

= The King of Limbs =

The King of Limbs is the eighth studio album by the English rock band Radiohead, produced by Nigel Godrich. It was self @-@ released on 18 February 2011 as a download in MP3 and WAV formats, followed by physical CD and 12 " vinyl releases on 28 March and a special " newspaper " edition on 9 May 2011. The physical editions were released through the band's Ticker Tape imprint on XL in the United Kingdom, TBD in the United States, and Hostess Entertainment in Japan.

Following the protracted recording and more conventional rock instrumentation of In Rainbows (2007), Radiohead developed The King of Limbs by sampling and looping their recordings. Singer Thom Yorke described the album as an expression of " wildness " and " mutation ". Radiohead released no singles from the album, but released a music video for " Lotus Flower " that spawned an internet meme.

The King of Limbs was named one of the best albums of 2011 by publications including the Wire, the NME, and PopMatters, and was nominated for five categories in the 54th Grammy Awards, including Best Alternative Music Album. It sold an estimated 300 @,@ 000 to 400 @,@ 000 download copies in the first two months of release and became a bestseller on vinyl. The album was followed in the same year by a remix album, TKOL RMX 1234567, and a live video, The King of Limbs : Live from the Basement.

= = Recording = =

Radiohead worked on The King of Limbs with longtime producer Nigel Godrich intermittently from May 2009 to January 2011. Like their sixth album, Hail to the Thief (2003), it was recorded in Los Angeles, possibly at the home of actress Drew Barrymore, who is thanked in the album's liner notes.

The band wanted to avoid repeating the protracted recording process of their previous album In Rainbows (2007). Cover artist Stanley Donwood said: " In Rainbows was very much a definitive statement, and that isn't where the band are at the moment. Where they are now is more transitory ... this album shows where Radiohead are at the moment the record was released. The music is a continuing thing. And we wanted to make the album representative of that. " Singer Thom Yorke said the band had felt that " if we are gonna carry on, we need to do it for a new set of reasons. " Multi @-@ instrumentalist Jonny Greenwood told Rolling Stone that the band had not wanted to " pick up guitars and write chord sequences. We didn't want to sit in front of a computer either. We wanted a third thing, which involved playing and programming. "

Whereas Radiohead developed In Rainbows from their live performances, they developed The King of Limbs from studio experimentation. Much of the album is constructed from samples of drum, bass and guitar parts individually played by the band members, then looped, manipulated and edited with turntables, vinyl emulation software and sampling software written by Greenwood. Yorke likened the process to editing a film. Guitarist Ed O'Brien said: " Music came first, then the lyrics, and the melody came after. So we had blocks of music and then Thom would write a lead vocal line melody and lyrics to it. " He told Rolling Stone: " The brick walls we tended to hit were when we knew something was great, like ' Bloom ', but not finished. We knew the song was nearly something. Then [bassist Colin Greenwood] had that bassline, and Thom started singing. Those things suddenly made it a hundred times better. "

= = Music and lyrics = =

The King of Limbs emphasises drummer Phil Selway and bassist Colin Greenwood's rhythm section. According to O'Brien: " Rhythm is the king of limbs! The rhythm dictates the record. It's very important. " The album makes prominent use of sampling, looping, and ambient sounds, including samples of natural sounds such as birdsong and wind. Pitchfork described its music as " aggressive rhythms made out of dainty bits of digital detritus, robotically repetitive yet humanly off @-@ kilter, parched thickets of drumming graced with fleeting moments of melodic relief. " Several

critics noted dubstep influences .

The first track , " Bloom " , opens with a repeating piano loop and features complex rhythms and a flugelhorn arrangement by Jonny Greenwood . " Morning Mr Magpie " , debuted as a solo acoustic performance by Yorke in a webcast in 2002 , appears with a repeating electric guitar riff and a looping hi @-@ hat pattern . " Little by Little " features intricate guitar playing over busy , syncopated percussion . " Feral " is an instrumental with wordless , processed vocals , cut @-@ up drum loops , and a distorted synth bassline . " Lotus Flower " features a driving synth bassline and Yorke 's falsetto vocals . " Codex " is a downtempo piano ballad with flugelhorns and strings . " Give Up the Ghost " is an acoustic guitar ballad with call @-@ and @-@ response vocal harmonies . The final track , " Separator " , features a looped drum pattern and a " Neil Young @-@ inspired " electric guitar riff .

Yorke told NPR that he felt The King of Limbs was a " visual " album , with lyrics and artwork about " wildness " and " mutating " inspired by his environmental concerns . The album title is thought to refer to the King of Limbs , an ancient oak tree in Wiltshire 's Savernake Forest , close to Tottenham House , where Radiohead recorded In Rainbows .

At eight tracks and 37 minutes in length , The King of Limbs is Radiohead 's shortest album . Appearing on a BBC radio show in April 2011 , O 'Brien explained that Radiohead felt the ideal album was around 40 minutes long , and cited Marvin Gaye 's What 's Going On (1971) as a classic record shorter than The King of Limbs .

= = Packaging and artwork = =

The King of Limbs artwork was created by Yorke and Stanley Donwood , who has worked with Radiohead since their second album , The Bends (1995) . Donwood originally intended to paint oil portraits of the Radiohead members in the style of Gerhard Richter , but abandoned the idea as " I 'd never painted with oils before and I 'm not Gerhard Richter so it was just a series of painted disasters . " The final artwork was influenced by Northern European fairy tales and their association with nature and woods . As with previous Radiohead albums , Donwood worked on the artwork as the band recorded nearby ; the music made Donwood think of " immense multicoloured cathedrals of trees , with music echoing from the branches whilst strange fauna lurked in the fog . " He and Yorke drew trees with eyes , limbs , mouths and familiars , creating " strange , multi @-@ limbed creatures that are neither malevolent or benevolent , they 're simply there , part of the living spirit of the forest . "

For the special " newspaper " edition of The King of Limbs , Donwood wanted to create something " in a state of flux . " He chose newspaper for " its ephemeral nature " , admiring how paper fades in sunlight ; this reflected the album 's nature themes , mirroring the natural decay of living things . Donwood took inspiration from real publications , including weekend broadsheets and a stack of radical 1960s newspapers and magazines left at bassist Colin Greenwood 's house by an unknown person . The " newspaper " edition of The King of Limbs was nominated for the Best Boxed or Special Limited Edition Package in the 54th Grammy Awards .

= = Release = =

Radiohead announced The King of Limbs on their website on 14 February 2011 with a release date of 19 February . It was released one day earlier , on 18 February . The download of The King of Limbs is DRM @-@ free . The MP3 download costs £ 6 , US \$ 9 , or ? 7 ; the WAV download costs £ 9 , US \$ 14 , or ? 11 . Customers could also order a special " newspaper edition " of the album , released 9 May 2011 , for £ 30 , US \$ 48 or ? 36 with the MP3 download , and £ 33 , US \$ 53 or ? 39 with the WAV download (shipping included) . The " newspaper " edition contains " two 10 @-@ inch vinyl records in a special record sleeve , many large sheets of artwork , 625 tiny pieces of artwork , a compact disc , and a colour piece of oxo @-@ degradable plastic package " . The retail CD and vinyl editions of The King of Limbs were released through the band 's Ticker Tape imprint on XL in the United Kingdom , TBD in the United States , and Hostess Entertainment in Japan .

On 16 April 2011 , Radiohead released two tracks not included on The King of Limbs but worked on during the same sessions , " Supercollider " and " The Butcher " , as a double single for Record Store Day . They later released the tracks as free downloads to those who had purchased The King of Limbs from the Radiohead website .

In June 2011 , Radiohead announced a series of King of Limbs remix singles by various artists . These remixes and others are compiled on the remix album TKOL RMX 1234567 , released in September 2011 . Radiohead performed The King of Limbs in its entirety for The King of Limbs : Live from the Basement , broadcast in July 2011 and released on DVD and Blu @-@ ray in December 2011 . On February 11 , 2014 , Radiohead released the Polyfauna app for Android and iOS ; it is an " experimental collaboration " between the band and the British digital arts studio Universal Everything , and uses musical elements and imagery from The King of Limbs .

= = Promotion and tour = =

Radiohead released a music video for " Lotus Flower " on their YouTube channel on February 16 , 2011 , featuring black @-@ and @-@ white footage of Yorke dancing . It was directed by Hammer & Tongs member Garth Jennings and choreographed by Wayne McGregor . The video sparked the " Dancing Thom Yorke " internet meme , whereby fans replaced the video 's audio or edited the visuals , and " # thomdance " became a trending hashtag on Twitter .

To promote the retail release of The King of Limbs , Radiohead distributed a free single @-@ issue newspaper , the Universal Sigh , at independent record shops across the world on 28 March 2011 . Influenced by free newspapers such as LA Weekly or London Lite , the Universal Sigh is a 12 @-@ page tabloid printed using web @-@ offset lithography on newsprint paper and features artwork , poetry , and lyrics along with short stories by Donwood , Jay Griffiths and Robert Macfarlane . Donwood and Yorke distributed copies of the Universal Sigh in person at a record shop in east London .

Radiohead did not support The King of Limbs with a tour until 2012 , as Yorke wanted to continue studio work , and as it took the band some time to arrange the album for live performance . They enlisted drummer Clive Deamer , best known for his work with Portishead and Get the Blessing , to help perform the complex rhythms . Selway said of the two @-@ drummer setup : " That was fascinating . One played in the traditional way , the other almost mimicked a drum machine . It was push @-@ and @-@ pull , like kids at play , really interesting . " On 24 June 2011 , Radiohead played a surprise performance on the Park stage at the 2011 Glastonbury Festival , performing songs from The King of Limbs before an audience for the first time . [106] In September , they played two dates at New York City 's Roseland Ballroom and made American TV appearances including a one @-@ hour special episode of The Colbert Report and the season première of Saturday Night Live . In February 2012 , Radiohead began their first extended North American tour in four years , including dates in the United States , Canada and Mexico .

= = Commercial performance = =

The retail edition of The King of Limbs debuted at number six on the Billboard 200 in the United States , with first @-@ week sales of 69 @,@ 000 copies . The following week , it peaked at number three , selling 67 @,@ 000 copies . In the United Kingdom , it debuted at number seven on the UK Albums Chart , selling 33 @,@ 469 copies in its first week . By April 2012 , The King of Limbs had sold 307 @,@ 000 retail copies in the US , making it Radiohead 's first album to fail to achieve gold certification there . The retail vinyl edition , excluding " newspaper album " sales , sold more than 20 @,@ 000 copies in the UK in the first half of 2011 , 12 % of all vinyl sold in that period , and became the best @-@ selling vinyl album of 2011 ; as of April 2015 , it was the UK 's second best @-@ selling vinyl of the decade thus far .

These figures describe retail sales after 28 March 2011 and do not include " newspaper album " or download sales through Radiohead 's website , where The King of Limbs was exclusively available for nearly two months prior to retail release , selling an estimated 300 @,@ 000 to 400 @,@ 000

copies . Radiohead 's co @-@ manager Chris Hufford estimated that Radiohead made more money from The King of Limbs than any of their previous albums , as most sales were made through the band 's website without a record company .

= = Critical reception = =

At Metacritic , which assigns a normalised rating out of 100 to reviews from mainstream critics , The King of Limbs has an average score of 80 based on 40 reviews , indicating " generally favorable reviews " . BBC Music 's Mike Diver described the album as " a fans @-@ pleasing eighth album from Britain 's most consistently brilliant band . " Michael Brodeur of The Boston Globe praised " the tense calm these eight songs maintain ? a composure that feels constantly ready to crack " , commenting that " where In Rainbows was mellow but brisk ? an album that felt on its way somewhere ? these songs are eerie and insidious , creeping like shadows ? and , often because of the haunting voice of Thom Yorke , the occasional chill . " PopMatters wrote : " The King of Limbs is a beautiful record , one that begs more of a conscious listen than its predecessor , but one that provides equal ? if different ? thrills in doing so . "

François Marchand of The Vancouver Sun said that the album " bridges Radiohead 's many different styles " and is " worth embracing " . Mark Pytlik of Pitchfork Media called the album " well @-@ worn terrain for Radiohead , and while it continues to yield rewarding results , the band 's signature game @-@ changing ambition is missed . " Pitchfork later named " Give Up the Ghost " as " Best New Music " , describing it as " a highlight " and " life @-@ affirming . " Robert Christgau awarded the album a two @-@ star " honourable mention " and recommended the songs " Little by Little " and " Bloom " . Los Angeles Times writer Ann Powers wrote that the album " can be heard from several different angles ... fans and critics have already been registering wildly divergent reactions : some think it 's one of the band 's best efforts ; others find it too low @-@ key or similar to previous work ; a few consider it awfully doomy , and a few others wish it were less abstract . " In a retrospective 2015 article for Stereogum , Ryan Leas wrote that The King of Limbs is " very good , occasionally great music by a pivotal band that nevertheless felt like something of a letdown because it wasn 't , ultimately , some genius stroke none of us expected . "

The album was named one of the best of 2011 by several publications : The Wire and the Guardian both named it the 27th best of the year , Mojo the 47th , NME the 20th , PopMatters the 10th , Uncut the 7th and Rolling Stone the 5th , the latter describing it as " a record that grew all year ? in your room , and onstage " . The King of Limbs was nominated for five categories in the 54th Grammy Awards : Best Alternative Music Album , Best Boxed or Special Limited Edition Package , Best Short Form Music Video (for " Lotus Flower ") , Best Rock Performance (" Lotus Flower ") and Best Rock Song (" Lotus Flower ") .

= = Track listing = =

All tracks written by Radiohead and produced by Radiohead and Nigel Godrich .

" Bloom " ? 5 : 15

" Morning Mr Magpie " ? 4 : 41

" Little by Little " ? 4 : 27

" Feral " ? 3 : 13

" Lotus Flower " ? 5 : 01

" Codex " ? 4 : 47

" Give Up the Ghost " ? 4 : 50

" Separator " ? 5 : 20

= = Personnel = =

Radiohead

Colin Greenwood

Jonny Greenwood

Ed O'Brien

Phil Selway

Thom Yorke (also credited as " Zachariah Wildwood " for cover art and packaging)

Additional personnel

Yazz Ahmed ? flugelhorn on " Bloom " and " Codex "

Drew Brown ? additional engineering

Bryan Cooke ? additional assistance

Stanley Donwood ? cover art and packaging (credited as " Donald Twain ")

Nigel Godrich ? production , engineering

Noel Langley ? flugelhorn on " Bloom " and " Codex "

Bob Ludwig ? mastering

Darrell Thorp ? additional assistance

The London Telefilmonic Orchestra , led by Levine Andrade and conducted by Robert Ziegler ?
strings on " Codex "

= = Charts = =