Continue

Japanese math rock

Style of rock music Math rockStylistic origins Progressive rock indie rock post-hardcore minimal noise rock Cultural originsLate 1980s, United States and JapanDerivative forms Mathcore midwest emo post-rock[1] Other topics Experimental rock jazz fusion Steve Albini was an influence in the math rock genre. Math rock is a style of alternative and indie rock[2] with roots in bands such as King Crimson and Rush.[3][4] It is characterized by complex, atypical rhythmic structures (including irregular stopping and starting), counterpoint, odd time signatures, and extended chords. Bearing similarities to post-rock, math rock has been described as the "opposite side of the same coin". Opting for a "rockier" approach to songwriting and timbres, the style is often performed by smaller ensembles which emphasize the role of the guitar.[2] Polvo, Don Caballero, Slint, Bitch Magnet, Bastro and Ruins are considered by some to be the genre's pioneers.[5][6] The albums Red and Discipline by King Crimson,[7][8] as well as Spiderland by Slint,[9] are generally considered seminal influences on the development of math rock. The Canadian punk rock group Nomeansno (founded in 1979 and inactive as of 2016) have been cited by music critics as a "secret influence" on math rock,[10] predating much of the genre's development by more than a decade. An even more avant-garde group of the same era, Massacre, featured the guitarist Fred Frith and the bassist Bill Laswell. With some influence from the rapid-fire energy of punk, Massacre's influential music used complex rhythmic characteristics. Black Flag's 1984 album, My War, also included unusual polyrhythms.[11] Two songs on Yes' album Fragile (1971) have drawn attention – Paul Lester of Classic Rock writes that "Five Per Cent for Nothing" finds drummer Bill Bruford "inventing math rock",[12] while "Heart of the Sunrise" was described by Pitchfork's Chris Dahlen, Dominique Leone and Joe Tangari as "a deftly constructed proto math-rock epic".[13] Examples of modern math rock bands include Delta Sleep,[14] Covet,[15] Tricot,[16] and TTNG.[17] Math rock is typified by its rhythmic complexity, seen as mathematical in character by listeners and critics. While most rock music uses a 44 meter (however accented or syncopated), math rock makes use of more non-standard, frequently changing time signatures such as 54, 78, 118, or 138.[18] As in traditional rock, the sound is most often dominated by guitars and drums. However, drums play a greater role in math rock in providing driving, complex rhythms. Math rock guitarists make use of tapping techniques and loop pedals to build on these rhythms, as illustrated by songs like those of math rock supergroup Battles.[19][20] Lyrics are generally not the focus of math rock; the voice is treated as just another instrument in the mix. Often, vocals are not overdubbed, and are positioned less prominently, as in the recording style of Steve Albini.[citation needed] Many of math rock's best-known groups are entirely instrumental such as Don Caballero or Hella.[21][22] A significant intersection exists between math rock and emo, exemplified by bands such as Tiny Moving Parts[23] or American Football, whose sound has been described as "twinkly, mathy rock, a sound that became one of the defining traits of the emo scene throughout the 2000s".[24] The term began as a joke, but has since developed into the accepted name for the musical style. One advocate of this is Matt Sweeney, singer with Chavez, a group often linked to the math rock scene.[25] Despite this, not all critics see math rock as a serious sub-genre of rock, and some of the genre's most notable acts have disavowed the term.[26][27] See also: List of math rock groups This section needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources in this section. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. (June 2021) (Learn how and when to remove this message) Math rock has a significant presence in Japan; the most prominent Japanese groups include Toe, Tricot, The Cabs, and Lite.[28] Other Japanese groups which incorporate math rock in their music include Ling Tosite Sigure,[29] Zazen Boys[28] and Mouse on the Keys[30] while the Japanoise scene features bands such as Ruins, Zeni Geva, and Boredoms.[28] Taiwan has a very small indie music scene, of which math rock is an emergent genre that is quickly gaining in popularity, with well-known math rock bands including Elephant Gym.[31] Polvo of Chapel Hill, North Carolina is often considered one of the household names in math rock, although the band members themselves have disavowed the categorization.[32] In California, power pop groups Game Theory and the Loud Family were both led by Scott Miller, who was said to "tinker with pop the way a born mathematician tinkers with numbers".[33] The origin of Game Theory's name is mathematical, suggesting a "nearly mathy" sound cited as "IQ rock."[34] Although the Seattle grunge scene was not widely associated with math rock, some consider Soundgarden to be one of few exceptions, due to the odd time signatures found in many of their songs.[35][relevant?] List of musical works in unusual time signatures Mathcore Music and mathematics Noise rock Post-hardcore Progressive metal ^ "Post-Rock Music Genre Overview". AllMusic. Retrieved December 24, 2016. ^ a b "Math Rock Music Genre Overview". AllMusic. Retrieved October 23, 2016. ^ Body, Alex E. (June 20, 2019). Rush : song by song. [Stroud, Gloucestershire, England]. ISBN 978-1-78155-729-7. OCLC 1088907970.{{cite book}}: CS1 maint: location missing publisher (link) ^ Progressive rock reconsidered. Holm-Hudson, Kevin. New York: Routledge. 2002. ISBN 0-8153-3714-0. OCLC 45890399.{{cite book}}: CS1 maint: others (link) ^ "Read An Exclusive Excerpt From The New Book 'Math Rock' By Jeff Gomez". Stereogum. April 4, 2024. Retrieved December 5, 2024. ^ Goldner, Sam. "Hella: Hold Your Horse Is (Deluxe Reissue)". Pitchfork. Retrieved December 5, 2024. ^ Sodomsky, Sam. "King Crimson Red". Condé Nast. Pitchfork. Retrieved February 14, 2020. ^ Leone, Dominique (November 21, 2002). "The Top 100 Albums of the 1980s". Pitchfork. Retrieved March 16, 2021. ^ Stablein, Lee. "Under The Influence #24: Lapsarian on "Spiderland" by Slint!". Metal Noise. Retrieved February 15, 2020. ^ "Live and Cuddly". Allmusic. Retrieved August 1, 2007. ^ Blush, Steven (2010). "Black Flag & SST: Thirsty and miserable". American Hardcore: A Tribal History. Los Angeles: Feral House. p. 72. ISBN 978-1-932595-98-7. ... its seven-minute Metal dirges and Fusion-style time signatures confused many fans. ^ Lester, Paul (November 27, 2015). "Yes: Fragile". Classic Rock. Retrieved August 6, 2024. ^ Dahlen, Chris; Leone, Dominique; Tangari, Joe (February 8, 2004). "Pitchfork: Album Reviews: Yes: The Yes Album / Fragile / Close to the Edge / Tales from Topographic Oceans / Relayer / Going for the One / Tormato / Drama / 90125". Pitchfork. Retrieved January 19, 2008. ^ "Delta Sleep Songs, Albums, Reviews, Bio & More..." AllMusic. Retrieved December 5, 2024. ^ Michael Astley-Brown (April 5, 2023). "Yvette Young names the 10(+) guitarists who shaped her sound". guitarworld. Retrieved December 6, 2024. ^ "Tricot Songs, Albums, Reviews, Bio & More | Al..." AllMusic. Retrieved December 5, 2024. ^ "This Town Needs Guns Songs, Albums, Reviews, B..." AllMusic. Retrieved December 5, 2024. ^ Progressive rock reconsidered. Holm-Hudson, Kevin. New York: Routledge. 2002. ISBN 0-8153-3714-0. OCLC 45890399.{{cite book}}: CS1 maint: others (link) ^ "Battles: Math rock made with room for improvisation". Washington Post. Retrieved December 5, 2024. Battles is rooted in the irregular time signatures and guitar tapping of math rock, but the experimental trio is constantly pushing sonic boundaries. ^ Leonard, Colin (June 7, 2011). "A math-rock supergroup loses its voice, and gets some soul". POLITICO. Retrieved December 5, 2024. ^ "Hella Biography by Bradley Torreano". AllMusic. Retrieved December 5, 2024. ^ "Don Caballero Biography by Steve Huey". AllMusic. Retrieved December 5, 2024. ^ "A Tiny Interview with Tiny Moving Parts". September 9, 2014. ^ "Never Meant: The Complete Oral History of American Football". NOISEY. February 2, 2016. Retrieved February 2, 2016. ^ LeMay, Matt (August 12, 2006). "Interview: Chavez". Pitchfork. Archived from the original on January 9, 2014. Retrieved July 17, 2015. [Math rock] was invented by a friend of ours as a derogatory term for a band me and James played in called Wider. But his whole joke is that he'd watch the song and not react at all, and then take out his calculator to figure out how good the song was. So he'd call it math rock, and it was a total diss, as it should be. ^ Kamp, David. (2005). The rock snob*s dictionary : an essential lexicon of rockological knowledge. Daly, Steven, 1960- (1st ed.). New York: Broadway Books. pp. 69. ISBN 0-7679-1873-8. OCLC 55990376. ^ Goldner, Sam. "Hella: Hold Your Horse Is (Deluxe Reissue)". Pitchfork. Retrieved December 5, 2024. ^ a b c "A Complete Guide to Japanese Math Rock". Tokyo Weekender. February 19, 2020. Retrieved July 27, 2021. ^ "10 indie bands from Asia you need to know". Time Out Hong Kong. November 27, 2019. Retrieved July 27, 2021. ^ "Mouse On The Keys live in KL | Music in Kuala Lumpur". Time Out Kuala Lumpur. August 3, 2015. Retrieved July 27, 2021. ^ Robson, Daniel (August 6, 2022). "INTERVIEW | Taiwan's Math Rock Heroes Elephant Gym: 'We Can All Resonate Together in Music' | JAPAN Forward". japan-forward.com. Retrieved October 22, 2022. ^ Redford, Chad. "You can call Polvo math rock, but the numbers just don't add up". Creative Loafing. Archived from the original on August 12, 2011. Retrieved October 3, 2016.{{cite web}}: CS1 maint: bot: original URL status unknown (link) ^ Schoemer, Karen (April 2, 1993). "Sounds Around Town: Miller Writ Loud". New York Times. Archived from the original on November 13, 2013. ^ Amar, Erin (July 2011). "Music: What Happened? Scott Miller on 50 Years of Singles in 258 Pages". Rocker Magazine. Archived from the original on November 1, 2013. ^ "WAS SOUNDGARDEN A MATH ROCK BAND?". feckingbahamas. July 9, 2019. Retrieved December 19, 2023. Dale, P. (2016). Anyone Can Do It: Empowerment, Tradition and the Punk Underground. Ashgate Popular and Folk Music Series. Taylor & Francis. p. pt237–. ISBN 978-1-317-18024-1. Eberhart, Max (September 29, 2016). "Calculating the Influence of Math Rock". The Santa Clara. Archived from the original on October 1, 2016. Retrieved October 3, 2016. Gomez, Jeff (2024). Math Rock. Bloomsbury. ISBN 979-8765103371. Math Rock at AllMusic Portal: Rock music Retrieved from "

2A guitar where the bridge extends beyond its usual stop For other uses, see Third bridge (disambiguation). This article needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed.Find sources: "3rd bridge" – news · newspapers · books · scholar · JSTOR (November 2017) (Learn how and when to remove this message) Yuri Landman's Home Swinger, 12 string 3rd bridge zither Landman's 2006 Moodswinger, a 12 string overtone zither. Different possible shapes of a third bridge: "a common six-sided pencil [4mm contact], a round dowel [more focused contact], and an L-shaped bracket [even more fine]." The pencil creates, "a damping effect and also prevents energy from transferring across the bridge to the opposing string segment," with the dowel, "resulting in greater sustain and cross-string resonance," and the bracket, "offers even more sustain than a [round] dowel."[1] The 3rd bridge is an extended playing technique used on the electric guitar and other string instruments that allows a musician to produce distinctive timbres and overtones that are unavailable on a conventional string instrument with two bridges (a nut and a saddle). The timbre created with this technique is close to that of gamelan instruments like the bonang and similar Indonesian types of pitched gongs. A third bridge can be devised by inserting a rigid preparation object between the strings and the body or neck of the instrument, effectively dividing the string into distinct vibrating segments.[1] Third bridge instruments can be custom-made by experimental luthiers (as with guitars designed and played by Hans Reichel); modified from a non-third bridge instrument (as with conventional guitars modified with a pencil or screwdriver under the strings[2]); or may take advantage of design quirks of factory-built instruments (as with the Fender Jazzmaster, which has strings that continue from the "standard" bridge to the vibrato mechanism). Perhaps the best-known examples of this technique come from No Wave artists like Glenn Branca and Sonic Youth. The 3rd bridge technique has a physical connection with Pythagoras' monochord, because both function with the scale of harmonics. Many non-Western musical scales and musical instruments share these consonant just pitch relations. 3rd bridge preparation, the front and the back tone are in a reciprocal relationship and known as the bi-tone[1] On a standard guitar, the string is held above the soundboard by two nodes: the "nut" (near the headstock) and the "bridge" (near the player's right hand on a standard guitar). A player sounding a note on a standard guitar vibrates a single portion of the string (between the nut and the bridge or between their fretting finger and the bridge). In contrast, a third bridge divides the string into two pieces. When played at one part of a string, the opposed part can resonate in a subharmonic of the struck part, depending on a predictable mathematical ratio of the strings' lengths.[3] On harmonic positions the created multiphonic tone is consonant and increases in volume and sustain because of the reciprocal string resonance. The sound is comparable with the sound of bells or clocks ("yielding bell-like resonant sounds...enabled the guitar to more resemble percussive instruments like bells, gongs, and chimes"[4]). Landman published a clarifying 3rd bridge diagram related to this subject in 2012 (and a more elaborate version of this diagram in 2017).[5] In the 1930s, Harry Partch experimented with this technique on an instrument he called a Kithara that had movable glass rods. In the late 1960s, Keith Rowe made occasional use of third bridge guitars, inspiring a slew of experimental guitarists (notably Fred Frith) to use prepared guitars, inspired by John Cage's technique of the prepared piano. Classical guitar duo Elgart & Yates wrote a small book, Prepared Guitar Techniques, in which the technique is described and used in the added written musical piece, although not defined with the term 'third bridge' yet. From the 1970s, Hans Reichel's self-made and modified acoustic guitars sometimes featured third bridges. From the late 1970s, Glenn Branca adopted Partch's theory and used amplified string tables for some of his symphonies.[6] After being trained in the Branca orchestra, Sonic Youth applied their own guitars with screwdrivers, mainly in their early years. On their debut EP and the album Confusion is Sex this technique is often used.[7] Afterwards Bradford Reed developed the Pencilina. Reed plays mainly with drumsticks hitting the strings as well. "Nails" (2004) by Kaki King uses a third bridge set over the 16th fret and the technique has also been used by Fred Frith and Keith Rowe in addition to Branca, Moore, and Ranaldo.[1] The sound effect can be achieved without an additional 3rd bridge or extended tail piece. If the player presses on a fret (not behind it, as with standard fretting) and strums the string at the head side, the resonance comes through. Again, on harmonic positions the result is much louder and clearer than on the inharmonic fret positions. The 5th, 7th, 12th and 19th fret generate low-frequency humming overtones with the complementary tone, which is usually played in the regular way. This playing technique causes a smooth, round multiphonic sound. By muting the resonating part and letting it go after the pluck it sounds like an inverse recorded sound. On all other positions the tone is more undefined and comes with higher pitched lower volume overtones. With heavy distortion these tones can become more clear. The technique is widely used in many modern classical works on bowing instruments. The extended technique involves bowing the instrument on the afterlength, the short length of string behind the bridge. The tone is very high and squeaky. By playing the instrument at a string part behind the bridge, the opposed part starts to resonate. The tone is louder at harmonic relations of the bridge string length. On violins, the tone can be very high, even above the range of human hearing. Depending on the instrument, the pitch of the tones may or may not be perceived (cellos and double basses are more likely to produce recognizable pitches because of their longer strings). This technique is used extensively in Krzysztof Penderecki's Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima. Another example is found in Ferde Grofé's Grand Canyon Suite where bowing behind the bridge in a violin cadenza represents a donkey's braying. Fender Jazzmaster Fender Jaguar SX SJM Teisco guitars with tailed bridges New Complexity Australian-made 3rd bridge guitars ^ a b c d Frengel, Mike (2017). The Unorthodox Guitar: A Guide to Alternative Performance Practice, p.115-7. Oxford. ISBN 9780199381852. "The shape of the bridge, or more precisely, the amount of contact it makes with the string as they pass over it, affects both sustain and cross-bridge resonance." ^ Bigsby's ENGR 407 blog (February 26, 2008): "Third Bridge Guitar", Bigsby.WordPress.com. Accessed: December 16, 2017. ^ "Moodswinger", OddMusic.com. Accessed: December 16, 2017. ^ Chick, Stevie (2009). Psychic Confusion: The Sonic Youth Story, [unpaginated]. Omnibus. ISBN 9780857120540. ^ "3rd Bridge Diagram", HyperCustom.nl. Accessed: December 16, 2017. ^ "Glenn Branca". Archived from the original on 2009-02-11. Retrieved 2008-12-06. ^ Edmondson, Jacqueline; ed. (2013). Music in American Life, p.1177. ABC-CLIO. ISBN 9780313393488. "They inserted screwdrivers between the fretboard and strings to make the guitar sound like clocks or chimes." Epand, Yuri (October 23, 2008). www.ezineArticles.com/?Adding-a-Twist-to-the-Electric-Guitar&id=1610340 -"Adding a Twist to the Electric Guitar", An article describing the technique at EzineArticle.com. Accessed: December 16, 2017. Retrieved from "

3 The following pages link to 3rd bridge External tools (link count transclusion count sorted list) · See help page for transcluding these entries Showing 50 items. View (previous 50 | next 50) (20 | 50 | 100 | 250 | 500)Bagpipes (links | edit) Embouchure (links | edit) Fundamental frequency (links | edit) Glissando (links | edit) Harmonica (links | edit) Harmonic series (music) (links | edit) Just intonation (links | edit) Music (links | edit) Musical tuning (links | edit) No wave (links | edit) Piano (links | edit) Trombone (links | edit) Washtub bass (links | edit) Human voice (links | edit) Overtone (links | edit) Standing wave (links | edit) Musical composition (links | edit) Art rock (links | edit) Keyboard instrument (links | edit) String instrument (links | edit) Pizzicato (links | edit) Free improvisation (links | edit) Post-rock (links | edit) Overtone singing (links | edit) Microtonality (transclusion) (links | edit) Transverse wave (links | edit) Glenn Branca (links | edit) Pitch (music) (links | edit) Intelligent dance music (links | edit) Prepared piano (links | edit) Noise music (links | edit) Industrial music (links | edit) Free jazz (links | edit) Aleatoric music (links | edit) Gamelan (links | edit) Longitudinal wave (links | edit) Musical bow (links | edit) Musicality (links | edit) Fret (links | edit) Col legno (links | edit) Bow (music) (links | edit) Math rock (links | edit) Dynamics (music) (links | edit) Turntablism (links | edit) Sprechgesang (links | edit) Glitch (music) (links | edit) Avant-garde jazz (links | edit) Avant-garde music (links | edit) Krautrock (links | edit) Historically informed performance (links | edit) View (previous 50 | next 50) (20 | 50 | 100 | 250 | 500) Retrieved from " WhatLinksHere/3rd_bridge" For a genre heard of by so few, math rock (or at least the ideas behind it) has been one of the most prominent pillars of progressive and experimental rock music for the best part of three decades. Named by critics for its outwardly snobby complexity and calculated aesthetics, math rock's approach to rhythm and melody was seen as intently technical, manically detailed, introverted and computed. And that's because, on some level, it was all of those things. Rooted in the classical influences of Igor Stravinsky and Steve Reich and keenly aware of the free and avant-garde revolutions in jazz in the 1960s, math rock took the developments of Seventies progressive rock acts and pushed them further. The use of increasingly ambitious time signatures, like those found in krautrock titans Can and NEU, were combined with the grandiose, intricate guitar work of acts like King Crimson and Bi Ryo Kan. That link to progressive rock never truly left certain strands of math rock (especially in Japan), even as angular, post-punk-influenced guitar melodies made their way over from the new wave and set in motion the development of a more melodic style. Since the genre's inception, Japanese musicians have been at the crux of so much that is exciting and forward-looking about math rock. Not only have Japanese bands long been embedded in the very foundations of the genre but they have been evident of the genre's broad influence on other styles and deep resonance with musicians in local music scenes. For every big name or contemporary icon is a small scene band or lone stylistic outcast acting under the influence of uncommon time signatures or jolting melodies. From Ruins' blistering early works to the genre-leading stylistic innovations of acts like Toe and Tricot, the Japanese math rock scene inhabits a special place in the history and modern landscape of the genre. Here I'll touch on five math rock albums that mark the genre's extensive developments and Japanese musicians' crucial role in its growth. Ruins, 'Ruins 1986-1992' (Skin Graft) As predictable as it may seem, there are few better places from which to date the historic ingenuity of Japanese math rock than with Ruins, a band that defined numerous features of the genre and even predated the naming of the style. Led by Tatsuya Yoshida, now a legendary figure in Japanese rock (also known for his work with Acid Mothers Temple, Koenji Hyakkei and more), every outfit of Ruins has explored a different path of texture and dissonance. Drummer and vocalist Yoshida has been the sole staple figure in what has commonly been only a bassist-drummer duo. Revisiting those first Ruins records, Ruins I (1986) , II (1987) and III (1988) offers a fascinating insight into the birth of Japanese math rock. Yet, listening to those records in their original form can feel akin to listening to music recorded in tin cans. Luckily for us, the compilation record Ruins 1986-1992 (2001) captured and remastered Ruins' early achievements with remarkable clarity. Revealed under the haze of early Ruins is a grim, mischievous fondness for off-time repetition, rawer and more unpredictable than their American math rock-founding peers Slint and Shellac. Its brashness and Yoshida's yelping make for a discomforting listen and yet, by its end, the album sees Ruins gradually transforming towards the kind of melodic math rock that the genre is known for. Later Ruins works would play with Yoshida's influences, exploring melody as he looked away from harsh noise and free jazz, though Yoshida's long-running and still-active outfit Koenji Hyakkei continues to push the boundaries of modern progressive rock (see: Dhorimviskha, 2018). However, for an appropriate introduction to Ruins and early math rock, 1986-1992 dates the turbulent progression of an iconic band who saw math rock's development from a style within other genres (e.g. the work of Boredoms, Zeni Geva) into a genre fully unto itself. See Also: Altered States' Mosaic (1995), a grander, more dramatic and more free-jazz inspired full-band record shrouded in mystery; and Nuito's Unutella (2009), a more modern reincarnation of Ruins' opaque complexity and unrelenting harshness. Downy, 'Mudai [4]' (Felicity) Since the early 2000s, math rock has been closely associated – and often conflated – with three key subgenres of rock, sometimes all at once: progressive rock in the vein of Ruins (including avant prog, brutal prog etc), post-hardcore and post rock. Post rock, the vague genre that refers to the use of what would normally be considered rock instrumentation in music that isn't clearly rock music, instinctively aligns with a lot of the jazz – and orchestrally oriented way markers that inspire so many math rock bands. The opportunity to twist rock music into something longform, complex and near-unrecognizable from its roots was grasped by many turn-of-the-century Japanese math rock artists. They were at once both a counterweight to Ruins' uncontrolled chaos and building upon Ruins' later, more celestial works. At the pinnacle of this style were Downy who, over a four year period (2001-2004), released four mudai (or untitled) records, each with their own individual draw. Absent of the clichéd crescendos that hampered so much of post rock's third wave, Downy were sparse and distant, slower and more contemplative. After three albums that established Downy as formidable post rock musicians, as adept at crafting alien soundscapes with growing ambient depth as they were at piling-on the intensity, Mudai [4] felt like a culminative achievement. Cementing the jazz-like tendencies of its predecessors with urgent drumming and wandering saxophone, Downy layered staccato guitars upon refined layers of distortion. 4 acts as a resounding final act to the Mudai series, an album that stands apart as both an accomplished math rock and post rock album, showcasing the best of the widespread cross-pollination between the two genres. See Also: Hyakkei, a mellower and similarly instrumental post rock band with pretty melodies but without Downy's capacity for intensity; and Paranoid Void's Literary Math (2017), a more recent mathy, jazzy and technical post rock release. Toe, 'The Book About My Idle Plot on a Vague Anxiety' (Catune) As Downy were pushing a sound closely related to broader brushstrokes of post rock, Toe were among the first to precisely and effectively execute so many of the features of math rock now best associated with the genre. 2005's The Book About My Idle Plot on a Vague Anxiety, with its spiralling guitars, punctuative rhythm section and melancholic atmospheres, sparked bouts of imitators. Toe may not have been the first Japanese math rock band to have one dashing for some high-quality headphones, but their early material typifies exactly the kind of extreme skill and intellectual songwriting that the genre is known for. Toe stand apart because, though many have since attempted to replicate their style and quality, few (if any) have bested them. And the reason behind the longevity of Toe's success is simple: Takashi Kashikura's drumming. Best exemplified on Book and its successor EP New Sentimentality (2006), Kashikura is tactile with his fills and off-beats, academic in his dictation of pace, and energetic throughout. His work seems almost improvised, and yet he holds together every inch of melody and packs the punches in almost every track. Book remains a glimpse into how even purely-instrumental math rock transcends the appeal of every depth of music fan. Gorgeous and immediately appealing, it only becomes more so among those more informed of the style. Later Toe albums never quite replicated the same kind of genius displayed on Book (though the lower-key, more acoustic For Long Tomorrow, 2009, is certainly worth a listen), yet their influence went far further. Toe set a standard of musicianship followed by in spirit by the likes of Lite, Nuito, Uchu Conbini and People in the Box. Meanwhile, the groundwork Book laid became a precursor for the kind of math rock that, instrumentally so inherently emotional, became quintessentially compatible with those wishing to lyrically express the most sincere and pained of human emotions. "Emo" and "screamo" capitalised effectively on such potential, even if both genres found popularity in the American Midwest long before they produced fantastic records in Japan. See Also: Lite's Phantasia (2008), a wonderful modern progressive rock album with Toe-esque performances and clearer contrasts between heavy, gritty riffs and delicate, plucked beauty. Tricot, 'T H E' (Bakuretsu) Those who have kept up to date with the Tokyo Weekender's top Japanese albums of the decade won't be surprised to find Tricot's T H E included here. 2013's T H E marks the moment that math rock endorsed full-blooded pop; unpretentiously taking all the technical finesse of three decades of math rock development and bringing it full circle. If math rock was initially intended to be a revolution in rock and a turn away from convention, then T H E brought it all back. Due to the phenomenal popularity of T H E, it is naturally easy to see it as a solitary watershed moment in the history of math rock. But the reality is quite different. Tricot's sound and debut came about as the clear result of several other key developments in the genre and in the wake of many other key works. As far back as Zazen Boys' Zazen Boys II (2004), math rock was being moulded into music alongside genres like post-hardcore and funk; while bands like Wowaka (Unhappy Refrain, 2011), Susquatch (In This World, 2009) and People in the Box (Family Record, 2010) were bolstering math rock with elements of emo and J-pop. T H E, therefore, didn't emerge out of nothing. What it did do, however, was spark unprecedented interest in math rock generally, and did so with some of the best-written, best-performed music that genre has seen to date. Few albums in recent memory have had such immense impact (indeed, it is T H E that sparked my own interest in the genre), not only inciting huge interest in Japanese math rock but interest in math rock generally. Tricot's follow-ups to this record, A N D (2015), 3 (2018) and Makkuro (2020), though stellar, never quite replicated the same impact of their debut. Nevertheless, T H E, as Tricot's initial reaction against complicatedness and snobbery, has proven remarkably popular, and rightfully so. See Also: The Cabs' Saisei no Hukei (2013), an equally anthemic, technical and emotionally poignant release tinged with elements of post-hardcore. Notable for its emo-screamo vocals and high-timbre drumming (a style most commonly associated with black metal), it remains The Cabs' only full-length work. Jyocho, 'Utsukushi shumatsu saikuru' (No Big Deal) After exploring a few of the many strands pursued by math rock musicians over the years, that leaves the questions of what modern math rock sounds like (that is, how it sounded at the end of the 2010s), and the direction in which the genre is headed. As to what it sounds like; math rock still sounds somewhat like everything noted on this list. For every band like Ruins, Downy and Toe there are countless more like them. For every crossover with post-hardcore, post rock, pop or funk, there are more bands exploring similar sounds. And therefore, as is logical, contemporary math rock is therefore heading, as it always has done, in many, many different directions, all at once. An example one of those directions is in the innovation of Daijiro Nakagawa, specifically under the Jyocho name. Nakagawa's style of guitar play is sparking and rhythmic; on Utsukushi shumatsu saikuru – or The Beautiful Cycle of Termination – his songwriting is complex (in my opinion, more so than his previous project Uchu Conbini). He works in acoustic guitars, woodwind and folk elements, adding textures that many would associate more with chamber music rather than prog rock. Beautiful Cycle is, unlike many past math rock records, not overly complex or convoluted; it isn't testing or harsh. Still complex and fascinating, it is simply very, very pretty. Nakagawa's music questions math rock's relationship with rhythm and melody, but he certainly isn't alone in bringing the genre forward and expanding its potential audience. There are many, many others (Fulusu, 1inamillion, Passepied, Polkadot Stingray, to name a few) that continue to work with odd time signatures and complex melodies within a more accessible style. They are proof that, even 30 years later, Japanese math rock continues to lead the field and is still as restlessly evolutionary as ever. Feature photo: Nikola Spasenoski / Shutterstock.com