

= Homogenic =

Homogenic is the third international solo album by Icelandic musician Björk , released in September 1997 . Produced by Björk , Mark Bell , Guy Sigsworth , Howie B and Markus Dravs , it was released on One Little Indian Records . The music of Homogenic was a new style for Björk , focusing on similar sounding music combining electronic beats and string instruments with songs in tribute to her native country Iceland . Homogenic was originally to be produced in her home in London , but was later recorded in Spain . Homogenic marked the first of several production collaborations between Björk and Mark Bell , whom Björk would cite as a major influence on her musical career . The album peaked at number twenty @-@ eight on the Billboard 200 , and at number four on the UK Albums Chart .

Five singles were released from Homogenic : " Jóga " , " Bachelorette " , " Hunter " , " Alarm Call " and " All Is Full of Love " . Homogenic was highly acclaimed on its initial release and continues to be praised by critics , with Sal Cinquemani of Slant Magazine stating that " if not the greatest electronic album of all time , it 's certainly the greatest of its decade " .

= = Production = =

= = = Maida Vale sessions = = =

After an extensive tour in 1996 , Björk returned to her home in Maida Vale with an urgent need to write new songs as a form of therapy . Björk would let audio engineer Markus Dravs into her home studio to start creating new songs . Björk wanted to create an album with " a simple sound " and " only one flavour " . The album began with the working title of Homogeneous , but Björk shortly afterwards changed it to Homogenic .

The sessions with Dravs and Björk were casual , with Björk allowing Dravs freedom with the album . Björk only left the studio to cook meals for the both of them . One of the first songs created during the sessions was " 5 Years " which Dravs created the fast beat for . The progress of Homogenic in these sessions was halted due to a media sensation caused by the suicide of Björk 's stalker Ricardo López . To deal with the stress of being at home during this incident , Björk imagined herself as the protagonist in a Spanish soap opera . The character 's image inspired a song titled " So Broken " which she sang to herself in her kitchen . The song was later included on the Japanese import of the album .

= = = Málaga sessions = = =

To record in privacy away from the sudden unwanted media interest , Björk 's tour drummer Trevor Morais offered his studio in Spain . Björk went to Málaga and arranged to meet with flamenco guitarist Raimundo Amador . Björk had originally intended to stay in Málaga only briefly , but later decided to record the entirety of Homogenic there . Björk made a final trip out of the country before staying in Spain . As she had done since moving to London , Björk returned to Iceland for Christmas . While there , she wrote more new songs for Homogenic , including " Jóga " . Before returning to Spain to record , Björk was sidetracked by a two @-@ week worldwide press tour for the promotion of her remix album Telegram , which had just been released .

After returning to the studio in Spain in late January , Björk decided that producer Nellee Hooper , who had produced both Debut and Post , would not return , as Björk stated that they had " both stopped surprising each other " . Björk had intended to produce the album alone , but she abandoned the idea and sought out a group of close collaborators including Dravs , Howie B , Guy Sigsworth and LFO 's Mark Bell . Howie B had worked with Björk previously on Debut and Post and Sigsworth had played harpsichord on Post . The American hip hop group Wu @-@ Tang Clan almost contributed to the production of Homogenic , but were unable due to their production on the album Wu @-@ Tang Forever , which had taken longer than planned . Most of the melodies on the

album were created by Björk , who then composed string sections on a Casio keyboard and brought them to programmers who would add suitable rhythmic patterns . Björk desired to have Mark Bell contribute to her albums Debut and Post , only finding him available for Homogenic . Mark Bell was credited for the majority of the album 's production , including the songs " Pluto " , " Alarm Call " , and the bass line in " Jóga " . Björk stated about her collaboration with Bell that she " trusts and respects what [Bell] does for me . If I were to say who has influenced me most it would be Stockhausen , Kraftwerk , Brian Eno and Mark Bell " . Other unorthodox methods of recording were used during the production , including Björk wanting to record outside on the porch and using non @-@ professionals to help with production , such as Rebecca Storey , who was hired as a babysitter but added to the production staff after showing interest in the equipment .

String arrangements were added late in the recording process . Björk had friend Eumir Deodato conduct , transcribe and compose original pieces for the few songs that Björk did not arrange for herself . To keep with the Icelandic theme of the album , Björk ordered the services of the Icelandic String Octet . By June 1997 , the album was behind schedule and Björk was uncertain of the final track listing and unhappy with some of the recorded vocals .

= = Composition = =

Before production began on Homogenic , Björk wanted to create an album with " a simple sound " and " only one flavour " . Heather Phares of Allmusic described the sound of Homogenic as a " fusion of chilly strings (courtesy of the Icelandic String Octet) , stuttering , abstract beats , and unique touches like accordion and glass harmonica " . The album differs from her previous two releases stylistically , and Neva Chonin of Rolling Stone stated the album was " certain to be rough going for fans looking for the sweet melodies and peppy dance collages of her earlier releases " .

Björk wanted Homogenic to have a conceptual focus on her native Iceland . Producer Markus Dravs recalled Björk wanting it to sound like " rough volcanoes with soft moss growing all over it ... " In an interview for Oor , Björk explained that " in Iceland , everything revolves around nature , 24 hours a day . Earthquakes , snowstorms , rain , ice , volcanic eruptions , geysers ... Very elementary and uncontrollable . But at the other hand , Iceland is incredibly modern ; everything is hi @-@ tech . The number of people owning a computer is as high as nowhere else in the world . That contradiction is also on Homogenic . The electronic beats are the rhythm , the heartbeat . The violins create the old @-@ fashioned atmosphere , the colouring . "

Björk 's vocals on Homogenic range from primitive sounding screams to a traditional singing method used by Icelandic choir men , a combination of speaking and singing as illustrated in the song " Unravel " . The majority of songs on Homogenic have lyrics about love and failed relationships . The song " Jóga " was written as a tribute to her best friend and tour masseuse of the same name . Björk called " All is Full of Love " a song about " believing in love " and that " Love isn 't just about two persons . It 's everywhere around you " . " All Neon Like " contains snippets of a poem Björk wrote called " Techno Prayer " in 1996 . The song " 5 Years " appeared in live form a few weeks after her breakup with musician Tricky and music journalists considered it a response to it . " Bachelorette " was originally written for director Bernardo Bertolucci for his film Stealing Beauty . Björk later faxed Bertolucci , informing him the song would be used for her album instead . " Bachelorette " and " Jóga " were written with Icelandic poet Sján , because Björk wanted to use epic lyrics . " Immature " was written about mistakes in past relationships , shortly after the breakup with Goldie . Björk described " Pluto " as about " being plastered , that need to destroy everything so you can start again " . " Unravel " is a song about lamenting love , with brief flashes of hope .

= = Release = =

The album was released later than One Little Indian Records had intended . Björk was behind schedule and the album 's cover design by Nick Knight needed a reshoot . Towards the end of August 1997 , One Little Indian delayed the album by a month . Homogenic was released on September 22 , 1997 on One Little Indian in the United Kingdom and on September 23 Elektra

Records in North America on compact disc and cassette . The album was later issued on vinyl and DualDisc formats . The Japanese version of Homogenic included several bonus tracks and remixed versions of songs . The DualDisc release featured the full album on the CD side and the DVD side included the album with superior sound quality and the music videos for the singles .

On the album 's initial release , it charted in the United States on October 11 , 1997 , and stayed in the charts for nine weeks peaking at number 28 . Homogenic entered the charts in Canada for one week at number 20 . In the United Kingdom , Homogenic entered the charts on October 4 , 1997 , stayed in the charts for thirteen weeks and peaked at number four . Of the ten songs on Homogenic , five were released as singles . A music video for " Jóga " directed by Michel Gondry was filmed in the middle of 1997 and was the first single for the album . " Bachelorette " was released in December 1997 with another music video directed by Gondry . In 1998 , two singles were released : " Hunter " , which had a music video directed by Paul White , and " Alarm Call " , which had a video directed by Alexander McQueen . The final single from Homogenic was " All Is Full of Love " , released in 1999 with a music video directed by Chris Cunningham . " Jóga " was the only single to not chart in the United Kingdom and " All Is Full of Love " was the only single to chart in the United States , peaking at number eight the Hot Dance Singles Sales chart . In Canada , the Canadian Recording Industry Association certified Homogenic as a gold record on June 12 , 1998 , and in the United States the RIAA certified the album as Gold on August 31 , 2001 .

== Album cover ==

The themes of the album are reflected in the album cover designed by Alexander McQueen . Björk approached McQueen explaining to him the person who wrote Homogenic 's songs was someone who " had to become a warrior . A warrior who had to fight not with weapons , but with love . I had 10 kilos of hair on my head , and special contact lenses and a manicure that prevented me from eating with my fingers , and gaffer tape around my waist and high clogs so I couldn 't walk easily " .

== Tour ==

When the release of Homogenic was delayed by a month , its tour began with the audience not being familiar with the album 's songs since it had not been released yet . The tour started at the beginning of September with a backing band that consisted only of Mark Bell and made stops in Germany , the Netherlands , France , Belgium , Spain , and England . These shows were brief live shows lasting about half an hour consisting of only new material . Another tour took place in late October and lasted less than four weeks . Stops on this tour included Italy , Switzerland , France , England , Scotland , Germany , Ireland , and Denmark . In late November , Björk was diagnosed with a kidney infection and while she was still healthy she was advised to take a three @-@ week rest and was forced to cancel her American tour . In 1998 , a North American tour with Radiohead was announced but canceled later due to difficulty of changing the stage between performances of the acts . Björk had another tour in the middle of 1998 through Europe , and outside of the continent through other countries , including Chile , Brazil and Argentina . Opening acts for portions of the tour included electronic musician µ @-@ Ziq .

== Reception ==

Homogenic has been met with unanimous critical acclaim since its initial release , winning multiple awards , as well as being placed on several " best of " charts . The album was nominated in the Best Alternative Music Performance category at the 1998 Grammy Awards , losing to Radiohead 's OK Computer . Michel Gondry 's music video for " Bachelorette " was nominated for best Best Short Form Music Video at the 1999 Grammy Awards , but lost to Jonas Åkerlund 's video for the Madonna song " Ray of Light " . Homogenic landed Björk the award for Best International Female at the BRIT Awards where she accepted the award stating " I am grateful grapefruit " .

Initial critical reception was very positive . David Browne of Entertainment Weekly stated that "

Homogenic could have been stuffy and dull ? Sting with a sex @-@ change operation . It 's a testament to Bjork 's continued weirdness that even overtures toward adulthood come out delightfully skewed " . Neva Chonin of Rolling Stone cited it as " one of the boldest ? and most exciting ? albums of the year " . NME 's Ted Kessler praised Homogenic as Björk 's best album and " her most emotional , highly charged and groovy record , as well as a stinging triumph for the spirit of adventure . " Heather Phares of AllMusic cited the album as being more emotionally deep than any of Björk 's previous work and called it a " seamless fusion of chilly strings , stuttering , abstract beats , and unique touches like an accordion and glass harmonica . "

A more negative review came from Stephen Thompson of The A.V. Club , who said " Homogenic is stylish enough , and it 's as restlessly creative as you 'd expect , but the album rarely gives Björk 's songs a chance to assert themselves " . Robert Christgau of The Village Voice assigned the album a two @-@ star honorable mention rating , indicating a " likable effort consumers attuned to its overriding aesthetic or individual vision may well enjoy . "

= = Commercial reception = =

The album debuted at number six on the Australian Albums Chart on 12 October 1997 . The album descended to number 45 after five weeks in the chart . Homogenic debuted at number eight on the New Zealand Albums Chart on 12 October 1997 . The album peaked at number six on 19 October 1997 , but descended after six weeks on the chart .

The album was released in North America digitally on August 3 , 2004 . The album debuted at number twenty @-@ eight on the Billboard 200 . The stayed a total of nine weeks inside the top 200 , where its last position was at number 164 . The album was certified gold on August 1 , 2001 by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) for shipments of 500 @,@ 000 copies . The album debuted at twenty on the Canadian Albums Chart , becoming Bjork 's first album to chart on the Canada Billboard chart and spent a sole week there . The album was certified gold by the Canadian Music Industry on June 12 , 1998 .

= = Legacy = =

American critics rated Homogenic highly in end of the year polls . In Village Voice 's Pazz & Jop critics ' poll of 1997 , the album placed at number nine . Spin ranked the album at number four on their list of " Top 20 Albums of the Year " . British critics listed the album in similar polls , with Melody Maker ranking the album at number thirty @-@ three on their list of " Albums of the Year " and NME placed the album at number fifteen in its Critics ' Poll . Later reception to the album has also been generally positive . Ryan Schrieber of Pitchfork Media gave Homogenic a 9 @.@ 9 out of 10 rating , claiming the album was " absolutely brilliant " . In 2002 , Homogenic placed at number ten on Slant Magazine 's list of " The Greatest Electronic Albums of the 20th Century " . In 2003 , Homogenic placed on number 21 on the music webzine Pitchfork Media 's list of the top one hundred albums of the 1990s , claiming it as " one of the most perfectly formed records of any era , and it is entirely possible that Björk will never approach this level of consistently enrapturing beauty again " . In 2007 , Slant Magazine gave the highest possible rating of five out of five stars , describing the album as " gorgeous and evocative " and praising it as one of the best albums of the 1990s . In a career retrospective in 2007 , Spin gave the album five out of five stars . In 2011 , Slant Magazine placed the album at number one on their list of best albums of the 1990s . According to Tiny Mix Tapes , Homogenic is " one of the most groundbreaking albums of all @-@ time , an album that assuredly caused countless hearts to soar . "

= = Track listing = =

All songs written by Björk and produced by Björk and Mark Bell , except where otherwise noted .

= = Personnel = =

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =