

= Harisu =

Lee Kyung @-@ eun (born Lee Kyung @-@ yeop , February 17 , 1975) , better known by her stage name Harisu (Hangul : ??? ; Hanja : ???) , is a Korean pop singer , model , and actress . Assigned male at birth , Harisu identified as female from early childhood , and underwent sex reassignment surgery in the 1990s . She is the Republic of Korea 's first transgender entertainer , and in 2002 became only the second person in Korea to legally change their gender . Her stage name is an adaptation of the English phrase " hot issue " .

Harisu first gained public attention in 2001 , after appearing in a television commercial for DoDo cosmetics . The commercial was a success and ended up launching her career , allowing her to branch out into other fields such as music and acting . So far she has recorded five Korean musical albums , switching genres between techno and R & B , and her overseas releases have featured songs recorded in Mandarin . Her first major acting role was in the 2001 film Yellow Hair 2 , and since then her credits have included Hi ! Honey , a Taiwanese drama series , and Colour Blossoms , an erotic drama by Hong Kong filmmaker Yonfan . On May 19 , 2007 , Harisu married Micky Jung , whom she had been dating for two years .

= = Early life and transition = =

Harisu was born Lee Kyung @-@ yeop in Seongnam , Korea , and is one of five children . Although assigned male at birth , she identified as female from an early age , recalling , " I was always a girl who loved playing with dolls . " This did not go unnoticed by her family or school friends , who often remarked that she looked and acted like a girl . A failed relationship with a boy during her teenage years convinced Harisu of the need to change her sex , and by the time she graduated from the all @-@ boys Naksaeng High School , she was already undergoing hormone replacement therapy . It was for this reason that she was exempted from the military service usually required of males in the Republic of Korea , being rejected on the grounds of " mental illness " . By the end of the 1990s , Harisu had undergone breast augmentation , sex reassignment surgery , rhinoplasty , and increase of hips , having had surgery performed in Korea and Japan .

Harisu lived in Japan for several years , where she studied to be a hair stylist . It was while working as a nightclub singer that she was discovered by a talent agency , and soon after she began her career as a model . After returning to Korea in 2000 , she signed with management company TTM Entertainment , and first began using the stage name " Harisu " , derived from the English phrase " hot issue " .

= = Career = =

= = = Debut = = =

Harisu made her acting debut in 1991 ? while still living as a boy ? as a supporting actor in a high school TV drama series , and this was followed by other minor film and TV roles as an extra during the 1990s .

Her big break came in early 2001 , when she appeared in a TV commercial for DoDo cosmetics . The commercial hinted at the fact she is a transsexual , zooming in to reveal her Adam 's apple (although this was added digitally , since Harisu herself does not have a prominent Adam 's apple) . DoDo were initially cautious about using the commercial , and had been prepared to withdraw it if the response was negative , but it turned out to be a big success and quickly established her as a celebrity . As the Republic of Korea 's first transgender entertainer , there was a great deal of media interest in Harisu , and she was routinely described as being " more beautiful than a woman " . Explaining her reasons for " coming out " , she said , " I don 't want to face people dishonestly . I won 't be able to hide it after all . It 's better to make it clear from the start . " In June 2001 , Harisu was the subject of a television documentary produced by KBS , which covered her childhood , family

relationships , and debut as an entertainer .

Later that year she was cast in the film Yellow Hair 2 , her first leading role . In addition to contributing songs for the films soundtrack , Harisu played a transsexual who goes on the run after the apparent death of a convenience store owner . Regarding her decision to appear in the film , she said , " I wanted to break the stereotype of transsexuals ? the demureness and extreme weakness with which they are often portrayed . " The film was released on July 21 .

Also in 2001 , Harisu published her autobiography , Eve from Adam , and appeared in a music video for dance group Turbo . In September , she entered the K @-@ pop music scene with her debut album , Temptation , a mix of techno @-@ style pop music and slow ballads , which peaked at number 32 on the MIAK (Music Industry Association of Korea) K @-@ pop albums chart . She released her second album , Liar , in October 2002 , describing it as " a high @-@ energy dance record with a very upbeat rhythm . " Liar became her biggest domestic chart success , reaching number 23 in its first month of release .

= = = 2003 ? 2005 = = =

In October 2003 , Harisu made the decision to leave her management company , TTM Entertainment . However , TTM claimed to hold the rights to her stage name , and announced their intentions to use that name to promote other artists . The matter was taken to court , and in early 2004 the ruling went in favour of Harisu , allowing her to keep the name . She subsequently set up her own company , G & F Entertainment , in order to make her own decisions regarding her career . In February she released her third album , Foxy Lady , which marked a change from the sound of her previous albums towards a more hip @-@ hop / R & B style , with Harisu saying " now I am on my own , and showing my true colors , doing exactly the kind of music that I 've always wanted . " The album , however , failed to make the top 50 in the Korean charts .

In 2004 , Harisu began to develop her career overseas , expressing frustration at being " pigeon @-@ holed " as a transsexual in Korea . She starred in the Taiwanese drama series Hi ! Honey alongside local celebrity Pace Wu , despite not being fluent in Mandarin (her lines were spoken in Korean and later dubbed) . She drew attention by promoting sanitary napkins in a series of advertisements for Taiwanese company UFT , for which she was paid an estimated ? 100 million per ad . Although she had been initially reluctant to take on the project , observers hailed the casting of a trans woman in such a campaign as a sign of progress . Towards the end of the year Harisu appeared in Yonfan 's Colour Blossoms , an erotic drama film from Hong Kong in which she shared a role with veteran Japanese actress Keiko Matsuzaka . Released on October 18 , 2004 , it was poorly received at the box office and by the media , though it had some success at film festivals , and picked up several awards and nominations .

Harisu made a return to Korean screens in early 2005 , after being cast in the MBC miniseries Beating Heart , her first major role in a Korean drama . She starred in several episodes as a transsexual woman , returning to her family after a lengthy absence in a bid to gain acceptance . Later that year her Foxy Lady album was released in Taiwan and China with the inclusion of songs re @-@ recorded in Mandarin , and she was even promoted by her Taiwanese record label as the " Kylie Minogue of the East " . In September 2005 , Harisu gained a foothold in Malaysia after signing a three @-@ year memorandum of understanding with Hock Star Entertainment , a deal which included the production of two feature films and secured the Malaysian release of her album .

= = = 2006 ? present = = =

After a prolonged absence from the Korean music scene , Harisu returned in January 2006 with her fourth , self @-@ titled album . Although her comeback was originally scheduled for the summer of 2005 , this had been prevented by other commitments overseas . The album was preceded by a digital single , " Winter Story " , and marked a change in her image , with an emphasis on being " cute " rather than " sexy " . Harisu charted at number 46 in Korea , and as with her previous album it was released in Taiwan and China with extra songs recorded in Mandarin . Her fifth Korean album ,

Summer , was released just six months later , though it failed to chart in the top 50 .

Her next film ? the first as part of the deal with Hock Star Entertainment ? was Possessed , a Malaysian horror film released on November 30 , 2006 , in which she starred alongside Amber Chia . Harisu played Lisu , a murdered pop singer who becomes a vengeful ghost , and also performed the films theme song , though it was necessary for her dialogue to be spoken in Korean and later dubbed . She was praised by director Bjarne Wong for her hard work and professionalism , and has hinted that they may collaborate on another film in the future .

In early 2007 , Harisu was cast as the lead actress in Police Line , a Korean drama series produced for cable network On @-@ Media . The series , based around a special unit for victims of sexual abuse , starred Harisu as a policewoman who was molested as a child by her stepfather . Filming for Police Line began in April 2007 , and the series was launched in June with Harisu 's husband Micky Jung making a cameo appearance . In December 2007 , Harisu released a digital mini @-@ album , Winter Special , which featured a duet with her husband on the track " First Snow " .

Harisu published a collection of essays in Japan in March 2008 , titled Haris Beauty (sic) . The essays formed a comprehensive guide to beauty , diet and fashion , and contained photographs of Harisu taken by Yamagishi Shin , who had traveled to Seoul the previous December for a four @-@ day photo shoot . Harisu also provided narration for the visually impaired for the 2008 film If You Were Me : Anima Version 2 , an animated film about human rights .

As of 2008 , Harisu believed that she still faced discrimination within the entertainment industry , saying on television , " Many people pretend to smile and welcome me , but after the filming , they 'd scold me behind my back " .

= = Personal life = =

Harisu 's decision to undergo sex reassignment surgery placed a strain on the relationship with her family , and she noted that when her parents first found out they " were very upset . They weren 't angry , but very sad . " Her father in particular had great difficulty accepting his child as a daughter , but her family have since accepted this and show great pride in her career .

Harisu has been given credit for raising social awareness of transgenderism in the Republic of Korea , and has said in interviews that she hopes to be a role model for other transpeople . In April 2007 , she came to the aid of a Chinese trans woman unable to afford surgery , giving her the financial support needed to complete her transition . Affected by the 2008 suicides of gay actor Kim Ji @-@ hoo and transsexual television personality Jang Chae @-@ won , Harisu opened transgender club " Mix @-@ Trans " in Apgujeong @-@ dong , southern Seoul , in June 2009 .

= = = Legal recognition of gender = = =

On November 29 , 2002 , Harisu filed a petition with the Incheon District Court to have her sex corrected on her family register , and that her birth name be changed from Lee Kyung @-@ yeop to the more feminine Lee Kyung @-@ eun . The subsequent court ruling went in her favour , and on December 13 , 2002 , she became only the second person in the Republic of Korea to legally change their sex . Speaking of the difficulties she had previously encountered , Harisu has said : " My most embarrassing moments were when I have had to show my personal identification card in public ... I couldn 't get a passport , visa or even my own bank accounts because I was legally a man " .

= = = Marriage = = =

Since her debut in 2001 , Harisu has consistently expressed a desire to marry and have a family of her own . In 2005 , she began dating Micky Jung (real name Jung Yong @-@ jin) , a rapper whom she had met online . Jung , who had been a member of dance group EQ during the 1990s , later joined Harisu 's management company and worked on her fourth and fifth albums . The couple briefly separated in 2006 , but were reunited after Jung saw her dating another man on a TV show .

Rumours that the two were to marry began circulating in November 2006 , and a date for the wedding was announced in February , following meetings between their respective families . Harisu and Jung starred in a reality television show on cable network Mnet showing their everyday lives and preparations for their wedding , but the couple were subjected to harsh criticism from netizens .

On May 19 , 2007 , Harisu and Jung were married at Central City Millennium Hall in the Seocho @-@ gu district of Seoul . The ceremony was presided over by KBS anchor Shin Young @-@ il , and officiated by Kim Suk @-@ kwon , a Dong @-@ A University professor who had performed Harisu 's sex change surgery in the 1990s . The couple honeymooned on the Thai island of Ko Samui , and began their married life at Harisu 's family home in Nonhyun @-@ dong , in the Gangnam @-@ gu district of Seoul . The couple have said that they plan to adopt four children , though the news prompted a mixed public reaction . A poll by Mnet found that 69 % of 1 @,@ 300 respondents were in favour of Harisu 's decision to adopt , while in a similar poll by Daum , 58 % of 8 @,@ 094 respondents were against the idea .

= = = Welfare and politics = = =

In November 2007 , Harisu unveiled plans to build and run an orphanage , stating that it was one of her " long @-@ cherished dreams " . With the support of her husband and mother @-@ in @-@ law , she purchased a 3 @,@ 300 m2 (3 @,@ 900 sq yd) plot of land in Janghowon , Gyeonggi @-@ do , and studied for a community service license . Harisu campaigned for the New Progressive Party in the 2008 Republic of Korea legislative elections , supporting the legalization of marijuana .

= = Discography = =

As of 2007 , Harisu has released five Korean language studio albums , though her song lyrics typically include English as well . While her early work has been described as " techno @-@ flavored K @-@ pop " , her more recent albums have leaned towards the R & B , hip @-@ hop and disco genres . She has named Madonna and Janet Jackson as her musical influences ; of her contemporaries she holds Chae Rina in high esteem .

= = = Studio albums = = =

= = = Other releases = = =

= = = Music videos = = =

" History " by Turbo (2001)
" Temptation " (2001)
" Always " by Kang Sung (2002)
" Liar " (2002)
" Foxy Lady " (2004)
" Reaction " (2006)
" Shopping girl " (2012)

= = Filmography = =

= = Awards = =