

## MUSIC



Andy Chung (left) with his late father John, who performed his own Hakka songs. Photo: SMP Pictures

## To Scottish folk singing via Hakka and Sam Hui

As Andy Chung works on his seventh album he reflects on his Chinese roots and influences

**John Carney**  
john.carney@scmp.com

A Chinese-Scottish folk singer has described how his Hong Kong father's love of traditional Hakka folk songs set him on the road to success.

Andy Chung is a popular Scottish folk singer based in Edinburgh. He was born in Kirkcaldy, Scotland, but his parents originally came from Hong Kong.

Chung's father, John, was part of the Hakka community living in Sai Kung, where the language is frequently spoken.

But he emigrated to Kirkcaldy in his early 20s and ran a restaurant there before retiring.

Hakka is one of the major Chinese dialects, and is spoken natively by the Hakka people in southern China, mainly in Guangdong.

There is a big Chinese community in Scotland overall, but within that, there is a large Hakka community in Dundee and Fife.

"When weddings were taking place or there was some celebration in the restaurant, my dad

would get up and sing a Hakka song," Chung, 48, said.

"He'd write a song for the bride and groom in Hakka. When he retired, he had the time to write his own Hakka songs. The songs were about daily life, but because of the dialect certain things were also very funny."

John Chung died two years ago at the age of 73. Chung said he didn't sing the Hakka songs at all when he lived in Hong Kong, and only after emigrating did he become more aware of his heritage.

He is currently working on his new album, which will be out in September. It will be the seventh album he has released.

"My father's songs certainly influenced me. I was born in Scotland so I mainly sing Scottish and Irish folk songs, but I will occasionally do a Chinese set of songs in Hakka," Chung said.

"There are so many things that are comparable between Scottish folk music and Hakka folk music. Many of the Hakka songs my father sang were written by him. Traditionally they can be made up on the spot and be very impromptu."

Another Chinese musical influence was Hong Kong Canto-pop musician Sam Hui.

He is credited with popularising Canto-pop both with the infusion of Western-style music and using popular, street Cantonese jargon in his lyrics. Hui is considered by some to be the first major superstar of Canto-pop.

"I grew up listening to Sam Hui in our house. He was a huge star in the 1970s," he said.



**Many things are comparable between Scottish and Hakka folk music**

ANDY CHUNG, FOLK SINGER