Pop superstar visits New York

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By HONG XIAO and JUDY ZHU in New York |   
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Chinese pop superstar Yi Yangqianxi, also known as Jackson Yi, has been making the rounds in the Big Apple.  
A day after attending the 60th Grammy Awards at Madison Square Garden as a Chinese Music Vision guest, the 17-year-old singer paid an official visit to the Empire State Building's 86th-floor observation deck, where he sat for an exclusive interview with China Daily.  
"Everything is so exciting," Yi said, adding that he could not stop thinking about the Grammys.  
"Even though I knew the performances would be top-level, they were so much more exciting than I expected," he said. "The atmosphere was terrific, and I have learned a lot."  
"I'm expecting to come again next year," he added.  
Actually, attending the Grammys was not the teenager's first appearance on the international musical stage.  
In November 2017, Yi released his first English-language single Nothing to Lose. The song was produced by American Grammy award-winning producer Harvey Mason Jr and his team, while Yi helped with the lyrics.  
After its release, the song soon topped several Mandopop (Mandarin pop) billboards.  
Yi released another single Unpredictable, a song written and produced by American musician David Gamson with lyrics by country music songster Dave Gibson.  
Yi said he especially likes the lyric in the refrain of Unpredictable: "I live a life, unpredictable.  
"It's so pertinent to my current life, which is also unpredictable," said Yi, who will graduate from high school this year and is looking forward to starting the next chapter of his life.  
Born in Huaihua, Hunan province, in 2000, Yi first went on stage at the age of five.  
In 2013, Yi officially debuted in show business as a member of the boy band TFBoys, with co-members Wang Junkai and Wang Yuan.  
The band soon gained attention and went viral. TFBoys became one of the most popular boy bands in China and a pop sensation.  
Yi is also celebrated for his outstanding hip hop dancing skills. The number of his followers on Weibo, China's Twitter, exceeds 35 million.  
Even though he has been an early bloomer, Yi has always kept a down-to-earth attitude.  
"When I sing the song (Unpredictable), I imagine my future and I feel that any of my ambitions should be achieved step by step," he said.  
While many people still associate him with TFBoys' big hit Practicing Handbook of Youth, Yi has extended himself into other areas, especially philanthropy.  
In 2016, Yi was chosen by the China Green Foundation as envoy for their Poverty Alleviation in Ecosystem Project.  
In March 2017, Yi was named charity ambassador of the China Children and Teenagers' Fund, as part of their Musical Childhood Project to help poor children realize their musical potential.  
In May 2017, he was appointed Denmark's first tourism ambassador to China in conjunction with the Danish-Chinese Tourism Year.  
During his birthday concert on Nov 28, 2017, Yi announced the establishment of the Yi Yangqianxi Love Fund.  
The foundation's first phase will help raise $227,000 to support a charity for the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation that helps support more than 2,000 rural, "left-behind" children, whose parents have moved to urban areas to work.  
In 2017, Jackson was appointed The Great Wall Protection and Public Welfare Ambassador by the China Foundation for Cultural Heritage Conservation, becoming the first celebrity ever to hold the title.  
"I hope through my personal actions, I can encourage people who look on me as a role model to actively participate in philanthropy," said Yi, a teen with his feet firmly planted on the ground and his eyes gazing up into the starry night.

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