

GoAheadQuoteMe



The point is the character I'm playing. The audience doesn't need to know who I am because I'm not the Takeshi Kaneshiro everyone imagines.

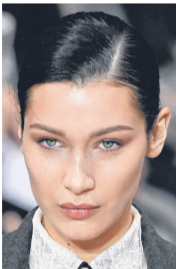


ACTOR TAKESHI KANESHIRO



The guy is a legit stud; he was a professional baseball player, he's a pilot, a father of many well-adjusted kids, he's a fisherman and a hunter and an outdoorsman. I asked him if he'd be my dad in real life and I'm still waiting to hear back.

ACTOR CHRIS PRATT on Kurt Russell, who plays his father in Guardians Of The Galaxy Vol. 2



I do sleep in my make-up sometimes, but I always wake up at 2am, freaking out and feeling completely guilty about it. My body knows.



MODEL BELLA HADID

Hip-hop for the masses

Artists under K-star Jay Park's label, AOMG, will perform here for the first time

Gwendolyn Ng

Ex-communicated from the Korean pop scene for his outspoken ways, Jay Park has defied the odds to become a successful rapper in a music industry dominated by single-gender groups performing bubble-gum pop.

The Korean-American has also helped boost the hip-hop scene in South Korea by setting up indie music label AOMG (Above Ordinary Music Group) in 2013.

Park and his labelmates will showcase their music at AOMG's first concert here on Monday, as part of a tour that has already stopped in New York and Bangkok.

"Hip-hop is big now, but back then, there was no room for artists like me. I wanted to give them a chance to be in the spotlight and get greater credit for their talent," says Park, who was speaking over the telephone from Seoul on his 30th birthday on Tuesday.

"I also wanted them to have the freedom to make music without the limitations of a bigger company, which would probably pressure them to make something more mainstream."

Park, who used to be part of boyband 2PM, would understand the restraints of being signed to a big talent agency.

His two-year boyband career was cut short after management agency JYP Entertainment terminated his contract for undisclosed reasons in 2010. It was widely speculated to be due to fans' outrage over Park's negative comments about South Korea that he made online years earlier.

The singer-rapper soldiered on and pursued a solo career. He released his fourth studio album, Everything You Wanted, last year, and it went to No. 3 on Billboard's World Album chart.

He also recently earned a coveted spot in the sports and entertainment category of Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia 2017 list, which honours young notable talents across various industries.

The success of AOMG also did not go unnoticed and, last year, Korean entertainment conglomerate CJ E&M acquired the start-up.

Park prefers not to talk about the past, but acknowledges the initial challenge of going up against established entertainment agencies with deep pockets.

"We couldn't put that much money into promotions and big-budget music videos. We could rely only on our music," he says.

"But I think more people are catching on to hip-hop. Five years ago, a lot of these artists such as Loco and Crush, who are popular now, were unknown."

AOMG's roster of artists includes the who's who of the Korean hip-hop scene, such as co-founder and rapper Simon D, rappers Gray and Loco, and DJ Pumkin. The four acts are part of the ongoing tour.

In Singapore, Park hopes that home-grown rapper Shigga Shay, whom he performed with at last year's youth music event Shine Festival here, will join him on stage.

A spokesman for concert organiser Launch Group says: "There is no confirmation as of now, but you never know if Shigga

Shay might just appear as a guest performer."

On spreading hip-hop to the masses, Park says: "We just have to keep pushing. The listeners are not attracted to what they are not used to. You have to get them accustomed to the sound through various ways, such as reality show Show Me The Money."

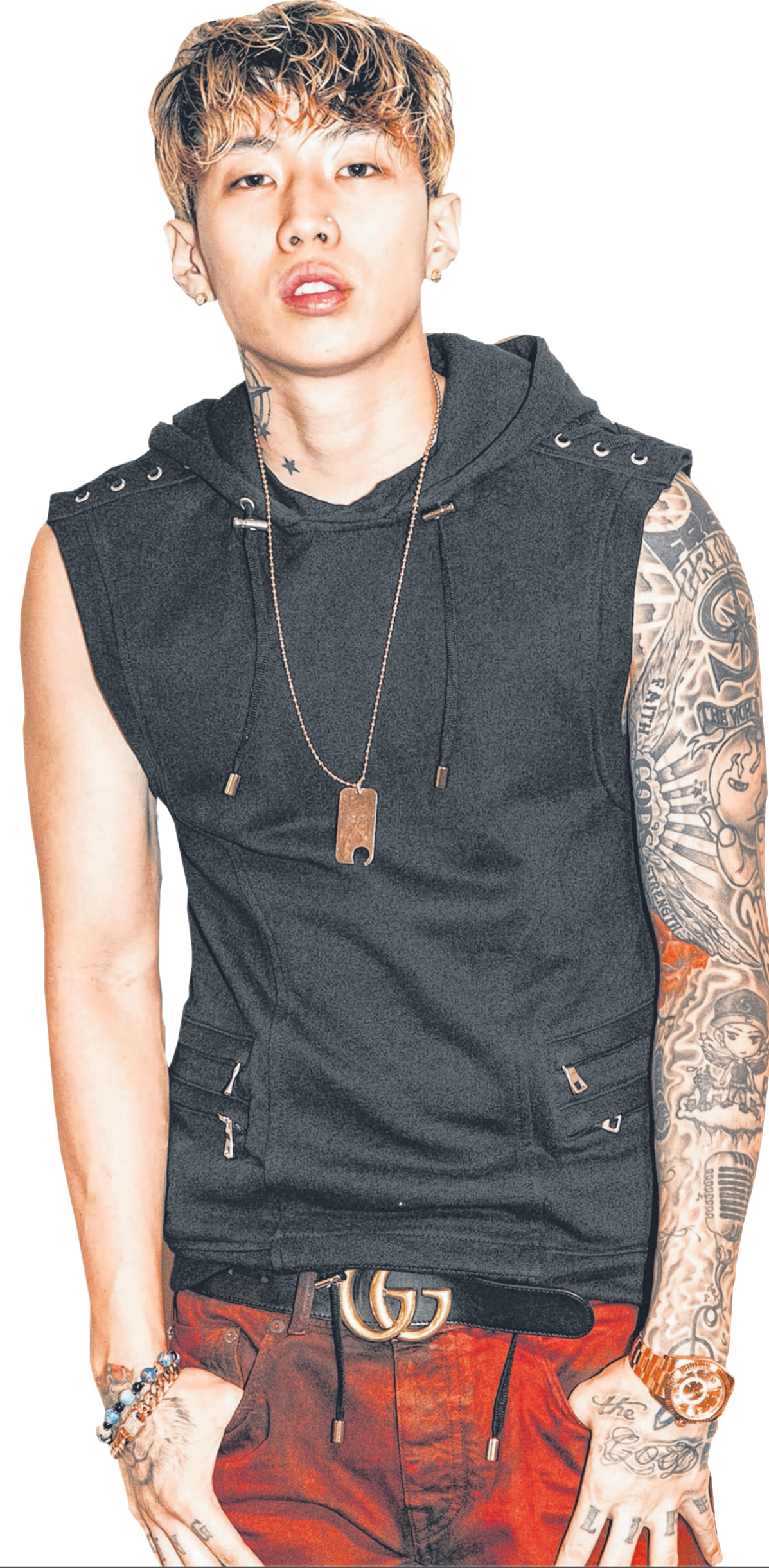
He is a judge on the upcoming sixth season of the televised rap contest.

As for love, it is not on the cards for the busy bachelor.

"It is not like I can't get a girlfriend. It's not like I don't want a girlfriend. I'm focused on accomplishing my goals. I can't do what I am doing now at 40, 50," he says.

"I'm hoping I can find love later on. Qualities of my ideal girl? She has to be confident and have a nice smile. I don't have a standard. She doesn't have to be a certain race, height or look."

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Korean-American rapper Jay Park started his own music label in 2013. PHOTO: WWW.BOOBAGRAPHY.COM

Beethoven with wit, freshness and sunshine

REVIEW/CONCERT

LIM YAN PLAYS BEETHOVEN

Resound Collective, Lim Yan, Piano
Victoria Concert Hall
Wednesday

Marc Rochester

There is no generally accepted definition of a chamber orchestra – it seems that any group calling itself one can define the term.

For the Resound Collective, which describes itself as Singapore's first fully professional chamber orchestra, that definition comprises two elements.

First, it is not the Singapore Sym-

phony Orchestra. Second, it is somewhat smaller than the Singapore Symphony Orchestra.

This was the first concert in its (admittedly short) history which dispensed with a conductor.

The logic seemed to be that as chamber music has no conductor, neither should a chamber orchestra.

But with three dozen players on stage, managing without a conductor was always going to be a tall order, especially for an ensemble that had played together in public only twice before.

It was left to violinist Seah Huan Yuh to lead the orchestra through the tricky pitfalls of Beethoven's Coriolan Overture.

The sound he got from them was fabulous. Oozing with the spirit and character of Beethoven, this was a gloriously robust and red-blooded performance. Seah led very much from the front, with the result that the music seemed to be ricocheting around the stage rather than coming out at the audience from a single conglomerate entity.

A party of nine wind players, a cellist and a double bass took the stage next for Dvorak's delicious Wind Serenade, a work brimming over with fine melodies and a wonderfully youthful vigour. For this, no single player seemed to be in overall command.

The musicians conveyed the melodies and the youthful vigour

well, but matters of inner balance and coordinated phrasing seemed to be left to chance, and while the musical performance was spirited, the overall sound was lumpy.

Pianist Lim Yan took control in the final work, Beethoven's First Piano Concerto. Initially reticent in his direction of the ensemble, he gradually became more involved as the concerto proceeded and the result was a thoroughly stimulating and enervating performance, full of wit, freshness and musical sunshine.

Lim has that gift of making everything sound easy and natural, of looking completely in his element yet producing genuinely insightful interpretations.

Particularly impressive was his first movement cadenza, in which he struck the ideal balance between the international trend for cadenzas to wander wildly off-piste and the Singaporean taste for keeping them strait-laced.

A conductor might have handled the communal bowing at the end of the concert better.

Lim came back several times to take a bow and give an encore and was applauded enthusiastically by the orchestra, but the audience was denied the opportunity to applaud fully the orchestra's sterling efforts.

That aside, Lim Yan showed that, when good musicians take the stage, conductors are largely superfluous.