

Two billion YouTube views and counting for 'Gangnam Style' (Update)

May 30 2014



South Korea's Psy attends the premiere of "RED 2" at Westwood Village in Los Angeles, on July 11, 2013

The wildly popular "Gangnam Style" music video cemented its place Saturday as one of the defining soundtracks of the digital age, smashing through the two billion barrier on YouTube.

The infectious and satirical mega-hit by South Korean pop star Psy became a worldwide sensation, fueling a South Korean "K-Pop" trend after it was first uploaded to the popular video sharing platform in July 2012.

It continues to garner thousands of looks daily and already was hundreds of thousands above the two billion mark early Saturday.

Psy's horse-riding-style dance moves in "Gangnam Style" have been mimicked in a myriad of videos uploaded to YouTube in various languages.

South Korea's most successful recent export has also gained currency beyond YouTube, becoming often copied, much parodied and endlessly analyzed.

"'Gangnam Style' actually pokes fun at how the common man fantasizes about life in the fast lane, as symbolized by the ritzy area in Seoul known as Gangnam," wrote an analyst in the renowned Harvard Business Review a few months after the release of the song, which by then was already a massive viral hit.

"The anti-materialism theme in the time of a global recession has helped broaden the appeal of the song," the analysis said.

The song's breach of the two billion views mark was a first at YouTube, where in February "Baby" by Canadian pop singer Justin Bieber became the only other video in the billion-view club.

"Two billion views; they are very honorable and very burdensome numbers," Psy said in a statement YouTube shared with AFP on Friday.

"With the appreciation, I will come back soon with more joyful

contents!"

His follow-up song "Gentleman" set the record for the most YouTube views in a single day—38 million—on April 14, 2013.

Meanwhile, the Wall Street Journal reported Saturday that Psy's new song "Hangover," a collaboration with rapper Snoop Dogg, was set for worldwide release on June 8 during a live broadcast of America's "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" late-night talk show.

The new creation reportedly will be "completely different" and display Psy's hip-hop side, his handlers told the newspaper.

The "Gangnam" in the hit song's title refers to Seoul's most upscale residential and shopping district lined with luxury boutiques, top-end bars and restaurants frequented by celebrities.

Psy sings about being the "guy who downs boiling coffee in one shot" and who "goes completely crazy when the right time comes."

The video, which satirizes the area's self-importance and ostentatious wealth, has Psy breezing through a world of speed boats, yoga classes and exclusive clubs while performing an eccentric horse-riding dance.

Only three percent of "Gangnam Style" views at YouTube have been from inside South Korea, underscoring Psy's global appeal.

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