



MIROTIC – Around September 2008, the five-member K-Pop group, Dong Bang Shin Ki (or DBSK for short), was making their next move to come back that autumn with a fifth album. I remember being so excited, as it was going to be the group's first album that I would be listening to in real-time.

Music in Korea during the late 2000's was fast changing by the time I had declared myself a fan. Yearly albums by K-Pop groups were the norm. If you were gone longer than that, the next album had to be a chart-topper. Something that would stand the test of time.

For DBSK, that album was *Mirotic*. Released on September 26th, the album ended a one-year and seven-month break for the band and would break records left, right and center.

Mirotic, released in three versions – A, B and C – sold over 500,000 copies in 109 days and became the best-selling album of 2008 in Korea. Even as an international fan outside of Korea, I could feel the impact of what it was like to be living in the *Mirotic* era from my family computer. Watching DBSK on variety shows and live performances on Veoh and playing Limewire's game of downloading the right track or getting duped with a Rick Astley

file were memorable experiences from my teenage days.

What made *Mirotic* so impactful was the group's move to a more mature pop/R&B sound with each member – Kim Jaejoong, Jung Yunho, Park Yoochun, Kim Junsu and Shim Changmin – participating more directly in this album.

When I finally got all 16 tracks of *Mirotic* on my iPod, I discovered an album that, to me, was on another level of artistry.

The opening track, "Mirotic," is often described as the "National Anthem of K-Pop." The moment the song's slow build picks up into a club beat, you're really feeling it. It's a classic and easy to understand why it won nine number one trophies on Korean music shows like Music Core and Inkigayo. The song's provocative lyrics also caused controversy, testing Korea's music industry and leading to it being rated 19+.

Joyful, upbeat tunes such as "Rainbow" and the funky, retro "Crazy Love" make you think of those long summers of your adolescence. Then there's the delicacy of "Flower Lady," which is more of a bright, spring bop.

The album also features a broad range of ballads, which DBSK has always excelled at. From the romantic – "You're My Melody" and "Picture of Your" (with the latter song written by Junsu) – to the emotional and heart-wrenching – "Don't Cry My Lover" (written and composed by Jaejoong) and "Forgotten Season," a remake of the 1982 hit by singer Lee Yong – the band's harmonizations on every song are incredible.

To me, the album's standout ballads include "Wish," featuring Junsu and Changmin singing along with labelmates Kyuhyun and Ryeowook of Super Junior, and "Love in the

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Ice.” Originally recorded for DBSK’s Japanese album, *T*, “Love in the Ice” goes down as one of the group’s most recognized songs, from the duets to the high notes sung by Junsu and Yoochun before the last chorus.

There’s something very calming and comforting about *Mirotic*’s R&B-inspired songs, namely “Paradise” and “Love Bye Love,” which was written, composed and arranged by Yoochun. There’s also “Wrong Number,” featuring a more dark-pop/R&B fusion with lyrics that send a clear message to their sasaengs (also known as obsessive fan stalkers).

In contrast, a lot of their choreography-heavy songs, like “Hey! (Don’t Bring Me Down),” fuse pop with a hip-hop influenced beat, which was a departure from their past dance tracks. “Are You a Good Girl?” is an electronica dance tune that works well with its catchy melody.

The final track, “Don’t Say Goodbye,” perfectly wraps up *Mirotic*. This slower ballad gives the vocals of Yoochun and Yunho more of a push. Cassiopeia is the name of DBSK’s fans and as a fan myself, the last refrain of the lyric, “Cause you are my everything to me” feels like a subtle and comforting way to express that their fans mean the world to them.

So, 15 years later, does *Mirotic* live up to the impact it had when it was released?

For me, the answer is definitively, “Yes.” There are a lot of sentimental feelings listening back to this album and all the songs are replayable to this day, despite the band’s eventual split. Many fans and idols have covered/danced to songs from the album over the years, from Australian dancer kaotsun, **who covered “Mirotic”** when the album first came out, to, most recently, boy group NCT 127 **covering “Love in the Ice.”** The album still

holds up as Album of the Decade amongst 2nd generation K-Pop idols.

Mirotic defined an era that’s now known for bringing forth a distinctive look and sound which is still quite common in K-Pop today. The album was mature and sexy. It elevated the expectations of what future K-Pop albums could be and stands as a true classic of the genre, continuing to enthrall listeners even today.

– NYASHA OLIVER

PLAYLIST

"Wrong Number," by DBSK

"Don't Cry My Lover," by DBSK

"MIROTIC," by DBSK

"CRAZY LOVE," by DBSK

"Hey! (Don't Bring Me Down)," by DBSK

"Wish," by DBSK

"You'Re My Melody," by DBSK

"Picture Of You," by DBSK

"RAINBOW," by DBSK

"Love Bye Love," by DBSK

"PARADISE," by DBSK

"Are You A Good Girl," by DBSK

"Flower Lady," by DBSK

"Don't Say Goodbye," by DBSK

"Forgotten Season," by DBSK

"Love In The Ice," by DBSK

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