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Groovy Everywhere: Korean R&B/Hip-Hop as a Site of Cultural Community

1992 is a pivotal year in Korean-African American relations. On one hand, the Los Angeles riots occurred, representing a flashpoint of conflict between the two groups. On the other hand, Seo Taiji and Boys debuted in Korea to the consternation of adults and delight of young people in the same year, beginning decades of musical hybridity. In this paper, I will explore the rise of Korean R&B/hip-hop (KR&B/HH) and what it means for Korean and African American communities in the wake of the 1992 Los Angeles riots. While R&B and hip-hop are two related genres, KR&B/HH represents a more experimental form of R&B exemplified by Korean artists such as Zion T., Crush, Dean, Samuel Seo, Colde and OffOnOff as well as producers such as GroovyRoom and Primary. This experimental branch of R&B exemplifies the way that Korean artists commune with black culture and express Korean culture in new ways and shares the music of R&B and hip-hop in ways that appeal to Korean and African American audiences. Much like their musical ancestor Seo Taiji, they utilize a hybridity that provides a channel for cultural exchange.

Bio: Crystal S. Anderson (PhD) is affiliate faculty in Korean Studies at George Mason University, working within the fields of transnational American studies and global Asias with a focus on Afro-Asian cultural studies. Her first book, *Beyond the Chinese Connection: Contemporary Afro-Asian Cultural Production* (2013), uses the films of Bruce Lee to interpret cross-cultural dynamics in post-1990 novels, films and anime. Her second book, *Soul in Seoul: African American Popular Music and K-pop* (2020), explores the impact of black popular music on Korean pop, R&B and hip-hop. She is also the director of *KPK: Kpop Kollektive*, the oldest and only aca-fansite for K-pop.