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Music

Suga's D-Day Concert Review: Agust D, Yoongi, and BTS Suga in One Glorious Fusion

His two-hour set seamlessly reflects on life, death, and survival.



BY JAE-HA KIM

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With his first solo tour D-Day, Suga could've given fans what some may have expected — a stripped-down BTS concert focusing on the enigmatic rapper, with a few ments thrown in for good measure. Instead, the 30-year-old musician has been thrilling audiences with a full-blown extravaganza — pyrotechnics, a backup band, and one of the most unique stage setups I've ever seen. As his two-hour set seamlessly reflects on life, death, and survival, it has become clear that the star's D-Day tour is equal parts rock opera and theater, performed by three compelling protagonists: the BTS idol Suga, his biting alter ego Agust D, and Min Yoongi (also romanized as Yunki) — the boy from Daegu who defied his once disapproving parents to become one of the world's most famous pop stars.

But on May 5 — the second of three sold-out concerts at the Allstate Arena, just outside of Chicago — a fourth persona emerged: Yoongi, the consummate *rock* star who is as comfortable strutting down the runway-like stage as he is accompanying himself on the piano or guitar. The man is in his element.

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The show starts off with a noir video that would fit right into a Chow Yun-Fat film. As rain beats down on the oversized screen at the back of the stage, Yoongi is depicted in a horrific motorcycle crash, which alludes to a **real-life accident** he experienced while working as a deliveryman. Breaking the fourth wall, four hooded dancers hoist Yoongi in their arms and cautiously carry him to the tip of the stage. As the sound of thunder crackles within the arena, the men gently lay him down, as if honoring his final resting place. But as the *haegeum* — a **traditional Korean** string instrument — pulsates and grows louder, Agust D is revived, uttering a single “yo” before launching into a vigorous rendition of his recent lead single, “Haegeum.”

The homonym, referring both to the instrument and to the concept of liberating oneself from restrictions, becomes a dichotomy through which to view his work; through all of

his solo music, he has been relentlessly focused on liberating the self, freeing the various Yoongis from societal expectations and self-imposed pressures.



Suga performs at Allstate Arena outside of Chicago. COURTESY OF BIGHIT MUSIC



Suga performs at UBS Arena in New York City. COURTESY OF BIGHIT MUSIC

With his thoughtful solo album, also titled *D-Day*, and his commanding performance, Suga makes it clear that while he misses his BTS bandmates, he is quite comfortable shining on his own.

Dressed head-to-toe in **Valentino**, he reminds the appreciative crowd that he's come a long way since his early years as a trainee, but he remains immensely thankful to the group that gave him the opportunity to be where he is today. In the first third of the concert, he sings a reworked version of the BTS crowd pleaser “Trivia 轉: Seesaw,” while strumming an acoustic guitar signed by all of his bandmates.

His stage production is minimalist, but it's one that embraces technology. Nine panels complete a stage that will eventually disappear, one panel at a time, leaving less and less room for Suga to perform. But rather than being constrained by the shrinking setup, he appears freed. After the last panel is lifted high towards the arena ceiling, Yoongi is on

the floor level, looking his audience dead in the eye. With all the panels gone, there is no artifice to his art.

Sitting at his piano, Suga pays a brief video homage to the late Ryuichi Sakamoto, who collaborated with him on his standout *D-Day* track “Snooze.” In the hypnotic number, he declares that “your success will be your leash and shackles,” before segueing into the gentle chorus, where he tries convincing himself that “everything will be okay.” Like much of his recent work, “Snooze” offers harmonic complexity along with a vocal hook (courtesy of The Rose’s Woosung, who is heard on a track) that reverberates.

Though known for his spitfire rapping, Suga’s vocals shine through beautifully throughout the evening, most notably on the haunting “Amygdala.” Here, he sings about his father’s cancer diagnosis, his mother’s heart surgery (which was also referenced in BTS’ 2015 song “Moving On”), and suicidal ideation. The amygdala is the portion of the brain associated with encoding our memories and processing our emotions. In his documentary *Suga: Road to D-Day*, he explains that all his unpleasant memories are stored in his amygdala. “I have massive mood swings whenever I’m working on this song,” he told Jimin in 2020. “To work on it, I have to bring up some of my unpleasant memories. But this is actually a very important process to learn to control them.” The rich arrangements of the song — which was more than three years in the making — fill out the musical palettes, presenting a sobering picture of what Yoongi went through to become Agust D.

The concert ends with a three-song encore that includes “D-Day” – where Suga promises that the “future’s gonna be OK / D-Day’s coming / It’s a f*cking good day” — and closes with “The Last,” a bleak track from Agust D’s self-titled 2016 mixtape. “Thanks to the depression that takes over me,” he spits out. “And all my self hatred / Min Yoongi is dead already / I killed him.” The powerful lyrics coupled with the chilling delivery drives home the point that Min Yoongi defied the odds by not only surviving, but absolutely thriving on his own terms.

In the final moments of the show, the cameras seem to multiply, his cadence intensifies, the lights flash like paparazzi light bulbs. On the giant screen, surveillance-style footage captures him at a dozen different angles. It’s all fury and flame and breathless swagger;

Suga can dance, Agust D prefers to stalk. And the last image we see is Min Yoongi, his retreating back, the house lights already up, a person at the very end of it all.



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