

South Koreans Bask In Oscars Triumph For 'KPop Demon Hunters'

AFP:: South Korean fans and media basked in the success of "KPop Demon Hunters" on Monday after the film clinched two Oscars and added to the country's growing pantheon of cultural hits.

The fantasy flick, a clash of good versus evil drawing heavily on Korean mythology and driven by a pulsing K-pop soundtrack, won the Academy Awards for best animated feature and best original song at Sunday's ceremony in Hollywood.

It had already built a massive global following, becoming the most-watched original film of all time on streaming giant Netflix and hoovering up accolades including a Grammy for lead track "Golden", the first such win for a K-pop song.

South Koreans hailed their latest cultural product to infect the world with "K-syndrome" – the irresistible surrender to the country's movies, music, books, fashion and cuisine.

"So the so-called K-syndrome is now going into animated film as well," wrote one viewer using the YouTube handle Kim Chang-soo, echoing widespread pride online.

Much of the domestic reaction centred on Korean-Canadian co-director Maggie Kang's emotional acceptance speech, with the Seoul-born filmmaker dedicating the prizes to her motherland.

"The culture ministry should at least award her a medal for that speech!" one internet user commented on a news portal.

A headline in the Hankook Ilbo newspaper quoted Kang's address directly, blaring: "This is for Korea and Koreans everywhere".

News channel YTN lavished praise on Kang's "heartfelt message to Korea", referring to the movie by its affectionate shorthand "Kedehun", a combination of the title's first three syllables.

The film's dual Oscars triumph caps a remarkable run since its June release on Netflix.

On the back of its blockbuster-style debut, the platform also released a limited "sing-along" edition in North American cinemas for one weekend, which topped the box-office chart.

Netflix has already announced a sequel, though no release date has been set.

The film's Grammy win for "Golden" was widely viewed as a breakthrough moment for K-pop, marking the genre's first victory at an awards show that had eluded the industry despite its global popularity.

AFP