

**LONGSTONE
Kabuki**

UNCUT

OCHRE RECORDS

Everything, including kitchen sink. Literally Mike Cross and Mike Ward's sixth album of sparse, experimental electronica includes a sleeve credit for "percussion, shelf brackets, household gadgets", which is a handy pointer for what to expect from the six tracks here. Glitchy beats build and build, with the addition of improvised guitar, woodwind (courtesy of the Guillemots' Chris Cundy) and the aforementioned shelf brackets into soundscapes that don't sound anywhere near as self-indulgent as they perhaps should. It works best on the more beat-driven tracks such as "Kabuki Part Two" and "Kabuki Part Four" which have a sense of propulsiveness that recalls Neu! at their finest.

NATHANIEL CRAMP

Longstone
Kabuki
Ochre CD

Over 12 years, six albums and a plethora of side projects, Longstone have evolved into a unique proposition. The duo of Mike Ward and Mike Cross have repeatedly opened their compositional process up to the influence of collaborators, which means that musicians as diverse as Will Sergeant, Pete Kember and Fyfe Dangerfield have had an impact on their sound. On *Kabuki*, they've practically transformed themselves into a group. The record has its genesis in 2008's live work, and the basic tracks were recorded, as a six piece ensemble, in real time. Chris Cundy's plaintive saxophones and Steve Moody's progressive guitars are particularly striking on the first listen, but Stuart Wilding's intricate percussion playing – nimbly woven around the programmed rhythms – and Kev Fox's outlandish splashes of electronic colour contribute just as much to the overall effect. The result is a true hybrid, a questing, indefinable music propelled through reverberant spaces by staccato rhythms and slashes of artful noise.

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On record

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**LONGSTONE
Sakura**

★★★

Wavetable WAVECD001



Cheltenham's durable electronics duo enlist various local experimental luminaries in a suite of fizzy noise, with all profits to

Japanese tsunami relief charities. Clattering blips arrive, from Düsseldorf via Detroit, and bleed into becalmed woodwinds. Cautious melodic progressions emerge from shudderingly undanceable beats. Ice sheets of high-end drones slide into the sea. Available digitally, *Sakura* also comes as a limited-edition CD in a large-card wallet, with numbered inserts and prints. My copy included a hand-made origami frog, raising the bar for other musicians' releases considerably. **SL**

**Longstone
Sakura**

Wavetable CD

The Cheltenham based duo and their regular cast of instrumental co-conspirators spike their bitcrushed drones and action-splatter beats with mournful, distant woodwind wails and urgent yet measured percussion flourishes. Incongruous, perhaps, but it works. In the past they have often invoked comparisons with Krautrock's motorik strand, but *Sakura* more strongly recalls the data-saturated Industrial workouts of 1980s Sheffield heroes Hula, particularly in the way that hard funk beats suddenly leer out from uneasily becalmed Ambient passages. Any record that manages to stitch together 8-bit cartoon breaks, ethno-Improvisation 'n' scratch and hi-gloss sonic mangling is fine by me. The proceeds of this set go to Japanese earthquake relief funds.



Keith Moliné overcomes an aversion to whalesong while embracing hi-gloss sonic mangling and fabulously cheerless