

260528 Namjoon Weverse Live “hihi”

Opening Remarks

Hello. It's been a really long time since I turned on a live by myself...I just came back from riding a roller coaster with Jin hyung, so I used that photo as the thumbnail.

The reason I turned this live on is I felt like if I didn't do it today, I probably wouldn't have a chance to do it for quite a while. And before too much time passes since *Arirang* was made, I wanted to share a little about the things I still remember. I wanted to leave some of that behind.

I set the subtitles so they'll come out in Korean, so I'll try to keep the important things in Korean as much as I can. Yesterday we received the AMA, and today, now, while we've been performing in North America, Korea and Japan, there are these moments for me. Sometimes I get choked up. Sometimes I get really pulled into the emotion of it.

And this album has been out for a little over two months now, right? A little over two months. I think about 70 days. So I thought it would be good to talk, for the first time on live, about the thoughts I have about this album, and also some things I hope you might know, since some of you are coming to the concerts too. After tomorrow's Las Vegas show, we'll be going back to Korea.

I don't know. In the old days, I think I used to write things down and prepare before going live. So honestly, I thought about this a lot before turning it on. But still, there are these small, kind of fun behind-the-scenes stories, about the song camp and about this album. And, right, the thoughts I have about things going forward.

Because while performing this time, we went to seven places: Seoul, Tokyo, Tampa, El Paso, Mexico City, Stanford, and Las Vegas.

And going there, performing after such a long time, meeting so many people, I had a lot of thoughts. I really felt like we were really connecting with each other. Especially during the encore part, many of you probably saw it in videos, but there's that section that's kind of like karaoke, right? Where songs come on randomly and we don't know what song will play. A lot of older songs come out there. Today, *Attack on Bangtan* came out. If I remember correctly, *Attack on Bangtan* came out around *N.O.*, so it's been about 13 years, or 12 and a half years. So I ended up looking back at who we were then, and at the same time trying to get a sense of who we are now, and thinking a lot about what would be good for us going forward.

Honestly, I mean, it's kind of a hassle too, and these days every single thing I say can sometimes become an issue, so I did wonder whether I should turn this on or not. Whether I should talk about *Arirang* once. But apart from the *Rolling Stone* interview and things like that, I felt like I had only talked about it in a limited way. Now that some time has passed, I thought there might be parts about the process that I can talk about in a more measured way. So I

thought, okay, around now it should be alright to turn this on and talk. A lot of the news has already passed, we received an award, and we've done one round of performances.

In any case, because there were parts of this album that I worried about a lot, and parts I was very serious about, I felt like I hadn't really talked about those parts properly. So first, I'm going to talk about the overall thoughts I have about this album now. Then, after going through the album once, I'll talk about the thoughts I've been having lately about music or performance.

Before getting into it, around the time Jin hyung was discharged, that was one year before all of us were discharged, right? At that time, everyone's mental state was really not good. When Jin hyung was discharged and when I played the saxophone, I think we were all gathered either at Jimin's place or mine... I think it was Jimin's place. We were all together at Jimin's place. Jung Kook was having a really hard time then too. We were all having a hard time. We were all private first class.

We were crying our eyes out and saying things like, "Hyung, you need to hold the team together more." We talked about a lot of things among ourselves then. And we sort of decided, in summary, "Okay, then, since people are waiting for us. When we come back, let's make an album. Let's repay the people who waited for us." Since all the members' discharge dates were clustered around June and the timing worked out, I think from around the end of that year, we started setting up the song camp.

Actually, the question was who was going to be the captain of that song camp. And "song camp" itself is kind of Konglish. In English, they call it a session. A session. I had done sessions during *RPWP* inside HYBE with maybe 30 or 40 people, so I was very used to it. Jung Kook and Hobi probably had direct experience too.

There are sessions where the artist participates, and in this industry there are also things like pre-sessions where the singer doesn't participate. They make things that fit that artist's color. So in July and August, we decided to go to LA, gather together, and do sessions together. I don't remember exactly, maybe as the year turned, but I think that's how we decided it. And I think I just waited for that time. I wanted to be discharged quickly. Since there had been quite a long gap, Jin hyung and Hobi, who were discharged first, really went through a lot. They performed a lot, went on a lot of variety shows. So after that gap, we flew to LA.

The problem was this. First, I believe the pre-sessions had already been running before we were discharged. I think that happened around April and May. The songs that had come out from there were *Body to Body*, *SWIM*, *Normal*, *Like Animals*, and *Please*. Around that many.

Before we went to LA after being discharged, we all gathered at a pension and had a preliminary listening session. There were a lot of songs that ended up being cut, and we listened through them. Staff from the company came too, and we were there. Listening to that, I had a lot of thoughts.

I think there were about 15 songs then. But everyone's opinions were different. One person liked this one, another person didn't like it. And these seven people, we all have experience

now. All seven of us have done solo work. And if you look at the solo work, you know, we're really different. The directions we pursue are different, and what we want to show is really different. So we're supposed to release a full-length album after six and a half years and tour with it. How do we bring that together as one?

In the past, maybe I, or especially me, or Yoongi hyung, would talk and kind of pull things along. Like *We listen to more music*, almost that kind of thing. But now, one thing that I think is both our strength and our weakness, though really it's a strength, is that all the members are careful. Everyone is extremely careful with each other. Because nobody wants to break this enormous, and also deeply close relationship. So if one member says they don't really like something, everyone tries to respect that.

But the problem is, because of that, nothing narrows down clearly. One or two people don't want to do it, four people are okay with it, and one person says, "I'll just do whatever we decide." So even before we were discharged, I had this feeling that the entire process, making the album, releasing it, and going all the way to tour, would begin and end with how we make decisions. And that was right.

So from the songs that had come out of the pre-session, we cut a few, and then we went to LA.

In LA, well, I've talked about this several times, but we went to work every day. Six days a week, to Conway Studios, which is this really organic, really good studio. Conway has three buildings, and we set up four rooms there. Every day, different producers, instrumentalists, people who play instruments, and topliners, people who are good at singing and making melodies vocally, would go into the rooms with us in different combinations.

So, for example, one day it might just be me and Jung Kook going into one room and staying there all day. Another day it might be Tae Hyung and me in another room. Like that. And the five or so people in the room that day had to make one or two songs no matter what. In a way, I don't know, it was almost like an office-work system. Like a workplace for making songs.

The company also selected people. JPEGMAFIA, who participated in *FYA* came. And there's an artist I really like called 070 Shake. 070 Shake came and worked with us too for a couple of days. Some of the songs made it in, and some didn't. That's how it went.

During the first week or so, since the members weren't very comfortable with English and weren't used to this way of working, everyone was a little hesitant. But after about a week, I think they started to settle into it. They started seeing familiar writers and things like that. And that's how two months went by.

Of course, from the beginning, we had no intention of making *SWIM* the title track.

Of course, we wanted something stronger than *SWIM*, something powerful and energetic. I don't know. But this is the thing too. If BTS is coming back, then what should BTS's title track be? Whoever answers that could be right, and also nobody's answer could be right. Because some people want *Dynamite* from us. Some people might want something like *ON*. Some

people might want something like *Hooligan*, which came out this time. Some people might say, no, BTS should do this, BTS should do something like *Spring Day*.

Because over the past ten-something years, we've done so many genres and so many different things, everyone had a different idea of where we should be headed. The fans were different. The thoughts of the members here were different. The thoughts of the relevant departments and stakeholders were all different. We couldn't narrow it down.

So the hardest thing here was that there wasn't a clear captain. There needed to be one leader or boss who could strongly pull it along and decide, "This is right," or "This isn't right." But at that time, it was honestly very difficult for that to happen.

So it was really difficult. Honestly, we made the album without having set a direction in advance.

So when this album came out, I knew there would naturally be divided opinions. Starting with the title *Arirang* itself. But for me, as one of the players participating in this, the fact that this album came out at all is a miracle. Really. I truly think it's a miracle that it came out.

Whether there are regrets, whether people dislike it, we came back here together, released a full-length album like we promised, and started performing and touring again. Of course there are things that feel lacking. This is lacking, that is lacking, everything feels lacking. I feel that too. But really, with not one person dropping out, not one person sick, not one person failing to show up, we got here safely.

And because, thanks to you all, the scale of what we do has grown so much, once we make an album and then manage the schedule afterward, if we don't roughly schedule things a year or a year and a half ahead, it just can't happen. Because so many people move together with us. It's not something where you can just say, "Can't we just do this, and then this?" It doesn't work like that.

So it was a very, very difficult project to make. And if there are things you feel are lacking, I think maybe it's that there wasn't some strong central axis, or a captain. That's probably it. But it couldn't really be helped. And I think we had to release this album so that, someday, when we gather again and make something together, even if something kind of scattered, something with many different things mixed together, comes out, we'll know that this was the situation that made that inevitable.

Body to Body

So, going through the songs one by one.

As I said earlier, *Body to Body* was originally a song that had come out of the pre-session. I worked on it with a songwriter named A.Chic. Since I'm not a native English speaker, even though I've written a lot of lyrics before, English isn't my native language. So I worked with a professional songwriter in the U.S. on the lyrics too. Because there were parts where I wanted it to blend in more naturally.

Originally, *Body to Body* was called *Body on Body*. As far as I remember, it was a very sexual song. Something like, "I need some body on body," bodies overlapping, you get the general vibe, right? So it was a sexual song. And it's not like we can't do a sexual song. We're in our 30s. But still, I don't know how I should put it. I didn't think that just releasing a sexual song for no particular reason was something we needed to do right now.

So it became *Hand to Hand*, right? Thinking of Koreana's *Hand in Hand* from the 1988 Olympics. We changed it into *Body to Body*, almost like "body in body." We wanted it to become an anthem.

And then there was that scene in the documentary that people talked a lot about, right? Whether or not we should put Arirang into it. There are some parts where the before and after were cut out, but I was convinced the third time I listened to it. I thought, "Ah, there's a reason for this."

Of course, I had been listening to the original version of *Body to Body* without "Arirang" for a long time, so when I heard that version, it felt jarring at first. And I also thought, "Isn't this a forced patriotic hype?" Honestly, that's a valid opinion too.

But in the end, when thinking all the way to the concert, seeing so many overseas fans sing that Korean folk song together at exactly that part, almost like they had been waiting for it, I thought, this isn't something you can simply stage by force.

I really like that clip too, where Hobi is next to me dancing all cheerfully, and I'm just standing there like this. I was dead serious. I was really thinking, 'Oh no, this is freaking worrisome.'

I mean, choosing the title *Arirang*, I thought that itself was good. Because, of course, *Arirang* is also, how should I say it, if you see it narrowly, it can be a very narrow word, and its usage and meaning can be narrow too. But if you see it broadly, it's really broad. There's *Jeongseon Arirang*, *Gyeonggi Arirang*, and so on.

But just, the new beginning of these seven Korean young men. In the end, the seven of us are still just seven guys, seven country bumpkins from Korea. Even now.

For example, yesterday after the American Music Awards, I thought maybe I'd go to the after-party and mingle a little with artists and producers based in the US, and try to be kind of

smooth about it. But then I didn't go. I got scared again. The members also find English a little difficult, and some of them don't really like parties or mingling like that, so we didn't go.

These kinds of things are... Why did I say this? Ah, seriously, why did I say this? Anyway, I think we needed a direction that could go broadly like that, while carrying the locality of Korea. Because that is our...

Right. Then what makes BTS different from other teams? What are the things we've done? And how much has the era changed?

Honestly, whoever the producer is, if you tell them, "Make an album for BTS after they've been discharged," it would probably be the hardest job in the world. I actually said that to the staff. "Right now, this is probably the hardest project in the world."

It has to be K-pop, and at the same time pop. We're coming back after a long time. There are things we've done before. The era has changed. But we also can't just stay still. If we change, how much do we change?

Anyway, if I start explaining *Arirang*, there's really no end to it. But there was that meaning. And in that sense, before, I think I saw *Body to Body* as just a sexual song with a good beat and a good melody, but with lyrics that were just sexual, and I didn't really think it was a song we necessarily had to do. I wondered, "Will this be good when we add our voices to it?"

And then that line, "I need the whole stadium to jump," and ultimately *Arirang*, or this idea of "Body to Body," of becoming one with each other. Personally, for me, this is the most exciting moment in the show. When we do *Body to Body* together. Singing "Arirang," and then going back into "I need the whole stadium to jump." That part.

Anyway, we accepted "Arirang" but returning to that part (the intro) was something we strongly pushed for and managed to bring back. So deciding what something is, with the company and the artists involved, it keeps moving back and forth like that until the decision gets made. What the documentary shows is really only a small fragment. That's how it is.

I think it came out well. In the end, it's a song that is completed only when you sing along at the concert. These days, music that you only listen to is kind of difficult, right? There's the video, there are visuals, album covers, what the lyrics are like, whether the title is written in lowercase, even things like that. These days, there aren't those boundaries anymore.

So in that sense, *Body to Body* was a track that had to be included, and I think it came out well. Yeah. That's how I feel.

Hooligan

Hooligan...Ah, this is going to get too long. I'll try to cut it off within an hour.

Hooligan, I think, was probably made mostly with Jung Kook and Hobi. It probably came out of Jung Kook and Hobi's room. And as you know, I don't know why Jung Kook suddenly brought in the keyword "hooligan," but anyway, Jung Kook wrote that part, "watch this, watch this beat goin' hooligan." From there, the songwriters who were there locally helped flesh it out, and I also made some revisions. A lot of people revised it, and that's how it came out.

This was by El Guincho, the producer who worked a lot with Rosalía. He worked with us for more than ten days, and there were so many fun tracks. Tracks that started with the sound of knives, or motorcycle sounds, Game Boy sounds, things like that. When this song came out, probably around the one-month mark in Hobi and Jung Kook's room, the company really liked it, and Bang PD-nim really liked it too. So this song became the standard.

It became the reference point. We spent the whole rest of August, from late July or early August onward, trying to make a song that could surpass *Hooligan*. That's how much it became the standard: an alternative hip-hop track like *Hooligan*, but harder-edged, more fitting for a title track. So Hobi and Jung Kook did something really important there, together with the people who were in that room.

From the first time I heard it, the track was so good, and the keyword "hooligan" was so catchy. So, yeah, it really had that feeling.

Originally, there was a really intense choreography. You know, the one the guys danced with Tae Hyung doing it too. But after hearing the company's idea and different people's opinions, we changed it to this, thinking, "Let's make this into a challenge, let's make it meme-like." But as expected, challenges don't become challenges just because you decide to make them. In the end, one of our fans made that other choreography, the one where you bounce your hips like this, and that became the challenge. Everyone ended up doing that challenge.

So the thing we made, thinking, "Let's make this into a challenge," didn't become a challenge at all. That was where I thought, "Ah, you really can't make something go viral just by aiming for it." Still, since a lot of people did *Hooligan*, it was good.

As for the behind-the-scenes story of *Hooligan*, I don't really know. Later, if Jung Kook or Hobi go on a live, please ask them about it. I think Hobi especially worked a lot with El Guincho. That combination seemed really good. Anyway, this was the song that came out and became a standard in the middle of the session.

Aliens

And the song that came out around the same time as *Hooligan* was *Aliens*. This also probably came out of Jung Kook and Hobi's room. It was produced by Mike WiLL Made-It, a producer everyone knows. The track is really unique, right? *Dun dun dun dun dun dun dun*. We were wondering how to write the line over that, and they did it well somehow. I think the songwriter there, maybe Charles, did a really good job.

As far as I know, with this song, there was a process where the rap was originally very long, then it got cut, and that repeated. Jung Kook and Hobi thought about it a lot.

Originally, the title of *Aliens* was *Endless*. But *Endless* felt a little empty, you know? "We have no end." It sounded too abstract. The pronunciation was sweet though. *Endless*. So we changed it to *Aliens*, like, "We're aliens from Korea, guys, hi." *Aliens*, *Endless*. The pronunciation is almost the same. It could keep the taste of the original track's wording while adding more of our own originality. That's what I thought.

And if you look at the lyrics, yes, there's a bit of corniness in them. But part of that was intentional. It's just this intuitive lyric where we're very proud to be Korean. Of course, I could write it more poetically, more in a way that looks, quote-unquote, sophisticated. But we had to preserve the taste of the existing lines. And this song is just, "Ah, I'm an alien. So what?" Kind of like that.

So when international ARMYs sing this song together, there's this fun phenomenon where things get kind of reversed, or turned inside out. I actually wanted more people to know the lyrics, whether they became a meme or as a mockery or whatever. The lyrics of this song speak out very directly.

Aliens was really hard to write in Korean. At first, I wrote a lot of it in English, but the members found some of the pronunciation difficult, and the song was also about Korea, so I mixed Korean and English together. Keeping that sound and flow was really not easy. It took a long time. I remember spending a lot of time revising that.

FYA

And then there's *FYA*. As I said earlier, *FYA* was one of the songs we worked on because we wanted to surpass *Hooligan*. We wanted to make something harder and better than *Hooligan*.

You know Flume, right? He had that really famous song *Never Be Like You* before, and he was one of the people who led the future bass boom. Flume and JPEGMAFIA. JPEGMAFIA, whose album came out recently too, is basically one of the leaders of experimental rap, alternative hip-hop. His tracks and ideas are so, so good that we used him a lot as a reference this time.

Those two released an album together last year, or maybe the year before, anyway. And Diplo has a wide network, you know. He used to be our US head. I told the company, "I really want to work with JPEGMAFIA. Whether it works out or not, I want to try." So he came.

In the middle of that, we listened to Flume's beats. He had, seriously, thousands of beats. We couldn't listen to them all, so we listened to maybe around 200. And then there was this one that starts with the motorcycle sound, *drr-drr-drr-drr*, and I liked it so much. Then it goes into that Jersey rhythm, *dung-dung-tak, dung-dung-tak*, and then "It's fya," something, something.

Because the phrase that came out the most at the song camp was "That's fire." People say it even as an empty compliment. We'd be working all day, and it gets exhausting. One song starts to sound like another song, one melody starts to sound like another melody, and then suddenly someone says something else, and someone goes, "Bro, that's fire." It became a habit. For Korean people, it's almost like saying, "Have you eaten?" or "Let's eat sometime." That's what "That's fire" felt like.

I thought it was funny how that compliment, "That's fire," kept getting thrown around everywhere. So I thought, why not just make it "That's fire"? So we did something like, "blah blah blah, it's fire, blah blah blah, it's fire." Everyone seemed to think it was okay, so I said to JPEGMAFIA, "Hyung, could you maybe just spit something with 'it's fire' coming out in it?" And he was like, "Me?" Then he did it like that. So I was like, "That's it, that's it." Later we added melody, and that's how it came out.

Personally, I just wanted to make one really unhinged song. *Aliens, Hooligan, Body to Body*, they all have meaning. So I wanted one song where you could just turn your brain off and play. Like real brain rot. I imagined everyone jumping together at the concert, almost like a mosh pit. Everyone is just jumping and playing while saying this thing that means nothing. Really, it means nothing. I imagined that picture. And I think, in the end, it fits to some extent.

I think a few members probably said, "I don't really know about this one." But after performing it, everyone accepted it. They were like, "Ah, we needed that song." So the songs that needed to be there all came in.

2.0

Next is *2.0*. The working title for our album was actually *BTS 2.0*. Just for this whole project. *BTS 2.0 Project*. I think that had been attached as the working title for about a year and a half, before *Arirang*.

This one also probably came out of the room with Jung Kook, Hobi, and Tae Hyung, the three of them. With Mike WiLL Made-It. I really like Mike WiLL Made-It too, so sometimes I would go in by myself. Since I can communicate, and since I rap and all that, there were times when I would usually go in alone. But I think there were limits when I went in alone. Whereas these three friends gathered together, working with the other songwriters..

My throat is a little hoarse because I have a slight cold right now, but when I heard Hobi do that “stop, ride” part, I was like, “Oh, this track is so interesting. This track is really fresh.”

This one too. Usually, Jimin and I often have opposite opinions, but I thought this song absolutely had to be included. Because this was the only song, sonically, where we could properly show the choreography, the performance, the intense performance that people have liked from us before. I completely thought that.

But Jimin and the vocal-line members had a hard time with it, especially. If you listen carefully to *2.0*, the vocal members only have one melody. *You know how I do do do do do do*. But making that come alive was really, really hard. Because the notes are very high, and the feel of the words is really difficult. It’s a melody you can only really digest if you have some understanding of Black music, or if you’re very much from that side of things. I think Charles was the one who wrote that melody, and he sang it in this very thin voice, like *you know how I do...* For these friends from Korea to pull that off was extremely difficult. They had the hardest time with that one.

In this entire album, the part that was hardest for the vocal members to record was *2.0*. Even after the recording was done, I think they felt a lot that the way they sang it sounded a little awkward, or that they weren’t fully satisfied with it. So up until the very end, before the setlist was decided, there were quite a few opinions saying we should take it out. I think Tae Hyung probably felt that way too.

But I and, who was it, anyway, we were like, “Absolutely not. No way. Absolutely no.” So I’m relieved. In the end, it turned out like this, right? I’m so glad I was right. Haha. The members really like the song now too. I thought that without this song, it would be hard for us to do choreography. *Hooligan* is actually kind of awkward to choreograph too, and we could choreograph *Aliens* if we wanted, but I didn’t think it would feel that new. Thankfully, even though it must have been really hard for the vocal members, when they perform it now, everyone is basically flying.

Because I’m not very good at dancing, every time we danced, I really wanted to do the *2.0* choreography well. So before dance lessons, I would come an hour early and practice. After they ended, I would stay 30 more minutes before leaving. Only *2.0*. Because every day,

watching Jung Kook, Jimin, Hoseok, and Tae Hyung, I kept thinking, “I really don’t want to be a burden. I want to do it with a vibe too, in a cool way like them. I have experience too...” So I kept watching them and analysing, watching the dancers and analysing. Anyway, I have a lot of memories with this one.

And a lot of people loved the music video too. So I think it was a very meaningful song, one that preserved something very us while also taking one step forward into something new. I’m really grateful to Mike, Charles, Jung Kook, Hobi, and Tae Hyung for this song.

Wow, I’m in trouble. I talk way too much, what am I going to do? Well, I’ll try anyway. I’ve already started, so there’s nothing I can do now, everyone.

Later, when it comes to my thoughts on *Arirang*, I might say, “I was like this, I was like that...” But since I don’t know every part of everything, please just think of this as *my review of Arirang*.

No.29

Next is *No.29*. Number 29. It's the Sacred Bell of King Seongdeok. As far as I know, while we were working on the album, I met the director of the National Museum of Korea, the current director, Yu Hong-jun, and he told me about this. They were going to strike the Sacred Bell of King Seongdeok again, for inspection, after maybe 15 or 20 years, and he said he wanted about ten notable people to come and strike it. He asked me to go to Gyeongju and strike it, since it's in Gyeongju.

And I was like, ah, I want to hear that so badly. But I think my schedule didn't work out then, or something, so I couldn't go. I couldn't go, but then this idea, I think maybe it was Bang PD-nim's idea, came up. Instead of doing a skit like the old days, where we're talking in the car and saying this and that, if something like this went in, it could separate the front section, which is really hyped up, from the later section, which is more, so-called, emotional pop. So it ends around 1 minute and 37 seconds, where the frequency disappears.

I'm really sad I haven't heard it in person. If someday I get to strike it and hear it, I really hope I can. I'd like to play it in a concert someday too. Let's go.

SWIM

And then *SWIM*. I really love this song. I think a lot of people were probably disappointed. Like, why isn't it something exciting like *Dynamite*, or something intense with hip-hop and performance like *Hooligan* or *2.0*? Why did they come out with this kind of plain, somewhat dragging song?

First, the reality is this. We didn't get a better song than *SWIM*. We did not set out to make *SWIM* the title track. But we had to consider radio too, and in the end, whether it would have longevity, versatility, the qualities the song had. There was only *SWIM*.

Honestly, even with *SWIM*, there were a lot of...And honestly, probably because ARMY promoted this song really well, but these days, I think the concept of a "title track" almost doesn't mean anything anymore. There's more of a lead single or single concept. Especially in pop, and even more in the U.S., there really isn't such a thing as a title track.

So what I really liked after *Arirang* came out was that, aside from *SWIM* of course, the fact that all of the tracks charted was really because ARMY listened so hard. But seeing *Body to Body* become talked about, *Hooligan* got talked about, *2.0* got talked about, *Normal* became talked about. That made me so happy. It's really hard, when an idol group releases an album, for so many songs inside that album to be talked about and charted. Even if *SWIM* may have been a little less stimulating to the ear, I was so, so happy that the album as a whole was being talked about. I was just really happy.

Writing the lyrics for *SWIM* took a really long time. Because, and it's kind of sad to say this in 2026, I wanted to make a meaningful song too. Since it became the title track anyway, nothing came out that surpassed *SWIM* in terms of radio...

Honestly, I'm not very good at swimming, but I think I felt that life was like swimming. Even when I was counting the days one by one in the military, it was the same. Waiting, wandering, just swimming one day at a time. Swimming forward one breath at a time.

So to me, this song is actually very sad. I think of it as a song of BTS in their 30s, entering our 30s, becoming more mature, having built a rapport with you, a little more grown, living each of our lives. So personally, the lyrics and the feeling this song carries... Of course, it would have been nice if there had been a better title track. But to me, this is a song that will stay for a very long time. Honestly, I wish it would receive more love.

Of course, performance is inevitably so important for us as a team. And because we originally grew through hip-hop, hip-hop sounds, and that kind of intense base, this might not feel satisfying.

But *SWIM* is just... for me, *SWIM* is a song I would want to hear at my grave.

It sounds like a love song, but it's also about life. I wanted it to be able to be heard in that double sense. In this place where the moon and sharks have risen, looking at you. That "you" could be the person I love, it could be the fans, it could be myself, it could be the life I'm looking at. Just all those different emotions. Joy, anger, sorrow, pleasure, all of them are in it. I thought it was a rare song in that sense.

So, *SWIM* is kind of like that. Personally, it's a song I wish could be loved a little more. Anyway, yes, I felt some disappointment.

Ah, my voice is really hoarse, I'm sorry. I've been doing a lot of shows and working hard...

I think I came to this sad conclusion: people no longer listen to lyrics. Honestly, after this album, that's what I thought. So maybe, after hearing me talk, I hope you might look a little more closely, one more time, at what we're trying to say inside the album. Personally, I'm just expressing that wish.

There's so much I could say about *SWIM*, and I think there will be more chances to talk about it later. Anyway, I really love it.

I also think the "Keep Swimming" campaign was really good. Just, all of us keep swimming through each day. Life really isn't that much, right? There are many happy things and many sad things. It's just kind of like swimming.

Merry Go Round

Next is *Merry Go Round*, and this is the same. It's in the same vein as *SWIM*.

Do I have enough battery? I don't know. Maybe I'll at least lower the screen brightness...

Anyway, *Merry Go Round*. Among the producers who came early on while we were working on songs, there was someone named Sam. While working on a song with Sam, we were just talking, just chatting, and Tame Impala came up. I said, "I'm a huge fan of Tame Impala. I actually really wanted to work with him. I couldn't do it for my solo work either, but..." And then he said he was friends with Tame Impala. That they had worked together too.

So I don't know whether it was a beat by Tame Impala alone, or a beat he had worked on with Sam, but while we were listening through things, he played this one for me. And I said, "Ah, I like this so much." So, I'm saying this because this is another way work happens in sessions. I heard the beat, and at that time I had to go to another room, so there's this songwriter named Aldae, who participated in a lot of the songs this time. He's really talented, he also worked on songs like Miley Cyrus's *Flowers*. I think I asked Aldae before I left, "Could you try writing a melody on this beat with the topic 'merry-go-round'?"

Because in the military too, and just like with *SWIM*, living as an idol or a singer, every day repeats, and it's a repetition you can't get away from. But if *SWIM* talks about hope, then *Merry Go Round* talks about boredom and despair. So I told him, "I've always thought of a merry-go-round. In the military too, and while living this life, I thought of a merry-go-round I couldn't get off."

I said that, and then went to another room for about an hour. When I came back out, Aldae had already finished the melody and the lyrics. It was so good. So I played it for all the members and said, "Ah, I really hope this one goes in. To me, this song is like *Spring Day*." And that's how we put it in. It's sad, right? It's the only song on the album that is openly sad. So Aldae wrote the lyrics based on the things I had talked about.

*I wish that I could tell you that it's over
I wish that I could walk away from pain
My life is like a broken roller coaster
But maybe I'm the only one to blame*

Right. It's my fault. Everyone's life is their own fault, right? I think that was the feeling.

Normal

And now, *Normal*. Ryan Tedder. This was a song that already existed, and I thought this one was a total banger too. I thought it would be so fun if we all did “hands up” together, going, “kerosene, dopamine, chemical induced...”

But everyone, *Normal* is also a really sad song. The melody sounds very hopeful, right? At first, I wrote all the lyrics in Korean, then changed them into English, partly because of radio and things like that. There is probably a Korean version. The members all recorded it. There is a Korean version. I don't know if it will ever come out, but anyway.

Kerosene is lamp oil, right? Oil that lights a flame. Dopamine that lights a flame, all these chemical things, fame, fans, actually things like Las Vegas here too. *Show me hate, show me love*. So I won't die even if you shoot me. *make me bulletproof. Yeah we call this shit normal*.

The keyword “normal” was already there. “What is normal? For us?” Living now as BTS, what is normal for me? What is ordinary for me?

Ah, right. One day people say they love me, and one day they tell me to disappear. Like an extremely toxic couple. The public outside, or the people who don't love us, feel like that. One day they overpraise you, one day they tear you down. Kind of like, raise the blue flag, lower the white flag, that kind of thing. That's normal. I wrote it with that feeling. So this one also took a long time to write, and if you look at it, that's what it's about.

*Heavy is the head when you chasin' true
Will you color me red? Will you color me blue?*

Are you going to color me red? Are you going to color me blue?

Two sides of a coin, and they both ain't true

There are two sides of the coin for us, but neither of them is true. Why? Because both are true, and both are false. People are three-dimensional, right? There's no one who can explain the team called BTS right now either.

Wish I had a minute just to turn me off

The countless days when I couldn't sleep after performing, or after coming back from the Gwanghwamun performance. I was too activated. My thoughts wouldn't turn off. I couldn't relax.

Wish I had a minute just to turn me off

Just, from people's... Right? Yes, I chose this life, and it's my fault. But I can still think that I want to get away from those gazes for a little while, can't I? It doesn't mean I want to give up. I can wish, just for a moment, that people would forget me, can't I? I think that's the feeling I wrote it with.

This song is really sad too, now that I look at it.

Fantasy and fame, yeah the things we choose.

It's acknowledging fame. Fame, fantasy, and the fact that we chose them.

But show me hate, show me love, make me bulletproof.

So even though this song is sad, during the concert, I want people to sing it joyfully together. Because that too is two sides of a coin.

Normal too, like *SWIM*, these were the two songs we were trying to promote the most, in a way. And I think these two songs will stay with me for a very long time.

Like Animals

This was originally a song from the pre-session too. This song was also very sexual. The lyrics were kind of like that already, right?

*If you wanna be animals
Baby, we can be animals*

What was next? Something like... maybe "live in pain is beautiful"? Something with a sadism-masochism kind of vibe. Like, let's be animals and do that kind of thing to each other. That kind of song.

But I thought it wasn't the right timing for us to release something sexual, so we changed it into a song that brings out the raw instinct more.

But honestly, I think it could have gone sexual too. The sound of the song itself is kind of sexy. *Like Animals* is a song I really like.

I really like psychedelic music, and this was a style of song we hadn't done before. Artemas helped a lot with this kind of thing too. I thought a sound like this needed to go in so that we could move forward a little more, make some progress. We can't only keep doing what we've already done.

But at the same time, when *Attack on Bangtan* came on today, I did like it. Stuff like that too. Like, wow, this really is exciting. There really is romance about our team. That's what I thought.

they don't know 'bout us

They Don't Know is a song Jimin basically grabbed and ran with. Jimin always said this, right? Through this session, he really improved a lot. In learning how to sing, in singing itself, and in writing melodies too.

Before making this song, Jimin and I, with the songwriters who were there at the time, made a song called *Weak*. While thinking about what kind of thing we could talk about, I brought up the phrase "You make me weak." What I was thinking was that. And honestly, this was something I was saying to you. "You always make me weak." It's something you say to someone you love.

But that can be bad, and it can be good too, like *Normal*. So it's like this. You make me weak. In a way, you disarm me. With you, I want to be honest too. But there are also things I can't say. I want to look cool too. But in the end, what gets taken off is the shell or persona I'm wearing. I wanted to try talking about something like that. So we wrote a song like, "*you make me weak*." Jung Kook really liked that song.

But somehow, it didn't match the color of the album. The song was okay, but it was a little too sweet, maybe too openly a love song? Then Jimin asked me, "'You make me weak.' Hyung, why is it 'You make me weak'? Why do they make you weak?" And I said, "because honestly, people don't know us. They can't know. I don't even know myself."

While we were talking about that, I think Jimin found that really interesting. The idea that because people don't know me, it makes me weak. The next day, Jimin and I were split into different rooms, and in his room with Pdogg hyung, I think they used some kind of sample and made it into *They Don't Know Us*. So this song too, when you see it during the performance, there are eyes or faces of other people floating on the iPads, on those tablets, right?

So this originally started as a song written to ARMY, but actually it became a very aggressive song addressed to the people outside who just don't know us. While doing this session, I really felt that it's interesting how you never know where inspiration will come from, or how something will turn into something else.

Personally, I really like this song. And here too, everything I want to say is there. What I want to say is just that: they don't know about us. They just can't know. But now, the people outside, other than us.

They don't know us anyway. And, you know, "economic effect" this and that, and all those things are nice to say, but not that. People say, "BTS creates an economic effect of however many trillions," and that's fine, but the bond that made that possible, the years we've shared, the many things we've gone through, that history, if you're not inside this rapport, you can't know it. Really, because that's a relationship.

We can make a song like this too, right? That's what I think. I think Jimin wrote it really well.

One More Night

One More Night. There were mixed opinions about this one too. Should we put it in or not? Honestly, I didn't think it was an incredibly good song or anything, but it's ratchet, right? A ratchet style that used to be popular. But it's also a little sweet, and it has that R&B kind of ratchet feel.

This song also has something a little sad about it. I can't say this song is a masterpiece, or that it's a really great song, or that it absolutely had to be there. But I thought there needed to be a song like this on the album. I thought that, and there were other people who thought that too.

Some people were like, "I don't really like *One More Night*." I think Hobi didn't really like this song. Anyway, that's how it was. Everyone's opinions are different.

But I actually like Hobi's verse the most in this song.

I don't have much to say about this song.

For this song, and for my part, and also while writing the lyrics for the other parts, I think I was thinking something like this:

"One day, because of you, I'll probably cry for a long time. What scares me is that what is already sad is a shadow that has come to resemble me too much."

So, when you love someone, that person could be a lover or it could really be all of you. I'm relying on this person so much, giving, and receiving so much love. And you know how, when you're so happy, you can also feel so sad?

Because you've become too alike. Because being together is so good. Already, that loss is there. There is clearly such a thing as a bond that belongs to a certain time. Or something could happen to us, to Bangtan, and there are so many possible cases. In this world, in this multiverse, to already be grieving even that far ahead is such a foolish thing. But I think that too is love.

That heart. That very, very vulnerable truth. Even so, the heart that wants to do something together for just one more night. The human condition of looking toward the saddest future from the happiest point in time. I think I was thinking about something like that.

Yes, this song...I think we'll probably sing it in concert someday. That's how I feel.

Please

Please. Ah, this was the thing I really wanted to say to you very openly. I thought maybe I should make it more difficult and literary, but the chorus is already “Baby oh please,” right?

So I thought, let’s just ask directly. Let’s plead.

When the world separates us, I’ll step closer. *Even hell, I’m down.* I’m down. If I’m with you. I’m fucking down. Be with me on my worst day. I’m on my knees.

Just everything lowly and desperate that I can say: Stay with me. Don’t leave. Be with me. Wait for me. I’ll wait too. Things like that. Since it’s the track right before the last one, I think of it as a song very openly offered up to ARMY.

The harmony where we go back and forth here, I think it has that beautiful harmony flavor of old BTS B-sides. So I like it.

Into the Sun

Into the Sun is the last one. Ah, this song was already good, but in concert it really shows its true value.

During *Into the Sun*, today too, just a few hours ago, I felt so many different things. So many emotions. I think a song that can give you that many layered emotions, joy, anger, sorrow, pleasure, all mixed together, is a really good song.

There are seven people walking toward the place where the sun is setting, where the sunset is fading. And that sun is the light of 50,000 or 60,000 ARMY bombs. Looking at that, looking at your faces. At that moment, the light also shines toward the audience, so I can see each face clearly. The slogans too. I think that's one of the moments I wait for the most in the concert.

Tae Hyung worked really well with other people on it, and from the beginning, the song was so good that we said this one absolutely had to go in. Jin hyung's voice here is also incredibly beautiful.

And I thought, I should write this fully in Korean. Through *RPWP*, through my solo work, I let go of a lot of the way I used to work. Explaining things in a literary way, describing them, painting them like pictures. I let go of a lot of those literary things. But for this song, I wanted to return to the old me.

So, the hour of the dog and the wolf? In that time when a dog and a wolf can't be distinguished, the compass of the beasts breaks, humans flee, and yet in front of noise and lingering attachment, I rebel. But I want to go to the house where you are waiting. There, grass rises and stars fall. I'm suffering in the fire now, but I want to go back there. I want to go into that night where the moon does not rise.

I think this song is such a good example of this: becoming more sophisticated while still keeping the taste we had. And the hook, *I'll follow you into the sun*, is something everyone can sing along to. *You call, I run* too. It's just a really good song to close the album with, and I don't think there's anything to criticise about it.

Closing Remarks

So, I've talked through all these different episodes, and I still think this was our best. Even if I went back, it would be the same. Of course, it would have been better if better songs had come out.

It would have been better if a better *FYA* than *FYA* had come out. It would have been better if a better *Normal* than *Normal* had come out. Of course, it would have been better if there had been some other title track better than *SWIM*.

But as I said earlier, we had come out of the military, and at a time when nothing was really decided yet, going through all these different opinions, one person saying it should be this way, another person saying it should be that way, and going through this huge number of decision-making processes, I still think this was the best version of BTS 2.0 right now. I don't feel any shame about that.

The sad thing, though, is that the times have changed so much. I mean, I'm someone who started music through literature, through words, through lyrics, right? But it really does feel like people don't listen to lyrics anymore. Honestly, most people, even I'm like that. Even I saw reels for the first time in the military. And while doing that, I'd be like, ah, this hits intuitively, wow, this is hilarious, wow, this song really sticks. And then I'd listen to fast-tempo digicore or whatever at the gym.

So I feel this unease too, like, is there less and less room for someone like me? We've reached an era where even if you put a story into something, the story doesn't get delivered. Or it's very hard for it to be delivered.

There is so much good content now. So much content. We don't really read books anymore, and we don't want to think. Entertainment, people want it to remain entertainment. To be fun. And I understand that so much, because life is already hard and tiring. I have that side of me too.

But looking at that, I think I've had a lot of thoughts. Because I still believe in the power of lyrics. Personally, I'm someone who really believes in the power of lyrics. I was someone who was saved by an artist's words and melody, and lived through them.

What I learned through my solo work is that you can tell a story through sound too, without necessarily writing it in words.

There are already so many new artists, singers, and groups who express this era so well, who make good and fun things that belong to the present. I think the young guns are doing that really well.

But for BTS, I don't know about solo work, because each of us is different. But at least when it comes to BTS, going forward, even if we don't spell everything out in lyrics, line by line, I hope

we can still be a team that delivers stories. Whether they're personal or universal, whether they're about love or about something else. I want to keep protecting that. But I think, as time goes on, the era wants stories less and less. It seems people want entertainment, or amusement, dressed up as stories. And sure that could be a well-crafted story. But stories that are a little dark, or sad, or somehow uncomfortable. There are so many discomforts we feel as we live, right? As human beings. Things like that, I feel they're all being pushed aside, except for amusement, enjoyment, and excessive positivity. Not positivity, but excessive positivity. I feel like everything is being pushed away. And I know that too. As I follow the algorithm, I wonder, am I doing that too? Am I any different? As a listener, as a reader, am I different? I'm exactly the same. If I'm reading a book and if it gets too heavy, I just throw it aside and go back to watching reels.

I'm like that too, and when I'm the creator, I... Right. But even so, with BTS, with Bangtan Sonyeondan, I hope we can keep protecting that sense of romance. That's my personal wish, and I think that's what I've felt the most while doing this album and this tour.

I don't know if the story is coming across well, since my throat is hoarse, but anyway, I've said so much. I wanted to deliver this accurately, so I spoke in Korean. The subtitles will probably go out as Korean too, then translated.

Anyway, I can't change this era. And rather than just feeling sad about that, while performing in Korea, Japan, the US, and Mexico, I saw it in your eyes. We are still connected. And I think it's fine if you film with your phones. I film too. When I go to concerts, I film too. But still, at concerts, there are moments when we look into each other's eyes for a lot of the time. The reason I like movie theaters is that when you go to a movie theater, you have to turn your phone off for two hours. For two hours, you're fully dragged along by the director's intention. We really don't have that kind of time anymore. I look at my phone until I fall asleep, and when I wake up, I look at my phone.

So, of course, coming here and recording and filming is completely your right as people who came. But while filming, there are also songs where, in that moment, there is an energy that only the tens of thousands of people there, including the seven of us, can feel. Looking at each other, singing the same lyrics, jumping together, waving our hands together. I think those moments will become more and more precious, and more and more expensive, from now on. I think that kind of experience will become more of a luxury. In many senses. Whether people want it or don't want it, I think it will become a luxury. Something so precious.

So those things are disappearing. But here, rather than blaming the times like some old timer, I want to acknowledge the times. Then, if we're going to deliver stories, if we're going to keep carrying this romance, how can we carry it in a more sophisticated way? To what extent can we ride the current of the times and move with it? In any case, if we want to keep being active in a meaningful way, I think we have to keep changing.

So anyway, from Gwanghwamun to our discharge, there were so many events around this thing called *Arirang*. But these days, once an album comes out, after a week, all the events are over,

and the album just passes by as if it never existed. There are really so many artists now, including us.

So I think most creators, all of us creators, probably want to make something that remains for a long time and is loved for a long time. Music now is not really just something you hear, and it's not just something you see either. So many things are combined: concerts, merch, documentaries, all of that. I think we're a team that creates some kind of total experience, and that becomes the story. I think we're that kind of team. We're that kind of brand.

I've said a lot of things trying to sound cool, but it comes down to one thing. Just love. Sincerity.

We've come this far, and so many things have happened over all that time. Even now, turning on this live and talking to you like this is scary for me. But *you make me weak*. I want to talk. Because if I don't turn this on now, I don't think I'll turn it on once I go back to Korea. And when we go to the next leg, it'll get farther and farther away. It's already almost been a year since the time when we were making the *Arirang* album. I thought I might not remember the song camp, so I wanted to leave this behind once.

Someday, if there's time, I'd like to talk about the solo work too, about *Indigo* and *RPWP*, and the stories from that whole period. I don't think I'll do it track by track like this, but I'd like to talk about the things I remember.

So the fact that I'm using an hour like this to talk to you, and that 3.7 million of you came in and are watching this, I believe it's a meaningful kind of struggle. I hope this helps you, as people who love us, understand this album, my decisions, my lyrics, and what's behind them a little better.

Anyway, I'll stop around here. I have another shoe tomorrow, so I think my voice is going to be completely gone... Thank you for watching.

I'll keep thinking carefully about what really matters, and what it is that I'm doing. I'm always grateful, and I want to tell you that I really love you.

I'll get going now. Tomorrow is the last day. Bye. Good night.