In this issue, we take a look at a few facets of Hong Kong’s pop culture, and celebrate the HKU alumni who have played important roles in shaping the development of this distinctive form of cultural expression. These are individuals who have personified Hong Kong’s robust, never-say-die spirit, and who have stepped into the spotlight to tell their stories their way. Few thought of leaving behind legacies; they simply felt they had something worth sharing, and they told it straight from the heart. Not surprisingly, along the way they captured our hearts as well.
Pop music has undergone a localisation process over the past three decades. Mandarin songs once dominated the market but in the early 1970s, Sam Hui (BA 1971) played a critical role in making Cantopop the language of local pop music. He sang his first Cantonese song – comparing experiences in America with Hong Kong – in the popular TV programme "Sam" hosted by himself and his brother Michael Hui. Not only did the song signal the start of Cantopop, it also prompted a local pop-song culture on the mainland and in Southeast Asia. His song "Games Gamblers Play" became the first Chinese song played on BBC radio in Britain. Sam's songs and movies expressed identity with, and love for, Hong Kong, and also voiced the frustrations and social discontent of the working class.

He made history in 1983 by holding the first solo pop concert in the Hong Kong Coliseum. He retired in 1992, having earned the venerable title of "God of Cantopop." Had he not retired, Sam's role as the voice of the working class would have provided a much needed emotional outlet in the present economic climate for the depressed working class.

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Sam has not been in the public eye for 12 years. The recent fervour he excited began with a 26-concert comeback in June, July and August. For the August run of these concerts, over 40,000 tickets were sold out in 9 hours, and fans old and young are still clamouring for more. He is famous for his happy, cheerful songs, songs for the weary labourers, the forgotten workers and people in the streets. His songs invoke the resilient spirit of Hong Kong, the passion and the pride, and encouraged people when times were tough in the 70s and 80s, and now.

Thank You for the Music
流行音乐在过去的三十年中发生了一定程度的本地化。从1970年代开始，香港的流行音乐逐渐成为一种重要的文化表达形式，并在国内外产生了深远的影响。其中，由Sam Hui（1941年）创作并演唱的歌曲《四季常青》被誉为香港流行音乐的里程碑之一。这首歌曲不仅在音乐上取得了巨大成功，而且在社会和文化层面也产生了深远影响。

歌声的起源

1970年代初期，香港的流行音乐市场主要以粤语歌曲为主，而英文歌曲则相对较少。然而，随着社会的变迁和文化的发展，香港的流行音乐逐渐开始融入更多的本地元素，形成了一种独特的香港流行音乐风格，即“Cantopop”。

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歌声的发展

1970年代末期，香港的流行音乐市场开始出现了一些新的变化。一方面，香港的流行音乐开始更多地借鉴西方的流行音乐元素，另一方面，香港的流行音乐也开始更多地融合本地的传统文化元素。这种变化在一定程度上推动了香港的流行音乐市场的发展，使得香港的流行音乐在国际上也逐渐获得了更多的认可。

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歌声的影响

香港的流行音乐在国际上也逐渐获得了更多的认可。这种变化在一定程度上推动了香港的流行音乐市场的发展，使得香港的流行音乐在国际上也逐渐获得了更多的认可。
By the 1980s, Cantonese songs had replaced Mandarin songs as the pop music of choice in Hong Kong. As Cantonese television drama series became popular, the songs they featured also gained popularity. Michael Ka Leung Wai-man

(BA 1963; MPhil 1982; PhD 2003), an architect, was a popular Cantonese singer at the time. The lyrics and melodies of many of his songs (such as

世界是我们的家

,大地感谢

,同甘共苦

), which dealt sensitively with the socio-political changes of the 1970s and 1980s. Young directors like Ann Hui (BA 1969; MA 1973) made films with a realistic sensibility and language of generations of Hong Kong people.

## Visionary Women

MOVIES have long been viewed as commercial ventures in Hong Kong. Only over the last ten years have they been widely accepted as a cultural contribution, shaping local identity and consciousness. After a period of domination by Mandarin movies produced by the Shaw Brothers (later MP & GI) films, Cantonese movies began to find a place in Hong Kong as early as the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s.

In the 1960s, Maggie Cheung Man-yuk (BA 1984), a movie actress turned screenwriter, is another example of literati's involvement in

scripts apart from Eileen Chang (alias Qin Yu or Qin Yifu)

, who wrote numerous famous tunes (1939-1941). Her adaptation

of Eileen Chang's (1939-1941) novel

A Bright Star, Moon and Sun

for MP & GI films in 1987, 1989 and 1991 are considered a major milestone in Hong Kong film history.

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Good lyrics are an essential ingredient of Cantonese songs and Wong Jim is a household name. He was very prolific in the 1970s and 1980s, producing popular advertising jingles and even more popular TV theme songs. He has worked in advertising, in television as a talk show host, radio and films. His PhD thesis explored the rise and decline of cantonpop. In short, Wong Jim is a household name. A multi-talented icon, Wong Jim is also admired for his lyrics.

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As a director of sufficient stature to deal with stories of social upheaval and distress. Subsequent films Love in a Fallen City (1980) and Starry is the Night (1981) captured the mood of the 1930s and 1940s and the social unrest of the 1960s and firmly established her directing style.

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Other alumni who have played a part in Hong Kong's film culture include Joan Teng (known as "Mao Mei"), Kwok Siu-leung (BA 1989, Ann Allason Bridge waiter BSc 1990), Valerie Chow (BA 1993), Crystal Kwok (MA 1990, Nicola Cheung (LLB 1997) and Celia Siu (BA 1997).
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Wong Jim also writes typical Hong Kong-style “popular literature.” Nicknamed “Ghost Talent” (天才鬼才) for his ingenuity and “Indecent Jim” (下流才子) for his irreverent jokes, he has written more than 30 paperbacks on a variety of subjects, ranging from sex to Cantoneses opera. He has combined his literary talent with commercial viability, producing a popular mix of writing that can at times be very vulgar and at times very highbrow.

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James Yuen (BA 1986) and Joe Ma (BA 1987) are two recent prolific film directors and screenwriters. James has written or co-written 27 movies in the period between 1989 and 1997 (e.g. *He’s a Woman, She’s a Man*, *Twenty Something*), and his debut as a director was 1997’s *The Wedding Days*, a romantic comedy. Many of these scripts depict younger people and their relationships in modern-day Hong Kong. Joe Ma has contributed to more than 25 scripts since 1987 and directed over a dozen films since 1992. Most of Joe’s films are light romantic comedies about the twenty-something generation, and are often box office hits (e.g. *Feel 100%*, *Lawyers, Lawyers*, *The Golden Girls*).

Mabel and Alex are now working on several projects in Beijing. One is a period film called *The Legend of Ah Toy* (which is about the first Chinese prostitute in America in the 1860s during the construction of the railroads). They are also producing and directing a costume TV drama set at the beginning of the Qing Dynasty. Next year, they will be involved in the writing and directing of a multimedia musical to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of motion pictures in China.

Clara Law (BA 1976) took a second degree in film making at the National Film School in Britain. The movie she made in her final year of study – *They Say the Moon is Fuller Here* – won the Silver Plaque award at the 1985 Chicago Film Festival. Clara was heavily influenced by French New Wave cinema and earned herself cult status. She also won a Golden Leopard award at the 1992 Locarno International Film Festival for *Autumn Moon*.

Alex Fong (BBA graduating in 2004) is now also known as an upcoming pop singer with a healthy image. He is representing Hong Kong as one of the deliverers of the torch for the Olympics in Greece.

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Directors-screenwriter Mabel Cheung and producer-screenwriter partner Alex Law (BA 1973) have collected awards since their New York University final year project The Illegal Immigrant (非法移民), which earned Mabel the Best Director prize at the Hong Kong Films Award in 1985. Alex won Best Screenplay at the Award two years later for the love story, An Autumn’s Tale (秋天的童话). The pair also earned local and overseas awards for the movies The Soong Sisters (宋氏三姐妹) and City of Glass (玻璃之城), the latter set against a backdrop of HKU and its students in the 1970s. Alex also directed the movie Painted Faces (塗鴉), which won seven Golden Horse Awards and an award at the Chicago International Film Festival.

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### Screening the Next Generation

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## Music of Next Generation

After having found fame for his swimming records in Hong Kong, Alex Fong (BA 2004) is now also known as an upcoming pop singer with a healthy image. He is representing Hong Kong as one of the deliverers of the torch for the Olympics in Greece.

## Pioneering DJs

Chau Pui-hing (BSc 1971), now Director of Broadcasting, and Raymond Ng Sek-fai (BA 1993) hosting the television edition, began as DJs for Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK). As a DJ, Tu-air-hsing produced pop music programmes with Raymond, and launched the pop music channel, Radio 2.

Stephen Chan (BA 1981, second right) of the Drama Lab generation, now General Manager at TVB, has hosted a variety of programmes under the name. 

Joe Chen Yum (BA 1995; MPhil 2001), a popular DJ in the late 1960s and now a programme host and columnist, wrote his thesis on the history of radio broadcasting. Chen is regarded as the forerunner in establishing a local DJ culture. Currently, he also operates a restaurant, "JC at 65" in Central.

Elvin Wong (MPhil 1997), a DJ and columnist, is also a critic on pop-music culture.
The 1980s saw the emergence of professional theatre groups. Though never formally trained in drama, secondary school teacher Raymond To 卢立信 (BA 1971) soon became the leading playwright in Hong Kong. He started a trend that changed stage performances from non-profit-making cultural activities into popular and profitable Broadway-style shows, and crossed over into film.

His play, I have a Date with Spring 我和春天有个约会 (CertEd 1981), proved that theatre could and should belong to the wider public. After several successful re-runs at the government-subsidized HKRT, it was made into a film in 1994 by Springtime Productions, a commercial enterprise, winning the Hong Kong Film Award for Best Screenplay and popularising the play and the HKRT cast. It was then re-presented on stage by Spring-Time Production with a movie/pop star cast for commercial runs, luring movie-goers into the theatre. Its director, Ko Tin-lung 高天 Lung, who drew about 140,000 in 1999, including tourists from the region and returning Hong Kong emigrants fans. He won the Golden Horse Film Award (1997) for the film The Legend of the Mad Phoenix (疯癫十三太保), which also won a second Hong Kong Film Award (1998); and received the Bronze Bauhinia (BBS) in 1999. His film directing debut was in 2001, directing Forever and Ever 永远和你 (1997), adapted from another HKRT play he wrote. The work of Raymond To and Ko Tin-lung portray love in its many splendid forms, celebrate the traditional virtues of kindness and benevolence, those eternal values of dignity and integrity, help define that sensibility which we call Hong Kong.

More Stories...

You'll find more stories about HKU graduates in "Growing with Hong Kong". This 2002 publication features stories about graduates in various areas of culture, education, law, medicine, business and the civil service. Purchase your own copy online at www.hku.hk/alumni/profile, or at the University Bookstore and other major bookstores in town today.

After a performance, outside the Drama Lab

Jack Lowcock (BA 1961; MA 1966) was just 65 when he died in May this year. Several people I’ve talked to since then have said not only how much they miss him, but that he seemed to stand for an older Hong Kong, and an older Hong Kong University - a more enjoyable and a more forgiving place and time. That may be so, but in other ways I have felt that Jack was always ahead of us and we have yet to catch up with him.

He was indeed a man of Hong Kong, coming from a family that is part of many Hong Kong traditions and histories, and dedicating his life to education and culture in this city. Education and culture are boring words, but they came to a warm and vivid life in Jack, a man who was quite incapable of doing anything impersonal. Perhaps it all began with a dramatic babyhood, as a refugee during the Second World War. Later Diocesan Boys’ School and Hong Kong University gave him his training, but the inspiration was inward and intuitive. After a spell at Stanford, he came back to Hong Kong to teach in the University. For generations of students, he is one of the most vivid memories of their student days, in the lecture room or the drama laboratory. He had already embarked on his other career as a drama producer, and here his achievements were collaborative and very important indeed, not only in terms of artistic creation, but of seeds planted in the mind and spirit of the young people who worked with him, and of the community to whose life he contributed vitally.

More than most, his life was all of one piece. For him his family came first, but I would guess that his family, his friends, his students all encountered the same qualities in him - a brilliant inventiveness, a gift for sympathy, humour, and a certain melancholy, a sometimes ruthless knack of bringing out the best in people. We could add his vivid enthusiasms, a surprising attention to detail, his love of good talk, an often hair-raising frankness, especially after dark. He couldn’t see any point in teaching unless it was connected with feeling (the rest was literature), so all his work really was dramatic. Meanwhile he was not above creating and relishing drama in his own life. His teaching was continuous with his friendships - so many of his former students became his good friends - and both could be theatrical. On a famous occasion he was heard to declare loudly and often that he was not an academic. Unfortunately, this was in the presence of the then Vice-Chancellor. But it was true. Though he was a wonderful teacher, there was nothing in him of the academic in the cloistered and theoretical sense. He was too much of a humanist. In more ways than one, he is irreplaceable.

The death of someone we love makes us feel, against all the evidence, that the world is getting emptier. It was a feeling that, as a lifelong and profound student of Samuel Beckett, Jack knew all about. But he also shared, with Beckett, the courage of facing up to things to the end. The end is in the beginning and yet you go on. Those of us who knew Jack Lowcock have every reason to feel sorry for ourselves, but no reason to feel sorry for him, a man remembered with love by so many people.

A Tribute by Dr Douglas Kerr

Associate Professor, Department of English

Jack Lowcock and students.