



06/10/09

To whom it may concern:

It is my great pleasure to write this letter of appreciation for the great Iranian musician, Kourosh Yaghmaei.

I first discovered Kourosh's music vicariously – intrepid record dealers, including a Persian associate of mine, had traveled to their homeland some thirty years after their hasty departure to find the records they'd stashed when they left Iran for nations around the globe.

They searched out the records they had from the label Ahang-e Rooz, its closest competitor Royal and a handful of other labels. These were the labels that, in the late 60s and early 70s, started to release new recordings of different artists and in all genres of Persian music – including, of course, Western-influenced rock music.

By the early 70s, using indigenous instruments and forms and adding electric guitar as well as other Western influences, Kourosh Yaghmaei took the stage. He was the first Iranian rock musician; his fusing of Iranian folk music and the driving beat of rock, his psychedelic flourish – they were ahead of their time. His were the first Iranian records I heard; his were the first Iranian records I fell in love with. I heard a guitarist whose voice and musical style bearing a striking resemblance to Turkish fuzz-guitar god Erkin Koray but was altogether unique! I couldn't categorize his music, but I knew it was genius. His 7" singles were exceedingly rare – I knew that success couldn't have come easy for this pop-psycher. But it was that drive, that talent, that made me search for his records. And eventually I found some. Songs like "Hajm-e Kahaali," a meditation on loneliness, hit me as a masterful in its cross-cultural melding, and I couldn't believe it had languished, unheard of by those outside of the immediate Iranian diaspora.

It is for this reason that I have chosen to include "Hajm-e Kahaali" on my compilation *Forge Your Own Chains*, which I'm going to release on my imprint, Now-Again Records. It is the only Iranian record on the compilation, and it is one of the best.

And, working with Kourosh and his family (notably his son, and fellow musician, Kaveh), I will work to get out an anthology of Kourosh's genius 70s work. Music that spans the gamut. Music that speaks to the soul.

Music that inspires me daily.

With admiration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eothen Alapatt", written over a horizontal line.

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