

Artist Spotlight:

Beirut

By Eduardo Gomez

Zach Condon's fascination with eastern European culture and sound led to the creation of Beirut, a band that evolved from what was originally intended as a solo project. The name is drawn from Lebanon's capital, a place known for clashing cultures and historical conflict. At the age of 17, Condon traveled to Europe, leading to his deeper exploration and transformative understanding of world music that later developed his distinct melodic sound.



The band's debut album, *Gulag Orkestar*, released in 2006, features the collaborative talents of Jeremy Barnes and Heather Trost of A Hawk & a Hacksaw. Their contributions include the works of accordions, violins, percussion and more, adding depth to the project. The album's title is a fusion of "Gulag," referring to the

Soviet government agency administering Criminal Justice, and Orkestar, referring to the Serbo-Croatian word for orchestra. This project can be described as a musical postcard that sends its listeners through a glimpse of notice in the past and the hazy memories of triumph and sorrow through that period of time. With powerful, acrobatic vocals from Zach Condon, the album tells the tale of lost historical narratives that washed into the undertow of global culture.



Gulag Orkestar Album Cover, 2006

Personal Favorite

"Postcards from Italy" reflects on cherished moments once shared with a loved one. With a vibrant mix of horns and percussion with a gentle rhythm of an upbeat ukulele, the song transports listeners to the nostalgic emotions of a love that once was.