



**JOAKIM
GOMEZ,
987FM RADIO
PRODUCER-
PRESENTER,
HAS COME
A LONG WAY
SINCE HIS
SINGAPORE
IDOL DAYS.**

***RISING BY
LIFTING
OTHERS***

Being able to do what he does now — radio, television and hosting — is a childhood dream come true for Joakim Gomez, but it hasn't been all smooth sailing.

His first opportunity came in 2006, when he took part in the second season of *Singapore Idol* at the age of 18. Despite harsh criticism from netizens, he made it to the Top 5. After completing National Service, Joakim ventured full-time into the entertainment industry, taking on roles in dramas and joining 987FM as a radio producer-presenter. Now 33 years old, he has the honour of having hosted eight National Day Parades, including this year's.

Speaking to *Life Storeys*, Joakim shares how he handles the responsibility that comes with fame, and his love for his neighbourhood — so much so that he calls himself a “Bishan ambassador”.

“

I enjoy running along the Park Connector Network... I have run all the way from Mediacorp (at One North) back home! I love Bishan so much that I do not see myself living anywhere else.

What have you been up to?

It has been a quiet year but things are picking up again, and I am very happy about it. I just finished filming two Channel 5 shows titled *Mind Blown!* and *The Green Plan*. There will be a number of 987FM Facebook live events happening in September — lots to look forward to!

How long have you been in showbiz?

Officially, 15 years. When I took part in *Singapore Idol*, I just wanted to get noticed in the industry because for Channel 5, opportunities like these were few and far



between. I never expected to get into the Top 5. The comments that came my way affected me mentally; it broke my self-esteem, which wasn't high to begin with. For a couple of years after that, I was trying to figure myself out again and to find my niche. Everything got better after I joined 987FM in 2014 — something I am very thankful for and do not take for granted.

How has being a public figure changed you?

I learnt to deal with detractors more professionally. With social media being so prevalent, public figures have to be extra cautious about what we say and how we behave. While it has made me a more careful person, I am only human and may have missteps sometimes, and I hope people can understand that.

You recently started two passion projects. Tell us more about them.

The first one is about music production in Singapore. I am working with my station to create podcasts and videos that feature the growing community of local music producers, such as Evan Low and Jasmine Sokko. I want to give them the spotlight and show people that there is a future in pursuing music, if you are genuine and serious about your craft.

As for the second project, I am self-funding and self-producing it as a small way of giving back to

society. Given the platform and following that I have, I hope to address certain societal issues, as well as raise awareness of the different faiths and cultures in Singapore. It is still a work-in-progress because I need to make sure that everything I present is factual and nothing too contentious.

How long have you lived in Bishan?

I have lived here for 26 years, so I know this place like the back of my hand. My mum and I used to live in a block opposite Kuo Chuan Presbyterian Secondary School, before we moved to a three-room flat a few blocks down the road. Bishan is conveniently located with so many amenities and lots of good food, such as Ming Kee Chicken Rice, just a short walk away. The MRT station is across the street from my block!

What do you like most about your estate?

I enjoy running along the Park Connector Network. This shelter (main image) marks the start and end point of my runs. If I head to the right, I can go to MacRitchie Reservoir; if I head left, I go towards Bishan Park. I have run all the way from Mediacorp (at One North) back home! I love Bishan so much that I do not see myself living anywhere else. If you have secured yourself a unit at the new Build-To-Order (BTO) projects in this area, congratulations!

How is your relationship with your neighbours?

They have seen me grow up. Whenever I meet the auntie who lives next to me, she says, “So big boy already *ah*,” and asks when will I be on TV again. My neighbours are all very friendly. Some of them recognise me, and we smile and wave at each other. When my Indian neighbours cook *briyani* and curry, I wish I could have a plate of it because it smells so good!

What advice do you have for those who are keen to join the industry?

With platforms like TikTok and Instagram, anybody can do what you do. How are you different? What do you stand for? Are you ready for the challenges and tribulations that come with the job? As much as I enjoy and love my job, there is sacrifice involved. But don't forget to have fun and don't be afraid to laugh at yourself. I used to take myself too seriously, and I lost the joy of it. Now that I am older and a bit more mature, I know how to manage my emotions better.

STAY TUNED!

Catch Joakim Gomez on 987FM's *The Shock Circuit* every Monday to Friday, from 4pm to 8pm.