

Establishment of the Local Pop Music Archive Online System¹

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Abstract. The K-pop music is considered to be planned products through a very comprehensive systematic production by major entertainment companies. This study starts from a question of whether this well-organized, nurtured music is a representative pop content of Korea. The local musicians who are not affiliated with those major companies are less exposed to the public and more often than not, they have few chances to publicize and promote their music and themselves. In this context, this study suggests establishing the local pop music archive online system to bridge local musicians to music consumers. It also helps acquire diversity in pop music in Korea.

Keywords: pop music, local culture, archive, application, K-pop, music industry

1 Introduction

The Korean pop music, one of the hallyu³ contents has spread throughout the world beyond the Asian continent in the recent years [1]. Hallyu has been fetching the public in China, starting from the dramas which had been considered the first generation of popular cultural contents gaining worldwide popularity. Based on its popularity in China, the second generation of hallyu, namely, K-pop has had an influence on even the West as well as Asia.

The worldwide hit song, Psy's *Gangnam Style* provides a good example for this recent popularity of K-pop. For the first time since the foundation of Youtube.com, it hits over 2 billion times as of May 2014, which set a remarkable new record. Psy, who was one of the indifferent singers in Korea, has established a Korea's leading entertainer.

However, his marvelous success does not imply that K-pop indeed represents Korean sentiment. The reasons might vary and be vague because K-pop was not originated in Korea through a spontaneous process, which means many pop songs are produced by a group of major entertainment companies; they intend to invent on

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³ The term, hallyu or Korean wave refers to Korea becoming the most important cultural force in Asia and beyond.

production of boy bands, girl groups that has fancy choreography, addictive hook music, and electronic back music in common. The process of music production of these profit-oriented companies usually presents similar style and trend.

As mentioned above, K-pop has grown and spread under the influence of major entertainment companies such as SM, YG, JYP. The public has been very passive audiences; the consumers have been affected by well-organized projects devised by these companies. Particularly, the infrastructure regarding the music industry concentrated in Seoul. The minor music, compared to a mainstream genre of music, is excluded from popularity of K-pop, at home and abroad. The musicians who try to find their career outside Seoul have even more difficult time. The provincial areas are not able to support the musicians in terms of the pop music structure in general. Thus, many musicians are flowing into Seoul for their career; this is the present state of local musicians.

The music with local identity is important because it represents the uniqueness and characteristics of the region. As for Britain, America and Japan, the local musicians who are active in the region usually go into the music industry through the process in that a casting manager scouts a musician and support him/her after having a contract.

Those musicians go on a different way while Korean musicians flocked into Seoul get through the auditions focused on the entertainment companies' favor. Under this system, the musicians in Korea are hard to equip themselves with independence and uniqueness of their own music. On the contrary, the musicians who are able to be engage music in the region can keep local culture and characteristics; they improve their music with diverse colors and consistently play their music.

There is a good example in Korea. The second largest city in the nation and a port city, Busan, is close to Japan, so it is the city that is most affected by Japanese culture among the Korean cities. Compared to Seoul, Busan has a strong local accent in the language and straightforward, blunt cultural orientation. Their style is not considered very sophisticated and exquisite. Because of this characteristic, the pop music of Busan presented the most powerful and fasted music in the 1980s and 90s. Its major genre includes Heavy metal, hardcore, and Grunge rock. The Busan International Rock Festival is one the music festivals which is assessed as the most stimulating and belligerent. In this regard, it is not overstated that the locality of Busan is rather masculine. The band called 'PIA' which played their music in Busan went up to Seoul and successfully settled in the mainstream. The PIA based on powerful metal sound music got an award at the 1999 National Rock Festival sponsored by the Munhwa Broadcasting Company and had a step-stone to gaining nationwide popularity. They heralded their name in Seoul and were discovered by the company led by SeoTaeji.⁴ It was a key to a success; they have become one of the representative bands in Korea.

Even though they gained a nationwide reputation, they are beloved by people of Busan and always invited to the rock festival held in Busan. Such band based on locality suggests bright future for diversity of music. However, not everybody is as lucky as they are. The circumstances are so difficult that the local bands hardly find the place to actively play their music. The reason for this dates back to the Japanese colonial period and the Korean War(1950-53). In other words, colonial rule, the

⁴He is a Korean singer, musician, and songwriter. he has become one of the most prominent and influential cultural icons in Korea.

Korean War, rapid industrialization and urbanization, and recent democratization and egalitarianism have pulverized tradition, for worse [2]. Back then Korea was the poorest country in the world; the government tried to develop economy rapidly by focusing on the development of Seoul Metropolitan area in order to get away from poverty.

As a result, the culture besides Seoul relatively gets minor attention; the Korean pop culture started out from Seoul. The rest of the nation gradually became isolated, not reaching fruition of cultural improvement. As of 2014, the Korean economy is perceived as a miracle, however, within itself, it is time to look after its local culture which was neglected in the course of rapid development of the nation. In this regard, the locality is one of the cultural resources that cannot be alternated or eliminated. The pop culture is akin with having a local characteristic. It indeed endows Korean music industry with diversity, leading to promotion of pop music. In order to resolve the problem of isolation and decline of local music, this study suggests establishing the archive online system of local pop music.

2 Development of the Local Pop Music Archive Online System

The diverse genres of cultural contents are being recorded, preserved and stored as well as utilized. Contrary to other artistic contents, sound resources such as music are intangible resources that require more care in terms of recording and preservation. Particularly, the pop music is almost impossible to classify between experts and amateurs. Thus, its recording and preservation should be paid more attention to.

The discussion on classifying what musicians are into the pop professionals does not attract immediate interests. Thus, the support for local musicians is forced to vanish. In this context, the local pop music online archive system enables us to preserve precious resources of local musicians, manage their activities and furthermore to exhibit their works as well as browse through their records, which helps the consumers get access to the secondary or tertiary use of pop cultural contents. The local pop music online archive system should provide local musicians with the network of community system besides that. That is, the local musicians can exchange information and musical inspiration by having a connection with one another through this system. To conduct this, the openness of the website is very essential. At the present time, in Korea, the site called 'Myul' ([www. mule.co.kr](http://www.mule.co.kr)) has been established to provide the service mentioned above, however, its condition is substandard.

The local pop musicians are not introduced online at all and their music is not stored, rather, the site is working as an ad for the job-wanted, the help-wanted or buying and selling of the musical instruments. In addition, most of the activities online are focused on the metropolitan area, so the local musicians are subject to having difficulty to access. Accordingly, it is necessary to fit their needs by establishing the feasible infrastructure for local musicians. The comprehensive survey and management of their records should prioritize before constructing the website.

Through the local pop music online archive system, the musicians and local music should be recorded, preserved and also introduced to promote new songs. In addition,

it has to have a system to connect to SNS and related applications of smart-phone. They will help the musicians get close to the consumers and know their needs. The consumers are also able to know the characteristics as well as their music through the system.

The existing app. in Korea is 'Indistreet.' This app. is limited within Hongik University region⁵ and defined to introduce the clubs and performances of the musicians. Thus, it is not inclined to introduce all the bands in Seoul.

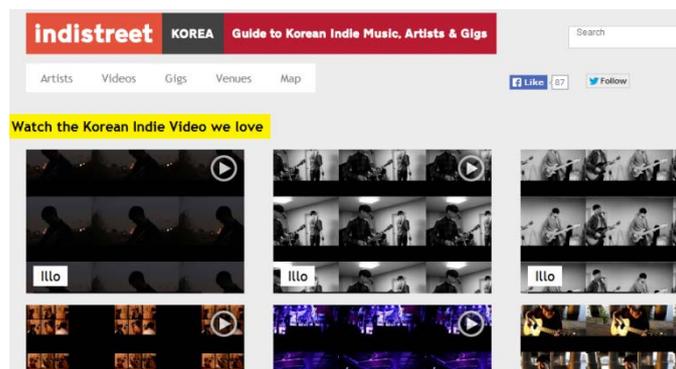


Fig. 1. www.indistreet.com English homepage

The Korean bands cannot have an alternative but are forced to work in Hongik University region because there are few places open for infamous, independent bands with a financial burden. Accordingly, the archive online system can draw out a result in promoting the works produces by all the musicians in each region through the apps including Hongik University region, which bridges between the producers and the consumers.

So far the existing music sites have aimed at profits. This may be likely to interrupt the development of pop music as well as deterioration of diversity in music. On the contrary, the local pop music archive online system should be based on publicness and public interests. The information provided to the public is very important because some people cannot participate in the music events due to lack of information. The system also provides performance planners and entertainment companies with information on the musicians and events. By who and where the music is played can be essential information for the related companies to discover the trend and new music.

3Conclusion

Unfortunately, the gap between the big-named musicians and the infamous musicians who tend to play their music in a certain region is getting bigger despite the

⁵It is a neighborhood known for its youthful and romantic ambience, underground cultures, and freedom of self-expression. www.visitkorea.co.kr

worldwide popularity of the Korean pop culture. So far the pop music production tends to pursue profits by creating massive, uniform groups so-called idols. However, Korea has boasted its diversity in local cultures over history. The local cultures are unique and intense, which are definitely novel resources leading popular culture in Korea. The K-pop music industry has enjoyed its worldwide success in the recent years. Now it is time to find ways to secure diversity in the middle of the rapid change of the world trends. In this regard, the local pop music will nurture diversity in pop culture. Fortunately Korea is considered as one of the most wired countries in the world. The Internet has become a popular medium of communication, connecting artists and audiences, and making it possible for consumers to share ideas and opinions about popular music [3]. The online archive system will help discover pop music resources more than before. It also gives confidence and pride to local pop musicians. In addition, it will be a help for the local musicians to be more active.

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