

## My Favorite Asia-Related Digital Media Japanese and Korean Pop Music

By Samantha Hughes

While watching Japanese anime and playing video games, I fell in love with Asian media, especially its music. Genres like Japanese Rock (JRock), Visual Kei, Korean Pop (KPop), and Korean Hip-hop (KHip-hop) became the major focus of my personal playlist. After discovering these styles of music, I became fond of two particular companies: Pony Canyon Studios in Japan and YG Entertainment in South Korea. These two important Asian media companies have been dishing out quality entertainment and music through CDs and YouTube for years. Featuring the well-known artists PSY and SE7EN and groups like LM.C, BIGBANG, and 2NE1, these companies have expanded beyond their borders and have touched many people from all walks of life. Some artists are especially inspiring and encouraging to young people around the world.

Pony Canyon and YG Entertainment give an informative look into Asian pop culture for outsiders. We can truly learn one aspect of what another culture engages in for entertainment instead of just relying on words from the potentially biased pen of a journalist. If we sit down and look at the media from these companies, we can see that it is almost no different from our own and that our cultures have more in common than it seems. People should not be afraid to use the Internet to cross borders and reach beyond oceans to take in part of another culture.

YG Entertainment and Pony Canyon are two of the few companies that are very interactive with their fans and viewers. Recently, we have seen



Screen capture from the LM.C "Hoshi no Arika" YouTube video at <http://tiny.cc/tyf1yw>.  
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hit that it was featured in an anime called *Nurarihyon No Mago*. Very few entertainers let fans participate in the production of a new song, let alone add their input to it. Seeing such generosity generates many new fans and invigorates followers to invest more into whom they listen.

Entertainers from both companies take time to reach out to their fans, encouraging their supporters to become the best that they can be. This also demonstrates that the artists are just as human as their fans and allows them to connect on a more personal level. Different podcasts like LM.C's *Chat Show* connect fans from all over the world to their favorite celebrities. Pony Canyon and YG Entertainment regularly post live performances and offer CDs and DVDs of their entertainers as often as they can in order to reach people who cannot attend a concert. In live performances, one can see the passion in both the performers' eyes and gestures with their apparent longing to intertwine their hearts with others' through their music.

Many people across the world, especially Americans, should consider listening to East Asian entertainers and not just what is presented to them locally. I would encourage readers to look up Pony Canyon and YG Entertainment and explore the offerings from both. Who knows? You might find a new favorite to add to your playlist! ■



Screen capture from the PSY "Gangnam Style" video on YouTube at <http://tiny.cc/hzu1yw>.  
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YG's artist PSY come out with the hit single "Gangnam Style" with its memorable and ever-so-popular "horse riding" dance that gave many the chance not only to participate in a dance phenomenon, but also the chance to look into another culture for fun and entertainment. One can look on YouTube or watch commercials to see the many different parodies and alterations of "Gangnam Style." People from across the globe have non-Korean spin-offs that are fun plays on the original, despite the language barrier. Another group, LM.C, recently recorded a song called "Hoshi no Arika" that called for the voices of fans from around the world to help in its creation. Thousands participated in the process, and it was such a huge

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SAMANTHA HUGHES is a senior at Millington Central High School, just north of Memphis, Tennessee, and is currently ranked in the top three of her class. She is part of her school's award-winning Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) team. She has long had an interest in different world cultures that grew stronger during her World Geography class. She hopes to encourage all people to look beyond their immediate scope and explore media from other parts of the globe as a way to get to know more about the people and countries that created it.