



SANJOY Narayan

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Why I Listen To New Music

Yes, we love listening to bands that have been around for decades. But that doesn't mean we ignore the music being made now

AFROBEAT

Nigerian singer Seun Kuti's self-titled album has political songs about poverty and corruption

PEOPLE KEEP asking me why I write so much about new music and not so much about bands that most of us are familiar with. Recently one reader mailed me asking why I don't write about heavy metal bands and, in particular, why I don't write about early metal bands like Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath and Deep Purple. Others have suggested new (or nu) metal bands like Linkin Park. Yet others have asked for more on world music or on Indian rock bands and so on.

The fact is I do listen to old music. It's not as if one doesn't turn back to Led Zeppelin or Cream or even selective doses of Deep Purple once in a while. But all of these are old bands that I grew up with. I remember blasting *Stairway to Heaven* and *Black Dog* over and over and over again and again till we got sick of them and the records got scratchy. I still like to hear their live and rambunctious versions in Led Zep's triple album, *How The West Was Won*, which was released a few years ago but has tracks from the band's 1972 concert tour of the US. But what can one keep writing about Led Zeppelin? They were a great band and we all know that. As were scores of other bands. We all have our favourite rock and pop bands that we grew up with as we also have the ones that we hated growing up with. For instance, I didn't much care for The Doors (okay, except for a few of their really early stuff, pre-*LA Woman*). Music polarised us as kids too. Back in the 1970s, we even used to have two groups – those who liked Beatles more than the Stones and vice versa.

Like everybody else, I like jumping back in time and listening to old bands and old albums once in a while. I'm also constantly (and pleasantly) surprised that a lot of today's youngsters like to hear some of the bands that we grew up with. I discovered on Facebook that my teenage daughter's long list of favourite musicians includes Led Zeppelin and The Who. But I think it's the new music that's the most fun in discovering. There's a huge amount of new music coming out from all over the world and with more and more musicians adopting the Internet to spread

their work, it's easy to discover gems. Like Seun Anikulapo Kuti, the youngest son of the legendary Nigerian musician, Fela Kuti. Seun, who's only 27, leads his father's old band Egypt 80 and keeps Afrobeat, the genre that his father pioneered, alive. His self-titled album, which came out last year, has songs that are in line with what his father sang about, political songs that are about Nigeria's travails – poverty, corruption and mis-governance. His album bursts with the punchy jazz exuberance of a horn section, guitars and keyboards. Track to check out: *Mosquito Song*.

Talking about jazz, I stumbled upon a Canadian jazz-influenced band, curiously called Do Make Say Think. An instrumental ensemble, Do Make Say Think uses electronic effects, guitars, saxophones and other wind instruments to create part-jazz, part-experimental rock that can be rather interesting. I believe they have six or seven full-length albums out but I sampled their EP called *The Whole Story of Glory*. YouTube has a few videos of tracks from their live sessions that can be checked out, particularly one called *Reitschule*.

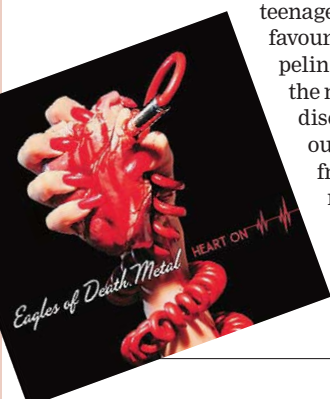


INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE
Canadian jazz-influenced band Do Make Say Think's part-jazz, part-experimental rock is rather interesting

So many readers send mail advising me to listen to genres like 'death metal', 'hardcore' and the like that when I came across a band called Eagles of Death Metal, I exulted. Now, I thought, I'd have something to tell all those angry metal-heads who mail me. Much to my surprise, Eagles of Death Metal are as far removed from 'metal' as Tom Jones is from hip-hop. EoDM (as they are called in short) are an American garage band with a pleasing hard rock sound and band members who have comical aliases like The Devil, Baby Duck, The Sexy-Mexy (he's the drummer) and Big Hands (the bassist). They're what you could call a time-pass band – good to pass time by and, by the way, are also said to have opened for Guns 'N Roses. I'm sure that the 1960s, 1970s and the 1990s produced enough great music that you can keep listening to (yes, I know I haven't mentioned the aberrant 1980s, but I'll keep that for another time), but does that mean you shouldn't check out what's happening in the 2000s? Surely not!

(To stream or download the music mentioned in this column, go to www.hindustantimes.com. And send feedback to downloadctrl@gmail.com)

TIME PASS
Eagles of Death Metal are what you could call a time-pass band



LED ZEPPELIN WERE A GREAT BAND BUT HOW MUCH CAN YOU WRITE ABOUT THEM?