

Incunabula

ByteNoise

Incunabula



Incunabula

Artist

[Autechre](#)

Label	Warp Records
Year	1993
Rating	?????
Summary	Sublime and otherworldly enough to warrant a listen.

If B12's Electro-Soma is background music, Autechre's Incunabula takes you on a journey. Best listened to with headphones and your undivided attention, it's an ethereal soundscape above all else.

The first track, Kalpol Introl, is a crescendo of breathtaking beauty. Sparse, squishy bass sounds run through a delay take centre stage, soon joined by an atmospheric pad and quirky, hissing percussion. The overall result is as sublime as it is otherworldly.

Overlapping with the end of Kalpol Introl is the beginning of the slightly more down-to-Earth Bike (if you were hoping to include them in a randomised playlist, I'd recommend joining these two tracks together, as they go well together anyway). This is where a regular [drum machine](#) makes its first appearance, providing a more familiar type of percussion: a repetitive rhythm. Combined with the sort of synthetic bassline that you feel more than hear, and delayed melodic synths with quick [envelope](#) settings on the higher frequencies, this is another wonderfully atmospheric track.

Autriche starts off with an inviting, warm pad and distant talking, swiftly accompanied with another rhythm on the analogue drum machine, but in my opinion spoils it with the inclusion of a grating timbre for the main melody.

Bronchus 2 sounds like someone plucking a long, twangy, metal

cable, drenched in delays and reverb. This one just leaves me with the feeling that I missed the point of the track entirely.

Basscadet is rhythmically more upbeat, yet with a haunting atmosphere and a distorted timbre that all add up to create a jarring sound. Slightly scary stuff.

Eggshell is much more my cup of tea. It's more laid back and sounds to me more like it's trying to convey a sense of wonder than fear. By all rights, it should sound too repetitive: a mere two chords provide the musical setting for nine minutes' worth of music. By the time the second melody arrives, however, Autechre have proven they can pull such a feat off. The music flies by all too quickly.

In my opinion, Autechre sound like they're trying too hard to be clever with the confusing percussion at the beginning of the next track, Doctrine. It soon starts making sense when put in context (albeit a rather loud context). The actual melodies and harmonies are nice for the most part, as long as you can get past the loud clanging of the rhythm.

Moving on, Maetl is slightly more calm, yet still fueled by a clangy beat. Its melody seems almost bittersweet, and once the pads fade in, it fits in much better with the album's overall spooky, otherworldly feel.

At over eleven minutes long, the next track, Windwind, is an epic offering. Its seemingly unrelated components, which fit together so well, feel like a continuation of the opening track. The epic pad, combined with all the interesting underlying parts, creates a soundscape that makes you wonder just what untold adventure inspired this piece.

Lowride chills you back down again. While not breathtaking, it provides a much needed rest.

The last track, 444, is another dramatic affair. Using intense harmonies, it takes you on a final journey before letting you go. The unintrusive rhythm takes a back seat to the delayed synthetic sounds playing the strange music.

Whether I would recommend this album depends on the individual listener. It has its bad points as well as its beautiful moments. Personally, I found the sublime journey that the album took me on to be worth tracking it down. I tend to only listen to roughly half of the tracks that it has to offer, but I wouldn't want to part with them. It's a quirky release worth at least a listen by anyone curious as to how unusual music can sound while remaining good.