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## Homespun: John Boy's Courage

*The Fall Precaution* (self-released)

By [Christian Schaeffer](#)

Published: May 16, 2007

Todd Sarvies, lead singer and songwriter for John Boy's Courage, has a voice made for modern-rock radio. His whisper-to-a-scream range can handle breathless confessionals and the occasional soul-unloading howl. The press materials accompanying *The Fall Precaution* refer to Sarvies' voice as "slightly unpolished" (among other traits), but nothing about this album lacks polish; the disc is as ordered and calculated as can be. Guitarist Chris Taggart, formerly of the hip-hop crew CORE Project, employs a dreamy, echo-heavy approach on Sarvies' songs, especially in the light groove of "Still." And while I'm wary of any rock musician besides David Byrne who employs a percussionist, Pete Hays adds tasteful, if often imperceptible, flourishes. The arrangements are clean and tasteful, if a bit anemic in places, but the instrumentation seems designed to keep the spotlight on Sarvies and his songs about bad break-ups and lost love.

**Subject(s):** [John Boy's Courage](#); [John Boy's Courage](#)

In other words, *The Fall Precaution* is a broken-heart record, and its songs work as a cycle of healing and

resolution. And that's the main problem with the album. Its thirteen songs are technically proficient, but there's nothing on the disc that you haven't heard before. It's hard to tell if opener "Changing Seasons" sounds more like the Black Crowes' "She Talks to Angels" or Hootie & the Blowfish's "Let Her Cry." Sure, there's bound to be an element of navel-gazing with any singer-songwriter, and Sarvies stuffs every verse with questions and doubt. But goddamn, how much introspection can you take? Emotions sound better with emotional music, and John Boy's Courage relies too much on Sarvies' voice to

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carry the weight.

— *Christian Schaeffer*

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