

Joelle Izon: Behind The Spotlight

by Anya Espina

Behind every captivating performance comes risk, discipline, and determination. For Joelle Izon, competing in both piano and singing during the Asia All Stars Festival was not just about aiming for gold—it was about breaking boundaries, embracing growth, and stepping forward with bravery. From exhausting late-night rehearsals to last-minute song changes, Joelle’s journey proves that behind the spotlight, true success lies in the hard work done long before the show even starts.

Although the Asia All Stars Festival was not Joelle’s first time competing internationally, her previous competition’s success of winning gold has made the pressure feel greater this time. With the weight of her past achievements on her shoulders, she felt a strong sense of capability—not just to others who had heightened expectations of her succeeding again, but to herself. “I knew I had to give even more of myself to meet or even exceed what I had achieved before.” she recalled. This pushed her to approach her preparations for the Asia All Stars Festival with increased focus and determination.

To handle the increased pressure, Joelle intensified her preparation and paid close attention to her well-being, ensuring that she avoids any sickness or anything that can harm her voice before the competition—a lesson learnt after a nosebleed she once experienced right before a vocal performance. Balancing piano and vocal practices demanded a great deal of her time, energy, and focus—preparing for two separate competitions. To access a grand piano, Joelle had to rent studios for consistency, revealing her determination. It was not easy practicing for two different talents and finding places to rent for the sake of practice, but for Joelle, it was necessary.

Juggling multiple demanding performances for Asia All Stars Festival was already a major challenge. Between her piano piece, solo, and group number, that did not stop Joelle from raising the bar even higher. For her group performance, Joelle sang “One Night Only” by Anika Noni Rose, Beyoncé, and Sharon Leal along with her fellow singers, showcasing not only her own voice but also her capability to blend and balance with other voices. As for her solo piece, instead of playing it safe, she took a bold risk by making a last-minute decision, switching from her original song to decidedly singing “And I Am Telling You” by Jennifer Hudson, a vocal piece known for its difficulty. This move required immense vocal control and sheer determination in her. Reflecting on her decision, she shared:

“I wanted to prove to myself that I could take on bigger challenges, like switching to a more difficult vocal piece at the last minute, and preparing for my piano performance as well.”

Taking on multiple categories demanded more than just technical skill—it required Joelle’s discipline, resilience, and an unshakeable mindset. Joelle’s decision to push herself meant she had to juggle multiple rehearsals of different categories, organize her time wisely, and, most of all, stay mentally composed through it all. Every choice she has made, from changing her song

last minute to arranging proper access to conducive practice spaces while traveling, reflects Joelle's desire to grow, not just win.

Despite Joelle's silver medal finish, the true value of her experience went beyond the awards. For her, the competition was a milestone in her personal growth—a chance to face bigger challenges, break boundaries, and develop greater confidence in her abilities. **“Maybe this wasn't my winning moment, but I believe that it's still coming.”** Joelle reflects, indicating her unwavering determination and optimism. Rather than letting the outcome define her, she believes that although the outcome was not the expectation she had in mind, she came out of the competition empowered, more motivated to keep pushing forward in her musical journey, no matter the results. The lessons from her journey and the risks she has taken strengthened her passion to improve and reach new heights beyond her limits.