

10 J-rock Bands To Add To Your Playlist If You Want Something New

Gia-Hung Dao | Sports Editor



<https://unsplash.com/photos/rock-band-on-stage-uCZVEo8iT9Q>

I. Love. Japanese rock. It has to make up at least half of the music I listen to. So why? Simply, I find it easier to get lost in the music when I do not understand the lyrics (did I mention I don't speak Japanese?). After over two years of listening to J-rock in earnest, I have *so* many artists I can share, but I limited myself to the 10 bands below. They are arranged in order from the most popular to the least. So, if you want to find bands that are more easily shareable to discuss with others, the first few ones are the ones for you. If you want to expand your playlist as much as possible, you are very welcome to read on to the end.

A few caveats. I do not have the context for any of these bands, partly because I cannot go and read Japanese to learn or the bands are too small. You won't find the origins of the band names, their musical inspirations, or their histories. What you get in this article is my observations and a little bit of information I managed to glean from social media posts. My music knowledge is also pretty poor, so I cannot tell you about their artistry. The last thing I will say is that I am a much

bigger fan of the later bands, and I have more to say about them. But enough preamble, if you are curious, if you are trying to impress someone, if you want to rock on, then read on!

1. ONE OK ROCK

It might be shocking to learn that ONE OK ROCK is a rock band, but they are one of the most famous Japanese rock bands internationally. In fact, their songs are in both Japanese and English, with the English songs being more popular. Their sound is reminiscent of bands like My Chemical Romance or Linkin Park, which can be heard in their song "[Clock Strikes](#)". If you have had any encounters with J-rock at all, you will have already heard of ONE OK ROCK, which goes to show their enduring popularity.

2. BABYMETAL

I was careful to say this list is ordered by the most known first and not the most mainstream. BABYMETAL is a part of the kawaii metal subgenre which is characterized by metal instrumental backing and a cutesy vocal. The pioneer of kawaii metal was none other than BABYMETAL, and I think to really understand, you have to listen to them. Perhaps you want to start with the song that introduced them to the world, "[Gimme Chocolate!!](#)" I think it is very fun for such an unconventional band to find a niche and succeed in it, so do check them out if you think their premise is interesting.

3. sumika

Tell you what, I *do* know the origin of this band's name. It comes from the Japanese word for 'residence' because the members wanted the band to be like a home for them. With a wholesome name like that, their music is similarly wholesome. I would describe their songs as the first or second songs of a musical, where all the characters sing about what a wonderful day it is. Of course, not all of their songs are like that, but if you don't believe me with that description, listen to their song "[Unmei](#)" and say that I'm wrong. Maybe you're just looking for a band that is happy to be singing, to be performing, then sumika is the band for you.

4. My Hair is Bad

Hopefully, you're desensitized to the names now. My Hair is Bad knows how to use their instrumentals to elevate and highlight their singer's voice, which is a treat to hear every time. You can hear it in "[Sotsugyo](#)" how the instruments really let the voice come through before joining in for big moments. Please go listen to their other songs because they have so much to offer that I can't do them justice by summarizing them here.

5. go!go!vanillas

I once commented that I thought go!go!vanillas sounds like they could be big in the States, but my friend rebutted that they are too jazzy for that. So, if you think you are up for something a little jazzier, then I recommend this band. Their song "[SHAKE](#)" has a swagger to it that I think is really cool. I dare say this is one of the most underrated bands on this list, so do go check them out.

6. Brandy Senki

The J-rock scene is fairly male-dominated, but the all-girl band Brandy Senki has seen a fast rise since they first formed in 2022. While they do have the rock DNA in them, Brandy Senki's songs have a certain mellowness to them that makes them a chill listen, especially for me who has listened to some headbangers. I think "[Last Live](#)" shows what I mean fairly well. They do not have much of a discography yet, but that is more fun because you can observe their musical evolution in real-time right now.

7. bokula.

The famous bands above are partly popular because they have been around for quite a while, and their age does give them a lot of perspectives to write about. On the other hand, bokula. is a younger bunch, and their songs reflect that. There is a bounciness, a joviality, a youthfulness to their songs. You can hear this well in "[Summer Annoyance](#)". If ever a sense of nostalgia strikes you, bokula. can satisfy those emotions.

8. Enfants

All the bands above have clear voices, and in some ways, their voices are a big part of their songs. Enfants play by a different book. For most of their songs, the singer's voice is

understated, almost to a whisper sometimes. The singer can raise his voice too if the situation ever asks for it, but Enfants's songs invoke emotions just fine without a voice steering. Let me direct you to "[Drive Living Dead](#)" so you can get a sense of what I am trying to say. If you enjoyed what I offered, then you will be glad to continue down the road listening to Enfants.

9. Bocchi

Unfortunately, Bocchi shares a name with an anime about music, so you can imagine how fun it is to look them up. But it is totally worth it! Bocchi's music is full of emotions which you can hear in spite of the language barrier, such as in "[Kotobadake](#)". You would find that their songs are simple and easily consumed, but that is the band's strength. Bocchi is also the newest band on this list, so you really have no excuse not to check them out since their whole discography is not much.

10. ammo

This is my favorite band. The band's three members play well together, with each instrument—guitar, bass, and drums—supporting each other, and the singer's voice is unique and captivating. If you pick a random song of theirs, most likely the song is about love, be it romantic love or family love. I will leave you with "[Ai Mashou No Onna](#)" so you get a taste of what they are like. To be clear, I'm writing through a tinted lens, but I do heavily recommend you check out ammo because they should be bigger.

If you listened to all those bands and enjoyed them, I will say that I am glad. But you might also want to know how to find more bands to listen to, so I will leave you with a few tips. The first thing I would say is that YouTube is going to be the best option for finding new songs because there is more on there than anywhere else. The more music you listen to, the more you will get recommended other songs similar to what you listen to, so it might be a function of time. You could also seek about fanmade playlists to find new songs. This is how I first encountered J-rock, so I will leave you with the playlist that opened that door for me [here](#). Also, get ready to become acquainted with Google Translate or any other translating program you want because all streaming applications *sometimes* translate the bands' and songs' names, and they are *not*

consistent between your platforms of choice, so be mindful of that. With these, you have more than enough information to dive into Japanese rock and discover new artists.