

**K-pop's golden boys
 break silence**



by Lee Yong-sung
 The Korea Herald

Key players of golden generation of K-pop (abbreviation for South Korean popular music) are returning to the music scene after a long hiatus, which is good news for the long-struggling local pop music industry.

Although there has not been an album surpassing the 100,000 sales mark so far this year, the situation was totally different 10 years ago. Four albums became million sellers in 1998 alone: Jo Sung-mo's *To Heaven* (1.35 million), Seo Taiji's *Take 2* (1.1 million), H.O.T's *Resurrection* (1.1 million) and Shin Seung-hoon's *A Promise That Can Never Be Kept* (1.05 million).

Except for the now-defunct boy band legend H.O.T, the remaining three are preparing to break their long, self-imposed silence with new albums. This is expected to revitalize the industry.

Kim Kun-mo, one of the biggest recording stars in the country's history of pop music, is releasing his 12th album later this month. Kim, who began his hit parade in 1992 with *Chot-in-sang* (*First Impression*), which sold more than 700,000 copies.

(Considering the total population of this country this is equal to quadruple-platinum sales in the United States.)

He racked up a record-breaking 2.8 million copies sold with his third album, *Jal-mot-doen-man-nam* (*Wrongful Relationship*) in 1995.

For the upcoming R&B album the 39-year-old singer has collaborated with Kim Chang-hwan, the producer of his top-selling albums during the 90s. The albums include *Jal-mot-doen-man-nam* and *Excuse* (*Ping-gye*), the breakthrough second album that sold more than 1.8 million copies in 1993.

Seo Tae-ji, the former leader of Seo Taiji & Boys, almost single handedly reshaped the local pop scene with his musical experimentation based on American hip-hop. He will release his long awaited eighth album next month.

Also, on August 15 he will host a rock festival named after him, 'Eerie Taiji People Festival', at Seoul Jamsil Baseball Stadium, the lineup of which includes the cult rock star Marilyn Manson, Japanese hip-hop sensation Dragon Ash and of course, Seo himself.

Kim Jong-kook, a pop star with a beautiful, high-pitched voice and a masculine body, recently finished his two-year mandatory military duty. His new album will come out sometime during fall.

The singer debuted as the vocalist for dance duo Turbo, back in 1995. He experimented with a new style of music when the duo was disbanded. He eventually landed back at the top of the major charts when his second solo album, *One Man* (*Han Namja*) came out in June 2004.

Jo Sung-mo, whose previous three albums released between 1998 and 1999 sold more than 5.6 million copies, total, also finished his military duty recently. A member of the 'Year of the Dragon Club', a group of peers born in 1976, which also includes Kim Jong-kook and Cha Tae-hyun, Jo became a star immediately after debuting with the movie-like music video of his song, *To Heaven*.

Small Barbet:

the commonest of the endemics

Text and illustrations
 by Jagath Gunawardana

Barbets belong to the family *Capitonidae* and are small to medium-sized birds that are characterized by stoutly-built, stocky bodies. They have large heads with large conical beaks which are wide at the base and surrounded by a set of long bristles. The wings are short and broad and tails short. The feet are zygodactyle; that is they have two toes pointing forwards and the other two pointing backwards. They are arboreal and feed mainly on fruits. Four members of this family are found in Sri Lanka and resident, with two of them endemic species.

The Small Barbet (*Megalaima rubricapilla*), also known as the Ceylon Coppersmith and the Sri Lanka Coppersmith is known as the *Mal-Kottoruwa* in Sinhala. It is about 15 c.m. (6 inches) in length or slightly larger than a House Sparrow, but with a more robust build. The body is a dark, bright green and is darker on the upper parts. In contrast, the head has five colours. The forehead and the forehead-crown is a dark crimson red and the rest of the crown and the nape are of the same green found in the upper part. The eye is surrounded by a broken ring of orange-yellow. The chin and throat are of the same orange-yellow. The throat patch terminates in a scarlet red band or narrow patch on the upper breast. A cobalt blue colour is found on the sides of the face and this extends to the beak on the anterior and to the sides of the neck on the posterior. The red forehead and the yellow eyering are bordered with black. The beak is black and the legs and feet are pink-red or red and the nails are

pale brown. The male and female are similar in appearance. It is this elaborate colours that has given it the Sinhala name *Mal-Kottoruwa*, which means the 'flower-like barbet.'

It is always found on trees and prefers upper branches and does not come down to less than 3 meters (10 feet). It is usually found alone or in pairs, but is occasionally seen in small flocks. A peaceful bird, it can be seen in the company of other species, especially

when feeding, never showing any aggression to others of the same species or towards other species. The green colour of the body provides it with a perfect camouflage and it is difficult to spot it when lurking amongst the foliage. The flight is fast and powerful with rapid fluttering of the wings. It often makes short flights between trees but can easily fly over a distance when needed.

The call is a loud continuous and metallic 'tonk-tonk' somewhat similar to the sound emitted when a piece of

metal is pounded by a hammer. The calling is unusual as it is always uttered with the beak closed. The force made during calling makes the throat to puff-out and the sides of the face balloon out and the body is jerked to and fro with each note. The calls are often accompanied with the swaying of the head from side to side along a wide arc which makes one syllable to be heard loudly than the accompanying syllable which may be heard quite low. It gives an impression that the notes are coming from two different places and makes it difficult to locate the calling bird. The calling may go on for ten to

habit of crushing fruits and also to the habit of inserting the head deep in to ripe pulp. It will look unkempt and bedraggled after such a bout of feeding.

The breeding season is during the first half of the year and the majority of nesting occurs during March and April and the calling is incessant and the loudest during courtship. It nests in a hole in a tree, often made by the pair. It prefers dead branches and soft wood that is easy to dig. The two or three eggs are white in colour. Both parents take turns in incubating eggs and the feeding of young. The young birds stays with the parents for some months, forming a small family party. Young birds are similar to the adults in general appearance but lack the red forehead and the other colours on the face are considerably paler.

The Small Barbet is found throughout the low country wet and dry zones and in the hills up to 1300 meters (4000 feet). It is a common bird, but escapes the attention of many due to the colouration. It needs some tall trees and is never found in places where there are only bushes. It is even found in Colombo and is present in the busy Fort and Pettah areas, where it can be readily seen when Nuga and Bo trees bear fruit. It has declined in areas where there are only a few or no tall trees, but has increased in numbers in other areas. It is not shy of human presence and does not get frightened by the noise made by traffic and other human activities. The only bird that can be confused with the Small Barbet is the Crimson-breasted Barbet. However, it lacks the blue colour on the face and instead has a bright lemon-yellow and the breast has dark green streaks on a yellow-green background as opposed to the uniform green breast and abdomen of the Small Barbet.

The Small Barbet is yet another species of bird whose status has gone through a full circle. It was initially considered as an endemic species. However, Hugh Whistler who conducted the Avifaunal Survey of Sri Lanka considered it to belong to the same species (con-specific) with the Crimson-throated Barbet of South India. This relegation of status from an endemic species to an endemic subspecies was accepted in all subsequent works in India and Sri Lanka. The elevation of the status (or rather the restoration of the status) to an endemic species was done by Sibley and Munroe in 1991. Although some in Sri Lanka were reluctant to accept this change to an endemic species, it is now accepted as an endemic without any disagreement. It is undoubtedly the commonest and one of the most widely distributed of the endemics and is not declining in numbers if the overall situation is considered and has adapted well to the changes in habitats.

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metal is pounded by a hammer. It is the call that has earned it the name Ceylon Coppersmith. This call is uttered either as a low monotone or as a rapid, rhythmic and repetitive call that is pulsating and forceful. When calling, it usually gets into the topmost branches that gives a good view and it maintains a vertical position.

fifteen minutes continuously and the loud calling can be heard to a distance of 300 meters or more - a remarkable feat for a small bird.

The Small Barbet feeds on fruit and is not particularly choosy in food preferences, feeding on any available food, though it prefers small fruit if given the choice. In home gardens, it is often seen feeding on guavas, rose-apple (*jambu*) and jam fruit. Smaller fruits are swallowed whole, slightly larger fruits are crushed between the mandibles to reduce it to a manageable size and to make them tender and portions are pecked out of large fruits methodically from one place. It is a gluttonous and messy feeder that often gets soiled when feeding on juicy fruits. This is due both to the



Leisure Land 2-3



**Beauty of
 the beetroot**

Colombo Philharmonic Choir
La Joie de La Musique

**'Brooklyn', the boarding
 house in a different era**

