

VVS is Not Your Mother's K-pop Girl Group

“Boys talkin’ down...Yeah, fuck them boys.” Indeed.



K-CULTURE WITH JAE-HA KIM

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(Handout photo courtesy of MZMC Inc. Korea Co., Ltd.)

After making their official debut on April 22 with their infectiously catchy single, “Tea,” VVS is back with their eight-track EP *D.I.M.M.* — which stands for *Diamonds in My Mouth*. Besides “Tea,” the album — which is a mesh of pop, hip-hop and R&B — includes “Fact\$” and “Touch It.”

But it’s their rap-heavy title track, “D.I.M.M.” that shows off what they excel at. The quintet — whose members range in age from 15 (!!) to 21 — start the music video off with a tribute to the late DJ Screw, and end it by introducing a sixth member, whose

“New Phone (Interlude)” offers a clever one-line nod to Connor Price and Ktlyn’s “New Phone.” As for the rest of the song’s lyrics? They’re unapologetic in their use of profanity to get their point across: “Boys talkin’ down / I got them diamonds in my mouth / Yeah, fuck them boys.”

VVS are *not* your mother’s K-pop girl group.

In this exclusive interview with *K-Culture with Jae-Ha Kim*, VVS tells readers about working with their American manager, visiting “[Lovely Runner](#)” filming sites, and trying hard to improve their foreign language skills (just like their fans).

This interview was conducted prior to the addition of Lena, the newest member of the VVS.

VVS 빅비에스 'D.I.M.M' MV



Please introduce yourselves to our readers.

Brittney: Hello. This is VVS Brittney. I’m 21 years old and the leader of VVS. I’m Korean.

Ilee: Hello, this is VVS Ilee. I am 19 yrs old and the rapper of VSS. I’m Korean.

Rana: Hello, I am Rana of VVS and I’m the main dancer of the group. I’m from Japan!

Jiu: Hello, this is VVS Jiu. I am 17 yrs old and the main vocalist of the group and I’m Korean!

Liwon: Hello this is VVS Liwon and I am 15 yrs old, the youngest member of the group and I'm Korean.

You are with an agency that was founded by Paul Brian Thompson, who is American. What are some of the cultural differences that you had to navigate?

Brittney: Since I lived in America for a few years, I didn't feel any big cultural differences. We are just glad that we have someone that can teach us about the culture that our CEO came from.

Ilee: I've always dreamed of becoming an idol and had the goal of expanding globally, so I think the fact that our CEO is a foreigner worked to my advantage! It would be a lie to say there were no cultural differences at all, but since the CEO has lived in Korea for a long time and understands K-POP culture really well, I didn't experience much difficulty during training. In fact, being able to use English naturally in everyday life has helped me improve my English skills.

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Most of my readers are very interested in South Korea and its culture. If someone asked you what they should see or do in South Korea, what would you say?

Brittney: I want to recommend visting Hangang. Hangang is the Han River in Korea and there is a big culture in Korea where we go to picnic by the water and eat ramen and have delicious snacks. During spring, most of the people go to Hangang to enjoy the weather and cherry blossoms.

Ilee: I'd like to recommend Mangwon-dong! There's the Mangwon Market, and so many great restaurants, so I think there are quite a lot of things to enjoy there. Also, since nearby neighborhoods like Hongdae, Hapjeong, and Sangsu are all connected, it's a great area to explore and walk around.

Rana: I recommend Sinsa-dong! There are so many pretty cafes and places to shop, so you can have fun all day and take lots of cute photos!

Jiu: I recommend Haenggung-dong! I live in Suwon, so I used to go there often, and every time I went, it felt so pretty and new—like a fairytale village. There are also tons of great restaurants. I also recommend visiting the house featured in the famous

drama "Lovely Runner" — it's a popular photo spot!

Liwon: I'd like to recommend Lotte World in Jamsil! It's a place where you can enjoy a variety of fun rides and delicious food, and it's a cultural experience to wear school uniforms while riding the attractions, which makes it even more fun!

VVS 빅빅에스 'Tea' MV



When you released the video trailer for “Tea” last month, I remember thinking it looked like a very thrilling short film. Are any of you trained in acting?

Ilee: Thank you for the compliment! I once tried acting out lines by mimicking a scene from a drama, but this was my first time doing complex and detailed emotional acting along with action scenes, so it felt new and a bit awkward at first. But the atmosphere on set felt so realistic, and I was able to quickly adapt thanks to the great chemistry with the other actors I worked with!

Brittney: I never acted before, and it was my first time experiencing a film set. I was very nervous at first when I went to action training to learn my stunts. However, the staff and the directors made the environment very comfortable which helped me to finish my scenes smoothly. It was a great experience.

Rana: This was my first time doing this kind of acting. Since I usually have a lot of action scenes, I mostly practiced my stunts. But thanks to the action team, who taught me each basic move one by one, I think I was able to do well!

Jiu: This was my first time acting, and also my first time doing action scenes! I had to

perform expressions of slight annoyance and action scenes, and since it was my first time, it felt a bit awkward. But with great guidance, I was able to follow along well!

Liwon: This was my first time acting! At first, when I was told I'd be acting, I was really nervous and worried about whether I could do well. Gladly, once we started filming and I immersed myself in the situation, the acting just came out naturally. Even I was amazed when I saw myself on screen.

Is there any chance we will see you on tour this year?

Brittney: We don't have any specific plans yet, but we hope to be on tour as soon as possible because we have so many good songs hidden for the future. If there are any countries that want us, we'll be there!



From left: LIWON, RANA, BRITTNEY, JIU and ILEE. (Handout photo courtesy of MZMC Inc. Korea Co., Ltd.)

You worked on some of your video content in Japan. What was that experience like?

Rana: It had been such a long time since I'd been to Japan that I forgot a bit of Japanese! So sometimes the other members ended up helping me instead.

Ilee: We visited Japan to film various contents for our debut album, including the

music video for our debut title track “Tea,” as well as the songs “Purrfect,” and “Fact\$”! All the filming locations were so cool and new to us, so we had a lot of fun shooting. On our last day before heading back to Korea, we went to Shibuya in Tokyo for some shopping and had a bit of free time. During that time, Rana helped and guided us a lot, so we were able to enjoy it comfortably!

Brittney: It was actually my first time in Japan and while we were filming the music video we went to different places and I was surprised by how beautiful the scenery was. We went to Rana’s hometown and visited some places, but unfortunately Rana was also super busy, so we had a separate guide.

Jiu: We went to film our first title track “Tea” and various other content! It was my first time visiting Japan, so there were a lot of things I didn’t know, but Rana was my roommate, and she taught me a lot and stayed by my side whenever we went out.

Liwon: I think what left the biggest memory for me was shopping and eating sushi together on the last day! The weather was so nice that day and walking through the streets of Japan while shopping felt really amazing. It was my first time in Japan, but Rana helped me a lot—when I couldn’t understand things at convenience stores, she would step in and help. She really took care of me!



Do you pick up new languages easily?

Brittney: I speak English natively as well as Korean natively. I honestly think I'm quick at picking up new languages if I put my mind to it so I hope to learn a few more!

Ilee: I don't yet speak any other languages fluently, but I'm putting a lot of effort into learning English. I'm good at quickly memorizing vocabulary, so I believe that if I keep working at it, I'll be able to catch up with the language.

Rana: I can only speak Japanese and Korean. I think I learned Korean pretty quickly! Since I live in Korea, it was inevitable that I'd learn Korean fast.

Jiu: I don't know other languages yet! But right now, I'm taking English lessons at the company, and I think I'm slowly starting to pick it up more than I expected! I hope the day comes soon when I can speak English comfortably.

Liwon: I can't speak anything yet, but I'm learning English! Still, I think I'm good at catching up quickly once I start learning.

When you travel for work, do you ever go back there for a vacation?

Rana: It wasn't for travel, but when I first came to Korea, I felt that the country was well-equipped for foreigners to get around comfortably, and the food was delicious too. It made me think that even if I came to Korea alone, I'd be just fine.

Brittney: I want to visit Japan again. Even though I stayed there for about 2 weeks, since our work schedule was hectic, I couldn't really experience things in Japan. I want to go back to Japan for a personal trip.

Ilee: I haven't had the chance to revisit a place I traveled to before on my own yet, but if I ever get the opportunity, I'd really love to go back to France! When I went with my family, I was so young that I couldn't fully take in all the beautiful scenery and moments, which I've always felt a bit sad about. Lately, I've been wanting to try traveling alone—not within the country, but overseas—so if I do get the chance, I'd like to go somewhere a bit farther away and experience a fresh new vibe.

Jiu: I've never traveled alone yet, but if I get the chance, I'd really love to try it someday! If I do go, I think I'd choose to visit Japan again. I felt like the facilities and food in Japan suited me well.

Liwon: I prefer going places with a group rather than alone, so I've never ever traveled somewhere by myself just yet!



Handout photo courtesy of MZMC Inc. Korea Co., Ltd.

What was your best holiday trip so far?

Brittney: During New Year's Day I went on a family trip to Jeju Island. We went to Jeju two days earlier and did our countdown on Jeju island. It was a great trip and we had such a memorable time together. Jeju island is such a beautiful place in Korea to visit and is famous for its pork belly!

Jiu: It wasn't a trip, but the most memorable thing for me was spending time with my grandparent's house for the New Year! We went to Daecheon and ate at the eel restaurant that I used to go to often when I was younger, with my grandfather. It was so nice to have a conversation with my grandparents after a long time and to see my uncle and cousins. I was really happy.

Liwon: I've gone to Myeongdong with my family for Christmas. Myeongdong gets very crowded during Christmas, but I think it's still one of the best places to experience the Christmas atmosphere. There are so many delicious things to eat and lots of places to shop, and most importantly, when night falls, it has such a beautiful and cozy vibe.

What are some of your favorite cities?

Brittney: My favorite cities are Gangnamgu, Gapyeong, Seokcho, Jeju Island, and

Yeosu. All of these places have lots of entertainment, great food, and amazing tour sites to visit.

Ilee: The places I love the most are Gangnam in Seoul, where I currently live; Mapo-gu, which has lots of fun things to do; Hannam-dong, which has the kind of vibe I really like; Daejeon, where the bakeries are delicious; and lastly, warm and lovely Jeju Island, which is perfect for traveling!

Rana: My favorite places are Shibuya and Harajuku in Japan, as well as Gangnam, Incheon, and Songpa-gu in Korea! Shibuya and Harajuku are popular hangout spots for students in Japan, and when you go there, you can really keep up with the latest trends. As for Korea, I chose the cities where I had the most fun and felt like I made the most out of my time there!

Jiu: First, I really like Suwon because I used to live there, so I know all the best restaurants and fun spots. Next, I like Seongsu because there are many clothing stores that match my style, and there's just a lot to explore. Third is Gangnam—it's close by and has many accessory shops, so I often go there to shop for accessories. I also like Jamsil because I always go to Lotte World and then do things like escape rooms or claw machines nearby. Lastly, I like Incheon because my family often goes shopping in Songdo during Christmas, and there are also a lot of good restaurants there.

Liwon: I like Incheon, Jeonju, Daegu, Seoul, and Busan. Incheon is where I live! Jeonju—because I love Jeonju bibimbap! Daegu—it's my father's hometown! Seoul—there's so much to see and so many fun things to do! And Busan—I really love Haeundae Beach!



What do you girls take with you on the road?

Brittney: My must have items that I take on a trip are an iPad, tea bags, makeup, and a towel. I always take a towel on a trip to cover the pillow. I take tea bags because I don't like the taste of normal water, so I usually drink tea.

Ilee: I don't usually wear hats, but I always make sure to pack one when I go on a trip! There's no particular reason, but it just feels comforting to have. And AirPods! There's nothing more healing than spending time listening to good music while enjoying a beautiful view, so I definitely need my AirPods.

Rana: When I travel, I prefer to pack as lightly as possible, so I don't really have any specific items. But I recently bought a camera, and the pictures turn out so great that I think I'll be bringing it with me whenever I go somewhere from now on!

Jiu: When I travel, I always make sure to bring items to help with swelling. I take a lifting band with me and use it in the morning to reduce puffiness. Also, since I have sensitive skin, I always bring my own skincare products in small containers. That way, my skin doesn't react badly.

Liwon: The items I always make sure to bring are AirPods, cute clothes, and cosmetics. AirPods are essential for listening to music while traveling, and cute

clothes and makeup are must-haves for a trip! To take good photos, the right clothes and makeup are important! So, these are the three things I always bring when I travel!

What is your favorite vacation destination?

Brittney: California. Since I lived there for a few years, I know how beautiful California is, and the food and snacks are so good [there].

Ilee: I've traveled to various countries, but Japan still feels the closest and most familiar, so I want to visit again. I think the biggest reason is that the food really suits my taste!

Rana: Sapporo, Japan. It's cold in the winter, but there's the Snow Festival, and the seafood is so delicious—that's why I love Sapporo.

Jiu: Japan. When I visited, it felt very clean and refreshing, and I still clearly remember how kind everyone was. The sushi I had in Japan was also so delicious that I still can't forget it! If I get the chance to go again, I'd definitely love to visit.

Liwon: Taean in Korea! I really love the countryside, so going there and feeling the fresh country air is something I find healing and really enjoy.

For my final question, can you share with us what your best or worst trip was?

Brittney: My best vacation memory is when I went on a family trip to Hawaii. I went when I was in elementary school and I remember I only had good memories from this trip.

Ilee: The best trip I've had was when I went to Osaka with my family and we enjoyed a hot spring! It wasn't the worst, but one of the more difficult trips was my trip to Switzerland, specifically to Jungfrau, which I had mentioned earlier as a stunning location. It was incredibly beautiful, but I remember feeling really sick from altitude sickness, which made it tough.

Rana: The trip that stands out the most for me was France! Everywhere I went, all the buildings were so beautiful that it felt like I was walking through an art museum.

Jiu: If I had to pick the best trip, it would be when my family and I went to Dragon City Hotel and had a staycation. We didn't really go anywhere, but just relaxing together in a nice place, enjoying a buffet, and having meaningful conversations was a huge happiness for me. So that's why it's my most memorable trip. As for the not-so-great trip, it wasn't the worst, but I remember when we went to Jeju Island with my family. We visited many tourist spots, took pictures, and enjoyed the trip. However, as the days went by, we all started feeling unwell. After we returned to Korea, we took the

COVID-19 test, and everyone in my family tested positive. So the week after the trip, we didn't go anywhere and all had to quarantine together.

Liwon: The best trip was to a pension in Taean! My family and I went for a 1-night, 2-day trip, and we had a really fun time. We gathered together, chatted, swam in the pool, and played in the mudflats at night. It was the most memorable family trip. As for the worst trip, I didn't have one!

VVS 빅빅에스 'Tea' MV



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