

Thanks to volunteers who help creative talent

By CLARISSA OON

ASPIRING singer-songwriter Alex Wang wants to be a star.

And if he succeeds, the 29-year-old will have a 32-member government committee to thank.

He and his buddies received \$50,000 as seed money for them to develop original Singapore musicals.

But yesterday, it was Minister of Information, Communications and the Arts Lee Boon Yang who thanked the committee members for giving their time to help groom talents like Mr Wang.

They are government policymakers and entrepreneurs who volunteered to sit on the ministry's committee which selects and funds creative projects.

This Creative Community Singapore (CCS) Partnership panel is among 41 Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (Mica) committees that advise and guide the ministry in formulating arts, cultural and media policies.

Yesterday, they were given special thanks by Dr Lee at a dinner he hosted for 500 guests at the National Museum.



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THEY MADE IT: Rising stars (from left) Amos Hong, 28; Alex Wang, 29; and Serene Yang, 24, performing at Mica's annual thank-you dinner for its committee members.

Drawn from all walks of life, they include the boss of the 77th Street chain of streetwear boutiques, Ms Elim Chew, who serves on the CCS Partnership panel, and leading jazz musician Jeremy Monteiro, who sits on the National Arts Council board.

Both were present to watch Mr Wang and two buddies perform two of his compositions from an upcoming musical that he is creating with six others.

Their project, called Beat-by-Beat, has already produced two musicals that had sold-out runs at the Esplanade last year - Believe, written by Mr Wang, and Georgette, written by emerging playwright Ng Yi-Sheng.

The economic value of such works

was noted by Dr Lee in his speech last night.

"In recent years, the creative sector has gained increasing attention as a significant economic driver," he said.

Mica committees, he said, "play critical roles in helping us to formulate more industry-oriented skills development programmes".

The ministry formed five new committees last year, including two advisory groups on Internet policy and regulatory issues, and one to develop creative businesses.

Their formation reflects new challenges faced by Mica in promoting new media as well as navigating its social and legal implications, said Dr Lee.