

Derek Piotr

Forest People Pop



1. Tonic/You Move
2. Light
3. Hear You
4. Ice Floe 2.0e (feat. Banx)
5. Clear
6. Crush On You
7. Sky
8. You Move/Timelapse
9. Aquamarine Endpoint
10. Sunup

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Derek Piotr releases *Forest People Pop*, his seventh solo record.

Although many themes echo those of its precursor *Drono*, *Forest People Pop* marks the boldest stylistic shift in Piotr's discography. This is Piotr's most vivid exploration of the melodies, rhythms and hooks of western pop music, refracted through the prism of his own passion for global indigenous musics such as Egyptian electro-chaabi, Algerian rai and Indonesian gamelan.

Forest People Pop has its roots in the *Drono* sessions, with the previous album's abstract formlessness failing to satiate Piotr's restless fascination with percussion. As such, the blueprint for this polyrhythmic record is centred on a marriage between traditional indigenous forest rhythms from across the globe and perceptive references to contemporary pop, hip-hop and club production. These pop allusions are diverse and fascinating, by turns evoking the breaks of Timbaland, the pristine gloss of SOPHIE, Dirty Projectors' experimentation and the chameleonic shape-shifting of MIA. Hearing the recognisably maximalist sounds of urban music melding with the repetition of Piotr's indigenous instrumentation is an alien experience, evoking a parallel universe whose mainstream radio is an uncanny post-colonial distortion of our own.

Yet despite contrasts and hybridisation found throughout *Forest People Pop*, at its centre lies a genuine admiration for pop aesthetics. Its tracks are full of moments that are emotive, catchy and – often overlooked in much contemporary experimental music – fun! Auto-tune, twenty-first century pop's most ubiquitous instrument, is employed on every track, often to extreme degrees (as in the playful melodies of 'Light' and 'Ice Floe'). Piotr forces the unconventional vocal scales of his indigenous musical influences through auto-tune, whose westernised struggle to recognise them creates a voice that is thrillingly surreal.

Forest People Pop is also Piotr's first unabashedly devotional record, with most of its songs ruminating on love; both autobiographical and universal. Pre-release single 'Tonic/You Move', which opens the album, is unflinching in its emotional content. Spontaneously written, its freeform lyrical structure amplifies the intensely personal sentimentality. There are references throughout to nature and environmental concerns, which are themes that have guided much of Piotr's output to date, but his lyrics here foreground these issues more explicitly and affectingly than ever before.

Forest People Pop is an impression of western pop music from the perspective of a lover of global musical traditions. Indeed, by lyrically and sonically investing so personally in this body of work, Piotr succeeds in deeply affecting the listener: a reflection of the impact that devotional pop music has on our own daily emotions.

Text by Dr. Michael Waugh