

Asia's Got Talent magician rises from the ashes



(Right) Mr T.K. Jiang's room was damaged in the fire. (Above) Getting the Golden Buzzer from Korean-American judge Jay Park. PHOTOS: T.K. JIANG, AXN ASIA



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Just a year ago, it seemed like his entire world had collapsed, when his bedroom – along with all his magic equipment – was completely damaged after a fire broke out in his flat.

Cut to the present, and Mr T.K. Jiang has risen from the ashes, representing Singapore in the third and latest season of reality TV talent show Asia's Got Talent.

During his audition, the 23-year-old business administration undergraduate from Singapore Management University and part-time digital magician performed an original trick that involved objects such as balls, fruits and even a glass of juice apparently "emerging" from his iPad.

GOLDEN BUZZER

Korean-American judge Jay Park was so impressed and entertained, he pressed his Golden Buzzer for Mr Jiang, sending him straight to the semi-finals.

Asia's Got Talent 3 is currently airing on AXN (StarHub TV Ch 511/Singtel TV Ch 304) every Thursday at 8.30pm.

Mr Jiang told The New Paper: "I never expected this from Jay. I am more shocked than anything since he is a huge hip-hop star and I am a magic act.

"There are so many talented and capable performers on the show, so I really want to step up and impress Jay because he has put a lot of faith in me."

Faith was certainly what kept him going after his baptism by fire.

Mr Jiang, who has been pursuing and perfecting his craft since he was in secondary school, was on his way home from class when he noticed firefighters and police under his block in Upper Boon Keng

Road.

The entire flat that he shared with his parents, who were also not home at the time, suffered heavy soot damage, and the family had to move out immediately.

"It felt like walking into a haunted house," Mr Jiang recalled.

Despite losing all his magic equipment, which included close-up and stage magic props, he pressed on with his passion and made the most of what he had – his laptop and tablet – and turned to digital magic.

"I am constantly thinking of ways to modernise classic magic to suit the needs of a modern audience," he said.

While trying to recover from the ordeal, Mr Jiang decided to try crowdfunding on Give.asia. About \$7,000 was raised, which went towards the refurbishment of his flat and replacing his magic equipment.

The family managed to move in after three months.

He said: "I was able to bounce back so quickly because of all the unexpected support I received, so I decided to audition for Asia's Got Talent as a way to repay all the people who helped me.

"I want to make them proud and show them how appreciative I am."

Looking back, Mr Jiang now sees the fire as a "blessing in disguise".

"Mentally, I have grown a lot. I have become a better person and I am more content with what I have. I also want to be an inspiration for those who are also chasing their dreams."

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