

# Seo Taiji (서태지) and Boys' First Album: The Influences of African American Pop

## Seo Taiji and Boys (1992)

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## Seo Taiji's Impact



- The history of Korean pop culture had always been overinflated with the Korean ballad.
- With a distinct 1990's hip-hop sound, Seo Taiji and Boys debuted with low critical acclaim from the older generation.
- Seo Taiji and Boys debuted on an MBC competition show, where one older judge said, "The melody is a bit weak. It doesn't feel like you put a lot of effort into it," (Yoo, par. 2).
- But the placement on the show did not matter. The younger generation loved their unique sound, so Seo Taiji and Boys exploded in teen popularity.



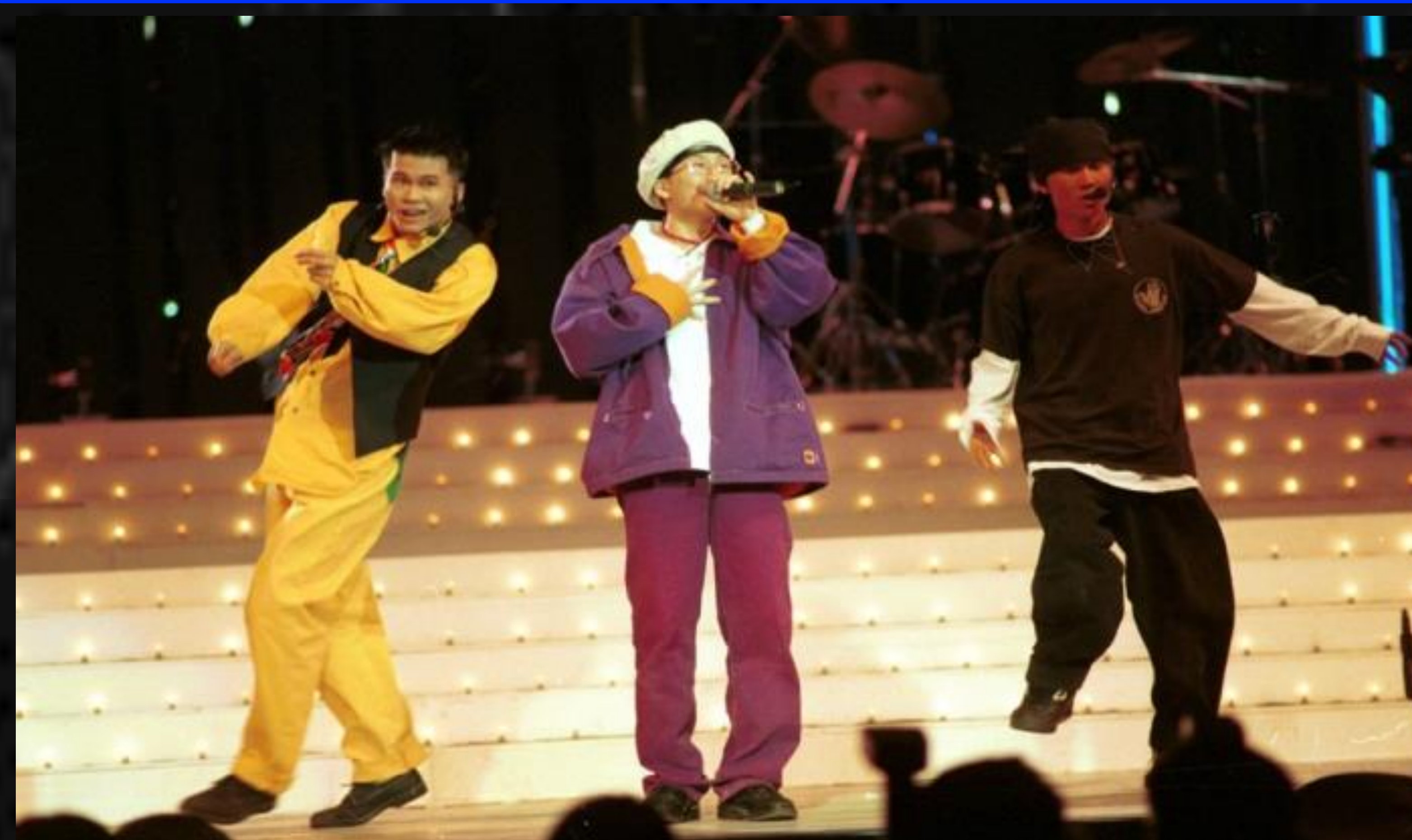
## I Know (난 알아요): Translation Analysis

*"(Please stop!)  
I know, when this night passes, yo!  
I'll put behind me the image of you leaving  
The sad feelings of our last kiss  
Are you really leaving?"*

In the second verse of Nan Arayo (I Know), the background music changes to a heavily inspired 1990's African American hip-hop beat. The cadence to which the second verse is delivered is very reminiscent of hip-hop verses of that time period, especially with the adlib "yo!".

## The Charts

Without taking in account the numerous pirated content of their work, the *Seo Taiji and Boys* album "went on to sell 1.7 million copies" and their main title track, *I Know*, stayed at the top of the Korean music charts for 18 weeks (Yoo, Par. 2).



- ✓ Seo Taiji and Boys' hip-hop and rock discography birthed the modern K-Pop industry.
- ✓ The usage of *ppongjjak* that "employs rap only during the verses, singing choruses in a pop style" became the foundation of the first generation of K-Pop (Shim, pp. 36).
- ✓ In their article "75 Greatest Boy Band Songs of All Time", *Rolling Stone Australia* ranks *I Know* at #43 (Spanos).
- ✓ Credited as a "game-changing" debut by *Rolling Stone Australia*, the flashy beats and catchy melodies of "I Know" and the insightful lyrics of the rest of the album has shaped the Korean Pop industry to what it is today (Spanos).

## References

## The Album

