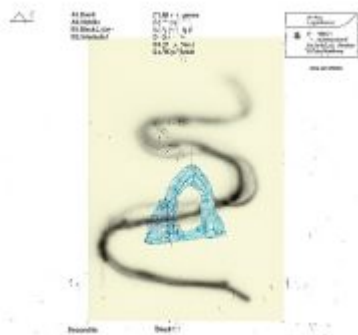


## Music | Bittles' Magazine: The music column from the end of the world

With 2020 now in full swing there are a raft of great new releases springing out of hibernation to hit record store shelves. These are rare creatures though, only to be found if you know where to look. That's why, this week, I shall be introducing you to some of the fabulous records which you might not find within the bland offerings of *Amazon* or *HMV*. We have the mournful electronica of **Recondite** and **Steven Rutter & Bryonii**, the 80s tinged house of **Jordan**, the wistful folk stylings of **Arborist**, **Emika's** heartfelt piano ballads, and lots more. By **JOHN BITTLES**

So, wax out those ears, cast aside any distractions from your life, and let us begin...



**Lorenz Brunner** returned to his well-regarded **Recondite** alias late January with the lush electronica and deep techno grooves of *Dwell*. After the spacious ambiance of *Daemmerlicht* from early last year, *Dwell* finds the producer returning to the dancefloor with ten tracks of melancholy heavy sounds. The title track opens proceedings with some mournful synths and moody beats. Restrained and thoughtful sounding, this is a song which is content to exist within its own shadowy world. Next up, the eerie beat driven atmospheric of *Nobilia* would sit nicely on a *Mo'Wax* comp from back in the day. Further in, *Black Letter* has a trance-like melody to die for, the mid-paced *Mirror Games* is guaranteed to be the highlight of any warm-up set, *Surface* is so gloriously deep you could get lost within its grooves for days, while the contemplative *Moon Pearl* should be officially recognised as a work of outstanding beauty. Quietly understated and emotionally powerful, *Dwell* is a record which may not 'get the party started', but which enriches your very soul. **9/10**.



With the first of the *Nocturne Edits* series being played everywhere from *Panorama Bar* to *Ulster Sports Club* it seemed only a matter of time before a sequel would hit the shelves.

Arriving late February, *Nocturne Edits 002* finds the mysterious producer sometimes known as **Jordan** offering four high quality edits of 80s influenced funk. *Boogie Down* gets things off to a blistering start, a heavily treated vocal sitting atop a driving disco beat. Hypnotic and gloriously deep, this is a track which has already been causing a stir wherever it's been played. The loose funk strut of *Touch Me* follows, a female vocal intoning 'touch me with your heart' over a vintage bassline. Flip over for the '**John Carpenter** lost in a disco' sound of *Visitors* and the pure euphoric rush of *Simon Says*. With each track a winner and vinyl only as always, get down to your local record emporium now to avoid being fleeced on *Discogs* or enduring the indignity of having to wait for a repress. **9/10**.



**FireScope Records** head and one half of legendary IDM duo **B12, Steven Rutter** teams up with vocalist **Bryonii** this March for a wonderfully atmospheric ten track LP. Out on Steven's own imprint, the record pairs warm electronics with lush vocals on an album which recalls **Thom Yorke's** solo work, early **Portishead** or the best of 90s trip hop. While lots of this type of music can sound overbearingly polite, on *StarCrossed* the duo get the balance just right. Opener *Juliet* is eerie and unsettling, **Bryonii's** voice nestling within some hushed acid squiggles and whispered beats to stunning effect. Recalling **Billie Ray Martin's Persuasion** in its haunting intensity, this is a sign of the treats to come. *LDLM* continues its predecessor's ominous air, bringing to mind the experimental yearning of **FKA twigs** in its mournful beauty. Other picks include the playful bass wobble of *Oxygen*, *Room Without A View's* lullaby like aural trip, and the fractured r&b of *Chinese Whisper*. Sounding simultaneously alien and startlingly humane, *StarCrossed* is a thoughtful, contemplative album which offers a deeply immersive listening experience for anyone with the courage to dive in. **8.5/10**.



Belfast band **Arborist** follow the *Home Burial* album this month with the spectral beauty of their new LP. *A Northern View* is out now, available from the band's [Bandcamp](#) page and finds **Mark McCambridge** and co creating a warm, inviting aural world. The album's eleven tracks are full of

hushed folk stirrings, sigh-filled lullabies and open-hearted pleas. *A Stranger Heart* opens with some contemplative strings before suddenly morphing into a **Neil Young** style slice of melancholy. Beautifully heartfelt, this is about as good a beginning as any LP can hope to have. *Here Comes The Devil* meanwhile, has an urgent sense of yearning impossible to ignore. Further in, *The Guttural Blues* is quietly magnificent, the spoken-word *Taxi* is brimming with a sense of nostalgia, while the windswept title track closes proceedings in style. Drenched in a rich sense of longing, *A Northern View* is a wonderful album which, even after a single play, feels like an old friend. **8.5/10**.



Next up we have some deep electronics with the latest volume in the *Air Texture* series. Following an excellent selection of introspective techno and electro via **Steffi** and **Martyn** on the previous volume, *Air Texture VII* finds **Rose** and **Silent Servant** exploring darkened realms. The first CD finds London based Californian **Seth Horvitz (Rose)** blending together selections by **Anthony Child**, **Ron Morelli**, **Laurel Halo**, **Octo Octa** and more. Heady and surreal, the mix starts out with the deep ambiance of **Anthony Child's** *Forced Compliance Behaviour*, *Decision-Making And Effort* and **Robert Aiki Aubrey Lowe's** *8<sup>th</sup> Continent In 5 Dimensions*. From here the album builds in intensity until **Laurel Halo's** *Dies Ist Ein* offers a welcome moment of respite. For his selection **Juan Mendez** adopts his **Silent Servant** persona to present 14 tracks of brooding ambiance and mesmeric grooves. Highlights include the gloriously trippy *When It Twists* by **Luke Slater**, the dub splattered angst of *Volatile Stillness* by **Pod Blotz** and the old school techno/trance thump of **June And An-I's** *Afterlife*. Deeply hypnotic, listening to *Air Texture VII* is like inviting the cold winter night into your home. **8.5/10**.



Berlin resident **Emika's** new album is a tranquil, contemplative delight. Released on Valentine's day, *Klavirni Temna* is the spiritual sister to *Klavirni* which came out to critical acclaim back in 2015. Formed of fourteen solo piano pieces full of space and emotion, the music recalls the classical indebted ambiance of **Nils Frahm** or **Max Cooper** in their hushed sense of wonder. Serene and

introspective, the songs on *Klavirni Temna* swell with feelings of nostalgia and melancholy and will surely be soundtracking images on your television screen soon. According to the press notes, the album was recorded in a time of “ultra-hyped up creativity combined with a massive fear about losing my identity or creativity as an artist once I would become a mother”. As such, songs like *Dilo 23*, *Dilo 29* and *Dilo 33* overflow with a sense of yearning, and a trepidation which seeps into your very soul. At times hauntingly beautiful, **Emika’s** latest embraces you like a warm hug. **8.5/10**.



A special mention must also go to: *Come Home EP* by **Mike Schommer** - Featuring vocals by **Milly James**, legendary dub techno titan **Mike Schommer’s** latest EP is deep, dubby and divine, **9.5/10**, *Love Beyond The Intersect* by **Space Dimension Controller** - The follow up to *Welcome To Mikrosector-50* is a funk-filled delight of vintage sounding electro grooves, **9/10**, *Fluids Of Emotion* by **Eris Drew** - The hotly tipped producer/DJ’s eagerly anticipated debut solo EP is a rave-tinged beauty, full of euphoric dancefloor jams, **9/10**, *Tangerine* by **Shanti Celeste** - Released back in November on the always excellent *Peach Discs* imprint, *Tangerine* is full of quirky ambiance and bass heavy house, **8.5/10**, *Images* by **Synkro** - Three tracks from last year’s *Images LP* receive the remix treatment from **Claro Intelecto**, **Sieren** and **Sad City**, with the deliriously heady **Sad City** refit of *Realize* the stand-out for me, **8/10**, *Invisible Island* by **Midori Hirano** - Dreamy ambiance and vivid soundscapes abound in a bewitching album which is the perfect soundtrack for closing your eyes and allowing reality to slowly drift away, **8/10**, *Pop Ambient 2020* by **V/A** - Also ideal for chasing away the horrors of modern life is the latest in *Kompakt’s* long running compilation series, **8/10**, *Wait On Me* by **Felipe Gordon** - The always on point *Toy Tonics* imprint come up trumps yet again with four tracks of house goodness, **8/10**, and *Nothing Matters When We’re Dancing Vol. 10* by **V/A** - To celebrate their tenth birthday, Berlin institution *CockTail d’Amore* give us a compilation formed of three groove-laden 12”s. Turn the volume up, and it’s almost as if you’re there, **9/10**.

| [JOHN BITTLES](#)