THE DEFINITIVE YOUTH MAGAZINE

SHOWITH MAGAZINE

## The early influences of a horror fan

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Fear has been embedded in humans since the beginning of time. It has allowed us to survive, adapt, and thrive. It is an essential pillar in the core of being human. Thus it seems natural that the genre of horror has captivated so many. By indulging in this genre, we can feel dread, discomfort, terror, disgust, etc. All from the comfort of our own rooms. As a result, anything related to horror and the dark side of both the natural and metaphysical world has a group of avid admirers. As with most interests, the love of horror has humble roots that can grow and expand for years.

One of the biggest influences of a young fan of the macabre would be the literature they are exposed to from an early age. The best known example of this would be the Goosebumps series by R. L. Stine, which was always a staple in my own library. Books like these serve as an easy, palatable transition into the world of horror for a budding fan. The Goosebumps books in particular

dealt with young protagonists, usually in middle school, and the bizarre yet terrifying adventures they had while facing a wide variety of monsters or supernatural entities. The books are bite-sized but still manage to provide wholly satisfying reading experiences, while serving as a stepping stone for the young enthusiast to jump onto the heavy hitters, such as the works of Stephen King and H. P. Lovecraft.

"Back in the good old days," children's TV shows generally possessed a bizarre air about them. They'd effortlessly shift from being adorable to being absolutely terrifying (borderline traumatising) and we loved it. No other show embodies this duality better than Courage the Cowardly Dog. The show followed the lovable and cowardly Courage, who manages to survive through horrific situations in order to save his owners, Muriel and Eustace. Even as a grown up, one can't help but appreciate how truly scary the show was and how it gave us such memorable antagonists. The show either terrified a young viewer so much so that they avoided the genre

entirely, or they were nudged into an appreciation of it. Either way, both types of kids probably faced the worrisome issue of imagining a dead pharaoh outside their door, politely asking for his slab or to make them suffer with a curse.

Functioning on a different but similar wavelength than TV shows and movies, an underrated form of story-telling would be just that. The act of story-telling in its simplest form is an under appreciated treasure and it has contributed a lot in developing the love for horror and the unknown. This can be traced back to childhood, where cousins, siblings, and friends would get together and share terrifying stories about paranormal adventures that they've had or heard of. It isn't limited to just sharing personal stories though. Folklores and urban legends play a great role, as people seem to be naturally drawn to them and feel the need to find out more.

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## DEEPARGHYA DUTTA BARUA

As opposed to the staggering popularity of anime and weird commercials, Japan has a fairly active indie music scene. While some of the artists might still be hard to access outside of Japan, artists that don't really abide by the conventions of major music labels have started to welcome the global audience.

The first obstacle one might face is the language barrier. Unlike popular Korean music, the lyrics of Japanese songs are a tad bit hard to find, especially if the artists that you're seeking don't have a sizable following. However, it's oddly rewarding if you do manage to find the translated lyrics. For Japanese being quite a specific language, while the content of the lyrics might feel natural to an average Japanese, the lyrics can turn out to be quite complex when translated. LyricsTranslate or the r/translator subreddit might come in

a song that really clicks. The second obstacle would be the

handy in case you're willing to understand

availability of all the music on platforms like YouTube or Spotify. Regardless of these issues, the Japanese indie music scene is incredibly diverse, both in terms of lyricism and production. A good way to find a catalogue for binge listening would be using the country-based filter of RateYourMusic, the r/JapaneseMusic subreddit and Discord servers tailored towards Japanese music enthusiasts (e.g. the Listen.moe Discord server).

As for diversity, there's always something to find that might pique your interest — let it be rock (Indigo La End, Gesu no Kiwami Otome, Yorushika), hiphop (Earlier DAOKO material, Haru Nemuri, chelmico) or electronic (Mondo Grosso, Suiyoubi no Campanella, Snail's House); the options are endless. There are bands that are household names in global forums, like Kinoko Teikoku or Mass of the Fermenting Dregs, whose sound is primarily inspired by shoegaze. There's also a comparatively large housing for math rock acts in Japan such as toe, tricot, and mouse on the keys. Tons of content

INDIE MUSIC

dabbles in experimenting with ambient sounds.

Even though 'Indie' is the focal point here, some of the artists mentioned above are signed under major labels, but their music bears the strong influence of the indie scene. Sheena Ringo's album, 'Kalk Samen Kuri no Hana', is a cult classic that comes to mind when talking about creative influence in Japanese music. The layers of intricate instrumentation sandwiched in that album, along with the lyrical prowess, make it such a worthy listen despite being entirely foreign.

There's a new niche in the Japanese indie scene that focuses on animated music videos that are completely unrelated to any anime. These artists tend to cater more to the global audience as their music is on platforms like YouTube without any licensing restraints. Most of their discography is accessible and some even provide English captions with translated lyrics. Artists like Zutto Mayonaka de Iinoni (Zutomayo), Eve, and Minami fall under this category. Often,

the videos contain lots of symbolism and narratives that are dark in nature.

Now, the question stands — why would anyone bother to go through all that hassle just to listen to music? To answer simply, it's much easier to find music when you're browsing through a foreign catalogue without any prior knowledge. The way Japan weaves dark lyrics with some of the catchiest of beats feels fresh in comparison to a lot of the music that's being released globally. The experimentation done with some of the music feels so seamlessly integrated that the music itself does not base its identity on the experimental nature and rather leaves the listener to figure out exactly where it feels different from western acts. And that, in my opinion, deserves its own bow.

Deeparghya Dutta Barua likes to feel apprehensive whenever there are more than two people around. Help him in finding new ways of butchering his name at deeparghya@rantages.com