

Bradford-born, Wakefield-raised **John Burton** grew up fascinated by sound, and as a young boy would often drift off to sleep to the diffuse tones of his dad's progressive rock collection emanating from the room beneath him. He tried piano, guitar, and a short stint playing mouth organ but they failed to captivate him. It wasn't until halfway through his painting degree at Norwich School of Art and Design that he discovered the computer he bought to write his dissertation could take him on new sonic adventures by recording and manipulating sound.

His first recordings reached the offices of **Planet Mu Records** in 1999 where its founder and **Aphex Twin** collaborator **Mike Paradinas** encouraged John's more experimental efforts. During this time, he acquired his artist name, suggested by a friend who compared his creativity and industriousness to that of a leafcutter ant. Working with Planet Mu, John released three critically-acclaimed albums which culminated in the release of **The Housebound Spirit**, an album which combined elements of music-concrete and electro-acoustic music with voice and guitar work more commonly found in folk music. It won an Honorary Mention at the **2004 Ars Electronica Awards**, and was featured in **The Wire's** top 50 records of 2003.

His fourth album **The Forest and the Sea** was nominated for **Best Album (Quartz Electronic Music Awards 2007)** and was toured extensively throughout Europe and Australia. **Resurrection**, released in 2015, marked another shift for John, building on his formidable reputation as an inventor of unusual handmade electronic instruments and extraordinary music software. For the track **Gulps**, John used a recursive software system to layer a recording of the North Sea 7.1 billion times, once for each human alive on the planet.

For his latest (seventh) album, John is thrilled to team up with fellow stalwarts of idiosyncratic electronica **Border Community** on the joyously upbeat **Yes! Come Parade With Us**. Weaving field recordings from the Norfolk coastline together with layers of lyrical modular synth, it comprises seven bright-eyed anthems that beam with positivity and a sense of place. An intensely personal project, John has also hand-drawn the labyrinthine album art and animated his own suitably exuberant rainbow-hued video to accompany the boundless enthusiasm of the restorative title track **Yes! Come Parade With Us**.

As part of his ongoing quest to create more expressive instruments with which to write and produce music John has designed, built and developed a unique **light controlled musical interface** which is the heart of his live show. Comprising a light sensitive controller and bespoke Max/MSP software which he plays gesturally using handheld lights. He has performed with it throughout Europe and given talks and workshops at various music and art schools, including the Royal College of Music. In 2012 he took this system to Vietnam at the invitation of the **British Council** and in 2014 played it to a sold-out **Roundhouse** in London supporting **Imogen Heap**. In 2015, the interface won the **Quartz Electronic Music Award for Innovation**.

Since 2004 John has been a key member of experimental jazz band **Polar Bear**, recording five albums with them, touring extensively and picking up two prestigious **Mercury Prize** nominations. John has also performed with **Shabaka Hutchings**, **Talvin Singh** and **Imogen Heap**, supported **Matmos**, **Otomo Yoshihide** and **Yo La Tengo** and twice been part of **Beck's** band at the Barbican, London. In 2007 he was also invited to perform at **Jarvis Cocker's** Meltdown Festival at London's Southbank Centre, alongside **Beth Orton**, **Grace Jones**, **Nick Cave** and **Roisin Murphy**.

Living up to his industrious artist name, John is also a prodigious producer and remixer. His production credits include **Bas Jan** and **Melt Yourself Down** and he's currently working with **Ed Dowie** on his second solo album. And he's been commissioned to provide scores for countless theatre, dance and poetry luminaries, such as the **Handspring Puppet Company** and renowned choreographer **Wayne McGregor**. John has also written custom software for artists including **Jon Hopkins** (as used on his 2018 album *Singularity*) and experimental beat boxer **Jason Singh**.

## selected praise

*"Alongside Aphex Twin and Bogdan Raczynski – he's one of the UK's most fearlessly inventive electronicists"* - **Time Out London**

*"A musician who combines acoustic and electronic music with an irresistible compulsion to build Heath Robinson- like inventions"* - **The Guardian**

*"One of the burgeoning stars of post-electronica"* - **The Wire**

*"He has used the power available to him to push boundaries and concepts"* - **Future Music**

*"Leafcutter John brews up a particularly English blend of electronica"* - **Louder Than War**

*"A true, actual genius"* - **Jon Hopkins**

## awards & nominations

Paul Hamlyn, Awards for Artists 2017, Winner

Quartz Electronic Music Awards 2015, Innovation Winner (for the Light Interface)

Quartz Electronic Music Awards 2007, Best Album nomination The Forest and the Sea

Ars Electronica Awards, Honorary Mention 2004

With **Polar Bear**:

- MOBO Awards 2015, Best Jazz Act nomination

- Urban Music Awards 2015, Best Jazz Act nomination

- Mercury Prize 2014 nomination

- Mercury Prize 2005 nomination

## selected discography

<b>leafcutter john :</b>	<b>"yes! come parade with us" (album)</b>	<b>border community</b>	<b>2019</b>
	<b>"resurrection" (album)</b>	<b>desire path</b>	<b>2015</b>
	<b>"tunis" (album)</b>	<b>tsuku boshi</b>	<b>2010</b>
	<b>"the forest and the sea" (album)</b>	<b>staubgold</b>	<b>2006</b>
	<b>"the housebound spirit" (album)</b>	<b>planet mu</b>	<b>2003</b>
	<b>"microcontact" (album)</b>		<b>2001</b>
	<b>"concourse eep" (album)</b>		<b>2000</b>
<b>polar bear :</b>	<b>"same as you"</b>	<b>the leaf label</b>	<b>2015</b>
	<b>"in each and every one"</b>		<b>2014</b>
	<b>"peepers"</b>		<b>2010</b>
	<b>"polar bear"</b>	<b>tin angel</b>	<b>2008</b>
	<b>"held on the tips of fingers"</b>	<b>babel</b>	<b>2005</b>

## selected remixes

<b>talvin singh :</b>	<b>“traveller” (leafcutter john remix)</b>	<b>island</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>capitol k :</b>	<b>“pillow” (leafcutter john’s playtime remix)</b>	<b>xl recordings</b>	<b>2002</b>
<b>slag boom van loon</b>	<b>“broccoli” (leafcutter john remix)</b>	<b>planet mu</b>	<b>2001</b>
<b>badly drawn boy</b>	<b>“the shining” (capitol k &amp; leafcutter john remix)</b>	<b>twisted nerve</b>	<b>2000</b>

## production & mixing

Bas Jan, Yes I Jan (2018), Lost Map – co-produced with Capitol K and Leo Abrahams

Hello Skinny, Watermelon Sun (2017) Brownswood Recordings – additional production

United Vibrations, The Myth of The Golden Ratio (2016), Ubiquity – additional production

Melt Yourself Down, Last Evenings on Earth (2016), The Leaf Label – producer and mixer

Melt Yourself Down, Melt Yourself Down (2013), The Leaf Label – producer and mixer

## collaborations & commissions

Bau.Haus.Klang. Eine Harmonielehre: Performance with Michael Wollney. Akademie der Künste, Germany (2019)

Video Jam x Basquiat: performance with Danalogue, featuring Sarathy Korwar, and Idris Rahman (2018)

Material Men Redux: commission to extend music for a dance piece by Shobana Jeyasingh Dance (UK tour 2016/17)

The Reverse Collection: Guest musician at Tarek Atoui’s installation in the The Tanks, Tate Modern, London. (2016)

Stowfest, London: commission inspired by the designs of William Morris and performed at the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow (2016)

Material Men: commission to write electronic music for a dance piece by Shobana Jeyasingh Dance (2015)

Vuong: commission to write music for dance piece for Wayne McGregor/Random Dance (2015)

Imogen Heap’s Reverb: production of robotic orchestra (2014)

Converse and Google pop-up workshop: created and ran a workshop on DIY audio electronics (2013)

Crow: score for large scale production by Handspring Puppet Company (2012)

New graphic score piece for Blank Canvass with London Sinfonietta (2011)

The Chekhov Challenge: commissioned by Between the Ears on BBC Radio 3 (2010)

Canal Music: commissioned by SoundUK (2009)

BBC Radio 3: commissioned by The Verb in collaboration with poet Jen Hadfield (2009)