



5 International Bands You Haven't Heard Of BUT SHOULD LISTEN TO

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It's widely believed that music has no language, and discovering new music is a wonderful thing. So I've spent two nights looking up music ranging from Japanese noisepunk to Indian classical to let you know what's actually worth listening to.

Soapkills

Soapkills is a Lebanese duo formed in 1997 in Beirut, consisting of Zeid and Yasmine Hamdan, who have formed various other bands together and separately. The music is electro-indie jazz, with Yasmine's vocals very Arabesque cabaret. Their work, from the late 90's to their latest album released in 2008, is quite consistent, all romantic lyrics against the background music of trumpets, violins and percussions. You can find a few of their songs on their Soundcloud page.

Favorite track: *Enta Fen*

Alcest

Alcest began in 2000 in France as a black metal solo project by Neige, until drummer Winterhalter joined in 2009. Most of Alcest's music is more shoegaze rock than metal, in fact, the metal influences they speak of are hard to distinguish, and their music videos pretty bright. Alcest is one of the more well-known bands in this list, and if you like Opeth, you would probably like them.

Favorite tracks: *Autre Temp*, *Les Voyages de L'Ame*

Kaizers Orchestra

The only popular non-metal Norwegian band, Tom Waits-inspired Kaizers Orchestra is almost My Chemical Romance reminiscent, while claiming to be alternative rock. The lyrics are absolutely brilliant, almost poetic ("When I was born by a doctor through his experiment/ I am a mixture of a little everything/ But there is probably no doubt that I must be half-cat"), and the music heavy with great drumming. "Six Norwegians, some guitars, a drum set, a double bass, a pump organ and several oil barrels, steel rims, trash cans and sirens. Sounds very strange at first glance, but it all fits together perfectly!" is how they describe themselves and it's



pretty spot on. Irony and gas masks are kind of their thing, and they pull it off like no other.

Favorite tracks: *170*; *Resistansen*; *Bastard*; *Aldri Vodka*, *Violeta*

San Ul Lim

Long dissolved, 70's psychedelic rock band San Ul Lim (meaning "mountain echo" and also spelled Sanulrim) are like Korea's answer to The Beatles. The band is made up of three brothers playing guitar, bass and drums, with occasional organs played by their sister. Clean drumming and sharp electric guitars with catchy vocals, this band produced about twenty albums, but only a few of their songs are available on YouTube.

Favorite tracks: *It Was Probably Late Summer*; *Frustration*

Tryo

A reggae band, Tryo is probably the only French band that is popular in Southeast Asia, too. The band

is made up of three guitarists and a percussionist, usually playing unplugged. The lyrics range from 'politically charged' to something that reminds you of beautiful friendships and good times gone by. They've been around for a long time and are still just as popular, with songs about current topics, like *Je Suis Charlie*.

Favorite track: *J'ai Trouve Des Amis*

Aysha Amin's life is a struggle of meeting the unrealistically high goals she sets for herself while being too lazy to ever do anything. Contact her if you're anything but human (semi-human will do at times of desperation) at aysha.amin.27@gmail.com



ALBUM REVIEW

DARK BEFORE DAWN

Breaking Benjamin's Brilliant Comeback

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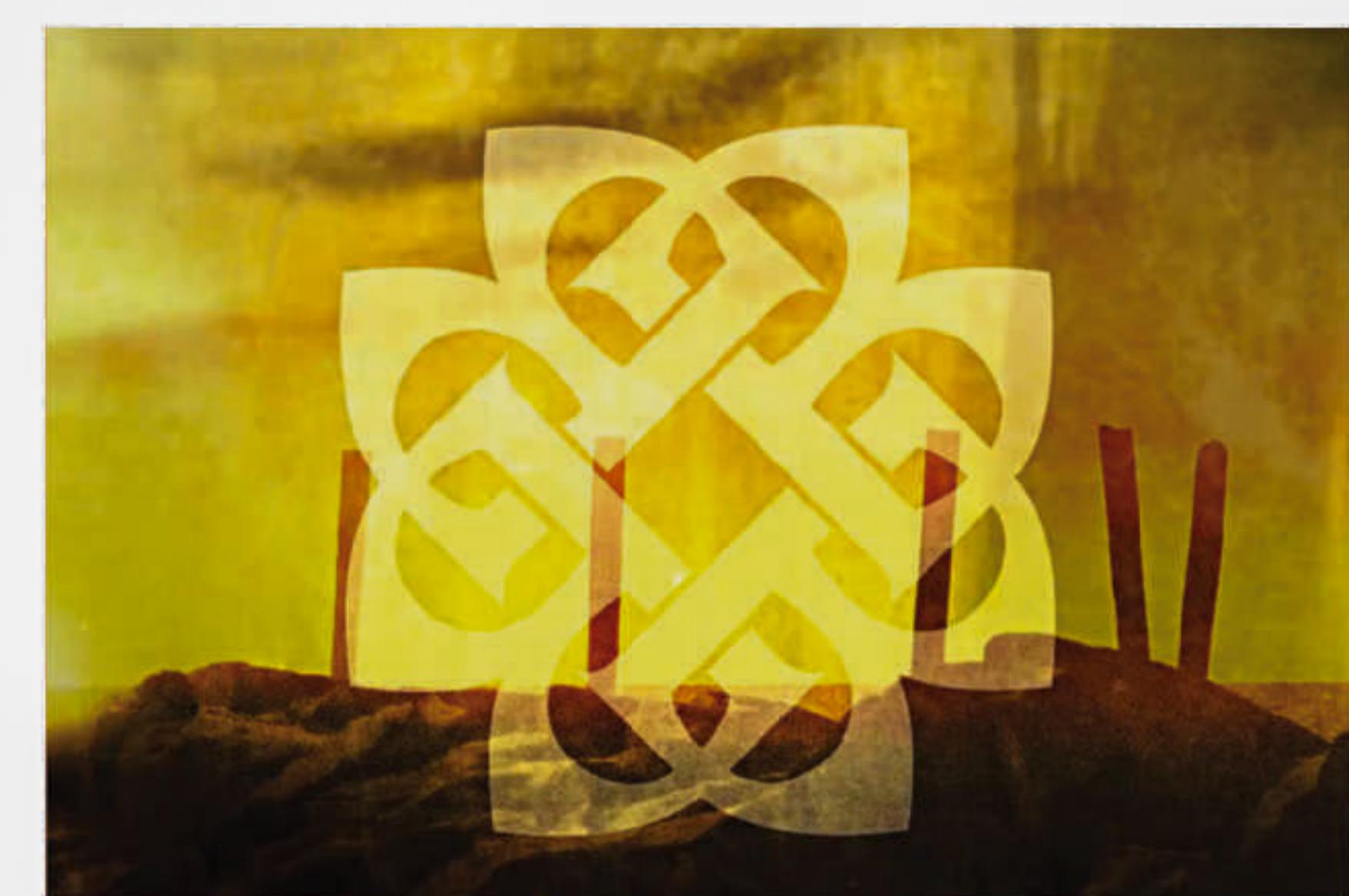
GENRE: ALTERNATIVE METAL, POST-GRUNGE, HARD ROCK

LENGTH: 42:42

LABEL: HOLLYWOOD RECORDS

PRODUCER: BENJAMIN BURNLEY

Since their debut album, *Saturate* (2002), Breaking Benjamin had been making millions of fans all over the globe crazy with their unique sound until the band broke up over a copyright dispute in 2011. After that, the band was



in hiatus for four years. Within this time period, Burnley battled his health issues, wrote some songs, created a completely new lineup for the band consisting some of his friends, recorded a new album "Dark Before Dawn" and announced it on March 18, 2015. Breaking Benjamin fans were absolutely delighted at the news.

The album starts off with the instrumental "Dark". This track sets the perfect mood and gets you going for the album. The first actual song in the album is "Failure." The song bears similarity to "The Diary of Jane" in its structure and the song probably is an expression of Ben's failure to recover from his health issues and to be actively involved in music in the last few years. This is arguably the best song in the album. "Angels Fall" is a comparatively happier track. The chorus of this song is extremely catchy and it is the strongest part of the track.

The third track "Breaking The Silence" starts directly with a metal riff. This track is a headbanger special. "Hollow" is a slower track that perfectly showcases Ben's melodic vocals. I felt the strong Metallica influence in the track "Close To Heaven" especially in the pre-chorus. "Bury Me Alive" is the only song in the album that feels like a filler. However, the instrumental works and the screams are stellar as usual.

After the slightly disappointing "Bury Me Alive", the album picks up again with "Never Again". It is an uplifting track that also sounds a tad bit similar to "The Diary of Jane" but is good enough to have its own identity. "The Great Divide" is a great track as well. "The Great Divide" is followed by "Ashes of Eden," an acoustic ballad. Ben's serene vocals, the soothing tunes of the organ and the philosophical nature of the lyrics make this a great song to listen to while travelling. The penultimate track "Defeated" is a powerful song about self-struggle. The final track "Dawn" is an outro to the album that starts with Ben's newborn child's heartbeat and gradually morphs into an instrumental.

Most critics' complaint against Breaking Benjamin has always been their lack of variation. Granted, change can be good sometimes but why change something that is already perfect? *Dark Before Dawn* brings back the traditional sound of Breaking Benjamin that we always loved and it still sounds as good as it did before, if not better.