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The Straits Times, Life, Page 2, Section: | life | music
Thursday 11 June 2026
578 words, 352cm² in size
386,100 circulation

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The founder of independent home-grown music label and production company Parka, Dominic Yuan has spent the past four years finding young talent, making music and proving that a sustainable career in Singapore's music industry is possible.

"I wanted to create something that could partner emerging artistes who may have a unique voice, but not the resources to create a good product from start to end," the 28-year-old says.

Founded in 2022, Parka operates from a shophouse studio in Whampoa with a team of eight, including Yuan's business partner and fellow musician-producer Timothy Liew, 31.

Yuan studied music and audio technology at Singapore Polytechnic, but when national service ended, he chose business management at Singapore Management University (SMU) over music school. He started Parka at the end of his second year, using it as his official SMU internship placement.

In October 2024, business media company Singapore Business Review named Yuan as one of nine Singapore student entrepreneurs to watch.

The early days of Parka were run out of his HDB bedroom in Tampines. Co-founders came and went, and at one point, he was left alone with one artiste on the roster and two polytechnic interns cycling over from Pasir Ris to help with production.

Parka's first breakthrough artiste was local singer-songwriter Regina Song, who signed on in 2023 with barely 15,000 streams to her name.

Yuan and the team produced her debut album *fangirl*, released in June 2024. Then a TikTok clip from a show at the Peranakan Museum went viral. Her single *The Cutest Pair* garnered 26.8 million views and has accumulated 63.7 million Spotify streams.

Song, 22, is not with the label anymore.

The outfit's current stable includes Indonesian singer-songwriter Iovlaine, 25, and Icebox, a Singapore-based 22-year-old Filipino artiste who makes alt-pop with an electronic edge.

Icebox's collaboration with Filipino singer Eliza Maturan on *Ikaw, Ikaw, Ikaw* (2025) – a Tagalog version of his 2023 song *Promises*, recorded in a single session in Manila – went to No. 1 on Twitter in the Philippines. This led to Icebox performing on the *Wish 107.5 Bus*, a mobile radio booth and recording studio that has launched careers across the Philippines.

Yuan, who still lives with his parents, recalls there were months when he did not pay himself any salary, choosing instead to channel his income and savings back into the artistes' expenses so the label and its roster could keep going.

He acknowledges that the reason not many people are running indie labels in Singapore is the country's small music market and lack of an immediate audience for local acts.

With "not a lot" of consumers to tap, it can take years before a project even approaches the break-even point, making it difficult to sustain such a label purely as a business, he adds.

"But I like to build things. I like to create something from nothing and see it come to life."

He ultimately wishes for Parka to be a bridge that connects young artistes across South-east Asia, with writing camps, regional tours and cross-border collaborations.

"English is our main language and Singapore is full of young artistes whose parents came from other countries and brought their culture with them. That's a massive asset," he says. "I want Parka to be that home for Asian music."



Dominic Yuan runs hybrid music label Parka and works with home-grown and regional artistes. ST PHOTO: JASEL POH