the millennium ! We want it now ! " .

Among the voices singing the three verses of the hymn are keyboardist Nick Coler , Drummond and Cauty , multiple recordings of whom are overlain to simulate a congregation . Mark Manning evangelically narrates its lyrics , and between verses , Gimpo screams for " Bill ! " ( Drummond ) and " Jimmy ! " ( Cauty ) ? the only instance throughout their music that either of them is referred to without a pseudonym .

A Select journalist enthused about the track in the context of the duo 's wider catalogue : " As soon as it starts you immediately remember the excitement that comes from hearing a KLF record for the first time . The original ambient house melody kicks in ? and it hasn 't dated a day . The chorus is given an extra kick by Acid Brass ' massed ranks of horns and trumpets .... It is quite brilliant . "

= = K2 Plant Hire = =

Around the time of the single 's release , further full @-@ page adverts appeared in the national press , this time asking readers " \* \* \* k The Millennium : Yes / No ? " , with a telephone number ? the " Millennium Crisis Line " ? provided for voting : " If you want to fuck the millennium , press ' 1 ' . If not , press ' 2 ' . " The adverts were placed under the pseudonym K2 Plant Hire Ltd . , who duly claimed that 18 @,@ 436 ( 89 % ) of respondents wished to fuck the millennium . Thus , on 31 October 1997 , K2 Plant Hire announced " The People 's Pyramid " , an estimated 150 @-@ foot ( 46 m ) -high structure built from as many house bricks as there were British 20th century births ( estimated by the duo as 87 million ) , with no cost to the taxpayer . According to Melody Maker , a statement posted on K2 Plant Hire 's website " pointedly contrast [ ed ] the intended virtues of their People 's Pyramid with the drawbacks of the officially sponsored Millennium Dome " . The Guardian noted drily that the idea " would appear to be far @-@ fetched even by their own standards " and " Planning permission might pose a problem . " The Pyramid was never built .

K2 Plant Hire also contributed a short story , written by Drummond , to editor Sarah Champion 's anthology Disco 2000 . Entitled " ' Let 's Grind ' or ' How K2 Plant Hire Went To Work ' " , the 1997 story is a fictional account of K2 Plant Hire 's plan to demolish Stonehenge on the eve of the millennium . Also in 1997 , Drummond and Cauty reportedly used K2 Plant Hire 's remaining funds to bid for purchase of the Rollright Stones ancient monument . Psychogeographer Stewart Home alleged that despite K2 Plant Hire 's bid being the highest , the owners of the monument refused to trade with the duo .

= = Themes = =

Drummond and Cauty 's works were both highly self @-@ referential and rife with references to The Illuminatus ! Trilogy esoteric novel , from which The JAMs took their name . Their last work , as 2K and K2 Plant Hire , continued many of these themes . Their subversive attitude was exhibited in their attempt to undermine the pop comeback . They defaced a wall of the National Theatre the day after the Barbican performance : the graffiti " 1997 : What the fuck 's going on ? " referenced their similar graffiti of ten years earlier on the same wall of the arts establishment . The unusual show at the Barbican was typical of their previous confusing and humorous costumed appearances ; moreover , the horns strapped to their foreheads were previously used in The KLF 's cowl costumes . The advertising campaigns before and after the single 's release resumed Drummond and Cauty 's characteristic promotional tactic of cryptic , monochrome full @-@ page adverts placed in UK national newspapers and music press .

The duo 's tenth anniversary was prominently implied by the adverts and graffiti , and " Fuck the Millennium " contains many samples from their earliest works . The KLF 's " What Time Is Love ? " ? a breakthrough track for Drummond and Cauty on two occasions ? is also used extensively : " Fuck the Millennium " contains the entirety of " What Time Is Love ? ( Pure Trance Original ) " , as well as samples used in " What Time Is Love ? ( Live at Trancentral ) " .

Seafaring was a recurring element of Drummond and Cauty 's output , in lyrics from Who Killed The

JAMs ? , The White Room and " America : What Time Is Love ? " , and in imagery used to illustrate The KLF 's retirement press notice . Prior to entering the music business , Drummond had worked as a trawlerman . Samples of evangelists also feature in several KLF Communications recordings : the album Chill Out and the B @-@ sides " What Time Is Love ? ( Virtual Reality Mix ) " and " America No More " . " Fuck the Millennium " was a studio track promoted as a live recording and featuring sampled crowd noise , as were The KLF 's self @-@ named " Stadium House Trilogy " of singles . The use of an English hymn is central to The JAMs ' " It 's Grim up North " . All of The KLF 's chart singles either refer or allude to time , a theme continued by " Fuck the Millennium " .

2K 's lifespan was billed as the duration of the Barbican performance , 23 minutes . The number is given numerological significance in The Illuminatus ! Trilogy . The " Fuck the Millennium " sleeve notes state that " The Justified Ancients of Mu Mu appear courtesy of The Five " , a reference to the five Illuminati leaders of the novels . Drummond and Cauty took The JAMs ' name from the fictional cult in Illuminatus ! , wherein the fictional JAMs are long @-@ standing enemies of the Illuminati . K2 Plant Hire 's " The People 's Pyramid " recalled Drummond and Cauty 's " Pyramid Blaster " logo ( a ghetto blaster suspended in front of a pyramid ) , itself a reference to the all @-@ seeing eye icon used in Illuminatus ! .

Although the references to Illuminatus ! and themselves were in keeping with Drummond and Cauty 's tradition , this was also in part intended to be a self @-@ parodying dredge of The KLF 's " myth " . Drummond 's opinions of the " rock ' n ' roll comeback " were recorded by him at the time and aired in 2000 : " The history of rock ' n ' roll has been littered with pathetic comebacks .... No comeback has ever worked . The motivation behind the comeback has never and will never be the same as when the group or artist first crawled out of their sub @-@ cult .... If there was fresh original talent , it is now tired and tested , only capable of flicking the nostalgia switch . " Designing 2K 's parody of the comeback , Drummond wrote that he and Cauty were " getting totally into the institution of The Comeback , drawing on the sad , pathetic nature of the whole thing , the desperation of all concerned to exploit whatever they can from the myth ... " .

= = After the event = =

Contemporary press reaction to 2K and their Barbican performance was mixed but mostly negative . Since then , however , The Observer have held up the Barbican show as the model of a pop performance . " At one unfortunately memorable Stereophonics gig ... " , the paper said , " the extent of Richard Jones ' showmanship was to play his bass while standing on a rug .... this is hardly the pyjama @-@ clad KLF , horns strapped to their heads , whizzing around the Barbican in wheelchairs with Zodiac Mindwarp in a pulpit and hundreds of sacked Liverpool dockers yelling " Fuck the millennium ! " at the tops of their voices ... " Likewise , a 1999 feature on Drummond and Cauty in The Irish Times reported their millennium activities with some warmth . " As a critique of the sponsor @-@ saturated multi @-@ million pound Millennium Dome , " the editorial ran , " the ' people 's pyramid ' is unsurpassed . "

Recounting the exploits of 2K , and the press reaction , in his book 45 ( published in the millennium year , 2000 ) , Drummond said :

= = Formats and track listings = =

" Fuck the Millennium " was given an international single release on 13 October 1997 . The record was not a success in comparison to The KLF 's earlier chart @-@ topping endeavours , peaking at a moderate # 28 in the UK Singles Chart .

All formats contained at least one version of 2K 's " Fuck the Millennium " and one of Acid Brass ' " What Time Is Love ? " . The formats and track listings are tabulated below :

Key

m ? " \* \* \* K the Millennium " ( radio edit ) ( 4 : 18 )

c ? " \* \* \* K the Millennium " ( censored radio edit ) ( 4 : 18 )

M ? " \* \* \* K the Millennium " ( 13 : 57 )

K ? " Acid Brass / What Time Is Love ( Version K ) " ( 4 : 33 )

P ? " Acid Brass / What Time Is Love ( Version P ? Royal Oak Mix ) " ( 5 : 28 ) ( remixed by Pan Sonic )

O ? " Acid Brass / What Time Is Love ( Original Version ) " ( 4 : 39 )

= = Personnel = =

" Fuck the Millennium " and " What Time Is Love ? " were written and produced by Bill Drummond and Jimmy Cauty .

Jeremy Deller ? Acid Brass concept

The Williams Fairey Brass Band ? Acid Brass performance of " What Time Is Love ? " , conducted by Brian Hurdley .

Jimmy Cauty , Nick Coler and Bill Drummond ? The National Retired Life Boat Men 's Choral Society , conducted and arranged by Nick Coler

Chike ? credited for samples " Ancients of Mu Mu " and " Don 't take five , take what you want to take " , originally from 1987 ( What the Fuck Is Going On ? )

Alan Goodrick ? spoken contributions

Donald Johnson ? live drumming

Mark Manning ? " Reverend Bitumen Hoarfrost " ' s evangelical narration

Rodney Newton ? Acid Brass arrangement of The KLF 's " What Time Is Love ? "

Mark " Spike " Stent ? mixing