



PUBLICATION DJ
ARTICLE TITLE ALBUM OF THE MONTH: LUKE SOLOMON – THE DIFFERENCE ENGINE
WRITTEN BY DAVE JENKINS
DATE FEB 08

tunes



ALBUM OF THE MONTH

LUKE SOLOMON

THE DIFFERENCE ENGINE *Rekids* (UK)



The playful flutter of a jazz horn, the off-key nonsense of chatting computers, the mournful weep of a cello, the brain-frazzling twist of a skewered acid line, Robert Owens hosting an underwater hoe-down and a triumphant chorus of carnival-esque horns... all in a day's work for Luke Solomon.

Actually, that's a bit of a fib. Nobody could conjure up such a remarkable solo debut in a day. Not even Superman. In reality, this is the end result of a tumultuous time for Luke Solomon. As head honcho at *Classic and Music For Freaks* he remained the undisputed king of the wonky house castle from the mid-'90s through till 2004. As a founder of *The Freaks*, he found himself part of a live electronic band that were, certainly in retrospect, well ahead of their time. Then, as the labels came to an untimely demise, he suddenly found himself at a loose end.

Back to the future, and it seems Luke has rediscovered his mojo. And then some. Make no mistake. *The Difference Engine* is one captivating debut. Served as one continuous piece of music, Luke runs the house gamut with references and flavours from past, present and future. What first hits you, somewhat unsurprisingly, is Luke's intrinsic link to unique leftfield house. And while this primarily serves as Luke's line in the sand with a view to the future, there're obvious links to the house music he spent years peddling back in the day: heavily swung beats, trippy synth washes, off-beat bass notes and the odd boomy flavour thrown in for good measure.

Other flavours include the effervescent flutes and horns of cuts such as 'The Beat Goes' and 'Spirits' (a mesmerising voodoo dance if ever I heard one) add an organic flavour that would translate amazingly in a live environment. Shit-scary acid lines rear their

ugly head as Luke pays homage to acid house on 'Junkies & Whores' and early '80s electro-funk gets pulverised into the tripped-out slab of leftfield electronic soul that is 'Open Fire'. The more you listen to it, the deeper you'll find yourself floating in the mix, bombarded by sudden transitions, quirky samples, crafty edits. Often, thanks to its DJ mix style, you'll find yourself several tracks deep without even noticing the time passing.

To many, *The Difference Engine* will get filed as yet another premium house album, which is all good and well, but it's abundantly clear that this is far more heartfelt and honest than that. To Luke, this is as life changing as Babbage's original difference engine. To the rest of us it's a statement of intent, and what a statement it is. Welcome back Luke.

★★★★★
Dave Jenkins



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