

It was towards the end of 2010 when Norfolk's self-styled ambassador of art school electronica Luke Abbott first unveiled the lush organic textures and pagan hypnotics of 'Holkham Drones', his ever-so-slightly-wonky debut album that takes its name from a beach on Norfolk's surprisingly northern section of coast. In the intervening months that have since elapsed, the unassuming twelve track collection of handcrafted hardware-jams has won over convert upon convert, staking a claim alongside recent releases from Four Tet and Gold Panda as one of the definitive works of the UK's ever-bolder Kraut-tinged corner of the dance music spectrum, as well as making serious inroads with the Drowned In Sound indie set, for whom the "game-changing electronic opus" stood out as "far and away one of DiS' favourite records of 2010".

Luke Abbott spent his formative years in the Norfolk fenland village of North Lopham, surrounded by records lovingly hoarded by his pop music historian father Kingsley, author of biographical tomes encompassing Sixties luminaries such as The Beach Boys and Phil Spector. Luke first headed towards the bright lights of Norwich to enrol at the city's respected art school, soon followed by a course in Electroacoustic Composition at the UEA. Here the university's open-minded approach would allow him to indulge all of his technological curiosities, wandering at will down the various experimental avenues that run through electronic music's leftfield. This hands-on and homemade DIY approach has continued to inform his fledgling steps into a musical career, from circuit-bending and hardware-hacking to generating bespoke software instruments and sequencers and building his own custom MIDI controller.

It was back in 2006 when Luke's first fully-fledged physical single release landed on the now sadly defunct but no less legendary Output Recordings: the wackily-titled 'B'B'B'B'B'B'B'B'B'B'B'B'B'B'B'B' had the dubious honour of being the last slice of vinyl ever pressed by Trevor Jackson's much-mourned imprint. A split 7" on London's Trash Aesthetics (previous hosts to Bloc Party, The Rakes and Tilly and the Wall) followed soon after, before Luke eventually found a new home for his sprawling catalogue of unreleased tracks with Border Community in 2008. He began by giving the alt-dance world something to chew on with the twinkly psychedelics of the six-track 'Tuesday EP', followed the next year by the mathematical hedonism of 'Whitebox Stereo'. But where these early releases sought to cover all of Luke's most beloved electronic sub-species in one go (from 8-bit glitch through to ambient field recordings), the occasion of his debut album saw Luke rise to the conceptual challenge, cooking up a cohesive collection of elasticated primordial mantras whose thoroughly immersive unified wholesome goodness does the album format proud.

And 'Holkham Drones' is an accomplished beast indeed, knitting together joyous arpeggios and rolling primal rhythms in an overwhelmingly satisfying union that seems to somehow channel the pagan heritage of the British Isles through the incongruous electronic medium, just as his Kraut counterparts and forbears Harmonia sought to do in Germany almost forty years before. The inherent wonk of Luke's boutique analogue synths and his bolshy, offbeat and polyrhythmic approach to percussion imbue his organitronic creations with an overwhelmingly warm, human and positively homemade character. Deftly positioning itself between the twin poles of Krautrock and techno, the offbeat dischordant thud that runs throughout 'Holkham Drones' is danceable rather than dance music, "like the second-cousin of dance music. Once removed," as Luke himself puts it. "You can dance to it if you want, but you don't have to."

Attuned to the dancefloor rather than enslaved by it, Luke Abbott's accompanying live show has assumed ever heavier and increasingly danceable proportions as it has rumbled across the clubs, gigs and festivals of Europe, characterised by "beautiful, intricately constructed arpeggios delivered with significantly more bass than is present on 'Holkham Drones'" (The Line Of Best Fit). The ubiquitous live show laptop has gradually disappeared out of the picture, evolving towards the all-analogue, custom-controller extravaganza that we see today, befitting his hardware-centred studio approach. Steering well clear of all of dance music's most tired cliches, Luke's hypnotic entrancements instead seem to connect with something deeper seated within, tapping into an urge to dance that is seemingly innate.

A whole year on from its release and there is clearly plenty of life in 'Holkham Drones' yet, as its graceful, insidious charms continue to seduce wherever they are heard. A sterling remix and video package is currently being assembled around the exceedingly moreish anthem-in-waiting 'Brazil', which as the album's final single epitaph should make a fitting swansong for this slowburning gem. Meanwhile, back in his studio, Luke Abbott's experimental heart beats strongly, as with the aid of his weird and wonderful equipment purchases and a bit of good old DIY – via the odd diverting remix for the likes of Dan Deacon, John Talabot, The MFA, Gomma Records and East Anglian brothers-in-drone Transept - he is already beginning to tentatively seek out his next musical steps.

luke abbott :

selected press

"It's always more fulfilling when something enters your radar through word of mouth. DIY by nature, working from Norfolk, Abbott is a wizard with noise. If Britain had a Pitchfork then surely he would be its darling" - Hayden Thorpe, Wild Beasts (talking to **The Guardian**)

"Yet, as always, on the fringes and unnominated, the future is pulsing, with the likes of Mount Kimbie and Luke Abbott releasing graceful, submerged, ambientish dance albums that are inspiring shifts on a tectonic level across the globe." - Sean Adams, **The Sunday Times**

"Holkham Drones' should stand side-by-side with the masterpieces that Kieran Hebden [Four Tet] and Dan Snaith [Caribou] have put out this year." - 9/10, **Drowned In Sound**

"A richly rewarding experience." - 4/5, **Mojo**

"Sweet without being saccharine and emotive without being overblown, it's one of the finest leftfield techno-electronica debuts of the year" - 9/10, **IDJ**

"With 'Holkham Drones', Abbott has created something that already feels utterly timeless. This debut offers the latest proof that the new golden era in UK electronica continues apace. We might even be witnessing the birth of its new leading light." 9/10, **RaggedWords.com**

luke abbott :

discography

luke abbott :	"holkham drones" (album)	border community	2010
	"brazil"		2011
	"trans forest alignment"		2010
	"whitebox stereo"		2009
	"tuesday ep"		2008
	"honeycomb ep"	amazing sounds	2010
	"(Prelude) 'We've Lost The War'"	output	2006
	"B'B'B'B'B'B'B'B'B'B'B'B'B'B'B'B"		
	"repus tekram"	trash aesthetics	2006
esperanza ft. banjo or freakout :	"sirena" (luke abbott remix)	gomma	2011
transept :	"leopard slug love song" (luke abbott remix)	transept	2011
andi muller :	"comedown" (luke abbott remix)	trouw	2011
crimea x :	"plov" (luke abbott remix)	hell yeah	2011
ghianda :	"apricots" (luke abbott remix)	technowagon	2011
dan deacon :	"surprise stefani" (luke abbott remix)	amazing sounds	2010
hanssen :	"airplaning" (luke abbott remix)	innerflight	2010
john talabot :	"sunshine" (luke abbott remix)	hivern	2009
the mfa :	"throw it back (we will destroy you)" (luke abbott remix)	border community	2009
mit :	"rauch" (luke abbott remix)	half machine	2009
micromattic :	"under over the clouds" (luke abbott remix)	absolute	2009