

DJ Ykcor Presents: the Real Jay Mills— Summer Madness Mixtape

Jay Mills “Possesses some [lyrical] finesse....” but, in actuality, appears to be a better poet.

Rating: 3 Bowls (Light Lunch)

Washington D.C. native, **Jay Mills**, recently released her second LP, *The Real Jay Mills—Summer Time Mixtape*, presented by **DJ Ykcor**, and performed with an impressively contrasting cast of hip-hop veterans. The album, which highlights her love of words, in hip-hop form, is also flooded with her varying observations, local experiences and not-so-subtle expectations.

Mills, whose sound is most comparable to rappers **Eve** and **Shawna**, is an unmistakably gifted expressionist, who uses the art of hip-hop to display her lyrical depth. But while her efforts were commendable, the end result was, at best, mediocre; unevenly wavering between apathy and awareness, while attempting to comprehend the difference between her healthy self-promotion and obvious conceit.

Her ideas are often contradicted, as she appears to be a profound feminist in one regard and a sexually-candid vixen in another. In addition, the logical, emotional, cultural, and political epiphanies that add the most depth to the album are like mere flickers of light in a solar-powered room, being brought to our attention far less often than the superficial qualities that we most readily hear and see in today’s music.

Her passion, however, is more than evident on this project, as she repeatedly uses her sporadically brutal, though always feminine vocal stylings, to support her position on every verse of every track. Nevertheless, her lyrical finesse would appear to be put to better use as a poet—mirroring people’s pain through her pen stroke rather than attempting to lend listeners a mere portion of her brainpower, as she meanders through the topics of sex games and weed smoke.

Of the 15 tracks presented on this album, less than half could be classified as hip-hop. In her attempts to establish herself as a hip-hop artist, she never successfully pin points her vision, or lyrically captures her audience, amidst her forceful tone. Most often she is heard rhyming not rapping, failing to accurately convey her story or connect her verses, steadily conforming to popular music’s existing precedent.

And although she may appear to be a new name, she is all too familiar with the bright lights and applause that come with being at center stage. She’s performed at the *Historic Lincoln Theatre* (2007), and has opened for **Kelis** (2006), **Rah Digga** (2007), and **Algebra Blessett** (2008).

The majority of the songs presented through this mixtape need no mention, but there are a few that are praiseworthy, mostly due to their depth and creativity. “DaCipher (D.C.)” is a collaborative effort that highlights **Mills, Emperess, ThePosterGirl Maria J, Ra The MC, Florence Carey, K-Beta, Laelo Hood, Rasi Caprice, Pro’Verb, Tese Fever, Dee Woodz,** and **Alison Carney**, all of whom come together to promote their respective D.C. experiences.

Her ballad-like, “Really,” featuring **Florence Carey** and **Dee Woodz**, is a soft, slow, substantive and poetic expression between man and woman, mimicking the act of love making by way of a carefully sculpted lyrical flow. It is likely the most believable of the album’s tracks and unquestionably the most passionate.

“I Used to Love H.I.M.” also houses an impressive combination of lyrical skill and musical passion, coupled with a definitive purpose; one that speaks of hip-hop in its past tense, stating “Our love was deep; our love was strong,” recollecting hip-hop’s former glory, expressing sympathy regarding its absence and analyzing its current state, while personifying its importance.

The turbulent track “Trouble,” her flomatic “Uptown Freestyle,” and “Sex, Drugs, and Money” are the epitome of hip-hop tunes, solidly verifying her legitimacy as a rapper, using “throwback” lyricism, beats, and neighborhood tales to tell her stories.

It isn’t **Mills’** ability that comes into question, but more so her consistency that waves the proverbial red flag. Hip-Hop and poetry share a common bond, in that they both require substance but have each found themselves in the realm of rhyme without weight, as it pertains to today’s artists. **Jay Mills** is more than capable of becoming a hip-hop icon, but fails to show it consistently. Her craft, though admirable, would be better expressed in poetic form; as her poetry and lyricism seem much broader in that regard. But in either circumstance, she is accurate in her claim that “Rhymes are [her] testament.”