**Over the past five years, Ben UFO has acquired a deserved reputation as one of contemporary dance music’s most daring and wide-ranging selectors, with his keen ear and razor-sharp technical abilities enabling him to cut between eras, lineages and mixing styles with dazzling ease and fluidity.**

**Having cut his teeth in early dubstep and drum ’n’ bass, his roots lie in UK rave culture - yet his selections cast the net wider, drawing new mutations of this culture into the orbit of house, techno and other global dancefloor sounds. In the club, his sets somehow manage to be simultaneously considered and raucous, sliding from sidewinding broken rhythms into an irresistible four-to-the-floor groove, or broadsiding you with unexpected tangents, old favourites and bizarre secret weapons.**

**Thomson’s development as a DJ has been inextricably linked to the maturing of Hessle Audio, the label he co-founded in 2007 alongside Pearson Sound and Pangaea. Just as dubstep was starting to unfurl into a sprawling, globalised festival sound, Hessle Audio, in stark contrast, emerged with a strikingly focused, spacious and percussive aesthetic. As the scene continued to unravel, they went on to become one of the most coherent focal points within a rapidly diverging UK dance music community, through their DJ sets, label releases and radio shows on London station Rinse FM. Listening back to Ben’s two official mix CD releases, 2011’s *Rinse:16* and 2013’s *Fabriclive.67*, you can hear snapshots of that evolutionary process in action; they plot subtle and often surprising connections between the pirate radio-borne genres he grew up with, and the worldwide house and techno scene.**

**It’s refreshingly difficult to pin down what makes Ben’s DJing distinctive and exciting, whether you encounter it on the radio, in a recorded mix or on the dancefloor. If there’s a core characteristic of his approach it’s an infectious warmth and restless love of exploration, exemplified by his habit of meshing mind-bendingly strange tracks into peak-time sets, and by the way his Thursday night shows on Rinse FM weave together jacking unreleased dance cuts with new finds and dubbed-out oddities from across the globe. In the club, he shapes these elements into something rich and unpredictable, interspersing phases of driving momentum with joyful curveballs and ruptures in the flow that jolt you back to your senses — moments, as he describes it, that feel like coming up for air on the dancefloor.**

**This fascination with the possibilities of dance music, stemming from Thomson’s formative years spent absorbing the sound-system weight of London’s Plastic People club, extends to his desire to continue playing for huge crowds as well as in tiny, sweaty basements — from large-scale outdoor festivals and world-renowned clubs such as Fabric and Panoramabar, to the intimate spaces of Hamburg’s Golden Pudel, Tokyo’s Air, or Freerotation festival, where the Hessle Audio trio are annual residents. The appeal of his fluid and open-minded approach is self-evident in the way it crosses genre crowds and spans nominal divides between underground and mainsteam. In recent years, for example, he’s played back-to-back with DJs as varied in style as Jackmaster, Morphosis, Gerd Janson, Joy Orbison and DJ Nobu, as well as recording mixes for both staunchly independent platforms like The Trilogy Tapes and Truants, and for widely-acclaimed series such as Resident Advisor and BBC Radio 1’s long-running Essential Mix.**

**From their early years in Leeds, Ben UFO and Hessle Audio have evolved into core figures in an increasingly globally-connected dance music scene. Having provided an early platform for music from kindred innovative spirits such as Blawan, Peverelist, Untold and Joe, the label continues to release new music from both its founders and emerging new artists. This openness marks the cornerstone of Ben’s approach: drawing connections, exploring new ideas, and feeding some of Hessle Audio’s energy and enthusiasm back into the musical communities of which they are an integral part.**