

EDITORIAL

Last May, I completed my undergraduate thesis. A year's worth of hard work had finally reached its conclusion. No longer was I going to have to spend sleepless nights trying to fix my code, or have mental breakdowns every time I faced an error. Life for me just became a bit easier.

Sadly, however, the peace didn't last long. Me and my teammates began searching for a proper conference or journal to get our work published. There were plenty of options out there, but not all of them were legitimate. Many of these academic conferences and publications are notorious in the sense that they exist only to exploit students and young researchers.

Predatory publications have been around for quite some time, and even though people are aware of their existence, these publications still manage to attract thousands of submissions every year. But why is that? Why are people so invested in them even though these publications have nothing good to offer? And how else do we enter and stay active in the academic research scene?

– Faisal Bin Iqbal, Sub-Editor & Digital Coordinator, SHOUT



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MUSIC



Gojira, Metal and Environmentalism

SABIH SAFWAT

When the Duplantier brothers initially chose to name their band "Godzilla" (later to be changed to, and presently known as, Gojira), they felt that the atomic monster from the 1954 film was a fitting representation of their sound. In their own words, "It was in our heads a symbol of devastating power," and the sheer amount of power is exactly the first thing you notice about their music.

The French metal quartet combines elements from the metal subgenres technical death metal, groove metal and progressive metal into a sound filled to the brim with energy and aggression. Confrontational, yet somehow compassionate at the same time, the band presents us with songs about life, death, change, and the necessity for the right kind of strength.

Gojira's songs are based on heavy, jarring guitar riffs, down-tuned to the depths of the abyss. The guitars growl and wail while the vocals scream the simple yet passionate lyrics. Joe Duplantier packs one of the harshest and most hard-hitting vocal tones I've ever come across.

However, the element paramount in their individuality is Mario Duplantier's virtuoso at the instrument, his technically complex and fiery souled, drumlines. Uncommon song structures are common in their discography, with the band often putting the instrumental sections on focus. This trend especially prevails in their albums *The Way of All Flesh* and *L'Enfant Sauvage*; their finest works in my opinion.

Despite the destructive monster that Gojira had initially named themselves after, they chose to use their influence for something completely contradictory

to the sentiment of violence. From their early days, Gojira has been involved in environmental activities. This mentality stemmed from the Duplantier brothers witnessing the rural area they grew up in slowly being polluted over time, the life forms and their lifestyles forced to change.

The notable first step towards environmental activism was their album *From Mars to Sirius*. The whole album was created based on the theme of climate change and the possible ensuing crisis. A story about humans depleting the earth's resources and having to evacuate to Mars is narrated throughout the tracks, to serve as a reminder of the consequences humanity's lack of consideration for the environment may bring about.

Similar warnings come up recurrently in their later albums through songs like, "Toxic Garbage Island", "Wolf Down the Earth", "Another World", and "Amazonia".

Aside from raising awareness, they've also taken actions through fundraisers and showing support for environmental protection organisations, such as the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and projects like Boyan Slat's "The Ocean Cleanup".

With the launch of their new album *Fortitude* in April 2021, Gojira has launched a fundraising event to fight the deforestation of the Amazon rainforest. They're more determined than ever to make a change, a spirit that should be shared by us all.

Sabih Safwat is always up for trying new music. Send him songs to listen to at sabih-safwat@gmail.com