

1. THE BEGINNING



The concept of <WINGS> was decided then. The ending of “Fire” music video, ‘BOY MEETS WHAT’. The blinking cursor behind the phrase ‘BOY MEETS’ at the ending of “SAVE ME” music video. The story of BTS had already been written then. What the boy will meet is ‘BOY MEETS EVIL’ of <WINGS>, or in other words, the fissures and temptation of the world. Somewhere in the middle of the ‘Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa’ series, the planning for <WINGS> started as BTS looked back on what they felt passing what could be called their best moment in life. After that, producer Bang Shihyuk met the manga <Spiral: The Bonds Of Reasoning> and constructed the outline, though vague it was. <Spiral: The Bonds Of Reasoning> may seem like a simple mystery series, but the protagonist eventually fell into the end, end, end of despair, no, into a much deeper darkness. Despite that, he said it was okay, because all the agony came from his own choice. It was time for BTS to talk about the suffering and the choices a boy has to face in the process of advancing forward and growing up.

The hint gained from this manga - overlapped with the story BTS had been telling - was expanded to the conception of adult and antiadult, nonadult. ‘Antiadults’ believe the realm of adults is full of evil, they refuse to grow up and declare the intention to stay as Peter Pan. On the other hand, ‘nonadults’ have soon known that life is dirty and nasty, but they can’t stop on the path of becoming adults as if someone is pushing them forward. In the end, they can’t become complete adults, and this was also the conception that met BTS who sang ‘Forever We Are Young’ as they wrapped up the ‘Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa’ series.

Looking back, from the start of ‘school trilogy’ in 2013 to <WINGS>, BTS’ history was the story of why, by what and how the boy lives, and also a great journey to come to that conclusion. In ‘school trilogy’, BTS were teenagers who aren’t tamed by the rules of the world. They shouted “Hey, what’s your dream?” to peers who don’t have much worry about the future, to the school that forces the same old way of thinking, the same old goals, and to all the adults. Their debut album <2 Cool 4 Skool> and <O!RUL8,2?> (Oh! Are You Late, Too?) were the voice of boys who are young but determined to decide their own life path. That teenage energy passed through

<Skool Luv Affair> and <DARK&WILD>, adding the face of the vigorous, red-blooded youth who fight for love recklessly. Dream, happiness, love. They were what teenagers wanted to hear about more than anything, what no one had talked about for a long time, but BTS bared them all out truthfully through 'school trilogy'.

The boys who dashed forward with a spirit as if to destroy the world, at some point, became the wandering youth. The 'Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa' days lasted only for a moment, they were dazzlingly beautiful and shining more beautifully than ever, but they were also restless, there was nothing they could know. In "I NEED U", they were obsessed with love, clung to love knowing they would be wounded; in "RUN", they sang that they wouldn't stop loving despite sensing they would get hurt. The seven of BTS dashing forward together were the image of the youth willing to face anxiety and suffering itself. Inside the fence called school, inside the world they had set foot in, the boys questioned the world, stepped out of the box and in the end, chose suffering.

And finally, <Demian> and <WINGS>. From 'Two Realms' to 'The Bird Fights Its Way Out Of The Egg', 'Jacob Wrestling', the stories in the book showed the world BTS has created so far and the journey to manhood. Dream, secret desire, those temptations (Evil) left marks on the once peaceful, dependent and moral youth; the boys realized the evil in reality. Experiencing the evil, witnessing their torn-apart egos and eventually coming to self-awareness. It's the reason the main theme of <WINGS> is temptation and conflict. Like how they rejected the rules set by school and adults in 'school trilogy', like how they ran forward knowing they would get hurt in 'Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa' series, BTS once again knew the danger yet still opened the door to meet the evil. From the question of 'Boy meets what', the story of <WINGS> began.

SHORT FILM #1 BEGIN

Like a nightmare, Suga's portrait and easel go up in flames. A flock of birds flying casts shadow upon the blazing scene. The drawing in his hands turns into Demian's drawing of bird. A big pair of wings rises from Jungkook's silhouette.

SHORT FILM #2 LIE

"Tell me the way, stop me, let me breath." Jimin eats an apple in the all-gray room. His innocent expression spreads into a wicked smile.

SHORT FILM #3 STIGMA

V continues to scratch the table legs even in the middle of interrogation. He runs in the dark, gets hit by something invisible and falls down. Moving onto the single room scene.

SHORT FILM #4 FIRST LOVE

Continuous whistle, intense light and the sound effect of an accident. Bloodstain and tire tracks left in the road Suga is standing on.

SHORT FILM #5 REFLECTION

The telephone continues to ring, the booth is locked in chains. Rap Monster tries to open the door in agony. The telephone stops ringing and he sinks down. The word 'Liar' is carved on the floor.

SHORT FILM #6 MAMA

J-hope takes a pill and the isolation unit changes like a hallucination. The image of Eva appears.

SHORT FILM #7 AWAKE

A shape akin to flame shows up in Jin's pupils. He lies on the bed and the room is distorted. The curtains flap and the bird flies outside the window.

2. SHORT FILM

The piano burns, the window shatters with a sharp screech. Paint leaks and drips from the portrait. Jungkook watches all of these with fear in his eyes. V recalls his unhappy past, Suga trespasses somewhere and plays the piano, Rap Monster sits in the pitch darkness and tattoos his wrist. They are once again in the position of the restless boys.

They shouted in "EPILOGUE: Young Forever". "I want the me of today to last eternally, I want to be young forever." Living and being hounded ceaselessly by the incitement of the world, they were young forever, wanted to be young forever. To those boys, the short films of <WINGS> where the symbols of <Demian> and the images of 'Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa' series co-exist are the record linking the end of an era with the next one and at the same time, showed that they shall remain boys as ever. Starting with concerns about problems they face at school in debut days, to spending the time of youth and wandering in 'school trilogy', BTS met the temptation from a bigger realm, a more complex outer world in <WINGS>. Jungkook's silhouette spreads its wings unknowingly. Jimin bites the apple with an ambiguous smile. A perplexed J-hope in a paint-scattered room. And finally, Jin drops the apple, burns the lilies, silently touches and stands in front of the rippling mirror. He leaves the photos of all those symbols and goes somewhere.

Various traces of 'Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa' remain in the short films, at the same time, the different sides of the members compared to the past implies the transition of BTS. This is the farewell to 'Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa', the most melancholy era to both BTS and every fans, it also means despite that, the story of the boys will continue. They witnessed the fissures of the world, which soon lead to the awakening of their egos. It's time to step into the world of decadence and temptation. The boys remain as restless as ever.

In "I NEED U", they were in pain, they fought, they suffered so bad that they drowned themselves in medicine, yet they still played with fireworks and laughed so innocently; in "Run", they ran and screamed as though they would destroy the whole world if they have to. The pain made the moment even more beautiful. The youth BTS spent in 'Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa' was the faces of the insecure boys who fell out of the fence of the world, a world in which grades, parents and school

were their everything. Through <WINGS> short films, though still scared, they had started to come into the arms of the evil, the adult world they must step into. Breaking out of the solid world, experiencing and awaking to the evil, this is what one has to go through to become a man.

"In the scene where I had to shed tears, I cried for real. First of all, if they play songs at the set it'll create a mood. I'm quite sensitive to images or sounds so I was able to cry easily when filming." - Jungkook

"It's hard to explain what images I thought of. I just listened to my solo song "Lie" and left it to my body. It would be more difficult to portray it if I think too much." - Jimin

"It was an extension of my character in 'Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa' so I didn't have any difficulty portraying it. Besides I was with a cute obedient puppy so I had a great time filming." - V

"The scene where I threw the rock and broke the window was hard to be re-shoot. I entered the set with tension after practicing several times, and luckily I nailed it in one go." - Suga

"The telephone booth was set to not open but it strangely did and fell so I almost destroyed it. I wasn't supposed to rip apart the chains as well but I did. It was left with a lot of regrets but I think I did my best." - Rap Monster

"Since I was young, I was already familiar with a form of musical performance called 'Dance-cal'. So I had no pressure about filming the short film alone, I focused and acted for the video to come out in the best quality." - J-hope

"I talked with the director on the set and adjusted the character. I was in a position where I was the only one left and watching over the others, so I tried to portray the sadness and loneliness." - Jin

3. COMEBACK TRAILER

In 2013, Rap Monster's voice filled the debut trailer signaling the start of 'school trilogy'. In 2015, the star of <Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa PT.2> trailer was Suga, who shouted fiercely "whatever thorny path it is, run" like in <Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa PT.1>. And in 2016, there was no doubt that J-hope will be the guide, the gatekeeper to the world of <WINGS>. Producer Bang Shihyuk said, "j-hope is an unique member in the group. He's the best at dancing and able to pull off rapping as well. I think if he can express his self-composed song through dancing well, he couldn't be cooler beyond that." True to his words, J-hope has prepared with his blood, sweat and tears for one year, and played an excellent role of being the portal to the new path of BTS. Through a choreographer designated by himself, he perfected the performance fusing old school style and krump with a hint of modern dance.

The trailer of <WINGS>, "Boy Meets Evil", is the invitation ticket sent from BTS. J-hope is the guide to the new world. Between the short films and music video, the trailer served as the guide to enter the world of <WINGS> solely through dance without any further explanation. In less than 3 minutes, J-hope accomplished it with his performance. He was in pain, but he danced like he couldn't stop. In the midst of the void with nothing but dust, J-hope dances as the crimson smoke rises and the floor cracks as if foreshadowing the entry to a strange new world. He sways between the glamorous world of temptation scattered with colorful paints and his ego. As if he can't control his desire, as if he's calling for redemption, his movement turns the void into a place overlaid with colors and put on a sensual vibe. Like the saying in <Demian>, "The evil held me in his clutches, the enemy was behind me", J-hope portrayed the anxiety of the youth through a thrilling dynamic performance. Just like the lyrics written by J-hope, "Too Bad It's Too Sweet." this trailer is another test of the temptation, in which viewers can't keep their eyes until the end. As J-hope said, "This love is another name for the evil" ("Boy Meets Evil"), you can't help but be drawn into <WINGS> as if being possessed.

"This trailer was the chance that won't come to me a second time. If I mess this up because I don't practice enough, I would regret for the rest of my life, so I bit the bullet. I hate living with regrets." - J-hope

"When I first received the theme 'Boy Meets Evil', I thought of my past and was extremely immersed in it. That's why I could write the song with a sincere attitude and danced as well." - J-hope

4. PHOTOGRAPHY

From 'school trilogy' to 'Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa' series, BTS' concept photos always conveyed their stories and characters visually. With 'school trilogy', they dressed up in rumpled uniform look, while in 'Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa' series, they appeared in Mod style outfits, which were popular in England during the 60s. It explained the image and growth of BTS - the rebellious boys, the wandering youth - through a visual aspect. But the process of visualizing the theme of <WINGS>, of becoming adults and dealing with temptation on the way, can be a little more complicated. Like Producer Bang Shihyuk said, as the direction of <WINGS> was inspired by <Demian>, the topic of consensus between good and evil, temptation and ego, is an abstract conception. Excluding explanation and expressing clearly what the new concept means to say in a few photos without straying too far away from the stories BTS has told so far is undoubtedly difficult. Hence, <WINGS> concept photos were more abstract than before. Jimin looks at the camera with apples scattered around, Jungkook lies down on heaps of feathers, Rap Monster sits in front of layers of mirrors. The mirrors cast Rap Monster's reflection in many directions. This intensifies the abstract and multivalent images shown in the short films. In the short films, Jimin bit the apple with an ambiguous expression, a pair of wings formed from feathers soared from Jungkook's shoulders. and like the title "reflection", Rap Monster was perplexed by his reflection in the mirrors.

Starting from the <Demian> hint, the story of <WINGS> was slowly unraveled from individual short films, the trailer to concept photos for that reason. The detailed motive of <WINGS> was embedded in the short films, and each individual symbol, imprinted on the viewers' minds through the short films, was once again fused into the concept photos. To make this storytelling possible, the details of the sets were invested in 5 times more than normal photoshoot sets. The process of visualizing 'temptation' and adding in erotic elements was especially needed in order to portray an abstract world like <WINGS>. The face expressions and poses of BTS members looked weary but mysterious at the same time, while their outfits used glam look, the recent trending pajama look and bare look with partial exposure to maximize the sexy and glamorous image. Able to add the eroticism without going too explicitly, bare look and glam look were the most suitable option to represent the concept of <WINGS>.

"Man muss noch Chaos in sich haben, um einen tanzenden Stern gebären zu können." This phrase was written in V's concept photos. It means "you must have chaos within you to give birth to a dancing star", a quote from <Thus Spoke Zarathustra> by Friedrich Nietzsche. What the props, the outfits and even the quote never forget to speak up for a moment, is the concept of <WINGS> itself.

5. BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS

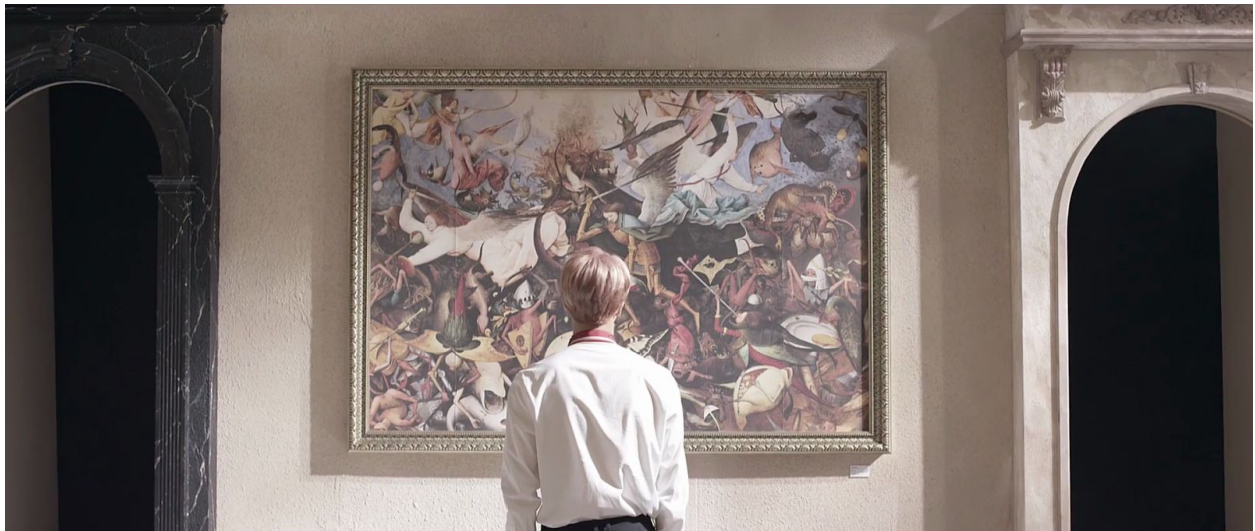
BTS tends to be recognized as a boyband with a global fandom rather than a K-pop band. The first testing of this was "Fire", an electro trap song. The experiment Producer Bang Shihyuk did with "Fire" proved to be a success. True to its title, "Fire" lighted the fans all over the world on fire, and BTS' strategy of making the winning move with the kind of music that is currently trending in the world, not just in Korea only, wasn't wrong. Korean idol groups' music has started to create a sensation in the West as well. The game's rules have changed. With "Blood, Sweat & Tears", they took another step forward. It doesn't follow the grammar and the genre of idols' pop songs where being catchy and easy to sing along is typical. Using moombahton - a globally rising genre - as the base, the melody started with "Blood, Sweat & Tears" from the beginning intuitively suggests the theme of temptation and lets the dark and subverse energy seep through. This formation that presents a foreign vibe from the start leading to the climax was new but astonishing at the same time.

Foreign, and sensual. "Blood, Sweat & Tears" music video was foreign and obscure to viewers than ever and full of abstract images for that reason. From 6 months before the release, Producer Bang Shihyuk and music video director Lumpens had researched about mise-en-scène, and had come to a decision to distribute the information so it wouldn't stay fixed in "Blood, Sweat & Tears", unlike the dramatized music videos with stories in 'Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa' stories. Through the change of verticle or horizontal composition, each scene was born as a different painting, and the music video becomes a kind of gallery with multiple objets d'art. Meanwhile, the choreography acts as another splendid mise-en-scène. With Suga covering Jimin's eyes as the

first movement of the performance, the music video for "Blood, Sweat & Tears" officially started.

In addition, "Blood, Sweat & Tears" contains the story and symbols based on <Demian>. The <WINGS> album - including "Blood, Sweat & Tears" - conceptualized the growth of BTS before moving onto the next phase with the help from classics and mythology. The story of having to go through agony in order to grow up, rather than describing the specific situation, created the vibe they want to show and explained the conception of temptation, decadence and growth. While Jin was gazing at "The Fall of the Rebel Angels", playing in the background was a music piece by Bach, seeking forgiveness from God, but the BTS of "Blood, Sweat & Tears" said there's no such thing as God, that our fate has been decided like this since long ago. From the youth portrayed by the green candy, green smoke, monotonous colors, they went out into a more complicated, more glamorous and chaotic world. Like how Rap Monster gave the melted candle wax to Jungkook, like how Suga took Jimin's hands and led him somewhere outside, the ones who have grown up first in the 'Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa' series urged the kids who haven't awoken from the dream to wake up. Like that, the story of BTS and <WINGS> was completed.

SCENE BY SCENE



Scene 1: Jin is looking at 'The Fall of the Rebel Angels' by Pieter Bruegel. Although the painting depicts the angels who rebelled against God being forced down to Hell, in the music video, it was used with the meaning that for a person to realize about themselves and grow up, they must stand against God.



Scene 2: Behind the members is 'The Lament for Icarus' by Herbert James Draper. In the myth of Icarus, he fell while flying close to the sun when his wings made from bees wax melted. It holds the meaning that he rejected the fate given by God and chose to follow his own path.



Scene 3: The scene of Suga covering Jimin's eyes resembles the last scene of <Demian>. Demian tells Sinclair who has his eyes closed "I'm giving you a kiss from Frau Eva", which means he will soon merge with his ego.



Scene 4: The alcohol Rap Monster is drinking is Absinthe, a favorite drink of Romanticism artists like Vincent van Gogh and Romanticism writer Arthur Rimbaud. It was used to symbolize the will of humans to fight against God and fate.



Scene 5: There are two contrast conceptions called 'Monotonous' and 'Colored'. Here, 'Colored' doesn't only mean having colors, but also being glamorous and diverse. From the monotonous world of youth, BTS learned about the various situations of the colored real world.



Scene 6: The water under J-hope's chair is melted chocolate. In <Demian>, when Sinclair was suffering because of his lies, his mother gave him a piece of chocolate. Michelangelo, Pietà, 1498-1499, St. Peter's Basilica (Vatican City)



Scene 7: The scene of Rap Monster feeding candle wax to Jungkook appears in <Demian> too. It's an analogy to when Demian received a drawing of bird from Sinclair, and also means to urge him to awake to the fact that he can't be young forever.



Scene 8: J-hope shooting an arrow towards V is not that he's killing V, he's helping him to realize himself. It means the death of youth and growth, this shows in the photo of V with paint splatters after getting shot with the arrow.



Scene 9: The background image is 'Landscape with the Fall of Icarus' by Pieter Bruegel. Amid the peaceful scenery, Icarus fell down to where the eyes can't reach. This work portrays the intrinsic agony of humans. V jumping down symbolizes the death of youth and entry to the next phase.



Scene 10: The song Suga is playing is ‘Passacaglia’. In <Demian>, if youth is symbolized by ‘Matthäus-Passion’, then after realizing the evil, it’s changed into ‘Passacaglia’. In the music video, the drama is changed after playing this music piece.

INTERVIEW

JUNGKOOK

『 *Thinking of <WINGS>, I feel like I have a lot in common with Sinclair in <Demian>. He wants to break free from the care of others and be an adult, and so do I. Rather than saying it’s a special album, I would say it made me think a lot after hearing the album concept. “I want to be a real adult too.”* 』

You graduated from high school.

“If I kept studying and spending time with my friends like an ordinary person, I would think ‘So I finally became an adult’ when I graduate. But since I started living sort of an adult like since I was 15, I still feel like I’m a kid. I’m 21 but my mental age is like 15 years old. There’re a lot of adults around me too.”

Do the other members treat you as an adult?

“Rather than treating me as an adult, they tell me “You’re an adult now”. Things like ‘Be mature’, ‘You’re an adult too, act carefully’ (*laughs*) Especially when my jokes go too far, they tell me to stay still, to not go too far. I tend to have to go through something to know it. If they tell me so, I’ll fix myself little by little. I’m gradually learning thanks to the hyungs,”

What you said earlier is what your solo song “Begin” is about.

“There was a time when Bang Shihyuk Producer-nim and the 7 of us gathered and talked about all the stress, the distress we had been piling up for a long time, and we all cried together. Rap Monster-hyung listened to my story from that time and wrote the lyrics.”

Comparing before and after debut, do you feel you have changed a lot thanks to the members?

“I changed a lot for sure. I gained a lot of confidence too. I couldn’t even talk like this before. I kept watching the hyungs doing interviews from the side and as time goes by, I started talking little by little and eventually was able to do interviews. Hyungs really made me. I learn music by watching foreign artists and pick up basically everything else thanks to the hyungs.”

Are you the type to express your feelings well?

“I’m not good at it. I feel embarrassed even from saying thank you so I basically never do it. I’m good at complaining though. *(laughs)* I can complain easily but when it comes to good talks, it always feels awkward. I can do it through texts since it’s somewhat easier, but talking directly is really hard.”

BTS grows up along with each album’s story, and Jungkook grows up along with BTS too.

“Thinking of <WINGS>, I feel like I have a lot in common with Sinclair in <Demian>. He wants to break free from the care of others and be an adult, and so do I. Rather than saying it’s a special album, I would say it made me think a lot after hearing the album concept. ‘I want to be a real adult too’. Looking at the other hyungs, don’t they know themselves and do well? They can think and create something by themselves, but I still lack a lot so there’s not much I can do by myself. It’s not like I’m good at composing or anything. I want to try my best and be able to do something well.”

Are you talking about wanting to compose music?

“On some level, yes. I stayed up until 7 in the morning to try composing with MIDI the day before this interview too. I don’t know piano chords since I didn’t learn it, so playing the song’s very hard. The hyungs were all tired, I didn’t want to bother them by asking what I don’t know. I want a certain sound to be at this part but finding it is difficult, so I just try pressing every key. I keep telling the company I want to learn piano so I can start composing, and now I’m planning to properly start working with MIDI.”

But is it necessary for every member of the team to make songs?

“Just because 2-3 members of the team will make songs doesn’t mean the others don’t have to do it. It’ll be great if everyone can. Besides, the kind of music and emotions I like are different from what the other members like. I want to make my emotions into a story and hear it in sound. But I’m upset that I still can’t do it well. Not long ago I was playing with MIDI before I slept and it make me think I want to get my name on the album credit soon too.”

To what level do you want to make it?

“I haven’t considered that. I just plan to do it slowly without thinking too hastily.”

What kind of music and emotions do you like?

“I like quiet songs. The emotional and sad songs, kind of gloomy rather than bright. I really like listening to piano and guitar sounds. When I want to get excited I listen to loud songs such as hip hop or EDM, but usually I listen to quiet songs, like pop ballad.”

You have been nicknamed “Golden Maknae” for being multi-talented since debut, is there any time when you have no confidence?

“Rather than having no confidence, I’m the type to cower inside a little bit. I tend to think I have a long way to go even if I dance well, or think “I can’t sing” even if they say I sing well. I would still be like that 10 years later, when I practice and become someone who can really sing well. I would keep this thought even if I’m the ultimate vocalist. I’m originally this type of person.”

Don’t idols have to show that they think “I’m the best” on stage?

“It’s different on stage. There, I must show everything I can there and then come down. Only after that do I think about myself. It’s closer to thinking I have a long way to go than me having no confidence.”

<WINGS> contains the solo songs of each member and it somewhat revealed each person’s color a little more in various ways. What do you think is your role in BTS?

“What am I in the team... I’m curious what the hyungs think about me but I have never asked them. Can I ask like ‘What do you think about me?’ *(laughs)* I just wish I don’t cause harm to the team, that I’m helpful. And, of course the other members are doing very well but, I hope I can become the kind of existence that without me, a part of it will fall apart. I hope I can become a member that shows our synergy when the 7 of us gather.”

To do that, it would be important to find what is of your own.

“I still don’t have it yet, my core. I’m thinking so. That’s why I have to learn more and work harder so I can step up my game. Finding what only I have is, in some ways, the goal of my life.”

J-HOPE

『 ‘MAMA’ was my real story so I wrote it very comfortably. When they asked me what kind of song I would like to make at the meeting, I said, ‘I think talking about my mother would be great. But I don’t want it to be gloomy, I want it to be bright like my personality.’ I was able to naturally express the emotions I felt about my mom in my whole life. 』

2016 was one of the best years to BTS.

“I may be stating the obvious but I felt very proud and happy, because it was a year where things I dreamed of came true. We had a concert at Seoul Gymnastics Stadium and received the valuable Daesang too. There were so many people who think we wouldn’t make it. Those results

were what I and the members gained by overcoming them and working hard together. That's why I'm proud about everything."

Do you think you can show how proud you are as much as you want?

"We shouldn't be arrogant of course but I think there's no need to hide it. We don't need to be like 'no, we're not'."

You laughed and looked very happy when receiving the 'Artist Of The Year' award at 'Mnet Asian Music Awards (MAMA)'.

"I really cried a lot when we got the 'Album Of The Year' award at 'Melon Music Awards'. I don't know the meaning of those tears but I had been tearing up since before we got the award. They just all fell down when our name was called. But MAMA was different, even though the other members were all crying, I only felt happy. Maybe I couldn't cry because I was too happy. *(laughs)* Ah, we finally got it. This moment came to us too. There are no words that could express my happiness."

What did you do after receiving the award?

"We just gave a big present to each other. All seven of us gathered and went eat after a long time. We went to a luxury restaurant and drank champagne. Spending time with the members is that present."

<WINGS> seems to hold a special meaning not only to the team but also to you personally.

"Yes. First of all, our album intros have always been done by the rapper line, and I finally got to be in charge of the intro with <WINGS>. In some ways, it's like I have been working hard ever since for this one. There are fans who have big expectation in me, so I wanted to satisfy them. I thought that if I want to do this well, I need to have my ability as the support, so I worked really hard."

Wasn't performance practice also as necessary as rap practice?

"Honestly, I felt less difficult to make songs, since I have always been writing. But the pressure about the performance was huge. I just needed to take and learn the choreography from the foreign choreographer, but its level of difficulty was really something. It took about a month to practice only the choreography and then I filmed the trailer video. I was worried a lot but the video turned out very nice. It's all thanks to the director."

You also had to compose your solo song "MAMA".

"Personally, it felt great having two songs with my voice in our second full album. So burden or not, I was able to enjoy working on it. 'MAMA' was my real story so I wrote it very comfortably. When they asked me what kind of song I would like to make at the meeting, I said, 'I think talking about my mother would be great. But I don't want it to be gloomy, I want it to be bright like my personality.' I was able to naturally express the emotions I felt about my mom in my whole life."

What did your mother say when she heard the song?

“She really like it. Everyone around and even the other members’ parents were envious of her. Not just my mom, my dad also liked it a lot.”

Was he jealous?

“(laughs) No, not at... Honestly I don’t know how he felt (laughs) but he was proud. He said he’s proud that I personally composed and wrote the lyrics for a song about my mom, that he’s really happy these days too. I didn’t get to see my dad smiling often before, but looking at how happy he is, I’m happy too. Sometimes he even asks me to give my autographs. Of course I should do it for him. If BTS wasn’t popular, such thing wouldn’t even happen. If I think of it as something that comes naturally, giving autographs is not hard at all.”

You played a very important role in the performance for “Blood, Sweat & Tears”, there must be a lot of pressure.

“The pressure was big. I got a lot of parts this time, in the chorus and two rap parts. I was worried ‘If I pull off these parts well, will this be able to impress the fans and the public?’, because ‘Blood, Sweat & Tears’ is a song that requires a sexy and even decadent image. I didn’t think I suit that kind of character so I was worried a lot.”

How did you resolve it?

“I decided not to exaggerate in order to look sexy. Whenever I monitor, I look very weird when I’m exaggerating. It’s like adding a little extra sauce on my normal self. I basically let it all out freely on stage. So I monitored myself, checked out for the fans’ reactions and did a lot of research.”

The more broadcasts you do, the better it’s complete.

“Absolutely. It’s the same for every promotion. No matter how much I prepared, if I do it on stage and the reaction goes ‘It’s so-so’, I definitely will modify it. That happens a lot. The reaction is important. I’m also the center of the performance so I need to do that much. I only realize it now but, if I look sexy on the camera even just once, the fans like it a lot. I took out what I prepared with each broadcast and paid attention to do more simply and make better face expressions.”

Until before this promotion, have you ever had the greed to show more of what you can do?

“There’s no way I can have no greed. I can feel I’m lacking when I make music, so I work even harder. Since we release albums often, when I look back at myself, my rap style’s the same. It’s unavoidable due to the limited time, but I often research to change it. I determined to utilize the time I have during the tour in 2017 to level up my skills. I need to do better. If I think ‘This is enough’, then it will stop there for real. I’m still far from being the better.”

Are you planning to release a mixtape like Rap Monster or Suga?

“I’m thinking about it. Suga-hyung or Rap Monster’s mixtape always contains what they want to say. But I think I need to start from considering what to talk about. I’m not the type to write in-depth lyrics. I need to keep working hard, think much, read books, watch movies and listen to the stories of people around me to be able to cover what I want to talk about.”

You seems to say you need to work hard a lot.

“I tend to hear feedback from people around and push myself a lot. But I also only hear what I want to hear and dismiss what I want to dismiss. If there’s anything to be fixed, I’ll fix it, if there’s anything I want to keep about myself, I’ll keep it. I don’t totally dwell on other people’s opinions.”

Have you ever imagined you would become such singer when you were young?

“Honestly I matured quite fast. I was sure of my dream since I was in sixth grade of elementary, so I already had a big desire to make my dream come true soon. I practiced diligently by myself and managed myself as I want, not doing bad things, meeting good friends and dancing. It may sound funny but I was certain I would later become a singer then.”

Running nonstop from trainee days to now, isn’t there any time when you’re tired?

“Sometimes, but I don’t tell anyone. For example, at the set for music video or album jacket shooting, I tend to act as bright as possible even if I’m tired. We all determined to do it well, so we should cheer each other up. If everyone’s tired and exhausted, then where’s the fun in the shooting?”

Despite that, don’t you sometimes want to put down that role?

“I do think like that. But everyone is tired as well. Our members, even the staff are tired too. I should take the bullet first, actually it’s something I should do so saying ‘take the bullet’ may sound funny, but I try to refresh the mood. It’s been engraved in my body now. *(laughs)*”

If you want to keep your energy all the time, then you need to take good care of yourself physically and mentally.

“These days I realize managing my health is important, so I planned to take this and that. But it doesn’t work well. I clearly brought nutritional supplements with me when going overseas for the tour, but I forgot and ended up not taking at all. I don’t break down mentally. I have a pretty strong mental.”

Is there any time you think ‘Is it okay to do nothing but work like this?’?

“Those kinds of thoughts are possible, but I want to work hard when I still have the strength.”

Why are you thinking about that already?

“*(laughs)* It’s just, idols go with the flow of times. As they go with that flow, time passes and they grow older, and another clock in the idol world will run. It’ll be hard to do this until 50, 60 years old. I should plan out for my old age from now. *(laughs)*”

Then what is J-hope’s goal?

“I don’t have anything detailed. Just making the music I like and dancing as much as I could, that much is clear.”

SUGA

『 What I'm thankful to Bang Shihyuk PD and our music production team is, there are originally a lot of people who don't know a good sound even if we present them one. Everyone has a different preference so it's hard to pick the sound we think is the right answer, but there's always the sound close to the right answer in our music. Mixing or mastering is as important as composing, and having a company with the ability to differentiate between good sources and good sounds is a huge blessing. 』

2016 was a meaningful year to both BTS and Suga personally.

“It was hectic. Lots of things happened too. My life's always hectic but last year was even more so. We told ourselves ‘We went through a lot, everyone all worked so hard’. Luckily it turned out well so we could look back on last year like this.”

But you don't seem to be carried away by that good mood.

“We are a realistic team. We can enjoy the happiness because we have been and will be doing well, but we have never once been content with ourselves. It's been like that from before debut. Every time we release an album, we always worry whether or not it would do well, and they said this album was the most important one. That's why we received even more stress, but we do not settle and continue to work on it, that's the strength of our team.”

Why?

“From before debut, our company was small and had no money. We came out when the company was on the verge of falling down. Some friends who used to train with me left the company and even suggested going with them, but then I debuted. So we always tell each other not to be content with ourselves, to look forward and keep going. I think showing what we can do steadily is the top priority.”

How did you work on the album? From the mixtape released under the name of Agust D to “Blood, Sweat & Tears” and repackage album, you're slowly reflecting the stories of yourselves into the albums more and more.

“Bang Shihyuk PD-nim once said this too, a person would brighten up after releasing a mixtape. He even asked where that incisive person full of wrath from before had gone. It was my complex and the way to solve it was music that I need to make. Thinking about how many idols can have this chance, I'm making music in a very good environment. BTS, Agust D or a human named Min Yoongi, it all comes from the same person, so if I put in the real stories of mine, many people can listen and relate to it.”

What's the difference between releasing as BTS and releasing mixtape?

“My mixtape is purely just shouting out. *(laughs)* I figure that the influence my mixtape brings is different from what BTS' albums bring, with BTS, I need to refine. Firstly, there's not much I can

use. To compress what I want to say into as short as possible, I have to think more compared to when making mixtape.”

Was “First Love” from <WINGS> that point of contact?

“It’s a meaningful song too. “First Love” talks about the piano I used to play when I was young, which also means the only friend I had. I cried a lot while recording. I kept crying at the emotion explosion part in the latter half. It was when I just finished working on the ‘Agust D’ mixtape and moved onto the album right away, so I didn’t have much time, I wrote it quick and recorded all by myself. Right after I cried and recorded the song, I sent it and went to the airport, but then they called and said it might need to be re-recorded because the file was broken. I cried that hard while recording but! (*laughs*) I recorded again after going back to Korea and went to catch a flight again 4, 5 hours later. It was stressful but fun.”

What led you to choose the current message of your solo songs among many stories you can tell?

“Bang Shihyuk PD-nim informed us there would solo songs when we talked about the album concept. I thought a lot about what kind of song I should do and suggested ‘So Far Away’, which is currently in the mixtape. It’s something I can pull off well and also public-friendly, so I asked ‘How do you think?’, they said it was fine but we need to discuss a little more. Then the song was put in the mixtape. After listening to other members’ songs, I felt like if my song is depressing, it would sag the mood of the whole album down. I asked how about doing the ‘tough’ style that I can pull off the best, but it would not fit the flow of the album. So I started making a rap-only track. Actually, the main line of ‘First Love’ is the same as ‘So Far Away’. I remembered the orchestra session I wanted to put in but couldn’t because of the lack of time and made use of it. If you listen to ‘First Love’, there’s just straight up rapping for 3 minutes 9 seconds. It’s not that common nowadays so it was fun.”

You don’t tend to show your emotions much, seems like you relieve it through rapping.

“I don’t think I live an ordinary life.. I started making music since I was young, and left home since I was young too. Many interesting things happened in my life. I don’t show it much usually. Basically not at all. But I always live hoping someone would know it. I relieve through music. It’s like I resolve it by performing and making music. I think of music as my release. That’s why I made ‘Agust D’ freely. It was a load off my mind.”

What happened in the past?

“There was a time I had to live with just 300,000 won (\$262) a month. I couldn’t eat three meals a day. It was hard and I wasn’t that rich, but I think I enjoyed it. Why? My inferiority complex and the desire of wanting to do well quick was strong after debut. It wasn’t like a total failure, just my high ideals made it hard. Back in high school, I spent my days playing around and having fun with my friend. I went to my old school, took a walk, sorted out my thoughts and got to know what I need to do.”

Is “First Love” or “Spring Day” the result?

“Yes. ‘Agust D’ is my turning point. It’s probably the best thing I did in 2016. I was very emotionally exhausted then. There were also the worries of being an idol. I met an old acquaintance not long ago and they said I became a completely different person. If you ask me whether I’m satisfied with the music in ‘Agust D’ or not, I would say I’m not. I didn’t have enough time and many parts could have been better, but if you ask I regret releasing the mixtape or not, I want to say I really like it. The members said the same too. They told me my mixtape is too ‘fierce-fierce-fierce-fierce’. *(laughs)* I said I couldn’t do anything other than it. I don’t regret making it that way at all. I became more relaxed making music after that. More naturally too. There is no longer a limit like before.”

How did you work on “Blood, Sweat & Tears”?

“I heard the beat made by Pdogg-hyung first and it was so good. What I’m really thankful to our company staff is, they always develop, even Pdogg-hyung and Bang Shihyuk PD-nim. Pdogg-hyung made half of the title track and the rest was on us, so I started working on it without much pressure. It’s like, if it doesn’t do well, let it be. I tend to be really stressed when working but that time I wrote the song while playing games. I unknowingly finished the outline after playing a few rounds.”

Was it difficult putting your individual into the sound or flow that’s different from before?

“I became really sensitive to sound when working on ‘Agust D’. I modified every single beat and even personally participated in mixing. For this album, I would give it 93 out of 100 in terms of sound. What I’m thankful to Bang Shihyuk PD and our music production team is, there are originally a lot of people who don’t know a good sound even if we present them one. Everyone has a different preference so it’s hard to pick the sound we think is the right answer, but there’s always the sound close to the right answer in our music. Mixing or mastering is as important as composing, and having a company with the ability to differentiate between good sources and good sounds is a huge blessing. We all got goosebumps when we listened to the album for the first time in Pdogg-hyung’s room. Truthfully, it doesn’t lose to foreign artists’ sounds.”

Now you must have gained the confidence to be able to bring in a certain quality when making songs without worrying too much.

“Good things don’t always come when there’s stress. I pursued for perfection a lot before. Actually, people called perfectionists, they’re not perfect, they have a complex there. You can’t know at the time how it would be when looking back after everything’s done. What makes it hard is keeping being greedy despite of that. Thinking this way eased my mind. I couldn’t live telling ‘So what if I fall’, ‘So what if I’m hurt’ through music. I can’t fall, if I fall it’s the end, I have to endure even if I’m hurt, I used to think like this but now my thoughts changed a lot, because I’m a human too.”

How high is Suga’s goal?

“I think being a musician, we need to be satisfied as late as possible. Money and the standard of success are important too, but I’m just curious. How far can BTS and also Min Yoongi go? Bang Shihyuk PD-nim told us this. That at this level, we need to carve the new way for the juniors. Not

the juniors in our company, but the juniors in the Korean music industry. I used to think whether we could success more if we debuted 3 years earlier, but not anymore. I think we too are walking on the way paved by many seniors and receiving a lot of generational benefits like Naver VLIVE and Twitter. We need to carve a new way so more musicians could introduce better music to the world more easily.”

How does it feel having people all over the world listen to your songs?

“This is probably half of the goal I set before. I used to work as a studio engineer while composing and performing at the same time in Daegu. But there was no one when I performed. 50 people was a lot. I lost money every day, I didn’t even have money to eat after performing. I had had enough of it. If I want to make the kind of music that satisfies myself only, it would be better for my mental health to make it alone at home. *(laughs)* I came up to Seoul because I wanted to let many people hear my music, so BTS’ achievements feels like a miracle. It’s also the reason I became an idol.”

What stories do you want to bring people now?

“Whether by rapping or by whatever method, I have decided what kind of music I want to make. Hopeful songs like ‘Tomorrow’ or ‘So Far Away’ from the mixtape. Many people find it weird how the least hopeful person would want to make such kind of music. *(laughs)* I grew up listening to Epik High. At that time, songs about dream or hope were a trend, and the reason I like Tablo-hyung was because he made that kind of music. I want to make such music too. I have an influence now, and I want to use that influence in the right direction.”

RAP MONSTER

『 *Will we settle down here, or will we run more? There’s a visible limit of until where we can run, but settling down is, rather than right or wrong, not cool in my standard. I think it has become my vocation. We need to see until where we can go, we need to pave the way, I told the members I hope they would think about that, and thankfully they all related to me. I don’t know where is the end but we need to finish. 』*

I heard the members were confused when hearing the title “Blood, Sweat & Tears” for the first time.

“*(laughs)* After reconsidering for about a day I thought it sounds okay. Suga-hyung opposed it. That hyung opposed it at first. *(laughs)*”

Where did you feel like it sounds okay?

“It’s not a colloquial expression in Korean. We normally say ‘shed blood and sweat’, ‘shed blood and tears’, we don’t use ‘blood, sweat and tears’. It sounds unfamiliar. I like a rapper called Ace Hood and he has an album titled <Blood, Sweat & Tears>. This is a commonly used expression in English and I thought if we take and change this to Korean, we could make it into one of our expressions. Also, I kept thinking about the phrase ‘blood, sweat and tears’ and the words’ feel is

kind of uncomfortable. Feels like something is emitted. I thought about it for a day but other people would think it's either sexy or dirty when hearing the title. It ended up not sounding dirty so that's a success."

How did you feel when you first heard the concept of <WINGS> will be based on <Demian>?

"I enjoyed reading <Demian> when I was young. I just read without knowing anything. I only thought 'It's a cool novel'. *(laughs)* The only thing I remember was that it was cool and difficult, but I went to read again after knowing the concept of <WINGS> will be <Demian>. Hearing Bang Shihyuk PD-nim talking, I got to understand why <Demian> is a classic coming-of-age novel. The elements in <Demian> suit what we want to do and what was portrayed in the 'Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa' series too."

You even personally recorded the English quotes in <Demian>.

"This was Bang Shihyuk PD-nim's idea. The reason why K-pop, combining various factors, can succeed is because of its organic storyline. BTS' story is once again completed more strongly with <Demian> in <WINGS>. When people ask 'Why do you like K-pop that much?', 'You should listen to Justin Bieber or One Direction, why do you have to like BTS?', I think they can answer that it's because of the storyline and the members' fiction-like chemistry. Using my voice as another installation will make people immersed more. Besides, we are currently at the stage where we can't only think of the Korean market anymore."

How much did you participate in the repackage album <YOU NEVER WALK ALONE>?

"I wrote chorus for the first time in the title song 'Spring Day'. Until now our title songs' choruses have always been written by professional composers so I didn't hold much greed, but I happened to write this when I went to Saetgang Park one day. That day the dead leaves oddly caught my eyes. It reminded me of how I used to dry leaves, put in letters and sent. 20, 30 minutes later I came up with a melody starting with 'dead leaves'. When I first heard the title song, I wished there would be a melody with such kind of feels. I tried combining with what I wrote that time and it sounded good. I have thought that this would definitely be great from the start and after bringing them, they all said it's good and in the end it was approved without any change. It was an honor for me."

Do you come to the park often?

"I like parks and I also like coming to unfamiliar places. Sometimes I got to Jungnangcheon or Cheongnyangni Station for no reason, or basically anywhere. If I see any place I like on the car, I use the map on my phone and take photos so I can come there next time. I probably have gone to every place that's worth visiting in Seoul. Now I'm planning to come to every place I haven't gone to even if it has no special meaning. Like Gongdeok Station. Come and do nothing but just be there, seeing how people live, seeing them walking around. I'm curious how everyone lives in places I don't know."

It means indirect experience.

“Yes. I tend to come to such places and relieve my stress. I come there and see, doesn’t this world have no connection to me? Everyone is busy with thoughts about work always linger in their heads. When I come to such places, look around and have some time alone to think, something will be resolved. Even if there’s none, it’s emotionally relieving. It’s hypocritical how I get anxious when I have nothing to do, but when I do I want to escape. So I want to keep going outside and blend in the world that has no direct connection to me, even if I have to force myself. No one interferes me there. I don’t have many chances to hang out and talk with my ordinary friends, so coming to those places and listening to people talking sometimes help with my work too.”

What you just said is the story of your solo song “Reflection”.

“I wrote it when I went to Ttukseom. That time I had determined to write something and went out. Before I made ‘Reflection’, there was a good song too, but as I listen to it, it was too similar to the vibe of the artist I’m influenced by. I hated that. The company said it’s okay but I have my qualms of conscience. It’s not similar technically but to me it sounds obviously influenced by that person. We got our name on Billboard and other places too now, I hate making songs in that way. Anyway I have to make my solo song so I was going to use one I made before which I planned to put in my mixtape, but I hated that as well. It seemed to bend the album concept. ‘Then let’s just start over’, I thought, but I wasn’t sure what to do after deciding to start over, so I went to Ttukseom.”

What inspiration did you get there?

“If you come in the evening, you can see people just sit there. Everyone is gathering but it’s dark so they don’t mind each other. It’s nice. I can take a can of beer and sit together with them and no one will know. It satisfies my twofold desire. I want to be with someone else, but at the same time I want to be alone. I decided to write the song I want to hear there so I recorded the sound of the subway passing by with my phone and put it in the beginning of the song. I originally wanted to title it ‘At Ttukseom’ but Bang Shihyuk PD-nim said it was unacceptable. *(laughs)* He said there was no way everyone else’s was ‘Lie’, ‘Stigma’ and only mine was ‘At Ttukseom’. People who listen to this song for the first time find it weird how Ttukseom came out of nowhere, but for me, putting it in the song is important. It started there and ended there.”

As BTS grows bigger, it’s slowly becoming more important to balance out with your personal life.

“It’s really important. I don’t know if that’s why I go outside more often. If I’m too immersed in BTS only, I feel very empty. I would think ‘Is it real that I’m being loved?’ after I’m done performing or behind the stage. Maybe that’s why the only celebrity friend I meet outside of work is GOT7’s Jackson. Or Mot’s eAeon-hyung and (Kim) Yoonah-noona, I meet them sometimes too. Strangely, I don’t know whether it’s because of my image or it’s because people tend to either like or hate me, I don’t make any new friends in the entertainment world after debut. The ones whom I meet all the time are my high school friends. Meeting them and hearing them talking about enlisting and coming back or finding job make me happy. I often read newspapers and and watch news

because, isn't the world of BTS and our fans very solid? It's like a way of trying to escape from it sometimes. I plan to adjust the balance of myself as a person and as a professional."

What about as the leader of the team?

"I have two thoughts, of where we should go next and of taking a little step back as a leader. There's a part that I have to give ambition to the team. We have come this far, it's time to make a choice. Will we settle down here, or will we run more? There's a visible limit of until where we can run, but settling down is, rather than right or wrong, not cool in my standard. I think it has become my vocation. We need to see until where we can go, we need to pave the way, I told the members I hope they would think about that, and thankfully they all related to me. I don't know where is the end but we need to finish."

If there's a role exclusively for Rap Monster, what is it?

"Leading in official events and giving ambition to the team as I mentioned before, I consider these my roles. Actually, the other guys is better than me as an idol. Everyone has their own role so I think I'm taking a step back there. It doesn't mean I won't do it, I'm just working hard on what I do and trying not to dominate too much. It's been 4 years since our debut, we have passed that stage. It's good for the other members to show their talents too. We can no longer just blindly say 'do it', 'let's do it' like before."

Then what is Rap Monster's topic or assignments in 2017?

"The thing that keeps coming no matter how much we do is homework so... *(laughs)* Firstly, as team, it's the tour. Should I say concerts and tour are like an assorted gift set to singers? It's the final piece. We did many things for it. So right now, my biggest topic and also worry is how well I will do at the concerts and how much people will react to it. I have a lot of assignments for myself but the most important one is music. My work is reaching a plateau so I'm worried about how I should do next. I keep thinking in my head but maybe it's because my body is too busy that my mind doesn't move forward. Truthfully, I haven't come up with an answer yet. I need to release many music in 2017 but, I don't know. I'm a little scared, and I don't know if I can meet up my standard."

What do you think about when you need to overcome those times?

"I think about how it feels when I look in our fans' eyes at the concert. This person doesn't eat today, doesn't watch a movie today, they spent their time to come all the way here for us, I think. At the same time, it makes me feel I'm doing a significant work. It's not something significant socially, but I'm surprised that we can share each other's energy. There's no way to perfectly realizing my childhood dream, but mostly I think in any way, my dream came true."

JIN

『 It's not that I don't have the greed to receive awards or to go higher. There's no end to greed right? I just think if I'm satisfied with the present and keep working hard, something new will

come again. If I keep thinking about things like what award I want to receive or where I want to perform, it would be the opposite of my personality and make me anxious, so I plan not to carry those thoughts. I only think, let's work hard on what I'm doing, let's raise my stats. ㄹ

Your solo song “Awake”, which you participated in composing for the first time, was in the album.

“Actually my share doesn't take up that much, I just brought the main chorus to Slow Rabbit-hyung. I said ‘Hyung, this is so good, I want to do this one’ and after talking for a while with a little debate, it was finally accepted. I wrote the A verse, B part and A part of the second verse.”

What was the reason you liked that main chorus?

“I wrote 5, 6 versions and this current one is the one I liked in particular. I was so happy just thinking of singing this song at the concert so I wanted to do this one at any cost. I persuaded the staff for a very long time.”

How did you persuade them?

“I just kept on insisting. *(laughs)*”

Was the working process difficult?

“I always try writing melodies and lyrics for every album, not just <WINGS>. The result wasn't well, but mine was finally selected this time. Luckily Slow Rabbit-hyung who worked on this together with me is from our company so we match well, he also knows our schedule well so I was able to work on my solo song the soonest among members. I started writing around 2 months before the album came out. Even if it didn't turn out well, I kept doing while going to eat and continuing my schedule.”

Seems like you're the type to not be worried even if you got stuck halfway.

“I'm not. I actually was very stressed. Especially this time it's my solo song so I wanted it to have what I wrote. I also wanted to sing the song I wrote so it was even more stressful. Even though I tend to forget it the next day. *(laughs)*”

What was the most memorable review about the song you received?

“After it's finished, Pdogg PD-nim told me ‘Wow, Seokjin has debuted as a composer now’ and it made me very happy.”

What did the other members say?

“Suga told me he didn't think there would be such ballad-like song in our album. He said this song sounded really good and calming. Some other members also said they liked this song the most and I was very happy. I have been wanting to make such song since the beginning. It's my solo song so I have to sing all by myself. Recording it was hard. Normally my parts in BTS' songs don't have a big difference between low and high pitches. But for ‘Awake’, I have to sing in low pitch at the beginning and high pitch towards the latter part, so vocal control was hard. I relax my

throat when singing from a high pitch, and I figured it would sound nice to sing low pitch in that way so I tried that too. I tried various ways.”

Do you have the desire to have a bigger importance in the next album, or the next promotion?

“Of course I do have that thought, but each member have their own color. If the song suits it, there’ll be more parts and if not, there’ll unavoidably be lesser.”

Aren’t you anxious?

“Being anxious doesn’t solve anything. If I do my best at where I am, some day there’ll be a song that suits me. The composer hyungs told me that my voice is optimized for Korean ballads, but BTS doesn’t sing those kind of songs. Singing the songs that suit the team’s color is important.”

A lot of memorable things happened to BTS last year, how do you feel looking back?

“Lots of things happened. I especially remember the ‘Save Me’ performance at the Seoul Gymnastics Stadium concert. It’s a calm song so we only need to lightly move our bodies at the beginning, then the beat suddenly changes and the dance break comes. Our fans liked it a lot. I will forever remember that cheer. And I can’t forget when we received ‘Album Of The Year’ award at MAMA too. I cried looking a little heartbreaking at Melon Music Award, so at MAMA I held back because I was afraid I would look like that again. I ended up shedding a drop of tear and looked very handsome. *(laughs)* I was really happy.”

Every stage sure makes you once again amazed by the fact that you have this many fans all over the world.

“No matter how much I like a foreign artist, it’s hard to sing along to the whole song. But every time we hold concerts, our international fans sing along to all of our songs and it always makes me happy. We have earnest songs as ending, so when I sing it, I look back at the venue. It’s big and full of people. When can I stand on such stage? I have this thought in every concert. That moment brings an unique emotion... But it can’t be described with words.”

Do you cry?

“I do get emotional, but if I cry I wouldn’t be able to sing, so I hold back.”

With good achievements not only in Korea but also in the Billboard chart, you must have some sort of worry about what BTS should do next.

“I don’t tend to do that. I was like that from debut. It’s not that I don’t have the greed to receive awards or to go higher. There’s no end to greed right? I just think if I’m satisfied with the present and keep working hard, something new will come again. If I keep thinking about things like what award I want to receive or where I want to perform, it would be the opposite of my personality and make me anxious, so I plan not to carry those thoughts. I only think, let’s work hard on what I’m doing, let’s raise my stats.”

You must have a special feeling towards fans there.

“Our first fan song was included in <WINGS>. It’s called ‘Two! Three! (Hoping For More Good Days)’. When we received the award at an award show, this song charted very high. It made me think that we made the song really well, that it’s an important song for both us and the fans. I want to tell them that here will be hardships to come, but we’ll be energized as long as they stay by our side. Our strength grows from the existence of our fans. I hope they will always support us.”

V

『 *When I first debuted, I couldn’t even think there would be this many fans liking us, they vote for us a lot, send us a lot of supportive messages and letters. Every of those small hearts came together and turned BTS into a big tree, letting us bring good music, good performances and good sides of us.* 』

How did you work on your solo song “Stigma”?

“I have been wanting to make some kind of jazzy music like this one. I also enjoy stuffs like the movie <Born To Be Blue>. I composed and wrote the lyrics for the chorus myself and told them ‘I want it to have this kind of feeling’, then the producers made the intro and the bridge based on it for me.”

Was it hard taking a whole song on yourself?

“Truthfully the stage was beyond my capacity. I don’t think I can fill the stage all by myself. I need to work on it, but it still remains a homework for me.”

What kind of performance do you want to create if you can one day?

“It’s just my imagination but I want to sing on the stage alongside a trumpeter or pianist. I really like lyrical music, so I hope instead of being an exciting song, my song can be healing to people.”

You don’t look nervous at all when standing on the stage with other members.

“First of all, I often try ad libbing so I don’t feel nervous about it. Actually I don’t quite like when everything’s set in place, so I get more nervous if it’s scripted or planned out. Also, when performing ‘Blood, Sweat & Tears’, I only had one thought in my mind, to be as charming and as sexy as possible. It was a little different from previous BTS songs, but that didn’t make performing on the stage hard or awkward. Just go with it, this was my mindset. (laughs)”

Do you yourself think you did well?

“(laughs) No, not up to that level. Should I say it’s more like ‘At least people can somehow watch my performance’? I don’t know if I did well or not, but I think so far my performance still can’t capture the hearts of all the audience.”

Aren’t you being too humble?

“I’m sensitive about my performance. I think the members are the same too. We have to judge our performance with a cool head. We change our expressions and gestures every stage but there’s always a lot of regrets left. What should I do to be able to fully dominate the stage? I’m curious.”

It has been quite a long time since you started to be active under the name of BTS, you must have gotten really well with the members at this point.

“It’s like we were made for each other, we’re extremely close. When the 7 of us get together we’re seriously noisy, we can chat about the same subject for 3 hours. Suga-hyung surprisingly talks the most when it comes to a subject he knows well. *(laughs)* And personally, I have learned a lot about how to communicate with the members, or the limit to not cause them inconvenience.”

Do you play around less?

“Comparing to before, I really do. I originally played around a lot with the hyungs off stage. But now I plan to act calmly if there are other people around. Rather than saying it’s because I have to manage my image, I would say it’s because I don’t want to be seen as an easy person.”

There was a time when you had to do both BTS’ activities and acting at the same time.

“Both took a lot of energy so it was a little hard to balance things out. I had to film <Hwarang> while going on tour, and even had to leave for the tour between shoots. I didn’t want to hear anything like ‘He neglected BTS’ activities to film the drama’, or ‘He said he would do activities with BTS but he mostly just filmed his drama’. In the end I didn’t hear it at all. If I did anything wrong, it would all reflect on the whole image of BTS, so I worked even more earnestly.”

It must have been very stressful.

“There certainly were stressful times, but I couldn’t use the excuse of having to film a drama to show I’m tired when the other members were also working hard on the tour. And the members helped me a lot too. Whenever they asked ‘Are you tired these days?’, it became my consolation. I used that strength to work even harder. Actually there wasn’t any physical problem. I originally don’t sleep much so sleeping a little less wasn’t that hard.”

What are the members to V?

“My family? Because they’re always beside me. They always help me, support me and look after me. They’re the ones who know every detail of me. Sometimes I even think of them as my parents. The members probably don’t know it though. *(laughs)*”

Seems like you don’t say that directly.

“Yes. I would like to use this chance to say few words to Rap Monster-hyung. First of all, I want to thank him for making BTS. BTS wouldn’t exist without hyung. I want to say thank you for doing the leader role so well too. Actually, he could just talk like a leader and act like the other members, but Rap Monster-hyung is different. He takes responsible for bad things by himself and shares good things with us. Hyung is also the bridge connecting us and the company. It must

have made him stressed out and hurt a lot, but hyung doesn't show it at all. He takes it all on himself. He is the best in this world to me. Even though when he comes back to the dorm, he breaks or spills something and loses his stuffs. *(laughs)* I think it's thanks to Rap Monster-hyung creating the atmosphere that the members can get along this well."

What are you to Rap Monster?

"Honestly I think I let him down a lot. I'll be careful in the future. Even if I make just a small mistake, the public won't accept it easily."

Does it mean you don't want to disappoint the fans?

"Yes. It takes a long time for fruits to grow on a tree. You have to keep watering it, looking after it and growing it with your whole heart. Only then can it become a healthy tree. When I first debuted, I couldn't even think there would be this many fans liking us, they vote for us a lot, send us a lot of supportive messages and letters. Every of those small hearts came together and turned BTS into a big tree, letting us bring good music, good performances and good sides of us. It's like a really beautiful tree with golden fruits. I want to pick even better fruits and give it to our fans. I need to show how the tree is slowly growing more and more."

It can be said that your goal became clearer thanks to the fans.

"I want to become a singer who can make ARMYs proud. A singer whose fans can go anywhere saying 'My idol is BTS' and people around would marvel 'Wow'."

Aren't you doing that already?

"I want to work harder. After all, we have big dreams. *(laughs)*"

JIMIN

『 *We are singers, we all perform right? Doing my best with the thought of having nothing to offer except for my performance, I think it's important not to lose that thought.* 』

Being in charge of the opening for "Blood, Sweat & Tears" must have been a big pressure for you.

"I was nervous from the recording stage. Bang Shihyuk PD-nim told me 'You're fine, do well' but it became a burden too, since the first impression of the song is on me. I worked on it thinking 'I have to pull it off somehow'. After receiving the song and thinking about how I should sing it alone, I went to the recording studio and the producers told me to sing it this and that way, and I was slowly led to a better direction. PD-nim often told me to sing 'Blood, Sweat & Tears' sexily too. So I sang it with a light and delicate tone. You should listen to what I sang while practicing. *(laughs)*"

Jin chose Jimin as the member who carries the vibe of "Blood, Sweat & Tears" performance the best.

“I think the performance can never go well if I’m the only one who do well. He must have chosen me because my part is at the beginning. We often talk about this with each other. The face expressions of a person at their own part isn’t what matters, the other members need to create the vibe in order to express it fully.”

Is there any part you think you pulled off the best?

“I think it’s the opening. The fans really liked it. Last time when we filmed a show for Naver VLIVE, there was a question like this in the fans survey, ‘Which part do you like the most among BTS songs?’. A lot of fans picked the opening of ‘Blood, Sweat & Tears’ so it got 1st place. I must have pulled it off for them to think like that. *(laughs)* I worked out for about 2 years, but I lost about 7kg after dieting this time. I was pretty sensitive during my diet. When we practiced the choreography together, I was the only one knocked over, not because I was hungry but because I had no strength. *(laughs)* It was inevitable so the members could only feel sorry for me. Jin-hyung told me ‘Eat with me. Why do you have to do that?’, but I just told him “No, I need to do it” and continued to diet.”

How did you work on your solo song “Lie”?

“It took around 3, 4 weeks in total. Organizing the melodies and lyrics, composing together with composer hyung and noona took about 1, 2 weeks and another 2 weeks to record. It was really hard. I recorded everything and threw away to start over because I wasn’t satisfied with it, this kept repeating over and over and it was very stressful. The output has to be good, so I kept recording until it came out well.”

What was the most difficult part?

“It was difficult from the moment I first heard the track. What kind of melody and lyrics can go with this song? I have never uploaded any cover so ‘Lie’ is my first step as a composer and lyricist. Doesn’t this song seem too difficult to people who listen for the first time? It was hard starting from this thought. I was worried until the end, only when many people showed positive reactions about it more than I expected did I feel relieved.”

Have you ever asked why they gave you such a difficult track?

(laughs) I did ask ‘This seems too difficult, will it be fine?’. Everyone said it would be fine but I was like ‘Not this... This is not the reply I wanted...’ *(laughs)*

It’s finished now anyway, so have you gotten any feeling of “I have developed this far”?

“I still don’t think I have developed a lot even now. I feel frustrated looking at what I do. Thinking ‘Why doesn’t it turn out well?’. I can probably get good quickly but I can’t reach my goal. No matter how far I think I have gotten, when looking back, I’m still at the same place. This tired me out a lot before. Why doesn’t it turn out as well as what I did? Talent is indeed important, I don’t have any talent, I thought. So I practiced even harder. I have no talent so I just work harder.”

How much did you practice?

“I cut down on sleep a lot. I woke up early before going to school to practice, I practiced during lunch time, practiced after school, practiced until the dawn and continued again after taking a nap and then went to school. This repeated for about 1 year. But there wasn’t any significant change. I took vocal lessons sometimes before, but I only started singing in one year being a trainee. I couldn’t sing well at first so it was really hard practicing alone. What do I need to practice? Where do I need to start? These thoughts always stuck in my head.”

You expressed your worry about your vocal on the blog early last year.

“I’m still resolving my worry now. This is like my homework as a singer. I even think as far as wanting to halt all activities with BTS to take vocal lessons even just for 3 months, like at a training camp. I want to improve even if I have to go to that extent.”

Did you get to know the strength of your voice while working on <WINGS>?

“The staff often tell me that my voice is really nice. I kind of hated it. I want to hear people say I sing well, but it makes me feel like my voice covers everything else. Everyone was talking so nicely, I was the only one being pessimistic. ‘Why can’t I still get any compliment other than these?’ I’m not that harsh on myself anymore. I think about ‘Yeah, I can do well too, just go with it’ more.”

Your confidence must have raised higher than before.

“I do think that we’re slowly achieving what we want. On the other side, I’m anxious too. I feel the pressure of developing myself as my team is growing. We could cover for each other before, but now, even when we plan not to do it, each of us stands out. We can no longer cover for each other even if we want to. That’s why I think the role of each member is important.”

What is that “role”?

“The performance each of us has to show on stage. To show the unique feeling of each individual. I don’t know what exactly is the role in the team. Before it was like ‘I am XX in charge of being charming’, but I don’t think it’s the matter of who’s in charge of acting, or who’s in charge of singing. We are singers, we all perform right? Doing my best with the thought of having nothing to offer except for my performance, I think it’s important not to lose that thought.”

7. THE WINGS TOUR IN SEOUL

"The boy moves forward." At the ending of the concert at Gocheok Sky Dome, Mokdong, Seoul, the concert that wrapped up the promotion of <WINGS> and <WINGS: YOU NEVER WALK ALONE> as well as began <BTS Live Trilogy Episode III: THE WINGS TOUR>, on the big screen covering the entire stage, were videos and text showing the past of BTS. Starting with "How many roads must a boy walk before he can become a man," to "A boy with seven hearts" and "What is the boy looking for with closed eyes," it ended with "The boy moves forward." The journey of seven boys who walk on the path that not even they themselves can know, and move forward. From 'school trilogy' to 'Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa' and <WINGS>, BTS built their own story inside their albums.

The boys who worried about their dreams at school, who experienced their first love at school, met the temptation awaiting them on the path of adulthood in <WINGS>. BTS in reality moved forward as well. The group that held their debut showcase at a small venue now sold out a 2-day dome concert in just 4 years. They also improved musically, with each of the members making a solo song in <WINGS>, and got their name on the main charts of Billboard and iTunes. Whether in the story of 'Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa' or in reality, BTS faced many difficulties and worries, yet they became one and came this far. The huge venue, the fans who filled up that venue. And the seven boys who show the path they walked on. This concert wasn't just a mere concert, it was also the first stop on that path of theirs. The VCRs organized the stories BTS included in previous albums and unfolded the stories between 'Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa' series and <WINGS>, completing the stories of BTS in the albums as a whole. Meanwhile on stage, BTS' songs which each carry an individual concept were merged and separated. Their title songs from "No More Dream" to "Run" were connected into one performance, on the other hand, the solo songs of each member in <WINGS> took an important place as the center of the concert. Each of the individual performances were carried out in different methods depending on what they want to deliver, like J-hope's "MAMA" which turns into a large-scale performance towards the latter half of the song, or Suga's "First Love" that was like his own monologue. On top of that, the VCRs also portrayed each member with symbolic images.

This concert didn't just merely show the well-loved songs by BTS on stage, it was the annotation and the finish of the stories in the previous 9 albums of BTS. If <WINGS: YOU NEVER WALK ALONE> is the story taking place somewhere between 'Hwa Yang Yeon Hwa' and <WINGS> which wasn't revealed in <WINGS>, the concert VCRs offer a deeper look into the story of the members in <WINGS>. <WINGS> didn't expand the world of BTS through just the story only. The theme of <WINGS> - the growth of the boys who met the evil - was portrayed not only through the songs and music video, but also the individual short films and performances with every single movement carries a meaning. <BTS Live Trilogy Episode III: THE WINGS TOUR> also showed the story of <WINGS> on a large-scale stage. The world of BTS is no longer just depicted through music videos or images only, it's now depicted through a big concert stage. The advance of the boys has become the expansion of their world. Starting the concert was "Not Today" from <WINGS: YOU NEVER WALK ALONE>, and the ending act was the title song "Spring Day" of the same album. In "Not Today" music video, they remained unmoved despite being shot. We're bulletproof. It's what BTS is. The idols who show powerful performances. The group that called themselves "bulletproof" in their debut album has now become a group that sings about consolation and hope in spring days after 9 albums. A group that says "I miss you" to those they can't meet and hopes for the spring day to come someday. As much as the songs have changed, BTS changed and grew up too. The idol group that sang "No More Dream" went through "I NEED YOU" and "Blood, Sweat & Tears" and reached "Spring Day". But as they grow, BTS still maintains the 'bulletproof' side of them like in "Not Today". They have come a long way from "No More Dream", but they still remain idols and boys.

Starting with "Not Today" and ending with "Spring Day", the concert showed the changing history

of BTS as well as their unchanged identity. Compared to debut days, the scale of the venues has grown unbelievably large. They now perform in not only Korea but also Asia and the West. Despite that, they are still the BTS that block out bullets for someone else. Their rehearsals now take several days like the real concert, but they still work themselves into a sweat just like the time at the small venue. The concert venue filled with so many fans. The proof to what BTS has done so far is that they can tell those who couldn't be with them, tell their peers that "I miss you". Like the phrases in the concert, they 'shut the sky of youth away in broken drawers', 'search for a sea nowhere to be seen', 'in a world of swaying temptation', 'always alone in the moment of decision', but still, they moved forward ceaselessly. Like the man in the myth that wished to fly eternally, the journey of BTS is going out looking for a bigger world, bigger ideals and at the same time, sharing the worries with the youth of their generation, finding the answer and realizing about themselves. And after so many stories, <BTS Live Trilogy Episode III: THE WINGS TOUR> announced the end and the beginning of the story. The boy moved forward. And he shall continue to move forward, along the path called the never-ending question of the youth.



How many roads must a boy walk before he can become a man?

School and home, alleys and the sea

Shutting the sky of youth away in broken drawers

At the dead end of the road is the entrance to the maze.

Smear blood on the palm, like a stigma.

This pain riding up shoulder blades

Is the dream of soaring wings.

In search of a sea nowhere to be seen

The boy walks.

The boy with seven hearts.

Seven beats and one move forward

Upturned view and one is seven.

To run is to fall without doubt.

And to turn away is to meet the cliff.

In a world of swaying temptation

What is the boy looking for with closed eyes?

Open the curtains and smash the mirror

There will lie a road in the fragments.

Outside is inside, inside is outside.

An entangled world.

The crossroad of everything.

The two worlds, back to back,

Relentlessly merge into one.

Now the boy is seven on that road.
Seven but one.
Seven boys with one heart.
One boy with seven hearts.
One and seven, the reflection of each other.

How many roads must a boy walk before he can become a man?
Roads are another name for the world.
Day and night, crossroads and tunnels.
The roads take endless forks
And always alone in the moment of decision.
In meeting and separation, there is nothing new.
If he turns around that corner, can he meet a day of his crimson youth?
(If he turns around that corner, will the crimson flowers of youth still be in full bloom?)
Where is this dream leading to?
Fear is another name for hope.
Tears are another name for smile.
The boy smiles.
He can smile because they are together.

The boy moves forward.
The boy grows up.