

International Sad Hits Volume One: Altaic Language Group

20/20/20

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This record, the first of a series compiling international sad hits from around the globe, displays the work of four musicians who share three elements in common – one local, one regional, and one universal. First, is that the songwriting duo Damon & Naomi discovered each of them while on tour in their respective countries. Second, is that they all sing in their native Altaic languages. Third, is that their songs are filled with the despair, agony and desire to communicate of our best ballads.

No stranger to a sad song themselves, Damon Krukowski and Naomi Yang have always been fascinated with attempts to convey the torments of human nature through music. After years of international touring, including a continued collaboration with Japan's Ghost, and shows in Istanbul and Seoul, they found themselves in the opportune position that every record collector yearns to achieve – finding music that only they seem to know about, yet is universal enough to speak to anyone. After coming upon the four artists on *International Sad Hits*, they felt that presenting them to a Western audience was imperative. There are a whole lot of tears on this record, but, as any listener will find, you can cry in many different ways.

The enclosed liner notes tell the stories of these honored musicians best, but to give a summary:

Fikret Kizilok After playing in pop bands in his youth, Kizilok visited Anatolia and emerged a changed man. He made music with strong political and social messages, and the emphasis went from the chorus to the words. Even with his gentle singing style, you can hear the power behind how he sings.

Kim Doo Soo A man who writes a song that inspires one suicide and prevents another is someone deeply in touch with human nature (track two on the comp, "Bohemian.") He has suffered the worst an artist can encounter, censorship of his work in his native Korea, while also experiencing the best, that being inspiration from the natural world during extended meditative leaves from school.

Tomokawa Kazuki There's no mistaking Tomokawa's wails and cries in his music. Every word he spits out sounds like it could be his last gasp. There is absolutely nothing in Western music that sounds like this.

Mikami Kan The most well-known of the four in Western circles, because of his work with the reknowned label PSF (Tomokawa also records for them), Mikami Kan achieved national fame in the seventies, then slowly saw a drop off of popularity. Simultaneously, his music got darker, more intense, less commercial – in a sense, he can be considered Japan's answer to Scott Walker.

There is no mistaking that these are some of the most beautiful songs set to record, and for the first time they are easily available to Western ears.

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