



Ahmad Nahri (left) is jubilant over his win

Ahmad Nahri has talent

In a talent competition based on online voting, popularity and talent go hand in hand. The more votes you get, the higher your chance of moving forward in the contest.

Being a first-year English Language and Communications student at UCSD University, Ahmad Nahri knew that he would not have made it as a finalist of the UCSD's Got Talent 2009 competition without self-promotion.

"I am still so new at the university, and didn't know that many people, so it would have been difficult to garner enough votes," says Ahmad.

He attributes his success in making it to the top five to the video of his audition posted on the university's official YouTube channel (<http://www.ucsd.edu/my/youtube>).

"I am thankful for the chance to be in the top five, and I owe it all to UCSD University's Youtube," says the 21-year-old, who beat 14 contestants at the semi-finals to win the UCSD's Got Talent

2009 title.

Ahmad, who sang his trademark song — Jason Mraz's *Butterfly* — won RM1,000.

He plans to continue pursuing music as a minor.

Second place winner Nigerian Iliya Ibrahim, a Foundation in Architectural Studies major, performed a rap song he had written about the university and its students.

The top five also featured Malaysian Mass Communications student Celine Tan, Business Administration student Abigail from Nigeria and Indonesian Mass Communications student Lydia Octavia Yusmanto.

Abigail sang Kelly Clarkson's *Because of You*, while Lydia's rendition of Whitney Houston's *I Will Always Love You* was dedicated to her father.

Tan sang her own composition titled *Reality*.

All finalists jointly sang Michael Bolton's *Go the Distance* at the end of the talent show, which coincided with

the university's recent Hollywood-themed Prom Night.

They were judged by local celebrities Christien New, Lavin Seow and R&B singer and songwriter, Liang, who were impressed with the level of talent and professionalism each contestant had demonstrated.

Organised by UCSD University's Student Council, more than 35 students auditioned in the first round of the competition more than a month ago.

Fourteen finalists comprised students with a wide range of talents — from magicians and dancers to actors and singers — made it to the semi-finals picked by judges who were UCSD University's Contemporary Music Department acting head Juan Pablo De Zubiria Rueda, former television host Kevin Chong and former UCSD Student Council President Stephanie Liew.

The top five were then chosen by the public based on online votes via the university's website.



Participants of UCSD's Got Talent 2009



(From left) Judges Liang, Lavin Seow and Christien New