

From Thriller to Teresa

Under the guise of famous personalities, corporate entertainer Daniel Thompson "croaks", moonwalks and serenades his audience with English and Chinese hits

Janice Goh

AT THE age of seven and then the youngest member of a professional singing group, Mr Daniel Thompson learnt that capitalising on his singing and dancing talents to an appreciative audience was the best way to get himself toys.

"I thought, 'I could buy anything in the toy store just for singing and dancing? This is a good job!'" recalls the Australian, who was then performing in shopping centres and theme parks in Queensland.

He has not looked back since.

He continued to perform throughout high school. And on his graduation day, at age 17, he flew to Sydney to launch his career and continue honing his craft.

All the world's his stage

Over the last two decades, his career has taken him to Australia, England, the United States, Macau and Indonesia. He has also performed on international cruise ships and in commercials, clubs and casinos.

It is, however, Singapore — with its sunny days and enthusiastic audience — that has attracted him to return repeatedly.

The 35-year-old bachelor first performed here in 1994 as a host, singer and dancer in the Disney show *Magical Memories* at Raffles City Shopping Centre.

He then worked in Singapore on sporadic shows before he obtained a permit in 2009 to be the sole director, founder and creative director of Broadway Production Company.

Crowd pleaser

When asked to describe his job — which includes performing at dinner and dance functions, award nights and private events for companies — the animal-lover and vegan quips: "To quote Kermit the Frog from *The Muppet Movie*, it's about singing and dancing and making people happy.

"My job is purely to entertain the audience and make them laugh, clap, sing and cheer."

In his 25- to 30-minute one-man show — usually performed to an audience aged 30 and above — he drapes Kermit the Frog over his shoulder and mimics it, and croons songs from *The Phantom of the Opera* or Josh Groban's *You Raise Me Up*.

With his tall, lanky frame and sleek moonwalk and hand movements, he does an uncanny impersonation of the late Michael Jackson, belting out hot numbers like



Mr Thompson has been performing in public since he was seven.

Billy Jean and Thriller.

He also masquerades as the late legendary Elvis Presley and sings favourites like Blue Suede Shoes and Love Me Tender.

Just when the crowd sits back and drinks in his act, Mr Thompson launches into Teresa Teng's Tian Mi Mi (Your Sweet Smile) or the Hokkien all-time

rousing favourite, Ai Pia Jia Eh Yia (Only Those Who Fight Will Win).

He says cheekily: "Some people think I speak Mandarin because of these songs. Well, maybe I do, maybe I don't. I like to keep people guessing!"

He also tap dances, quickening his steps as the audience cheers him on. Finally, he ends his lineup on a high note with the catchy tune *We Will Rock You*.

He says: "I enjoy getting a crowd going. And picking the right people from the audience to join me on stage can make a big difference to the show. It is a great feeling to know that you gave people a fantastic show.

"I make it look easy and many

people think it is as simple as getting up on stage and singing a song like in a karaoke bar, but actually years of training and study have gone into my practice."

Eyeing the big screen

His career accomplishments include playing apart in the biggest box-office selling live show, *Grease The Arena Spectacular*, in Australia in 1998.

In 2000, he tap danced at the opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympic Games to 100,000 live spectators and billions of television viewers worldwide.

While impersonating famous names helps to draw the crowds, he would love to make theatrical productions and films in Singapore.

He recalls his most memorable working experience: "It was when I staged a musical known as *City Gym The Musical*. I wrote the script, music and lyrics and also directed, produced and starred in the show."

Adding that performing is a life-long career for him, he says: "There is nothing else that interests me as much.

"But I imagine I will end up in the writing and creative industry as that makes me feel the best."

For details, visit www.broadwayproductions.com.au or e-mail bookings@broadwayproductions.com.au



The multi-talented Mr Thompson makes superstar impersonation look like a piece of cake.
PHOTOS: M. BASHEER