

# SUPER JACK

Interviewed by **The Silver Age**, June 9th, 2024

Super Jack is a solo artist based in central New Jersey and regularly playing in the Philadelphia and New Jersey house show scenes. He is known for his striking stage personas and dynamic performances. Further information about his music and many other art projects can be found at [superjack.neocities.org](http://superjack.neocities.org).

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ALICIA LOPEZ: Name to start? Do you want to just go by Super Jack?

SUPER JACK: Yeah, Super Jack is fine.

A.L.: How old are you?

S.J.: I'm 24.

A.L.: Where are you based?

S.J.: Central Jersey.

A.L.: What type of music do you play?

S.J.: That's a great question. It falls somewhere between the lines of post-punk and R&B, for lack of a better terminology.

A.L.: How long have you been playing music?

S.J.: I've been playing music since I was like six, but I've only started being good at music since I was like 17, 18-ish.

A.L.: Are you self-taught or musically trained?

S.J.: I was trained. I had a guitar teacher, but I taught myself how to play every other instrument. Actually, I had a piano teacher as well. So I had two teachers but bass and drums and twiddling the knobs on a synthesizer and singing, that's all self-taught in a sense.

A.L.: You mentioned a couple, but what instruments do you play?

S.J.: I sing. I play guitar. I do play keyboards, but I'm more of a synthesizer type of guy. I'm more like "find something I like and hit it." It's not really about the theory, so that's more synth. And bass, drums, and that's everything.

A.L.: Musical influences?

S.J.: Beck, David Bowie, Talking Heads. Brian Eno a little bit, Prince. Yeah, that's kind of the main ones if you include Prince.

A.L.: Who's involved in your music writing process? I know you have a band. Do they just perform with you? How does it all work?

S.J.: At the moment, the backing band just does the shows with me, but a couple of them have been on a couple of records that are gonna come out. My process. It's usually me and for each album, I kind of pick a group of different people, not in a formal sense, more like I'll do stuff and I'm like, "I like this" or "oh, this needs something else" and then I'll send it to one of the guys and I am like, "Hey, you want to add something to this?"

A.L.: What themes do you like to explore in your writing?

S.J.: Depression, paranoia, overthinking, and on my last record, the weather and long lost love.

A.L.: And how do you approach writing lyrics specifically?

S.J.: I guess whatever feels natural. Sometimes I use cut-ups. Sometimes I'll just turn on the record button and then go back later and trace it over with some real lyrics. But yeah, I guess it's spur of the moment for lack of a better word, whatever the song needs.

A.L.: Do you usually write the music first and then add the lyrics or opposite?

S.J.: Usually the music comes first. But if it's something that's conceptual, like my last record, some of those lyrics came first. It's usually the music though.

A.L.: And do you write on guitar, on keyboard?

S.J.: Yeah. I write on guitar and on the keyboard as well. Those are usually the bases. Sometimes I'll start with the drums and go from there, so I don't know if that counts but.

A.L.: What are you working on now musically?

S.J.: I'm working on a very electronic and synthesizer-driven— I know that's the same thing, but I'm just using different words to describe it — an electronic and synthesizer-driven record that deals with the idea of miscommunication.

A.L.: I know you've started doing music videos and obviously you have a pretty coherent look. How did you arrive at that look and what's it been like making music videos?

S.J.: Well, I'll answer the coherent look thing first, because I guess there's sort of two aspects of it that are public. There are two public personas. There's one, which is the literal Super Jack, which is the dude with the mask on and sometimes a cape. Then there's Tempest Ravyn, who was recently retired, but obviously does exist in the niche public conscious as it were. With Super Jack, I had the stage name and I didn't think it quite fit, but like I kept the name because honestly, it's hard to change your artist name once you've had something out that you're proud of.

Midway through, by the time 2021 happened, my good friend, Kaiser Unique, who's a rapper in his own right, was like, "you know, what if you just went out on stage in a domino mask, like Robin the boy wonder type stuff." And it ended up kind of catching on and I sort of ran with the idea of "what if it's like an ARG, what if there's some coded stuff in the album, and we make a couple of games out of it, and the videos tell the story of a disappearance of the non-masked Jack as if he was the brain, or like he was some sort of cult leader." This is honestly the first time I've ever actually talked about this with someone who's not a close friend of mine. So this is very funny that I'm talking about this right now. So thank you for letting me talk about it.

As for the other character, Tempest Ravyn, that honestly just kind of came out because I felt like I was starting to become a caricature of myself writing as a fake version of myself. I wanted to write for someone else completely. And I was getting a friend of mine who plays in the band, Misha, back or further into David Bowie and through that we not only started listening to German krautrock stuff, but also went to go see Rocky Horror. I was kind of like, "okay, maybe then the next idea is to do something like this." People love a spectacle. And making the videos for both of those have been very fun. I mean, for Super Jack there was a lot less planning that went into it, at least in terms of the videos. For the games and the writing, there was tons of planning, but for Tempest it was kind of an overall machine. I'm very thankful to Adam and Misha and Kaiser and Dotty and a bunch of other people who I'm probably forgetting right now who really helped put that together and made that a very solid year of my life.

COLE GABORIAULT: That's very interesting. There are not many people in the house show DIY world who are doing this level of not just music, but also music video production and related different art and media.

S.J.: Yeah, I said, Gorillaz were an influence on me earlier, but for me, I'm not a band, if I'm going to be a solo artist, I want to be the artist who I want to listen to. So the artists I like listening to have a lot going on around the albums as it were.

A.L.: In a lot of your stuff, I've seen things with news and headlines and that type of stuff. That seems like a theme but maybe I'm reading into it too much. I was wondering if that's something you're interested in exploring or what you think of news in the modern world.

S.J.: That's a very good question. That's one that just kind of happened. I was a journalist in college, so I guess I have some fascination with newspapers and press as it were, and I feel like when you're a smaller artist, much like Bowie did with Ziggy – although of course he's much bigger than I am – you have to create your own myths, your own ethos. So if you use a lot of newspaper imagery and news stuff and radios and all that sort of thing, it helps build the world around you and then people can take what you give them and build from there in a sense.

C.G.: It fits well with the old-school superhero stuff as well.

S.J.: Yeah.

A.L.: You said you were a journalist in college. Where did you go to school and what did you study?

S.J.: I studied at Mercy College. I was a music production major but I wrote for the school paper as well and did some zine stuff online, so I ended up doing some journalism stuff as well.

A.L.: And what do you do now? Outside of music?

S.J.: Honestly right now, just this. I do some production work for other people. Right now work's a little slow, but I was working on a couple albums last year. People in the scene, like Kaiser, who I mentioned earlier, I produced a couple records for. I produced one record for Pillowwilde from New Brunswick. I think Signal Valley wants me to work with him on his next record, but we haven't really gotten to get our schedules together for that yet. But that's happening.

A.L.: Do you have other types of art that you do? Hobbies outside of music?

S.J.: Unfortunately, no. I probably should find some other hobbies soon.

A.L.: Why are you a musician?

S.J.: It's something that I'm good at. I mean, like that's the real literal answer. But also it's an easy way to have self-expression. I feel like people like Bowie and like some of those early punk acts when I was a kid made me feel

like I was less strange and less alone. So I would love for someone to hear me talking things out and maybe have a similar thought.

C.G.: Cool. I think the last thing is if there are things that are happening soon that you want us to list.

S.J.: It's just that there is a new album and it will probably come out when I feel it's ready to come out. It's probably going to come out in 2025, but I don't want to put a set date on it, you know?