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By James Flint

Opening with the rattle of a spray can and ending with the quiet tones of a music box, Four Tet's new album, *Pause* is a complete delight. Don't take my word on it: *iD* called it "a contender for album of the year"; in *M8* it was the album of the month; the *NME* labelled it a work of genius (yeah, okay, so that's the *NME*). But as good as *Pause* is, it's also difficult to describe. Four Tet is Kieran Hebden, formerly of Fridge. Hebden is both young and prolific – by the age of 21 he'd released three albums with Fridge and one on his own, the latter being the Four Tet debut album *Dialogue*. You could think of his new album as melding the musical imagination of Brian Eno with the harmonic sense of Susumu Yokota, and then grinding this admixture up with the rhythmic drive of DJ Shadow. Or you could think of it as a perfect aural mural, an elegant piece of sonic graffiti art. Or you could think of it as a bunch of pits and troughs on a printed CD. But the truth is that familiar, light-on-its-feet and self-assured as *Pause* is, it doesn't sound like anything, really, other than itself. Which, they tell me, is the hallmark of a classic.

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