



K-Pop Now!: The Korean Music Revolution

Mark James Russell

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"This is the book on K-pop everybody has been waiting for. It explains for westerners what K-pop music is really all about—a must-read!"—Charlotte Naudin, PR manager for Torpedo Productions

K-Pop Now! takes a fun look at Korea's high-energy pop music, and is written for its growing legions of fans. It features all the famous groups and singers, and takes an insider's look at how they have made it to the top.

In 2012, Psy's song and music video "Gangnam Style" suddenly took the world by storm. But K-Pop, the music of Psy's homeland of Korea, has been winning fans for years with its infectious melodies and high-energy fun. Featuring incredibly attractive and talented singers and eye-popping visuals, K-Pop is the music of now.

Though K-Pop is a relatively young phenomenon in the West, it is rapidly gaining traction and reaching much larger audiences—thanks in large part to social media like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. Top K-Pop acts get ten million to thirty million hits for their videos—the Girls Generation single "Gee" has over a hundred million views!

In *K-Pop Now!* you'll find:

Profiles of all the current K-Pop artists and their hits

A look at Seoul's hippest hot spots and hangouts

Interviews with top artists like Kevin from Ze:A and Brian Joo

A look at the K-Pop idols of tomorrow

You'll meet the biggest record producers, the hosts of the insanely popular "Eat Your Kimchi" website, and K-Pop groups like Big Bang, TVXQ, 2NE1, Girls Generation, HOT, SES, FinKL Busker Busker and The Koxx. The book also includes a guide for fans who plan to visit Seoul to explore K-Pop up close and personal.

Join the K-Pop revolution now!

K-Pop Now!: The Korean Music Revolution Details

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From Reader Review K-Pop Now!: The Korean Music Revolution for online ebook

Abby says

Very informative ... & useful for new kpop fans

Belinda says

SPOILER ALERT

Okay, let's be real, the author did a great job talking about KPOP's cultural background, its roots, its history and how the KPOP revolution evolved over time. However, when it comes to the section about boy groups and girl groups, there needs to be major editing with information given due to the lack of information that was missing and incorrect information concerning dates and names.

The cover of the book is absolutely amazing, we have major KPOP groups like TVXQ!, Big Bang, EXO, SNSD, Wondergirls 2ne1- you get the gist- it's glossy and a beautiful finish from the front cover to the back cover of the book.

The first chapter, "The Land of KPOP", interesting and useful information covering the history and roots of where KPOP originates from and the kinds of things that you should at least know KPOP's background information in general.

The second chapter, " What is KPOP?", the author interviews "Eat Your Kimchi", Kevin Kim from ZE:A and Brian Joo from Fly to the Sky. The interviews were short and had good information, but I felt like it lacked in detail and at times were a bit too short. I expected the author to interview other artists like Kevin from U-Kiss (Korean-American), Nickhun from 2pm (Thai-American) or even Amber from f(x) (Tawainese-American) about the diversity of KPOP, or even Jay Park just to read about their experiences in the KPOP industry and such. Don't get me wrong, it was great hearing from the Simon and Martina (but if you follow their youtube account, you already have the idea of who they are, what they do etc, so the information in the interview is not new, but old information for KPOP fans who already know who Simon and Martina are), it was refreshing to hear from Kevin Kim from ZE:A even though I don't listen to ZE:A as much-- it was nice to hear about what he had to say about KPOP and his experiences in the KPOP world and Brian Joo (been a fan of "Fly to Sky" from the beginning), it was great to read about his experiences in SM Entertainment and now. I didn't have a problem with the interviews, but it lacked information and I wished that the author had more interviews and maybe a fan interview from any of the big groups or solo artists in Korea.

Boy groups - If you're going to be covering boy groups, you need to get the dates and history right.

TVXQ! - The author gave information that covered only two members (Yunho and Changmin), but what about the other three members (Jaejoong, Yoochun and Junsu) who debuted with Yunho and Changmin in 2003. For new fans that are reading this book or are planning to buy this book, let's get things straight.

TVXQ! debuted with 5 members not 2 in 2003, and the author failed to mention the splitting of the group. The former members of TVXQ!; Jaejoong, Yoochun and Junsu left SM and became known as JYJ while TVXQ! became a duo with Yunho and Changmin. Another thing, MIROTIC was released in 2008 not 2006. 2006 was TVXQ! 's "O" era. If the author can mention Jay Park leaving 2pm in the book and have Jay Park

under the Past Members of 2pm, I'm sure we all expect to see Jaejoong, Yoochun and Junsu under the Past Members as well (however, the author fails to include JYJ in this book) which disappointed me in the most part. The author did mention JYJ in the beginning about KPOP groups having concerts outside of Korea, but doesn't bother to clarify who JYJ is.

Super Junior- Last I remember, Super Junior debuted with 13 members not 11. The author failed to mention Hangeng or Kibum, and even failed to mention them as "Past Members".

EXO- EXO has two leaders, EXO-K (SUHO) and EXO-M (KRIS), however only Kris was labeled as the leader. Last I check when EXO debuted, they had two leaders.

Many of the pictures were of great quality, others looked blurry and not as appealing to its fans. No offense, but even fans can take better pictures than what what published in the book. For example, 2pm's picture was blurry compared to other groups, it might seem like a big deal for other fans, but you kind of want to know what they look like as well. Not to mention, Super Juniors' pictures.

I'm surprised that SS501 wasn't mentioned in this book, they were just as great as TVXQ! and had many accomplishments as well.

GIRL GROUPS:

In the girl group, AFTERSCHOOL, the former leader's name is not RAHI, it's KAHY.

The picture quality for girl groups, many of them were great some were somewhat just blurry and low quality like F(x).

I give the author props for having a solo artist section and also mentioning Yoo- Mi Rae.

The information was basic and had decent information, but I wish there was more information about the KPOP groups since many of them had only 2 pages worth of information.

I also wished that there a section for FANCLUBS who also played a huge role in the KPOP community and the many ways that they show support to their favorite artists and groups.

I understand that talking about KPOP alone and condensing into one book is a difficult thing to do, and I give props to the author for writing the book and trying to put enough information in the book as possible, but the information itself wasn't all correct, lacked information needed and made me question about other things that the author should've included.

My advice for older KPOP fans, SAVE YOUR MONEY and for New KPOP fans, give the book a try and read it, but you might need to use your own KPOP sources to go back on the missing information that the author failed to give and that I've listed.

|

Ronald Lim says

Read the full review over at my blog, Ronreads!

Written by journalist Mark James Russell, the book is more than a hundred pages of photos and information on the current lay of the K-Pop land — from boy bands to girl groups and even the solo acts.

Russell certainly makes it easy for the K-Pop novice to step into its colorful world, starting the book with a description of what it would be like to be in the audience of a K-Pop artist's concert. From there, he tells a truncated but still informative history of K-Pop, starting with Seoul, the city where it was born, and then tracking how the city and the industry has grown and changed from the early 90s to the present day.

Particularly interesting to read is how Russell traces the beginnings of K-Pop to one group: Seo Taiji and the Boys. One of its members, Yang Hyun-Suk, started YG Entertainment in 1996, and has produced artists like Big Bang, 2NE1, and Psy. Between YG Entertainment, Soo-Man Lee's SM Entertainment, and Park Jin-young's JYP Entertainment, it doesn't look like there will be a shortage of K-Pop acts any time soon.

Russell also doesn't hesitate to give his readers an idea of how rigorously these companies search and train the people it will turn into K-Pop celebrities. He talks about how young most of these acts begin their training, and how arduous that training can be. Recruits then spend at least four years performing singing, dancing, and language skills, with most of them staying at small dormitories close to the main studio. He also doesn't shy away from touching on the infamous long-term contracts that these music companies impose upon their stars, some of which stretch as far as 13 years.

But the meat of the book — and probably the one that people are most interested to see — is made up of the profiles of the many acts that have come to represent K-Pop around the world, and it certainly doesn't disappoint. Photos abound, and newcomers to the fandom may find interesting some of the tidbits that Russell shares. For instance, it would seem that most K-Pop acts have official colours — Big Bang's is black and yellow, while Super Junior's is pearl sapphire blue. Birth days, fan clubs, and discographies are also included, as well as a couple of interviews with K-Pop artists Kevin Kim and Brian Joo.

There's no question that newbies will find much to enjoy in "K-pop Now! The Korean Music Revolution", as it is a perfect introduction to this particular genre, a perfect starting point to start one's exploration. More seasoned fans, however, may find the book lacking.

Superfans, after all, can find more photos and information about their favorite groups online. Sasaengs, or excessively obsessed fans who have been known to stalk and invade the privacy of their idols, certainly won't find anything new in this book.

Perhaps mainly due to page constraints, Russell's profiles on the K-Pop artists often only scratch the surface. For instance, the group Busker Busker was embroiled in a bit of controversy when its drummer, Brad Moore, talked to a blog about his experience on the reality show, Superstar K3. All of it warrants just one sentence on the group's profile in the book.

The same goes for the other K-Pop stars that have been embroiled in scandals and controversies in the past. Jay Park's troubles with the Korean public gets one paragraph, while the controversies that hounded Super Junior and TVXQ! aren't even mentioned.

These faults, however, will only really trouble those who do not need an introduction to the world of K-Pop. For those looking to dip their toes into it, "K-pop Now! The Korean Music Revolution" is a perfect gateway drug.

Rose D says

So my bro saw this on the new-books shelf at the library and very excitedly shoved it in my face, to which I very excitedly whisper shouted (cuz it be a library) OMIGOSH THANKS HADI AHHH and promptly checked it out without really looking at it.

I think my bro had more fun looking thru and reading it than me. Both the boy and girl group descriptions are all giant balls of mostly uninformative praiseful puff. The most annoying part was that every group description ended with something along the lines of "it looks like they'll be the future of kpop" or "this group's shining future looks limitless". yay...

ALSO this guy's sentence structure was APPALLING AGHH MY GRAMMAR HEARTEU IS IN PAINNN. Just read this sentence, this terrible sentence:

"The story of Jay Park's rise to fame is one of the more unusual ones in kPOP, RISING, FALLING TERRIBLY, ONLY TO RISE AGAIN EVEN MORE SPECTACULARLY, ALTHOUGH THE TRUTH IS IN MANY WAYS IT IS BARELY KPOP AT ALL" (okay I swear I didn't mean to type all that in caps, I was reading the sentence from the book and not looking at the screen while I typed. But since it fits my mood towards this guys writing I'll just leave it gd)

I mean what the honest fug kind of sentence is that Mr. Mark James Russell? Run-on, fragmented, and that last phrase has nothing to do with anyfuggingthing. What's "it" ey? DO YOU KNOW WHAT PERIODS AND DASHES ARE OR ARE YOU ONLY CAPABLE OF USING COMMAS? This sentence just reminds me terribly of "Has anyone really been far even as decided to use even go want to do look more like?" and if you don't know what that is look it up. It went viral at one point because it was a similar example of a stupid incoherent writer and people just couldn't understand it like I can't understand Russell. And if you think that's the only incoherent sentence in the book, you are wronnggg cuz he had a sentence like that in mostly every entry in the book.

Basically, this book is like this: you already know mostly everything that is written about the groups you like so those descriptions are of no use, and are actually very annoying because they are written in such a detached "I actually know nothing about this group or its members so I'm just gonna praise them, mention random albums and members, and throw in some questionable info here and there so kpop fans get really annoyed at me" way. So then of course reading about groups you don't know is pretty unreliable. BAP and BigBang descriptions were actually okay, esp for BigBang cuz he devoted a portion to describing each of the members, which he should've done for each group. And BAP was nicely accurate.

So yes, it was nice to have something kpop to look at in book form, and my favorite parts were probably the shiny photos (honestly some photos took up 75% of the pages so there was lovely little space for the author to even write his shitty group summaries), finding out a couple groups/duos I didn't know about (but will research on my own thanks v much) and recognizing the groups I know (I mean they even had History! surprised heart eyes). But then there's also the fact that it failed to include both BTS and BlockB and Mamamoo which is simply unforgiveablleee. But then again idk what the rights were for creating this book, so maybe the author wasn't able to include them. I have to say I'm partly relieved, because altho it would've been nice to see beautiful large shiny pics of them, I wouldn't want their story butchered.

2.5 stars

Barry Welsh says

Mark James Russell is an entertainment journalist who has been writing about Korean culture, economics and society since 1996. Over the course of two very well-researched books, the former Korea correspondent for The Hollywood Reporter and Billboard has explored in great detail the development of Korea's modern pop culture. Russell's 2008 book "Pop Goes Korea" is an in-depth examination of the incredible, rapid developments that took place in pop culture during the 1990s and 2000s which achieved a lot in a relatively short space of time. Its influence was growing in the rest of the world as well. Russell addresses the social, personal, cultural, and political factors that enabled and gave rise to this development at the end of the twentieth century. With concisely insightful commentary and a witty, intelligent writing style, he focuses on seven emblematic Korean success stories. He looks at the fascinating rise of media conglomerate CJ Entertainment, the factors surrounding the production of "Shiri" – one of Korea's most significant blockbusters, the birth and rise in stature of the Busan Film Festival, and even uses the career of heartthrob TV actor Lee Byung-hun as a way of discussing the prominence of Korean TV dramas in Asia. All of these stories are packed with intriguing, interesting details and insightful analysis that carefully situate them within their respective cultural and historical moments. In focusing on the business side of popular culture, Russell shows how a strong media and industry infrastructure is vital if creative artists are to flourish in their chosen mediums at home and abroad. He also highlights some issues inherent in Korean pop culture, suggesting that it is often too disposable in nature partly due to a lack of historical connection.

Russell's 2014 book, "K-Pop Now," zooms in on the wildly popular Korean music phenomenon. He takes great care to discuss the current role K-Pop plays in Korean youth culture and explores its background and origin as well as some interesting ties with different areas in Seoul: Hongdae, Samcheong, and Gangnam. This book is aimed more directly at fans as opposed to those looking for insightful analysis; it primarily consists of a series of brief profiles of many of the key acts, groups and solo artists pushing K-Pop forward today.

Nick says

Very short and will probably be out of date soon if it isn't already. It was kind of nice to read little blurbs about some of my favorite groups and artists, but I wish they had gone into more biographical depth, or gone into more details about how these music labels/producing houses/megacorporations work in Korea, because it seems like they play a much more prominent role in publicly branding themselves along with their "properties" (artists) than is the case in the US, and each one apparently crafts its own style which its artists sort of share. In my opinion, S.M. Entertainment is clearly the coolest one with the most forward thinking and creative style of K-Pop. It was also interesting to see how many bands have international and multilingual members, and how many songs they produce in Chinese and Japanese. They are really really REALLY outwards looking compared to Japan. Wish it had gone into more history about the roots too, but whatever, that's why it gets 2 stars. It was more of an industry magazine than a book on k-pop.

LynnDee (The Library Lush) says

This is a good resource if you nothing about K-pop & aren't sure where to start.

Dani McLymond says

Highly informative, great images, and had all my favorite Kpop stars. Highly recommend this for people who enjoy KPop.

Note: Received this in a Goodreads Giveaway

Jordan Funke says

Good writing and organization. Glossy interesting photos. Surprised that Big Bang is not featured more prominently. Good for newbies and fans alike.

Kait says

Bright colorful images, and very insightful into the world of K-Pop! I recommends this to all K-Pop lovers, it's just a great book for a fan to have around!

Staci says

This book seems to be geared towards new Kpop fans more than anything else -- even in the first chapter it starts listing Kpop artists names offhand, as if it expects the reader to at least know most of them and the subsequent parts dedicated to different Kpop acts just serve to fill you in on names you've probably heard but may not know too much about. He even gives a little bit of advice for those looking to try to become Kpop idols themselves (which perhaps clues you in even more to who the target audience is).

Despite the author having lived in Korea, it's not clear just how good of a grasp of Kpop he has (he barely touched on it in his previous book, *Pop Goes Korea: Behind the Revolution in Movies, Music, and Internet Culture*, choosing to focus more on industry titan Lee Sooman of SM Entertainment than anything else) and he has some rather obvious mistakes when it comes to the dates for artists and their releases that even a moderate fan of Kpop would notice -- he says that TVXQ debuted in 2004 and that Mirotic was released in 2006, when it was actually 2003 and 2008, respectively. However, he does list several groups and artists in the book but there clearly seems to be a specific order, possibly based on popularity: some of the arguably most popular groups are listed first and then the rest alphabetically. It would be interesting to know what information he used to decide that order since EXO, one of the biggest groups in Kpop, even in 2014 when this book was published, is listed alphabetically, not as one of the first; it may be because at barely two years old when the book was published, EXO would most likely still have been seen as a "rookie" group. Also, perhaps surprisingly for Kpop fans, he doesn't talk about group members leaving at all: he mentions that

Super Junior was one of the "biggest" Kpop groups, i.e. in number of members, but never says a specific number and yet specifically calls TVXQ a duo, without mentioning that they originally started as five -- in fact he briefly mentions the TVXQ situation when talking about Kara yet doesn't actually talk about what happened, which it would seem would be somewhat confusing to fans reading this book without already having knowledge about that situation. Yet he also, interestingly, points out that 2AM and 2PM started as "an eleven-man group called One Day"...which is true but then 2PM member Jay Park was forced to leave; this exception may be allowed because Jay Park is later featured in the solo artists category. He also strangely talks about SHINee's "impressive array of bulging muscles and chiseled abs" (are you sure we're talking SHINee here, not 2PM) but then two sentences later points out that "the guys project a soft, slightly androgynous look, with plenty of long, well-moussed hair". I kind of get the feeling that the author was somewhat aware of mainstream Kpop, since he's lived in the country so long, but in order to write this book had to do some major research and thus got some of his facts switched (although kudos to him for including Yoon Mirae in the solo artists category, she's critically respected as an artist but not exactly mainstream Kpop).

Overall, this is a glossy intro to Kpop (with lots of pictures), at least for when it was printed: in less than three years, several of the groups listed in the book have disbanded and there are several that are not listed in the book, not even in the "K-pop's Future" chapter, that have gained the spotlight.

Amanda says

Nice book :) A lot of nice pictures to support the text :) All you need to know about kpop you'll find it in this book :) !
I don't listen much to kpop, but this book made me want to ear and see even more :) ! The book is nicely structured :) Your eyes will enjoy :)
Great job :) Easy reading ;)

Minzy says

Okay...you guys might think I am CRAY CRAY and stupid...but is that I am new here soooooo I don't know how to read/open the book here....any help?? Plz

GC says

Ehh.. it was OK.

Alesandra Fullerton says

I received this book through Good Reads first reads and I must say, it was great! Not only was this book filled with a plethora of Korean Pop groups, known and not so well known, but it also went into great depth when it came to each group's career. This book was very informative and fun! I highly recommend it to any K-pop fan. :)

