

= Debut ( Björk album ) =

Debut is the first international solo studio album by Icelandic recording artist Björk . The album was released in July 1993 on One Little Indian and Elektra Records , and was produced by Björk in collaboration with artist Nellee Hooper . Her first recording following the dissolution of her previous band the Sugarcubes , the album departed from the from the rock @-@ oriented style of her previous work and instead drew on an eclectic variety of styles across electronic pop , house music , jazz and trip hop .

Debut received widespread critical acclaim from British music critics , though United States reviewers doled out more mixed reviews . Upon its initial release , the album sold far greater than her label predicted , charting at number three in the United Kingdom and 61 in the United States . It was certified gold in Canada and platinum in the United States , where it remains her best @-@ selling album to date .

Five singles were released from Debut : " Human Behaviour " , " Venus as a Boy " , " Play Dead " , " Big Time Sensuality " and " Violently Happy " . All five singles charted in the United Kingdom with only " Human Behaviour " , " Violently Happy " and " Big Time Sensuality " charting on dance and modern rock charts in the United States .

= = Background and production = =

While still performing as the vocalist of Icelandic alternative rock group the Sugarcubes , Björk approached both Ásmundur Jónsson of Bad Taste and producer Derek Birkett of One Little Indian Records with a demo cassette of her own songs on which she had been working . These demos included versions of songs that would appear on Debut , including " The Anchor Song " and " Aeroplane " . After the Sugarcubes went on hiatus , she moved to London , England , where she and Birkett worked on the details of what would become Debut . Björk has admitted that The Sugarcube 's music was not her taste , and that her contact with London 's underground club culture of the late 1980s / early 1990s helped her find her own musical identity . She said : " ... as a music nerd , I just had to follow my heart , and my heart was those beats that were happening in England . And maybe what I 'm understanding more and more as I get older , is that music like Kate Bush has really influenced me . Brian Eno . Acid . Electronic beats . Labels like Warp . "

Many of the songs on the album were written years before Björk moved to London , including " Human Behaviour " which was written when the singer was a teenager . Björk had put aside these songs stating that " I was in punk bands and [ the songs ] weren 't punk . " Björk had already written half the songs for Debut in some form , but had nothing recorded . With no producer in line to work with , she continued to compose songs with 808 State member Graham Massey in a friend 's home in Manchester where she would write songs that would be included on later albums , including " Army of Me " and " The Modern Things " .

While creating more electronic based tracks with Massey , Björk developed a desire to work with a jazz producer . Wanting to work with a harpist , producer Paul Fox who had previously worked with the Sugarcubes , introduced her to jazz harpist Corky Hale . Hale was going to politely refuse to work with Björk until her stepson , who was a Sugarcubes fan , insisted that she take the job . Björk recorded a handful of jazz standards with Hale including " I Remember You " and an early version of " Like Someone in Love " . Fox also introduced Björk to Oliver Lake and the pair recorded another jazz standard , " Life Is Just a Bowl of Cherries " , with Lake 's jazz group for the John Hughes film Curly Sue . Hughes turned down the idea of the recording for the film , but it led to the idea of Debut being produced by Fox and arranged by Oliver Lake . Björk contracted Lake for working with some session saxophonists in London for Debut . Lake 's contributions to the album are heard on tracks including " Aeroplane " and " The Anchor Song " .

Björk was intending to have several producers work on the album , but this idea never came to fruition . Björk was then going to have the album produced with Paul Fox until she was introduced to producer Nellee Hooper by her boyfriend Dominic Thrupp . Hooper had previously produced albums by Soul II Soul , Sinéad O 'Connor and Massive Attack , which made Björk skeptical about working

with him , stating that " I thought Nellee was too ' good taste ' for my liking . But then I met him , got to know him , [ and ] got to hear about his fabulous ideas ... " Björk and Hooper 's recording ideas were very similar , which led to the decision to end production work with Massey and Fox . Hooper introduced Björk to studio technology and studio programmer Marius de Vries who gave Debut a modern style with the use of keyboards and synthesizers . Hooper produced the first ten tracks on the album , while Björk co @-@ produced " Like Someone in Love " with Hooper and produced " The Anchor Song " solely herself . Björk and Hooper spent many sessions in the studio working on Debut until the album was finished in early 1993 .

= = Composition = =

The music of Debut draws on an eclectic variety of sources . Treblezine described the album as " [ melding ] alternative dance and electronic with a graceful flow . " It is said that the album " [ shook ] the status quo " of the contemporary musical climate , in the sense that its eclectic experimental pop leanings distanced it from the music " primarily being made by men with guitars " that was popular at the time , like grunge and the burgeoning britpop . Michael Cragg of The Guardian has described it as an " indefinable conflation of electronic pop , trip @-@ hop , world music and otherworldly lyrics " . AllMusic described the album 's style as " creative , tantalizing electronic pop . " The The New York Times review stated that " Debut often recalls the early 70 's jazz @-@ fusion of bands like Weather Report . But where these fusionists combined jazz harmony with funk and acid rock , Björk marries her scat @-@ vocalese and off @-@ kilter melodies with the futuristic textures and programmed percussion of today 's techno and acid house . Furthermore , The Face 's Mandi James felt Debut was " a delightful fusion of thrash metal , jazz , funk and opera , with the odd dash of exotica thrown in for good measure . " The singer also took influence from the music of Bollywood and " the buzz of London nightlife . "

A main element of Debut 's sound is its incorporation of dance music , reflecting the contemporary styles of London 's club culture , with which the singer had established close ties . While the echoes of subgenres such as Euro @-@ house , acid jazz , worldbeat and IDM can be noted , " they hadn't yet broken free from the primal thump of four @-@ on @-@ the @-@ floor house music . " Tom Breihan of Stereogum asserts that " even as dance music took on all these new sounds , that basic pulse was still the most important thing about it , and that pulse reverberates all through Debut . " Björk said : " A lot of the songs on my record have dance beats , but I think they're beats that are more reflective of daily life ? like life in the middle of the day in a city , as opposed to the night life of the clubs . " The " four @-@ on @-@ the @-@ floor " style ? typical of house music ? is mostly evident in songs such as " Human Behaviour " , " Crying " , " Big Time Sensuality " , " There 's More to Life Than This " and " Violently Happy " . Björk felt house music was " the only pop music that [ was ] truly modern , " stating in 1993 that it was " the only music where anything creative is happening today . "

Her departure from the guitar @-@ driven rock of her previous works stemmed from the feeling that it was outdated , arguing that " as soon as any form becomes traditional , like the guitar , bass and drums , then people start to behave traditionally , " and that " it 's really difficult to get a band to stay on the edge using typical bass , guitar and drums set @-@ up because it tends to lapse into a predictable form . " Being a fan of dance music since the early days of acid house , she thus used it as the framework for her songs . However , in a Rolling Stone interview she also stated that " [ she ] was more influenced by ambient music than what you 'd call dance music , and by things that were happening way back in Chicago and Detroit that were sensual and daring and groundbreaking in their time ; " also adding : " Ninety @-@ five percent of the dance music you hear today is crap . It 's only that experimental five percent that I 'm into ? the records that get played in clubs after 7 o'clock in the morning , when the DJs are playing stuff for themselves , rather than trying to please people . " Björk 's embracement of England 's dance culture also extended to her looks , with her style at the time now considered a representative of 1990s acid house fashion .

Björk 's adoption of " the contemporary musical environment of London " also included the burgeoning trip @-@ hop scene of bands like Portishead and Massive Attack . Co @-@ producer

Nellee Hooper had been a member of Bristol 's " Wild Bunch " collective , a group that took from acid jazz , funk and hip hop and catalyzed the appearance of trip @-@ hop . Thus , the electronically backed songs of the album that are not dance @-@ oriented have a more trip @-@ hop style sound . These non @-@ dance tracks have been described as having a " more delicate atmosphere " . i @-@ D noted that Debut ? and Björk 's following album , Post ? also integrate ambient techno and jungle , stating that they " couldn 't have existed without Aphex Twin , Black Dog , A Guy Called Gerald , LFO and all the other producers who reshaped the language of music since 1988 . " Also present are elements of jazz , with WUOG stating that " while many see Debut as Björk ? s clubbiest album , it may also be her jazziest . " Likewise , Brad Shoup of Stereogum wrote that " though her electronic bent gets the most attention , it 's her interest in jazz that courses through the set . " Tim Perlich of Now felt Debut " bridges jazz and pop " , and Simon Reynolds characterized it as " jazzy love songs tinged with an oceanic feeling . "

= = = Songs = = =

For the most part , the lyrics of Debut are concerned with love . The love themes range from " flesh @-@ and @-@ blood passion " for another person to the love of life itself . According to i @-@ D , with a couple of exceptions , the songs of Debut fell into two types : " those where Björk addressed the listener as someone in pain and told them fireworks would light their nights and all would be well ; " and " songs where she sang about her own pain . " The Face stated that the album 's lyrics " [ consolidated ] her love affair with language , " while The Sunday Times felt that Björk " rigorously [ avoided ] the obvious " by using lyrics that do not rhyme .

Album opener " Human Behaviour " features a " bouncing riff " sampled from Antônio Carlos Jobim , with " its syncopated beat consigned to a venerable orchestral instrument , the timpani . " Its lyrics refer to Björk 's experience as a child , finding the behaviour of adults " rather chaotic and nonsensical , " instead finding harmony with other children , nature and animals . Inspired by naturalist David Attenborough , she sings from the point of view of an animal , with its opening line being " If you ever get close to a human / And human behaviour / Be ready , be ready to get confused " . Following track " Crying " shows a contradiction between its " bubbly , shiny @-@ surfaced acid disco @-@ pop " sound and lyrics that describe the turmoil of feeling alienated in a big city . " Venus as a Boy " ? considered an ambient track by Rolling Stone ? reflected Björk 's newly found interest in Bollywood , having befriended people of Indian origin in London , most notably Talvin Singh . In a spontaneous fashion , the song 's strings ? and also those of " Come to Me " ? were recorded by a film studio orchestra in India . The lyrics of the track are about the sensitivity of her then boyfriend Dominic Thrupp , with lyrics that have been described as " sweet and just the slightest bit naughty . " In the dancefloor @-@ oriented " There 's More to Life Than This " , Björk leaves romance behind , with " her mischievous side [ coming ] to the fore " . Its lyrics were inspired by a party she attended and promptly left . " Like Someone in Love " is one of the several jazz standards the singer recorded with Corky Hale , with her voice " cradled in harp and swoony strings . "

" Like Someone in Love " is followed by the techno @-@ tinged " Big Time Sensuality " in an " intentionally startling " leap . An " anthem to emotional bravery , " it contains lyrics described as " simple but passionate " , concerning Björk 's relationship with her co @-@ producer Nellee Hooper . The songs " The Anchor Song " , " One Day " , and " Aeroplane " draw on what Björk refers to as her more " academic , clever side " . " One Day " also presents a sudden shift of mood , featuring a " gently pulsing bass " that builds into an " itchily impassioned , housey pop euphoria . " " Aeroplane " is one of Debut 's most musically complicated pieces with off @-@ kilter arrangement from Oliver Lake ; its backdrop is inspired by exotica music . This song is also about Thrupp , written when he was living in the United Kingdom and Björk still lived in Iceland . " Come to Me " features a " hazy musical backdrop of raindrop synths , padded drums and sweeping strings " ; lyrically , it explores a " sensually intense need to nurture . " " Violently Happy " is the most hardcore techno track on the album . In the song , over " brisk house beats " Björk sings in a stammering fashion , as she " struggles to express feelings of excitement so intense she seems on the brink of leaping out of her

skin . " As a gesture to inexpressible feelings , the song samples one syllable and " [ turns ] it into a stuttering vocal tic . " Closing track " The Anchor Song " is the only one in the album solely produced by Björk . One of the three songs to appear on her first demo cassette of 1990 , it features Oliver Lake playing the saxophone , in an arrangement that replicated the " ebb and tide of an ocean 's peaking tops , an image reinforced by Björk 's fiercely patriotic lyrics . "

= = Release = =

Debut was released on 5 July 1993 on compact disc and cassette on One Little Indian Records in the United Kingdom and 13 July 1993 on Elektra Records in the United States . One Little Indian estimated that Debut would sell a total of 40 @, @ 000 copies worldwide based on a guess of the Sugarcubes fan base at the time . However , within three months of Debut 's release , over 600 @, @ 000 copies had been sold worldwide . On the album 's initial release , it charted in the United States , peaking at number one on the Top Heatseekers chart and at number sixty @-@ one on the Billboard 200 . In the United Kingdom , Debut entered the charts on 17 July 1993 , staying in the charts for sixty @-@ nine weeks and peaking at number three . Debut has been re @-@ issued several times in different formats . In November 1993 , the album was re @-@ issued in the United Kingdom with the bonus track " Play Dead " , a song written for the film The Young Americans , shortly after Debut 's completion . The album was later issued on vinyl and DualDisc formats . The Japanese version of Debut included two bonus tracks : " Play Dead " and " Atlantic " . The DualDisc release featured the full album on the CD side while the DVD side included the album with superior sound quality and the music videos for the singles . On 5 May 1994 , The Canadian Recording Industry Association certified that Debut had sold over 50 @, @ 000 units making it a Gold record in Canada . On 31 August 2001 , the RIAA certified that Debut had sold over one million units making it a Platinum record in the United States . Worldwide sales of the album stand at 4 @. @ 7 million copies .

= = = Singles = = =

In 1993 Björk contacted French director Michel Gondry to create a music video for " Human Behaviour " after seeing a video he made for his own band Oui Oui . " Human Behaviour " was the first single taken from Debut , and was issued a month before the album 's release in June 1993 . Three more singles were released from Debut in 1993 . " Venus as a Boy " was the second single , released in August with a music video directed by Sophie Muller . " Play Dead " was released in August 1993 as a non @-@ album single , that would be included on later releases of the album . " Play Dead " had an accompanying music video directed by Danny Cannon . The final single released in 1993 was " Big Time Sensuality " remixed by Fluke with a music video by Stéphane Sednaoui . A further single , " Violently Happy " , was released in March 1994 with an accompanying video by Jean @-@ Baptiste Mondino . All five singles from Debut charted within the top 40 of the UK Singles Chart while only " Human Behaviour " , " Violently Happy " and " Big Time Sensuality " charted in the American Billboard charts .

= = Reception = =

At the 1994 Grammy Awards , Michel Gondry 's music video for " Human Behavior " was nominated for best Best Short Form Music Video , but lost to Stephen Johnson 's video for the Peter Gabriel song " Steam " . At the 1994 Brit Awards , Björk won awards for " Best Newcomer " and " Best International Female " . Shortly after the Brit Awards , Björk was sued by Simon Fisher , a musician she collaborated with in 1990 . Fisher 's claim stated that he had co @-@ written " Human Behaviour " , " Venus as a Boy " , " Crying " , and " Aeroplane " and sought damages of over ? 20 @, @ 000 . Hooper and Björk went to court with Fisher shortly after the release of Björk 's album Post . Judge Robin Jacob found Fisher only seeking credit for one song instead of four and cleared Hooper and Björk of all charges stating that Fisher 's charges rendered him " unreliable , diffuse ,

and vague " .

Critical reaction to Debut was generally positive . The British music press spoke positively about the album , with Q giving it four out of five stars calling it " a surprising , playful collection " while the NME wrote that Debut was " an album that believes music can be magical and special . " The Independent gave Debut a favorable review noting that Björk had " fashioned an amazing array of contrasting arrangements , whose musical diversity never interferes with their clarity of vision . " American reception was more mixed . Musician magazine praised the vocals of the album , stating " what makes [ Björk 's ] singing memorable isn 't the odd assortment of growls , moans and chirps she relies upon , but the emotions those sounds convey . " The New York Times described Debut as " an enchanting album " . American critic Robert Christgau gave the album a " neither " rating , indicating an album that " may impress once or twice with consistent craft or an arresting track or two . Then it won 't " . A negative review came from Rolling Stone who gave the album two stars out of five calling the album " utterly disappointing " blaming producer Nellee Hooper , suggesting he " sabotaged a ferociously iconoclastic talent with a phalanx of cheap electronic gimmickry . " Michele Romero of Entertainment Weekly gave the album a C , saying , " On a few songs , [ Björk 's ] breathy mewl is a pleasant contrast to the mechanical drone of Sugarcube @-@ like techno @-@ tunes . But most of Debut sounds annoyingly like the monotonous plinking of a deranged music box . Wind it up if you like -- eventually it will stop . " Debut rated highly in British end of year polls . The NME ranked Debut at number one on their list of " Top 50 LPs of 1993 " . Melody Maker placed the album at number six on their list of " Albums of the Year for 1993 " calling it " a fantastic debut " . In 1994 , Q included the album on their list for top fifty albums of 1993 . Björk reacted to the positive reviews hesitantly , stating that if she 'd " delivered exactly the same album and I came from Nottingham , I 'd have got completely different reviews , normal down @-@ to @-@ earth ones " and that Debut " was a bit of a rehearsal and it 's really not that good . I can do much better . "

Later reception was also positive . In Spin magazine 's alternative record guide , the album received a rating of nine out of ten stating that the choice of Nellee Hooper as producer was a " stroke of genius " and Björk 's vocals were " awe @-@ inspiring " . Heather Phares of AllMusic gave the album a five @-@ star rating , stating that Debut is " Possibly her prettiest work , Björk 's horizons expanded on her other releases , but the album still sounds fresh , which is even more impressive considering electronic music 's whiplash @-@ speed innovations . "

= = Legacy = =

Debut is widely regarded as one of the greatest albums of 1993 and the 1990s in general . In 2013 , John Hamilton of Idolator called the album " highly influential " , and wrote " in spite of its advancing age , Debut 's futurism has aged exquisitely . " The album has also been credited as one of the first albums to introduce electronic music into mainstream pop . Stereogum 's Tom Breihan wrote : " House music didn 't quite have critical respect before Björk came along , and plenty of American writers didn 't know what to make of the sound of Debut when it came out . [ ... ] Debut didn 't just establish Björk ; it helped make sounds like that cool to a segment of the music @-@ dork universe that might 've remained deaf to its charms otherwise . At this point , it 's virtually impossible to imagine a big publication slamming an adventurous dance @-@ pop album for " cheap electronic gimmickry , " and Debut is a big part of that change . Celebrating the album 's twenty @-@ year anniversary , Emily Mackay of NME wrote the album " put the lie to the post @-@ grunge assumption that heartfelt , passionate solo artistry came in the form of acoustic guitar and heartbreak , creating a new breed of singer @-@ songwriter . " Dubbing it an " influential masterpiece " , she found influences of the album in the work of musicians such as M.I.A. , Grimes , These New Puritans and Tune @-@ Yards , writing : " It 's in fascinatingly individual artists like those that you 'll find [ Björk 's ] influence ? not , as many would have you believe , in every pretty @-@ faced girl with a big voice . " Mackay also noted that the album 's legacy echoes through dance @-@ pop artists like Lady Gaga and Robyn .

Furthermore , in 2013 Michael Cragg of The Guardian pointed out that " two decades after its release , the Icelandic artist 's first album has never sounded more relevant . " He argued that Debut

" reconstructed pop music " , also writing that " while pop in 2013 looks back to the early 90s for inspiration , Björk 's ability on Debut to innovate by using disparate genres without losing a sense of her own identity should be the blueprint for any new artist with desires to break the mould . " In the album 's entry in their list of " The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time " ? where the album was included at number 46 ? , NME claimed that " Debut achieved the remarkable feat of turning an idiosyncratic vocalist from a feted cult band into a significant global pop star , without losing one iota of the experimental mindset and creative cool that made her so special . " In 2005 , Björk stated that she thought the album wasn 't as strong as her later efforts : " It 's hard to judge yourself but I don 't think [ Debut and Post are ] my best . Debut was the album that went the highest up there in terms of what is ' Bjork music ' . But I think that the persona I created , which was entirely accidental , is better captured on the later albums " .

= = = Accolades = = =

The information regarding accolades attributed to Debut is adapted from Acclaimed Music , except where otherwise noted .

= = Track listing = =

Notes

^ a signifies an additional producer

= = Personnel = =

= = Charts and certifications = =

= = = Singles = = =