

<http://www.herculesmoments.co.uk/2013/02/derek-piotr-raj.html>

Derek Piotr - Raj



Raj is a complex, intense construction of electronics and vocal noise, designed around rhythmic expression rather than melodic phrasing.

It starts with a metronomic knocking, with feedback and glitches drifting in and out to weave a sonic setup for the rest of the record. However, it's the second track that really showcases the creativity of Piotr. *Amendola* is built around his vocal (the main instrument on *Raj*), which hints at counting down (it's hard to tell what the vocalisations are, if they're even meant to be intelligible) and a coming failure.

Derek's palette is tense. The music here is hard to listen to on pretty much every track. There's no comfort here. And why should there be? Music shouldn't be warm and comforting all the time, it should challenge and antagonise; inflame and irritate. *Grave* is short uneasy listening, quickly followed by *Karakum*, which rocks along on a distorted, broken hip hop beat with sub-tantric chanting – written down that sounds terrible, but it's thoroughly engaging.

The second half explores similar territory; there's lots of noise drifting into each track, with sharp rhythmic interruptions. *Open*, as the title suggests, has a bit more space but still feels close. The bass acts like a heartbeat increasing, as a nervous Piotr journeys down a long corridor towards a perilous end.

Using voice as an instrument is of course nothing new - even mainstream artists like Bjork and Mike Patton have had a bash at that over the years. But Piotr alongside this builds up dense blankets of interference to mask his vocalisations. It's pretty cool.

The record finishes with *Flow Through Light* which features scissors as a percussive instrument. It kind of sums up the approach Piotr has taken with *Raj*, cutting up rhythms and sounds to create a broader sonic construction, often in thrillingly clever ways.

Derek Piotr – *Raj* is self-released on 26th February