



GIG

Autechre

Leaders of an arcane boys' club of laptop electronica, Sean Booth and Rob Brown have been skulking at the edges of the genre IDM (intelligent dance music) since they appeared on Warp's Artificial Intelligence compilation in 1992. But while some of their peers have achieved wider exposure, Autechre seem content on the fringe, thanks to their apparent desire to create the most inaccessible music possible.

Debut album *Incunabula*, released in 1993, was a startlingly original and refreshing instrumental work. Follow-up *Amber* satisfied the fans with more pretty melodies and excursions around the theme of downbeat electro; 1995's glorious third album, *Tri Repetae*, launched a voyage into deeper and darker sonic territory. Autechre then began shaking up the rhythmic and melodic frame with bizarre polyrhythmic structures and atonal sounds, but their latest album, *Untilted*, is a more cohesive blending of all the strands.

It's a catalogue that suggests Autechre view themselves as serious artists. So how do they feel about their music being described as pioneering? 'Toad lane,' responds Booth obtusely. What can we expect from their show, then? 'Sound,' he says, enigmatically. 'We don't have to explain anything. We just make tunes.'

Those tunes, as well as material from a host of others, can be heard at the Version festival, starting this Friday, when the band will be playing alongside the likes of Cathode, Pixel and Monolake. The three-day event, co-produced by Amino, Forma and no-fi, sees the best in prog rock, ambient and complex electronica brought together. To add even more spice to proceedings, it all takes place onboard the MS Stubnitz – a massive ship converted into a floating art space-cum-music hall, moored on Newcastle's Quayside. Just don't go expecting answers. *Mark Evans*
Fri, MS Stubnitz, Quayside,
Newcastle upon Tyne, 8pm,
£55 weekend ticket, £16 session ticket.
Tel: 0191 232 1232. Metro: Central Station.
www.version.org.uk