

# Singaporean in

**Jasmine Sokko, an electronic music singer-songwriter, has made it to the finals of the Chinese reality competition**

**Jan Lee**

Home-grown electronic music singer-songwriter Jasmine Sokko may have trouble passing her university modules in Sweden, but at least she has a good reason.

The 23-year-old is the only Singaporean and one of six acts to make it to the finals of Chinese reality competition programme Rave Now – a show focusing on electronic music production. The show is in its first season.

Local DJ Koflow and beatboxer Dharni Ng, who teamed up to appear on the show were booted off earlier in the series, which began airing online on Chinese streaming site Tencent Video last month.

From late August to this month, Sokko, a fourth-year Singapore Management University student, had to fly between Shanghai for filming and Stockholm, where she is on a six-month exchange programme.

"I'm graded on attendance, so I don't think I'm going to pass," says Sokko candidly during an interview with The Straits Times while she was in Singapore earlier this month.

Known for obscuring most of her face with a visor during public appearances, Sokko, who had never been to China before the show, gained a solid following of Chinese fans with renditions of her original songs such as 1057 (2016), which were modified for the show with new Chinese lyrics.

Speaking of her entry into the vast Chinese market, Sokko says: "It's a very interesting market and electronic music is still relatively new there. I want to break in and explore what the scene is like."

The biggest difference between the Singapore and Chinese market so far? The feedback she is getting.

Sokko says: "When I release something here, I might get some likes and a few comments. But in China, there are so many comments. If you

sing something, people will give advice, praise, criticise or even recount personal stories that they felt the song reminded them of. So I feel my existence as an artist more intensely over there, but, of course, when people don't like you or your performances, the hate is more acute too."

The Chinese-language medium is also a departure for Sokko, who has produced largely English language content since her debut in 2016.

"It's really great that my mentor is Lay Zhang, because he's a big advocate of mixed Mandopop, which means that songs don't have to be completely in Chinese, it can be 50-50," says Sokko.

Zhang, a popular Chinese singer and member of famed South Korean boyband Exo, is one of three regular mentors on the show.

"I didn't know much about him before filming, but my respect for him has increased exponentially since we began filming," says Sokko.

"At his level, he can afford to hire people to do music for him. But he wants to do everything on his own. I've learnt a lot from him."

And Sokko is not Zhang's only new fan – her mother is too.

"My mum doesn't just watch episodes of the show with me in it. She watches it for Lay," says Sokko, who added that her mother will be flying up to watch her film the live broadcast of the show's finals, slated to air on Friday.

"My parents have become more open-minded in the years since my debut. They're traditional parents; they were worried that music as a career won't be stable. But they've become more supportive as my career grew."

Is she confident of being the last man standing on Friday then?

Sokko, who admits that she is not certain of her chances, says: "It's challenging, but I'll give it my best shot."

And if her best shot fails to crown her as the winner of Rave Now, Sokko has at least one valuable takeaway: "My ability to speak Mandarin has definitely improved."

janlee@sph.com.sg

• The finals of Rave Now will be broadcast live on Feb 1, 8pm, on Tencent Video at v.qq.com.

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# Rave Now finals



Jasmine Sokko, who obscures most of her face with a visor during public appearances, has gained a solid following of Chinese fans with renditions of her original songs such as 1057.

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