

G-Dragon (centre) is known for his genre-blending sound.



G-Dragon's knight fit during the concert.

CONCERT REVIEW

BY JOHN TAN

# King of K-pop

➤ G-Dragon reclaims throne with electrifying world tour after seven years hiatus from music scene

**T**HE year was 2018 when G-Dragon withdrew himself from the spotlight. Upon the release of his solo, self-titled album *Kwon Ji Yong*, he enlisted in the military, and the King of K-pop took a break from his solo activities to fulfil his mandatory national service as well as explore other pursuits.

Seven years is a long time, more so in the ultra-fluid and now, after seven years, G-Dragon returns to reclaim his throne with the release of his third album and current world tour *Ubermensch*. For a change, Malaysia was not left out of the tour itinerary and fans got to experience the 36-year-old's electrifying brand of pop at the Axiata Arena Bukit Jalil.

The Korean superstar performed melodies across his catalogue for over 20,000 attendees in celebration of his musical renaissance.

**Evening of passion**

He may not have performed much these past few years, but G-Dragon very much maintained his calibre on stage. The Big Bang's rapper-in-chief innate ability to put on a great show shone throughout the whole evening.

Attendees were occupied with electrifying performances of fan favourites. From songs off of his 2012 EP *One of a Kind* to *Ubermensch*, G-Dragon consistently delivered powerful vocals, strong stage charisma and relentless energy.

His performance of *Today* was particularly memorable as he got on a signature bloom lift. The flexibility to move back and forth above the crowd created a thrilling and personal interaction with fans.

*Home Sweet Home* and *Butterfly* were other noteworthy performances. While band members Taeyang and Daesung were not able to join him in person for *Home Sweet Home*, their futuristic holograms were enough to create a commotion. Whereas the latter, a ballad from his debut album *Heartbreaker*, balanced out the high-energetic numbers off the set-list.



G-Dragon's red rose applique jacket. - PIC FROM INSTAGRAM @WAITINGFORYOU\_GD

Additionally, G-Dragon's interpolations and covers of popular songs such as Kendrick Lamar's *Not Like Us* and Maroon 5's *This Love* were a delightful surprise. The rapper breathed new life into them as he presented them in the Korean language.

**Visual impact**

The concert's visuals and props were other aspects that did not disappoint. For the tour, G-Dragon embodied the German philosophy *Ubermensch*, which describes an individual who surpasses themselves and conventional morality for self-improvement.

G-Dragon believes this to be reflective of his own journey of self-discovery and artistic evolution. The concert, therefore, incorporated various futuristic elements to convey themes of self-transcendence, reinvention and artistic liberation.

Whether it was the stage designs or elaborate lighting, the evening was a multi-sensory spectacle for audiences. As for G-Dragon himself, these elements strengthened his presence on stage, amplifying the nature of his songs and performing style.

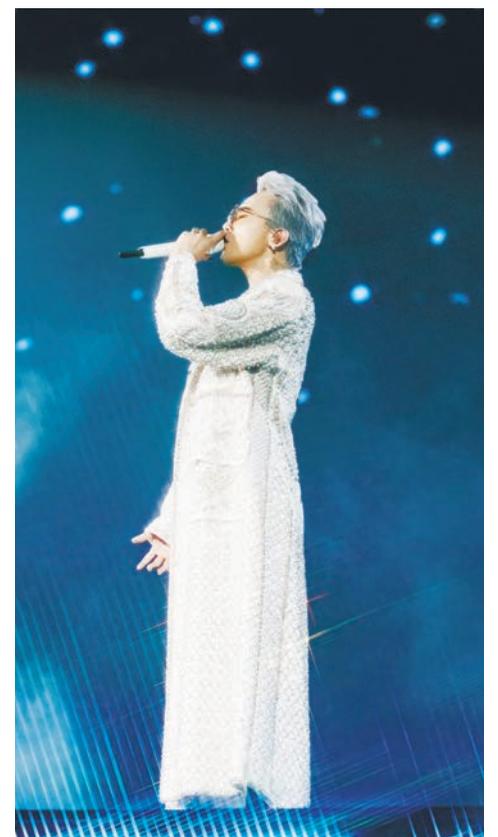
Though he did not dance much, his creative use of stage effects and props still worked its magic in drawing audiences in. His fashion choices did a number too. The stylings were a clever play on high-fashion and streetwear.

Take his red rose applique jacket and knight look, for instance. The pairings were bold, refreshing and presented something new.

**Personal updates**

In the midst of the fun and excitement, G-Dragon did allocate some time to be personal too. Given his break from the spotlight, the *Crayon* hitmaker explained to fans the reasons behind his hiatus in a confessional video.

He admitted to being burnt out after years of non-stop hustling. This time around, he aims to keep things focused, ensuring he stays true to his artistry. The crowd got a little too excited when he proceeded to tease



G-Dragon's current tour is in support of his latest album *Ubermensch*.

**Big Bang's comeback.**

The group, according to him, will reunite in line with its upcoming 20th anniversary next year. Updates on new music and tour, however, was not confirmed.

Speaking of Big Bang, the group's memorable hits did not manage to secure a spot on the set list. This may have been a letdown for fans who were expecting him to. Contrary to his fellow member Daesung, who was in town previously, G-Dragon solely focused on delivering his solo material.

This sentiment, however, feels irrelevant on the whole. The show was a dream come true for fans who have long awaited his return. While it may have been a long haul, the evening's performances made up for lost time.