

# Scales and Chords

*Not only masters of measurements, surveyors can also have vibrant voices, dizzying dynamics and perfect pitch, reveal Sr Stephanie Au and Sr W C Vincent Lim.*

Kit M Yip



Sr W C Vincent Lim (L) and Sr Stephanie Au (R) share their passion in music and singing.

Photo: SCMP and interviewees

*“We try out different themes every year, from integrating choral speaking with singing, composing new storylines for our musicals, using pieces from *Cats* and *Les Misérables*, to composing our own songs.”*

Sr Stephanie Au, Assistant Project Manager at building surveying consultant Freevision, has been a building surveyor for five years. She has been a musician, however, for much longer. Picking up her first instrument at the age of five, she later progressed to grade eight in piano and grade seven in violin. She was also a member of the acclaimed Good Hope School Choir during her primary and secondary years. A duet champion in the music festival held by the Hong Kong Schools Music and Speech Association (HKSMSA), she retained her passion for singing throughout her busiest academic years, even when preparing for public examinations and university entrance.

Despite Au's impressive portfolio, for her, music is not about certificates or competitions; it is about enjoyment and community involvement. While Christmas carolling a few years ago, she and her music-loving friends decided to found *Festive Chamber* – a choir that holds annual charity concerts for the needy, including the Single Parents Association and the Hereditary Breast Cancer Family Registry. The group, now a registered company, hopes to become a non-profit organisation to continue their philanthropic efforts.

“We aim to deliver a message of love and happiness through music, which is also what our name, *Festive Chamber*, suggests,” Au says. The choir of 60 members runs like a social enterprise. They sing carols at hotels during Christmas to subsidise the production costs of their annual charity concert, which is also supported by donors' contributions. All revenue generated from ticket sales for the annual concert goes directly to the beneficiary.

As an alto and concert producer, Au busies herself all year round with weekly rehearsals and coordination of activities. “We basically run everything on our own. To save handling fees, for instance, we do our own promotions

and ticketing without going through the city's collective ticketing system. The choir is conducted by our honorary adviser.”

In one of their many initiatives, *Festive Chamber* is invited to conduct extra-curricular singing sessions at a primary school in Tin Shui Wai by the Council of Social Service. “A member of our group, who is also a music teacher by profession, volunteers to bring joy to the kids through music,” Au says.

Apart from charity work, the mostly-female choir uses the group as an opportunity to experiment musically. “We try out different themes every year, from integrating choral speaking with singing, composing new storylines for our musicals, using pieces from *Cats* and *Les Misérables*, to composing our own songs.”

For Sr W C Vincent Lim, Deputy Project Manager in the Special Projects Department at Sun Hung Kai, the musical side of his life also started long before his decade-old surveying career. Little do Lim's colleagues know that their low-profile counterpart is a singer who once won the *South China Morning Post's* Student Musician of the Year award at age 17. Playing piano from the tender age of four, and joining the reputable school choir at St Paul's Co-educational College, Lim achieved advanced certificates in piano and singing. He was also a baritone solo champion and two-time scholarship recipient at the HKSMSA's music festival.

As a surveyor, he continues to sing as a co-founder of *I Cantanti*, a group of eight singers specialising in traditional a capella chamber singing. “*I Cantanti* means ‘the singers’ in Italian,” Lim says. “We do it for the enjoyment of music, with the hope that others enjoy it too.” With members coming from the surveying, legal, medical and musical professions, they make time to come together for rehearsals and performances despite their tight schedules.

# LIFE ON ALL LEVELS

*“We need to listen to each other’s voices, pay attention to timing, and note whether the chords blend harmoniously. It is all group work.”*

“We are probably one of the few, if not the only, a capella group in Hong Kong with a focus on music from the baroque period to the classical period,” Lim says. “From Bach to Brahms, we mostly stick to classical music, since our strongest motivation is singing pieces we enjoy.” He adds that other a capella groups in the region mainly focus on jazz and pop, which appeal to a larger audience.

*I Cantanti* will be celebrating its 10th anniversary next year with a major performance. The group has already performed at many well-known classical music venues in the past decade, including City Hall and St John’s Cathedral.

Both Lim and Au believe that music aids their work as surveyors. “When we sing a capella, which is without accompanying music or a conductor, collaboration is key,” Lim says. “We need to listen to each other’s voices, pay attention to timing, and note whether the chords blend harmoniously. It is all group work. Far-fetched as it seems, this bears a resemblance to my job in project management and as a lead consultant; we need to collaborate with one another.”

Au believes that singing in public helps build self-confidence, which is essential not only during presentations and client meetings, but in her day-to-day consultancy work as a surveyor.

As such, despite their heavy workload, the two surveyors continue to make time for music. “We need music for relaxation, entertainment and work-life balance,” Lim says.



*Festive Chamber’s Charity Concert 2015 - World of Love*

Au explains that singing helped her study efforts. “I once stopped going to rehearsals when preparing for a surveyors’ professional examination, only to discover two months later that I could study and rest more effectively when I continued singing. I ended up resuming my practice and participating in a concert which took place just one week after the examination.” Needless to say, Au passed the examination with flying colours.

The singer-surveyors are thankful that their families and colleagues are supportive of their singing. “As the producer of charity concerts, I have to inform my friends, boss and colleagues about the concerts for fundraising purposes,” says Au, who will be preparing her choir’s upcoming concert at Baptist University to raise funds for the Faith in Love Foundation. “I am glad that my boss is most supportive, and that my hobby does not have any adverse effects on my career.”

*The article is published courtesy of Classified Post.*



*Concert of I Cantanti 2009*

「我們每年都會嘗試不同主題，包括融合集體朗誦與歌唱、為音樂劇編撰新故事，以及利用《貓》及《悲慘世界》的音樂創作歌曲等。」

# 音階與和弦

區琬靈和林蔚晴的故事讓我們明白，除了精通業務之外，測量師亦能夠擁有曼妙聲線、令人著迷的唱腔和完美音準。

Kit M Yip

富匯測量師有限公司助理項目經理區琬靈測量師是位建築測量師，從業已有五年，而她作為一名音樂人的資歷，卻遠不止五年。她自五歲開始學習第一種樂器，後來更考取鋼琴八級及小提琴七級證書。中小學期間，她加入久負盛名的香港德望學校合唱團，並榮獲香港學校音樂及朗誦協會音樂節二重唱冠軍。在學業最為繁忙的幾年，甚至是在準備公開考試和大學入學考試期間，區琬靈對歌唱的熱情絲毫未減。

儘管在音樂方面取得無數驕人成績，但對於區琬靈而言，音樂其實無關證書或比賽，更重要的是音樂帶來的歡樂和參與社區活動的機會。幾年前，在參與聖誕頌歌表演時，區琬靈和其他熱愛音樂的朋友決定共同組建「菁菁雅頌」合唱團 (Festive Chamber)。合唱團與香港單親協會、香港遺傳性乳癌家族資料庫等機構合作，舉辦年度慈善音樂會，為有需要人士籌款。目前，合唱團已成為註冊公司，冀藉此轉為非牟利機構，繼續為慈善出一份力。

區琬靈表示：「我們希望透過音樂傳達愛和幸福，而這也是『菁菁雅頌』這個名稱的涵義。」合唱團有60名成員，運作方式與社會企業類似。聖誕節期間，合唱團在酒店演唱聖誕頌歌，所得收入連同捐款人善款，皆用於舉辦年度慈善音樂會。音樂會的全部售票收入，均會直接捐予受惠機構。

作為女低音和音樂會監製，無論寒暑，區琬靈一直堅持進行每週排練和籌辦活動。她表示：「事無巨細，我們都親力親為，例如，為了節省手續費，我們沒有採用香港的統一售票系統，而是自行宣傳和售票。我們亦邀得我們的榮譽顧問擔任合唱團的指揮。」

合唱團活動眾多。例如，「菁菁雅頌」合唱團應香港社會服務聯會之邀，到天水圍某小學組織課餘歌唱活動。區琬靈說：「我們當中一名任職音樂教師的團員，義務去用音樂為小朋友們帶來歡樂。」

合唱團團員以女性居多。除慈善工作外，團員們還會在音樂方面進行各種嘗試。「我們每年都會嘗試不同主題，包括融合集體朗誦與歌唱、為音樂劇編撰新故事，以及利用《貓》及《悲慘世界》的音樂創作歌曲等。」

新鴻基地產特別發展部副項目經理林蔚晴測量師從業十年，而成為測量師之前，他早已與音樂結緣。林蔚晴為人低調，他的同事對他參與無伴奏合唱知之甚少。林蔚晴四歲便開始學彈鋼琴，及後加入

知名的聖保羅男女中學合唱團，17歲時曾獲頒授《南華早報》「年度學生音樂家」(Student Musician of the Year) 獎項。林蔚晴持有鋼琴和歌唱方面的高級證書，亦曾奪得男中音獨唱冠軍，並兩度榮獲香港學校音樂及朗誦協會音樂節的獎學金。

成為測量師後，林蔚晴繼續投入其歌唱活動。他和友人共同成立的I Cantanti 八人合唱團，主要進行傳統室內無伴奏合唱。林蔚晴說：「在意大利語中，I Cantanti 意為『歌手』。我們成立樂團，是為了享受音樂，同時亦希望其他人能夠藉此享受音樂帶來的歡樂。」樂團成員來自測量、法律、醫療及音樂等各行各業，大家都努力在百忙之中抽暇一起排練和表演。

林蔚晴表示：「我們主要演唱巴洛克時期至古典時期的樂曲，這在香港的無伴奏合唱團中並不多見，我們可能是唯一一個。從巴赫到布拉姆斯，我們專注於古典音樂，因為演唱自己喜歡的作品是我們的最大動力。」他補充道，香港的其他無伴奏合唱團大多演唱更受大眾歡迎的爵士樂和流行樂。

明年，I Cantanti 將舉辦一場重要表演，慶賀樂團成立十週年。自成立以來，樂團曾在多個知名的古典音樂場館演出，包括香港大會堂及聖約翰座堂等。

林蔚晴和區琬靈一致認為，音樂對他們的測量工作有所幫助。林蔚晴表示：「在無伴奏合唱過程中，沒有伴奏或指揮，配合是關鍵。我們需要聆聽其他人的聲音，注意掌握節奏，同時留意和弦是否和諧融合。這一切都離不開團隊合作。雖然看似牽強，但這其實和我的工作有相似之處。作為項目經理和首席顧問，與多方合作自然必不可少。」

區琬靈認為，公開演唱有助增強自信，這對做簡報、與客戶會面，乃至日常的測量諮詢工作，都大有裨益。

儘管工作繁忙，但兩位測量師都會盡量安排時間唱歌。林蔚晴說：「我們需要音樂來幫助我們放鬆、娛樂並達致工作生活平衡」。

區琬靈表示，唱歌對她的學業亦有助益。「我曾經因為準備測量師專業考試而缺席排練，但兩個月後我便發現，如果繼續唱歌，我的學習和休息效率會更高。最後，我恢復練習，並參加了考試後一周舉辦的音樂會。」當然，區琬靈在考試中取得了優異成績。

同時身為歌手的兩位測量師，對家人和同事的支持心存感激。區琬靈正在籌備合唱團即將在浸會大學舉辦的音樂會，為「相信愛基金」籌款。她說：「我是慈善音樂會的監製，為籌集更多善款，我必須向朋友、老闆和同事宣傳這場音樂會。感謝老闆的鼎力支持，亦很慶幸我的愛好並未為自己的職業帶來任何不利影響。」

本文由《Classified Post》撰文。



區琬靈測量師 (左) 和林蔚晴測量師 (右) 同樣熱愛音樂和合唱藝術。

「我們需要聆聽其他人的聲音，注意掌握節奏，同時留意和弦是否和諧融合。這一切都離不開團隊合作。」