

First visit to homeland after ‘KPop Demon Hunters’ release ‘Deeply grateful for huge love; we must have confidence in Korean culture’

President Lee Jae Myung meets director Kang: ‘We will build a proud cultural powerhouse’



Director Maggie Kang of the film “KPop Demon Hunters”

“Netflix and (Sony Pictures Animation) gave us their full support from the very beginning. They seemed to understand how appealing Korean culture and Korean content are to so many people.”

Director Maggie Kang, who created the Netflix animated film “KPop Demon Hunters,” said, “I believe we must have confidence in our culture and in the Korean perspective.”

At a press conference held at CGV Yongsan I’Park Mall in Seoul on Aug. 22, Kang said, “I’ve loved Seo Taiji and Boys and H.O.T. since way back, and I was also greatly influenced by director Bong Joon-ho. In particular, the film ‘The Host’ holds a lot of meaning for me.”

Regarding a sequel to “KPop Demon Hunters,” she hinted that while “there’s no official word yet,” she has many ideas she’d like to incorporate into a follow-up.

“I would like to showcase more of Korea’s diverse music styles,” she said. “Trot is all the rage these days, so I’d like to feature those kinds of songs, and I’d also like to show some heavy metal.”

‘Influenced by Seo Taiji, H.O.T. and Bong Joon-ho’

The secret behind “KPop Demon Hunters” global popularity lies in its universally relatable story. Kang explained, “Doesn’t everyone want to be loved, crave stability and seek recognition? These are points everyone can relate to.”

Relating to this, Kang referenced a review left by a 6-year-old child at a screening of “KPop Demon Hunters.”

“The child said they could precisely understand the fear felt by Rumi (a member of the girl group Huntrix in the film) because they had once feared how their friends would see them,” Kang said. “The core theme this work aims to address is ‘shame.’”

Rumi is also a character that partially reflects Kang herself. She said, “To be honest, I wanted to see a woman ‘like me.’”

“It seemed like many animations tried to draw female characters so they wouldn’t be ugly, too funny or foolish. In my work, I wanted to see a woman who eats food strangely and makes funny faces.”

Rumi shares the name of Kang’s daughter. She also shared how her daughter personally



A scene from the Netflix animated film “KPop Demon Hunters” (Provided by Netflix)



President Lee Jae Myung appears on the Arirang International Broadcasting program "K-Pop: The Next Chapter," which aired as a prerecorded broadcast on Aug. 20. President Lee met with Maggie Kang (L), director of the Netflix animation "KPop Demon Hunters," to discuss the future of the K-pop industry. (Provided by the Office of the President)

voiced young Rumi in the film.

"Seeing her perform without fear -- singing and acting in front of unfamiliar adults -- made me so proud of my daughter," the director said. "She told me, 'If I do well, Mom's movie will be even better.'"

'I want to include trot music in the sequel too'

Though it was a labor of love that took seven years from production start to release, she says that she did not expect such a massive success. Kang said, with tears in her eyes, "I never imagined it would receive this much love, and I truly want to express my gratitude."

She recalled that "Golden," an iconic original soundtrack (OST) song, was the most challenging one to work on among the film's tracks.

"It was a representative song embodying the protagonist Rumi's hopes and aspirations, making it a crucially important piece in the film," Kang said. "We went through seven to eight versions before finding the final one. When I heard the final version, I felt, 'Ah, this is it,' and tears came to my eyes."

Maggie Kang is a Korean Canadian director who was born in Seoul and moved to Toronto, Canada, with her family at age 5. She worked as a story artist at DreamWorks, Blue Sky, Warner Bros. and Illumination, and "KPop Demon Hunters" is her first feature film as director.

Released last June, the film became the highest-grossing Netflix original animation of all time, while its original soundtrack (OST) "Golden" claimed the top spot on the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 main singles chart. Billboard announced in its chart preview article on

Aug. 25 (local time) that "Golden" climbed one spot from the previous week, securing its second week at No. 1.

President Lee Jae Myung: 'Emergence of this great work is miracle'

On Aug. 20, President Lee Jae Myung said, "The opportunity to truly showcase the power of Korean culture is now fully under way."

Appearing on Arirang International Broadcasting's program "K-Pop: The Next Chapter" that day, Lee responded to the host's question, "How far has South Korea come as a cultural powerhouse?" by remarking, "We've just entered the beginning."

During the broadcast, the president discussed strategies for fostering a cultural powerhouse with figures like Kang and her film "KPop Demon Hunters."

"I agree with the criticism that while South Korea's cultural industry appears dazzling on the surface, it may be hollow inside with rotting roots. The government will build strong roots, starting now," Lee said.

"We will lay a solid foundation to make it a core industry," Lee continued. "We aim to build a proud cultural powerhouse. For a great tree to grow, the grassland must be well-cultivated. Support and nurturing for the pure arts are also necessary. That is the government's role, not the market's."

Lee further assessed, "Opportunities in the cultural and artistic fields should be created equitably so anyone can challenge themselves, but they were largely neglected. It's truly remarkable and almost miraculous that such great works and artists have emerged." 