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These are the fresh new faces audiences are becoming increasingly familiar with. CNA Lifestyle gets to know them better.



(Photo: Aik Chen; Hair and makeup: Joanna Ang and Dax Lye)

If you've been watching television, you'll probably have noticed more and more pretty young things popping up on your screen. And who can complain? Their fresh, youthful faces are breathing life into your TV.

Perhaps they're starting to look a little familiar, but you can't quite place them yet. Or you know their faces, but you're not sure about their names.

Don't worry. You'll be hearing a lot more about them in the near future.

Meet the new kids whose stars are rising in the local entertainment scene.

DENISE CAMILLIA TAN



Denise Camillia Tan (Photo: Aik Chen; Hair and makeup: Joanna Ang)

Denise got her start as a pageant queen in the 2012 Miss Astro Chinese International Pageant in Malaysia. The Selangor-born 26-year-old, who has a background in fashion design, then had parts in TVB dramas such as *Outbound Love* and *The Hiddens* before joining Mediacorp, and acting in shows including *Mind Matters* and *Fifty And Fabulous*, as well as playing a hosting role on *The Sheng Siong Show*.

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So, you'd be surprised to learn that she's actually an introvert, and was encouraged to join her first pageant by her mother as a way of coaxing her out of her shell. "My mum would ask me to order drinks from the waiter and I would be so shy, I'd refuse to do it," she recalled.

She's since gained confidence, and if you get to know her, you might say of her, as Say Cheese co-star Romeo Tan did in an Instagram post last year: "Don't be deceived by her good looks. She can be full of nonsense at times. Correction – most of the time."



Denise Camillia Tan (Photo: Aik Chen; Hair and makeup: Joanna Ang)

You may remember her from her role in the recently aired Channel 8 drama Heart To Heart, in which she played a flirty masseuse "with golden locks and really skimpy clothing". "The first day on set, I had to give out flyers in a very public place and speak in a certain way," she recounted, cringing slightly at the thought.

"It was really not me. When my friends watched it, they commented, 'Oh, gosh, that's not the Denise I know.' But I think that's the fun part about acting – you get to play different roles, be in different shoes (and experience) all walks of life."

With family members, she says, "I'm comical in my own way. I like making my mum laugh. I do silly things to make her smile, like pulling ugly faces. (But) when I'm serious, I can be quite scary!"

When she's not working hard on set, she's a homebody. "I just want to go home and catch up on my Netflix dramas and eat my snacks. I just finished Ghost In The Shell and I'm currently on The Umbrella Academy," she said.

"Besides that, I like singing. Last year, I got a few singing gigs, which I was really happy about. I got to sing Chinese pop songs on stage." If she could pursue acting and singing, she said she'd have a really good time – especially if she could also host the occasional travel show.

THAVANESAN

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Thavanesan (Photo: Aik Chen; Hair and makeup: Joanna Ang)

Thavanesan made his TV debut with a big bang and headed straight for the top, playing the lead role in last year's *Vettai: The Force* and becoming an instant hit with *Vasantham* viewers.

When he'd auditioned for the role, the 27-year-old shared that he'd been in his last semester of university. "I told myself that if I got a supporting role, I wouldn't pursue it because I was in my last semester and was in the midst of searching for jobs," he recalled. "The next thing I knew, I got a call, and yeah, I landed the lead role. So, it was a big break for me in my first drama."

He had dabbled in stage plays and Indian art forms, but acting was a hobby up until then. Graduating with a degree in business management, he still holds a job as a freelance digital marketer while juggling his acting career. Since *Vettai*, he's played roles in *Guru Paarvai* Season 4 and the currently airing *Uyire*.



Thavanesan (Photo: Aik Chen; Hair and makeup: Joanna Ang)

"I'm now starting to get looks (on the street), like, 'Eh, I know this guy'," he shared. "I do get people coming up to me to congratulate me or ask for selfies."

Describing himself as "energetic", "the moth that's attracted to the spotlight" and "the guy who tries to steal the limelight in any group setting", Thava, as his friends call him, also gets more than his fair share of pick-up lines.

"Sometime back, someone slid into my DMs and was like, 'Are you a library book? Because I'd like to check you out'," he chuckled.

ALAN WONG

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Alan Wong (Photo: Aik Chen; Hair and makeup: Joanna Ang)

Alan Wong marked his first lead role with the Channel 5 drama Avenue 14 – although you may also remember him from his recurring role on Tanglin as Shruti Bhaskar's love interest. Apart from acting, he's also known as one of the hosts on the current season of Asia's Got Talent.

The erstwhile MTV Asia VJ began living and working in Singapore about six and a half years ago, and things really took off for him last year; in addition to these projects, he also had a lead role on the Toggle series, Glitch.

For the California-born 33-year-old, Singapore is "the perfect space for me, in terms of being a mixed Asian entertainer who also speaks English". With a background in children's theatre, he started out acting in Los Angeles, but "I felt like I was in this very weird place where my face looked like one thing and my name sounded like a different thing, and nobody seemed willing to reconcile the two," he said, explaining, "My dad is Cantonese American – he is a third-generation American – and my mum is blond haired and blue eyed."



Alan Wong (Photo: Aik Chen; Hair and makeup: Joanna Ang)

His mother was a music teacher and he grew up wanting to be a musical theatre star because "creativity was where hard work made sense to me". "Before Glee existed, I was a Gleek," he said. But it was in hosting that he eventually found his niche. And now, he says, "My heart is in acting. I love hosting and I hope to never have to give it up, but I would act in a million different types of shows, because they're all so unique and different. The core of good hosting and good acting, I think, is the same thing, and I think it's authenticity."

If there's one thing to know about him, it's that "I'm a happy person – to a fault. Sometimes, I exhaust my friends".

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Wong's innate happiness is so rampant that while filming for Avenue 14, a dark thriller in which he plays a detective, the crew had to work on "taking the happiness down".

"Sometimes, I would come to set too happy. Maybe I got too much sleep; maybe I talked to my parents that morning; maybe I just had a really good cup of coffee; maybe I had too much coffee.

"So, my assistant director would have ready for me a couple of headlines of news stories about really depressing or sad things that had happened, and I would just sit there and she would read them to me."

FANG RONG



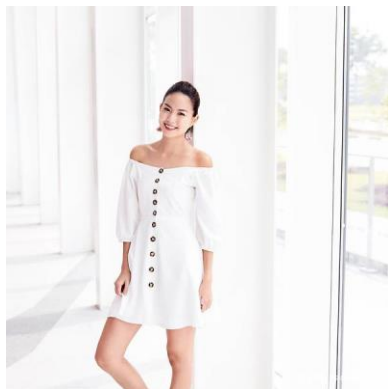
Fang Rong (Photo: Aik Chen; Hair and makeup: Dax Lye)

Fang Rong isn't exactly a new face, if you count the fact that she's been acting in Channel 8 dramas since she was seven. But, after graduating with a degree in psychology last year, the 23-year-old embarked on her acting career full time, so we'll be seeing a lot more of her on our screens from now on, starting with the upcoming Channel 5 drama Fried Rice Paradise, in which she plays the lead role.

"We start filming in about two weeks, and I'm really excited about that," she said. "The cool part about it is that it has musical elements in it, but it's not a break out in song and dance kind of drama – it's actually a mystery thriller that revolves around my mum's death at the start of the drama."

She also plays a part in the upcoming Channel 8 drama Dear Neighbours.

You may also remember her from her roles on Channel 5's Faculty, Fine Tune and The Hush; Channel 8's You Can Be An Angel 2; as well as the movie Wonder Boy.



Fang Rong (Photo: Aik Chen; Hair and makeup: Dax Lye)

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In her free time, "I like to sing, dance and play the guitar," she said. "I'm a very curious person and I'm always looking for something fun to do, or figuring out why something is the way it is."

It's a trait she's had ever since she got her start as a four-year-old in a Hyundai commercial. "My mum saw how much fun I had on set – I was like, 'Mummy, I want to do more'," she recalled, adding, "I feel that the one thing that acting taught me when I was young, which I can't really replace in any other form, is the concept of self-confidence and of owning your own space."

As a psychology major, her pursuit of the discipline doesn't just satisfy her curious nature; it also helps her shape the roles she plays now, she said. "It helps me with understanding my characters on a deeper level. I can plot out their personality traits and, based on those, learn how to treat each character differently."

ASRAF AMIN



Asraf Amin (Photo: Aik Chen; Hair and makeup: Joanna Ang)

Asraf, known for his roles in the dramas Mamaku Sayang, Kek Untuk Kapten and the currently airing Kultus, is a rising star on Suria at just 26 years of age.

He's been acting on and off since he was 18, but only started working intensively last year. He loves acting, he said, for the challenge of making each character "colourful". "Different characters have different objectives, so it's quite challenging, and the most challenging thing is when you have two projects concurrently."

When he's not busy acting, Asraf, who describes himself as "jovial" and "happy-go-lucky", is actively involved in social work.



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Asraf Amin (Photo: Aik Chen; Hair and makeup: Joanna Ang)

"I volunteer with the Malay Youth Literary Association, where we do a lot of community service," he shared. "The organisation focuses on low-income families and has programmes for them. Coming up, for example, we have Ramadan On Wheels, which is about feeding people, helping them with grocery items and preparing for the upcoming festive season. And recently, I took part in a humanitarian aid project in the Philippines."

In fact, if he doesn't continue as an actor, he might consider an alternative career as a social worker. While he may be caring and friendly, he's also a bit of an introvert – until you get to know him. "When I'm with people I'm comfortable with, I tend to be crazy. Those people know I'm quite a joker," he said.

REGENE LIM



Regene Lim (Photo: Aik Chen; Hair and makeup: Dax Lye)

Get ready to see increasingly more of Regene, who turns 20 this year, as she pursues her television career while completing her degree in Communications Studies.

Also a child actor, she started appearing on television at the age of seven, playing Shaun Chen and Ivy Lee's daughter in the 2006 drama C.I.D. "I was kidnapped and I just had to cry. That's all I remember," she laughed.

For three consecutive years starting in 2009, the precocious child took home the Young Talent award at the annual Star Awards ceremony.

In recent years, she had parts in the Channel 8 dramas Fifty And Fabulous and You Can Be An Angel 3. Her latest project is the Toggle drama Rhythm Of Youth, alongside Gavin Teo and Chen Yixin. She will also be appearing in the currently airing long-form drama Jalan Jalan.

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Regene Lim (Photo: Aik Chen; Hair and makeup: Dax Lye)

Her father was initially opposed to her acting career, she shared, but the funny part is that he had named her, in Chinese, after Hong Kong actress Anita Yuen, or Yuan Yong Yi. “My mum was like, ‘Since you gave her a name like that, you might as well let her act, because you set yourself up for this’.”

When it comes to her personality, “I’m outgoing, friendly and really passionate about what I believe in,” she shared. “I believe in feminism. I’m about equality. I really support equal rights for everyone. I try and do my part by trying to spread awareness whenever I can.”

In addition, “I really enjoy singing in the shower. I’ve been really into Chinese music lately – a lot of Stefanie Sun, Jay Chou, JJ Lin. I love Taylor Swift, and R&B. (But) I spend a lot of time studying now – I have a scholarship, so I need to be able to maintain it, and this semester’s workload is a bit crazy.”

Looking to the future, she’d like to have “a very adventurous career”. “I really fell in love with the whole idea of taking up a different role and character, putting yourself in someone else’s shoes,” she said.

“I even had to play a blind character once. I’ve had to play rich girls, poor girls, girls who are bimbotic and girls who are really nerdy. You get to live through that, and experience different ways of life.”