

COACHELLA 2010 COVERAGE

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Who: Devo in the Mojave Tent

In 3 or Fewer Words: Discordant desert devolution.

I'll Remember This Forever Because: More bands at Coachella owe their existence to Devo than not and, impressively, festival goers seemed to know this. The Mojave Tent couldn't contain Devo's midnight madness, a memorable set that itself devolved, beginning with Devo's sub-genius synth-pop before shifting to the original new wave punk classics.

Costume changes and video art projections (largely featuring food and phalluses) peppered the set, though Devo's trademarked choreography was largely absent. And while early on the Mothersbaugh and Casale brothers (joined by sticks-for-hire Josh Freese) seemed to be going through the motions, the crowd's feverous, erm, devotion seemed to inseminate the band after a brief (narrated) intermission.

"Uncontrollable Urge" and "Mongoloid" were standouts, but "Smart Patrol / Mr. DNA" stole the set. By that point the no-good deadbeat uncles of rock had reverted to their true punk selves, energetic with urgency. Devo closed with their cathartic battle cry, "Gates of Steel," just as the clock struck 1.

During the whole revelatory hour I couldn't help but think of the throngs of manchild hipsters elsewhere on the grounds; some lessons have yet to be learned by today's youth culture, and all too many missed their chance at education. But considering the sundry of satisfied spuds in the Mojave Tent on Saturday night, there's still (no) hope for us yet.

What I'd Tell My Friend Who Was at Tiesto: Devo's songs? They're about people like you.