

ALBUM REVIEW

The “Ember” that's a bonfire

RASHEED KHAN

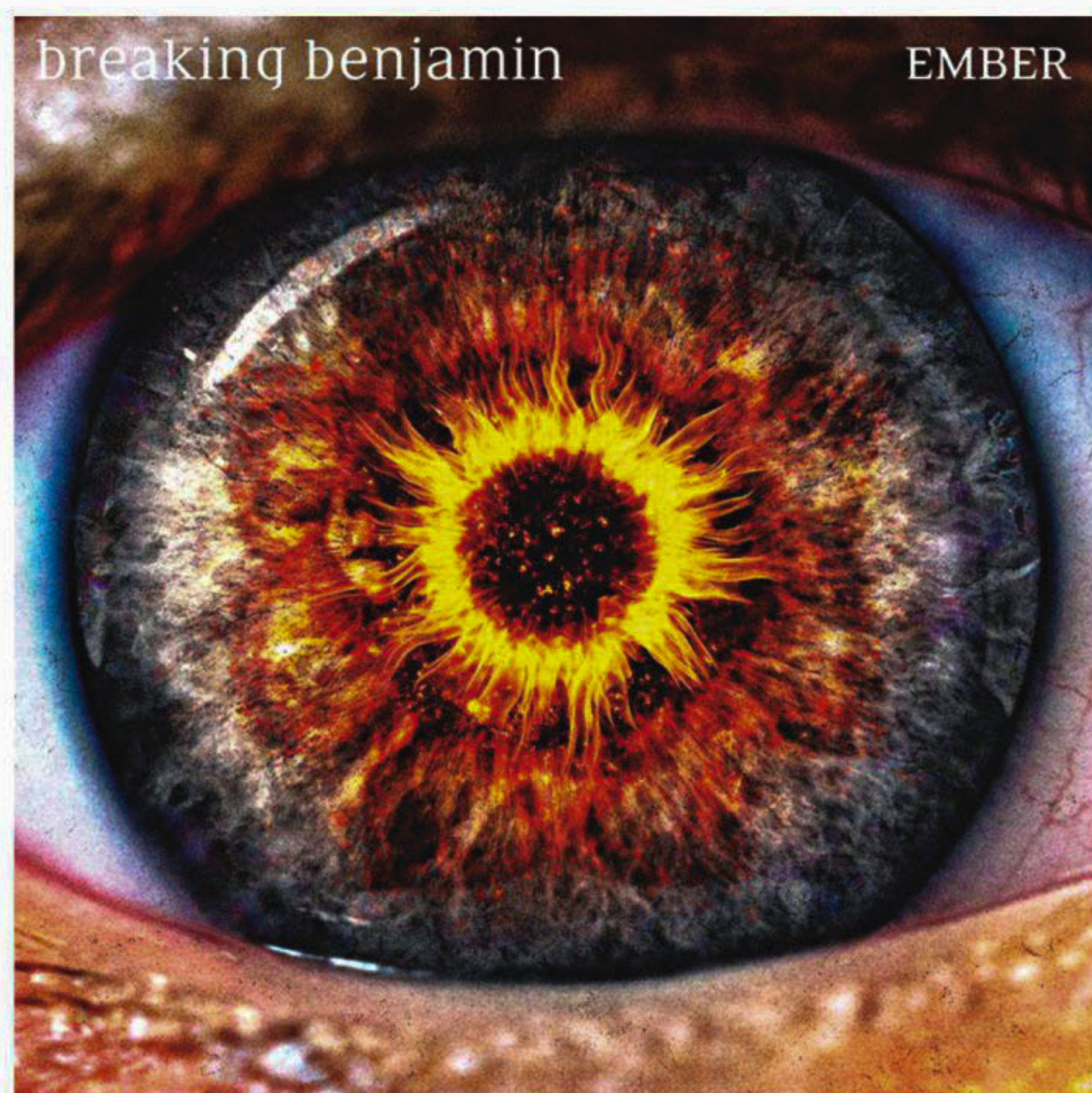
Sixteen years have passed since the release of “Saturate”, and like aged wine, Breaking Benjamin's music has matured beautifully. That notion is quite obvious as soon as you listen to the album that came out this year on April 13: Ember.

Sonically, every single song in the album is outstanding. The album takes the crown of “Breaking Benjamin's heaviest album” but in contrast, also carries some of the softest and ethereal tunes the band has made. Impressively, instead of keeping these two shades apart, the band takes the bold move of blending it together masterfully.

The album not only takes a much heavier direction in their music, but in lyrics and theme as well. For example, the lead single “Red Cold River” is about a father who finds his missing daughter murdered, and how he sold his soul to the Devil to find the killer. The lyrics maintain a very hopeless and bleak vibe to them. Nearly every song on the album is like this, but it makes for an interesting take, compared to the other more uplifting and hopeful stuff like “I Will Not Bow”.

Instrumentally, the band really pushed themselves. In fact, lead guitarist Jason Rauch claims that “playing-wise, this is the most difficult album”. While that statement can probably be disputed, in my opinion, there's no doubt that the compositions are amazing. This is the album they all contributed on, and you can really see that in the way the instruments and their parts in the songs complement each other. This teamwork is actually the reason as to why you can probably sense a difference in relation to their previous work. In the past, it's been mostly Benjamin Burnley, the frontman, who did the composition. With all their styles mixed in this time, they finally pulled out something that's wonderfully fresh yet so nicely familiar. The guitar tones and riffs remain catchy but are also dark; lunging and moody, or beautiful and soaring. The drums are epic and dramatic. Heck, I think I even remember hearing something dank slapping on the bass in one of the songs, too. For me, however, the highlight was Burnley's vocals. All those small instances of screams and growls in the previous songs are nothing compared to the roars – yes, ROARS – in this album. Start with “Red Cold River”. If you tell me that you didn't do a double-take at the pre-chorus, you're most likely a liar.

All in all, this album is one that definitely deserves your attention, especially if you're an old time fan, but just as much if you're a new listener.



Science podcasts for geeks

ZARIN RAYHANA

We have all been told by our teachers or seniors to read books on science outside our school curriculum, but some of us never seemed to be successful in this attempt because we found these books to be too complex or lacklustre. However, podcasts did the thing for me that books couldn't. There is something about the emotions and the emphasis in a person's narration that retains your attention. Moreover, you can listen to them whenever you want – stuck in traffic jam, at a boring wedding, or when you're waiting in a queue for something.

Hence, if you're eager to learn more about science but books aren't just doing it for you, then here's a list of podcasts you can try out.

STUFF TO BLOW YOUR MIND

In this podcast, historical storytelling is blended with different aspects of science and presented in a simplified yet insightful manner. The hosts talk about an array of topics, starting from Space to Neurology, Evolution, Futurism, and even discussing the science behind myths. They seem to make even the most complex of quandaries easy to understand. This is sometimes done by making offbeat references to pop culture. They also provide a healthy dose of skepticism, so you will never stop questioning the world around you.

<https://www.stufftoblowyourmind.com/podcasts>

STARTALK RADIO

This podcast is hosted by an astrophysicist you may have heard of – Neil deGrasse Tyson, famous for his TV series *Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey*. With a greater inclusion of pop culture than the aforementioned podcast, StarTalk Radio discusses physics and the universe, ensuring hilarity by bringing in guests from different backgrounds, including comedians and celebrities. Whether recent cosmic discoveries or the mechanism behind Formula E cars, StarTalk Radio has it all. My favourite segment

of the podcast is Cosmic Queries, where listeners' questions regarding the universe are answered.

<https://www.startalkradio.net/category/podcasts>

BAD SCIENCE

Every time we watch a sci-fi movie with a group of friends, there is always this nerdy friend who points out the inaccuracy of the scientific elements in that movie. Even though they might always be told to shut up, have you ever wondered what the facts actually are? In Bad Science, a pair of scientist and comedian is present every episode, breaking down the incorrect scientific details in popular movies and TV shows. Beware of spoilers.

<https://podtail.com/en/podcast/bad-science>

60-SECOND SCIENCE

It is what its name says, providing you with the latest scientific developments, alongside useful explanations, in just 60 seconds. If you have a very hectic schedule but still want to keep up with the science fix, this one is for you.

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/podcast/60-second-science>

THE PEOPLE'S PHARMACY

This podcast is a must if you are interested in medicine, home remedies, and wellbeing in general. Even though it somewhat lacks a humorous approach, pharmacologist Joe Graedon and medical anthropologist Terry Graedon are sure to provide you with an in-depth knowledge of different diseases, the medicines that are in use and how they work, latest discoveries in pharmacy, herbs, and everything health-related. If you are more into biology or chemistry rather than just physics, this is for you.

<https://www.peoplespharmacy.com/get-the-podcast>

Zarin Rayhana likes to spend her time by pondering over alternative theories about the universe instead of studying for school. Send her your theories at facebook.com/zarinrayhana.