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'BEGIN THE CHAGRIN' ALBUM BLENDS COMEDY AND MISERY

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By Lauren Shook
A&E Editor

Need a good road trip soundtrack, or just something that strays from the norm? Broaden your horizons by giving David Jacobsen's album "Begin the Chagrin" a listen.

Guitar is a major instrument in his music, providing varying strumming styles and patterns throughout the 20 track album.

Jacobsen's voice is smooth and soothing in a familiar way that I can't quite put my finger on.

The music and instrumentals throughout the album are consistent, though the subject matter varies greatly. Jacobsen develops many characters and stories through the lyrics of each track.

"The album presents a range of noble, relatable, pitiable and revolting characters dealing with disappointment or causing it for someone else," writes Jacobsen, "Its frustrated or frustrating protagonists include those failing at art, love, or life in general."

The combination of humor and misery creates a unique feeling for the album.

"Settle," the first track of the album, sets the tone for those to come. The catchy guitar and beat of the tambourine create a folk-like feeling that radiates through the rest of the album.

The singer makes his case that he could be good for the one he desires, but only if she doesn't find someone better. "We're not getting younger, so settle for me," Jacobsen sings.

"Guitar Guy" immediately caught my attention with its use of humor. The song tells the story of a guy performing in a bar on a Tuesday night. He gives profiles of the venue and of the interesting people he sees.

The next track, "In the Schoolyard," begins with a slightly more morose tone,

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though fades back to a more lighthearted sound quickly. The song embodies unrequited love.

“Your Sister” is another track that may make you chuckle, or cringe. The singer essentially falls in love with his friend’s sister.

“Binoculars,” while utilizing humor once again, depicts a much more uneasy character. It essentially paints the life of a “Peeping Tom” who obsesses over a girl through her window.

The funky track, “Do You Want Fries with That,” maintains the lighthearted tone frequent to this album while also shedding light on the world’s burdens and great changes.

Just when you thought the subjects of this album weren’t diverse enough, “Dan Danielle” comes along.

This song is about a cousin named “Dan” who finds themselves and makes the enlightening and life-altering decision to identify as a woman, “Danielle.”

“Thanksgiving in West Paterson,” “Christmas in East Paterson” and “First Christmas” are likely not the cheery holiday season tunes you would expect.

While “Christmas in East Paterson” utilizes the contrast between cheery music and not-so-cheery lyrics, “First Christmas” tells the sad tale of a couple’s first Christmas apart after a breakup.

From here, the album shifts in its point of view. Rather than depicting characters in outrageous situations, an element of emotion is evolved in Jacobsen’s singing.

One of my favorites from this album, “Just the Way You Are,” tells a sweet and humorous story about his love for his significant other just the way she is. However, he would appreciate her doing some dishes and making the bed once in a while.

I really wasn’t sure what to expect from this album, though I was pleasantly surprised by the content of the lyrics. The songs were fresh and the lyrics were creative.

For more information about Jacobsen, you can visit his website at davidwj.com.

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