

People & Places

Music

Dylan to tour again

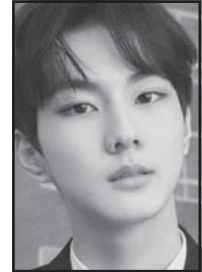
K-pop ENHYPEN's 1st album a joyful delight

By Cristina Jaleru

'Dimension: Dilemma' by ENHYPEN (BELIFT)

ENHYPEN takes its own advice seriously. Track "Go Big or Go Home" could very well describe the K-pop group's attitude to its first studio album "Dimension: Dilemma." Its understated musical vibe belies its flawlessness and impact.

The septet's highly anticipated first full record (they have already released two very well received EPs in the last 10 months) will delight with its carousel of well-executed genres. The eight tracks move easily between rock, some R&B and hip-hop, with a little garage thrown in, all underscored by very smooth pop and electro.



Jungwon

Lead single "Tamed-Dashed" is a New Wave track reworked for modern sensibilities underscored by an exhilarating EDM-synth bass that takes the listener on a journey. "Upper Side Dream-in" goes electro funk with an earworm of a hook that treads a nostalgic path while "Just a Little Bit" is a pleasant ballad

that slows down the pace of the album only for "Go Big or Go Home" to pick right up with its irresistible house beat.

"Blockbuster," which gets a little assist from Yeonjun of TXT, is all about dreaming big, feeling big and rocking out to some dramatic hip-hop and rock beats. "Attention, please!" ups the album's cool factor with some alternative rock credentials, a distorted guitar and some heart-thumping 808 bass.

ENHYPEN have crafted a joyful musical journey whose only failing is that it leaves you wanting more. But maybe perfection is best consumed in minuscule doses.

The group is composed of seven members: Jungwon, Heeseung, Jay, Jake, Sunghoon, Sunoo, and Ni-ki. Enhyphen debuted on November 30, 2020.

**'Dooms Children'** by Dooms Children (Dine Alone Records)

Sometimes it takes a crisis to settle into the space you should have been all along.

That appears to be the case on "Dooms Children," the new solo project by Wade MacNeil, who made his name fronting hardcore bands such as Alexisonfire and Gallows. His new venture, which he describes as "a record about my life falling apart and then trying to pick up the pieces," shows more maturity than the rocket-propelled ferocity of his earlier work.

What you're left with are 11 power rock ballads that make up for the drop in ferocity with stronger melodies, more introspective lyrics and better playing. There's no loss of intensity in songs like "Psyche Hospital Blues" and "Heavy Year," which begins with a meditation on the death of MacNeil's mother, and the amps aren't turned down much. But the energy feels more directed and constructive.

The best achievements here are slower songs like "Flower Moon" and "Skeleton Beach," which give themselves room to breathe. That allows MacNeil's sandstone-gravel voice to convey genuine regret. Something similar happens on "Morningstar," which begins with a 90-second instrumental opening before winding deliberately into an optimistic, shine-again message.

There are a few trite turns here. A power love ballad called "Spring Equinox" is built around the hook, "You don't need no sugar, you're sweet enough to me." And some of the songs devolve into the insert-guitar-solo-here sensibility of a long-ago era that has been worked over pretty good — think Blue Oyster Cult with bigger amps.

But the sentiments are heartfelt and the music has real power. MacNeil has preserved the intensity of his earlier work even as he relinquishes just enough of its frenzy to find the place where he belongs.

**'Senjutsu,'** Iron Maiden (BMG)

Iron Maiden is not a band for those with short attention spans.

Since blasting out of England in the late '70s in what would become known as the new wave of British metal, Iron Maiden has never been one to give record companies the kind of three-minute anthems they craved.

Instead, they wrote and played (and played some more) until they were good and satisfied, and the result was often an epic track of 8-10 minutes or more, completely exploring a topic or idea until no stone was left unturned.

That is particularly the case on their 17th studio album, "Senjutsu," which translates from Japanese as "strategy and tactics." It deals with Iron Maiden's obsession with war and battle, from the title track to "Darkest Hour," an ode to Winston Churchill's perseverance during World War II.

The album's 10 tracks average eight minutes apiece, and the final three last for a combined 34 minutes.

Give singer Bruce Dickinson and Co. props for sticking to their musical guns and writing a song to be as long as it needs to be. As far back as the mid 1980s, they were breaking these barriers with tracks like "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," which clocked in at nearly 14 minutes.

The guitar trio of Dave Murray, Janick Gers and Adrian Smith bring an unparalleled level of firepower to each track, and the duo of bassist Steve Harris and drummer Nicko McBrain has long been among the best in metal.

Also:

NEW YORK: Bob Dylan is nothing if not confident.

The music legend has quietly put concert tickets on sale for a tour in support of last year's album, "Rough and Rowdy Ways." His website bills it as a "World Wide Tour 2021-2024."

The concert business is slowly ramping up after the pandemic pause, which grounded Dylan's so-called Never Ending Tour. He toured every year from 1988 until 2019.

He plans to return to live performing Nov. 2 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Dylan has 21 concerts scheduled through Dec. 2, hitting cities like Chicago, New York, Boston and Washington, as well as Moon Township, Pennsylvania and Knoxville, Tennessee.

Dylan turned 80 on May 24. (AP)



This undated photo released by Netflix shows South Korean cast members, (from left), Park Hae-soo, Lee Jung-jae and Jung Ho-yeon in a scene from 'Squid Game.' 'Squid Game,' a globally popular South Korea-produced Netflix show that depicts hundreds of financially distressed characters competing in deadly children's games for a chance to escape severe debt, has struck a raw nerve at home, where there's growing discontent over soaring household debt, decaying job markets and worsening income inequality. (AP)

Television

Show captivates global audiences

'Squid Game' strikes nerve in South Korea

SEOUL, South Korea, Oct. 14, (AP): "Squid Game," a brutal Netflix survival drama about desperate adults competing in deadly children's games for a chance to escape severe debt, hit a little too close to home for Lee Chang-keun.

The show has captivated global audiences since its September debut on its way to becoming Netflix's biggest hit ever. It has struck raw nerves at home, where there's growing discontent over soaring personal debt, decaying job markets and stark income inequalities worsened by financial crises in the past two decades.

In the dystopian horrors of "Squid Game," Lee sees a reflection of himself in the show's protagonist Seong Gi-hun, a laid-off autoworker coping with a broken family and struggling with constant business failures and gambling problems.

Seong gets beaten by gangster creditors into signing off his organs as collateral, but then receives a mysterious offer to play in a series of six traditional Korean children's games for a shot at winning \$38 million.

The South Korea-produced show pits Seong against hundreds of other financially distressed players in a hyper-violent competition for the ultimate prize, with losers being killed at every round.

It is raising disturbing questions about the future of one of Asia's wealthiest economies, where people who once crowded about the "Miracle of the Han River" now moan about "Hell Joseon," a sarcastic reference to a hierarchical kingdom that ruled Korea before the 20th century.

"Some scenes were very hard to watch," said Lee, a worker at South Korea's Ssangyong Motors who struggled with financial difficulties and depression after the carmaker laid him and 2,600 other employees off while filing for bankruptcy protection in 2009.

After years of protests, court battles and government intervention, Lee and hundreds of other Ssangyong workers returned to work in recent years. But not before a spate of suicides among

co-workers and family members who were plunged into financial misery.

"In 'Squid Game,' you see characters scrambling to survive after being laid off at work, struggling to operate fried chicken diners or working as 'daceri' drivers," who get paid for driving drunk people home in their own cars, Lee said. "That reminded me of my co-workers who died."

Lee said he and his colleagues struggled to find work and were backlisted by other auto companies that considered them militant labor activists.

A 2016 report by Korea University medical researchers said at least 28 laid-off Ssangyong workers or their relatives died of suicide or severe health problems, including those linked to post-traumatic stress disorder.

Inspired

"Squid Game" is one of many South Korean shows inspired by economic woes. Its dark tale of inequality and class has drawn comparisons with Bong Joon-ho's Oscar-winning "Parasite," another pandemic-era hit with stunning visuals and violence exposing the underside of South Korea's economic success story.

Netflix tweeted Wednesday that "Squid Game" has become its biggest original series launch after reaching 111 million fans.

South Korea's rapid rebuilding from the devastation of the 1950-53 Korean War has been spectacular - from Samsung's emergence as a global technology giant to the immense popularity of K-pop and movies that's expanding beyond Asia - though millions of South Koreans now grapple with the dark side of that rise.

"Class problems are severe everywhere in the world, but it seems South Korean directors and writers tackle the issue with more boldness," said Im Sang-soo, a film director.

In "Squid Game," Seong's troubles trace back to his firing a decade earlier from the fictional Dragon Motors, a nod to Ssangyong, which means "double dragon."

Hundreds of workers, including Lee, occupied a Ssangyong plant for

weeks in 2009 to protest the layoffs before being dispersed by riot police who besieged them, assaulted them with batons, shields and water-cannons and dropped liquified tear gas by helicopter.

That violent standoff injured dozens and is woven into the "Squid Game" narrative. Seong has flashbacks about a Dragon coworker killed by strikebreakers while organizing fellow game participants to create barricades with dormitory beds to block murderous sneak night attacks by more vicious opponents looking to eliminate the competition.

Ultimately, it's every person for themselves in a cruel battle royale between hundreds of people willing to risk even their lives for a shot at freeing themselves from the nightmare of insurmountable debts.

The show features other crushed or marginalized characters, like Ali Abdul, an undocumented factory worker from Pakistan with severed fingers and a boss who refuses to pay him, epitomizing how the country exploits some of the poorest people in Asia while ignoring dangerous working conditions and wage theft.

And Kang Sae-byook, a pickpocketing North Korean refugee who had known nothing but rough life on the streets and is desperate for money to rescue her brother from an orphanage and to smuggle her mother out of the North.

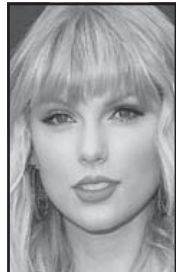
Many South Koreans despair of advancing in a society where good jobs are increasingly scarce and housing prices have skyrocketed, enticing many to borrow heavily to gamble on risky financial investments or cryptocurrencies.

Household debt, at over 1,800 trillion (\$1.5 trillion), now exceeds the country's annual economic output. Tough times have pushed a record-low birth rate lower as struggling couples avoid having babies.

Squid Game's global success is hardly a cause for pride, Se-Jeong Kim, a South Korean lawyer based in Poland, wrote in a Seoul Shinmun newspaper column.



Maggie Gyllenhaal poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'The Lost Daughter' during the 2021 BFI London Film Festival in London, Wednesday, Oct. 13. (AP)



Swift



Adele

Variety

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates: In the United Arab Emirates, home to the only Trump-branded golf course in the region and rulers who for years cultivated warm ties with the former US president, Donald Trump is back in the spotlight.

Not the real Trump, who has kept a relatively low profile since losing re-election last year, but a wax versions of Trump and his wife Melania. The two are some of the stars of Dubai's new Madame Tussauds, the tourist-friendly wax statue museum known for its celebrity likenesses that ceremonially opened its first Middle East branch on Wednesday.

The lavish waxworks temple located on a small artificial island off Dubai unveiled 60 celebrities and leaders, from a sultry Kylie Jenner to a beaming Chinese President Xi Jinping, along with a handful of Bollywood dance stars in various dance poses.

Trump's figure, sporting his signature red tie, is seated at a desk with the former president looking down and checking out his smartphone, while a sleek wax figure of former first lady Melania stands by his side in a cobalt blue dress, her classic look during the 2016 presidential campaign.

"He looks very real but he's not quite orange enough," said 27-year-old visitor Marwa al-Haddad after snapping a selfie.

The wax figures at Dubai's Madame Tussauds were each created over six months by a team of 20 artists at the London studio, where wax was poured into metal frames, then sculpted with clay. Each strand of real human hair was methodically implanted using needles.

During his presidency, Trump was considered a close friend in the capital of Abu Dhabi. Gulf Arab sheikhdoms welcomed Trump's policies in the region, including his harder-line on Iran, as he pulled America out of Tehran's landmark 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. In Dubai, the flashy Trump International Golf Club, developed by DAMAC Properties, sprawls from the center of a luxurious collection of upscale apartments and villas.

To design the collection, the Madame Tussauds team conducted an extensive population survey to figure out who potential visitors would most want to see. There is no President Joe Biden currently on display, but a company spokesman said he could be featured at some point in the future. (AP)



NEW YORK: Six years after her last album, Adele revealed Wednesday that her new project, "30," will be released on Nov. 19.

An initial single, "Easy on Me," is coming out on Friday.

The British singer, who was divorced in 2019, said in a lengthy Instagram post

that after "throwing myself into a maze of absolute mess and inner turmoil," she's feeling better.

"I'm ready to finally put this album out," she wrote.

With giant hits like "Rolling in the Deep" and "Hello," her previous two albums rank among the 50 biggest-selling in music history.

The disc "21" (she names her projects for her age while writing most of the music) was released in 2011 and has sold an estimated 31 million copies worldwide. The album "25" came out in 2015, and sold 22 million copies.

With streaming services like Spotify now dominant, there's no way Adele or anyone will reach those sales figures again. Yet she's in a stratosphere of popularity that only someone like Taylor Swift can approach in the music business.

She's also been away for six years from a medium where tastes change from month to month.

In an interview with Vogue recently, Adele said "there isn't a bombastic 'Hello.' But I don't want another song like that. That song catapulted me in fame to another level that I don't want to happen again."

She and her former husband, Simon Konecki, have a 9-year-old son. Adele's 33 years old now.

"I've learned a lot of blistering home truths about myself along the way," Adele wrote on Instagram. (AP)



People visit the wax versions of former US President Donald Trump and his wife Melania at the opening of the Madame Tussauds museum, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Wednesday, Oct. 13. The lavish waxworks temple located on a small artificial island off Dubai unveiled 60 celebrities and leaders, from a sultry Kylie Jenner to a beaming Chinese President Xi Jinping, along with a handful of Bollywood dance stars striking poses. (AP)