

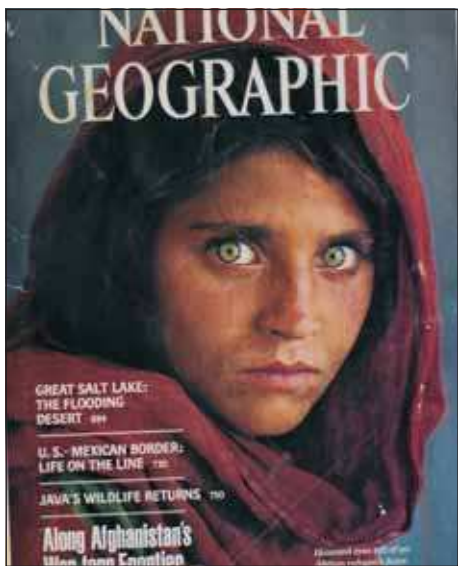
The Asian Reporter

Pacific Northwest News □ Volume 26 Number 21 □ November 7, 2016 □ www.asianreporter.com



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Comedian Pikotaro astonished by viral success of "PPAP" song



VIRAL VIDEO. Japanese comedian Pikotaro performs the "pen-pineapple-apple-pen" ("PPAP") song at a press conference in Tokyo on October 28, 2016. Pikotaro, who is behind the viral "PPAP" hit, said he is astonished by the global success of the song. Dressed in his trademark yellow outfit with snake and leopard patterns, Pikotaro debuted a two-minute "long" version of his 45-second song before taking questions. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

By Ken Moritsugu
The Associated Press

TOKYO — The Japanese comedian behind the viral hit "PPAP" is astonished by the global success of his "pen-pineapple-apple-pen" song.

Dressed in his trademark yellow outfit with snake and leopard patterns, Pikotaro debuted a two-minute "long" version of his 45-second song before taking questions at a Tokyo news conference.

His responses had the packed audience of journalists and others laughing, but it was often difficult to separate fact from fiction.

He expressed amazement that a song that he said cost 100,000 yen (\$1,000) to

produce in a six-hour session in a rented studio could explode worldwide.

"The internet is amazing!" he said.

In the song, Pikotaro, as the 53-year-old character who performs it is known, mimics stabbing a pen into an apple and a pineapple while singing simple English lyrics and dancing to a catchy beat.

The performer, whose real name is Kazuhito Kosaka according to Japanese entertainment news media, was little known before "PPAP" took off in September.

The song initially was popular among Japanese students, then started spreading globally and got a major boost when pop star Justin Bieber tweeted it was his favorite video, Pikotaro said.

"PPAP" has more than 155 million YouTube views and was the first Japanese song to get into the U.S. Billboard top 100 singles in 26 years. Guinness World Records recognized it in late October as the shortest song to make the top 100.

It has also spawned 40,000 lip-synching copies uploaded to the internet.

Pikotaro said it feels great to be imitated, and that those from India are his favorite so far. He discouraged imitators from using real fruit, though, deeming it wasteful.

"There's actually a theme when I'm singing," he said, ticking off world peace and love of family and friends. "And then, to prove the existence of dark matter," he

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