

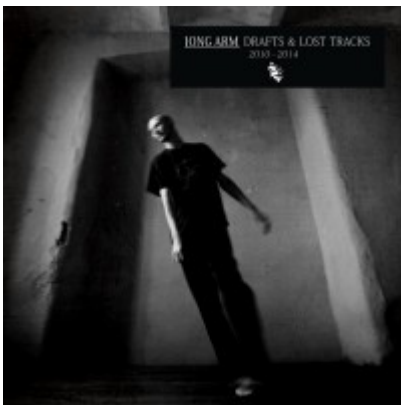
## Music | Bittles' Magazine: The music column from the end of the world

Music is memory. Sometimes all it takes is a mere hint of a melody, or the distant blast of a chorus to take you right back to the glory days of your youth. Faded memories suddenly seem clearer, while the feeling of nostalgia can be so intense that it almost seems we can reach out and touch our childhood toys. By **JOHN BITTLES**



Occasionally you come across a record which can achieve this feat without us even having heard it before. A case in point is the bitter-sweet instrumental hip hop of **Long Arm**. Recalling the dusty record aesthetics of **Bonobo**, the playfulness of **Mr. Scruff**, and the grand ambitions of **Cinematic Orchestra**, the producer has created some of the most bewitching and beguiling music to grace my ears.

**Long Arm** (real name **Georgy Kotunov**) first burst onto the scene in 2011 with the highly emotional beat-scapes of *The Branches*. Soft and willowy, the record was a lovingly crafted affair, filled with tracks which took great delight in enveloping the listener in their own vividly realised aural world. The follow-up, *Kellion - The Stories Of A Young Boy* was a little more beat-based, and delicately upped the pace to create a set which could work on a dance floor, yet still maintained a welcome dreamy haze. The record saw **Long Arm** branching out, being more creative and widening the scope of his sound palette. Utilizing elements of hip hop, house and funk to glorious effect, it is one of those albums you find yourself eagerly coming back to time and time again.



Late March saw the producer release *Drafts & Lost Tracks (2010-2014)*, a gorgeous collection of offcuts and sketches which didn't fit onto his previous two albums. Full of melancholy melodies, languid beats, tongue in cheek humour, and some downright filthy little grooves, *Drafts* is a lot more than a collection of cast-offs, it is a mesmerising and rich LP. For instance, songs such as *Rain Around*, *Butterflies*, *Sleepsafe* and *Caves Of The Consciousness* are gentle, downbeat affairs, containing a rich emotional depth which instantly grab hold of your soul. Yet, its not all shoegazing long dark teatimes of the soul, as these sombre, reflective moments are nicely contrasted by flourishes of gentle humour and/or wild abandon to create an album brimming with both humanity and musical depth.

In the following interview with **Long Arm** we discuss the new album, working with the label *Project Mooncircle*, Jazz, making turntables from old phonographs, and lots more. And, if you need a soundtrack for your reading then this lovely teaser mix of the LP should really hit the spot [Long Arm - Drafts](#)

For those who haven't heard your music before, can you tell us a bit about who you are and what you do?

My name is **Georgy Kotunov** and I'm making music as **Long Arm**.

Your new album *Drafts & Lost Tracks* (2010-2014) came out on the 23rd of March. What was the idea behind the LP?

I decided to combine these tracks into an LP because each one of them is associated with an important point in my music and real life. So I really didn't want to leave them unpublished.

How did you decide what to omit and what to include?

During this 4 year long process I started working on new material and on the concept several times. In my opinion, I included the most expressive tracks from all these different concepts in the album.

The album opens with the string-drenched melancholy of *Rain Around*, which is a lovely way to start any album. Was this always going to be the record's first track?

Yes, when I was making it I already knew that it should be first track on the record.

Next track *Butterflies* is, perhaps, my favourite track from the LP. Can you tell us a bit about how this song come about?

I created the first draft of this track in early Spring 2012. I potted with it for probably half a year before the composition took its present form. But I didn't have many options to develop this composition. I received some additional content at some point and I only worked on the sound for the rest of the time. For me it's a very airy and bright track.

Tracks like *Fun, You and Clouds Over The Foresthead* almost feel like dusty old jazz tracks. How big an influence is jazz in the music that you make?

I feel this influence less now than in those early years. But at the beginning I was inspired only by music impregnated with Jazz. So I think Jazz elements, to some extent, will always be present in my tracks.

Three of the album's songs feature **I.V.A.** (*Sleepsafe*, *Turkey* and *Vinyl Noise*) while two feature **R. Gadzhimuradov** (*Sleepsafe* and *Clouds Over The Foresthead*). What did they add to the tracks, and how did these collaborations come about?

**Vitaly Ivanov (I.V.A.)** is a percussionist from the city Zapolyarny, which is in the very north of Russia. He plays the hang drum on these tracks. I took his melodies as a basis to create *Vinyl Noise* and *Turkey*. And when I was working on *Sleepsafe* we decided to record a special hang part for it.



**Ruslan Gadzhimuradov** is a drummer from Kaierkan, based in St. Petersburg now. He plays the main drum parts in *Clouds Over The Foresthead*, and he recorded some percussion, toms and cymbals for *Sleepsafe*.

The album is going to be released on Project Mooncircle who have brought out most of your previous music. How did you first hook up with the label?

They somehow found my tracks on *Soundcloud* in 2010 and wrote me to suggest releasing on their label. My first work *After 4 AM* was published on their compilation *The Moon Comes Closer* in 2010. And then *Project Mooncircle* released my debut album *The Branches* in 2011.

Your Bio page on the Project Mooncircle website claims that “It was very difficult to get a turntable back then, so **Long Arm** and his friend started making them from old Soviet phonographs/record players”. Is this true? And, if so, how did it sound?

Very very dirty!:) But I would like to try it once again, one day!

Your previous LP, *Kellion - The Stories Of A Young Boy* was a concept album which traced a curious young boy discovering his way in the world. How important is the concept of story-telling in the music you make?

Very much! I love to build a story from track to track throughout the whole album. And I can't finish the album if the story isn't finished.

How did you first get into music?

My parents had a piano at home. My older sister studied at music school. I used to always approach the piano and play what I wanted. I often came up with some tunes.

And what was it that made you decide to become a musician yourself?

I have never consciously made such a decision. It all happened naturally.

What three albums should everybody in the world hear?

**Portico Quartet** - *Portico Quartet* (2012, *Real World Records*)

**Nils Frahm** - *Felt* (2011, *Erased Tapes Records*)

**Peter Dinklage** - *These Walls Of Mine* (2012, *Erased Tapes Records*)

Do you have any final words for our readers?

Be happy every single day!

For more information about *Drafts & Lost Tracks (2010-2014)* head to [Info](#), while the album is currently available in all good record stores and download sites such as [Project Mooncircle](#) and [Bleep](#). Enjoy!

| [JOHN BITTLES](#)

| PICS: ILINA VICKTORIA