

REVIEWS

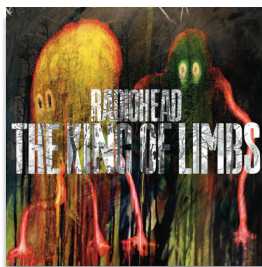
RADIOHEAD

The King of Limbs

[TBD Records]

There are two Radioheads, and there have been for some time now. One is a five-piece rock band from Oxfordshire, England, that is responsible for relatively straightforward modern classics like "Creep" and "Karma Police." The other is a six-piece studio collective (including producer Nigel Godrich, an essential part of the team since 1997's landmark *OK Computer*) that assembles complex, surreal sonic collages that frequently threaten to overwhelm the songs the other Radiohead comes up with. The two Radioheads have been involved in an epic power struggle for more than a decade now—the studio collective won on 2000's *Kid A*, the rock band seized control on 2003's *Hail to the Thief* and the two seemed to have reached a détente on 2007's brilliant *In Rainbows*.

On *The King of Limbs*, the studio collective once again wins out. The eight songs here are frequently overwhelmed by the dense soundscape of blips, beeps, glitches and skittering



electronic drum patterns that has been conjured to essay them. Opener "Bloom" proceeds from a Philip Glass-style keyboard pattern, seemingly assembling itself as it goes; "Feral" is little more than a drum pattern given an elaborate sonic going-over. The lyrical focus is on nature imagery, further pressing the conflict between technology and humanity that has been the group's primary theme for perhaps too long. *The King of Limbs* is tautly satisfying on its own terms, but one wishes the rock band Radiohead would peek out a bit more often. —Chris Neal

'*The King of Limbs* is tautly satisfying on its own terms.'

