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Jai Agnish - *Automata*

From the first time I received a copy of the zine Flygirl a few years ago when I was still living in New Jersey I knew there was something special about the guy with the interesting way of spelling the otherwise common name of Jason.

From a small Northern New Jersey town outside of New York City that is often mentioned in Weird NJ magazine, Jai continues to be innovative in his music as he has been with his zine. His debut record takes a bit of new direction from the songs that appeared under the name Jags on a compilation. Where they were melancholy acoustic songs, *Automata* livens things up a bit with the addition of programmed beats, keyboards, and samples.

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The combination is one that combines two worlds, but it proves to be a dynamite combo. How You Dream has a catchy little beat that could easily make its way onto a Volkswagon commercial, and on top of that is Jai's soothing voice and simple heartfelt lyrics. While the ending of the song is a bit anti-climatic, dare I say flat, the next song "Deaf Today" is one I keep finding myself coming back to. The simple beat and the lyrics just touch the heart and don't let go. Sad and depressing music has never played to quite the beat as it does on this record. "The odds are good its true, that I love you," Jai sings, simple lyrics that cut pretty thick.

While the rest of the album is pretty solid, it is these two songs that I keep returning tom the two songs that give me such a warmth and a feeling of joyous melancholy. While many of the songs are pretty straight- forward, Jai still goes the experimental route, incorporated lots of interesting noises lifted from various toys. An example of this is the song "Finding Ways," which alternates between different toys making noises while Jai's beautiful voice fights to sing over top.

Cleverly constructing and arranging lyrics is a knack Agnish has, for example the song Somerset Streets, in which he sings Climb into my RX-7, I'm on my way to heaven. Its no coincidence, that seven and heaven rhyme.

I already knew that Jai was a clever writer and publisher. Add to it now a clever songwriter, with a real knack for invention. Perhaps the release of this record will now have people saying Flygirl is run by Jai Agnish instead of the other way around as I introduced this review.

-Matthew Ralph