Selling out the indie music? : re-examining the independence of Hong Kong indie music in the early 21st century

Pui Yee Leung
Hong Kong Baptist University

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Selling Out the Indie Music?

Re-examining the Independence of Hong Kong Indie Music

in the Early 21st Century

LEUNG Pui Yee

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Philosophy

Principal Supervisors: Prof CHU Stephen Y W, Dr LEE Amy W S

Hong Kong Baptist University

December 2014
Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work which has been done after registration for the degree of MPhil at Hong Kong Baptist University, and has not been previously included in a thesis or dissertation submitted to this or any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

Signature: ______________________
Date: December 2014
Abstract

The rebellious spirit generated by the 1970s punk movement in the UK and the US influenced many local Hong Kong indie bands. However, in the early part of the 21st century, local indie music has created different kinds of relationship with the mainstream and commercial fields, which seem to have the potential to destroy the original meaning of indie music. The aims of this research were therefore to re-examine the independence of indie music in the early 21st century; to understand the role played by indie music and artists within the local music scene; to describe the “authenticity” of indie music, and to suggest how to bring about a better and more sustainable development for these kinds of “independent” and grassroots organizations. In response to these research aims, a case study was conducted of four local indie labels: 89268, Redline Music, Harbour Records and Music is Free Foundation (M.I.F.F.), by applying a marketing mix of the 4 “P”s—promotion, place, price and product—in order to investigate the business practices of these indie labels and to present a more comprehensive picture of Hong Kong indie music. Although indie music has become no longer purely “indy/independent”, it is also believed that the core values of indie music are being repackaged. Moreover, an interdependent relationship between indie music and commerce and/or the mainstream has been created. This interdependence is not necessarily leading to the end of indie, but has the potential to create more opportunities and spaces for the development of indie music.
Acknowledgement

“Don’t lose hope. When it gets darkest the stars come out.”—Author Unknown

In the summer of 2012, nine months after the end of my studentship, I met Prof Stephen Chu, who had been my previous Principal Supervisor. At that time, he encouraged me to continue my research according to my own ideas. While we were talking, Dr Amy Lee, my current Principal Supervisor, walked between us. She showed me her support by putting her hand on my shoulder. I could feel the positive energy they were giving to me. Becoming a Humanities student was one of the best opportunities of my life. Because of the many amazing people I have met there, I always feel I am going home every time I go back to the Humanities Department. Thank you Prof Chu, Dr Amy Lee, our secretary Ms Floria Ng, all teachers and classmates, for your guidance, tolerance and support.

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- Mr Yuen Chi Chung (Renowned Indie Music Critic and Music Curator)
– Dr Wong Chi Chung (Renowned DJ, Scholar of Cultural Studies and Music Curator)
– Mr Hon Ka Chun (Founder of Local Indie Label 89268)
– InLove (Local Indie Band with 89268)
– Mr Adrian Tsing, Ms Gloria Tang and Ms Jennifer Chiang (Members of M.I.F.F.)
– Mr Jesper Chan (Director of Redline Music) and Peri M (Indie Band with Redline Music)
– Mr Lenny Guo (Core Member of Blackbird)
– Mr Terry Wong (Director of Black Market Music Production and a Former A&R Manager of 89268)

Special thanks go to my cousin Kion Chan. This research would not have been possible if I had not been attracted by his design of the poster for the “Come Out and Play” concert, organized by 89268 in 2005. This was the first indie show I had attended in my life. I am still a big fan of his great designs.

Thank you my dad and mom, for your unconditional love and the immense amount of trust you put in me. I always feel lucky to have you as my parents and I am so proud to be your daughter.

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I dedicate this work to all my “stars”.

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Introduction: Situating Hong Kong Indie Music

“Hong Kong has no music scene, only an entertainment scene\(^1\)”, said Wong Ka Kui, a renowned leader of the Hong Kong band, Beyond. This has become a famous quote and reflects some of the reality of the past and current music scene in Hong Kong, in that over the past few decades, music has become subordinate to the music scene. Generally, major labels and mass audiences have regarded music as a form of entertainment, but have not treated music seriously as an art form. This situation has deteriorated over the past few decades as the overall number of record sales in the world has decreased. In order to compensate for the loss of income owing to decreasing record sales, major labels have divided the career of an artist into four categories: 1) artist management; 2) concerts; 3) films, and 4) records, listed in order of importance with regard to generating revenue. The ratio of the combination of items 1, 2 and 3 to item 4 is 70:30 (Wong Chi Chung, 2010: 295)\(^2\). This shows that major labels have been putting less time and effort into music production.

However, there are groups of musicians and participants, known as “indie” (an abbreviation for “independent music”), who work independently of the mainstream, and who always put music as the first priority. They continue to exist and play different roles in order to give support to the local music scene whenever there are ups and downs in the mainstream music scene. The first generation of

\(^1\) The original quote is 「香港沒有樂壇，只有娛樂圈」. Wong Ka Kui said this on a TV programme called “Let the Rainbow Live” (《活出彩虹》). Many reference materials in this study are in Chinese, such as the name of this TV programme, names of some Chinese and Taiwanese authors and publications, which don’t have official English translations. Therefore, my own translations of terms and names will be underlined for easy reference.

\(^2\) The total proportion of items 1, 2 and 3 to item 4 of some top artists like Joey Yung is 80:20 (Wong Chi Chung, 2010: 295).
Hong Kong indie bands, including Blackbird (黑鳥) and Beyond, appeared between the late 1970s and early 1980s. Blackbird and Beyond represent two extreme cases of indie music. Some indie bands (like Blackbird) have appeared to be more rebellious, while others (such as Beyond) have demonstrated more friendly attitudes towards the mainstream. Furthermore, in the early 21st century, indie artists have created different kinds of relationship with the mainstream and commercial fields, and are seeking more spaces where they can co-exist with the mainstream. No matter what approaches indie practitioners have adopted, it is believed that the “indie spirit” has never been lost. Instead, the “indie” concept is being re-packaged in different forms.

Indie music has not just been situated on the periphery of the mainstream music scene, but has also played an insignificant role in the local arts field. The Hong Kong government has seldom given support to indie music, as it has regarded indie as a kind of commercial music (Chu interview). However, indie music, which is always less commercial than mainstream pop music, does need some support from government. Indie music is usually excluded by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (ADC), a unique and official funding body that gives support to small to medium sized arts groups or individual artists in Hong Kong. There have been some unfavourable assessments of indie music, for various reasons; for instance, the ADC assessors are professional music practitioners with Western and Chinese institutional musical backgrounds, and thus may be at too much of a distance to understand the non-institutional indie music. In addition to

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3 As an Arts Support Officer of the music team at the ADC from November 2008 to December 2009, I understand the difficult situation current indie music occupies in the funding system. During my service at ADC, there were only two groups dealing with non-classical music projects which could obtain financial support from the ADC. The first of these was SIU2 from Flower Music, and the second was Kung Chi Shing’s Street Music Concert Series. SIU2 is a band
having less financial support, some policies, such as the “Policy of Revitalizing Industrial Buildings”, launched in 2009, have diminished the living space for indie music in industrial buildings⁴.

Lacking sufficient governmental support, indie labels in this early part of the 21st century have become no longer purely “indie/independent”; rather, they are interdependent on commerce and/or the mainstream. This interdependence is not necessarily leading to the end of indie, but has the potential to bring about more opportunities and spaces for the development of indie music. It confirms David Hesmondhalgh’s suggestion that the cultural industries, since indie is part of the cultural industries, are in a state of negotiation, conflict and struggle (Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 170).

The aims of this research, therefore, are as follows:

1. to re-examine the independence of indie music in this early part of the 21st century;
2. to understand the role played by indie music and artists within the local music scene;
3. to describe the “authenticity” of indie music;
4. to suggest how to bring about a better and more sustainable development for that features a Chinese musical instrument, the zheng, in their music. The aim of the Street Music Series is to provide platforms for non-commercial music, including indie music, experimental music and classical music. However, there is a similarity between the creators of SIU2 and Flower Music, Ng Cheuk Yin, and the organizer of the Street Music Concert Series, Kung Chi Shing, which is their strong institutional classical music background. Ng Cheuk Yin later joined the ADC as an assessor and examiner. Kung Chi Shing is a renowned music event organizer who has experience in helping organize governmental music events. Both have a considerable reputation in the arts scene, and it is thus easier for them to obtain financial support from an institutionalized funding body.

⁴ The negative impacts of the “Policy of Revitalizing Industrial Buildings” are discussed in chapter three.
these kinds of “independent” and grassroots organizations.

Rather than focusing on individual artists and bands, I have chosen four indie labels as the case studies for this research, since indie labels can provide more organized and centralized platforms for giving more “noise” and/or “voice” to the music scene. Their influence is more obvious and more powerful than that of individual artists and bands.

With regard to the selection of indie labels, labels which are closely and clearly linked with the mainstream were not chosen for this research. Labels like People Mountain People Sea and LYFE Music, established by Wong Yiu Ming, Anthony, in 1999 and Chet Lam in 2006 respectively, for example, are not included in this study because they can get more recognition and exposure by taking part in the mainstream. They provide the music scene with more diverse music and can have a direct influence on the scene. It should be a bit easier for them to survive, compared with the smaller and more “independent” labels. It is therefore these less known, more independent and smaller indie labels that are the main subject of this research.

The indie labels chosen in this research are 89268, Redline Music, Harbour Records and Music is Free Foundation (M.I.F.F.). These labels are representative of the Hong Kong indie music scene in the early 21st century.

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5 Official website of People Mountain People Sea: [http://www.peoplemountainpeoplesea.com/profile_index.htm](http://www.peoplemountainpeoplesea.com/profile_index.htm) and official website of LYFE Music: [http://www.chetlam.com/about.php](http://www.chetlam.com/about.php) 23 September 2013. Mainstream artists, including Leslie Cheung, Faye Wong, Andy Hui, Miriam Yeung, Sammi Cheng, Nicholas Tse, Eason Chan, Sun Yan Zi Stephanie, Elva Xiao and Gigi Leung, have worked with these two labels.
89268 successfully acted as a centralized platform for indie music in the mid- to late 2000s by organizing regular indie shows. It has also provided more possibilities for indie music by creating stylish images and establishing a variety of arts and commercial collaborations. Redline Music has established its own media magazine, called Re:pect Magazine, with the aim of diverting resources from the mainstream to the indie scene. However, I will argue that the disproportion between the coverage of mainstream and indie content in this magazine has led to its being manipulated by the mainstream. Redline Music is regarded as less successful, since it has just followed a mainstream mentality without creating its own unique character. Harbour Records is a relatively good example of how indie music can be sustained when artists work as amateurs and cooperate with one another. Its flexibility has created more room for indie bands to produce innovative music. Its band - My Little Airport (MLA) - has also successfully expanded into the national and overseas markets. Many indie artists operate consistently with a clear concept. M.I.F.F. has implemented the idea of free pricing by operating its School, Records and Concert to provide comprehensive development in different aspects of the music scene. The free-pricing concept is innovative in Hong Kong, but it is not able to exert much influence over the music scene owing to its unsustainable operation.

This research will emphasize both the theoretical and practical aspects of indie music. There is a gap between music studies and cultural studies in popular music studies, in that the music school may only be concerned with musical aspects, while cultural studies may exclude music and concentrate on other aspects of culture. Therefore, in this thesis an attempt is made to combine these two aspects by adding a chapter about musical analysis, in order to bridge the gap between
these two approaches and to illustrate the diversity of the local music scene. From a practical point of view, the experiences of indie labels, no matter how “successful” their operations (this also depends on how people define “success”), may provide some indications as to how to achieve a better growth of the Hong Kong music scene.

The meanings of the terms “underground”, “alternative” and “indie” music, which have been used alternately in different decades, are slightly different, but generally they refer to “non-mainstream music”. Lenny Guo, leader of the band Blackbird, offered a clear explanation of the terms. According to him, the term “underground” refers to music with strong social and political implications that are usually suppressed and censored by governments and the mass media. Therefore, there has never been a case of Hong Kong “underground” music, since no music here has ever been suppressed by any dictatorship. “Alternative” music refers to a musical genre that affords an “alternative” to mainstream pop music, that is, Canto-pop music in the case of Hong Kong. It is worth noting that some common styles, such as rock music, are also regarded as alternative music in Hong Kong. “Indie” refers to people operating a musical venture in an independent way. Though the terms may have different meanings, a spirit of autonomy is shared among them (Guo, 2007: np). In order to avoid confusion in the use of terms, in this thesis, the term “indie” is used throughout to refer this kind of non-mainstream music.

In this thesis, the term “mainstream” does not just refer to the mainstream music scene, but also to the mainstream media and a mainstream mentality in business practices at the operational level.
The term “music scene” is employed to “encompass both the geographical sites of localized musical practice and the social and economic networks that exist within these contexts” (Kruse, 2003: 145), and to describe the “cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization” (Kruse, 2003: 145-146). Therefore, the term “music scene” is used here to refer to the music that is being produced constantly over the whole Hong Kong music industry.

The subject of this research is the development of indie labels in the early part of the 21st century, mainly from 2000 to 2013. This time frame is inexact, since I started the research between 2006 and 2007 as an honours project in my final year of undergraduate study6. In the previous research, I traced back the activities and information of the only case study, 89268, since its establishment in 2000. I then re-started the research in December 2009 and continued until December 2013. Therefore, “the early 21st century” in this thesis refers to the development of indie music from 2000 to 2013.

This introductory chapter has included accounts of the background to the research, research questions, selection of indie labels, significance of this research, use of terms and the time frame of the research.

6 The research title of the honours project is “Tribute to the Indie Music Scene—The Development and Changes of Indie Music in the 1980s to the early 21st century” (the original Chinese title is 《向香港獨立音樂人致敬——從20世紀80年代至21世紀初香港獨立音樂的發展概況和轉變看非主流獨立音樂在香港的發展情況》).
In chapter one a brief history of local indie music in Hong Kong, the theoretical framework of the study, literature review and the methodology used for this research are presented.

Chapters two and three concern the business practices of the cases under study: 89268, Redline Music, Harbour Records and M.I.F.F.. These local indie labels are put together in order to compare the roles they have played in the local music scene. In order to give a comprehensive picture of how each indie label works, a marketing mix of the 4 “P”s—promotion, place, price and product—will be used as a framework to compare the impacts of each label on different aspects of the music scene. Thus, in chapter two the business operations and the first “P” (promotion) of the cases under study are described and analysed. The promotion section includes distribution network, support from media, cross-promotion/commercial collaboration and e-marketing/use of the internet.

Chapter three covers the other 3 “P”s: place (use of industrial buildings as performing venues), price (price setting strategies of the indie labels) and products (how designs of products can enhance the unique style of indie bands). At the end of chapter three, I apply the “making do” theory of Michel de Certeau to analyse the relationships and interactions of these labels with the mainstream as a summary of these two chapters.

Chapter four describes the “authenticity” of the indie music produced by these indie labels, including InLove, Gayamyan (假音人) and The Swamp (沼澤) from 89268, Peri M from Redline Music, Pork and Adrian Tsing from M.I.F.F. and MLA from Harbour Records. I attempt to demonstrate how some of the indie
bands have succeeded in expressing authenticity whereas others have not.

The thesis concludes by re-capturing the main theme of this research, re-examining the independence of local indie music in the early 21st century, and suggesting some ways in which a sustainable development of indie music may be achieved.
Chapter One: Background to Hong Kong Indie Music

In this chapter a brief history of Hong Kong indie music, and the theoretical framework, literature review and methodology of this research are presented as a background to the Hong Kong indie music scene and to the study of indie music.

1.1 Brief History of Local Indie Music

A narrative consisting of a brief history of local indie music prior to the 21st century will be helpful in explaining the current music scene. In this narrative the first generation of local indie bands, Blackbird (黑鳥) and Beyond, and three traditional models of local indie labels in the 1990s will be discussed in detail owing to the significant roles they played in indie music history.

1.1.1 Band Culture in the 1960s: Nurturing Musical Experts for the Local Music Scene

In attempting to trace the beginning of Hong Kong indie music, many sources agree that band culture in the 1960s paved the way for the development of the indie music in Hong Kong (Chu, 2000: 70; Ma, 2001: 167). In the 1960s, many local bands, under the influence of Western music, such as that of the Beatles, Gerry & the Pacemakers and the Searchers, formed and played cover songs of Western music.

Band culture became fanatical after the Beatles first came to Hong Kong in June 1964, and was known as “Beatlemania” and the “British Invasion”. Wong Jum
Sum James states that “Beatlemania” gave rise to many social discussions and social concerns at that time that “Beatlemania” may lead to social disorder. Ultimately this did not happen, but it did have a great influence on the Hong Kong music scene – forming a “bloom of band culture” in Hong Kong (Wong Jum Sum James, 2003: 79). The Lotus, formed by Sam Hui, Side Effects, formed by Joe Junior, Playboys, formed by Teddy Robin, The Mystics, The Zoundcrackers, The Continentals, The Powder Puffs etc. were mainstream bands formed under the influence of the “British Invasion” in the 1960s. These bands were not regarded as “indie” bands as they did not play original music, and they mainly worked under major labels. Wong Jum Sum James also comments that the musical techniques of these young mainstream bands were still not mature enough. However, this bloom in band culture in the 1960s nurtured many musical experts, and over the next few decades many of them became significant icons in the mainstream music scene and decision-makers working for major labels, contributing to the mainstream music scene to different degrees. These icons and musical experts included Sam Hui, who was regarded as a legendary singer who popularized Canto-pop in the 1970s; Teddy Robin, an actor and director; Norman Cheng and Ricky Fung, both of whom became senior managers and decision-makers with major labels such as PolyGram and EMI, showing that there was an inseparable relationship between the indie/band culture and the mainstream music scene (Wong Jum Sum James, 2003: 80-81).

1.1.2 The Rise of Transnational Music Companies and Star Systems in the 1970s

Some transnational music companies, such as PolyGram, EMI, Warner Music and Sony Music, started their businesses and gradually came to dominate the music
market in Hong Kong from the 1970s onwards, by developing star systems and fan culture. Some individual Canto-pop stars, such as Sam Hui, Roman Tam and Adam Cheng etc, gained much popularity owing to their involvement in some famous local television programmes and films by singing the theme songs (Chu interview).

The 1970s were known as the decade of the rise of Canto-pop music (Chu interview). Although there was not much development of band culture in the 1970s, an obvious change was that many mainstream bands started writing and singing Cantonese songs under the influence of the rising importance of Canto-pop music in the mainstream music scene. These mainstream bands included Wynners, New Topnotes, Ming, the re-formed Lotus etc.

At the same time, a “do-it-yourself” (DIY) ethos and a rebellious spirit generated from the 1970s punk movement in the UK and the US influenced many local Hong Kong indie bands. During the punk movement, people celebrated a lack of formal musical training, released records on non-major labels and promoted and distributed music through non-mainstream channels. Out of dissatisfaction with mainstream mentalities and the dominance of the major labels, in Hong Kong the first generation of local indie musicians emerged in the late 1970s to early 1980s.

1.1.3 The First Generation of Local Indie Bands in the Early to Mid-1980s: Blackbird and Beyond

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The term “underground” was mainly used in local music scene in the 1980s because there was a series of live gigs called “From the Underground” organized by a music magazine: “Music Week” (“音樂週刊”). “Underground” bands were invited to perform in a series of “From the Underground” live gigs. The bands who performed at the gigs were mainly heavy metal bands. (Yuen interview)
Blackbird and Beyond are regarded as the first generation of Hong Kong indie bands because they were pioneers in successfully self-publishing original songs in cassette form in the mid-1980s; their intention was to record and document their work and to spread their music more widely than previous indie artists had done (Yuen interviews). The roles played by Blackbird and Beyond in the local music scene were dramatically different. Blackbird retained its rebellious attitudes and lived consistently within the indie music scene, while Beyond signed to a major label, partially compromising with mainstream institutions in exchange for wider coverage of its music.

Blackbird was formed in the late 1970s and became active in the indie music scene from the mid-1980s. In 1984 it became the first band successfully to self-publish its original music, “East is Red/Generation 97”, on cassette. The band’s rebellious image as social activist gradually developed, as it regarded music as a tool to promote its political ideas. The music covered diverse political and social topics, such as anarchism, communism, gender problems, the Sino-British Joint Declaration, problems associated with the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997 and environmental issues. The band became very active after the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, working closely with the People’s Theatre (民眾劇場). They performed in street theatres and distributed political pamphlets for three months. Blackbird also self-published a “fanzine” called

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8 Blackbird was formed in the late 1970s under the influence of the 1968 French student movement. The history of Blackbird can be briefly divided into two stages. The first stage was when Blackbird worked closely with the People’s Theatre (民眾劇場). Four important works by the band, including “East is Red/Generation 97” (1984), “Manifesto” (1986) and “People Have the Power” (1987) were published. Blackbird reformed and become a trio with the affiliation of Peter Suart, a former band member of The Box, in 1992. The band then launched a major project called “Unracial Subversion” (1992), “Before the Storm” (1997) and “Singing in the Dead of the Night” (1999-2004).
“Communiqué”\(^9\), which became an important channel through which the band shared its views on various political issues. Copies of “Communiqué” and the music were also circulated in mainland China and Taiwan. Blackbird’s music especially influenced the development of the “underground” music scene in Taiwan\(^{10}\).

Blackbird tried to gain full autonomy over its musical production, so it refused to accept support from governmental funding bodies\(^{11}\) or commercial groups. It has

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\(^{9}\) “Communiqué” was distributed free to audiences. Six issues were published from 1991-1993. The initial circulation of “Communiqué” was 500 copies and usually the band needed to reprint 100 copies twice to meet “market demands”. (Guo, 2007: np; Guo interview)

\(^{10}\) The influence on Taiwanese audiences may have been greater and lasted for longer than on the audiences in Hong Kong. (Guo interview)

\(^{11}\) While arts organizations are used to applying for subsidies from the ADC, Blackbird has consistently used its own resources to produce and promote its music. Blackbird regards financial support from governmental funding bodies as another form of control. Lenny Guo believed that publishing ADC logos on promotional pamphlets was a way to help the government establish its credibility in its contribution to cultural and arts development. There were different opinions on whether the band should accept the subsidy from the government. This internal struggle resulted in the reforming of the band, as some members left owing to differences of opinion.
self-published and self-distributed most of its albums, with the exception of “Unracial Subversion”. The members of Blackbird were worried that the handover of Hong Kong in 1997 may affect human rights and freedom of speech. In “Unracial Subversion” the band aimed to raise international awareness of this issue, so it invited indie bands and artists from different countries, including Japan, Switzerland, Italy and the Philippines, to contribute to the compilation. Moreover, in order to have a wider circulation, Blackbird collaborated with Global Independent Generation (GIG) Music, a 1990s indie label, by using the label’s distribution network to distribute this international-level CD compilation. However, some of its audiences believed that collaborating with an indie label would threaten the independence of Blackbird (Leung, 1997: 102). This shows that Blackbird’s audiences had much higher expectations of it as an indie band and social activist, since its audiences thought that even using an indie distributor might threaten the band’s independence. However, the members of Blackbird believed that using the distribution network of an indie label would not threaten its full autonomy over its musical production.

In addition to the social and political content of the music, the musical style of Blackbird is also experimental. Even from today’s point of view, the music is innovative: for instance, in its extensive use of the erhu, a Chinese musical instrument, in rock music and the insertion of clips from news recordings to increase the dynamism of its topical songs. It produced a re-arrangement of “The Internationale” after 1989. The new version of “The Internationale” started with a recorded live version of the same song sung by students during the Tiananmen

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12 Blackbird collaborated with Yellow Studio in Japan to produce “The Return of the Orphan” and “Morning Children”, with Biel’s Atmosphere Studio in Switzerland to contribute “Shendaruan”, with Dominico from Padova in Italy to jam “Inno Individualista”, and with Noel Cabargon from Manila in the Philippines to contribute “Awit Ng Kagampan / Song of Plenitude”.

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Square protests; the song was then continued by Blackbird and a group of local young people. The arrangement created a continuity of revolutionary spirit. Moreover, Blackbird invited Ke Zai (克仔) to sing and narrate “Nanyin: The History of Hong Kong” (《南音：香港史話》) (1984) in “Cantonese naamyam”, a unique local narrative singing tradition in the Cantonese dialect, to summarize a brief history of Hong Kong\footnote{A brief history of Hong Kong was narrated in “Nanyin: The History of Hong Kong”, from the first Opium War in 1839-42, Hong Kong becoming a British Colony under the Treaty of Nanking on 29 August 1842 and the Convention of Peking in 1860, the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong for three years and eight months from 1941 to 1945, the influence of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, commonly known as the Cultural Revolution, on Hong Kong from 1966 to 1976, to the economic and industrial booms of the 1970s. The song succeeded in raising the concern of local and overseas Chinese societies regarding the 1997 Hong Kong handover issues. The lyric of “Nanyin: The History of Hong Kong” and other songs discussed in this thesis will be attached as appendix.}. This song impressed many overseas Chinese (Guo interview).

Blackbird described its goal as follows: “we have to create works that will be “independent” of the manipulation of “commercial value”…works that are truly created for culture, for human communication” (Guo, 2007: np). Blackbird has worked totally independently of the mainstream mentality and its music is designed for communicating with audiences. Using music for communication is much more important to it than making money. It even printed “please copy the tape for those who can’t afford it” on the cover of its cassettes. Leung Wing Sze (梁穎詩) used Blackbird as a case study to demonstrate how some indie bands, including Blackbird, have been able to realize a kind of “utopia”, by achieving a direct form of human communication and espousing a spirit of anti-capitalism.

Although Blackbird has reformed and disbanded several times since the 1970s, the core member of the band, Lenny Guo, is still active in the Hong Kong indie
music scene today. He performs in concerts with themes of fighting for human rights. He created a cultural space called “Bandhood” in the Kwai Hing industrial district and launched a music magazine called “The Band” in 2009. Although Bandhood lasted for only a short period of time and only four issues of “The Band” were published between 2009 and 2011, Guo still insists on using his own ways of contributing to the music scene.

As a result of this research, I was honoured to meet Guo several times in 2011. It was amazing for me to witness the process through which he and Ah Kok, an indie artist and the person in charge of a local performance venue called Hidden Agenda, produced a CD compilation called “Howl” in the space of two months.

“Howl” was a response to the 3/11 incident in Japan in 2011, and had the aim of raising people’s awareness of the disastrous impacts of nuclear power. I am also deeply impressed that he has implemented an “indie spirit” in his life attitude, that he always keeps a clear and critical mindset in his life while living in this
capitalized and commercial society. What success means to Lenny Guo, as an indie artist, is not defined by commercial perspectives, but by how he can continuously insist on doing what he believes in most. Blackbird is an excellent example of how indie music can succeed from this perspective.

Beyond is another legendary band in the local music scene\(^{14}\). It was an indie band for only a few years, then signed to a major label, Cinepoly Records, in 1987. As a result of its encouraging lyrical contents and musical style and an outspoken attitude of band members, Beyond became very famous not just in the local music scene, but also in some South-east Asian cities, especially in Japan, Taiwan and on the Chinese mainland. Audiences from some non-Cantonese-speaking places can also sing its songs in Cantonese fluently\(^{15}\). Beyond provides a good example of how an “indie” band can go inside the system/mainstream music scene to negotiate and have a direct influence on the music scene.

After Beyond signed to a major label, it was accused by some indie audiences of “selling out” rock ethics and the indie spirit. Natalia Chan (洛楓) also criticized Beyond for completely compromising with commerce, since it had taken part in many highly commercial activities\(^{16}\). “A discourse surrounding the question of

\(^{14}\) Beyond composed original music, which can be defined as but not limited to progressive rock, heavy rock or, as it prefers to call it, guitar rock. It won the “Best Group Award” at the Players Festival, organized by Guitar Magazine, which was established by Lenny Guo, from Blackbird, in 1983. It self-published its first cassette - “Goodbye Ideals” - and organized its first concert - “Waiting Forever” - at Caritas Hong Kong in 1986.

\(^{15}\) In a RTHK TV Programme called “Immortal Legend: Wong Ka Kui” (香港電台電視節目資料庫：《不死傳奇—黃家駒》), a Beijing audience can sing its songs in Cantonese quite fluently.

\(^{16}\) Beyond participated in many commercial activities, such as getting involved in composing background music, acting in commercial films and dramas, and participating in variety shows. Beyond became idols/all-round artists, providing entertainment for mass audiences. This may be regarded as one of the compromises it made, but in return it was able to become well known to the masses, and it has become a famous public figure.
“selling out”, became a metaphor for the conflict over commercialism in indie music as a whole” (Kruse, 2003: 26). When an indie band is no longer “indie” and gets involved in the mainstream, it will be accused negatively of “selling out”, which is the strongest accusation that can be made against an indie band. The accusation shows that an “aura” had been attached to indie music, and there was still a mutual opposition between the indie and the mainstream music scenes.

The aura of indie is closely associated with “authenticity”. Keir Keightley discusses the meaning of “authenticity” in depth, stating that authenticity has been rooted and developed from the tradition of rock music. She mentions that the Greek origin of the word “authentic” means “self-made”, and in this case stands “against the mass-processed, money-driven, anonymous and alienating aspects of modern life” (Keightley, 2001: 134). “Authentic” also refers to music, musicians and musical experiences that are seen to be direct and honest, uncorrupted by commerce, trendiness, derivativeness, a lack of inspiration and so on (Keightley, 2001: 131). In this context of authenticity, ideally, indie should be self-sufficient and self-contained, in order to engender a sense of freedom from mediation, and a feeling of autonomy and independence from external interference and control (Keightley, 2001: 134).

The original meaning of authenticity promoted an anti-mass culture and it encourages people to maintain some distance from commerce. This has caused some conflicts in the development of rock music (Keightley, 2001: 140-141). This conflict is also seen in the indie music scene, because there are intensive collaborations between the mainstream/commerce and indie music. Therefore, a conflict is caused when an indie band signs to a major label. The aura of
authenticity attached to indie will potentially be diminished. It seems that the establishment of different kinds of relationship with the mainstream and commerce is an inescapable development of indie music. It is believed that indie music can preserve its authenticity in this kind of mainstream-indie relationship. Some audiences blamed Beyond for betraying the spirit of rock music because of its change of image. The band members of Beyond had their long hair cut and accepted “weird” images for promoting their songs, such as that of the “The Arabian Dancing Girl” (亞拉伯跳舞女郎) (1987).

![Image](image.jpg)

Figure 3. CD cover of Beyond’s “The Arabian Dancing Girl”. Photo retrieved from the internet.

However, it would be to over-simplify the ethic of rock and indie music if audiences and the media just focused on its changes of image, and did not attempt to understand the content of the music and the goals it tries to achieve in the local music scene.

Whether the musical style of Beyond “sold out” to commercial markets was
arguable and controversial. A music critic, Gong Yu Wen (公羽文), comments that Beyond’s first two songs, “Brain Attack” and “Building”, produced when it was still an indie band, were immature, but good in terms of instrumental techniques and musical arrangements (Gong, 2000: 86). He went on to criticize the music produced by Beyond after joining a major label, saying that it was commercialized and contained nothing special in terms of musical arrangements (Gong, 2000: 87).

Another music critic, Fung Lai Chi (馮禮慈), has a different opinion of Beyond’s “commercialization”. He says that although Beyond had demonstrated an intention to make its music more popular, as with “Like You” (《喜歡你》) and “Really Love You” (《真的愛你》), the music was still alternative to the mainstream. The unique style of Beyond was retained. He also argues that there was not sufficient evidence to prove that Beyond had “sold out”, because these songs were only some of the songs Beyond had written for the commercial market (Fung, 2000: 182). It had also written many other “alternative” songs, such as “The Land” (《大地》), “Great Wall” (《長城》), “Soundless Age” (《歲月無聲》), “Glorious Years” (《光輝歲月》) and “Amani”. Beyond gained much popularity after joining the mainstream and its music spread widely on the local and national music scenes. Beyond also became a public figure of “Love and Peace” and “Forever Fighter”. People invariably sing its songs during social protests17, as Beyond’s music can give people strength and support. The influence of Beyond still continues today, even though the band no longer exists. A local drama group, FM Theatre Power (好戲量), organized a tribute musical called “Beyond the

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17 For details please refer to Gao Yu Juan’s “Why We Sing Beyond’s music in Social Movement: The Authenticity and Social Power of Beyond.” (高玉娟：〈社會運動為甚麼要唱Beyond 的歌? — Beyond 所體現的搖滾原真性及社群力量〉).
Horizon” (《駒歌》) on the 20th anniversary of the death of the lead singer, Wong Ka Kui, in 2013. A Facebook page, “Beyond (Band)”, has accumulated 86,505 “likes”, showing that there are still many fans supporting this legendary local band.

David Hesmondhalgh believes that artists (or “symbolic creators” in his term) working under transnational corporations (TNCs) or major companies may lose their creative autonomy in the production process. However, he also suggests that a distinctive organizational form of cultural production is the combination of a loose control over creative input and a tighter control over reproduction and circulation (Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 69), which means that artists can retain a certain degree of autonomy in the production process, with some restrictions. However, they have less control over reproduction and circulation, such as the scheduling of CD publications and marketing their music in the music industries. Beyond once said in an interview that about 40 per cent of its musical production had been interfered with by the producer, but it thought positively that the producer’s opinions could reflect market tastes (Blondie, 2000: 80). Some final products were better than the originals (Blondie, 2000: 81). That means that Beyond still had 60 per cent control over its musical production. Therefore, after an indie band enters the mainstream, it is not necessarily going to be absorbed by the mainstream mentality. This is rather a matter of negotiation. Beyond successfully gained popularity through its “mainstreaming rock” and it made

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18 “Beyond the Horizon” was organized on 12-13 September 2013 at Queen Elizabeth Stadium. A publication called “We All Grew up Listening to Beyond’s Music” (《我們都是聽Beyond 的歌長大》) was also published in July 2013 by FM Theatre Power.

19 Figure retrieved from “Beyond (Band).” Facebook. n.p., n.d.. Web. 25 Jan 2014. <https://www.facebook.com/beyondmusicnet>
conscious use of its popularity to motivate the masses. Beyond therefore acted
as a “successful” example of how an “indie” band can have a direct influence on
the music scene.

Blackbird and Beyond illustrate two extreme cases of indie music. Blackbird
always remained in the “underground” (corresponding to the mainstream on the
ground), while Beyond transformed from an indie band into a mainstream band.
But both of them managed to retain a certain degree of independence, and they
had some innovative ideas and significant influences on the music scene. They
reinforced the cultural role of music, the idea that music should not be regarded
simply as a form of entertainment to boost consumption, but as a medium for
raising public awareness of problems in society and in the world.

1.1.4 Transitional Periods Between the Late-1980s to Mid-1990s

Blackbird and Beyond, the first generation of local indie bands, were actively
involved in the indie music scene in the early to mid-1980s, though Beyond had
signed to a major label in 1987. There were some indie music concerts, such as
“From the Underground”, a concert series organized by “Music Week”. However, the late-1980s were regarded as a silent period for the indie music
scene, as there were not many indie bands after Blackbird and Beyond published
their music (Yuen interview).

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Beyond participated in charity works: for instance, by working closely with World Vision
and going to visit Papua New Guinea and Kenya in East Africa. It brought back messages to
people, urging them to be concerned about poverty problems in the world. Its song “Amani” was
written to spread the message of “Love and Peace”, a message always carried by rock music.
From the 1980s onwards, Ko Shan Theatre, regarded as the “Holy Land of Rock”, and the Fringe Club were two major performance venues for indie music; the “From the Underground” music series, for instance was mainly put on at the Ko Shan Theatre, which was managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department of the Hong Kong Government. Although rental fees were relatively low at these two venues, indie bands didn’t have many opportunities to perform owing to the limited financial support they had (Yuen interview).

In the early 1990s, more bands, such as Martyr and The Box, started to become aware of the importance of leaving their music behind for a wider circulation and reaching a wider audience, and a great deal of indie music was then published in cassette format.

1.1.5 Golden Era of Indie Music: The Three Indie Labels and Support from the Media in the Mid-1990s

Another significant factor in the history of indie music in Hong Kong was the growth of three indie labels in the mid-1990s: these were the Sound Factory, DIY Music and GIG Music. None of these indie labels lasted for very long, but with their appearance, this period was regarded as one of the most glorious periods in the history of the Hong Kong indie music scene (Yuen interview). The development of indie labels in the 1990s offers a contrast to the development of indie labels in the early 21st century.

A major contribution of the three indie labels is that they systematically signed

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DIY Music is also known as Music Communication.
many indie bands and published many indie releases in CD format. The publication of a CD was regarded as more innovative, as more advanced technology was needed at that time, while cassettes were commonly used for indie bands (Yuen interview). Sound Factory signed and published releases for AMK, Juno and Multi-plex. DIY Music signed Anodize, …Huh!?, Virus, and Black and Blue, and GIG Music signed Anthony Wong (黃秋生) and Black Box (黑盒). The indie labels thus helped these indie bands to publish their releases successfully.

The business practices of these three indie labels were not as diverse as those of the indie labels of the early 21st century, as they concentrated mainly on music alone. Sound Factory obtained licences to import and publish foreign experimental music. DIY Music was well organized with excellent A & R management. It arranged for its bands to record music in Beijing and invited producers from Taiwan to produce its releases.

These three 1990s indie labels maintained a cultural separation from the mainstream, but were unable to provide opportunities or explore markets as diverse as indie labels in the early 21st century. Therefore, when indie music labels in the 1990s were confronting financial problems and struggling for company survival, they tended to cooperate with other similar operations or with major labels. Both DIY Music and GIG Music were swallowed up by the majors, Song Music and Rock Records, respectively, and DIY Music and GIG Music gradually lost their independence and closed down.

Although Sound Factory still exists, it only operates on a small scale. Noise Asia Records was established in October 1997 as a successor to Sound Factory. It
sustains its operation by receiving royalties from ownership and copyright of its published music (Wong, Terry interview). Yuen Chi Chung concludes that their rapid development and over-eagerness to get involved in the mainstream music scene were the reasons for their failure (Yuen, 2010: 18-28).

When coping with financial difficulties, seeking financial support from the majors is not the only solution for indie labels in the early 21st century. They may explore different avenues, such as collaborating with commercial groups, developing their own advertising channels and media, working as cooperatives and extending into different art forms for cross-promotion. Their business operations are examined in detail in chapters two and three.

The mid-1990s were regarded as glorious period for the local indie music scene, also because of the support from the media. “Music Colony Bi-weekly” (“MCB”/《音樂殖民地》), an influential local music magazine was established in 1994 but it ceased publication in 2004. MCB, self-funded by Yuen Chi Chung for ten years with the aim of introducing and promoting Western and local indie bands, became a milestone in the history of local indie music.

In 1993, Commercial Radio Hong Kong (CRHK) broadcast a music radio programme called “The Sky of Quotable” (《豁達音樂天空》), which had some influence on the Hong Kong indie music scene. This programme aimed to introduce Western music and local bands’ music to audiences (Wong Chi Chung interview). At first, bands and original music were promoted and broadcast very widely by mass radio, as the programme was broadcast at prime time every weekday, and it also organized live shows and live broadcasts, such as “Saturday
night”, at weekends. A series of alternative concerts, for instance, “Music Force” (《樂勢力》), was organized at the Hong Kong Coliseum. Yuen Chi Chung has acknowledged the contributions CRHK has made to the local indie music scene, believing that “no matter how much music magazines and TV station promoted indie music, there was no substitute for people talking about indie music non-stop all weekend” (Yuen interview). However, Chu criticized CRHK for failing to provide a fair amount of space for the development of indie music. This was because CRHK had legitimated and manipulated a discourse to interpret what “indie” music was to the general public. It had packaged “indie” as a kind of “symbolic capital” or “sub-cultural capital” in order to promote consumerism; one example of this is that it cooperated with a credit card company to form a membership club called the “id” club. Only members of the club had the privilege of taking part in its activities, such as voting for “The Best of the Songs” at its annual music awards (Chu, 2002: 141-142).

Apart from media support, there were some significant and highly recognized band competitions and band shows in the mid-1990s; for instance, the “Carlsberg Pop Music Festival”, “Dark Entry” and “Variety Concert” (《雜感音樂會》). The recognition for these band competitions and indie shows was high; some indie bands, such as Taichi, who were the champions at the “Carlsberg Pop Music Festival” in 1985, were recruited by major labels, showing that there were more collaborations taking place between the indie and mainstream music scenes.

1.1.6 New Opportunities in the Late-1990s to the Early 21st Century

Other opportunities influenced the development of local indie scene from the
late-1990s, although this was a time when the mainstream music scene was
declining\textsuperscript{22} and Hong Kong was undergoing a crisis owing to the period of
economic recession in 1997. Many indie bands and indie labels were able to
occupy spare spaces in the industrial districts at relatively low rental rates because
many factories on local industrial estates in Hong Kong were being shut down and
moved to mainland China. With the rise in the popularity of the internet and an
increase in affordable advanced music technology, the ecology of indie music in
the early 21\textsuperscript{st} century arrived at a whole new era, which is studied in detail in the
next two chapters.

From the history of local indie music, it appears that in the past there were not
very many crossovers between mainstream and “underground” music, because the
musical image of “underground” bands was darker, compared with that of
mainstream music and indie music now. At that time indie bands had to present a
strong personality so as to give their voice some uniqueness. Therefore, the
boundary between mainstream and indie music in the past was very clear. The
distance between the two types of music has been reduced after so many years
(Yuen interview). Some indie artists have even made their living in the
mainstream music scene. The change in the images of indie music and interactions
between the indie and mainstream music scenes over the years have indeed
provided more opportunities and made the indie music scene in the early 21\textsuperscript{st}
century a more dynamic and interesting one.

\textsuperscript{22} Reasons for the decline of the local mainstream music scene are analysed in detail in *The
Rise and Decline of Cantopop: A Study of Hong Kong Popular Music (1949-1997)* (《粵語流行曲
的發展與興衰：香港流行音樂研究 (1949 - 1997)》), written by Wong Jum Sum James, pages
168-178.
1.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this research is derived mainly from *Cultural Industries*, written by David Hesmondhalgh. He borrows Raymond Williams’ analysis of three eras in the development of cultural production in Europe to talk about the development of the cultural industries. The first era is the era of “patronage” and “artisanal” artists, from the Middle Ages to the 19th century. While “patronage” artists were “retained” and supported by aristocrats or the Church, “artisanal” artists worked largely under their own direction. The second era is that of the “market professional”, from the early 19th century onwards. A market had started to be established and an increasing number of artistic works were being offered for sale. Intermediaries were created, with a more complex division of labour. This era was highly capitalized. The third era is that of the “corporate professional” in the early 20th century. More people became direct employees of cultural companies. Advertising also became an important new means of making money (Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 53-54). The third era of the “corporate professional”, developed in the 20th century, is the era of the growth of TNCs, spreading over the globe, and of a corporate culture in the cultural scenes.

These three eras provide a thorough description of the development of the cultural industries and the formation of the market. The rise of the market and cultural products led to a fundamental issue in the study of cultural industries, that is, how to deal with the tensions between creativity and the commercialization of cultural products. In the Hegelian philosophical tradition, “art could act as a form of critique of the rest of life and provide a utopian vision of how a better life might be possible” (Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 16). From the perspectives of Adorno and
Horkheimer, on the other hand, “culture had almost entirely lost this capacity to act as utopian critique because it had become commodified - a thing to be bought and sold” (Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 16). Creativity (both art and culture need creativity) and commerce have held long-term opposing positions since the commodification of cultural products became an inescapable development in the cultural industries. However, Hesmondhalgh believes that tension between the arts and commerce may not necessarily lead to diminished diversity and quality of cultural products. It may also lead “to exciting new directions and innovations” (Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 17), as the relationship between creativity and commerce is a matter of negotiation, conflict and struggle (Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 70).

Moreover, some major labels expanded vertically in order to control the pressing, promotion and distribution of their products, with the aim of maximizing their audiences and lowering their production costs. However, these vertical expansion or integration approaches are declining, as the majors have developed more inter-firm networking with indie labels. They subcontract to indie labels, which are regarded as potentially more dynamic and innovative than large ones, to take part in production (Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 94). These interdependent networks or decentralized production potentially provide more opportunities for the development of indie labels.

In the early 21st century, the mainstream-indie relationship is no longer one of competing roles; rather, it is one of interdependence. Using this theoretical framework, in this thesis the independence of local indie labels is examined further, as the relationship between the major and indie labels has become more complex.
Case studies on the cultural industries have mainly taken cases from the UK and the US to illustrate the development of the cultural industries and indie music, which are not necessarily applicable to the music scene in Hong Kong. My aim in this research, therefore, was to enrich the theoretical aspects of the studies of the cultural industries by studying the business practices and developments of Hong Kong indie music labels in the early 21st century.

1.3 Literature Review

There is a great deal of Western literature, especially in the UK and the US, on the study of indie music. Site and Sound: Understanding Independent Music Scenes (2003), by Holly Kruse, for example, gives a comprehensive picture of the indie music scene. She discusses many details of the indie music scene, such as the limitations of indie distributors, different kinds of indie-major label relationship, the advantages and disadvantages of working at both major and indie labels, and of the various parties which have interacted with indie, namely college radio, charts, video, retail and live performance venues. She has used some specific indie labels and bands, together with ample theoretical support, as case studies. However, Kruse emphasizes the business practices of indie music, and seldom mentions the music itself.

In Empire of Dirt (2006), Wendy Fonarow discusses different aspects of the British indie music scene, including definitions of the UK music scene, the aesthetics of indie music, and the gender and attitude of audiences. She defines British indie music using various aspects, including modes of distribution, genres,
ethos and modes of aesthetic judgment. Additionally, she examines the differences between mainstream and indie music in order to highlight the characteristics of British indie music.

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<td>substantive</td>
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<td>art</td>
<td>commerce</td>
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Figure 4. Comparison of characteristics of the mainstream and indie music in the UK music scene. Taken from *Empire of Dirt*: 66-67.

When re-examining what indie music is, it is also a good opportunity to reconsider what mainstream music is. The table above shows some of the characteristics of indie and mainstream music (Fonarow, 2006: 66-67).
Fonarow significantly draws attention to some contrasts between mainstream and indie music; however, she has to some extent established a mutual opposition between indie and the mainstream, which may eliminate some of the possibilities in the study of popular music.

In a chapter entitled “The Strategy of Large and Small Phonogram Companies”, included in *Big Sounds from Small Peoples: the Music Industry in Small Countries* (1984), the authors Roger Wallis and Krister Malm point out that it is nearly impossible for indie music to attain total independence, since it needs to rely on resources from the mainstream. Additionally, they remind audiences not to stereotype impressions of mainstream and indie music, as there are always exceptional cases. The reminder is always useful when studying the relationship between the mainstream and indie.

In *Producing Pop: Culture and Conflict in the Popular Music Industry* (1992), Keith Negus points to the “romantic ideology” involved in music fans’ support for what they think of as indie music. In fact, the author says, many so-called “independent” music companies and musicians work with or through the larger corporations. He writes, “the idea that independence inevitably provides an alternative and more sincere form of musical production…is based on selecting a few “pioneering” labels such as Atlantic, Island, Factory and Rough Trade as embodying an ethic in contrast to the dominant practices of the record industry at that time. This completely ignores the range of companies which have sheltered beneath the umbrella term of “independent”, and the values and practices these labels share with the larger corporations”(Negus, 1992: 18). The author appears to have become disillusioned with the romantic view of indie music and reminds
audiences of the complicated relationships/webs between indie labels and the majors.

While some authors appear to be disillusioned with indie concepts, Stephen Lee and Kaya Oakes still positively believe in the value of indie music. In *Re-examining the Concept of the ‘Independent’ Record Company: The Case of Wax Trax! Records* (1995), Stephen Lee has taken an indie label, Wax Trax! Records, in the US as a case study, re-examining its independence when seeking financial collaboration with major labels to deal with financial difficulties. Although he concludes that Wax Trax! Records ultimately failed to retain its independence, he firmly believes that there are contributions that indie labels made to the music scene; as he states, (the label’s failure to retain its independence) “still does not erase the ways that the label, its records and its practices served as crucial sights of cultural articulation”, and he hopes that “another indie will likely replace it, find the going equally rough, and struggle to make a difference” (Lee, 1995: 30).

In *Slanted and Enchanted: The Evolution of Indie Culture* (2009), Kaya Oakes believes that indie culture is being re-packaged, re-imaged and re-invented in order to survive in the capitalized society. She uses a variety of indie cultures, including punk, independent literature, independent comics, indie rock, indie publishing and crafting and indie design to argue that “indie means rebellion, risk, tenacity, innovation and resistance to convention” and that indie has been “rooted in the past and recycles and re-imagines the past, but it is always ahead of its time” (Oakes, 2009: 209). The original forms of indie may have been lost, but it is very likely that new forms of indie will be generated and that it will always be
ahead of the times.

Apart from Western publications, there are some books and journal articles about Taiwanese indie music. In *Dream Place of Rock・Youth of Ocean: Song in Rememberance of Ho-hai-van Rock Festival* (《搖滾夢土・青春海岸：海洋音樂祭回想曲》) (2004), the author Weng Jia Ming (翁嘉銘) has recorded the background, history and development of the Ho-hai-van Rock Festival, a famous music festival financially supported by the Taiwan government. Bu Ran (不然) provides some practical information on the music scene in Taiwan, such as an introduction to live houses, indie bands, different band instruments and Taiwan music festivals in *Underground Music: A Book You Can’t Miss to Know Underground Music* (《地下好樂：認識地下音樂你不可錯過的一本書》) (2008). Luo Yue Quan (羅悅全) has made a record of the ups and downs of many indie music performance venues in Taiwan since the 1990s in *Secret Base: Music Map of Taipei* (《秘密基地：台北的音樂版圖》) (2000).

There is also a great diversity of topics of dissertations about the Taiwan indie music scene. In *Strategies of Non-mainstream Music Labels in Taiwan: Case Studies of Crystal Records, Wind Music and Magic Stone Music* (《台灣的非主流公司競爭策略之研究—以水晶、風潮、魔岩唱片為例》) (1999), Lai Guan Yu (賴冠羽) borrows the “competitive strategies” developed by Michael E. Porter to analyse the business practices of indie labels in Taiwan, while Yang Ya Xin (楊雅馨) focuses on gender problems in the Taiwan indie music scene in *Analysis of Female Band Members of Taiwanese Bands* (《台灣搖滾樂團女樂手之樂團經歷研究》) (2005). The author conducted interviews with female band members in Taiwan in order to discover the problems they face in the male-dominated rock
Although little research has yet been conducted into the Hong Kong indie music scene, there are still some publications that provide useful insights and information for this area of study. The most significant of these is *The Days of Glory: A Study of Hong Kong Popular Bands/Groups* (《光輝歲月：香港流行樂隊組合研究 1984-1990》) (2000), written by Chu Yiu Wai. Rather than concentrating solely on indie music, Chu has paid attention to “pop bands” in general. Therefore, both mainstream and indie bands playing pop music have been discussed within the same discourse. He has discussed various aspects of local pop bands from the mid-1980s to the early-1990s; for instance, in the chapter entitled “Brief History of Hong Kong Pop Bands” (〈香港流行樂隊發展史略〉), he has recorded a brief history of local pop bands. He has also related the rebellious spirit of rock to band music in a chapter called “Rebellious Writings: Noise/Harmony of Counterbalance” (〈叛逆書寫：抗衡的雜聲/和聲〉), using lyrical analysis to illustrate the uncompromised images of the bands. In “In Between Mainstream and Non-mainstream” (〈樂在其「中」：在主流與非主流之間〉), he raises many important issues regarding “non-mainstream” music (indie) which are worth bearing in mind for any researcher working on this subject. These important issues are 1) mainstreaming rock music may not definitely destroy the authenticity of rock music, but may have positive impacts on the music scene; 2) “non-mainstream” music may potentially become another kind of commodified product, and 3) we should not assume that the quality of “non-mainstream” music is better than that of mainstream music. These points remind audiences to take a more subjective view of both mainstream and indie music.
Chu also suggests creating a third space, a better and healthier space, for the growth of both mainstream and non-mainstream music. In order to achieve this space, the author has made some suggestions in a chapter entitled “Hong Kong Cantopop in the Age of Global Capitalism” (《全球資本主義年代的香港粵語流行曲—兼論香港流行音樂的抗衡空間》), included in another publication called The Local Myth: Discursive Production in the Global Era 《本土神話：全球化年代的論述生產》 (2002). The suggestions are 1) creating a space for the growth of music criticism; 2) emphasizing the importance of research on pop music culture, and 3) making use of new media. These are all important elements of the development of the local music scene.

The Age of Heteroglossia: A Cultural Study of Hong Kong Popular Band Lyrics (《眾聲對唱：香港流行樂隊組合 (1984-1990)研究資料彙編》) (2000), edited by Chu Yiu Wai and Cheng Dik Lun, includes many articles, music critiques and interviews of pop bands published in newspapers and magazines from the mid-1980s to early-1990s. These materials are especially valuable as a record of the local music scene in the pre-digital era.

Other local publications relevant to indie bands are Wild in the Underground: Facsimile of Subculture (《地下狂野分子：次文化圖文傳真》) (2001) and Betray LMF: Case of Foul language music (《出賣 LMF：粗口音樂檔案》) (2001), written and edited by Ma Kit Wai (馬傑偉). In these two publications, the author examines the cultural impacts of radical images and the use of swear words by LMF, a local hip-hop group in Hong Kong, may bring to the society. Apart from LMF, other aspects of band music are also studied. In the chapter called “Band History: From Beatle to LMF” (《Band History：從披頭四到 LMF》), the author
has recorded band history from Beatlemania in the 1960s to LMF. An article by Ng Wing Sze (伍詠詩), entitled “Underground Wonderland” (〈地下遊記〉), is included in Betray LMF: Case of Foul language music. In this article, Ng describes in detail her first experience of attending a local indie show. This article reflects the fact that the study of local indie music was still at a primitive stage, because she was still trying to relate “sex and drugs” to the local “underground” music.

Wong Jum Sum James (黃湛森/黃霑), has recorded the complex phenomenon of pop music in Hong Kong from 1949 to 1997 in The Rise and Decline of Cantopop: A Study of Hong Kong Popular Music (1949-1997) (《粵語流行曲的發展與興衰：香港流行音樂研究 (1949 - 1997) 》) (2003). He states that there has been an inseparable relationship between the mainstream and band music since the 1980s (Wong Jum Sum James, 2003: 157), in that many bands and lyricists, such as Albert Leung (林夕) (lyricist in the non-mainstream band Radias), Chan Siu Kei (陳少琪) and Chow Yiu Fai (周耀輝) (lyricists in the mainstream band Tat Ming Pair) and Beyond, who were originally from the “non-mainstream” music scene, have joined and contributed to the mainstream music scene in different aspects. Moreover, he disagrees with Adorno that mass production simply leads to standardization and homogeneity and to the false needs of passive audiences. He cites many songs as examples to show how music can be created with the use of a standardized format. With the use of a so-called “standardized” format, composers can still explore diverse musical elements by using different kinds of instrumental arrangements, orchestration, harmonies and chord progressions. While romantic love has become the most common theme of local pop music (Wong Jum Sum James, 2003: 25), the skills involved in writing lyrics, such as choices of words,
uses of rhyme and organization of the whole structure, can make the important difference between a poorly written and a well written love song.

Some first-hand information, written by indie practitioners, is valuable for capturing the real situations involved in being “indie” in Hong Kong. Blackbird has selected some articles, transcripts of interviews and records of its performance art (行為藝術), which were originally published in “Communiqué”, in Singing in the Dark and Silence (《在黑夜的死寂中歌唱》) (2007).

Hon Ka Chun, aka BFSH, founder of 89268, published a book called One on Ten (2007), in which he shares his views of operating an indie label and his relationships with ten indie bands he worked closely with. The book records how they got to know each other and some personal stories about them. When reading this book, I was deeply impressed by the friendship and bondage developed among them.

Heald (希爾德) has written an introductory book about the local indie music scene called Rock and Roll of Hong Kong Bands (《香港 Band 友樂與路》) (2011). The author conducted numerous interviews with indie artists and bands, such as Teddy Robin, Danny Summer, Paul Wong, Joey Tang and Patrick Lui from Taichi, LMF etc. The book covers quite a lot of issues relating to the indie music scene. However, this book does not provide any in-depth discussion of indie.

An online questionnaire, “A Questionnaire of Hong Kong Bands and Music

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23 The bands include The Darlings, Primary Shapes, The Pliable, Echo, OLIVER, InLove, Qui Hong, The Swamp, Natural Q and Gayamyan.
Culture in 2012” (《2012 年香港樂隊及音樂文化問卷調查》), was distributed by Rock Motel in 2012. A total of 1,070 people have completed this online questionnaire. Some of the findings reveal aspects of the actual situation of indie music in the early 21st century. To the question “which channel do you get information on band concerts from?” (「請問您通常在什麼地方取得樂隊音樂會的消息？」), the top three answers are 1) “Facebook”, selected by 97.9% of the total sample (1048 people); 2) “Website of bands”, selected by 63.2% (676 people), and 3) “YouTube”, chosen by 45.0% (481 people). This is an indication of the extent to which the internet, as a new medium, has somehow replaced the traditional mass media as a promotional platform for indie music.

In the above review of the relevant literature, a variety of views of the theoretical background to the study of indie music have been presented, showing that indie music is always in a situation of negotiation and struggle. However, some studies of local indie music are either introductory or rather out of date. It is my hope that the current research will contribute to the study of local indie music by providing a more comprehensive picture of local indie music in early 21st century Hong Kong.

1.4 Methodology

I adopted a mixed methods approach in this research. The main source of information was the primary data I collected from the local indie music scene using an ethnographical approach; this was supplemented by some useful...
secondary data which I used to supply the information I was unable to acquire from my primary sources. This study is based on fieldwork conducted within the local indie music scene, including attending indie shows, conducting formal interviews with indie labels and bands, collecting information from written materials such as concert posters, websites and published articles, and carrying out on-site observations. I attended not merely those concerts and activities organized by the targeted labels and bands, but also others by different groups. This helped me to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the current indie music scene. A list of the concerts and activities I attended during the research period are included as an appendix.

The interviews were a crucial source of information for this research. This is because through direct communication and interactions with insiders to the indie music scene, I was able to understand more about their backgrounds, what they think and how they feel. Some of the interviews were conducted as early as 2006 and 2007 during my research for my honours project. These interviews are still useful for the current research. My interviewees included 1) Chu Yiu Wai, a scholar of cultural studies; 2) Yuen Chi Chung, a renowned indie music critic and music curator, and 3) Wong Chi Chung, a scholar and music curator of the local music scene. They shared their views and perspectives on the history and development of the current indie music scene on a macro-scale. Other interviewees were 4) Hon Ka Chun, founder of 89268; 5) InLove, indie band of 89268; 6) Adrian Tsing and Gloria Tang, founders of M.I.F.F.; 7) Jennifer Chiang, producer of the M.I.F.F. concert; 8) Jesper Chan, Director of Redline Music, and Peri M, indie band of Redline Music; 9) Lenny Guo, core member of Blackbird, and 10) Terry Wong, Director of Black Market Music Production and a former
A&R manager of 89268. These indie insiders shared the real situations of operating local indie labels and their valuable opinions on the current indie music scene. Moreover, I invited Tsui Wan Ching, the Principal of the Hong Kong Music Institute, to share his views and opinions on the authenticity of local indie music. His opinions contribute to the musical analysis in this thesis. The interviewees shared many inspiring opinions regarding the development of the local indie music scene, but unfortunately the length, scope and focus of this thesis did not permit the inclusion and discussion of all of these opinions. Therefore, I have selected and translated only the most relevant parts of the transcripts into English, (the interviews were conducted in Chinese), in order to make the presentation more focused. Excerpts from the bilingual interviews are attached at the end of this thesis as appendices.

In order to acquire a deeper understanding of the indie music scene, I joined The Underground, an indie label established in 2004 by Chris B, as an intern from July to December 2011. I worked as music critic and translator for the label, including writing Chinese music critiques for indie releases and concerts and doing some translation work. My music critiques are all published on the label’s official website\(^25\) and on the Facebook pages or websites of the indie bands. Additionally, I worked as an investigator for the operation of the Asian Hitz channel of its musical partner, HKGFM.net, an international net-radio based in Hong Kong\(^26\). My duty was to investigate and give advice on its operation. Although The Underground has not been included in this thesis as a case study, the experience I gained from working for an indie label is still valuable.


I also used some secondary data sources, such as interviews found in newspapers, magazines and some non-academic publications, to provide answers to some of the questions I did not cover in my own interviews. The reason for this is that most of the interviews and fieldwork were conducted at the early stage of the research, but the structures and case studies used and described in this thesis were not confirmed until the final stage of the research. Secondary sources are used only when there are no primary data from my interviews available; for instance, the information on Harbour Records was gathered mainly from secondary sources, as Harbour Records was included as a case study near the final stage of the research period. However, I believe that this has not influenced the results of this research a great deal, because the data from Harbour Records were quite plentiful, owing to its relative popularity in the local music scene.

The following chapters will study the business practices of the cases under study: 89268, Redline Music, Harbour Records and M.I.F.F., and analyse the roles they have played in the Hong Kong music scene.
Chapter Two: Case Studies of Local Indie Labels: Business Practices and Promotion

Chapters two and three examine the business practices of four Hong Kong indie labels: 89268, Redline Music, Harbour Records and M.I.F.F.. The aim of these two chapters is to re-examine the independence of indie labels in this early part of the 21st century and to give the reader an understanding of the roles they play in the Hong Kong music scene. These local indie labels are put together so that comparisons can be made between their interactions with and influences on the mainstream music scene. In order to provide a comprehensive picture of how each label works, a marketing mix of the 4 “P”s—promotion, place, price and product—is used as a framework.

This chapter first describes the business operations and missions of the indie labels; then the first “P”, promotion, from the marketing mix is analysed. Several aspects are included in this “promotion” section, including distribution networks, support from the media, cross-promotion/commercial collaboration and e-marketing/use of the internet.

2.1 Business Practices of the Four Indie Labels

I will start by discussing the business operations of 89268. 89268, established in 2000, is a well organized indie label in Hong Kong, whose mission is “to promote indie culture to the masses” and “to make non-mainstream music become mainstream” (Hon interview). The company is divided into several sectors, as shown in the figure below.
As shown in the figure, 89268 has six divisions.

1. Artist management: it operates as an agency to manage its bands. Indie bands like Gayamyan, InLove, Oliver, The Darlings, The Pliable and The Swamp (from Guangzhou)²⁷ work closely with the label. It has worked with over a hundred local indie bands over the years (Hon Interview).

2 and 3. Indie distributor and retail store: “The Panic” was established as an indie music distributor and retail store to distribute local products, import foreign indie records and sell band lifestyle products.

4. Performance venue: it has created its own spaces as performance venues;

these are called “Lab Yellow” and “SiLouGongChang” (四樓工場), and are located in the industrial areas of Kowloon Bay and San Po Kong respectively. The function of these spaces is flexible. They can either be a space for its own uses, such as organizing live indie shows and exhibitions, or it can be rented out to other parties.

5. Music promotion: 89268 releases its latest news through its official website and blogs. It has also formed a fan scheme, “Club 8”, to keep its supporters updated directly.

6. Production house: 89268 has not only focused on the development of indie music, but has also extended its influence to non-indie sectors. It has established POPM, a design and marketing consultancy, providing event management and production for different sectors, such as organizing concerts for “alternative” artists in the mainstream and public sector events28.

A distinctive feature of the business operation of 89268 is its “vertical integration”, which means it has integrated vertically every section of the recording industry, from music production and distribution to retail. It is common for the majors to own pressing and distribution facilities; however, they have rarely attempted to own retail outlets because of the complexity of running retail stores and the uncertainty of music markets (Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 170). Some transnational or major retail chains, which are less flexible and unwilling to take the risk of promoting less well known artists, have become dominant in the local music

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28 The music production part of Freespace Fest, organized by the West Kowloon District Authority in 14-15 Dec 2013, is also managed by 89268/POPM.
retailing industry. Moreover, indie practitioners usually encounter difficulties with indie distributors, such as limited access to retail stores, which reduce the number of indie releases that can be sold. To deal with these difficulties, 89268 has established its own distribution network and retail stores, called The Panic. The vertical integration of 89268 helps it to retain its total independence, from music production to distribution.

Redline Music was founded in 2009 on the basis of the sustainability of Re:spect Magazine, a local bi-weekly music magazine, established in 2007. Unlike the vertical integration of 89268, the most distinctive feature of the business model of Redline Music is that it has horizontally integrated with a form of media, to promote indie music. The name of Redline Music explicitly reveals its mission—to act as a “redline”, “to act as a medium between indie music and the mainstream” (Redline interview).

The following figure illustrates the business operation of Redline Music, showing how it is horizontally integrated with Re:spect Magazine.
1. Artist management: Redline Music currently has two bands, Supper Moment and Peri M\(^{29}\), signed with it. These two bands were the champions of an indie music competition, “Re:spect x San Miguel x M1 Band Competition”, organized by Re:spect Magazine. Redline Music offers an artist management contract to the champion of this competition as a prize.

2. Music distribution: Redline Music has not developed its own distribution network, but it collaborates closely with a major label, East Asia Music Publishing Limited, to distribute releases by its indie bands. Peri M has also signed to East Asia Music as a singer-songwriter.

3. Music promotion: Re:spect Magazine covers the content of both mainstream and indie music. The ratio of mainstream to indie content is 7:3 (mainstream

\(^{29}\) Peri M has left Redline Music since December 2013.
music: indie music = 7:3). Printed copies are distributed free at some major record and music shops. An online version is available through paid subscriptions for audiences in Taiwan and mainland China. Each issue reaches an estimated total audience of 150,000. The magazine has helped to build up mainstream and commercial networks for indie labels and its bands.

Redline Music is an example of an indie label integrating horizontally with a publishing medium and collaborating with a major label, and thus providing wider opportunities for indie music.

Harbour Records was formed in 2004 by five local indie bands: 22 Cats, False Alarm, JoyTrendySound, My Little Airport (MLA), Human Head Horse and Kwan King Chung, a former band member of AMK. The mission of Harbour Records is to promote the indie spirit, as it was set up on the basis of dissatisfaction with an expanding commercialized mainstream pop music field and the disappearance of local cultures. Harbour Records has become more well known owing to the popularity of MLA. MLA is a duo formed by Ah P and Nicole in 2001. In 2007, an international online music guide website, allmusic.com, elected MLA as the “Twee-est band”. Yuen Chi Chung has acknowledged MLA as the “King of indie-pop” in Hong Kong and refers to the

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30 Distribution points included the major record shops HMV, Hong Kong Records, CD Warehouse and Sky Music, and the major music shops Tom Lee and Parson Music etc. Printed copies are distributed free on the first and fifteenth of every month.

31 According to Kwan King Chung, “compared with other indie labels, Harbour Records is far from a business. It is more like a spirit”. (Yuen Chi Chung (袁智聰). “Calling for an Autonomy Across Times: Discussing an Ecology of Hong Kong Indie Music (〈劃時代自主呼聲—探討香港獨立音樂發展生態〉.” CforCulture).

32 It released its first album “The OK Thing to Do on Sunday Afternoon is to Toddle in the Zoo” in 2004 after setting up Harbour Records. It published six solo albums from 2004 to 2012.

“phenomenon of MLA” that has been formed, at local, regional and international levels. When he talks about the “phenomenon of MLA”, he is referring to the fact that non-Cantonese speaking audiences learn Cantonese because of MLA. The places mentioned in its songs have become tourist attractions for foreign MLA supporters when visiting Hong Kong\(^{34}\). Therefore, in the case study of Harbour Records, I describe mainly how MLA operates, with the help of Harbour Records, as MLA is one of the most successful (in terms of popularity and sustainability) indie bands in early 21\(^{st}\) century Hong Kong.

1. Music production: MLA has set up a “bedroom” studio in an industrial building in Ngau Tau Kok. Setting up a home or bedroom studio has become relatively

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\(^{34}\) The places mentioned in MLA’s songs included Lai Chi Kok Park, Mei Foo, Kowloon Tong, the swimming pool in Kowloon Park, Admiralty MTR station, Ngau Tau Kok and the Sino Centre. MLA has toured several times in mainland China and Taiwan. (Yuen Chi Chung. “Insist on Your Own Voice (《堅持自己的聲音》).” City Magazine (《號外》)).
affordable since the development of advanced recording technology\textsuperscript{35}.

2. Music dissemination: MLA has mainly promoted its new music through YouTube and Facebook. Using new media to promote music has become popular in the music scene, but the music of MLA posted on YouTube has attracted as many as 100,000 clicks, which is a very encouraging figure for a local indie band.

3. Music distribution: Harbour Records has relied on its own efforts to distribute its music. Moreover, it has developed some joint distribution networks with national and overseas indie distributors, so MLA’s music has spread widely to Taiwan, China and some European cities.

4. Concerts/touring: MLA has toured in Taiwan and mainland China several times. The band has achieved a relatively desirable model, in that after it has concentrated on music production for a certain period of time, it organizes concert tours to promote its music and interact with audiences. This model has succeeded in making MLA sustainable since the band was established.

5. Entering a commercial field: in 2008, MLA established a music company called “Don’t Tell My Boss Productions” for tailor-making one-minute long commercial jingles for commercial companies. Its clients include some big local companies, such as PCCW and Ever Learning Tutor, a tutorial centre\textsuperscript{36}.

\textsuperscript{35} What an indie artist needs to produce music can be as simple as a digital keyboard with a midi interface, such as USB cables, which can be connected to a PC or Macbook, and a midi sequencing program, such as Digital Performer, Logic Pro or Cubase for Macbook users, and Cubase, Cakewalk or Sonar for PC users. The setup cost can be as low as a few thousand Hong Kong dollars. (Lecture notes of 3D Composers, a music composition class organized by a professional studio Takumi Works)

\textsuperscript{36} PCCW is the largest Information and Communications Technologies company in Hong Kong, and is owned by the Lee family. Ever Learning Tutor is a local a tutorial centre. For
Instead of developing as a well organized and formal indie label, Harbour Records have operated as a cooperative and the members work as amateurs\(^{37}\). A cooperative is defined as an autonomous association of persons who voluntarily cooperate for their mutual social, economic and cultural benefit\(^{38}\).

In the operation of Harbour Records, it is more like a group of friends helping each other\(^{39}\). Working as a cooperative or as amateurs is a common situation among indie bands, but Harbour Records, especially MLA, has operated successfully in this way. The trend for indie participants to work as members of a cooperative has become common in the development of indie music. According to Terry Wong, “more indie labels tend to operate as cooperatives now. They only operate when needed” (Wong, Terry interview). Harbour Records is not as well organized as 89268 or Redline Music, but each member is responsible for different roles and positions according to their skills and talents. Although Harbour Records operates as a cooperative on a relatively small scale, its business practice is sustainable and successful.

M.I.F.F. was founded by two indie artists, Adrian Tsing and Gloria Tang, in 2008. M.I.F.F. has developed a comprehensive model by dividing the company into three sectors: school, records and stage, under a “free-pricing” concept, namely, commercial songs produced by “Don’t Tell My Boss Productions”, see “Don’t Tell My Boss Productions” \(<\text{http://www.mylittleairport.com/donttellmybossproductions.htm}>\)\(^{37}\). Kwan King Chung and Ah P said in a talk called “City Festival 2011: Record or DIY” on 7 May 2011, moderated by Yuen Chi Chung and organized by the Fringe Club, that each member of Harbour Records spent $3,000 in order to start the label. Any surplus money on each project is accumulated for subsequent projects. Therefore, the operation of Harbour Records is less formal. “Cooperative,” Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. n.p., n.d.. Web. 10 April 2013. \(<\text{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooperative}>\)\(^{38}\).

Ah P explained the reason why they established Harbour Records as being that “it is bothersome to publish an album, such as writing a proposal and preparing press interviews, so we have formed an indie label with other bands to do it together.” (Yuen Chi Chung: Calling for an Autonomy Across Times: Discussing an Ecology of Hong Kong Indie Music)
that music should be “free” to everyone. According to this concept, participants (students and audiences) pay $1 or above for music tuition (school), buying albums (records) and concert tickets (stage), depending on their financial ability. All M.I.F.F. members, including artists from the M.I.F.F. stage sector and teachers from the M.I.F.F. school, work as volunteers. The figure below shows the inter-relationships between the three sectors of this model.

![Diagram of the 360-Degree Model: M.I.F.F. School, Records, and Stage](image)

1. M.I.F.F. School
   - Bring potential buyers of releases; students making own songs published under M.I.F.F. records

2. M.I.F.F. Records
   - Bring potential buyers of releases; students making own songs published under M.I.F.F. records

3. M.I.F.F. Stage
   - Bring potential students
   - Bring performers and audiences (M.I.F.F. students, parents and friends) to concerts
   - Boost number of sales of M.I.F.F. releases

Figure 8. Business practice of M.I.F.F.: 360-Degree Model: M.I.F.F. School, Records and Stage

The 360-degree model originally refers to how record companies represent all aspects of an artist’s career, including touring, licensing, endorsements and merchandise (Anderson, 2009: 156). This is an alternative business arrangement to the traditional recording contract, designed to compensate for loss of income...
arising from the decrease in the number of releases being sold in the first decade of the 21st century. M.I.F.F. has established its own 360-degree model, a self-sufficient and self-contained model that may possibly contribute to a comprehensive and healthy development of the music scene. It does not just assist in music production and artist management, but has also expanded into music education by nurturing both music performers and audiences through music tuition and participating in performances.

1. M.I.F.F. School: M.I.F.F. provides music tuition under the free-pricing concept, so that students pay according to their financial capability. It offers diverse types of music tuition, ranging from pop to classical music and from practical to theoretical. The aim of the M.I.F.F. School is to make music education widely available, to raise the musical appreciation ability of its students and to nurture music supporters and audiences.

2. M.I.F.F. Records: The first and only indie band, Pork, formed in 2006, released its first EP, called “Genesis” in June 2009 with M.I.F.F. records. This EP and Adrian Tsing’s previously released albums (the releases published before the establishment of M.I.F.F.) are also sold under the free-pricing concept.

3. M.I.F.F. Stage: M.I.F.F. has organized two concerts under the “free-pricing” concept since its establishment. The first one was called “Let Music be Free” and the second one was entitled “We Make Proud Music”; they were

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41 The music tuition offered by the M.I.F.F. School includes pop and classical piano, saxophone, composition, writing lyrics, vocals, violin, guitar and bass.

42 The band members of Pork are Perry Sham, Chun Son Tam, Richard Wang and Kin Son Tam, who are former students of Adrian Tsing.
organized at Hang Out\textsuperscript{43} in August 2009 and May 2010 respectively. All artists playing in the concerts were volunteers. Therefore, artist fees, which are normally the most expensive part of the total production costs of a concert, were waived. M.I.F.F. was thus able to break even on these two concerts, since the revenue (obtained by asking audiences to put money in a collection box) could be used to cover the costs of other fixed expenditure, such as venue rental, rental of sound equipment and the cost of printing promotional pamphlets\textsuperscript{44}.

M.I.F.F. has thus implemented the idea of free pricing in the operation of its school, records and concert sectors. However, the operation of M.I.F.F. has been highly dependent on the volunteering of its members, which is indeed neither an ideal nor a sustainable model.

Each indie label has its own distinctive characteristics. 89268 and Redline Music are more well organized and more formal indie labels which have set daily operations and a clear division of labour. The operations of Harbour Records and M.I.F.F. are less formal. Harbour Records and M.I.F.F. are run as cooperatives, and their members work as amateurs and even as volunteers. Operating as cooperatives and working as amateurs may be regarded as a struggle in term of security; but may also be regarded as an opportunity, as it enables them to choose the best moments and take the best opportunities to launch their projects after saving enough capital and resources. This flexibility helps them to cope with financial difficulties more easily, thus making them more willing to take risks and

\textsuperscript{43} Hang Out is a popular indie music performance venue located in Sai Wai Ho.
\textsuperscript{44} The total production costs of the first and second concerts were $8,000-10,000 and $28,000 respectively. M.I.F.F. members regard the production costs of its concerts as the cheapest in Hong Kong. (M.I.F.F. and Chiang interviews)
bring innovative ideas to their music production and operational levels.

2.2 Promotion

In this section, as part of my re-examination of the independence of indie music, the first “P”, promotion, is divided into several aspects: distribution networks, support from the media, cross-promotion/commercial collaboration and e-marketing/use of the internet.

2.2.1 Distribution Networks

89268 has put more emphasis on developing an indie distribution network. It has vertically integrated and developed an indie distributor and retail store, The Panic, in order to be able to exert full control over all aspects - from music production to distribution. It does not just distribute local indie music, but also import foreign indie releases. Conversely, Redline Music has depended on a major distributor, but has focused more on developing and managing a publishing medium. Whether using major distributors diminishes the independence of indie music is the subject of debate; however, the use of either indie or major distributors is not the only factor influencing the independence of indie labels. Harbour Records and M.I.F.F. have also relied on their own efforts to distribute their releases, but with a vast difference in effectiveness.

Under the influence of the punk movement’s DIY manifesto in the period between the mid- to late-1970s, the distribution network became a key factor in determining the independence of indie music in the UK recording industry. The
punk movement and its DIY ethics encouraged people to make and distribute music through their own efforts, acting as a rebellious movement against the mass production of mainstream music (Fonarow, 2006: 33).

Under this philosophy, large numbers of independent distribution networks were then set up in the UK. The “indie” distribution network then referred to a network that was not owned by TNCs or the majors (Fonarow, 2006: 30). Music could be included in the “indie” charts if it was distributed by the indie distribution network. The mode of distribution is an institutional principle that is still employed to define indie music in the UK, the US and Japan today.

However, the majors have manipulated the indie distribution networks. As developing an indie band is an effective means of introducing them to the marketplace, the majors developed a number of “indie” labels and “indie” distribution networks to distribute their music (Fonarow, 2006: 37). Music produced by the majors but distributed using the “indie” distribution network could still be included in the indie charts. In contrast, music produced by indie labels but distributed through mainstream distribution networks would be excluded from the indie charts (Fonarow, 2006: 38).

Using the mode of distribution to determine whether music is indie or not is problematic and not sufficiently comprehensive; it can, however be used as a reference when attempting to understand Hong Kong indie music.

One of the major challenges for local indie artists is how to distribute their music. David Hesmondhalgh has said that “the thing to do is to get your own distribution
network, then you've got control, you've got power” (Fonarow, 2006: 33-34). 89268 identified the weaknesses of indie distributors and tried to gain control by creating a comprehensive distribution network.

The Panic, as an indie distributor, helped to distribute indie bands’ releases and to import releases by foreign indie bands into Hong Kong. It successfully expanded its network to Taiwan and attracted the attention and interest of the Taiwan music scene to HK indie bands in Taiwan. The indie releases of 89268, including Oliver’s “Freddy & King” and The Pliable’s “Parallel” (both of these bands being signed to 89268) have been put on the recommendation list of the Eslite music store (BFSH, 2007: 122). Through the network created by The Panic, 89268 also created bonds with bands from other cities, including Echo from Taiwan and The Swamp from Guangzhou. 89268 has enriched the local music scene by bringing these indie bands with their unique musical styles to Hong Kong. The Swamp, which has integrated the guqin, a Chinese musical instrument, into rock music, is unique in the Hong Kong music scene. The music of The Swamp is analysed in chapter four.

Apart from being an indie distributor, The Panic was created as a retail store selling local, regional and international indie music, band lifestyle products and limited edition music magazines. It was also a social space for indie participants and supporters. Staff from The Panic, who were experts on local and foreign indie music, would happily recommend the music of their favourite indie bands. The Panic provided less known local indie bands with an alternative to the unfavourable conditions of major retail outlets and created a space where people were encouraged to exchange music and to explore new and alternative music.
However, The Panic had to be relocated several times. It moved from the Hong Kong Arts Centre and Tsim Sha Tsui to an upstairs shop in Mong Kok, and finally to Lab Yellow in Kowloon Bay. These were all eventually closed down one by one\textsuperscript{45}.

Although The Panic has closed down, 89268 brought some unexpected influence to bear on both the local and Taiwan music scenes. It introduced Oliver to Taiwan, and he later set up another indie label called Black Market Music Production, with Terry Wong, in 2011. Black Market Music Production organized “Taiwan Calling”\textsuperscript{46} (a live music festival) in Hong Kong for three consecutive years between 2011 to 2013. It invited many renowned Taiwanese indie bands to perform, aiming to bring the ambiance of a Taiwanese music festival to the Hong Kong music scene.

\textsuperscript{45} The Panic was first located on the ground floor of the Hong Kong Arts Centre in Wanchai, and there was also one in Tsim Sha Tsui. Owing to the rapid increase in rental fees, The Panic then moved to an upstairs shop in Mong Kok. The Panic later moved back to the headquarters of 89268, Lab Yellow and SiLouGongChang, located in the industrial districts.

\textsuperscript{46} “Taiwan Calling” was organized from 2011-2013 (three years). “Taiwan Calling (呼叫音樂節)” FaceBook of Taiwan Calling. n.p., n.d.. Web. 26 Jan 2014. <https://www.facebook.com/taiwancalling?ref=br_tf>
While 89268 has focused more on developing an indie distributor, Redline Music sought the collaboration of a major label, East Asia Music Publishing Limited, to take over the distribution of their releases. Using major distributors, which have already developed well established channels, can help to widen the market for indie music. Some indie bands and labels regard major distributors as a significant factor in their survival. However, according to the definition of the British recording industry, Redline Music should not be regarded as “indie” label because it has given control over its distribution to a major label. This may be another way for the majors to exert control over the music marketplace, not merely by signing artists, but also by controlling the channels of distribution. Major distributors can also build up their reputations by demonstrating their tolerance of “others” through their support for “indie” labels.
However, rather than destroying its “independence”, using major distributors should be beneficial to an indie label. “Distribution is at least superficially the relationship that an independent label can enter into with a major label that is less threatening to an independent label’s image of integrity” (Fonarow, 2006: 41). The main reason for this is that within this relationship the major company (in this case, East Asia Music Publishing Limited) does not attempt to interfere in the musical production of the indie artist (Peri M from Redline Music in this case), but instead makes their already established distribution system available to the artist. This mainstream-indie relationship can be mutually beneficial, as the major can maintain a constant flow of products, while an indie label like Redline Music can get significant quantities of releases into chain and retail outlets.

Harbour Records has expanded the market through joint distribution and collaboration with other regional and international indie labels and distributors. MLA has distributed its releases through indie distributors in mainland China, Taiwan, Korea and also in Spain through Elefant Records, a Spanish indie label. Therefore, MLA’s music has also spread to Europe (MLA’s lyrics are in either Cantonese or English). BMX Bandits, an indie band in Scotland, covered MLA’s song “You Don’t Wanna be My Girlfriend, Phoebe” in 2008.

The collaborations between these national and international indie labels and distributors function as “affinity groups”. “An Affinity group is usually a small group of activists (usually from 3-20) who work together on direct action. Affinity groups are organized in a non-hierarchical manner, usually using consensus
decision making, and are often made up of trusted friends. They provide a method of organization that is flexible and decentralized. These indie distributors from different cities, who share similar goals, and who have gained virtually total control over all aspects from music production to distribution, have united and formed an influential and sometimes unexpected power. The spreading of MLA’s music to Europe is an indication of the power of these indie distributors, a decentralized power which can sometimes help to offset the power of the majors and the mainstream music scene.

As a result of its free-pricing concept, it is difficult for M.I.F.F. to distribute its releases through any indie or major distributors or to sell its releases in “formal” retail stores because there is no set price for its releases and no guaranteed income. Therefore, it only sells its releases at live shows and from online platforms, mainly through its blog. As a result, it is not particularly influential in the music scene.

In summary, 89268, Harbour Records and M.I.F.F. have depended on their own efforts to distribute indie releases. 89268 made a major contribution in developing The Panic to distribute various local indie releases. The Panic was beneficial not just to the indie bands signed with 89268, but also to the indie music scene as a whole. Major retail stores may put indie releases in a more obvious place or agree to hold more copies when they know there is a market demand. However, indie distributors will be more supportive of indie releases because they are less

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49 When the EP was still at the production stage, M.I.F.F. started promoting it on its blog. When the EP was finished, audiences could order it online, through its blog and by email, and pay for it by paypal or through bank transfer.
concerned with the mainstream market. They will try to create a market demand for the music, rather than just attempting to satisfy existing market demands. Harbour Records, especially in the case of MLA, is an excellent example of how the music of local indie bands can be spread to regional and international levels. Sometimes, indie distribution networks (the joint distribution networks of Harbour Records, for instance) can be much more powerful than the networks of the majors (as in the case of Peri M’s releases, distributed by East Asia Music).

2.2.2 Support from the Media

There is always only a limited amount of support for indie music by the mainstream media. Indie labels can rarely afford to advertise their music in the mainstream media, since the promotion costs are so high. Indie music seldom gets coverage from them unless it includes some gimmick or is on a topic that attracts the interest of the mainstream media. With regard to the support of the mainstream media, 89268, Harbour Records and M.I.F.F. have played a passive role, while Redline Music have been more active, by developing its own publication, Re:spect Magazine.

89268 published an indie magazine called “Tripper”50 and an online magazine called “stand.com”51 but these magazines were not able to last for very long. Apart from publishing its own magazines to promote indie music, 89268 has tried to bring indie bands to the mainstream music scene with the help of mainstream media. InLove, for instance, tried to gain more exposure by the mainstream media;

50 89268 started “Tripper”, a printed magazine, in 2003, but it ceased publication in 2006. 10 issues were published.
51 89268 launched “stand.com”, an online magazine in 2006, but this has now ceased publication.
Dicky and Tze Lok, guitarists in the band, provided guitar accompaniment for major artists in musical events organized by the *South China Morning Post* and Commercial Radio CR2 FM 903, and InLove has performed several times on TVB music programmes. 89268 and InLove have thus tried to use the mainstream media to promote the music; however, indie music has never become popular in the mainstream music scene.

MLA initially tried to get the support of the mainstream media by sending them a demo of “The OK Thing to Do on Sunday Afternoon is to Toddle in the Zoo”. The song succeeded in reaching the top 10 of CR2’s Ultimate 903 music chart and the top 20 of the CR1 chart in 2004. This song also hit HMV’s top selling chart at number 19. Furthermore, the song was used in a locally produced film called “Beyond Our Ken”, directed by Pang Ho Cheung Edmond in 2004.

There are commercial concerns and constraints on disc jockeys to choose which songs to play and the mass media are always a site of competition for the major labels (Chu, 2002: 137). MLA subsequently no longer tried to gain the support of the mainstream media; instead, it now efficiently and effectively disseminates its music through the new social media.

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52 Dicky and Tze Lok were invited to provide guitar accompaniment for Alex Fong (方力申), Yan Ng (吳日言) and Edmond Leung (梁漢文) in musical events organized by the *South China Morning Post* and CR2 FM903 in June 2005. In November 2004, InLove performed at the Ultimate Song Chart Awards Presentation 2004, organized by CR2 FM903. In August 2005, Dicky played guitar for Stephy Tang’s live radio show called “Going Home and Having Fun Upstairs” (《好回家樓上行樂》). In December 2005, InLove performed twice in the “Viva Music Concert” (《音樂潮拜》) organized by TVB Music. In March 2005, InLove were invited as guests to perform on the TVB music programme “Jade Solid Gold” (《勁歌金曲-五湖四海》). (InLove profile provided by 89268)

MLA happened to attract the attention of the mainstream media through two events caused by its two topical songs: “Divvying Up Stephen Lam’s $300000 Salary” and “Donald Tsang, Please Die”, written by MLA in 2009, at a time when Hong Kong was experiencing a series of political instabilities. The first event took place on 3 June 2009, when Lam Sui Lung, Stephen, who was the Chief Secretary for Administration of Hong Kong, visited Taiwan. China Times, a TV news programme in Taiwan, used “Divvying Up Stephen Lam’s $300000 Salary” (《瓜分林瑞麟三十萬薪金》) as background music when reporting the news of his visit.

In the same year, MLA was inspired to write “Donald Tsang, Please Die” after Tsang Yam Kuen, Donald, the second Chief Executive and President of the Executive Council of Hong Kong from 2005 to 2012, said that the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989 were an insignificant event compared with China’s current economic power. When Tsang Chun Wah, John, the current Financial Secretary of Hong Kong since 2007, visited the Eslite flagship store in Taipei in 2009, the song “Donald Tsang, Please Die” was chosen to be played for him when he was being encouraged to listen to some music there. He put down the headset immediately after listening to the first few lines of lyric. This news was reported by some gossip columnists in the local mainstream media. After that MLA

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became more well known to the masses.

Indie music can never play anything but a passive role with respect to the mainstream media, which will only report something they consider to have “news value”. M.I.F.F. has faced the same situation. It attracted quite a lot of mainstream media coverage in 2009 when the “free-pricing” idea was still new in Hong Kong. However, when it organized the second concert, the media showed no interest in reporting it (Chiang interview). 89268, Harbour Records and M.I.F.F. have all tried to obtain the help of the mainstream media in promoting indie music, but none of them has been very successful in doing so.

In the absence of much support from the mainstream media and in light of the fact that there were no sustainable music magazines in Hong Kong, Re:spect Magazine was started with the mission of reviving local music publications, and aiming to create a channel through which to promote both mainstream and indie music (Redline interview).

Re:spect Magazine has covered information on indie music, such as introducing new indie releases, providing a column called “Bandzone” for bands to share their news directly and promoting indie band shows. Since Re:spect Magazine is distributed free to audiences, it depends on income from a “third-party market”, which is the commonest marketing strategy nowadays. The term “third-party market” refers to the fact that three parties are involved in the market: providers, consumers and advertisers. If providers do not gain profits directly from the users.

58 There were several influential music magazines in Hong Kong, such as “Music Week”, “Guitar Magazine” and “Bi-weekly Rock Magazine” ("搖滾雙周") in the 1980s, “Quotables” (“豁達音樂誌向”) and MCB in the 1990s. All of them have now ceased publication.
of their products, they may receive an income from the third party, the advertisers. However, it is expected that it is the users who will ultimately pay the bill through different channels (Anderson, 2009: 24). Therefore, in order to ensure that its circulation is wide enough to attract advertisers and sponsors, the ratio of mainstream to indie content in Re:spect Magazine is set at 7:3, with the aim of attracting audiences from the mainstream to indie music. Re:spect Magazine provides a platform from which indie music can receive exposure and it strategically promotes indie music to audiences\(^{59}\). However, it includes only a limited number of in-depth articles on or reviews of indie music, thus failing to give audiences a comprehensive picture of indie music. This imbalance between mainstream and indie content means that Re:spect Magazine has become just another channel or site for mainstream music to occupy and manipulate, thus extending the major record companies’ scope to include alternative music audiences.

Although Re:spect Magazine fails to promote indie music fairly, it does succeed in reallocating resources from the mainstream and commercial fields\(^{60}\) to sustain the operations of both the magazine and the label, thereby maintaining a stable and constant platform for indie music.

One of the examples of its commercial collaborations is its partnership with Tom

\(^{59}\) The cover stories in Re:spect Magazine are always about mainstream artists, such as MC Jin in issue 028 (15 Jan 2009), Hacken Lee in issue 069 (1 Oct 2010), Gary Chaw in issue 070 (15 Oct 2010), Gin Lee in issue 095 (1 Nov 2011) and Coldplay in issue 131 (1 Dec 2012).

\(^{60}\) Advertisements include music stores like HMV and Tom Lee, classical music organizations like Hong Kong Sinfonietta, arts-related departments of property companies like Taikoo’s Artistree and the governmental department LCSD, sub-products of music such as electronic products and sound equipment, and non-music related products like watches, clothing, travel agencies and wedding planners. Information retrieved from the following issues of Re:spect Magazine I was able to obtain during my research period: 028, 069, 070, 083, 089, 095, 096, 098 and 121, published from 2009 to 2012.
Lee. Tom Lee does not just advertise in the magazine, but it also provided venue and equipment sponsorship for Peri M’s first concert. The concert was held at the Tom Lee Academy Hall, a relatively new performance venue, established in 2007 and located at the Mega Box in Kowloon Bay. Audiences needed to take a shuttle bus from the MTR station to this distant location. This partnership may be seen as mutually beneficial, because while Tom Lee provided Peri M with a venue, in return Peri M helped to introduce this new venue to audiences.

Peri M has worked with many musicians and performed at many occasions. This resourceful network developed by Redline Music and Re:spect Magazine is important for the growth of an indie band, and can be seen in some obvious improvements in Peri M’s performances.

Redline Music organized Peri M’s first concert - “Rainbow Tears” (《彩虹淚》) - on 29 Oct 2010 at the Tom Lee Academy Hall. The programme was smoothly arranged. The band members put all their energy into the performance, with the powerful voice of Aeolus and good technical skills of the pianist, Eunice. The musical part of the show was generally good, although not particularly impressive. The most exciting part of the whole concert was in fact the performance given by its guest performers, MC Jin and MC KT, two local rappers. They sang two songs, one was their own song and the other was a cover of one of Peri M’s songs, “Revenge” (《報復》). Their performance really heated up the atmosphere, but after they left it cooled down immediately. This dramatic change in atmosphere revealed a common problem with new bands, which is that they lack the

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61 For instance, Peri M has collaborated with the renowned musician Peter Kam Pui Tat (金培達) and performed at Tom Lee’s band shows and Langham Place (朗豪坊).
experience necessary to build up an atmosphere in their shows owing to a shortage of opportunities to perform.

By the time Peri M put on another solo concert, called “Peri M@Skyhigh music concert (《天比高圍你音樂會》)”, and co-presented by Redline Music, Re:spect Magazine and Skyhigh Creative Partners on 10 Jan 2012, it had become more mature and experienced. The band was more confident about the music it played and it could really move the audience with its own music (rather than having to rely on its guests to do so).

Although Redline Music and Re:spect Magazine have been largely dependent on commercial advertisements to sustain them, thus limiting their operations, they do provide more platforms and channels for indie bands. Their problems are typical of the struggles and dilemmas indie music is always having to confront in this early part of the 21st century.

2.2.3 Cross-promotion/Commercial Collaboration

Simon Frith predicted that there would be three parallel musical worlds in the age of advanced technology. First, the mainstream pop/rock business would continue to dominate the market (in the local Hong Kong music scene, rock music is still not a mainstream musical genre). Second, an essentially chaotic illegal business would be developed to act as an anti-commercial power. Third, artists would be connected together by the web in a semi-commercial genre music scene (Frith, 2001: 50). Although Frith does not expand on how these three musical worlds will operate, or on the inter-connections between them, he does point out that with the
growth of technology the music scene is becoming more complicated than ever before. The musical worlds are not simply divided in a state of mutual opposition, but are working in parallel and creating more possibilities and opportunities.

The operations of indie labels in the early 21st century are illustrative of this complicated relationship between the commercial (mainstream music scene), semi-commercial and anti-commercial musical worlds. They do not just focus on developing indie music, but also widen their scope to include other, non-musical aspects to create a “synergy”, a word originating from a medical term. This means that two or more elements work together to produce a result greater than the sum of the two or more parts (Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 166). 89268 has taken an interdisciplinary approach, integrating different art forms, to bring more interesting elements to the music scene and enlarge the audience segment of indie music.

89268 has extended its field to include a variety of arts disciplines, including literature, photography, tee (a representation of lifestyle), logos and other interdisciplinary arts.
1. Interdisciplinary arts: 89268 invited artists from different arts disciplines, including a photographer, an illustrator, a designer and indie bands from Hong Kong and Taiwan\(^{62}\), to contribute to an exhibition called “HEROES: Just For One Day”. The artists were invited to provide artworks on a specific topic: heroes. Above is the poster for “HEROES: Just For One Day”.

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\(^{62}\) Artists invited included a photographer BFSH (Black Face Skin Hair) (Hon Ka Chun) and Ngai Wing Hong, a fine arts artist Yeung Chi Hang(楊智恒), the collector Fattree, the local street art community Start from Zero, Bild, KS, the designer Kion, the musician Dicia, the Taiwanese musician Pochang Wu (吳柏蒼) and the local indie band Starfruit.
2. Texts + Music: 89268 has published a book entitled “Prelude” (《Prelude：2005 香港藝術節--埃克森美孚新視野「東主有喜」紀念讀本》) written by Nan He Lu (南和路), a local writer. The stories are about indie band members. 89268 distributed this book to the audience at a concert called “Come Out & Play”, organized in 26-27 Feb 2005 at the Concert Hall, Hong Kong City Hall. Above is the book cover of “Prelude”.

Figure 12. Poster of one of Photo exhibitions, organized by 89268, entitled “boo”.

Figure 11. Book cover of “Prelude”, published by 89268 in 2005.
3. Photography + Music: The founder of 89268, Hon Ka Chun, is a professional photographer. Photography is a strong medium to help audiences to understand the power of an indie band show by capturing some exciting moments of the performance. 89268 has organized several photo exhibitions in Lab Yellow and the Fringe Club. Above is the poster of one of the exhibitions, entitled “boo”.

Figure 13. Poster of tee exhibition (left) and some tee designs (right).
4. Tee + Music: 89268 invited artists from different arts disciplines to design a band “tee”. Tee can be regarded as a representation of lifestyle. 89268 organized a tee exhibition to promote tee culture in December 2006. Poster of tee exhibition and some tee designs.

![Figure 14. Poster for the logo exhibition, organized by 89268 in 2006.](image)

5. Logo + Music: A logo is used to represent a band’s style, but is seldom regarded as a proper art form. 89268 organized a logo exhibition for its Arts Director, Kion Chan, in November 2006 in Artland, a local art supplier. Above is the poster for the logo exhibition.

This integration of arts disciplines by 89268 has succeeded in creating a type of cross-promotion, bringing artists and audiences from different arts backgrounds together. Apart from relating indie music to other arts disciplines, 89268 has
played an important role in helping indie bands to market its music. It has
developed collaborations with commercial companies like “Beck’s”, an
international beer brand, and “The United Colours of Benetton”, a fashion brand.
For instance, Beck’s has chosen a song from 89268’s indie band for its official
website. The commercial companies may provide monetary or non-monetary
sponsorship for concerts or musical production; in return they may use the songs
to advertise their commercial products. In this indie-commercial relationship,
commercial companies do not have the right to interfere with the artistic direction
of the musical production of the bands. 89268 consciously selects and collaborates
with commercial companies which will suit the image of its bands. 89268 has
managed to achieve a good balance between artistic and commercial concerns,
and these commercial collaborations can add value to the images of both its bands
and commercial partners.

MLA has achieved a similar balance in commercial collaboration. While 89268
has identified a market for indie music after the music has been produced, MLA
manages to preserve its original style even when tailor-making music for
commercial use. In 2008 it established a music company called “Don’t Tell My
Boss Productions” to tailor-make one-minute long commercial jingles for
commercial uses. Its clients include major local companies like PCCW and Ever
Learning Tutor. The music written for PCCW to advertise its wireless internet
service is not very different from its original songs. A fluent and playful melody in
the original style of MLA perfectly matches the concept of the advertisement – a

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63 MLA has written a song - “Poor People Sell Themselves” (窮人賣屎忽) - to promote its commercial music company.
<http://www.mylittleairport.com/donttellmybossproductions.htm>
man in a sitting posture and using his “notebook” while at the same time flying out of his house, indicating the stability and smoothness of the wireless service.

Some pop songs, tailor-made for commercial advertisements, can be regarded as commercial songs, although some of these commercial songs are more successful than others. A good commercial song can serve a commercial purpose and at the same time help to add cultural value to pop songs (Chu interview; Fung and Chen, 2012: 58 and 81). In other words, the song can meaningfully relate to the goals or missions of the bands or to topics they are concerned about. 89268 and Harbour Records have been able to strike a balance between commercial and artistic considerations in this kind of commercial collaboration. Redline Music has also related indie music to commercial markets, but it is not as successful as 89268 and Harbour Records.

Peri M from Redline Music has participated in some commercialized activities. The band became a spokesperson for “The 15th Hong Kong Secondary School Cooking Competition” (第十五屆全港中學生烹飪比賽), organized by Lisa magazine in April 2013. They did not merely compose a theme song entitled “A Taste of Life” (《味道生活》) to promote the competition, but also attended the opening ceremony of the competition and played games with the secondary school students.
“A Taste of Life”, however, was tailor-made for this function. The meaning of the song only suits the commercial purpose, and contains no other meaningful messages. Attending this kind of commercial function is also irrelevant to the development of the images of the bands and indie music. Music practitioners from both the indie and mainstream music scenes always need to compromise with the market and also with reality; however, what is important for music practitioners is how they are able to bring innovative elements or new insights to the music scene. From this perspective, this commercial collaboration between Redline Music and Lisa magazine unfortunately failed to achieve this for the current music scene. It is not only this particular collaboration which leads me to come to this conclusion regarding Redline Music and Peri M, but rather, the general approach of Redline Music, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, is too market-oriented, and as a result fails to have much positive influence on the music scene.

The members of M.I.F.F., Adrian Tsing and Gloria Tang, have also developed
different kinds of indie-mainstream/commercial relationship, as both have worked as commercial musicians and worked closely with the mainstream music scene.

Adrian Tsing works as a full-time musician composing commercial jingles, and he has established his studio called “Do Music Limited” in order to support him as an indie artist and to operate M.I.F.F.65 The other founder of M.I.F.F, Gloria Tang, has become actively involved in the mainstream music scene. She joined the mainstream music scene as a backing vocalist and supporting keyboardist for mainstream concerts. She also composes music for commercial advertisements66. Gloria released her latest album, called “My Voice Story”, in August 2012 under musicNEXTT67, a recording company which is a wholly owned subsidiary of WSM Music Group Ltd, a major entertainment company in Hong Kong. The album has been promoted as a “high density audiophile recording” (HD), which requires higher musical techniques from artists and aims to pursue higher aesthetic values in music. When many mainstream artists are being promoted as “all-round” artists, for instance, by participating in films and being spokespersons for commercial products, the term “singer” may have already lost its meaning. There are groups of artists in the indie music scene who are “true” singers/artists, playing different roles in the mainstream music scene and contributing their musical talents.

Adrian Tsing and Gloria Tang are obvious examples of indie artists living in three parallel musical worlds, which are inter-dependent and inseparable. It is

65 Adrian was signed by a major label in Hong Kong as a songwriter in the early stage of his musical career. He later quit, because he was frustrated with being asked to compose “karaoke-style” pop music. (M.I.F.F. interview)
impossible to determine which single musical world they belong to; indeed, they belong to all three musical worlds. Their fluid identities give rise to more opportunities for developing their musical careers and for contributing to the three parallel musical worlds in different ways. The boundaries of the three musical worlds are not as obvious as before.

The above discussion has shown that the development of an indie-commercial/mainstream relationship is not necessarily going to lead to the destruction of the meaning of indie music. Instead, when we re-examine the independence of indie music we should attempt to understand how this kind of indie-commercial/mainstream relationship works and what impact it can have on the music scene.

2.2.4 E-marketing/Use of the Internet

All indie labels in this early part of the 21st century have promoted indie music through e-marketing via the internet. 89268 was active in the pre-Facebook and YouTube era. It promoted indie music through websites and blogs. It has also established “Club 8”, a membership scheme that keeps its members updated with its news through direct emailing. This can create a sense of belonging among members. Members can enjoy privileges for some activities: for example, they can bring a friend to attend free concerts and enjoy discount prices on concert tickets. This kind of “fan club” may operate similarly to the fan clubs of mainstream artists, but “Club 8” is a fan club for the label, not for specific indie

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68 Facebook is an online social networking service established in 2004 and YouTube is a video-sharing website established in 2005. These new media became popular in Hong Kong from 2006-2007 onwards.
bands. As Stephen Lee states, “fans articulated an explicit bond… not only with the bands they liked but also to [sic] the independent record label that put out the bands’ records” (Lee, 1995: 28). An explicit bond between an indie label, indie bands and audiences can be developed with faithful members of an audience who are not just fans of specific indie bands, but also fans of indie labels. When a bond is created between an audience and an indie label, the indie label can promote the music more easily to this audience because a trust has been developed among the indie label and audiences. Therefore, through the use of websites, blogs and the membership scheme, 89268 is able to spread its news to its target audiences effectively and directly.

Redline Music, Harbour Records and M.I.F.F. have followed the trend of the new media. In addition to managing their official websites and blogs, they all put a great deal of effort into managing their Facebook pages. The function of Facebook means they can reach their target audiences more directly, as audiences who follow their Facebook pages will get their information automatically. The “share” function of Facebook is also effective in spreading music. Audiences can share music with their friends directly through the “share” function, which works like spreading news by word of mouth. Out of all the companies and bands described here, MLA from Harbour Records is the one which uses the new media most effectively and efficiently.

Uploading new music videos onto YouTube and Facebook, as a form of free promotion, has become an important promotional strategy for many indie bands. MLA joined Facebook on 8 June 2008. It has already accumulated 35,915 clicks (as at 10 April 2013), or “likes”, on its fan page.
The table below shows a list of MLA’s most popular songs, all of which have been viewed on YouTube more than 100,000 times.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Songs</th>
<th>Year of publication</th>
<th>Number of hits (as at 10 Apr 2013)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. “Who Invented Going to Work” (《邊一個發明了返工》)</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>362,266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. “Donald Tsang, Please Die”</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>187,494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. “Poetics – Something Between Montparnasse and Mongkok” (《介乎法國與旺角的詩意》)</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>141,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. “Poor People Sell Themselves” (《窮人賣屎忽》)</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>133,822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. “Song of Sisyphus” (《西西弗斯之歌》)</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>126,142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. “To the People inside the Compartments of Admiralty MTR Station” (《給金鐘地鐵站車廂內的人》)</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>114,179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. “We Leave Together” (《我們一起離開吧》)</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>111,428</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 16. List of MLA songs which have accumulated more than 100,000 clicks.

Although the above information does not show the exact number of MLA’s supporters, these figures do reflect the popularity of MLA. The most popular song is “Who Invented Going to Work” (《邊一個發明了返工》) which has accumulated 362,266 clicks since 2009. Many songs have been heard and viewed more than 100,000 times, which is a very encouraging figure for a local indie band.

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MLA first disseminated its music free through Facebook and YouTube before distributing concrete albums and organizing performances. In the case of MLA, its free promotion of its music has not affected actual sales of concrete albums. MLA has also been able to break even from its musical production because of the comparatively lower costs of producing indie music\(^\text{70}\).

The dissemination of indie music through the use of the powerful new social media has to a certain extent presented a challenge to the mainstream mentality: that is, the longstanding belief of the major companies that they could ensure success in marketing by spending enormous marketing budgets on promoting mainstream artists and music. Some of the indie labels in the early 21st century, MLA from Harbour Records being a particularly good example, have been able to make a satisfactory promotional impact through the use of the new media without spending very much at all on marketing.

In an article entitled “The Cycle”, Michael M. Kaiser mentions how arts organizations can become sustainable. He emphasizes the importance of programming, suggesting that “an organization’s health—indeed, its survival—relies on the quality, imagination, and distinctiveness of its programme” (Kaiser, 2011: 5). The above quotation to some extent explains why, when almost all indie labels and indie bands use the same promotional tools, some of them are

\(^{70}\text{MLA keeps the production and dissemination costs of their music low as it records its music in its home studio. The cost of publishing 1000 CDs is about }$10,000, \text{and MLA can break even by selling 100 copies. (Source: “MLA gains success by retreating to the internet (退守網上小機場大旺場)” Ming Pao. (《明報》) The low set-up cost of a bedroom studio and the low production cost of the music can lessen the financial burden of indie bands. MLA is one of the local indie labels that has succeeded in sustaining itself through music alone.}
more successful than the others. It is in fact the programming, the unique quality of the musical content, that gives them their distinctiveness and that attracts audiences. This subject is discussed in detail in the musical analysis which forms part of chapter four.

In summary, the aims of this research were to re-examine the independence of indie music and to understand the role played by indie music and artists within the local Hong Kong music scene. The purpose of the investigation of the business practices and promotional methods of Hong Kong indie labels in the early 21st century contained in this chapter was to present a clearer picture of how local indie labels negotiate, and of whether or not they are successful. In the next chapter, the current situations of indie labels will be examined further through the other 3 “P”s in the marketing mix—place, price and product.
Chapter Three: Case Studies of Local Indie Labels: Place, Price and Product (3 “P”s)

In this chapter, as part of the re-examination of the independence of Hong Kong indie labels in the early part of the 21st century and in order to gain a deeper understanding of their potential impact on the local music scene, the operations of the local indie labels which are the subject of this case study are examined by using the other 3 “P”s—place, price and product. At the end of this chapter, the “making do” theory of Michel de Certeau is applied to an analysis of the relationships and interactions between these labels and the mainstream. This analysis serves as a conclusion to chapters two and three.

3.1 Place

During the period of economic recession in 1997, many factories on local industrial estates in Hong Kong were shut down and moved to mainland China. Many artists, including indie bands and indie labels, then occupied these spaces in the industrial districts at relatively low rental rates and used them as rehearsal rooms, recording studios and performance venues, forming some significant cultural clusters of local indie music.

However, the governmental “Policy of Revitalizing Industrial Buildings”, launched in 200971, has threatened the living spaces of indie music in these naturally formed cultural clusters. According to the “Survey on the Current Status

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71 For details of the “Policy of Revitalizing Industrial Buildings”, please refer to http://www.devb.gov.hk/industrialbuildings/eng/home/index.html
of Industrial Buildings for Arts Activities and Future Demand”, conducted by the ADC between November and December 2010, 434 interviews were successfully conducted with arts practitioners and groups housed in industrial buildings during the survey period (ADC, 2010: 4). The survey revealed that 34.5% of their incomes were used up in paying for the rental expenses (ADC, 2010: ii). This shows that about one-third of total expenditure is spent on high rental costs. Although the average increase in rents after the launch of the policy was 14%, the rental on industrial buildings in four major districts increased by more than a half, including an 81.3% increase in Kwun Tong, 66.7% in San Po Kong, 56.3% in Fo Tan and 54.5% in Ngau Tau Kok (ADC, 2010: iii). Moreover, 82.5% of the interviewees agreed that the policy has had a negative impact in terms of producing “rental increase/heavy burden”, 86.9% thought that the rental increase was beyond an affordable level and 76% stated that they would be discontinuing their current tenancy agreement (ADC, 2010: i).

The statistics revealed that the space for indie music has been diminishing owing to the unaffordable increased rental fees for industrial buildings. These industrial buildings once provided many spaces for the development of local indie music. Among all the cases under study here, 89268 has provided the most stable platform for indie music by creating its own space as a performance venue for organizing regular indie concerts. Many bands, such as MLA from Harbour Records and Adrian Tsing from M.I.F.F., have also set up their own recording studios and rehearsal rooms in industrial buildings.

3.1.1 Owning a Performance Venue
89268 established Lab Yellow and SiLouGongChang in industrial buildings in Kowloon Bay and San Po Kong respectively. Lab Yellow and SiLouGongChang became flexible spaces for organizing different kinds of events, such as concerts and exhibitions.\textsuperscript{72}

Figure 17. Photo taken outside Lab Yellow, which is located in an industrial building in Kowloon Bay. Lab Yellow has already been closed down.

Figure 18. Photo taken inside Lab Yellow. Everything inside this flexible space in Lab Yellow was

\textsuperscript{72} It accepted bookings from commercial companies and other indie functions, but there was a steep price difference, with the prices for commercial uses of the space being much higher. ("Information on Application of Venue (《場地使用申請通知》)." LY. n.p., n.d.. Web. 14 February 2007. <http://labyellow.org/images/ly_app.pdf>
movable.

Figure 19. Photo of SiLouGongChang. 89268 established SiLouGongChang in Oct 2009 after the closure of Lab Yellow. The space inside SiLouGongChang was designed to be as flexible as Lab Yellow.

89268 has organized regular indie shows at its own spaces, Lab Yellow and SiLouGongChang, to promote a live music culture in Hong Kong. One of the shows 89268 organized was “LIVELY”, which was a concert marathon organized at Lab Yellow over nine days in January 2007. It did not just present its own bands, but also invited indie bands from other indie labels\(^\text{73}\).

\(^{73}\) The indie bands signed to 89268, who performed in the “LIVELY”, included The Pliable, Oliver, Primary Shapes, The Swamp, Ghost Style and The Darlings. Other bands include The Yours, dummy, Revolver, hamster, False Alarm (from Harbour Records), OLIVER + waa (from Taiwan), Mazer, Juicyning (朱凌凌), UNiXX, Queen Elephantine, S.T., [A], Malfunction.
Figure 20. Concert poster for “LIVELY”, a concert marathon organized at Lab Yellow over nine days in January 2007.

It is important to have a fixed space and performance venue where indie bands can play live and audiences can go to a familiar place to enjoy live music. A live music culture can be generated and rooted in one place when it has become a habit for people. 89268 operated these two performance venues for almost ten years in cultural clusters located in the industrial districts. The distant locations of the industrial buildings did not discourage those faithful audiences who were willing to make an effort to travel. The relatively low rental cost of industrial buildings before the launch of the “Policy of Revitalizing Industrial Buildings” meant more living spaces were available for indie bands and labels, like 89268, to run in its own ways.

The limited numbers of performance venues available for indie bands is a major
obstacle to the development of indie music\textsuperscript{74}. Owning a free space that can be used as a performance venue can alleviate this problem, hence increasing the flexibility of indie labels and bands, giving them the ability to perform during the timeslots that are most favourable to them. Being well equipped with their own sound and lighting facilities, small venues like Lab Yellow and SiLouGongChang that can accommodate a few hundred people are ideal performance venues for indie concerts.

However, Lab Yellow and SiLouGongChang encountered some operational problems. 89268 received some quite radical responses from their neighbours, who were also working in the industrial districts, which forced them to move from place to place and finally to close down\textsuperscript{75}. This shows that there are many difficulties associated with running a live house in Hong Kong, even if it is located in a distant location.

3.1.2 Affordable Music Studios

The low rental costs of industrial buildings and the rise of advanced technology have provided opportunities for indie bands to establish rehearsal rooms and

\textsuperscript{74} Both 89268 and M.I.F.F. described the difficulties indie labels and bands encounter when attempting to hire formal performance venues for concerts: for instance, venues owned by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department of Hong Kong. This is because applicants are required to submit applications and detailed plans about a year in advance of the actual performances. As most indie bands and labels do not have time for administrative and management work, writing proposals and planning ahead may represent obstacles to them. (Hon and M.I.F.F. interviews)

\textsuperscript{75} The gate to Lab Yellow was burned down. In addition, since no soundproofing materials had been installed, SiLouGongChang received many complaints from its neighbours. Sources: “Performance arts (行為藝術).” BFSH.com. BFSH, 12 Dec 2006. Web. 19 April 2013.
<http://labyellow.blogspot.hk/2007_01_01_archive.html>
recording studios. It used to be rare for an indie label to own a professional recording studio, because the cost of setting up a music studio was one of the highest investments in music production (Hon interview). The set-up cost of professional music studios can be as much as a few millions; however, setting up “home” or “bedroom” studios (although they are not always literally “home” or “bedroom” studios because they may not be located at home or in the bedroom) equipped with simple but advanced music technology is more affordable for indie bands. Together with the relatively low rental rates of industrial buildings before the launch of the new government policy, this meant that more indie bands and indie artists such as MLA and Adrian Tsing could own their own studios. They can produce and record their music at any time and take as long as they need in order to be satisfied with their work, without having to worry about the high costs of renting professional studios and the resulting restrictions on the time they have available.

Figure 21. rm1210, studio of MLA in Ngau Tau Kok. Photo retrieved from Ah P’s Facebook page.

With the abnormal rise in rental rates for industrial buildings, the space available for indie music has been diminishing. Indie participants can usually find their own
ways of solving many problems, but limitations on space and unaffordable high rental costs are problems that cannot be solved solely by them. Solutions to these problems have to be negotiated with different parties, such as the owners of the industrial buildings, and also different departments of the government. It is not within the scope of this thesis to discuss whether or how the government should interfere, either by providing financial or software assistance, in order to develop a more sustainable and healthy indie music scene or a holistic cultural and arts scene, but these are issues that are in urgent need of being discussed and resolved.

3.2 Price

Achieving a financial balance between expenditure and income is a normal practice in doing business. However, the prices that are set and the application of the “free-pricing” concept in distributing the music published by indie labels are illustrative of a different attitude towards how to operate a “business”.

3.2.1 Low Ticket Prices of 89268

89268 has organized many indie shows at very affordable prices. The prices it sets are sometimes much cheaper than other indie shows. For instance, the regular price for each “LIVELY” show, a nine-day concert, was $50, and the discount price for members of Club 8 was $40. A concert pass for the entire nine days of the concert cost only $350. 89268 organized a line-up of many (relatively) famous indie bands from Hong Kong and Taiwan. This is a good example of 89268’s efforts to attract larger audiences to its shows by offering tickets at low prices.
3.2.2 Free Concerts by 89268 and InLove

In addition to offering low-price tickets, 89268 organized some free concerts at Lab Yellow. One of these was a performance by InLove. For this performance, members of “Club 8” were allowed to bring a friend who was given free entrance. Beer and soft drinks were also offered free to members of the audience.

![Free performance given by InLove on 29 October 2006 at Lab Yellow.]

Live performances should be one of the main sources of income in the music scene. However, 89268 and InLove turned their live performance into a free music-sharing event, rather than a business venture calculated to bring in revenue. This kind of free concert can be regarded as means of promoting indie music, and the production costs of the concerts can be partially subsidized by the audiences’ purchase of indie releases.

3.2.3 Free Compilations of Harbour Records

Harbour Records published two compilations, “We Wish You an Indie X’mas”
and “Listen to the People” in 2007 and 2010 respectively, for audiences to download for free.

Harbour Records invited indie bands from different labels, such as The Yours and Alok from Lona Records and Jing Wong from People Mountain People Sea, to contribute to the compilation. It seems that sales of indie releases are not as heavily influenced as in the mainstream music scene by the overall decreasing number of record sales in the world. The publication of indie music is still a major source of income for indie labels and bands. However, Harbour Records still released these compilations online for free because of its aim to circulate the music as widely as possible. These free compilations celebrate its independence – independence from the mainstream mentality that making a profit is the main goal of running a business. While the first compilation celebrated its attitude of independence and separation from the mainstream mentality, the second compilation, “Listen to the People”, went one step further, to make a documentary about an unstable period in Hong Kong history through indie music.

Most of the songs in “Listen to the People” are topical songs, including the following:
1) in “Switch a thought, Starts from Every inch of Soil under You” (《轉念 始於足下寸土》), Wong Hin Yan raised the issue of over-development; 2) in “Why Come to Revitalize Me as I Am Still Alive” (《我明明生勾勾 點解嚟活化我》), Wonder Garl (神奇膠) talked about the increases in rentals caused by the government’s project to revitalize old industrial buildings; 3) in “Song of The
Link” (《領匯歌》), Pusshi Ta-chi talked about the hegemony of The Link, which was killing the living space of small shops, and 4) in “I Know” (《我知道》), Lenny Guo described the negative impact of the domination by the mainstream media.

These songs captured and reflected some of the current situations and hot topics in Hong Kong during the first decade of the 21st century. These pieces of music reflect the rebellious image indie music originally had. The fact that Harbour Records published these critical and political songs for free does not mean that there is no market for this kind of music, but rather indicates that the market is not its main concern. For many indie participants, having a cultural influence is always more important than achieving commercial goals.

There are several meanings implied in the word “free”. According to the Oxford dictionary definition, “free” can mean either to be “given or available without charge” or to be “able to act or be done as one wishes; not under the control of another”. Thus, the free compilations of Harbour Records can be said to have been distributed “without charge”, while the meaning of “free” as applied by M.I.F.F. is more related to the second definition, the freedom to pay as one wishes or is able.

3.2.4 The Free-pricing Concept of M.I.F.F.

Chris Anderson has borrowed the idea of Peter Kropotkin, a Russian economist,
that “in giving something away, the trade-off is not money, but satisfaction. This satisfaction was rooted in community, mutual aid, and support. The self-reinforcing qualities of that aid would, in turn, prompt others to give equally to you” (Anderson, 2009: 40). Under M.I.F.F.’s “free-pricing” concept, audiences pay according to how satisfied they are with the music and according to their financial abilities, thus realizing Peter Kropotkin’s suggestion. M.I.F.F. has thereby brought audiences closer to a natural state of human affairs than market capitalism (Anderson, 2009: 40). According to Adrian Tsing, generally speaking, audiences at M.I.F.F. concerts have paid reasonable prices for the music under this “free-pricing” concept (M.I.F.F. interview).

Chris Anderson, however, is not totally optimistic about this “barter and exchange” model, as he states that “every effort to make this work in practice at any scale failed, largely because the social bonds that police such mutual aid tend to fray when the size of the group exceeds 150” (Anderson, 2009: 40). The number of people suggested by Chris Anderson may be an arbitrary number, but he has raised the important issue of the potential disintegration of this model when too many people get involved in it.

The internationally renowned band Radiohead released its album “In Rainbows” online in October 2007 through an optional-pay download, a similar concept to the free-pricing idea. According to an internet survey conducted by “Record of the Day”, 3,000 people, about one-third of the total number of interviewees, who downloaded the album, paid nothing, but the average price paid by other people
was £4. However, it was estimated that the album had “sold” 1.2 million copies, which is quite successful in term of circulation. The case of Radiohead to some extent proves what Chris Anderson says to be true. This kind of “barter and exchange” model may attract some people who do not respect the efforts musicians make.

As the maximum size of audience M.I.F.F. has reached is 400, a comparatively small group compared with Radiohead audiences, M.I.F.F.’s audiences can be well informed about its idea, and thus pay more fairly for what they gain from M.I.F.F. music. In developing the free-pricing concept, M.I.F.F. is trying to suggest an alternative mode of music consumption.

From an economist’s point of view, there is no free lunch in the world. “Free” may be used as a marketing gimmick to attract potential buyers (Anderson, 2009: 162). Anderson analyses how the concept of “free” is used in the 21st century. He has divided the “free” concept into three types. The first type is “direct cross-subsidies” (Anderson, 2009: 23) (for instance, the free concerts put on by 89268 may be partly subsidized by selling releases after the show), “the three-party market” (Anderson, 2009: 24) (Re:spect Magazine is sustained by advertisements) and “freemium”. In the “freemium” type, basic products are distributed for free, but consumers have to pay if they want to use advanced or

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79 The total number of people who attended the first and second concerts was 250 and 400 respectively. (M.I.F.F. and Chiang interviews)

80 Stuff (product A) is sold relatively cheaply or is distributed for free, while the supplement (product B) needed is sold at a higher price. The profits made from selling product B are thus actually shared by both product A and product B (Anderson, 2009: 23). However, this may not totally fit to the case of the free concert of 89268 and InLove because InLove’s releases were sold at the normal price in the show.
premium products. The group of users who pay for the premium products is therefore actually paying for the group of users who are using the basic products for free. Integrated with the concept of the “three-party market”, product providers normally have more bargaining power when dealing with advertisers if they have more premium consumers\(^{81}\) (this also applies to the case of Re:spect Magazine). M.I.F.F.’s “free-pricing” concept is also related to the “freemium” idea, that is, the small number of members of the audience who pay more subsidize those who pay less (Anderson, 2009: 165).

In this context, “free” is not really free (without charge), because from an economic point of view, producers can ultimately earn money from customers through different channels. However, this concept of “free” does not explain and is not applicable to the “free” distribution of compilations by Harbour Records or to the M.I.F.F. volunteer members. These indie participants do not gain any financial returns from the music they produce or from the time and effort they put in; their only reward is the satisfaction they derive from sharing their music.

The less market-oriented approach of 89268, Harbour Records and M.I.F.F. has to some extent realized the absolute freedom of creation by artists suggested by Gao Xingjian (高行健). Gao suggests that artists should enjoy an absolute aloneness when realizing the freedom of creation, and that they should aim to achieve self-satisfaction, rather than to fulfil market demands and aim for mass distribution. Without any market concerns, authenticity can be seen in an artwork through the artists’ expression of their most intimate and personal feelings.

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\(^{81}\) He also states that “free” is beneficial to “nonmonetary markets”, also known as the “gift economy”. Products are given away for free, but in return product providers may develop their reputations. However, “free” is not really free because providers are expecting that consumers will eventually pay for their products or services some time in the future.
Moreover, according to Gao, artists should not expect to obtain financial returns from their artworks, and he proposes that they should earn a living by other means (Gao, 2008: 3, 5 and 8). Gao’s views on how artists can achieve freedom in their creation are ideal views, which also partially fit the situation of indie participants who work as amateurs. But indie participants in the early 21st century do aim to distribute their music as widely as possible, which is the reason why they apply some “free” concepts in order to attract mass audiences. Indie artists can have more freedom to produce any kind of music when they do not have much market pressure. Therefore, although using the concept of “free” as a tactic is not beneficial to indie participants in terms of making a living, it is beneficial in terms of enabling them to extend their music to a wider audience.

3.3 Product

The philosophy of commercial marketing is to produce “what (products or services) consumers want” and to follow a market demand (Chan and Tsang, 2000: 297). However, many indie labels tend to express their personal feelings through the packaging of the music, rather than just following some “exciting” normal marketing practice. The way indie labels package indie bands and music can indeed demonstrate which aspects of music they value most.

Some indie artists like M.I.F.F. put less effort into design, although basic information and messages are clearly shown. The design of M.I.F.F. concert leaflets, as shown below, is quite simple but not very creative. It is difficult to attract people by its designs.
Figure 23. Concert leaflets for the first M.I.F.F. concert, the “Let Music be Free Concert” (left), and the second M.I.F.F. concert “We Make Proud Music” (right). The themes of the concerts are clearly shown.

A good and creative design with interesting elements can enhance the brands and images of both indie labels and bands. The design of 89268 and Harbour Records products are more creative and successful than the design of Redline Music products.
The design of the poster for the “Come Out & Play” concert, co-organized by the 33rd Hong Kong Arts Festival and 89268 in 2005, is very attractive. It has used an old-fashioned photo, which was a family and relative’s group photo taken on a dinner occasion in a Chinese restaurant.

It has inserted the faces of indie participants, including staff members of 89268, InLove and Gayamyan and so on, to replace the faces of the people who were originally in the photo. Using an old background with new people matches the theme of the show, which was to pay tribute to indie artists and participants in the past and current indie music scenes. The organization of the concert also matched the theme. Some current indie bands were invited to cover some old local indie songs, and they also covered the music of other current indie bands.

However, at the concert I attended only half the seats were taken, and many
members of the audience left the concert hall during the show. Some negative comments were received after the concert and some audiences complained that the show was not a drama (Chan, Kion, Artistic Director of 89268, informal chat). To my eyes there is no misleading message on the poster, as it clearly states that it is “A Concert that Celebrates Hong Kong Indies”. The above complaint thus reflects the fact that there is some distance between the “proper” arts disciplines, as promoted by the Hong Kong Arts Festival, and local indie music, which is seen as a kind of “improper” arts discipline. A good design can have an enormous promotional impact and attract audiences. The design of the “Come Out & Play” poster was successful in attracting an audience, but at the same time it managed to ‘deceive’ some of the members, although this was completely unintentional on 89268’s part.

89268 organized a series of band concerts for some new indie bands, called “Boo”, the sound “Boo” being the first sound made by a newborn baby. It organized four “Boo” concerts, so it used different numbers of “boo”s for each concert to indicate its order in the series: i.e., the first concert was called “Boo”, the second concert was called “Booboo” and so on. It also published a compilation CD of the featured bands. 89268 used this concept to develop the idea for the entire concert series.

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Ta Kung Pao (大公报) reported that the fatal flaw of the show lay in the absence of inter-disciplinary art forms and a lack of interaction, which was one of the main features promoted by the label.
Figure 25. Images designed for the first “Boo” concert (top left), the “Booboo” concert (top right) and for the third concert (lower left). The “booklet” for the compilation was designed in the format of a four-piece puzzle, and a toy was attached to the CD package as a souvenir (lower right).

Instead of using an image or photo of the bands for the design, 89268 used the photo of a lovely baby as the main design feature. The photo meaningfully captured the concept of the whole series, creating a playful feeling around the whole event.

The design for the Gayamyan album cover also expresses a kind of simplicity. It used a paper-packed package and attached some everyday-life photos of the band as the design, such as cats, toys, cups of coffee and shoes. It seems that these attached photos, which are not particularly attractive or special to audiences, are also quite irrelevant to the music of Gayamyan; however, these photos have captured and are linked to the everyday life of the band members. Gayamyan and
89268 have used the design of the album cover to share their “life moments” with audiences.

Figure 26. CD front cover (above) and inner pages (below) of Gayamyan album.

Producing, packaging and selling a CD on the market are commercial acts. However, in its products 89268 has always demonstrated less concern with the market and commercialism than with what it thinks is meaningful to the society. It released an album called “No War Peace on Earth” in 2003 in response to the 9/11 incident in the US. It collected songs from different indie labels and bands\(^\text{83}\) and

\[^{83}\text{The indie bands included on “No War Peace on Earth” are Pixel Toy and Arion (亞里安) from “People Mountain People Sea”, Chet Lam (林一峰) and Gayamyan.}\]
it took only 10 days from collecting the songs to publishing this CD compilation. Artists from major labels may have constraints when working with other artists who work under other record companies, which may be regarded as potential competitors. Indie labels and artists do not generally suffer from this restriction so they can use the music more flexibly to react to and interact with social issues. “Small independents normally are not guided solely by economic constraints; cultural goals, belief in what constitutes good music that should be spread around, provide an equally powerful motive force” (Malm and Wallis, 1984: 88). Harbour Records demonstrates its sense of cultural responsibility to the society through its products and operation. Therefore, indie labels and bands, in the absence of too many economic constraints, always go ahead of the trends and the times and become an innovative and creative force in the music scene.

![Figure 27. CD cover for “No War Peace on Earth” is simply an anti-war logo.](image)

The design of Harbour Records products always shows a kind of creativity and humour. On the cover of the “Poetics – Something Between Montparnasse and Mongkok” CD, released in 2009, the national flag of France is used as the
background to a girl wearing a nostalgic checkered shirt. This design is interesting because the colours of the national flag of France (red, white and blue) are the same as the colours of the “redwhiteblue” plastic bags commonly used by local Hong Kong people in the past decades. This kind of bag has represented a local “Hong Kong spirit” and has become part of the collective memory of local people. The idea of upgrading the “redwhiteblue” plastic bags from a grassroots product and daily necessity to a fashionable product matches the two places mentioned in the title of the album, Montparnasse in France and Mong Kok in Hong Kong. Hong Kong people have always had a particular affection for these two places. The former gives a feeling of elegance while the latter is more grassroots, with lots of interesting things happening. Whether something is seen as elegant or grassroots, however, is entirely dependent on the perspective or angle people adopt.

Figure 28. Cover of the “Poetics – Something Between Montparnasse and Mongkok” CD. Image retrieved from MLA website on 26 Jan 2014.

For the music video (MV) for “Poetics – Something Between Montparnasse and
Mongkok”, MLA collaborated with a local arts group called Cowrice, using simple drawings to narrate the story of a pair of lovers who work at the same company. MLA’s original song was just about the difficult situation of a pair of lovers who work for the same company, but Cowrice’s MV further developed the story into the love story of a pair of lesbian lovers. This different interpretation of the same song can indeed give more scope for the audience’s imagination and enrich the content of its music.

Figure 29. Music video (MV) of MLA’s “Poetics – Something Between Montparnasse and Mongkok”, produced by Cowrice. Image retrieved from the web.

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85 Figure retrieved from “Production of My Little Airport MV+ Download of New Album (製作過程+新專輯下載)” Mtime.com. Ah Ro, 25 November 2009. Web. 28 April 2013.
Cowrice also helped Harbour Records to design the cover for the “We Wish you an Indie X’mas” CD. Again, it used some simple drawings as the main design feature.

Figure 30. Cover of “We Wish You an Indie X’mas”. Image retrieved from the web and from Harbour Records’ official website.

Christmas was originally a religious festival to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, but for many companies in highly capitalist cities like Hong Kong Christmas has gradually lost its meaning and has become simply a collection of commercial activities for them to boost their sales. The design for “We Wish You an Indie X’mas” consists of a Christmas tree in the centre, surrounded by a merry-go-round. At first glance, this design appears to express a feeling of

<http://group.mtime.com/14703/discussion/741097/>
happiness, but the words included on the cover tell a different story. One character is asking “how many circles it is going to turn?”, one is saying “it’s boring”, while the third is saying “I hate x’mas”. The concept of this design reminds people not to be deceived by a superficial and false happiness controlled by a mainstream mentality.

The designs of Redline Music’s products are less creative and interesting than those of 89268 and Harbour Records, as it has put a great deal of effort into developing the image and appearance of the band. The image of Peri M was obviously changed after it signed to Redline Music. The photos below are taken from “Underground 65”86, published in 2009, before the band signed to the label. One of the guitarists in the band had long hair that covered almost his entire face when he was performing.

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86 The Underground series is a series of indie concerts organized by a local indie label; The Underground was established in 2004. They celebrated their 100th indie live show “The Underground 100” on 17 March 2012.
Figure 31. Photos of Peri M taken before it signed to Redline Music. Peri M performed in Underground 65 on 8 Aug 2009 at Club Cixi (before signing to Redline Music). One of the guitarists had long hair that covered almost all his face when he was performing (left). In the right-hand photo, the band members are, from left to right, Eunice Tang (keyboard player), Aeolus Wong (vocalist), Wong Wai Kit (former guitarist), Shingo (former drummer) and Chau Kai Kan (band leader and lead guitarist).

The photos and posters below are images of Peri M after joining Redline Music.

Figure 32. Photos and posters of Peri M’s concerts after joining Redline Music. Concert posters for Peri M’s first and second concerts, “Rainbow Tears” (《彩虹淚》) (left) and “Meet Again” (《又見》) (right).
The above posters for Peri M’s concerts show that Redline Music focused on developing the appearance of the band members, and this can be seen in their make-up, clothing and postures. However, it is strange to see a Marshall amp and speaker arranged in such an obvious position in the poster for “Rainbow Tears”, with the brand name clearly visible (the Marshall amp is a product of Sennheiser, who sponsored the concert). Redline Music has advertised the product of its commercial partner even in the poster for Peri M’s concert. This practice had a highly negative influence on the images of the indie band and the label, and destroyed the balance between commerce and the independence of indie music. Moreover, the design of the poster is irrelevant to the theme of the “Rainbow Tears” concert, or indeed to any of Peri M’s music. The design of the poster for the second concert is a bit better than that for the first concert. The photo was taken in a wasteland, which can be seen as relevant to one of Peri M’s songs, “Among the rocks and trees” (《石林叢間》), as it portrays a sense of abandonment. But the design of the poster is unattractive and does not succeed in illustrating any of the unique characteristics of Peri M.

Leo, the Director of Redline Music, said in the interview that, “of course the image of the band can’t be too strange. It is not so good if many people can’t accept it” (Redline interview). Constructing images for artists/bands is a normal practice, both in the mainstream and indie music scenes. To build up a stylish image for a band is a good idea, but Redline Music has over-emphasized the appearance of the band, without using images or an attractive design to enhance the musical content of Peri M’s work. Redline Music has followed the mainstream mentality that the appearance of a band is the most important element in
packaging band music, making it (the band) not very different from mainstream artists. The practice of Redline Music will only diminish the unique style of a band.

Both Harbour Records and 89268 have successfully upgraded the images of indie music by adding some interesting elements to the designs. The designs of their products offer more scope for the imagination. They successfully impress audiences with the themes and messages of the music. However, M.I.F.F. and Redline Music have failed to do so.

3.4 Summarizing the Four Indie Labels: The “Making Do” Theory of Michel de Certeau

David Cavanagh describes indie music as “a culture of independence that was almost a form of protest”, and according to Fonarow, indie music is calling nostalgically for a return to and restoration of “original” musical practices and ideals (Fonarow, 2006: 28-29). The original meaning of indie music was to resist “the church” of the mainstream and to emphasize a cultural separation with mainstream music. However, the “resistance” of indie music in Hong Kong in the early 21st century is not particularly obvious or radical. They have had an influence on the music scene by creating different kinds of indie-mainstream/commercial relationships and by playing different roles in the music scene. Here, the theory of “making do” suggested by Michel de Certeau will be used to analyse the relationship between mainstream and indie music.

Michel de Certeau has suggested that resistance is possible within dominating
institutions, that people “subvert them (hegemonies or dominations) not by rejecting or altering them, but by using them with respect to ends and references foreign to the system they had no choice but to accept…their use of the dominant social order deflected its power, which they lacked the means to challenge; they escaped it without leaving it” (Certeau, 1984: xiii). He further explains the tactics of resistance. A tactic refers to “a calculus which cannot count on a “proper” (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other’s place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance…the “proper” is a victory of space over time. On the contrary, because it does not have a place, a tactic depends on time—it is always on the watch for opportunities” (Certeau, 1984: xix).

It is possible for resistance to take place inside the system and the uses of tactics suggested by Certeau are quite applicable to the situations of local indie labels with regard to their relations to the mainstream. The system and dominant institutions referred to here are the normal practices or mentalities of the major labels dominating the music scene. Indie music, which is usually situated on the periphery of the centralized mainstream music scene, seldom attains a “proper” place inside the music scene. They are always looking for opportunities. Sometimes they try to do something subversive within the music scene, but at the same time they depend on the majors for their independence.

Redline Music is a good example of how an indie label actively gets inside the system, seeking opportunities and resources from the mainstream. 89268, Harbour
Records and M.I.F.F. have also tried to get inside the mainstream system, but then they have chosen to stay in a peripheral position relative to the centralized mainstream system, always watching for opportunities.

Without much support from the mainstream media, Redline Music has shown that indie music may not be definitely situated in an underprivileged position, and that indie music only depends on the mainstream for promotion. It has obtained a great deal of bargaining power in the music scene with the establishment of a widely circulated music magazine. Through the magazine, Redline Music is able to re-allocate resources and create networks from the mainstream music scene and commercial fields to support indie music. Moreover, Redline Music has indeed provided more opportunities for Peri M to get inside the mainstream, as Peri M has signed to East Asia Music as a songwriter\textsuperscript{87}.

Redline Music has tried to change the mainstream music scene into a more diversified one by getting inside the system. It is a worthy attempt; however, it has not been a very successful one. Its dependence on the mainstream and commercial advertisements has limited its operations. The general approach of Redline Music and Re:spect Magazine is too market-oriented, as they have to try and attract the interest of mass audiences in order to attract commercial advertisements.

The study of cultural studies has drawn attention to a problem of consumer culture, that “advertising now sits at the heart of contemporary public life” (Barker, 2002: 165). Through mass advertising and selling, consumers are encouraged to purchase standardized goods (Barker, 2002: 163). Re:spect Magazine is

\textsuperscript{87} Peri M music has not so far been selected by the mainstream.
unattractive mainly owing to its collusion with the mass advertising of standardized goods and its over-emphasis on the contents of the mainstream music scene. It has already become another site for advertisements of commercial products and mainstream music events, thus strengthening the consumer culture and the monopoly of the majors.

The staff of Redline Music and Peri M have expressed dissatisfaction with a system that promotes artists as idols and with the majors’ monopoly of the music market (Redline interview), which has led to a situation in which music has become subordinate in the mainstream music scene. The dissatisfaction expressed by them contradicts the operation of Redline Music and Re:spect Magazine, because in order to retain its independence, the label operates and embraces a mentality of mainstream practices without exploring many alternative possibilities (while still declaring itself an indie label), reflecting the fact that the negotiations of indie labels are sometimes contradictory.

Redline Music has created its own advertising channel, Re:spect Magazine, a “space” (as a self-controlled medium for releasing indie information) that is inside a “proper” place (the music scene). However, this “space” can only be sustained because it has been legitimated by the mainstream, in terms of applying mainstream mentalities to operate it. The business practice of Redline Music should potentially give indie music more of a voice; however, it only succeeds in reinforcing the mentality of the mainstream, and fails to have much influence on the music scene. Redline Music has actively got inside the system, while 89268 and Harbour Records remain on the periphery of the mainstream, having an impact on the music scene in different ways.
89268 has applied some mainstream practices as references and tactics, to create more opportunities for indie music. Firstly, it has emphasized packaging and the building up of the images of indie bands that mass audiences usually pay attention to. Packaging is an important tactic commonly used in the mainstream to attract audiences, but sometimes the mainstream has over-packaged artists or products and over-emphasized the appearance of artists, thereby losing the artists’ originality and the authenticity of the music. Instead of focusing solely on the appearances of artists, 89268 has used simple designs to enhance indie bands’ images and products. 89268 has applied this tactic to packaging indie music without compromising the originality of the bands.

Moreover, 89268 has chosen and promoted some pop style indie music to the masses. This mass approach in music can help to bring audiences who used to listen to mainstream pop music to indie music. Unlike the heavy metal and gothic styles of indie music commonly found in the 1980s to 1990s, a pop style of indie music has prevailed in the indie music scene since the late 1990s (Yuen interview). 89268 has selected some pop style indie bands to promote, such as InLove and Arnold Fang. These bands may be influenced and inspired by pop music from the local or foreign mainstream. In return they enrich local pop genres by adding their own unique styles of pop music. The influences of musical styles are always across boundaries. 89268 has shortened the distance between the mainstream and indie music scenes by bringing a similar musical style to the mainstream.

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88 InLove and Adrian Tsing have shown appreciation for some mainstream pop artists. (InLove and M.I.F.F. interviews.)
In addition, it has improved the general image of indie music from a relatively negative one to a positive one by applying certain practices of the mainstream (packaging and promoting pop style indie music as a tactic). 89268 has obtained more opportunities for indie bands to show up in the mainstream, but more importantly, opportunities have also been created for 89268 to attract more resources and support from commercial sponsorships and partnerships. 89268 is the first indie label in Hong Kong which has extended commercial collaborations with indie music (Yuen interview).

Commercial sponsorship is one of the potential forms of support for the sustainable development of grassroots, small- to medium-sized arts groups, like indie music. Commercial collaborations with the indie labels and bands have been created in the past few years along with the changes in the general image of indie music (Yuen interview). In the past, there might have been only beer companies like Carlsberg and music companies like Tom Lee which supported indie music, but now many other kinds of commercial companies are willing to provide monetary or non-monetary support for indie music.

89268 has been less active over the last few years (from February 2010 to December 2013) in the indie music scene, but it has played another role, which means that it continues to influence the music scene. It has shifted to another identity, a design and marketing consultancy called POPM, providing technical and administrative support for different kinds of event. One of its major ventures is to organize concerts by some “alternative” artists in the mainstream. 89268 has produced concerts for mainstream “alternative” artists, such as Khalil Fong (方大同), Johnny Ip (葉振棠), Vicky Fung (馮穎琪) and Anthony Lun (倫永亮). They
are regarded as “alternative” in the mainstream because they are less commercial and they put more emphasis on music production.

The Anthony Lun concert, “One Voice Ten Fingers 2013”, organized on 31 August 2013 at Queen Elizabeth Stadium, was arranged quite differently from other mainstream music concerts. He did not invite any “famous” mainstream artists, but he did invite some “unknown” (to the general music scene) musicians to this concert as support bands and guest performers. He called their names out over and over again (compared with support artists in the mainstream whose names may just have been mentioned once by the end of the show) and he performed with them one by one, to showcase the musical talent of each of them. One of the most impressive sessions was when he performed a cappella with his four harmony singers. This arrangement demonstrated his generous support and respect for “true” local musical talents. Another impressive session on his show was when he improvised an entire pop song, according to a hit line suggested by his audience. A member of the audience suggested “Play Mahjong Tonight” (original Chinese is 「今晚去開枱」) on the night I attended the show, and he took just one or two minutes to compose a complete song with a complete verse-chorus format. This improvisation session showed what an excellent musical talent Anthony Lun has. 89268/POPM has not just provided technical support for concerts, but has put a great deal of emphasis on the quality and essence of the music and on interaction with the audience. 89268 has provided alternative choices for artists in the mainstream music scene in order to avoid a standardized format of mainstream music concerts.
89268/POPM has maintained some distance from the centralized mainstream (without co-operating with the majors, and it has partially and consciously applied the practices of the mainstream) without leaving it (the music scene as a whole). It has used “tactics”, partially going inside the mainstream (putting on shows for those in the mainstream who are looking for alternative music and concert productions) so that its influence penetrates the mainstream music scene.

Both 89268 and Harbour Records have emphasized packaging and promoting “pop” music to the scene. The difference between 89268 and Harbour Records is that Harbour Records can “watch for the opportunities” within the new media: for instance, on Facebook and YouTube, while 89268 cannot.
MLA has been successful in gaining much attention from audiences by using new media, and it has become relatively “famous” in both the mainstream and indie music scenes. MLA has gained more mainstream media coverage compared with other indie bands. In this case, the mainstream media have played an active role in bringing MLA into the mainstream as they have discovered the “news value” of MLA. Indie music is always in a passive position with regard to the mainstream media; however, the relationship between the mainstream (both the mainstream media and the mainstream music scene) and the indie music scene can be seen as mutually beneficial. The mainstream media can bring interesting topics to audiences, while indie music can get more exposure in the mainstream. Indie music can occupy this temporary “space”—attention from the masses. This space is temporary for indie music because when there is no “market”, indie music will lose this space in the mainstream. As Michel de Certeau says, subordinates never own a space, but they can sometimes gain the spaces temporarily. Indie music never has a dominant role in the mainstream, in either the mainstream music scene or the mainstream media, but by having occupied the space temporarily when opportunities arose, more audiences from the masses may have shifted and accumulated to the indie music scene, which is significant cultural capital (the accumulation of audiences) for the further development of indie music.

M.I.F.F.’s resistance is the most obvious among all the other indie labels, but it is the least influential on the music scene owing to its limited distribution and advertising channels. M.I.F.F. has specifically resisted the commercialization of

89 Eason Chan, one of the most popular Canto-pop stars in the current music scene, publicly recommended MLA in his acceptance speech in the 2012 Ultimate Song Chart Awards Presentation (2012 年度叱咤樂壇流行榜頒獎典禮).
the music scene, in which the mainstream mentality has treated music as a commodity to consume. The relationship between musicians and audiences has become that between service providers and consumers. Adrian Tsing says that, for instance, audiences tend to be more concerned about the number of songs mainstream artists sing during a concert than with whether the artists are singing each song with their hearts (M.I.F.F. interview). In other words, audiences value the music they pay for in terms of quantity rather than quality. M.I.F.F. tries to bring audiences back to the essence of music. It tries to reinforce the communicative purpose of music and develop mutual respect between artists and audiences. Under the free-pricing concert scheme, people are encouraged to pay according to their wishes and financial abilities. This free-pricing idea can be regarded as a commercial act because audiences/participants do need to “pay” money in exchange for their enjoyment of the music. On the other hand, the free-pricing idea is also non-commercial because it is based neither on calculating profit-making nor on market demand. It is based on an egalitarian ideal - that music should be “free” (freedom) for everyone. The free-pricing concept promoted by M.I.F.F. aims to re-develop a purer and non-commercial relationship between musicians and audiences.

The free-pricing concept will be regarded as risky from a commercial point of view. Therefore, this kind of experimental and risky plan can only be operated outside the centralized system—as indie music has been less restricted by mainstream mentalities. Indie labels are always willing to take risks and to try out new ideas; therefore, they often become market-taste testers for the mainstream.

It seems that capitalism is unchallengeable; as Chris Barker says, “capitalism has
not disappeared but has continued to thrive. Indeed, the persistence and transformation of global capitalism has left humanity with no clear and viable alternative mode of economic production and distribution. In this context, we will need to ask about what resistance might possibly mean” (Barker, 2002: 155). Not all the indie labels in the early 21st century aim to challenge capitalism, but from my examination of the business practices of the four cases under study here, it appears that they are exploring an “alternative mode of economic production and distribution” and different and innovative ideas, by proposing some alternatives for music production, distribution and consumption. The impacts on people may not be obvious or immediate, but cultural impacts are always unpredictable. These indie labels do not form a musical revolution to challenge either the whole capitalist system or the music scene, as indie music is still only shared with a minority group of people. But Barker also believes that the best outcome people should expect is reform, which may be achieved by making changes to people gradually (Barker, 2002: 172). In terms of making profits, indie labels can never be regarded as “successful”; for instance, M.I.F.F. is only able to break even. However, from the perspective of having a cultural influence, indie labels are always ahead of the times.
Chapter four: The Authenticity of Hong Kong Indie Music

The approaches of labels are greatly influenced by the “spaces” (that is, the creative space, the scope for creativity or creative freedom) they have provided for the musical production of their bands and artists. The general approach of major labels is market-oriented. Under this approach, a “standardized” format of Canto-pop music has prevailed in the music scene to ensure the market successes of the majors. The standardized format of Canto-pop can be summarized as follows. Firstly, the duration of a pop song is normally three to four minutes. This means it can be employed for advertising on the radio and for commercial uses. Secondly, under the influence of American pop music, a “principal form”, also known as the verse-chorus form and the AABA form, has been widely applied. The melody of each verse is similar with slight modifications. The chorus always carries greater musical and emotional intensity than the verse. Thirdly, the rise in the popularity of karaoke since the 1990s has limited the musical range of pop music. The range was originally 11 or 12 semitones, but in order to make it easier for audiences to sing karaoke, this has been reduced to no more than 10 semitones (Wong Jum Sum, 2003: 155). Lastly, romantic love songs have become dominant in the mainstream music scene. A flood of unrefined love songs (Wong Jum Sum’s own term is “行貨”) has been produced on a mass scale for use in karaoke (Wong Jum Sum, 2003: 157). However, it is interesting to note that although the musical styles and formats of mainstream pop songs are standardized and mass-produced, the standard of lyrics in mainstream pop music has generally been higher than that in indie music. Moreover, the standardized format can be applied only generally

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90 Chu Yiu Wai has done a lot of research on lyrical analysis of local pop songs, showing that there is great diversity in the lyrical contents of mainstream pop music. His publications containing this sort of lyrical analysis include “Guided Interpretation of Hong Kong Popular
to the overall mainstream music scene; it is not necessarily used in every song, and thus one should not assume that the musical quality of mainstream pop music is inferior to that of indie music either. Indeed there are always some outstanding works in the mainstream music scene. However, understanding the standardized format of mainstream music will help in a comparison between it and the musical variety of indie music.

After applying a marketing mix, the 4 “P”s, to investigate the business practices of local indie labels in the early 21st century in the previous two chapters, some general approaches of these indie labels can now be summarized. The general approaches of 89268 and Harbour Records are more creative and less market-oriented; the operational practice of M.I.F.F.’s free-pricing concept is innovative. However, the approach of Redline Music is more market-oriented and less creative, as revealed in its operation and in its products. Therefore, this chapter will study the musical content of indie bands, produced in the spaces the different approaches of these indie labels have provided for them.

Simon Frith says that “most rock musicians lack formal training, and so do all rock commentators. They lack the vocabulary and techniques of musical analysis, and even the descriptive words that critics and fans do use – harmony, melody, riff, beat – are only loosely understood and applied. I share this ignorance” (Frith, 1983: 13). There is a gap between music studies and cultural studies in popular

music studies, in that the music school may only be concerned with musical aspects, while cultural studies may exclude music and concentrate on other aspects of culture. Therefore, the aims of this chapter are

1. to bridge the gap between music studies and cultural studies;
2. to elaborate the characteristics of local indie music;
3. to examine the authenticity of indie music, to see whether the bands investigated in this study are successful in expressing authenticity through their music; and
4. to illustrate the diversity of the local music scene.

Both classical and popular music have detailed music theories and comprehensive aesthetic principles which may not be totally applicable to indie music. Indie music should be regarded as a kind of popular music, but we should be open-minded when examining the musical styles of indie music, as its experimental and innovative nature should not be restricted by any theories or values. In my analysis of the characteristics of indie music I employ terms derived from existing musical concepts related to forms, features, use of musical instruments and lyrics (if any). Passing judgments on the aesthetic value of music is rather subjective. Therefore, in attempting to determine whether or not current indie music is successful in expressing authenticity, I have not made any judgments concerning whether or not a song is aesthetically good, but have instead analysed several concrete elements of the songs.

I borrow the three modes of authenticity suggested by Moore to analyse the content and elaborate on the authenticity of indie music. The first mode is when artists tell the truth about their own situation; the second refers to artists telling the
truth about other people’s situations, while the third refers to the music representing a culture, which can solidify a sense of belonging and cultural identity among audiences (Moore, 2001: 200-201).

InLove, Gayamyans and The Swamp from 89268, Peri M from Redline Music, Pork and Adrian Tsing from M.I.F.F. and MLA from Harbour Records are the artists who have been selected for this study of the authenticity of indie music.

4.1 89268: InLove

Lu (vocalist), Dicky (classical guitar player) and Tze Lok (guitarist and drummer), who knew each other from the church, formed the band InLove in 2002 and it joined 89268 as an artist in 2004. The name of the band “InLove” already implies the main theme of its music – love, which is a universal theme emphasized by most religions. However, InLove does not try to spread religious ideas through its music; the love InLove talks about is “not just romantic love, but also love of friends, family, of the world and of the poor, or we show concern about injustice” (InLove interview). The musical goal of InLove is to make “pleasant music” and music with meaningful contents (InLove interview). In the following paragraphs, the way in which the acoustic sound of InLove’s music, which benefits very much from the classical guitar played by Dicky (a graduate of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts) help to express its authenticity will be analysed.

With the rise of advanced musical technologies since the mid-1990s, music can be produced in an easier way. However, Wong Jum Sum believes that the quality of music has not been enhanced, but is deteriorating (Wong Jum Sum, 2003: 168). In
Wong’s view, the use of synthesizers and the computerized “autotune” function have replaced and obscured the authentic sounds of musical instruments and the singing skills of artists (Wong Jum Sum, 2003: 172-174).

InLove has achieved a good balance between using synthesized and acoustic instruments in its music. As InLove’s music has a typical pop style and the contents of its songs are mainly about love, the most distinctive feature of InLove’s music is its use of acoustic instruments, since this differentiates its music from standardized mainstream pop music. The word “acoustic” emphasizes the “real” sounds of musical instruments without much artificial tuning by electronic and computerized technology. However, in most of InLove’s songs, some special sound effects are created by a synthesizer, and this enhances the musical quality of its music. A song called “Realm” (冒險) is used here to illustrate the characteristics of the music of InLove.

InLove makes extensive use of the acoustic guitar in its music. In the introduction to “Realm”, the main melody is played on an acoustic guitar, accompanied by the bass and some electronic sounds imitating a heartbeat. This use of the synthesizer gives a sense of mystery to the song. The emotional content of the song is intensified by the addition of some special sound effects, while the acoustic guitar still plays the main part. By the end of verse two, the vocal sound has become purely electronic, then her real voice comes back in gradually to replace the electronic voice. This gradual change in the vocal sound from an electronic sound to an authentic voice makes the song more interesting. The synthesizer is used

\[\text{This is accomplished by turning up the autotune so that you can only hear the sound of the machine, and no real voice at all.}\]
throughout the song, but it only plays a supporting role, to add some interesting elements.

The lyrics of “Realm” are full of poetic imagery which can sometimes be felt, but not explained verbally. For example, the first verse contains the line “he flies to the pulse of darkness” (「他飛向漆黑的脈搏」)

92. It is common to use the verb “fly” with a place or a destination, but rare to use it with reference to the “pulse” inside a body. Moreover, in the first line of verse two they write, “put down backward-looking thoughts, the restraints of the safe house” (「放下回望的思索 / 溫室的束縛」). It is unusual to refer to “putting down thoughts”, but impossible for “thoughts” or “thinking” (「思索」) to look backward (「回望」).

The whole song is an attempt to describe a realm, where there is a light (「燈火」), representing a guide to a hope or a dream that people are longing for in the darkness. No matter how much time people may have spent in trying to discover or accomplish their goals (「或日或月或年終於可以看得到」), they are still encouraged to aim for these goals (「敞開雙臂/拋開一切/走出天際」). “Realm” is a song about people who sometimes get lost in their lives, but which encourages people to have faith and go forward in a pleasant, peaceful and poetic way, which is indeed consistent with the musical goal of InLove. Although there is room for improvement in InLove’s lyrical writing skills, the acoustic sound of its music, together with a raw and natural vocal sound, compensates for any inadequacy in its ability to express its intimate emotions and the authenticity of the music.

92 All lyrics in this chapter discussed are written in Chinese, except the music of Pork. A self-translated English version of the lyrics is put in brackets and full lyrics of the songs discussed in this chapter will be attached as appendix.
Gayamyan is a typical rock band and it was established in 2000. Its members, who are from a former band called Luk Ming Chun (鹿鳴春), are Chan Ho Fung (vocalist), Rodney Ma (guitarist), Ball Zai (bassist) and Feijaiming (drummer and synthesizer player). Its core member, Chan Ho Fung, has been an active member of Zuni Icosahedrin, a local experimental theatre company, from 1998 onwards, and he joined People Mountain People Sea as an artist after 89268 released the first Gayamyan album in 2002. Chan Ho Fung later formed another indie band - “Der Fluss” - with Rodney Ma and Edgar Hung in 2006 and Gayamyan became less active in the indie music scene. In the following paragraphs, the songs “What is a Youth” (《甚麼是青春》) and “I Fell in Love with Your Boyfriend” (《我愛上了你的男朋友》), included in Gayamyan’s first CD album, entitled “Gayamyan”, are used to analyse the characteristics of its music. “What is a Youth” has been chosen as the theme song for a radio drama called “I Love You Boyz” on Commercial Radio Hong Kong. This song is regarded as one of the band’s most famous songs (BFSH, 2007: 205). “I Fell in Love with Your Boyfriend” has been covered by other bands. Therefore, these two songs are representative of the musical styles of Gayamyan.

Gayamyan’s songs seldom contain the elements of a “standard” pop song. A properly structured pop song is well organized with four steps: an introduction, elucidation of the theme, transition to another viewpoint and a summing up (起承轉合 in Chinese) (Tsui interview). The music of Gayamyan has challenged this
structure by providing some alternatives and different perspectives on what pop music can be like.

The song “What is a Youth” uses a reverse chronology to explore the meaning of “youth”. In verses one and two they give some answers to the question “what is a youth?” subsequently asked in the chorus:

Verse one
青春是一頓吃不完的午餐 (Youth is a never-ending lunch)
青春是一啖不會化的痰 (Youth is a very strong sputum)
青春是血肉在體內翻兩翻 (Youth is freshness inside the body)
青春是殺人後眼也不會“斬” (Youth is not feeling hesitant after killing people)

Verse two
青春是抉擇讀書或者上班 (Youth is choosing either to go and study or to start work)
青春是快活早晚愛消閒 (Youth is having leisure time day and night)
青春是虛幻或許存於腦間 (Youth is an illusion or may only exist inside our minds)
青春是美夢又遠去於瞬間 (Youth is a sweet dream that leaves us in no time)

The whole song is an open question: “What is a Youth?” with numerous possible answers. The song repeatedly uses the same sentence structure, as each sentence starts with “Youth is…” (「青春是…」), and then brings out a different metaphor, including “a never-ending lunch”, “a very strong sputum”, “freshness inside the body” and “a sweet dream that leaves us in no time” to describe what youth is.
This repeated use of the same sentence structure serves to emphasize the main subject of the song.

From just reading the title of “I Fell in Love with Your Boyfriend”, it would be normal for an audience to understand it as a love song, but it is actually a song reflecting the jealousy in human nature. Again, the uses of languages are very straightforward. Each of the four lines in verse one starts with “I fell in love with your…”, while in the second verse, the first two lines begin “I don’t care about my…”.

Verse one
我愛了你的男朋友 也愛上了你的成與就
(I fell in love with your boyfriend, and I fell in love with your achievements)
我愛上了你的玩具狗 也愛上了你的家居與車與樓
(I fell in love with your toy dog, and I fell in love with your home and car and flat)

Verse two
我懶去理我的男朋友 也懶去理我的成與就
(I don’t care about my boyfriend and I don’t care about my achievements)
我計算過對你下毒手 計算過與你調轉身份
(I plan to harm you, to exchange my identity for yours)

Tsui has commented that the similarly structured sentences and the repeated use of the same words in these two songs means they lack of variety and that not much development is evident in the content. These comments represent some of the
traditional aesthetic values of pop music. However, Gayamyan’s use of this simple and straightforward language has a “minimalist” effect, which is also reflected in its musical arrangements.

“Minimalism” is an art form in which the simplest and smallest number of elements are used to create the maximum effect. In “minimal music”, intensified emotions are created with slight modulations of repetitions of the same material. The introduction to “I Fell in Love with Your Boyfriend” contains three main musical phrases, played by three main instruments with a similar melody. The first phrase begins with a bass solo. In the second phrase, a jazz drum beat is added to accompany the bass melody as a duet. The melody of the third phrase is slightly different and an electric guitar is added to form a trio. The melody in the three musical phrases is similar, and the same melody is used three times in the introduction, in the bridges and also at the end. The emotional intensity is gradually built up by adding the instruments one by one. Most of Gayamyan’s songs employ this simple and direct instrumental arrangement with a main melody played repeatedly throughout the whole song, creating powerfully energetic music.

The name of the band, “Gayamyan”, already implies one of the most distinctive features of the band, which is the use of “gayam” (假音), a transliteration of the Chinese word for “falsetto”. The voice of Chan Ho Feng, the band’s lead singer, is well controlled, with alternate uses of falsetto and “half-sung tones” in the music.

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<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minimalism>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minimal_music>
“What is a Youth” is sung using a half-sung tone. This half-sung tone is a sort of half-singing and half-speaking singing style, which is a rather natural way to sing. Then the song ends with the vocalist screaming and shouting in a wild and uninhibited voice, “wow…wow…”, pushing people to search for their answers. “I Fell in Love with Your Boyfriend” is sung in a half-sung tone and falsetto alternately. Chan has used a half-sung tone to sing the first and second verses. When singing in a much higher pitch in the chorus, starting each phrase with “Why was I born…” (「我怎麼天生…」), Chan changes to sing in a falsetto. Tsui has commented that Chan’s singing style, alternating between a half-sung tone and a falsetto, is untrained. Some audiences, who are used to listening to mainstream pop music, may also regard his singing style as bad (Hon interview). It is impossible to judge whether this untrained and natural way of singing is aesthetically good or not, but this style certainly challenges the normal standards of pop music.

The music of Gayamyan is about doubts about growing up and questions relating to human nature. This kind of topic has seldom been popular in the mainstream. Indie bands like Gayamyan can freely and openly bring up any topics they are concerned about in their music, making the music scene more diverse.

4.3 89268: The Swamp

The Swamp is a Guangzhou band formed in 1995 and its members are Hoyliang (guqin), Seasean (drummer), Littledream (guitarist) and Roy (bassist). 89268 signed The Swamp and began promoting its music in Hong Kong in 2003. The music of The Swamp is full of poetic imagery, as the band members have a strong
interest in and knowledge of Chinese philosophy, literature and history. The Swamp is a post-rock band. Post-rock music is a kind of music that uses “rock instrumentation for a non-rock purpose” (Bu Ran, 2008: 10). Rock instruments - guitars, bass and drums - are the basic format of a rock band, but post-rock music aims to challenge this existing format and structure of “traditional” rock music. 89268 brought The Swamp to Hong Kong because there wasn’t much post-rock music in the local music scene at that time. Two unique features of The Swamp’s music can be identified. The first is its invention of a new musical style by integrating a Chinese instrument, the guqin, into rock music. Secondly, its music contains a particular aspect of Chinese philosophy and sentiments. In the following paragraphs, The Swamp’s song “1911”, performed at the Fringe Club on 31 January 2013, will be used to analyse what the innovative music of The Swamp has brought to the local music scene.

The Swamp uses the guqin to replace the lead guitar as the major instrument in the band. The guqin is one of the most traditional of Chinese instruments. Traditionally, the guqin is used in solo performances. The sound of the guqin in classical Chinese music is softer than other Chinese instruments, so it can only be performed and shared among small audiences. The melody and rhythm of classical guqin music seldom contains popular tunes that can be memorized easily (Wong Chun Fung, 2009: 72). The Swamp has preserved most of the traditional characteristics of the guqin while at the same time adding a new dimension to guqin music and broadening the horizons of rock music.

The Swamp has integrated both Western and Chinese musical styles into its music. “1911” adopts a traditional Western orchestral symphony format, the piece being
divided into four movements. An entire performance of “1911” lasts for about an hour. Quite a lot of patience is required from audiences when they are listening to the song. At the same time, the band has preserved some unique guqin techniques in “1911”, such as the uses of harmonics (泛音), open-string notes (散音), stopped notes (按音) and ascending and descending glissandi. The addition of these unique Chinese-style techniques facilitates the creation of a poetic mood in the music.

Although the guqin is sometimes played softly, especially at the beginning of each movement of “1911”, to create a calm atmosphere, with the use of amplifier and synthesizer, the poetic moods of the guqin have been exaggerated, which can have an enormous emotional impact on audiences. This is a major transformation of both rock and guqin music.

Traditionally, the guqin has embraced a rich culture of music, literature and history (Wong Chun Fung, 2009: 72). The guqin player Tse Chun-yan (謝俊仁) writes, “guqin music has a reserved expressive power, and it is quiet and pure. In playing the guqin, we do not look for a festive atmosphere or a beautiful melody. Instead, we look for a poetical mood” (Wong Chun Fung, 2009: 81). “1911” has inherited this tradition of guqin music, as in this song The Swamp expresses its deep feelings about revolutionary spirit and humanist concerns for the people in

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96 First movement: an opening sonata or allegro; second movement: a slow movement, such as adagio; third movement: a minuet with trio or scherzo; and fourth movement: an allegro, rondo, or sonata.
97 Harmonics are produced by lightly touching certain points on the string with the left hand, while the right hand plucks the string. It has a pure and light tonal colour. The harmonics are mainly used in the beginning and closing sections of a piece.
98 The open-string notes are plucked by the right hand, and are used only occasionally.
99 The stopped notes are produced by pressing the left-hand fingers onto the string, while the right-hand fingers pluck it.
one of the most influential historical revolutions in China, and also for people living in the modern society.

The 1911 revolution was a significant event, since the revolutionaries were fighting for a democratic society. The Swamp uses this historic event as a sort of mirror to reflect the present reality, that real freedom has still not been realized even a hundred years after the revolution. The Swamp expresses a kind of disappointment with both the past historical event and the current situation: in the poem written for “1911” by the band leader Hai Liang (海亮), he writes, “both ups and downs are suffering, where is freedom found” (「興亡皆苦 自由安在」)100. Ordinary people have never enjoyed the freedom and prosperity that is supposed to have been created by the new society. The line “No end to poverty” (「未有窮期」) shows that ordinary people are still living in poor conditions, injustice and inequality. However, the mood of “1911” is not desperate throughout; it also includes the expression of hope that people will be able to pursue better lives.

The Swamp has selected elements from Western and Chinese music to create its own unique and innovative form of music. It can thus be said to have achieved the third mode of authenticity, as suggested by Moore: that is, a cultural level of authenticity. It provides a broad cultural dimension, showing concern for lower-class people in China who are living under injustice. This affection is not just specifically for local Chinese people, but can be expanded to all suffering people around the world.

100 A poem, written for “1911” by band leader Hai Liang (海亮), is attached as an appendix.
4.4 Redline Music: Peri M

Peri M was established in 2002. Its members are Aeolus (vocalist), Kai (guitarist), Turn B (bassist), Eunice (keyboard player) and Tim (drummer). Some of the members, who are Aeolus, Eunice and Tim, said in the interview that they are influenced by Western band music, such as the music of Coldplay, Japanese bands and other indie rock music (Redline interview). Over the years there has been an obvious change in Peri M’s music from a gloomy style to a more popular and easy-listening style, especially after it joined Redline Music. This “mainstreaming of rock” is often used to accuse indie bands of “selling out” and compromising with the market. However, the question of whether or not an indie band has sold out to the market should be answered by examining each case separately. In the
following paragraphs, Peri M’s music will be examined in depth to see what unique qualities Peri M has managed to retain, and to identify any “compromises” it made after joining the label.

Peri M has published two EPs. The first of these was “Rainbow Tears” (《彩虹淚》) and the second was “Meet Again” (《再見》), published in 2009 and 2010 respectively. Two songs: “Revenge” (《報復》) and “Rainbow Tears”, from the first EP have been selected in order to compare the musical styles of Peri M before and after joining the label. Moreover, songs from the first and second albums, including “Bird of Paradise” (《天堂鳥》) from the second album, have been chosen to determine whether there are any obvious changes in musical style.

The structure of “Revenge” takes the BABA form. While the AABA form is like a narrative developed in chronological order, the BABA form is like a narrative in reverse chronological order; in other words, people are told the most exciting part of the story first, then the details are revealed bit by bit. “Revenge” is arranged with a strong beat and a heavy electric guitar and drum rhythm, which express a kind of anger and frustration caused by a betrayal in a relationship. An electric guitar playing at a rapid tempo in the bridge after the second chorus gives the song an uneasy and anxious feeling. The whole song expresses a kind of anger and sadness, although the lyrics also include the more positive lines: “although I’m hurt I’m becoming stronger” (「然而受過傷痛總變得堅強」) and “I’ll let the

101 There are six songs on the first EP, “Rainbow Tears”. The first three songs, “Lovers” (《愛侶》), “Revenge” and “False Sky” (《假天空》), were composed before they joined Redline Music, while “Reborn” and “Rainbow Tears” were produced after that (Lau Sir (劉Sir). “Music Critic of Peri M’s “Rainbow Tears” (《樂評 Peri M《彩虹淚》》). Bitetone. n.p., 29 November 2010. Web. 22 April 2013. <http://bitetone.com/2010/11/29/%E7%A2%9F%E8%A9%95-peri-m-%E5%BD%A9%E8%99%B9%E6%B7%9A-cai-hong-lei-2010/>).
Another song, “Rainbow Tears”, produced after the band joined the label and chosen as a hit song and as the title of the EP, is much softer and more “easy-listening”. The structure of “Rainbow Tears” is the AABA form. There is no instrumental introduction – the vocalist comes straight in singing in a calm voice, accompanied by an electric guitar playing a simple rhythm. A keyboard joins in in verse two to form a trio. The chorus comes in with a stronger beat and a heavier rhythm, although less heavy than Peri M’s previous rock songs, played by the full band. Peri M has added more pop elements in “Rainbow Tears”, such as having a more melodic and catchy chorus and the singer singing in a soft voice. This song is about the unforgettable memory of a previous broken love relationship. Both “Revenge” and “Rainbow Tears” describe the emotions experienced after a broken relationship, but they express completely different attitudes towards the same issue. Although the emotions expressed in “Rainbow Tears” and its musical style are much softer, the originality of Peri M’s musical style is retained.

Tsui has commented that the musical standard of Peri M is high and its music demonstrates a sort of completeness. All the band members are skilful at playing their musical parts and all the instrumental parts support each other well. A beautiful and powerful voice, that of Aeolus, is one of the main features of Peri M’s music. Her voice has a wide range and versatility and achieves a good balance with the other instruments. She has excellent control over her voice, and is able to sing in a powerful way full of energy, or softly, expressing all of her emotions.
Peri M released its second EP, “Meet Again”, in 2012. Among all six songs, only two, “Bystander” (《旁觀者》) and “ID” (《本我》) retain the band’s original heavy rock style, while the other songs are much softer. The topics Peri M cover in its second album are more diverse than in the first EP. While in the first EP most of the songs are about betrayal in love or broken relationships, the theme of “Bystander” is alienation; “Among the rocks and trees” (《石林叢間》) describes sadness about the disappearance of the natural world, while “ID” is an exploration of human desire. Another obvious change in Peri M’s music is the extensive use of the piano in the later songs. In rock music the keyboard is usually only used as a backing instrument, but by Peri M’s second EP the keyboard has begun to play a dominant role.

In the introduction to “Bird of Paradise”, Peri M has arranged a solo part for an acoustic piano. This solo is adapted from a piece by Tchaikovsky called “June: Barcarolle”, with the left hand playing arpeggios and the right hand playing the melody. From the first verse to the first chorus, the vocal is accompanied solely by the piano playing softly. The rest of the song is still dominated by the piano, although the full band then joins in after the first chorus. Some rapid notes (semiquavers or demi-semiquavers) are played on the piano to create an anxious feeling and to imitate a bird of paradise flying in the sky.

The extensive use of the piano in the second album has softened the general musical style of Peri M. It has still tried to keep its original rock music style in this album, but this appears in only a small proportion of the music. This

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“mainstreaming” of rock is not something which has led to the complete destruction of the authenticity of Peri M’s music. However, the music has become less authentic because it expresses a kind of pretentiousness. Pretentiousness means “attempting to impress by affecting greater importance or merit than is actually possessed”\(^{103}\). The pretentiousness of Peri M’s music is revealed in its somewhat abstract and over-polished lyrics.

In “Bird of Paradise”, the story is told indirectly through the use of lots of imagery. From verse one to verse two, it uses images like that of a “cloudy sky” and a “cold wind” (「密雲漫天/冷風肆染亂囂」), of “all the light disappearing in a single instant” (「一剎/光線/全告幻滅」), of a “world that is changing and vanishing” (「世途在變/快磨滅了」) and of “the sun becoming tired, the whole city falling sick” (「太陽倦了/滿城病了」). Through these images, Peri M is describing a world in chaos.

The main subject of the song, the bird of paradise, does not appear until the last line of verse two: “a flutter of wings on the wind, a raising of heads to continue an unfinished dream” (「要振翅風中轉/抬頭來重拾未了願」). The image of the bird of paradise is clearer in the first chorus, but instead of describing the bird of paradise in concrete terms, it continues to describe images of beautiful scenery, such as “that moment when I saw petals falling silently to the ground, and I looked into the distant sun” (「望見花瓣靜悄散落遍地遙望日光那一秒」) and “I shall never forget the full moon with the clouds smiling down on me” (「毋忘那夜環抱月圓/雲上陪伴著我微笑」). These lyrics seem over-polished, being

overloaded with imagery, but failing to relate the main subject to the rest of the story. Then, quite suddenly, at the end of the first chorus, it says, “if there is no love, there is no paradise” (「如沒有愛/沒天堂了」) and then at the end of the song, “without you, there is no bird of paradise, [just a] helpless goodbye, the leaves wither and turn yellow” (「如沒有你/沒天堂鳥/無奈再見/葉枯黃了」). The song ends grandly with the use of the words “love” and “heaven” without much explanation of the development of the story. Thus, although the music and content of “Bird of Paradise” has intertextual relationships with classical music and myth, it is difficult to understand and thus keeps audiences at a distance.

4.5 M.I.F.F.: Pork

Pork was formed in 2000 by Perry (bassist), Odeon (guitarist), Richard (drummer) and Kin (guitarist), who graduated from a local international school. They were former students of Adrian Tsing when he taught at their school in the late 1990s (M.I.F.F. interview). Pork reformed in 2006 with two main band members, Kin Son Tam (vocalist and guitarist) and Perry Sham (bassist). Their educational background, studying in a local international school, has influenced the language the band members use in their music, as all music is written in English. Pork apply some jazz styles in its music, such as using beats played by a jazz drum at a slow tempo, and the use of a soft vocal sound. In “Winter Night, Summer Life”, the bass is used to play some jazzy chromatic scales to accompany the melody, conveying a unique relaxed and random jazz music style. Although this jazzy style is quite alternative in the mainstream music scene, Pork does not succeed in

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104 Adrian Tsing is a producer of the EP and he has taken part in the musical production by contributing piano and drum parts and midi programming. “Genesis” contains five songs: “Fever”, “Mother Earth”, “Cry”, “In My Mind” and “Winter Night, Summer Life”. All the lyrics are in English.
expressing the authenticity of the band owing to a lack of musical content.

Through the music on the “Genesis” album, Pork has tried to express the frustration of young people. For instance, the song entitled “Cry” is about the sadness caused by a broken relationship. However, there are only two lines of lyric in the entire piece: “just leave me alone, baby please don’t cry” and “you said you loved me, baby please don’t lie”. These two sentences are repeated throughout the song without any obvious modification. Owing to the lack of a coherent story and the absence of any concrete reasons given for the sadness, it is difficult for the song to arouse a sympathetic response from an audience. Pork’s music is less authentic as a result of this empty content, which fails to put across either its emotions or its messages.

4.6 M.I.F.F.: Adrian Tsing

The music of Adrian Tsing, the founder of M.I.F.F. and a one-man indie band, is always one of the highlights at M.I.F.F. concerts. Adrian Tsing is a returnee from Canada, as a result of immigrating there to study. He graduated from the Music department at the University of Western Ontario in Canada in 1996 and he self-released his first album “Prologue” in 2001. His music is deeply influenced by Beyond, as he said in the interview: “Wong Ka Kui from Beyond has inspired me deeply. His faith in music made me believe that I was on the right track” (M.I.F.F. interview). He signed to a music distribution company after he returned to Hong Kong and was asked to write some hit songs that people could sing along to happily in karaoke. That experience has made him realise that writing hit songs is not his musical goal; his goal is to “write songs I like and that move me”
Adrian Tsing makes use of midi-programming to compose music in diverse styles, such as rock, pop and rap. He is also a good lyricist, who can express himself freely through lyrics. Two songs have been chosen to analyse Adrian’s musical styles: “6791 to 6691” (reverse order of the years of the Cultural Revolution, 1966 to 1976) and “Run Hard” (《起勢跑》), included on his album “Reborn”, released in 2007105. Some unexpected musical elements are always to be found in his music.

“6791 to 6691” was inspired by the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution in China; in this song Tsing questions what should be considered right and what should be seen as wrong in chaotic times. He writes, “everything is turned around/ true and false are confused/ true has become false/ false can become true” (「一切都反轉了/對與錯都搞錯了/對了都變錯了/錯了都可以變對」). An unexpected musical contrast is achieved between the verses and the choruses. The song starts in a minor key, creating an uncomfortable and uncanny feeling. However, instead of the intensified gloomy emotion one might have expected in the chorus which follows, the style changes dramatically to an exciting and lively mood. This dramatic contrast helps to create an impression of irony, matching the theme of the song and reflecting the absurd nature of the reality.

“6791 to 6691” ends suddenly with a sound like a piece of metal hitting something. This sound imitates either the sound of an iron gate opening or the

105 Although this album was published before the establishment of M.I.F.F., this is sold under the free-pricing concept of M.I.F.F. Records, and he is a main performer at M.I.F.F. concerts.
sound of the unlocking of a machine gun. The use of this special sound effect effectively situates the audience in a real place of persecution. If it is the sound of unlocking a machine gun, it can be related to the lyric in the second verse: “My dream has become a machine gun firing at me” (「心中的理想/變了向著我發射的機關槍」). The sudden appearance of this sound successfully creates a sense of horror among audiences.

Adrian Tsing is good at creating this kind of cinematic scene in his music. “Run Hard”, which is a rap song, is another example. He uses the actual sound of rapid breathing as a special sound effect throughout the entire song to express how hard the process of running is. This special sound effect creates a sense of comedy in the song. A typical rap electronic beat is used in most of the song, but the texture becomes rich when it comes to the bridge played by instrumental music through midi programming. Some broken, accented notes played by stringed instruments and other percussion instruments noticeably create a feeling of excitement, which makes the audience feel that they are actually experiencing a real running competition.

Another characteristic of “Run Hard” is that it is written and sung in colloquial Cantonese, together with the use of Cantonese swear words and some English terms. Some of the colloquial Cantonese expressions are 「個天啱啱光咗」 (“the sky is just bright”), 「起勢啫跑」 (“run hard”), 「點解要搵咁啲喺嘅搞」 (“why do this kind of thing”), 「聽住」 (“listen”), 「呢個世界」 (“this world”), 「搞掂」 (“finish”), 「但係」 (“but”), 「好似條命咁都真係估佢唔到」 (“unexpected as fate”), 「好鬼屎」 (“very poor”), 「成粒鐘」 (“an hour”), 「小掩痛」 (“stomach ache”), 「腳板底」 (“sole of the foot”). Cantonese swear words such as 「掟」
(“fuck”) in 「跑撼埋」 (“finish the fucking run”). A bilingual lyric 「我諗我放棄都好 reasonable」 (“it is reasonable for me to give up”) is also used.

Cantonese is undervalued in Hong Kong, even though it is a mother tongue language that most local people use in everyday life (Lin, 2008: 162). One of the indications of this situation is reflected in the medium of instruction in Hong Kong’s Education System and Policy. In this post-British-rule era, “English continues to be the medium of instruction in most universities and professional training programs in Hong Kong and English Medium Instruction (EMI) secondary schools are generally perceived by the public as “first class”, while Chinese Medium Instruction (CMI) schools are perceived as “second rate”, even” (Lin, 2008: 162). Under this education system, inserting some English terms in colloquial Cantonese is a common practice of many educated local people. Also, the use of swear words, which are common language used by many grassroots people to intensify their emotions and feelings, is generally regarded as vulgar. However, these kinds of language practices can reflect the lives of ordinary people in certain periods, because each swear word and colloquial Cantonese term has its own specific historical roots and meanings. The use of such elements in indie music can help to capture the lives of grassroots and ordinary people. However, colloquial Cantonese and swear words in lyrics are seldom used in the mainstream commercial Canto-pop music scene, or in other literary works.

Owing to Adrian Tsing’s personal background, as a Chinese who is well-educated and has overseas experience, he may be aware of this embarrassing position of Cantonese, as many indie artists are, such as MLA. I believe he does not aim to subvert this mainstream mentality by just a few Cantonese songs; instead he tries
to suggest and provide some alternatives as to what “Canto-pop” music (really using colloquial Cantonese) can be like. This also shows that the music of Adrian Tsing is not restricted by any norms; he uses the language he feels comfortable with to express his most intimate feelings, which is consistent with his musical mission that he only writes songs he likes and that move him.

4.7 Harbour Records: MLA

MLA was formed in 2001 by Ah P and Nicole, who were classmates and are journalism graduates from a local university. Ah P mentioned in an interview that one of his favourite musicians is Leonard Cohen, a Canadian singer-songwriter who has written a lot of political songs, and the political stand of Ah P is against totalitarian regimes (Zhang, Chai, 2012: 210-220). Owing to their academic and personal backgrounds, MLA has shown concern about social injustice, having written more political songs, especially after 2009. 2009 can be regarded as a watershed year for MLA, as for many of the younger generation in Hong Kong. “Post-80s”, a term used to refer the generation who born from 1980 to 1989, had been commonly used in Hong Kong since 2009-2010 when Hong Kong was undergoing a period of social instability. The music of MLA, as one of the “post-80s” bands, can touch people's heart deeply, especially the “post-80s” generation, because its music can reflect and express the suppression and dilemma “post-80s” have faced in their lives, in that it seems that no matter how hard the “post-80s” work, they cannot gain a reward equal to the amount of effort they put in. From 2009 onwards, the topics of MLA’s music were able to give immediate responses to some social and political issues at that time that many “post-80s” were most concerned about, such as opposition to rapid urban development and
the fight for democracy. MLA has gained much popularity since 2009 and its musical contents have had some obvious changes. The musical characteristics of MLA and how its music is related to the social situation are analysed in the following paragraphs.

A standardized pop song generally lasts three to four and a half minutes with repeated singing of verse or chorus (AABA form). MLA’s music, however, seldom applies this format. All of MLA’s songs are only one to two and a half minutes long. Here I have selected “Song of Sisyphus” (《西西弗斯之歌》) to illustrate the musical style of MLA.

“Song of Sisyphus” is structured in three verses, without a chorus, and is a recitation of a revised version of the Greek myth of Sisyphus. The whole song is written and sung in spoken Cantonese. It is about how a bored employee working in a betting shop learns to change his/her attitude towards a difficult situation, rather than attempting to change the situation itself. The bold words in the lyrics below are recited in a speaking voice by the vocalist while the others are singing.

Verse two
開閘前半分鐘 (half a minute before the start of the race)
總有好急嘅客人 (there are always clients who come in in a hurry)
落注嘅時侯夾雜粗口 (they use foul language when they’re placing a bet)
聽到我一舊雲 (it’s difficult for me to understand)
但佢愈係忟 (but the more emotional they are)
我就愈係斯文 (the more polite I will be)
我話：「麻煩你重複一次」 (I said, “please say it again”)
Verse three

佢鬧我正一懵撚 (he blames me for being foolish)

話要叫個經理出嚟問 (asks to talk to the manager)

我都好有禮貌啲回應：(I will reply politely)

「先生，麻煩你等等」(“Sir, please wait a moment”)

我既緊張又興奮 (I am nervous but excited)

同時又扮晒殷勤 (at the same time I pretend to be attentive)

喺呢個心情咁複雜嘅搏鬥裡面 (in this complicated feeling and internal struggle)

我開始搵到工作嘅快感 (I start to find the enjoyment of the job)

This half-singing and half-reading style, which has become one of the most distinctive characteristics of MLA’s music, increases the sense of intimacy and humour among Cantonese-speaking audiences. There is also a contradiction and inconsistency between the language it uses and the emotions the vocalist is conveying in the singing, because Nicole, MLA’s vocalist, sings and recites both the colloquial Cantonese phrases and even some of the foul language in the song through a polite and calm tune. This contradiction between the emotions and the meaning of the words gives a comic feel to the song.

Another feature of MLA’s music is the extensively application of “intertextuality”. The word “intertextuality” is used in reference to “works of literature… [that] are built from systems, codes and traditions established by previous works of
literature. The systems, codes and traditions of other art forms and of culture in general are crucial to the meaning of a work of literature” (Allen, 2011: 1). This intertextuality appears in MLA’s “Song of Sisyphus”. After relating the complexity of feelings involved in working in a betting shop, MLA suggests and further describes a passive kind of resistance to a difficult reality by applying a revised version of the Greek myth of Sisyphus, suggesting that Sisyphus could have put up a passive resistance to the punishment, if he could only have changed his attitude and come to enjoy the process of repeatedly rolling an immense boulder up a hill, rather than seeing it as a punishment. This example of intertextuality, borrowing and giving a new meaning to the story from Greek mythology in order to talk about people’s present reality, enriches the content more effectively than the use of many words would have done.

In addition to the “Song of Sisyphus”, MLA has also used many metaphors and implications from previous literature in other music. For example, in “Song of Loss and Frustration” (《失落沮丧歌》)106, MLA mention Osamu Dazai107, in describing the search for the meanings of life and death; in “Socialist Teenagers” (《社會主義青年》)108, it uses Marx’s Communist Manifesto and communism to talk about people who fail to earn a living just because of their political ideals and dreams; it uses a story by Milan Kundera in “Milan”109, and refer to Serge Gainsbourg in “How Can You Fall In Love with A Guy Who Doesn’t Know

106 “Song of Loss and Frustration” (《失落沮丧歌》) is included on “Becoz I Was Too Nervous At That Time”.
107 Osamu Dazai (1909-1948) was a Japanese author who tried to commit suicide several times.
108 “Socialist Teenagers” (《社會主義青年》) is on “Poetics – Something Between Montparnasse and Mongkok”.
109 “Milan” is included in “Hong Kong is One Big Shopping Mall”.

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Apart from applying stories from previous literature and about various well-known figures, MLA has achieved intertextuality by basing songs on the impression of French culture possessed by local people. Hong Kong people have always had a special affection for France, as they always associate things French with a sense of elegance (Tsui interview). MLA has written some poems in French. For instance, “J’ai Peur” is written and recited by Suet, a friend of the band, in French, accompanied by MLA’s unique style of music. After Suet has read the poem elegantly in French, MLA makes a joke on it through another song called “Je Pense A Toi”. Ah P, a core member of MLA, uses his half-singing and half-reading style to sing,

“You teach me French, but I cannot speak well.
You said “je pense a toi”, but I said “Japan 實瓜”.” (「實瓜」 is a transliteration of the Cantonese for the French phrase “a toi”)

After creating an atmosphere of elegance in “J’ai Peur”, MLA then immediately make fun of it in the next song, “Je Pense A Toi”. MLA invariably surprises its audiences with these extremes and contradictions.

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110 Serge Gainsbourg was a French singer, songwriter, poet, composer, artist, actor and director who is regarded as one of the most important figures in French popular music. “How Can You Fall In Love with A Guy Who Doesn’t Know Gainsbourg?” is included on “Lonely Friday”.
111 “J’ai Peur” is included on “We Can’t Stop Smoking In The Vicious and Blue Summer”. “J’ai Peur” means “I am scared”. French is not a language commonly used in Hong Kong. Therefore, the poetic rhythm song becomes even more special when singing “J’ai Peur” than just simply “I am scared” in English.
112 “Je Pense A Toi” is included on “We Can’t Stop Smoking in the Vicious and Blue Summer”.
MLA also expresses a kind of locality in its music and music videos (MV) to reconstruct images of Hong Kong. MLA uses simple recording techniques to portray the contents of its songs. Videos are taken at real Hong Kong locations, such as the swimming pool in Kowloon Park (in the song “Swimming Pool in Kowloon Park”《九龍公園游泳池》), the Admiralty MTR station (in “To the People inside the Compartments at Admiralty MTR Station”《給金鐘地鐵站車廂內的人》), a Hong Kong tram (in “Romance”《羅曼蒂克》) and Mong Kok’s Sino Centre (in “Selling Discs in the Sino Centre”《去信和賣碟》). MVs made in these locations can help audiences to re-examine and give new meanings to these familiar places, showing that MLA has a deep and special affection for Hong Kong as the city it belongs to.

MLA always shows concern with the struggles of working-class people and gives voice to the inequalities and injustices in society. Apart from “Divvying Up Stephen Lam’s $300000 Salary”(《瓜分林瑞麟三十萬薪金》) and “Donald Tsang, Please Die”, which were discussed in chapter two, MLA has written many other topical songs since 2009.

A social protest caused by the Hong Kong Express Rail Link controversy took place between mid-2009 and early 2010. A group of young people, the “post-80s”, opposed the project and construction of the Guangzhou-Hong Kong Express Rail Link. The reason was that it would damage valuable natural environments; in particular, Choi Yuen Tsuen village in a rural area in Yuen Long, a peaceful village and home to 500 residents, would be dismantled for the construction. People who

113 In “Unemployment Protest Song” (《失業抗爭歌》), included on “Poetics – Something Between Montparnasse and Mongkok” (2009), it portrays a reality in which employees are exploited by major corporations and are afraid of becoming unemployed.
came out for this protest were not only residents of Choi Yuen Tsuen village, but also young people, “post-80s”, who no longer believed that economic construction was supreme, rather they valued the preservation of natural environments and cultural and historical traditions. This protest attracted a great deal of attention from the general public, especially “post-80s”, who were awakened to the importance of fighting against injustice. Ah P, a core member of MLA, shares same goal of the “post-80s”, so he has actively participated in these social protests since 2009. A song called “Female Otaku, Go out into the Streets” (《宅女，上街吧》) was distributed under the name of Ah P in 2010 during the opposition protest against the Guangzhou-Hong Kong Express Rail Link. The song mentions some significant social events of the late 2000s, such as the opposition to the Guangzhou-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, the preservation of the Star Ferry Pier and the Queen’s Pier and the anti-World Trade Organization movement. The song asks people, especially in addressing “Female Otaku” (「宅女」)114, not to remain silent, but to take action in order to make changes to the society.

MLA seeks the meaning of life in its music: for example, in “Scandinavia is Our Death Destination” (《北歐是我們的死亡終站》)115 and “Until the Extinction of the Human Race” (《直到人類滅亡》)116. In these two songs the band discuss ways of committing suicide and how to prepare for the end of world. However, the stories end up with people making positive preparations for death, such as accumulating enough savings to travel to Scandinavia to die in “Scandinavia is Our Death Destination” and having as much fun and enjoyment as possible before

114 “Female Otaku”, is originally a term Japanese term, and generally refers to people who stay at home and are little concerned with the society.
115 “Scandinavia is Our Death Destination” (《北歐是我們的死亡終站》) is included on “Poetics – Something Between Montparnasse and Mongkok”.
116 “Until the Extinction of the Human Race” (《直到人類滅亡》) is included on “Hong Kong is One Big Shopping Mall”.

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they die in “Until the Extinction of the Human Race”. MLA makes death as a serious subject less heavy, and asks audiences to think about the meaning of life.

The authenticity of MLA’s music lies in the fact that it always shares strong views and opinions in its music and it has developed its own unique musical style. Among all the indie bands and artists currently working in Hong Kong, MLA is the most successful at conveying its authenticity through music.

4.8 Summarizing the authenticity of indie bands

The above analysis has shown that some of the indie bands who formed the subject of this research have successfully expressed authenticity in their music in the space provided by the indie labels, but some of them have not. Sometimes the authenticity of music, or authentic sentiments in general, is not about the quality or standard of the music, and can only be expressed and felt, rather than described in words. It may also be reflected in the content, issues they are concerned about and modes of expression.

With regard to Moore’s three modes of authenticity, referred to above, the above discussion suggests that it is easier for indie bands to achieve the first and second modes, because bands and artists get inspiration from the everyday lives or stories of other people. The third level of authenticity is the most difficult one to achieve because it requires indie bands to have wider perspectives on life, culture and the world. The figure below shows the mode(s) of authenticity each indie band has achieved.
To some extent, the music of all the indie bands studied above express a certain degree of authenticity. Although I regard the music of Peri M and Pork as showing the least authenticity among all the indie bands studied owing to their abstract and over-polished musical content (Peri M’s “Bird of Paradise”) and empty content (Pork’s “Cry”), that keep an audience at some distance from being able to understand their music, however, they have tried to express their frustrations in their lives, accomplishing the first level of authenticity according to Moore’s three modes of authenticity. Moreover, the catchy and acoustic sound of InLove and the unique voice (“Realm”) and minimalist pattern of Gayamyan’s music (“I Fell in Love with Your Boyfriend”) successfully deliver and share their musical messages and feelings with the audience in their own distinctive ways. InLove and Gayamyan can be said to have achieved the first and second mode(s) of authenticity through their music. I regard the music of Adrian Tsing, The Swamp and MLA as being more successful in expressing authenticity because their music captures and represents a certain period of culture (Adrian Tsing’s “Run Hard”
and Ah P’s “Female Otaku, Go out into the Streets”, for example), the ordinary lives of ordinary people (The Swamp’s “1911” and MLA’s “Song of Sisyphus”) and some significant historical moments (Ah P’s “Female Otaku, Go out into the Streets”). The music of these three indie bands/artists can be understood from a wider cultural perspective, the third mode of authenticity.

Tseng Sun Man has summarized the three main missions of the Esplanade Theatres on the Bay in Singapore to talk about the divisions among target audiences:

1) to provide diversified programmes to attract audiences who are not familiar with arts;
2) to boost the number of audiences who have a good impression of arts;
3) to provide innovative and experimental programmes and new experiences to audiences who are very familiar with arts (Tseng, 2009: 46-47).

Through describing and analysing characteristics of local Hong Kong indie music, I hope I have shown something of the diversity of the local indie music scene. The diversity of indie music means that overall it has accomplished the three missions summarized by Tseng. While the musical style of InLove and Peri M is pop (mission 1), the music of Adrian Tsing, Gayamyan and The Swamp is more alternative (missions 2 and 3). Some indie bands, such as The Swamp, require more patience and a higher level of musical appreciation from audiences. Hong Kong indie music thus brings to the music scene a wide variety of musical genres and styles, which try to attract audiences with different tastes and with different musical backgrounds.
Conclusion: Re-examining the Independence of Local Indie Labels in the Early 21st Century

ToNick, a local indie band, included a hidden track on its first album released in 2010. This song is called 《關心菊英》(the Chinese title of the song has a double meaning. The transliteration is “Kwan Sum Guk Ying”, and translated it means “Care About Guk Ying”, which is a combination of the names of two mainstream artists, Kwan Sum Yin, Jade and Kwan Guk Ying, Susanna. This song was inspired by an incident that took place at the “2008 Jade Solid Gold Best Ten Music Awards Presentation”, when Jade Kwan mis-heard that her song “Pompeii • 21st Century” (《龐貝•21世紀》) had received an award, and she came out to take the award from Susanna Kwan, who had already been presented with it. This incident then became a hot topic and the video clip (of Jade Kwan coming out to take the award from Susanna Kwan) uploaded onto YouTube had a million clicks. The theme of 《關心菊英》 is a satire on the mainstream media and audiences who just focus on gossip about artists, and not on the efforts the artists make.

In the second concert given by ToNick, surprisingly Jade Kwan was invited as a special guest to perform the song 《關心菊英》. She then performed another two songs: “The Best is Yet to Come” and “Pompeii • 21st Century”. After singing these songs, Jade Kwan said that this incident had been really embarrassing for her but she was finally able to overcome it. And although it was in fact

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117 “Pompeii • 21st Century” (《龐貝•21世紀》) was published in 2008 under BMA Records.
118 The second ToNick concert was organized on 13 August 2011 in Kowloon Bay International Trade and Exhibition Centre.
119 “The Best is Yet to Come” is a famous song written by a local indie artist, Chet Lam, in 2002.
“Pompeii • 21st Century” that had brought her the embarrassment, she still chose to perform it because it was really a good song which should not be neglected by audiences simply because of the gossip.

The mainstream and indie music scenes are always interacting with each other, either at the level of musical production or at the operational level. Therefore, in this early part of the 21st century, indie music cannot simply be defined as music that operates independently of the majors. The relationship between the mainstream and indie scenes is one of interdependence.

In the study of globalization, some poststructuralists and deconstructionalists have suggested different approaches to the dependence-independence opposition, stating that it is possible for colonized people to achieve independence from the dominant West under this dependent-independent relationship. Thus, instead of a dependent-independent relationship/opposition, they suggest that there is a greater interdependence between Western and non-Western subjectivities clearly operating in the world (Lewis, 2002: 351-352).

The interdependence between Western and non-Western subjectivities is quite similar to the relationship between mainstream and indie music. It is difficult for indie music to be fully independent of the mainstream, as indie music has never existed outside the system and mainstream institutions.

The mainstream-indie relationship can be regarded as a strategy for exploring more spaces for indie survival. From the examination of the cases in this study, it is possible briefly to summarize the interdependent relationship between
mainstream and indie music as follows:

1. indie music can temporarily own a “space” in the mainstream media when the music has “news value” (as defined and judged by the mainstream media);
2. indie music has enhanced its images by packaging, which is also a tactic indie practitioners learnt from the mainstream; hence, it is easier for indie to attract more resources from the mainstream and commercial sectors;
3. indie music is regarded as a source of innovative and inspiring ideas and as a test of market tastes by the mainstream.

This interdependence is not only developed between indie and mainstream music, but also with commercial fields, which may be said to resemble the three parallel musical worlds identified by Simon Frith. In his description of three parallel musical worlds overlapping under the influence of technology, Frith states that, “different music industries are developing alongside each other, sometimes overlapping in their concerns and personnel; sometimes not” (Frith, 1996: 50).

Local indie labels in this early part of the 21st century have also developed their influence in commercial, semi-commercial and anti-commercial fields in order to achieve a more sustainable development. However, I propose that the term “non-commercial”, rather than “anti-commercial” musical world, is more applicable to the current situation of the local music scene. In the figure below, Frith’s three parallel musical worlds are adapted to indicate the positions of some of the indie labels and bands described in this thesis.
Blackbird, which was active in the 1980s, is the most powerful example of how an indie band can act as an anti-commercial force in the Hong Kong music scene. In terms of musical production, distribution and consumption, anti-commercial
music has tried to operate independently of the mainstream mentality, to suggest an alternative mode of operations and to challenge some of the normal practices of the majors who dominate the market. However, in this early part of the 21st century, rather than forming an anti-commercial force in the music scene, indie music mainly inhabits the semi- or non-commercial musical worlds.

All indie labels operate mainly on a semi-commercial basis. Of the labels examined here, Redline Music is the one closest to a centralized system, while 89268, M.I.F.F. and Harbour Records live in all three musical worlds in more dynamic ways.

Redline Music has been living principally in both the commercial and semi-commercial musical worlds because it has followed the mainstream mentality in its operation and is highly dependent on commercial advertisements to sustain and to promote (semi- and non-commercial) indie music.

89268 has created a “new” market for indie music by developing commercial collaborations and has produced concerts for some mainstream artists (commercial musical world). 89268 has promoted a wide variety of musical genres, including pop to more alternative music, which corresponds to the semi-commercial world, i.e., the genre music scenes, described by Frith. 89268 has taken a “non-commercial” approach because it has always been less concerned with the market: for example, in the production of “No War Peace on Earth”, and in offering free and low-price indie concert tickets, demonstrating its mission to achieve the cultural goal of promoting indie music to wider audiences.
The free-pricing concept introduced by M.I.F.F. has suggested an alternative mode of music production and consumption, forming semi- and non-commercial forces in the music scene. As M.I.F.F. is sustained by its members who work closely in the mainstream and commercial fields, the operation of M.I.F.F. explicitly shows how indie artists live in the three musical worlds.

Harbour Records is a bit closer to an anti-commercial force, as it has promoted some radical and social political songs for free distribution. The content of these songs aims to challenge some of the mainstream mentality. In the meantime, many indie artists, like MLA, sustain them by composing commercial jingles and doing other similar jobs.

Indie artists in the early 21st century have shown a high level of hybridity, which has already broken the simple binary independence-dependence relationship between the indie and mainstream music scenes.

As suggested by Wallis and Malm, there are three possible routes for indie labels. Firstly, indie labels may be either swallowed up by existing companies when confronted with financial difficulties (step 4A); secondly, they may co-operate with similar operations (step 4B); thirdly, they may grow into a “major priority” if they are able to control their success (step 4C) (Wallis and Malm, 1984: 157).
When coping with financial difficulties, indie labels in the early 21st century have demonstrated more diversified developments than in the past. Obtaining financial support from the majors is no longer the only solution.
Figure 38. The diagram showing a new development of indie music labels in the early 21st century, adapted from the routes of possible development for small record companies suggested by Wallis and Malm. The developments are based on the developments of the four indie labels examined in this study. With regard to step 4C, indie artists may not be able to gain a reputation in the local music scene, so they may prefer to develop their musical careers in other places, such as Taiwan, first, in order to achieve a more successful development in Hong Kong.

Compared with the routes of indie labels summarized by Wallis and Malm and the local indie labels of the mid-1990s, indie labels in the early 21st century have diversified their scope, making them more sustainable. Although indie labels have developed commercial collaborations, most of them are still far less commercial than mainstream music. While most mainstream artists have developed as “all-round” artists participating in many commercial activities, many indie practitioners still have music as their main concern.

Tseng Sun Man has summarized some elements that are important for the
sustainability of arts scenes, and from my investigation it appears that indie labels in early 21\textsuperscript{st} century Hong Kong are already covering some of the most important aspects, including:

1. ensure freedom of expression;
2. exchange opportunities for artists;
3. more distribution channels and performance opportunities, and
4. arts management to facilitate art works and allocate resources effectively (Tseng, 2009: 20-21).

Indie labels are not powerful enough to cover every aspect necessary for the development of a sustainable and healthy arts and cultural scene, but they have significantly acted as facilitators, trying to make the indie music scene more sustainable by their own methods. However, I would like to put forward here some suggestions as to which aspects should be emphasized by the indie music scene, in order for these kinds of independent and grassroots organization to achieve long-term development. My proposals are based on Tseng’s views and are as follows:

1. support for creativity and intellectual property;
2. encouragement of arts criticism and arts research;
3. media support;
4. arts education;
5. audience support and participation;
6. sponsorship by the public and commercial sectors, and
The above suggestions involve different stakeholders in the arts and cultural scene, including the government, media, educators, audiences and sponsors, and some fundamental problems, such as arts education. A healthy arts scene does need support from and does need to develop proper attitudes among audiences, who should be educated and inspired at an early age.

In summary, no matter how indie music has been re-packaged, there are some core values of indie music and indie spirit that remain. Kaya Oakes has mentioned that, “indie is not just about DIY, through DIY remains its central tenet. It’s about serving your community, self-actualization via creativity, and it’s about empowerment, all of which occur as a result of DIY” (Oakes, 2009: xiii). Indie music has served an important role to empower people through music. The sort of interaction that took place between Jade Kwan and ToNick in the concert mentioned above can indeed empower people; they used their personal experiences and stories to encourage people not to give up, no matter how tough life can be.

Carol Becker has also expanded Edward Said’s idea of “public intellectuals” to the role of “organic artists”, asking the question “what is it that we as audiences hope to draw from the work of artists? In my sense it is not that different from what we might expect from the work of public intellectuals—that the intent of the work is to have an impact on society, to challenge existing forms, to raise significant questions, to bring ideas into society that might not yet be visible, and to do so in a way that can be accessed and, with some scrutiny, understood” (Becker, 2002:19). Some indie artists have played the role of “organic artists” suggested by Carol Becker. Indie music always has more room to be “always on

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the move, on the make” (Becker, 2002: 14), to react quickly to current social situations through the music. The core values of the indie music and spirit or the responsibilities of indie artists are to empower people, inspire people with new ideas and ask questions about existing values and institutions.

There are many aspects of the Hong Kong indie music scene which have not been covered here owing to limitations of space. The indie labels I have chosen to discuss may not be sufficient to give a comprehensive picture of the indie music scene in Hong Kong in the early 21st century. There are still many more interesting cases to study. However, the reason they have been chosen is that each of them has their own uniqueness, which serves to illustrate different facets of the current indie music scene.

There are many topics related to indie music that are worthy of study; suggestions for future research could include, for example, the role of the new media in the development of indie: how indie music can be empowered by the use of the new media, which can potentially replace the traditional mass media. Another interesting project would be to examine the changes of image the mainstream media have projected onto indie music over the past few decades. Furthermore, to compile a comprehensive history of local indie music using an academic approach would be highly beneficial to the study of local popular music.

In order to end this thesis on a note of encouragement, here I borrow a quotation from “The Necessity of an Alternative” and also quote from Mr Einar Engelstad¹²⁰.

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¹²⁰ Mr Einar Engelstad is a journalist on a Bergen newspaper, Bergen Tidende and the owner of one of the oldest independent record shops, Apollon, in Norway.
“The Necessity of an Alternative” states that, “we do not simply look for possibilities, we’ll have to create them.” In an interview I conducted with Mr Einar Engelstad when I was an exchange student in Norway in 2005-2006, when asked how indie practitioners should prepare themselves, he said, “Easy. Prepare to be disappointed millions of times and to work and work and work…to prepare to start everything again. Never give up!”
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Appendix 1: Interview with Prof Chu Yiu Wai, a Scholar of Cultural Studies (Excerpt)
Date: 28 November 2006
Time: 9:40am-10:45am
Place: Prof Chu’s office (OEE 1101)
Interviewee: Prof Chu Yiu Wai (hereafter referred to as Chu)
Interviewer: Eva Leung (Leung)

Leung: Does the Hong Kong Government think that pop music cannot represent the Hong Kong identity?

Chu: Yes, its thoughts are very interesting. Its view is that people can earn “big” money from pop music, which doesn’t need support from the government. This is their view, but I think indie music is part of pop music. The scope of pop music is very big. For example, there are some major music companies, like Emperor Entertainment Group (EGG) and Warner Music Group, producing some mainstream pop music; but there are some small record labels, which are vitalizing the whole music scene. But the Government thinks that since the pop music scene is money-driven, why does it need the government’s support? I think it only sees part of the whole picture.

Leung: In the past, were many songs written for TV series?

Chu: Yes, many pop songs were TV theme songs in the early period. When the market got bigger in the mid- and late1970s, other songs, in addition to TV theme songs, became popular. But most of the popular songs in the early period were TV theme songs.
Therefore, a singer would become famous if he/she got an opportunity to sing a TV theme song. Or conversely, a singer would not have this chance if he/she was not famous enough.

梁：那麼你說許冠傑拍完《鬼馬雙星》出的唱片，是否為這電視劇而出？

Leung: I understand that Sam Hui tailor-made an album after taking part in the film “Games Gamblers Play”. Is that correct?

朱：他是為了電影寫的，他有幾首歌，再加另外數首歌出一張唱片的。其實都是配合電影宣傳的。

Chu: He wrote songs for the film. He published an album with several songs written for the film on it, together with another few songs. In fact the album was released in order to promote the film.

梁：那麼便不是音樂成了附屬？

Leung: So did the music become subordinate?

朱：是啊，可以這樣說。但我覺得早期勝在兩樣東西配合得好，是雙贏。但轉過頭近期的廣告和卡拉 OK，音樂太細了。最後真的成了附屬，但早期如電視劇我都覺得不是附屬，真是雙贏，那首歌令劇集更加 Popular。粵語流行曲早期的都是情歌或諷刺時弊的，但長篇肥皂劇是注入了另類的題材，人生的哲理，如《狂潮》、《家變》那些，霑叔都是。電視劇的題材令他可以注入這些歌，題材令粵語流行曲的範圍大了。

Chu: Yes, you could say that. But I think the two things complemented each other in the early period. They were in a win-win situation. Music written for recent advertisements and karaoke has indeed become subordinate. But the songs written for TV themes were not subordinate; they really were in a win-win situation. The song could make a TV programme become more popular. Canto-pop songs written in the early period were either love songs or songs used to criticize current affairs. But there were some alternative elements, such as philosophy of life, added to some long soap operas: for example, “Hotel” and “A House Is Not A Home”, especially some songs written by James Wong. The themes of TV series often inspired the themes of these songs, which enriched the content of Canto-pop songs.
Appendix 2: Interview with Mr Yuen Chi Chung, a Renowned Indie Music Critic and Music Curator (Excerpt)
Date: 6 February 2007
Time: 12:00 noon-2:00pm
Place: Pacific Coffee, 1/F, 1 Peking Road, Tsim Sha Tsui
Interviewee: Mr Yuen Chi Chung (hereafter referred to as Yuen)
Interviewer: Eva Leung (Leung)

Leung: How do you divide the different stages of Hong Kong indie music?

Yuen: I think Hong Kong indie music appeared in the 1980s. The first generation was Blackbird, followed by Beyond. But people at that time didn't identify indie music as “indie” music; they called it “underground” music. They were the first generation of indie musicians. The reason I identify them as the first generation is that they were electronic bands who were pioneers in publishing/releasing their own albums and they operated differently from mainstream music. That means self-publishing was not necessarily confined to indie music, because some popular musicians also published their own work. The music they played was similar to rock music: for instance, the content of Blackbird’s music was more political; musical genres included folk and punk. Beyond played progressive rock and hard rock, which were excluded from the mainstream music scene. There were not so many bands at that time. It was difficult for them to self-publish their music. For instance, Beyond spent a lot of money hiring a music studio, and it was very expensive to publish on vinyl, so normally they used cassettes. This was the indie music movement in Hong Kong in the 1980s.

Leung: How do you divide the different stages of Hong Kong indie music?

Yuen: I think Hong Kong indie music appeared in the 1980s. The first generation was Blackbird, followed by Beyond. But people at that time didn’t identify indie music as “indie” music; they called it “underground” music. They were the first generation of indie musicians. The reason I identify them as the first generation is that they were electronic bands who were pioneers in publishing/releasing their own albums and they operated differently from mainstream music. That means self-publishing was not necessarily confined to indie music, because some popular musicians also published their own work. The music they played was similar to rock music: for instance, the content of Blackbird’s music was more political; musical genres included folk and punk. Beyond played progressive rock and hard rock, which were excluded from the mainstream music scene. There were not so many bands at that time. It was difficult for them to self-publish their music. For instance, Beyond spent a lot of money hiring a music studio, and it was very expensive to publish on vinyl, so normally they used cassettes. This was the indie music movement in Hong Kong in the 1980s.

梁：你怎樣把香港的獨立音樂分階段？
Leung: Actually, why did Blackbird appear in the 1980s?

袁：因為其實他們的背景很有趣，他們的出現其實 70 年代尾已經組成。他們秉承了 punk movement 的沖擊，他們不是想扮 punk band，覺得那時在造就一些有關政治性的音樂，一些很 DIY 製作的音樂，那時他們便開始做歌、錄歌。第一批作品叫東方紅，即唱回東方紅那首歌。那時很有趣的，一盒錄音帶有兩面，每面都是唱五首歌，中文版的另一面是英文版，再唱一首南音，那時他們都算摸索到一個簡陋的製作。錄音是很粗糙的，但很有那種 underground 的味道。我想他們在摸索下出來，因那時他們前無來者。雖樂隊文化早在 60 年代已有，但那時的樂隊無所謂另類，因那時樂隊已是一個主流。Beatles 後有很多樂隊出現了，但跟着下來 90 年代的樂隊文化開始減弱了。

Yuen: Their background is very interesting. They had formed in the late-1970s. They formed under the influence of the punk movement. They did not intend to be a punk band, but the atmosphere at that time produced some political and DIY music; they started composing and recording music. Their first batch of work was called “East Is Red”, which was covered by the original song “East Is Red”. Their production was very interesting. There were two sides to a cassette, with five songs on each side; one side was sung in Chinese while the other side was in English. There was a “Nanyin” song. They had already worked out a simple production technique. The recording was very rough with a feeling of the “underground”. They worked out this method all by themselves because they didn’t have any predecessors. Although band culture had appeared in the 1960s, bands were not divided into so-called “alternative” or otherwise. The reason was that bands were a kind of mainstream culture. There were many bands formed after “Beatlemania”, but in the 1990s band culture began to weaken.

梁：那麼 Beyond 是受什麼影響而出現的呢？

Leung: What influences were there at the time Beyond appeared?

袁：他們出現都是因為……例如你聽早期 70 年代的 Progressive Rock，都是受到 New Wave 文化的影響，他們踏出頗大的一步，是他們肯毛遂自薦做他們的製作。例如他們會做自己的音樂會，他們覺得自己夠歌，便做一場演唱會，在中環做。然後再下一步是他們將歌錄下來給更多人聽，所以自資出錄音帶。他們本身多產、多歌。不像有時樂隊玩了四、五年都是得八首歌，不多原創歌，都是玩別人的歌。

Yuen: They appeared because...they were influenced by progressive rock and the New Wave culture of the 1970s. They took a big step when they opted to produce their own music. For instance, they organized their own concerts; they organized a concert in Central when they thought they had enough songs. Then the next step they wanted to take was to record their music for wider circulation, so they published their self-funded cassettes. They were productive; they had many songs. Unlike some bands who may have had only eight songs after playing for four or five years, and who didn’t have many original songs, just covering other bands’ songs.
Leung: The development of indie bands stagnated in the late-1980s. Then how did it develop in the 1990s?

Yuen: There were some music movements that arose in the late 1980s. Some concert series began to be organized, like “From the Underground”. A sort of force was formed after four or five “From the Underground” concerts had been organized. However, given the fact that there were more bands covering other bands’ music than composing their original songs, it seemed that the influence of the force was limited. The development was limited because of the limited number of original songs. There were not so many bands who were willing to publish their own music. This situation lasted until 1987 to 1989. Occasionally some of the bands published their music on cassette, but the force was very weak.

Leung: How did things develop after that?

Yuen: Martyr and The Box were the next wave of indie bands who became aware of the need to record their music to leave behind. Indie bands used to sustain themselves by playing live, so they didn’t realize they needed to record their works. When Martyr appeared, they came to realize that recording their works could help in disseminating their music.

Leung: What happened after Martyr and The Box?

Yuen: After that, indie record labels started to appear. The earliest one was Sound Factory, followed by DIY Music, GIG, DIY Music, and Music Communication. I don’t remember which name was the production company and which one was the regulation name. After that, DIY Music also started to publish albums. They released a series of works under the Independent Label label. The changes they made were that they would release CDs. The earliest album produced by the independent company was Xper Xr. That was in 1993.
Yuen: The indie labels appeared in the mid-1990s. Sound Factory was the earliest one, followed by DIY Music and GIG. DIY had two names; the other one was Music Communication. I don’t remember which name referred to the production house and which name was for administration. Then DIT was formed by some people from DIY. There were three indie labels in Hong Kong at that time. A significant change was that they published in CD format; the earliest CD they published was by Xper Xr in 1993.

梁：那麼這樂隊的形式是怎樣的？

Leung: What sort of music did this band play?

袁：玩一些實驗噪音音樂，都頗古怪。其實之前他們都自資出版過一些唱片，這就是他首張 CD 出品，我不記得 CD 的名稱是什麼，不過封名設計很好，是把黎明的相片放大了，好像叫「黎明」，我不太記得了。另外，那時 Sound Factory 簽了 AMK、Juno；另外，DIY Music Communication 簽了 Anodize, …Huh!?, Virus 和 Black and Blue，GIG 有黃秋生和黑盒 (Black Box)。

Yuen: They played some experimental noise music; the style was quite strange. Actually they published some self-funded albums, like their first CD album. I don’t remember the title of the CD, but the design of the cover was very good - they used an enlarged photo of Leon Lai. The title was something like “Leon Lai/Dawn”. I don’t remember clearly. In addition, Sound Factory had signed AMK and Juno; DIY Music Communication had signed Anodize, …Huh!? , Virus and Black and Blue; GIG had signed Wong Chau Sang, Anthony and Black Box.

梁：黃秋生都是做獨立音樂的嗎？

Leung: Did Wong Chau Sang, Anthony play indie music?

袁：是啊，其實最初三張碟都是 Independent Label 製作的。但第二張呢，因為當時的 Label 給滾石收購了，所以算是半個滾石旗下的，他的 concert 都是 GIG 的出品。90 年代中期有三大獨立唱片品牌出現了，令那時覺得有 music labels 在幫樂隊出版唱片，不是自資出的。那當然有些人不想求人於是自資出碟，但當時就有三間公司在推動這件事。那時是黃金年代。

Yuen: Yes, his first three albums were produced by an indie label. But his second album was published partially by Rock Records because GIG had already been acquired by Rock Records at that time. His concert was organized under the name of GIG. Three major indie labels appeared in the mid-1990s. Indie music was not only self-published and self-funded by bands; indie labels helped indie bands to publish their albums. Of course there were some people who didn’t want to be beholden to others, so they still self-published their albums. But these three indie labels were pushing this forward (publishing CD albums for indie bands). That was a golden era.

梁：你覺得 90 年代中期是黃金年代？
Leung: You regard the mid-1990s as the golden era?

袁：我覺得最主要係傳媒的幫助，例如商台那時搞了很多《樂勢力》，他們將 Band 捧到紅館演出。以往的音樂雜誌怎樣捧這件事，電視台怎樣播這首歌，都不及每星期有五、六、日不斷在講這件事。

Yuen: I think the main reason was gaining the support of the media; for example, Commercial Radio Hong Kong organized a lot of concerts called “Music Force” (《樂勢力》). They organized band shows at the Hong Kong Coliseum. No matter how much music magazines and TV station promoted indie music, there was no substitute for people talking about indie music non-stop all weekend.

梁：他們會不會像 89268 般，可以找一些商業機構贊助呢？

Leung: Were indie labels in the 1990s able to obtain sponsorship to support indie music, like 89268?

袁：這樣係更加因難，因為正如我之前所說，這種音樂的形象很 negative，所以人們不會贊助地下音樂，否則就會「拋錢下海」，所以不會有這種事情，只有近這些年才有這些 sponsorship 出現。即使是那時候那三大獨立唱片公司也不會有，如果有 support 都是商台 support，不會有一間啤酒公司、一個什麼品牌 support 一個獨立音樂的製作。

Yuen: This was much more difficult. As I said before, the image of indie music had previously been very negative, so they were not able to get sponsors. They [potential sponsors, for instance, commercial businesses] thought that to sponsor an indie band would be like throwing money into the sea – just wasting it. Therefore, it did not happen. Commercial sponsorships and collaborations have only been happening over the last few years. Even the three indie labels in the mid-1990s did not offer sponsorship. If they had support, it was given by Commercial Radio Hong Kong. No beer companies or any other brands supported indie music production at that time.

梁：相比起現在，獨立音樂的形象是否好多了？

Leung: Compared with that time, has the image of indie music improved a lot in recent years?

袁：因為這麼多年，已經將兩種音樂的距離拉近了，甚至乎有 indie 圈的樂手已經去了主流音樂圈生存，例如有盧巧音是一個例子，還有梁基爵、Minimal、亞里安，都會為主流歌手作歌，這使群眾對獨立音樂的接受能力高了，因為這兩種音樂多了 crossover。

Yuen: The distance between the two types of music has been reduced after so many years. Some indie artists have even made their living in the mainstream music scene, such as
Candy Lo; and Gaybird, Minimal and Arion compose music for mainstream artists. The crossover between mainstream and indie music enhances audiences’ abilities to accept indie music.

梁：你認為獨立音樂是對抗主流文化嗎？

Leung: Do you think indie music opposes mainstream culture?

袁：在今天的社會就未必要做這些，因為經過這麼多年，部份獨立音樂已經被主流吸納了，是靠主流音樂的層面而變成發展得很大。獨立音樂是有很多種類的，有些是很 pop 的，可以上流行榜 No.1 的，但有些是很偏激的，就視乎他們想做什麼，例如 89268 的樂隊都是偏向比較 pop 的類型，他們不會有些是很難令人接受、很艱澀的類型出現，所以他們是想做一些接近主流的音樂，例如 InLove 的音樂與一首主流音樂是沒有分別的，又例如方欣浩的音樂也是偏向主流，但另一方面，編曲編排方面也可以做一些對抗性的做法，就視乎他們取向的問題。

Yuen: There is not necessarily any opposition between indie and mainstream music in recent society. This is because indie music has been absorbed by the mainstream music scene after so many years; indie music depends on the mainstream music scene in order to grow. Indie music has many kinds of genre; some of them are very pop, and can become number one in the pop charts; some of them are very radical. It depends on what indie artists/bands want to achieve. For instance, the indie bands of 89268 tend towards a more popular music style, which is not a style that is difficult or too obscure for audiences to accept. Therefore, they want to produce music that is similar to mainstream music. The music of InLove is not very different from a mainstream pop song, for example. The music of Arnold Fang is also similar to a mainstream pop music style. But on the other hand, some oppositional/alternative elements can be added in musical arrangements. That depends on what approach they want to take.

梁：相對於現在，以前的獨立音樂是否有一些對抗？

Leung: Compared to the current situation, in the past was indie music more radical?

袁：因為那個年代，pop 和地下音樂的 crossover 不是很多，甚至乎當時上十大流行榜的地下樂隊所創作的音樂 image 都是比較黑暗，有些比較「奇異」的元素，在當時一定要做出一個強烈的個性才會有聲音的風格出來，否則就會變得很含糊，所以當時的界線分得很開。

Yuen: It was because there were not so many crossovers between mainstream and underground music. And even the musical image of underground bands, who could get into the top ten of the pop music charts, was darker, including some bizarre elements. At that time they had to present a strong personality so as to give their voice some uniqueness. If they didn’t, their image and sound could be very vague. Therefore, in the past the boundary between the mainstream and the underground in the past was very clear.
梁：那麼你認為 89268 對現在的獨立音樂有什麼影響呢？

Leung: What influence has 89268 had on the current indie music scene?

袁：我想是他們是有系統性地做他們的出品，最重要的是他們將主流與獨立音樂的界線更加減退了；他們也做了很多跨媒體活動，例如他們有相展和其他展覽活動，所以他們是 more than 出一張唱片和做一場 show，好像將整件事情變得好玩了。他們出版那張 “Come Out and Play” 3CD 專輯其實是想匯聚更加大的力量層面，他們是有一個野心的。

Yuen: I think they have produced their music products systematically. Most importantly they narrowed the gap between the mainstream and indie music scenes. They organized many multi-media functions; for example, they organized some photography exhibitions and other exhibitions, showing that they intended to do something more than just publish an album or organize a music show. It seemed that the whole thing became more playful. The aim of publishing the three-CD album “Come Out and Play” was to increase the power of indie music, showing that they had ambition.
Appendix 3: Interview with Dr Wong Chi Chung, a Renowned DJ, a Scholar of Cultural Studies and Music Curator (Excerpt)
Date: 27 September 2010
Time: 3:00pm-4:00pm
Place: Student Activity Room, Christian Education Centre, Hong Kong Baptist University
Interviewee: Dr Wong Chi Chung (hereafter referred to as Wong)
Interviewer: Eva Leung (Leung)

Leung: Are there any indie bands that can be seen as representative of each stage of the development of Hong Kong indie music?

Wong: ...Of course, we have Blackbird as the ancestor of political songs. They are a very significant band. When I was studying at the Hong Kong Baptist University we invited them to perform there. They had given some political performances with the People’s Theatre, including topics about political anxiety regarding the reunification of Hong Kong and China, denial of human rights etc. Their performances were very radical - they threw a burning television into a rubbish bin. There was an enormous audience at the performance. It is still a vivid memory to me. Therefore, Blackbird is not just an indie band, they are also the ancestor of political bands. They were always putting on this kind of performance in the post-64 era.

黃：...當然有我們政治性的始祖郭達年黑鳥，他也是很重要的一隊樂隊。黑鳥就是在我讀大學時，我們也曾請他來浸大演出，他們與民眾劇場做一些政治性的演出，都是在回歸前對政治的惶恐、人權的剝奪，都有很多政治性的議題。他們的演出也很激烈，把電視燒著放入垃圾桶，有很多人圍觀，歷歷在目。所以黑鳥是獨立樂隊之餘，也是政治樂隊的始祖，在後六四之後他們也做很多這樣的東西。

黃︰...到 90 前期及中期，商台開始有一個名叫《豁達音樂天空》的節目，《豁達音樂誌向》, "Quotables", 我們主力做兩種事情, 一是推介國際音樂，當然適逢其會很多西雅圖的樂隊，我們播得很厲害。另外就是 Pop Groups，有 Blur、Oasis、Radiohead 等，那幾年我們又是播很多這些歌，那時正是唱片業的黃金時間，外國唱片讓我們播放便會很流行，那些樂隊便會來港舉辦音樂會，全場滿座，媒體推動音樂的力量很集中，我們做這些好像很另類，但其實在西方是很流行的，這就是一種音樂風潮。我們又認為要做本地 band 的，商台或 903 做 band 音樂的傳統就是 80 年代起，我們又做 Beyond、太極及達明，都是我們很主動去做的，
我也適逢其會剛開始做電台，到 90 年代我們都覺得這些不可以停的，在電台播放裡面，除了有民藝復興，還有盒子、...Huh!? 亞龍大等十多隊 band，所以就是有這個機遇，這也是和家駒過身有關，家駒 93 年過身後我們舉辦了一些向他致敬的音樂會，亦請了十多隊 band 在高山舉辦了一場《別了戰友音樂會》，籌募了一些經費，出了一本書，但我忘了帶來那本書，那本書水禾田拍攝 Beyond 他們去了非洲之旅的相集，賣了得了數十萬，商台設立了一個基金來推動樂隊的，所以就是有成本去做這些 show，而那個精神就是繼承家駒的精神，告訴人們樂隊可以登下紅館之台，這就所以我們有了《樂勢力》的音樂會，雖然豁達至 95 年暫告一段落，但之後有 Inti 的《組 band 時間》繼承了我們，她之前還是小女孩為我們打點，慢慢便獨當一面，直至前兩年才沒做，就是有這個淵源。其實《樂勢力》也不止做了一次的，還有一次叫《河水犯井水》，這就是一些 pop 及 band 音樂的 crossover，那時我們每個星期六會在尖沙咀一個地方有一個 Saturday Live，像美國的 comedy show，我們就是 band show，每次會有 indie band 及 pop artist，像憶蓮會來唱 Nirvana 的歌向她致敬。因為她剛自殺死了，就是這些 crossover 的音樂，所以那次《河水犯井水》就是將 indie band 及 pop artist 一起 crossover，其實那次都是一個很重要的 signature，大概就可以分這三個年期。

Wong: ...Until the early to mid-1990s, Commercial Radio Hong Kong (CRHK) broadcast a music programme called “The Sky of Quotable”, and published a music magazine called “Quotable”. We focused on two things: one was to promote international music. There were many bands from Seattle. There were also some “Pop Group”, such as Blur, Oasis and Radiohead etc. We broadcast this kind of music a lot at that time. That was a golden age of the record industry. We popularized many Western records. The Western bands we introduced then would come to perform in Hong Kong. Their shows were always full houses. The support from the media was very focused. The music we promoted seemed to be alternative, but it was very popular in Western countries. We also believed we should promote local bands. CRHK 903 had been promoting band music since 1980s. We have promoted Beyond, Taichi and Tat Ming Pair. We promoted them very actively. I joined CRHK at that time. Until the 1990s, we thought that we couldn’t stop, so we kept promoting bands, such as The Renaissance, The Box, ...Huh!?, Anodize etc. It so happened that Ka Kui passed away in 1993, so we organized some tribute concerts for him. We invited more than ten bands to perform at the “Goodbye Comrades Concert” at the Ko Shan Theatre. We raised some funds from this concert, then we published a book, which I forgot to bring along with me today. This was a photography book. There were photos Water Poon had taken for Beyond when they visited Africa. We made hundreds of thousands dollars from selling this book and we established a fund to promote band music; that was the capital we had to organize band shows. We inherited the spirit of Ka Kui and we told people that local bands could also perform at the Hong Kong Coliseum. Therefore we organized “Music Force” concerts, although “The Sky of Quotable” was stopped in 1995. Following “The Sky of Quotable”, we (CRHK) had Inti’s music programme called “Time to Form a Band”. Inti was a little girl who had helped us in the programme before, then she worked independently on her own programme. The programme had stopped until two years ago. There was not just one “Music Force” concert actually. There was a concert series called “Intrusion of Well-water and River-water”, which was a crossing-over of pop and band music. We
organized band shows, called “Saturday Live”, every weekend in Tsim Sha Tsui, like some American comedy shows, but we organized band shows. We invited bands and pop artists to perform together; for instance, we invited Sandy Lam to cover Nirvana’s music, because he (Kurt Cobain, the lead singer of Nirvana) had just committed suicide at that time. These were some significant moments in the local indie music.
Appendix 4: Interview with Mr Hon Ka Chun, Founder of Local Indie Label 89268
(Excerpt)
Date: 21 October 2006
Time: 3:15pm-4:20pm
Place: Lab Yellow
Interviewee: Mr Hon Ka Chun (hereafter referred to as Hon)
Interviewer: Eva Leung (Leung)

梁︰你們成立 89268 的目的是什麼？

Leung: What was the aim in establishing 89268?

康︰其實可能都是喜歡做獨立製作。89268 都是想搞文化藝術項目。我們都是想將非主流的項目成為不太非主流的，甚至變成主流的。89268 的成立目的是...基於我年少的經驗，我覺得香港的 scene 太鬆散了，好像每個人都在玩自己的音樂、藝術創作，但好像各做各，你又做一些，我又做一些似的。他們普遍採取的態度和性格都是比較內斂和低調，普遍不會大力考慮如何將藝術創作和市場掛鈎，或者令更多人可以接觸到它。我覺得我可以做到這些事，可以將這些事放在那些藝術項目的時候，這會對整個 scene 有幫助。如講 89268 和音樂相關的項目來說，我們都關心。由 89268 開始的時候，我們要四處找做音樂的人，看看他們有無興趣合作。發展到今天我們已經可以吸引人找我們合作。你會看到城市中需要這樣的東西，如果你不做那些人只會一直坐在旁邊，自己做自己的音樂。他們不會知道如何去出一張唱片，不知道如何去做，只繼續躲在 band 房中做音樂。直至有一天有一位朋友對他說「其實你可以自己做的」，他才會開竅，知道自己原来可以做一隻碟。我想 89268 的價值在此。

Hon: Maybe because we liked indie production. 89268 wants to work on some cultural and arts projects. We aim to make non-mainstream music become not so non-mainstream, even become mainstream. The aim in establishing 89268 is...based on the experiences I had when I was young. I feel that the Hong Kong indie music scene has been loosely developed. It seems that everyone just focused on their own music and artistic creation; you did something; I did something. They took a general approach and their characters were rather restrained and low-key. Generally they didn’t consider how to relate artworks to markets, or how artworks could reach more people. I think I can do these things (relating artwork to markets); I can consider these things (relating artworks to markets) when working on arts projects, which are good for the scene. We care about all music-related projects. When 89268 was first set up, we looked for artists, to see whether they were interested in collaborating with us. But now artists actively ask to collaborate.
with us. You will see the city needs this kind of thing (a music agency like 89268); if you
don’t do this, people will just sit to one side and work on their own music. They didn’t
know how to publish an album, didn’t how to do anything, they just hid in their band
rooms and wrote their music. Until one day a friend tells them “actually you can do it
yourself”; then they realize that they can publish an album. I think this is the value of
89268.

梁︰那麼過去有多少隊獨立樂隊是得到你們的幫助？

Leung: How many bands have had your help so far?

康︰沒有計算過。而且問題這樣問好像有點誇張，「有多少隊樂隊得到我們的幫
助」，好像我是那些「東華三院」似的。我想和我們合作過的樂隊(不管時間長短)
都有百多隊。

Hon: I don’t count how many. The question seems a bit exaggerated: “How many bands
have had your help”. It sounds as though we are a charity like the “Tung Wah Group of
Hospitals”. I think there are more than a hundred bands which have collaborated with us,
some for long periods, others for only a short time.

梁︰那麼你們是不是獨立的唱片公司？

Leung: Is 89268 regarded as an indie label?

康︰所以我現在已不懂說什麼是獨立什麼不是，如果你先將我放在獨立的唱片公
司，那麼我可以肯定地說人山人海不是獨立，因為 89268 和人山人海是很大分別
的。他們肯定不是同一類型。為什麼？我們有的所謂經濟支援，我們所有的財產，
都和人山人海是兩碼子的事。最簡單我問你有哪一間唱片公司是可以有自己的錄音
室。

Hon: That’s why I don’t know what indie music is or what indie music is not now. If you
regard us as an indie label, I would tell you that People Mountain People Sea is definitely
not an indie label, because there is a major difference between 89268 and People
Mountain People Sea. They are definitely not the same type of label as us. Why not?
Because the so-called financial support we have, all the property we have, is completely
different from People Mountain People Sea. I ask you a simple question: what record
company has its own recording studio?

梁︰你們有沒有自己的錄音室呢？

Leung: Do you have your own music studio?

康︰當然沒有﹗只是得它有。它的錄音室還是要很完備的錄音室，可以租出去給主
流歌手的錄音室。如果每一間獨立唱片公司都能有這樣的財政在背後支持它這樣做
音樂，其實它根本是主流唱片公司。剛才你說它沒有和其他主流音樂有掛鈎實際上
又不是。其實人山人海主要是做主流音樂的，主要做給楊千嬅、黃耀明；Jason 蔡
德才主要做歌給...以前做給鄭秀文，現在做給許志安，這些是可能你沒留意到的。人山人海自己有什麼出品？它只是出品了at17和拜金小姐。拜金小姐，我姑且可以說為獨立製作氣味較重的產品，但at17真的不是。At17是看着mass approach而做音樂的組合來的。當然你循那個角度去看，她們都是自己做自己事，DIY諸如此類的，那也是的。不過我會這樣看，她們是來自一個很有錢的家庭的DIY小朋友，我們是來自較窮困家庭的DIY。所以我時常好介意將我和他們放在一起，我們高攀不起，我們其實沒有他們那些資源。我怕人們有錯覺說89268就是人山人海那些東西，人山人海那麼「巴閉」，那麼89268也是那麼「巴閉」，那麼風光，事實上不是這樣。at17到商場唱兩首歌可以得幾萬元，我們就沒有可能。

Hon: Of course not! Only it (People Mountain People Sea) has. Its music studio has excellent facilities and it can be rented out to mainstream pop artists. If an indie label can obtain enough financial support to make music, it is certainly a mainstream music label. It is not true that it doesn’t have any relationship with other mainstream music as you have just said. People Mountain People Sea mainly produces mainstream music; mainly produces music for Miriam Yeung and Anthony Wong; Jason Choi used to produce music for Sammi Cheng; now he produces music for Andy Hui. You may not have been aware of these relationships before. What does People Mountain People Sea have for its own indie production? It only produces At17 and Miss Gold Digger. I can grudgingly regard Miss Gold Digger as a product more like an indie production, but At17 is not (an indie band) really. At17 is a music group created for the tastes of the masses. Of course if you look at it from the perspective that they produce music using a DIY approach, then it is true. But I see them like children from a wealthy DIY family, while we are from a poorer DIY family. I am afraid that people get the wrong impression that 89268 is like People Mountain People Sea; People Mountain People Sea is so great, so 89268 is also great, with a good reputation. In fact that is not the case. At17 could earn thousands of dollars singing two songs in shopping centres, which is not possible for us.

梁：你認為有什麼因素會影響到香港獨立音樂的發展？例如香港是否太商業化，如果獨立音樂不夠商業化是否很難「揾到食」呢？

Leung: Which factors have influenced the development of the Hong Kong indie music scene? For example, is Hong Kong too commercialized? Is it difficult for indie bands/artists to support themselves if they are not commercial enough?

康：我不覺得是這樣。首先我不覺得香港人懂得分什麼音樂是商業化，什麼不是商業化，我們覺得他們沒有這個水平。我覺得最大問題是有時present出來的所謂獨立音樂太過神化，講到他們的音樂是很有內涵，是很高深、很有背後意義等等，我覺得這是其中一個令獨立音樂會「死得快」的原因來的。其實它不只不過是音樂而已，對於普羅大眾來說音樂有什麼分別呢？例如你到街上問一個大嬸，問她聽陳奕迅和聽容祖兒有什麼分別，她不懂得如何告訴你。「好聽囉﹗陳奕迅有K歌之王，都係K囉﹗」她都只是會這樣回答你。但是為何「K歌之王」不可以是獨立樂隊的歌呢？其實可以是的，其實無那些關係在當中。那麼問題是什麼？那問題是你們獨立音樂不行是因為做的音樂太主流？不是啊！其實關鍵是香港太沒有一個好正確、好認真對待藝術文化的視野。普遍大眾都沒有。普遍大眾都只會接收到最普及、最大
量的層面的所謂藝術文化項目。如果我們針對性地說音樂的話，他們便會認為自己在聽的音樂已是全部。對於他們來說那些才是音樂來的。例如你問一個主婦陳奕迅和聽容祖兒有什麼分別，她說無分別。然後你再播「假音人」她聽，她會說「這些不是音樂來的，痴線！那個人的聲音這麼難聽的！」她一定會這樣說，她一定會說陳浩鋒的聲音好難聽，他唱的都不知道是什麼。其實這顯示出他們視野的狹窄。但我從來都不會將問題歸咎於那些受眾。我不會介意那個大嬸視野狹窄，因為她的狹窄不是因為她自己想狹窄，我相信好少人是這樣。那為何會這樣狹窄？那和大家的成長過程有關。那成長過程有什麼？教育是很大的問題。究竟下一代，甚至乎現在這一代，在成長過程中接受的教育究竟有多少部份是得到好正面和好正確的方式去接觸好多不同類型的藝術創作呢？其實是沒有多少的。

Hon: I don’t think so. Firstly, I don’t think Hong Kong people know how to distinguish between commercial and non-commercial music. I don’t think they have this ability. I think a major problem is that sometimes the way indie music is presented is too “deified”: the music is full of connotations, very difficult [to understand], full of hidden meanings etc. I think this is one of the things that causes indie music to “die” quickly. After all, it is just music. What difference is there from the point of view of the general public? If you ask an auntie on the street, she won’t know the difference between the music of Eason Chan and the music of Joey Yung. “Sounds good! Eason Chan has a song called “The King of Karaoke”. They are all karaoke songs,” she may give you this answer. But why can’t “The King of Karaoke” be indie music? It can be in fact; it doesn’t matter at all. So what is the problem? Is it that indie music is not good because the music scene is too mainstream? No! A key point is that Hong Kong doesn’t have a proper, serious vision of or attitude towards the arts and the cultural scene. The general public doesn’t have one. The general public will only accept the most popular and most general level of so-called arts and cultural projects. If we are talking specifically about music, they think the music they listen to represents all music. That is music for them. If you ask a housewife what is the difference between the music of Eason Chan and Joey Yung, she will say there is no difference. Then if you play Gayamyan to her, she will say, “that’s not music, it’s crazy! The sound of the vocal is awful!” She is bound to say that; she’s bound to say that Chan Ho Fung’s voice sounds terrible and she doesn’t know what he’s singing about. This shows how narrow their vision [that of the general public] is. But I don’t blame the public for this. I don’t blame an auntie for her narrow views because they are not her fault. I don’t believe anyone wants to be narrow-minded; I believe few people are like that. So why is their vision so narrow? It relates to how people are brought up. Education is a major problem in the growing up process. How many opportunities are there in education for the next generation, or even this generation, to acquire a positive and correct attitude towards understanding different artistic genres? Not many, I think.
Date: 29 October 2006
Time: After the end of InLove’s concert
Place: Lab Yellow
Interviewee: Lu, Dicky, Tze Lok
Interviewer: Eva Leung (Leung)

Leung: How do you know each other?

Lu: We know each other from church. We’ve known each other for almost ten years. We’ve played music together since 2002. We were just friends before, without any musical relationship.

Leung: How did you start playing music together?

Lu: They knew that I composed music, but I didn’t sing my original songs to them at first. I just kept them to myself. Then Daniel found a music competition called “Tom Lee Unplug”. He suggested that we used my song to enter the competition, and that we should find one more member to join us. We wondered who we should invite at that time, then Tze Lok thought of Dicky, because Dicky’s guitar playing was awesome. The three of us first played together because of that competition.

Leung: What is the goal of your music?
Lu: We want to make pleasant music. It is necessary to be pleasant. Apart from being pleasant to listen to, I think music should have meaningful content. So we don’t just publish album as soon as we have enough songs; we publish albums when we have a theme we want to express to people. We value (romantic) love very much, but the love we talk about is not just romantic love, but also love of friends, family, of the world and of the poor, or we show concern about injustice. These are all about affection. We want to express these types of affection though our songs.

Leung: Are there any differences between your music and mainstream music, in terms of goals, creation and style?

Lu: I don’t think there is any difference. Some may think that mainstream music is mainly about romance, lost love etc, but songs on other topics are gradually starting to appear now. There are many mainstream artists singing meaningful songs, expressing other messages. I think some mainstream songs can be non-mainstream... they are able to strike a balance between commercial and artistic creation. So I think indie music, which is similar to mainstream music, doesn’t want to be too highbrow; we also want to communicate with others and to be accepted by audiences. So I think it’s important to get a balance. Indie music is not very different from mainstream music.

Leung: Do you think Hong Kong is a good place for indie music to develop?

D: 其實我覺得香港人的接受能力特別高，以音樂方面來說。有時我們有機會和台灣和中國的人談，他們會批評台灣的音樂很狹窄，中國的又會批評中國的音樂得空
Dicky: I think Hong Kong people have a great capacity for accepting new things. Sometimes, when we’ve talked to Taiwanese and Chinese people, they’ve criticized the music scene in Taiwan for being very narrow; some Chinese have criticized the content of Chinese music for being empty. For instance, they produced some manic music, but the content was very empty; it was manic for no reason. Of course not all music is like that.

Lu: 基本上所有地方都會批評自己的音樂...

Lu: Basically people criticize the music from their own places...

D: 對呀。其實我覺得香港很多類型的...其實我覺得的流行曲也不算差，他們的製作很多也很好。只是我不明白香港的...其實也不只是香港的，Indie 的人大多都會批評 pop 的人，pop 的人又會說 indie 不好聽。我覺得為甚麽要這樣？Indie 並不是高格調一點，(pop 和 indie) 也是音樂，我覺得這會是一個問題。香港不論 indie 和主流都有很好的音樂。

Dicky: Yes. Actually I think there are many musical genres in Hong Kong... I don’t think the mainstream music is that bad; they have some good music too. But I don’t understand why in Hong Kong... actually not only in Hong Kong, many indie artists criticize mainstream music, and mainstream artists say indie music is not good. Why is it like this? Indie music is not at a higher level. Both indie and mainstream music are kinds of music. I think this is a problem. There is good music no matter whether it’s indie or mainstream music in Hong Kong.
Appendix 6: Interview with Mr Adrian Tsing and Ms Gloria Tang, Founders of M.I.F.F. (Excerpt)
Date: 15 October 2010
Time: 2:00pm-3:00pm
Place: Tea Restaurant, Tai Hang
Interviewee: Adrian Tsing (hereafter referred to as Tsing) and Ms Gloria Tang (Gloria)
Interviewer: Eva Leung (Leung)

Leung: Have any foreign or local bands influenced your music?

Tsing: I was not influenced by any band when I was young. I like playing the piano, so I have kept playing. I wanted to compose music when I was in upper primary education to elementary secondary education. I wasn’t influenced by anyone until I went to study in Canada; as a result of immigrating there, I started getting to know many different kinds of music. Wong Ka Kui from Beyond has inspired me deeply. His faith in music made me believe that I was on the right track. I did once sell my music to a Hong Kong artist when I came back to Hong Kong. That was the only time I sold my music. I was signed to a music distribution company. No one wanted my music, then my boss told me that when I composed, I had to imagine people singing the song in karaoke. The music wasn’t good
enough if they couldn’t sing along or couldn’t sing it happily. I was so confused at that time, but I tried. I imagined how people sang in karaoke, then I composed a song using this method. That song was sold. I was happy at the time, but I didn’t really feel that it was much fun. I never wrote that kind of song again after that. I’d rather write songs I like and that move me. It is because composition should rely on instinct. It’s difficult for me to get rid of [the idea of] composing a hit song. I remember that I spent quite a while freeing myself of the idea that I had to write a hit song. Whether the song is popular or not is none of my business. I think this is a major change. If someone, some artists, buy my songs eventually because they like it, that will be all right; but don’t ask me to compose hit songs; I am not interested in it.

梁：那後來有沒有是你作了你喜歡的歌而賣給歌手？

Leung: Have you sold the songs you like to other artists?

程：有，本來是有的，那歌手還打來說很喜歡那兩歌，問可否要，但之後他又不了了之，後來說他之後的唱片是一張 concept album，所以用不到。

Tsing: Yes, originally there was someone. That artist called and told me he liked my two songs very much, and asked if he could have them; but finally it ended up with nothing definite. He later told me that he couldn’t use the songs because he was preparing a concept album.

梁：那你怎樣看主流樂壇？

Leung: What do you think about the mainstream music scene?

程：我覺得現在愈來愈好，有很多作曲、填詞的人出來而是受認可的，現在開始有 band，你現在 name 幾隊 band 來聽聽。

Tsing: I think it’s getting better. Many composers and lyricists are being recognized. There are some bands now. You name a few bands.

梁：現在最紅的應該是 Rubberband 和 Mr。

Leung: The most popular bands are Rubberband and Mr now.

程：對，都是這兩隊，但如果叫你 name 以前紅過的就只有 Beyond，是廿多三十年前的了。又例如王菀之，我也是很喜歡的，她有自己的風格，有自己的作品，又可以試不同的事情，而又受認可的，我覺得香港的樂壇又有這些元素是很好的，雖然不是很多，也不是超紅，但起碼有這些事情正在發生。陳奕迅我也喜歡的。他們 in common 的地方是他們唱的歌我是聽到歌詞內容的。我覺得很多人都不能給我這個感覺的。很多歌手唱歌時只讓聽眾聽到一堆東西，這不是咬字的問題，是他們有沒有把故事說出來，但這也看他們的音樂接受多少，然後他們能說出多少故事，陳奕
迅每次唱歌我都會聽到他要說的事情，他是一個好好的 story teller，而他們幾個都是有這特質的。

Tsing: Yes, they are. But if I ask you to name popular bands from the past, you’ll only be able to name Beyond. They were already twenty to thirty years ago. I like Ivana Wong very much too. She has her own style. She can write her own music. She has tried different kinds of things and she has had some recognition. I think it’s very good that these things are happening in the Hong Kong music scene. Although there are not many (singer-songwriters like Ivana Wong) and they are not super-popular, at least something is happening. I like Eason Chan too. A common characteristic is that I can listen to the stories/contents when they sing. Not many artists give me this feeling. Audiences only listen to some of the words [without understanding the content]. This is not a problem of articulation. It depends on the musicians’ ability to understand the music and tell a story. I can listen the stories Eason Chan tells every time he sings. He is a very good storyteller. This is a common characteristic they have.

梁︰我還想知道多些兩場音樂會的具體情況。2009 年 8 月那場是在蒲吧開了半場，那當時你們的預計人數及實際人數是多少的？

Leung: I’d like to know more about the two concerts. What was the expected size of the audience compared with the actual number of people who attended the concert organized in August 2009 at Hang Out?

歌︰那次好像是少些的，因為是開了半場，而租錢等的開支約$5,500，以我記憶。(程︰好像是。)連計其他雜費開支約共$8,000-$10,000，那次都是完成沒有問題的，好像有賺少許的。所以第二年的 concert 是想做大型一點，而且它們半場的音響很 ok，便想開全場，但全場的開支也不是突然多了很多，但我們要外借一些音響，因為蒲吧的音響不足以 provide 給全場，再加其他 printing，好像我們是要$28,000 的，我們要有$28,000 才不用蝕本的，那次我們有$26,000 多元的。

Gloria: It seemed that fewer people came because we only used half the arena of Hang Out. The expenditure on hiring the venue etc was about $5,500, if I remember correctly. (Tsing: I think that’s right.) The total expenditure, including other miscellaneous expenses, was about $8,000-$10,000. That was no problem; it seemed we could earn a little. Therefore we wanted to expand the scale of the concert the following year. The sound equipment was quite good for half the arena, so we wanted to use the whole arena. The expenditure did not increase rapidly, but we needed to hire some extra sound equipment for the arena. We spent $28,000, including some printing costs, so we would have broken even if we’d made $28,000. But on that occasion we only made $26,000.

程︰但因為 end up 不用這麼多錢，因為 printing 及 poster 又盡量便宜了，門票是我們自己印的，所以「掙」了，我們是 cover 到的。

Tsing: …We ended up not having to spend quite that much, because we saved some money on the printing of the posters and tickets, which we printed out ourselves. We managed to cover all the expenditure.
Tsing: That experience was a bad one. A norm in Hong Kong is that music is not the most important element. I’m guessing that if Eason Chan didn’t sing 30 songs at his concerts, audiences would think it was not worth going. But should it be like that? Is it worthwhile if I sing 40 songs without putting my heart in it? Audiences stay on overtime at concerts. Audiences have these consumption habits. I don’t think it should be like this. I could sing 10 songs which might be very short, but the audience would enjoy the time. I remember when I watched Rubberband’s concert, two new artists came out to sing. I feel uncomfortable about this aspect of Hong Kong culture... I’m not sure if the same thing happens in Taiwan... many guests were invited to sing at the concert, and for me this was the time to go to the washroom. I had gone to watch the show; I can accept some support acts, but the whole concert should be mainly performed by the main performers. I feel strange about these practices.

Leung: How did you start working with Pork?

Tsing: They were my students actually when I was teaching at a local international school. I was the head teacher of their class when they were in form 1. We didn’t talk about music at that time, but I kept in touch. Later I knew they played music and they asked me to watch their show. I felt good and touched after watching their show, so I wanted to help them release an album. We are not an agency company; we just helped them to release their album. We are not so well-developed that we can promote them. We don’t even promote ourselves effectively. We just provide an area for them to record their...
music and we give them some professional comments. We help them with these things. We also want to give them full autonomy to make music. They can make good music only when they have full control over their music. Our relationship is like this. We are not helping them as an artist’s agency, but we try to seek more opportunities for them to perform. We haven’t signed any contract.

梁：你們是否對 free pricing 仍然樂觀？

Leung: Do you still feel optimistic about the free pricing concept?

程：都很樂觀，因為實在是有些人是給很多的，如剛才所說，可以 cover 到一些未必能 afford 到很多錢的人，我相信這個 balance 可持續下去，當然如果是去紅館做這個 show 的話，便要很小心計算這個 balance，現在我們又盡量節儉，quality 又維持得到，so far 又不是要這麼多錢。

Tsing: Very optimistic, because many people give quite a lot. As I’ve said before, it can cover those members of the audience who pay less. I believe this model can be sustained. Of course, if we take our show to the Hong Kong Coliseum, it should be calculated more carefully. We are very careful now. Quality can be maintained. So far we haven’t needed that much money.
Appendix 7: Interview with Ms Jennifer Chiang, Producer of the M.I.F.F. Concert (Excerpt)
Date: 28 September 2010
Time: 11:00pm-12:00midnight
Place: Macafe, McDonald’s, Tsim Sha Tsui
Interviewee: Jennifer Chiang (hereafter referred to as Jennifer)
Interviewer: Eva Leung (Leung)

Leung: Did you contact the media so they could do interviews?

Jennifer: It was very difficult because we didn’t know any reporters. It was even more difficult when we had the second concert. It was because the free-pricing concept was still new at the time of the first concert, but when I contacted reporters from the Hong Kong Economic Times and Apple Daily the second time, it was very difficult to get them to interview us again. It was because the story no longer had any news value. I contacted many reporters but no one was willing to do interviews with us. The reporters I contacted were not just reporters from newspaper supplements. Later they replied, and friends who were reporters told us that it was because the free-pricing concept wasn’t new anymore. It had happened once, and we didn’t have any stars. There was no new value, so getting interviews with the media was more difficult than the first time. When the concept was still new, MingPao Weekly was interested in reporting on it. Surprisingly, someone wrote about our concert in his column, saying that a friend had told him about it. Some people talked about the first concert, but no one was willing to talk about it this time, because it wasn’t new anymore.

梁：那你問一些音樂會的具體情況，2009年8月22日第一場音樂會的預計人數及實際人數是多少？
Leung: I’d like to know more about the concerts. What was the expected size of the audience compared with the actual number of people who attended the concert organized in August 2009 at Hang Out?

J: 我也忘記了，最近那一場也忘記了。因為第一場開半場，沒有 800 人，好像預計人數是 400，後來來了 200 多人，如果可容納 400 的話，那應該是 250 人左右。第二場也忘記了，我預了 800 人，好像來了 400 人。

Jennifer: I’ve forgotten. I can’t remember how many people there were at the recent concert either. We used half the arena of Hang Out for the first concert, so there can’t have been more than 800 people. I think we expected about 400. Then only just over 200 people came. If the capacity of the venue was 400, the actual number of people should have been 250. I can’t remember the numbers at the second concert. The expected number would have been 800, but I think only about 400 people turned up.
Appendix 8: Interview with Mr Jesper Chan, Director of Redline Music, and Peri M, Indie Band of Redline Music (Excerpt)

Date: 30 November 2011
Time: 8:15pm-10:15pm
Place: Headquarters of Re:spect Magazine and Redline Music Limited, Chai Wan
Interviewee: Jesper Chan, Leo, Eunice (keyboard), Tim (drum), Aeolus Wong (vocal)
Interviewer: Eva Leung (Leung)

梁: 你覺得獨立的品牌和主流的唱片公司有沒有不同？

Leung: Are there any differences between an indie label and a mainstream music label?

Jesper: 有，首先，主流的公司商業的角度一定會多很多。因它簽得一隊樂隊必定有很多的投資、包裝、宣傳，或者其他。當然，唱片公司也是一個商業的機構，它栽培、投資那麼多東西也要計算回報，所以首先歌曲、包裝方面一定要是大眾化。一定要迎合那時期流行的音樂，或者口味，所以在大公司旗下的歌手、樂隊可能未必一定可以做到自己最喜歡和最擅長的音樂，因為多多少少都會受到高層和老闆的影響。而獨立則自由度和發揮會較多，他們可以創作自己喜歡的曲目，實驗性的，或香港不流行的都可以創作。香港的音樂很窄，只有流行曲或卡啦 OK 可以唱到的歌便是最好，而有些是不行的，那些是大唱片公司會篩走的歌來的。但獨立的公司便可以容許他們去創作這些音樂，自由度會大很多。這些音樂在香港不流行，但在外國可能是很 Popular 的，可以令香港人接觸多一些其他類型的音樂，聽到一些在主流市場聽不到的音樂。而我們公司紅線是介乎兩者之間，我們都知道兩者的好處和不好處，我們是有少少混合的，我們會做一些 mass 的，都希望會賺到錢給公司，讓旗下的 artist 可以找到錢來做音樂。但我們會比起外面公司的範限會闊很多，譬如 Peri M，他們作的歌我們都會聽，都會給意見，但尽量都想他們保持本來的風格或自己創作的東西。我們會給意見，但不會規定他們下一張唱片給一些 reference 你，外面一些公司會這樣的，例如 MR.，他們的老闆會拿一張外國的唱片給他們聽，今次他要這種類型的歌。但我們不會這樣做，我們會給意見，例如會說這樣重了一點，可輕一點類似這些，但大部份的創作是由他們自發揮。我們希望在類似大公司形式外都能保留他們類似的風格和 character。因為我們和他們合作都是欣賞他們的音樂、skill 和才華等等。我們不希望他們改變得太多。

Jesper: Yes. Firstly, a mainstream music label has more commercial concerns. It is because signing a band involves lots of investment, packaging, promotion etc. Of course, record companies are commercial organizations. They had to calculate revenues for amount they spent on training and investment, so the songs and images of the artists had
to have a mass appeal, and cater for the tastes of the general public at that time. Therefore, artists and bands signed under mainstream music labels may not be able to produce the music they like the most or that they are best at. Their music will be influenced by their seniors and bosses to a certain extent; whereas indie artists and bands have a higher degree of freedom and more opportunities to explore new things; they can produce the music they like; they can produce experimental music or music which is less popular in Hong Kong. The musical genres in Hong Kong are very limited; only hit songs and karaoke songs are regarded as good music; mainstream music labels will not choose any other musical genres apart from pop music, in order to avoid any risk. However, indie labels can provide creative spaces for indie bands to compose this kind of music; indie bands have more freedom of creation working under indie labels. Some music is not popular in Hong Kong, but may be very popular in foreign countries. Different kinds of musical genres are brought to Hong Kong audiences. They can listen to genres which are excluded from the mainstream music scene. Redline Music acts as a mediator between indie music and the mainstream. We know the advantages and disadvantages of both music scenes, so we mix from both sides. We do something with mass appeal, hoping to earn money for the company, so our artists can produce their own music. But the scope of the musical genres we provide is wider than that of other music companies. For instance, we listen to and give comments on Peri M’s music, but we want them to keep their original style. We offer them our opinion, but we don’t give them an album as a reference, which is the normal practice of some music labels, such as Mr. Their boss gives them an album by a foreign band to listen to, then asks them to produce something similar. But we don’t do this; we give opinions, like here it’s a bit heavy, maybe it should be lighter, something like that. They have control over the majority of their work. We hope we can keep their original styles and characters while they work under a similar operation to the mainstream music labels. We work with them because we appreciate their music, skills, talents etc. We don’t want them to have to change too much.

梁：刚才说了红线音乐的目标，那么 Re:spect 这本杂志有没有甚麽目标？

Leung: You have just told me the goal of Redline Music; so what is the goal of Re:spect Magazine?

Jesper: Re:spect 剛剛四週年，其實起初搞這本雜誌的原因是香港沒有音樂雜誌，因為香港只以流行雜誌、fashion 雜誌和八卦雜誌為主。真正去介紹音樂的雜誌較少，即使有雜誌訪問歌手都只是問他們和誰拍拖，近來的緋聞之類的。但真正去了解他們的歌、幕後作曲、彈奏、編曲的人真的不多。而我和幾個拍檔年輕時都是玩 band 的，一向都喜歡音樂，而我們亦在潮流雜誌做了十年八年，在機緣巧合下談及香港沒有音樂雜誌，而我們亦想，我們一向都是玩 band 的，香港八十年代是有 很多 band 的，後來變了創作人、變了 K 歌等。我們亦希望，其實 band 都是音樂最主要的元素來的，我們希望「攪番起佢」，從而構思辦一本音樂雜誌。希望內容在純音樂外加上樂隊，除了在主流音樂外，幫一些新晉的 band，我又不會分地上和地下的，希望幫一些有潛質的 band，可以多帶出來給多點人認識，或者他們不同類型的音樂都可以帶給香港人。所以辦一本音樂雜誌去強迫人們看，因此是免費的。我們的定位是，如果我們只做純音樂、或很 technical 的音樂雜誌，大部份人都看不明白和不會去看。如果我只介紹一些「上了位」或大唱片公司的人，那麼這些
Jesper: This is just the fourth anniversary of Re:spect Magazine. The reason we started the Magazine is that there was no music magazine in Hong Kong. It’s mainly just popular, fashion and gossip magazines in Hong Kong. There are few magazines that talk seriously about music. Even if there are some magazines that interview singers, the interviews only focus on their romances and gossip about them. There are not many people who really understand their songs, their compositions, how they play and their musical arrangements. My partners and I played in bands when we were young. We like music and we have worked on fashion magazines for eight to ten years. We talked about the fact that there happened to be no music magazines in Hong Kong. There are many former band members who later became creators or artists who write karaoke songs. We believe that band music is a major element in the Hong Kong music scene. We wanted to revive local music publications, so we had this idea of publishing a music magazine. Apart from mainstream music, the contents include pure music, band music and the introduction of some new bands; we don’t divide them into mainstream or indie bands. We would like to introduce up-and-coming bands and music of different genres to more people. We force people to read our music magazine, so it is free of charge. Our position is, if we only focus on pure music or technical music skills, the majority of people will not understand and will not read it. They don’t need us to introduce famous or mainstream artists, as many Hong Kong people already know them. Therefore, we promote new bands to the public through artists they already know well. So you will see mainstream artists from Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan, who already have faithful supporters, when you read our magazine. They will decide to take our magazine when they see the cover stories of the magazine are about Wildchild and Super Junior; then they will see the bands we promote in the last few pages of the Magazine. I hope audiences will try to get to know and accept them after reading about them in the Magazine.

梁：你們是否想做到一個 Artist 的形象出到來是和主流的 Artist 沒甚麼分別？

Leung: Do you think you should “package” an artist in a similar way to mainstream record companies?

Leo：但又不需刻意去改變，是個 style 重要，也不是現在主流的 artist 的形象是全部一樣，都有自己的 style。那麼我們都想他們有自己的 style。當然不可以太過古怪，很多人接受不到那些便不太好。

Leo: It’s not necessary to make changes intentionally. The style is important. Not all images of mainstream artists are the same now. They have their unique styles. We want them to have their own style too. Of course the image of the band mustn’t be too strange. It’s better if people can accept it.

梁：你們是否覺得沒甚麼成功的獨立樂隊的例子？
Leung: Do you know any of cases of successful indie bands?

Jesper: 我覺得除了 Beyond 沒有其他了，因他們是靠自己，雖然之後是簽了公司，他們應該是香港的 history 或神話。他們真是一段時期的人來的，even 現在散了，黃貫中四十多歲仍堅持玩音樂，我們都很欽敬他。

Jesper: I don’t think there are any apart from Beyond. They were successful because they depended on themselves, although they did sign to a mainstream music company a few years after they formed. They should become an important part of history or myth in the Hong Kong music scene. They were really representative of a particular period of the Hong Kong music scene, even though they have split up now. I admire Wong Koon Chung Paul (one of the members of Beyond) very much because he insists on still playing music even though he’s forty-something years old now.

Leo: 你說的成功是甚麼成功？是商業化？如果成功，英皇的 business model 都很成功，幫了很多出碟。

Leo: What do you mean by successful? Commercialized? The business model of EGG is very successful because it publishes many albums for artists.

Jesper: 又有拍戲、接廣告。

Jesper: And [their artists] participate in films and advertisements.

Leo: 但在音樂上他們不斷地出碟。

Leo: From a musical perspective, they keep publishing albums.

Jesper: 但都有不成功的，他們成功的原因是有錢。

Jesper: But they (EGG) have had some unsuccessful bands/artists as well. They are successful because they have money.

Leo: 以及你不會忘記他們，這是因他們有錢，也是有策略的。如果是為賺錢的，英皇是成功的。

Leo: And you won’t forget them. It’s because they have money and also strategies. EGG is successful in terms of making money.

梁: 我認為成功是可以持續地發展。

Leung: What success means to me is to have sustainable development.

Jesper: 每一間公司都可以持續地發展，只不過藝人不可持續地發展。大公司是不會倒閉的，是 artist 不行的話就回去做文員，我不是說你們(對著 Peri M 的成員說)，
Jesper: Every music company can have sustainable development. Only artists can’t have it. Big companies will not collapse. If it doesn’t work for artists, then they (artists) go back to doing a normal job. I’m not talking about you (facing and talking to the members of Peri M). Companies can look for other new artists. The companies will not fail, only the artists might fail. No mainstream music company has collapsed up until now, apart from the three indie labels you have just mentioned. Maybe their music was too radical, so not many people could accept them. I believe some radical music would be all right if the musicians had money (to promote it). If I win tens of millions from the mark six lottery, I will promote alternative music in a massive way, from TV advertisements, advertisements on the boards at the entrances to the cross-harbour tunnels. Then Hong Kong people will feel powerful, it is successful because they can see it everywhere. Successful cases can be that simple. Have you heard of Gin Lee?

Jesper: But you will see her advertisements everywhere, like at the entrances to the tunnels, on buses etc. She is a girl. BMA has spent several millions on promoting her.

Jesper: Maybe you don’t know her, but I believe the majority of people in Hong Kong know of her. They (BMA) bought the cover of the previous issue of the Magazine to promote her. Last time he came over, a musician from America, asked me if she was very famous in Hong Kong. I said no, she is just a new artist. Why did you say that? He said it was because he saw her everywhere the first time he came to Hong Kong. It is that simple.
Eunice: I searched her Facebook group when I was bored last time. I read that Mr Law (Lo Kit Sing, Steven, Boss of BMA) made a wish at a party that Gin Lee would get the Top Female Artist Prize. She can sing and they have the money to promote her. This formula used to be practicable. We’ll see if it still works now.

Leung: Have any foreign or local bands influenced your music?

Tim: I was influenced by some foreign music when I started playing in a band. I knew Beyond, but I seldom listened to local band music or Canto-pop music. I was influenced by different foreign music at different stages, but gradually I started to listen to more Hong Kong music. I am not influenced by any specific artists/bands.

Aeolus: I was also influenced by some foreign music, including Japanese bands and other indie rock music. I knew Beyond when I was young. But I didn’t listen to them anymore after the death of Ka Kui. My feeling is that all Hong Kong music is pop songs. I started to get to know band music when I first listened to some foreign music. So many musical elements and variations can be found in foreign music, so I had an impulse to play in band. We covered other people first, then we composed the music we liked.

Eunice: I was born in 1986. I started listening to the radio when I was in elementary secondary school in the 1990s. I listened to RTHK and CRHK 903. Then Coldplay was the first band I started listening to seriously. I didn’t listen to other bands. I didn’t have much idea about the musical genres and the musical terms the DJs mentioned in the
music programmes. The music and the terms were very strange to me and I didn’t know what they were playing. I was learning piano of course. I started to become curious about them (the music). I was still a student at that time, though, so my curiosity was not yet big enough for me to dig into that music.

梁：作為 artist 有沒有甚麼困難？

Leung: What difficulties do you have being an artist?

Aeolus：始終在香港我們沒太多人認識，記得有一次在朗豪坊出 show，有些很灰的情況是有人走過問我們是誰，就算好聽的但因為不認識便走了。就如 Jesper 剛才所說，好像有錢就可以做很大的宣傳，我覺得香港是一個被大財團壟斷的情況，所以有些很獨立的音樂好像是自己純粹為興趣而玩一樣。

Aeolus: Not many people know us in Hong Kong. I remember when we performed at Langham Place, someone came and asked us who we were. They would go away even if our music was good. Just like Jesper said, it seems that Hong Kong has been monopolized; artists can get massive promotion if they have money. Therefore, some indie bands/artists play only for their own interests.
Leung: Were there different stages in the development of Blackbird’s music and your own personal music? Did your band form in the 1970s?

Guo: It was the late-1970s. We wanted to use the band format; previously we had used printed media, such as publishing a newspaper and books, to discuss social and political issues, just like our recent project “HOWL”. But we found that the circulation was limited if we only published booklets or newspapers – they might only reach students and teachers. It was difficult to attract the attention of the general public if they weren’t interested in these topics. Therefore, we wanted to use some cultural means, using something that people were interested in at that time. For example, people who cared about and discussed politics might also like poems, music or the theatre. We formed this band in this cultural atmosphere. We kept publishing books and newspapers, and we performed, but our goal was the same. The first work “East is Red” by Blackbird was produced in 1984 when the Sino-British Joint Declaration was signed. We thought we
could produce a “historical” work, so we used “Nanyin” to interpret Hong Kong’s modern history. We wrote lyrics in a collective manner. This “Nanyin” work had a great impact—even people living in Canada valued this music after listening to it; they would call us on the phone or use some other means of communication to tell us that we needed to spread this work to people who were not in Hong Kong, to tell them about the situation in Hong Kong. This documentation using music was very important, because no one had ever done anything like this before.

Leung: Was “Communiqué” published for sale?

Guo: “Communiqué” was not for sale; it was for free distribution. If you are interested... but many articles have been compiled in the book “Singing in the Dark and Silence”. “Communiqué” was published against a backdrop similar to the current...
situation. We were so shocked by the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989, so we wanted to do many things. We performed drama shows, sang and distributed leaflets on the streets almost every week, to talk about the massacre. We kept doing these things for several months after June 1989, but after that I was sick; I got pneumothorax. I got an invitation to perform in a Taiwanese show but I couldn’t go. That was a big shock to me, because I was healthy, I hadn’t had any serious illnesses, but suddenly I needed to have surgery. The Western medical tradition uses a lot of antibiotics, which can make someone’s health deteriorate from a not so bad to a very bad situation. Therefore I was very weak from the late-1989 to the mid-1990s. All Blackbird’s and my performances were stopped. I had not recovered, so I thought at that time that I couldn’t perform, but I could write, so I published “Communiqué”. Originally I would publish, then perform. But because I couldn’t perform at that time, I published again. Through publication and the power of words, “Communiqué” was used to keep Blackbird’s audiences and to share some ideas and my views on some foreign music. “Communiqué” became very popular because there was nothing like foreign fanzines at that time. It was distributed in some small bookshops like the Youth Literary Book Store. Someone followed the publication of “Communiqué”. A group of audiences were formed. We had attracted a group of audiences when we did performances. They concerned agendas Blackbird had been concerned about, such as problems of ecology, totalitarian politics and social structures, because they liked Blackbird’s music. People found “Communiqué” interesting, the illustrations were also interesting, when they saw it in the Youth Literary Book Store. Some of them might not have heard Blackbird before, then they found our music to listen to. Someone who had supported us liked us more (because of “Communiqué”). “Communiqué” acted as a bridge; through our performances, we had brought some social agendas to the scope of literature and music; we also brought people who were interested in these agendas to music through literature. Therefore, “Communiqué” filled in the gaps when I couldn’t perform owing to my health problems. Then there was maximum progress after I performed again. “People Have The Power” was published on cassette in 1990. This cassette was distributed simultaneously in Hong Kong and Taiwan. A record company in Taiwan helped to publish and distribute it, so many Taiwanese audiences were attracted, building up a large audience base in Taiwan. Even now, I think there are still many Taiwanese audiences who pay attention to us. The name “Blackbird” no longer exists in Hong Kong. Some people from the older generation and who are interested in musical history may know us. Members of the post-80s and -90s generations who are not interested in tracing things back do not know us.
Appendix 10: Interview with Mr Terry Wong, Director of Black Market Music Production and a Former A&R Manager of 89268 (Excerpt)

Date: 13 October 2011
Time: 3:15pm-4:15pm
Place: P Cafe, Mong Kok
Interviewee: Mr Terry Wong (hereafter referred to as Wong)
Interviewer: Eva Leung (Leung)

《訪問黑市音樂創辦人及前 89268 經理 Mr Terry Wong》(節錄)
日期：2011 年 10 月 13 日
時間：3:15-4:15pm
地點：旺角 P Cafe
受訪者：Terry Wong (簡稱黃)
訪問者：梁珮儀 (下稱梁)

梁︰九十年代中期是否當時出了三間很好的 label，有 Sound Factory、DIY 及 GIG Music？

Leung: I understand that three very good indie labels – Sound Factory, DIY and GIG Music – appeared in the mid-1990s. Is that correct?

黃︰GIG 我就不認識，不知道你在哪裡看到，Sound Factory 及 DIY 就很出名的，因為當時唱片 CD 慢慢興起，Sound Factory 及 DIY 都出很多 CD 的，而其實這兩間公司還存在的，而他們的運作方式是不運作。因為 Sound Factory 還擁有很多 copyright，他們現在的模式不是出唱片，而是 own 一些音樂版權，DIY 也是的，但沒有運作，當有人用那些音樂時便收錢。

Wong: I don’t know GIG. I don’t know where you have found them. Sound Factory and DIY were very famous. CDs were getting more common at that time. Sound Factory and DIY published many albums in CD format. These two indie labels still exist now. Their mode of operation is no operation. Sound Factory has owned many music copyrights; their business operation now is not publishing albums; they own some music copyrights. It’s the same with DIY. It doesn’t have a daily operation; it earns money when people use their music.

梁︰那麼在營運模式方面，以前及現在的 indie label 有沒有什麼分別？

Leung: In term of business practices, are there any differences between former and current indie labels?

黃︰有分別，以前是真的一間公司而有 daily operation，每天都會有生意，現在是的，都是以一些合作社的形式去做，現在是有一間公司，但未必會運作，要運作的時候便運作，沒有的時候便停下來。你問我黑市音樂是否 full time，我不算是的，維港唱片的人也不是 full time 的，紅線唱片的人可以是 full time 但也可以不算是 full time 的，因為只有一個 artist 也不用每天為他工作。如果可以 full time 的話便
代表他們找到很多錢，如果很多錢就不是以這個模式去做了。所以以前的 Sound Factory 及 DIY 是可以每天都可以運作的公司，當然他們也有其他的事做，現在的是合作社。

Wong: Yes, there are some differences. In the past, there was a “concrete” company which had a daily operation; they did business every day. But now, many indie labels operate as cooperatives. There is a company, but it may not operate all the time; it just operates when needed; it takes a rest when there is no business. If you ask me if I am a full-time member of staff at Black Market Music Production, I am not. The staff at Harbour Records do not work full-time either. Staff from Redline Music can be regarded as full-time; but maybe not; because they don’t need to work every day since they only have one artist. If they can work full-time, that means they can earn a lot of money; if they earn a lot of money, they don’t need to operate like this. Sound Factory and DIY were companies which could have a daily operation; of course they had other businesses. Now they operate as cooperatives.
Appendix 11: Full Lyrics of the Songs Studied in the Thesis

1. Blackbird “Nanyin: The History of Hong Kong” (黑鳥《南音︰香港史話》)
2. InLove “Realm” (《冒險》)
3. Gayamyan “What is a Youth” (假音人《甚麼是青春》)
4. Gayamyan “I Fell in Love with Your Boyfriend” (假音人《我愛上了你的男朋友》)
5. The Swamp “1911” (沼澤 《一九一一》) (附錄於唱片封套的詩)
6. Peri M “Revenge” (《報復》)
7. Peri M “Rainbow Tears” (《彩虹淚》)
8. Peri M “Bird of Paradise” (《天堂鳥》)
9. Pork “Cry”
10. Adrian Tsing “6791 to 6691” (程理高《6791 至 6691》)
11. Adrian Tsing “Run Hard” (程理高《起勢跑》)
12. My Little Airport “Donald Tsang, Please Die”
13. My Little Airport “Divvying Up Stephen Lam's $300000 Salary” (《瓜分林瑞麟三十萬薪金》)
14. My Little Airport “Song of Sisyphus” (《西西弗斯之歌》)
15. My Little Airport “j'ai peur”
16. My Little Airport “japan 實瓜”
17. Ah P “Female Otaku, Go out into the Streets” (林阿 P《宅女，上街吧》)
18. My Little Airport “Scandinavia is Our Death Destination” (《北歐是我們的死亡終站》)
19. My Little Airport “Until the Extinction of the Human Race” (《直到人類滅亡》)
20. ToNick “Kwan Sum Guk Ying/ Care About Guk Ying” (《關心菊英》)

1. 黑鳥《南音︰香港史話》
歌唱/二胡：克仔
洞簫：虞雄

寒風陣陣呀 星月無光 正好怡和洋行
慶祝佢百五週年
煙花競放 太平山 個麥仕臣就係當年
大班
見佢聲聲似狼 響「著」賣其鴉片
搞到清朝唔啱
好似小二可憐 剩得個林則徐 同佢鍊呀
處虎門之地
銷大煙 你睇操場 面 紅火現
瀕道友道姑 也無言
耳畔聽得炮聲 人頭落呀
只見大清割地將條約簽
割左香港九龍強借新界囉 普羅大眾恨綿綿
以後華人與狗一樣賤呀 佢地錢財刮盡
樂趣無邊
奴化教育真陰毒 我地義憤填胸 向各位陳詞
講返清朝玩完 因革命呀 點知軍閥割據
亂江山

以為香港唔會 受戰火亂呀
點知「架」頭來犯 我地無窿「捐」
大好家園 遭焚毀囉 蟻民避亂 恨難填
三餐不繼炊糧斷囉 夫亡子散你話有誰憐
輾轉三年八個月呀 日落途窮「架」仔係咁先
以為香港會有新生活呀
點知鬼佬唔走刮多濜
陣國內革命形勢勁呀 貪官污吏詐著玩完
多得道光當年曾割地呀
濜富豪新貴挾帶南遷
跟住紅旗插滿地呀 盈屍遍野又三年
文革十年「立」「立」亂呀 游水落懥捱住先
今日香港繁榮得佢地呀 太平山上慶團圓
此處只有自由無民主呀 名牌靚衫呃通天
點知租約就懥期滿 任得你兩邊點樣懥點呀
我地都係 埋一條船

2. InLove 《冒險》
作詞：璐 (lu)

帶著沉重的驅殼 從霧中經過
他飛向漆黑的脈搏
發現埋藏的渴望 解開心鎖
在黑暗盡處有一點燈火 啊....啊....

放下回望的思索 溫室的束縛
敵不過內心的自覺
進入冒險的國度 強烈的感覺
在黑暗盡處有一點燈火

或日或月或年終於可以看得到
流星般的光線閃耀這片晚空
從夢幻地圖編出嚮往的星空
敞開雙臂
拋開一切 嘿哎 哎...

答答啦啦答啦啦 啊....

放下回望的思索 溫室的束縛
敵不過內心的自覺
更多更詳盡歌詞
進入冒險的國度 強烈的感覺
在黑暗盡處有一點燈火

或日或月或年終於可以看得到
流星般的光線閃耀這片晚空
從夢幻地圖編出嚮往的星空
敞開雙臂 拋開一切

拋開一切 走出天際
拋開一切 走出天際

或日或月或年終於可以看得到 (拋開一切)
流星般的光線閃耀這片晚空 (走出天際)
從夢幻地圖編出嚮往的星空 (拋開一切)
敞開雙臂 拋開一切

拋開一切

3. 假音人《甚麼是青春》

青春是一頓吃不完的午餐
青春是一啖不會化的痰
青春是血肉在體內翻兩翻
青春是殺人後眼也不會“斬”

甚麼是青春？ What is a Youth?
甚麼是青春？ What is a Youth?
What is a Youth? What is a Youth?
What is a Youth? What is a Youth?

甚麼是青春？ What is a Youth?
甚麼是青春？ What is a Youth?
What is a Youth? What is a Youth?
What is a Youth? What is a Youth?

青春是抉擇讀書或者上班
青春是快活早晚愛消閒
青春是虛幻或許存於腦間
青春是美夢又遠去於瞬間
甚麼是青春?  What is a Youth?
甚麼是青春?  What is a Youth?
What is a Youthhh?  What is a Youthhh?
What is a Youthhh?  What is a Youthhh?

What is a Youth?  What is a Youth?
What is a Youthhh?  What is a Youth?
What is a Youth?  What is a Youthhh?

Wow!  Wow!  Wow!  Wow!

4. 假音人《我愛上了你的男朋友》

我愛上了你的男朋友
也愛上了你的成與就
我愛上了你的玩具狗
也愛上了你的家居與車與樓
我懶去理我的男朋友
也懶去理我的成與就
我計算過對你下毒手
計算過與你調轉身份
我怎麼天生不愛自己
我怎麼天生只愛別人
我怎麼天生不愛缺陷
我怎麼天生只愛完美
我怎麼天生充滿藉口
我怎麼天生喜愛妒忌
我怎麼喜歡推卸責任
我怎可得到一次完美

5. 沼澤 《一九一一》
海亮
(附錄於唱片封套的詩)

夢繫百載 增在辛亥
大夏傾頹 九州煙靄
竿揭為誰 鹿逐何哀
興亡皆苦 自由安在
斯人已逝 舊事依稀
惟民追問 未有窮期
今賦弦鼓 歌以抒懷
6. Peri M《報復》
作曲：介
填詞：Acolus
編曲：介/傑
監製：介

白費心血換來是替代
誰沒法抵受這傷害
然而受過傷痛總變得堅強
放低內傷 擦對象
甜蜜裏 曾心醉
誰料你 把我當玩具
逃避我 尋樂趣
誰又了解我的空虛
日子飛去 逐點心碎
又怎擺脫這淚水
從沒有相愛或忘掉我在?
如沒愛一切都依舊
「願伴我一世」 都變得荒謬
愚弄遊戲 誰接受
隨便你 被拋棄
愚弄你讓你當後備
原諒我 留給你
愁或痛亦帶點傷悲
偽裝一切 用這心計
學懂怎去摧毀
白費心血換來是替代
誰沒法抵受這傷害
然而受過傷痛總變得堅強
放低內傷 擦對象
放低內傷 擦對象
從沒有相愛或忘掉我在?
如沒愛一切都依舊
「願伴我一世」 都變得荒謬
愚弄遊戲 誰接受
白費心血換來是替代
誰沒法抵受這傷害
然而受過傷痛總變得堅強
放低內傷 擦對象
放低內傷 擦對象
7. Peri M《彩虹淚》
作曲：介
填詞：Eunice
編曲：Peri M
監制：介

閉上兩眼說再見哪輕易 夢已褪色了
卻抹不掉
思憶散滿舊碎片 再心痛也沒法子
失去方寸 哪可安眠

有次遠處看見你那張臉 恨已放開了
卻抹不掉
深宵細看舊照片 每分每秒在掛牽
當天 你不知曉

讓愛恨流人心田綻放淚光 看清心中虛妄
模糊淚眼沒法分清日與光
眼淚流乾誰伴我身旁 忘掉那天道別過
從此 往昔的片段 放下了

去到哪裏再遠我也不倦 淚已擦乾了
卻抹不掉
天色晦暗路太短 我心透徹亦看穿
當天瞬間化雲煙

讓愛恨流人心田綻放淚光 看清心中虛妄
模糊淚眼沒法分清日與光
眼淚流乾誰伴我身旁 忘掉那天道別過
從此 往昔的片段

讓美夢埋在心田綻放淚光 看天邊的一角
滂沱大雨後那七色在遠方
我願從心燃亮這光芒 忘掉那天道別過
從此 往昔的片段 化做煙

8. Peri M《天堂鳥》
作曲：Eunice@Peri M
填詞：Eunice@Peri M
編曲：Peri M
監製：介@Peri M
密雲漫天 冷風肆染亂囂
一剎 光線 全告幻滅
夢迴萬千 記憶夜來纏繞
拋棄世間所有哀怨 仍然期盼再相遇

世途在變 快磨滅了
誰尚有心跳
太陽倦了 滿城病了
信念未破損
要振翅風中轉 抬頭來重拾未了願

讓我飛 飛出我天地
望見花瓣靜悄散落遍地遙望日光那一秒
平明尋見呼叫
毋忘那夜環抱月圓 雲上陪伴著我微笑
如沒有愛 沒天堂了

白雲在飄 繁星散落煩囂
一瞬 光線 雲裡驟現
命途萬千 信終日能逆轉
息去世界所有恩怨 靈魂無悔再相遇

世途在變 快磨滅了
懷念你一笑
太陽倦了 滿城病了
信念未破損
要振翅風中轉 抬頭來重拾未了願

讓我飛 飛出我天地
望見花瓣靜悄散落遍地遙望日光那一秒
平明尋見呼叫
毋忘那夜環抱月圓 雲上陪伴著我微笑
如沒有愛 沒天堂了

邁向誰也不知道這樂園
你的心 想星夜般那樣遙遠
願新離去能夠遇見 總有天

讓我飛 飛出我天地
望見花瓣靜悄散落遍地遙望日光那一秒
平明尋見呼叫
毋忘那夜環抱月圓 雲上陪伴著我微笑
如沒有愛 沒天堂了

別再飛 飛不去死年
為你咁遠於折傷兩翼決定留下夢醒那一秒
化作甜蜜花眷
埋藏野地無法自如 仍願陪著你微笑
如沒有你 沒天堂鳥

無奈再見 葉枯黃了

9. Pork “Cry”

Just leave me alone, Baby please don’t cry
Just leave me alone, Baby please don’t cry

You said you loved me, Baby please don’t lie
You said you loved me, Baby please don’t lie

Just leave me alone, I love you
Just leave me alone, I’ll miss you

10. 程理高《6791 至 6691》
(Original lyric printed in simplified Chinese)

时光是那么絶 我的光辉岁月
变了个残月 时光是那么的决絶

心中的理想 变了向着我发射的机关枪
大概我的理想 大概已到了大西洋
大概已到了太空的边疆

一切都反转了 对与错都搞错了
一切都经已反天覆地 对了都变错了
错了可以变对 一切都改变了
脑袋的思想糟到洗劫了 心底的血一早干掉
别妄想打倒我 我永远再也不会痛了

11. 程理高《起勢跑》

個天啱啱光咗我就已經起步
走出街 一見倒路 我就起勢咁跑
見路就跑跑跑跑 我就係要企出嚟跑

道路就係我既賽道
你可能會問我點解搵咁既嘢搞
係咩人到中年 係咩要減肥先
蔡康年 伍家廉 貴花田 聽住

幹些東西令自己驕傲

呢個世界裡面實在有太多既七日仙
即叫即蒸 即要即拎 即食麵 即掂 搞掂
乜都一日搞掂 但係 喂

有些東西係要用歲月磨鍊

有時 d 嘢真係可以話冇就有
好似條命咁都真係估佢唔到
自己好似乜能都做唔能到

最實在就係自己既腳步

記得初初跑嘅陣時真係好鬼死屎
跑響十五分鐘 就好似跑成粒鐘
小腿痛 小腿又痛 腳板底都痛 我諗

我放棄都好 reasonable

但係點解咁多人都可以跑得到
七十幾歲咁跑到 噗嘆嘆到嘆又跑到
係咩咁 d 嘢佢地有而我冇

佢哋有 毅力 韌力 仲有耐力

咁我就開始慢慢咁樣去日日跑
每次加幾分鐘 幾分鐘加到兩個幾鐘
有幾辛苦 我都會同自己講

老虎蟹我都要跑埋！

其實人生都幾似一場馬拉松
就算有幾萬人陪跑 最終只會係你一個人跑 與其想去超越人哋 我不如惺惺著氣

要贏人 我不如贏我自己！

跑 起勢跑
只管去跑跑跑跑跑跑
拼命跑跑跑出真相
投入跑 起勢跑跑跑出頭來 投入跑

12. My Little Airport “Donald Tsang, Please Die”

donald tsang, please die
我哋實上街
donald tsang, please die
when will you be fired?

假設 donald 今日你俾人斬左隻手
二十年後啲人發咗達又做埋特首
你會否因為他啲成就
然後叫自己不要追究？

donald tsang, please die
我哋實上街
donald tsang, please die
we are all poor guys

董建華雖然做野像渣
但係良心都唔會好似佢咁差
你任內最驕人既成就
就係強化市民對民主嘅要求

donald tsang, please die
when will you die?
donald tsang, please die...
when will you be fired?

13. My Little Airport《瓜分林瑞麟三十萬薪金》
詞/曲/編: 阿 p
唱: 阿 p/通利的阿賢/thomas/sot kanin/阿花

瓜分 讓我們瓜分
林瑞麟每個月 三十萬元的薪金
讓我們的新碟 會有更好的錄音

攤分 讓我們攤分
除開 三十份 每人都仲有幾蚊
讓我們每個月都會有覺好瞓

這件事雖不能發生
但詠下亦開心
林瑞麟本身都應被瓜分

然後再瓜分 讓我們瓜分
警察對我們社運人士的兇狠
告上法庭 不會被當襲警再監禁

攤分 終極地攤分
攤分香港政治權力的核心
權力歸於人民
領袖應該由人民普選產生

這件事不知幾時發生
或者到時已經過身
或者我已經不能返大陸探親

董建華雖然做野系渣
但系良心都唔會好似你咁差
你任內最驕人既成就
就係強化市民對民主既要求

14. My Little Airport《西西弗斯之歌》
詞曲編：阿 p
唱：Nicole

呢年嚟我有幾份兼職 其中嘅一份
係幫啲馬迷落注 喺電話投注中心
喺裡面我識唔到朋友 返工食飯都係一個人
我已經悶到抽筋 但要維生我谂到一個方法抗衡
開閘前半分鐘 總有好急嘅客人
落注時候夾雜粗口 聽到我一舊雲
但佢哋愈係急 我就愈係斯文
我話：「麻煩你重複一次」搞到夠鐘開閘 佢哋就問候我屋企人
佢們愈係急 我愈係斯文
我話：「先生，麻煩你等等」
我既緊張又興奮 同時又扮晒殷勤
喺呢個心情咁複雜嘅搏鬥裡面 我開始搵到工作嘅快感

希臘神話有一個故事
講述西西弗斯受到諸神嘅懲罰
要喺地獄不斷推一塊巨石上山
上到山頂 塊巨石又會自己碌返落山腳

順境下亦開心
林瑞麟本身都應被瓜分

然後再瓜分 讓我們瓜分
警察對我們社運人士的兇狠
告上法庭 不會被當襲警再監禁

攤分 終極地攤分
攤分香港政治權力的核心
權力歸於人民
領袖應該由人民普選產生

這件事不知幾時發生
或者到時已經過身
或者我已經不能返大陸探親

董建華雖然做野系渣
但系良心都唔會好似你咁差
你任內最驕人既成就
就係強化市民對民主既要求

14. My Little Airport《西西弗斯之歌》
詞曲編：阿 p
唱：Nicole

呢年嚟我有幾份兼職 其中嘅一份
係幫啲馬迷落注 喺電話投注中心
喺裡面我識唔到朋友 返工食飯都係一個人
我已經悶到抽筋 但要維生我谂到一個方法抗衡
開閘前半分鐘 總有好急嘅客人
落注時候夾雜粗口 聽到我一舊雲
但佢哋愈係急 我就愈係斯文
我話：「麻煩你重複一次」搞到夠鐘開閘 佢哋就問候我屋企人
佢們愈係急 我愈係斯文
我話：「先生，麻煩你等等」
我既緊張又興奮 同時又扮晒殷勤
喺呢個心情咁複雜嘅搏鬥裡面 我開始搵到工作嘅快感

希臘神話有一個故事
講述西西弗斯受到諸神嘅懲罰
要喺地獄不斷推一塊巨石上山
上到山頂 塊巨石又會自己碌返落山腳

順境下亦開心
林瑞麟本身都應被瓜分

然後再瓜分 讓我們瓜分
警察對我們社運人士的兇狠
告上法庭 不會被當襲警再監禁

攤分 終極地攤分
攤分香港政治權力的核心
權力歸於人民
領袖應該由人民普選產生

這件事不知幾時發生
或者到時已經過身
或者我已經不能返大陸探親

董建華雖然做野系渣
但系良心都唔會好似你咁差
你任內最驕人既成就
就係強化市民對民主既要求

14. My Little Airport《西西弗斯之歌》
詞曲編：阿 p
唱：Nicole

呢年嚟我有幾份兼職 其中嘅一份
係幫啲馬迷落注 喺電話投注中心
喺裡面我識唔到朋友 返工食飯都係一個人
我已經悶到抽筋 但要維生我谂到一個方法抗衡
開閘前半分鐘 總有好急嘅客人
落注時候夾雜粗口 聽到我一舊雲
但佢哋愈係急 我就愈係斯文
我話：「麻煩你重複一次」搞到夠鐘開閘 佢哋就問候我屋企人
佢們愈係急 我愈係斯文
我話：「先生，麻煩你等等」
我既緊張又興奮 同時又扮晒殷勤
喺呢個心情咁複雜嘅搏鬥裡面 我開始搵到工作嘅快感

希臘神話有一個故事
講述西西弗斯受到諸神嘅懲罰
要喺地獄不斷推一塊巨石上山
上到山頂 塊巨石又會自己碌返落山腳
佢每日都要重複呢種徒勞無功嘅工作
直到永恆
後人有一個講法
話諸神並唔係用「推石頭」嚟懲罰西西弗斯 而係用觀念
用「我永世都要推石頭實在太慘」嘅呢個觀念 西西弗斯知道自己改變唔到命運
佢唯一可以做嘅 就係繼續推石頭
直到有一日
佢發現佢可以蔑視自己嘅命運
甚至用享受呢個過程嚟去否定諸神對佢嘅懲罰
於是 佢感覺到自己係快樂嘅

15. My Little Airport “j'ai peur”
詩/唸：阿雪

j'ai peur que tu ne m'aime plus,
j'ai peur que tu ne me parle plus,
j'ai peur que tu as une autre belle fille,
j'ai peur que tu veux me quitter,
j'ai si peur que je ne peux pas dormir,
ce sera finir bientot, je sais, oui je sais.

16. My Little Airport “japan 實瓜”
唱：nicole/阿 p
詞/曲/編/ guitar：阿 p

You teach me French, but I cannot speak well.
You teach me French, but I cannot speak well.
You said 'je pense a toi', but I said “Japan 實瓜”.
you said 'je pense a toi', but I said “Japan 實瓜”.

I teach you French, but you cannot speak well.
I teach you French, but you cannot speak well.
I said 'je pense a toi', but you said “Japan 實瓜”.
I said 'je pense a toi', but you said “Japan 實瓜”.

17. 林阿 P《宅女，上街吧》

你錯過了反高鐵
你錯過了保衛天星碼頭
你錯過了包圍禮賓府
你錯過了反世貿

宅女，上街吧
這個政府係得過嗎？
宅女，上街吧
你要未來繼續任由人魚肉嗎？

不要再說你沒有仔吼
你對你的生活都沒有要求
你只關心工作已經不夠
你本來可以結識一個俊俏的八十後
趁你現在還可以補救
不要再信媒體中的主流
佢哋只會著眼肢體的爭鬥
不會理會暴力的政策才是因由

宅女，上街吧
這個政府靠得過嗎？
宅女，上街吧
功能組別還不夠醜惡嗎？

我們已錯過了美好的六十年代
錯過了胡士托、反戰、學運的精彩
現在理想主義已逐漸歸來
但你為何還不變改？

你錯過了反高鐵
其實我都錯過了保衛天星碼頭
有時我也會很悔疚
但願你的醒覺
不會是在多年以後

18. My Little Airport《北歐是我們的死亡終站》
詩/譜：阿雪
曲/編/video：阿p

這個抑鬱的星期天
我們在討論自殺的方法
你說嗑藥不錯
我說萬一死不去 還要洗胃很辛苦
割脈也太痛 不能接受
燒炭 你我都認同最舒適的方法
但未免太消極可悲
你說不如凍死 穿汗衣在北極凍死
我滿心歡喜 提議先到芬蘭旅遊
然後穿汗衣凍死
你說其實可以先環遊世界 然後到芬蘭凍死
好主意 我說北歐是我們的死亡終站
很浪漫的想法
你問打算何時進行 不如就 29 歲
活在永遠的 29 歲
我說時間無多 要開始儲錢 為了我們的計劃
你說你有積蓄，可以資助我
我感動地 幻想 29 歲 我們一起到北歐去

19. My Little Airport 《直到人類滅亡》
詩讀/錄像: 阿雪
曲/編: Nicole

親愛的 末日來了 你說怎麼辦？
我們開始儲糧吧 你喜歡吃的 都為你備好
趁假日一起到野外去 預早尋找神秘的洞穴 好等末日前藏起你與我
你說你還未去過歐洲 還未看透我的臉
還未與我好好瘋狂過
我說九月一起去巴黎吧
在末日前嚐一口香榭麗榭的熱朱古力
或到王爾德墓前畫一幅畫
一起模仿波德萊爾的遊蕩生活
親愛的 末日來了 你說怎麼辦？
我說讓我們緊貼著 在高山盡頭
看城市殞落
你說你害怕從高處墮下 我說我會牽著你手 保護你到最後 直到人類滅亡

20. ToNick 關心菊英 (Hidden Track)
作詞: ToNick
作曲: 小龜

今年我乜 Job 都接 今年我乜歌都唱
我想攞獎 個獎好靚
頒獎禮緊張得我 緊張到乜都聽錯 佢講得衰 我無聽錯 我無聽錯

佢話我唔 我唔覺噃 我關心佢 佢關心我
佢係嗌我 佢攞獎有乜錯
咪鬧我 咪窒我 佢關心菊英嘅
畀我 咪我 咪我
YouTube 百萬個觀眾 點解你係咁 Click 我 我的新歌 你有冇聽過
多得你地關心我 噢刻我係開心過
佢講得衰 我無聽錯 我無聽錯

你話我壞 我唔覺噃 我關心佢 佢關心我
佢係嗌我 我攞獎有乜錯
咪鬧我 咪窒我 我關心菊英唔
畀我 父我 父我

讀白：2008 年度傑出表現獎金獎得獎者
關菊英
你做咩咁踴躍跑出嚟咁關心妍 關菊英唔
唔緊要 佢出嚟為你興奮呢祝賀下菊姐
d大家都姓關嘛 嚅擁抱下先 好 恭喜哂
佢咪尊登架

你話我壞 我唔覺噃 我關心佢 佢關心我
佢係嗌我 我攞獎有乜錯
咪鬧我 咪窒我 個獎頒畀邊個
好㷗 父我 好過
Appendix 12: List of concerts, workshops and seminars attended during the research period. **Bold items** below are concerts organized by the four indie labels: 89268, Redline Music, Harbour Records and M.I.F.F.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Concerts/ Workshops</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
<th>Performers</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Ticket Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 9/1/2010 (Sat), 8:00pm</td>
<td>Reverie Concert Series no.9 - The Pancakes' 10th Anniversary Happy Together Gig</td>
<td>The Pancakes</td>
<td>The Pancakes Supporting band and performers: Modern Children (band), Tsui Lung-wei, Dool Seong, Lam ah-p, 林阿p (piano), Ng Cheuk-yin 伍卓賢 (piano)</td>
<td>Hang Out 蒲吧</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 22/1/2010 (Fri), 6:30-10:00pm</td>
<td>Street Music Concert 9《開放音樂》9 – 街頭音樂系列</td>
<td>Kung Music Workshop and Hong Kong Arts Centre</td>
<td>The Marshmallow Kisses (Indie Pop), Strings Appassionato (Classical Music), Edmund Leung (Guitar, Vocal), ah bunn 劉子斌 (Accordion, Folk Rock), Wong Hin Yan 黃衍仁 (Guitar, Vocal, Protest Songs), Alain Chiu and Musicians (Solo Piano, String Quartet, Contemporary Music)</td>
<td>Outside HK Arts Centre</td>
<td>Free Admission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 30/1/2010 (Sat), 3:00pm</td>
<td>馬上封音樂會</td>
<td>Hidden Agenda</td>
<td>Hidden Agenda</td>
<td>Hidden Agenda Free Admission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 26/2/2010 (Fri), 6:30-9:00pm</td>
<td>Street Music Concert 10《開放音樂》10 – 街頭音樂系列</td>
<td>Kung Music Workshop and Hong Kong Arts Centre</td>
<td>Chinese Traditional Music, Home (Indie Rock), FBI (Rock, Punk, Pop), Victoria Jazz Band (swing)</td>
<td>Outside HK Arts Centre</td>
<td>Free Admission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 27/2/2010</td>
<td>The Indies Ones Concert-1</td>
<td>Hulu Culture</td>
<td>Ng Cheuk Yin 伍卓賢 and Kung Chi Shing</td>
<td>Former Police</td>
<td>Free Admission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Admission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
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<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>5/3/2010</td>
<td>(Fri), 7:00-9:00pm</td>
<td>HKBU Chaplain’s Office - HKBU Chapel Free Ticket</td>
<td>Mar 102, Married Quarters at Hollywood Road</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>6/3/2010</td>
<td>(Sat), 3:00-6:30pm</td>
<td>Hulu Culture - Music Curator: Kung Chi Shing</td>
<td>Mar 102, Married Quarters at Hollywood Road</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>20/3/2010</td>
<td>(Sat), 10:00am-10:00pm</td>
<td>Chopstick - Beneficiary organisation: Oxfam Hong Kong</td>
<td>Mar 102, Married Quarters at Hollywood Road</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>24/4/2010</td>
<td>(Sat), 3-6pm</td>
<td>K11 - SIU2 Mini Gig K11 G/F piazza Free Admission</td>
<td>Mar 102, Married Quarters at Hollywood Road</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>25/4/2010</td>
<td>(Sun), 3:30-6:00pm</td>
<td>Tom Lee - Perfect Mind 完美思維, Smooth, Purple Eye, The Time Traveller, SEESAW, Lemon Baby</td>
<td>Mar 102, Married Quarters at Hollywood Road</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>1/5/2010</td>
<td>(Sat), 8:30-11:30pm</td>
<td>Rock Motel - ToNick “Let's Go!!” 首張大碟發佈音樂會 Supporting Bands: Kolor, Hard Pack, Sinfonia</td>
<td>Mar 102, Married Quarters at Hollywood Road</td>
<td>$100</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>8/5/2010</td>
<td>(Sat), 8:30-11:30pm</td>
<td>Rock Motel 3rd Floor Band Live 《搖滾,生活。Simply Rocks》</td>
<td>Mar 102, Married Quarters at Hollywood Road</td>
<td>$120</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>14/5/2010</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ketchup 10th Anniversary - Ketchup Hang Out 蒲吧 $150</td>
<td>Mar 102, Married Quarters at Hollywood Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Event Name</td>
<td>Artist(s)</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>22/5/2010</td>
<td>(Sat), 8:00-11:00pm</td>
<td><strong>We Make Proud Music 2010</strong></td>
<td>Adrian Tsing, Gloria Tang, Pork, 利得彙 (Taiwan)</td>
<td>Hang Out 蒲吧</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 15  | 28/5/2010  | (Fri), 6:00-10:00pm | **Street Music Concert 13**    | Kung Music Workshop  
Maniac  首張專輯《記憶. 凌亂散落》發佈會  
Rock Motel | Outside HK Arts Centre | Free Admission |
| 16  | 29/5/2010  | (Sat), 8:00-10:00pm | **Maniac 首張專輯《記憶. 凌亂散落》發佈會  
Rock Motel** | Maniac  
Supporting Bands:  
秋紅, In Love And Pain, 鐵樹蘭 | Hang Out 蒲吧 | $100 |
| 17  | 2/6/2010,  | 7:00-9:00pm | **Public Forum on “Creative Space in Industrial Buildings”  
「工廠大廈創意空間」公開論壇** | Hong Kong Arts Development Council (ADC)  
Facilitator: Mr. Louis Yu, Chief Executive of the ADC  
Speakers:  
1. Mr. Lo Chi-hong, Head/Development Opportunities Office, Development Bureau  
2. Mr. Law Sun-on, Prin AS (Home Affairs) (Cultural), Home Affairs Bureau  
3. Ms. Lee Bik-sai, Prin AS for Commerce & Econ Dev (Communications & Technology) B, Commerce and Economic Development Bureau  
4. Mr. Chow Chun-fai, a representative | ADC Office | Free Admission by Registration |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Performers</th>
<th>Admission</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>5/6/2010 (Sat), 6:00-11:30pm</td>
<td>Le French May Musical Showdown 2010 (法國五月藝術節音樂表演動之旅 2010)</td>
<td>Queen Elizabeth Stadium, 伊利沙伯體育館</td>
<td>The Teenagers, Wax Tailor, Chochukmo, Noughts &amp; Exes</td>
<td>$480, $360, $240</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>12/6/2010, 4:00-5:15pm</td>
<td>Le French May The Teenagers, Wax Tailor, Chochukmo, Noughts &amp; Exes</td>
<td>Hong Kong Arts Centre</td>
<td>Ng Cheuk Yin 伍卓賢</td>
<td>Free Admission</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>18/6/2010 (Fri), 8:30pm</td>
<td>World Refugee Day Fundraising Concert 世界難民日籌款音樂會</td>
<td>Backstage Live Restaurant &amp; UNHCR</td>
<td>Vicky Fung 馮穎琪, Barry Chung, Tonick</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>14/7 to 31/7</td>
<td>(Being a Voluntary at Workcamp) &quot;Luserna San Giovanni Music and Arts Festival&quot; (阿爾卑斯山音樂藝術祭)</td>
<td>SPAD, an indie label ran by a group of local young people</td>
<td>Turin, Italy</td>
<td>Free Admission</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>14/8/2010 (Sat-Sun), 6:00-10:00pm</td>
<td>SMF Silvermine Bay Music Festival 2010</td>
<td>Silvermine Bay, Mui Wo, Lantau</td>
<td>Free Admission</td>
<td>Free Admission</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>20/8/2010 (Sat), 6:30-9:00pm</td>
<td>SMF Silvermine Bay Music Festival 2010</td>
<td>Outside HK Arts Centre</td>
<td>Free Admission</td>
<td>Free Admission</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>21-22/8/2010 (Sat-Sun) (Sat)</td>
<td>Street Music Concert 16《開放音樂》16 – 街頭音樂系列</td>
<td>Outside HK Arts Centre</td>
<td>Free Admission</td>
<td>Free Admission</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>29/10/2010 (Fri), 8:00-</td>
<td>Peri M《彩虹淚》音樂會</td>
<td>Hang Out 蒲吧</td>
<td>Free Admission</td>
<td>Free Admission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Admission</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. 30/10/2010 (Sat), 7:30-10:00pm</td>
<td>13. Real Live (Are you living in a real life?)</td>
<td>Real Music</td>
<td>Rachel Kar, AniDa, Ryan Hui</td>
<td>Free Admission</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>27. 12/11/2010 (Fri), 8:00pm</td>
<td>Mars News Ensemble</td>
<td>New Vision Arts Festival</td>
<td>Zhang Chu, Wang Yong, Wang Fan, Zhu Wen, Yoshihiro Hanno (Japan), TOMO (Japan), Jonas Hellborg (Sweden), Sainkho Namtchylak (Tuva), Dickson Dee and other musicians</td>
<td>Free Admission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. 22/3/2011 (Tue), 8:00pm</td>
<td>PMPS GiGa-Guerilla</td>
<td>PMPS Music 人山人海</td>
<td>Anthony Wong Yiu Ming</td>
<td>$280</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. 4/4/2011 (Mon), 10:30am-12:30pm</td>
<td>(Workshop) Creative Industries Workshop 創意產業工作坊</td>
<td>Hong Kong Arts Administrators Association</td>
<td>Dr. Gerald Lidstone</td>
<td>$250</td>
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<tr>
<td>30. 7/5/2011 (Sat), 3:00-4:30pm</td>
<td>(Talk) City Festival 2011: Record Or D.I.Y.</td>
<td>Fringe Club</td>
<td>黃家強, 關勁松, The Pancakes, P @ My Little Airport, MastaMic, 萱寧, 俊仔 @ToNick</td>
<td>Free Admission</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>31. 12/5/2011, 6:30-9:30pm</td>
<td>The Underground Kubrick</td>
<td>The Underground</td>
<td>Avery &amp; Ginkgo (白果) (acoustic pop), Stuart Lennon (punchy acoustic tunes), Eli (alternative)</td>
<td>Free Admission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. 17/3/2011-21/4/2011 (every Thu), 7:30-9:30pm</td>
<td>(Music Composition Class) 3D Composer 立體作曲人</td>
<td>Takumi Works (專業錄音室)</td>
<td>Dr. Anthony Cheng 鄭汝森博士</td>
<td>Takumi Works</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>33. 23/7/2011</td>
<td>Girls with Guitars 4</td>
<td>The Underground HK</td>
<td>Savannah Betts (acoustic angst), New Tonic Press (folk blues), Who Shot Holga (2/3 chick rock), FAD (alt Brit rock)</td>
<td>The Live House</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>34. 12/8/2011</td>
<td>Girls with Guitars 5</td>
<td>The Underground HK</td>
<td>Dark Himaya (Jazz Grunge), Thinking Out</td>
<td>Backstage Live</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
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<td>35.</td>
<td>13/8/2011</td>
<td>ToNick 發你個夢音樂祭</td>
<td>ToNick</td>
<td>Rotunda 3, Kowloonbay International Trade &amp; Exhibition Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>27/8/2011</td>
<td>my little airport香港是個大商場音樂會</td>
<td>Harbour Records</td>
<td>my little airport</td>
<td>Hidden Agenda</td>
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<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>9/9/2011</td>
<td>2011 plugged Asian Music Festival</td>
<td>Sport b., Re:spect Magazine</td>
<td>PixelToy, The Yours, Jing</td>
<td>Youth Square, Chai Wan</td>
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<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>16/9/2011</td>
<td>好好先生首度來港秘密unplugged 音樂會</td>
<td>Black Market Music Production 香港黑市音樂</td>
<td>好好先生</td>
<td>Zoo Record</td>
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<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>6/10/2011</td>
<td>《馮穎琪的第 2 天音樂會》</td>
<td>Frenzi Music 音樂份子/Producer: BFSH/Marketing: POPM</td>
<td>馮穎琪</td>
<td>Youth Square, Chai Wan</td>
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<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>7/10/2011</td>
<td>Underground Electronica #2</td>
<td>The Underground HK</td>
<td>Tadjgruv (Rhythms found in all things music), Beatnick (Big beats, breaks and booty shaking bass) [New Zealand], TKO</td>
<td>Dharma Den, Central</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Performer(s)</td>
<td>Venue</td>
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<td>藝鵠書店</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>3/12/2011</td>
<td>Underground 99</td>
<td>The Underground HK</td>
<td>NEU (Progressive Rock), Operator (British alt. rock), Apache (Canton rock)</td>
<td>Backstage</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>30/12/2011</td>
<td>PART 2 Pong Nan in Concert 藍奕邦・又燦爛又糜爛之夜</td>
<td>East Asia Music (Holdings) Ltd 東亞唱片(集團)有限公司</td>
<td>Pong Nan</td>
<td>The Auditorium, KITEC (Kowloon International Trade &amp; Exhibition Centre)</td>
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<td>天比高黑黑盒</td>
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<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>10/1/2012</td>
<td>Peri M@天比高圍你音樂會</td>
<td>Redline Music</td>
<td>Peri M</td>
<td>Black Box Theatre, Skyhigh Creative Partners 天比高天黑黑盒</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Tue), 8:30pm</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>22/4/2012</td>
<td>Tat Ming Pair Live 2012 達明一派兜兜轉轉演唱會</td>
<td>Media Asia Entertainment Ltd, East Asia Entertainment Ltd, Emperor Entertainment Group</td>
<td>Tat Ming Pair 達明一派</td>
<td>Hong Kong Coliseum</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Sun), 8:15pm</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>18/8/2012</td>
<td>Tat Ming Pair Live 2012 - Part II 達明一派兜兜轉轉演唱會 - Part II</td>
<td>Media Asia Entertainment Ltd, East Asia Entertainment Ltd, Emperor Entertainment Group</td>
<td>Tat Ming Pair 達明一派</td>
<td>AsiaWorld-Arena</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Sat), 8:15pm</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td>31/8/2012</td>
<td>Party 40</td>
<td>89268</td>
<td>Mr Hon Ka Chun a.k.a. BFSH</td>
<td>SiLouGongChang</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Fri), 9pm</td>
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<td>No.</td>
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<td>Organizer/Presenter</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<td>50.</td>
<td>7/10/2012 (Sun), 8:00pm</td>
<td>The Glue x fullcupmusic @ 2012.10.07</td>
<td>fullcupmusic</td>
<td>The Glue</td>
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<td></td>
<td>fullcupmusic</td>
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<tr>
<td>51.</td>
<td>17/10/2012 (Wed), 7:30pm</td>
<td>(Screening) “On the edge of a floating city, we sing”《在浮城的角落唱首歌》</td>
<td>Hong Kong Social Movement Film Festival (香港社運電影節)</td>
<td>My Little Airport, False Alarm, The Pancakes, MiniNoise (迷你噪音), SQUARE Fruit (四方果), Anson Mak (麥海珊)</td>
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<td>Hong Kong City University LT-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>52.</td>
<td>27/10/2012 (Sat), 4-6pm</td>
<td>Green Roots Concert (草根民謠音樂會)</td>
<td>Kwang Hwa Information and Culture Center (光華新聞文化中心)</td>
<td>吳汶芳 (Taiwan), 保卜(Taiwan), The3Think(HK)</td>
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<td>Piazza of HK Cultural Centre</td>
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<td>53.</td>
<td>20/11/2012 (Tue), 9:30am-6:00pm</td>
<td>The Young, The Wise, The Undiscovered</td>
<td>TEDxYouth @ Hong Kong 2012</td>
<td>ToNick, Lil’ Ashes, The Lee’s (Harbour Records)</td>
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<td>Design Institute</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>54.</td>
<td>24/11/2012 (Sat), 3-10pm</td>
<td>Music Festival of Renaissance Foundation</td>
<td>Organizer: Renaissance Foundation / Co-presenter: People Mountain People Sea</td>
<td>林一峰, 周雲蓬, 巴奈, 黃靖, 黃耀明, 左小祖咒, 陳珊妮, 五條人, Atomic Bubbles</td>
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<td>West Kowloon District</td>
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<td>55.</td>
<td>1-2/12/2012 (Sat-Sun)</td>
<td>Clockenflap Music &amp; Arts Festival 2012</td>
<td>Clockenflap</td>
<td>Clockenflap</td>
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<td>West Kowloon District</td>
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<tr>
<td>56.</td>
<td>8/12/2012 (Sat), 3-5pm</td>
<td>丁丁與西西 x fullcupmusic @2012.12.08 特別場</td>
<td>fullcupmusic</td>
<td>丁丁與西西 (Taiwan)</td>
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<td>fullcupmusic</td>
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<td>57.</td>
<td>15/12/2012 (Sat), 12:30-8pm</td>
<td>Grassfest / Freepace Fest</td>
<td>West Kowloon District Authority</td>
<td>West Kowloon District</td>
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<td>58.</td>
<td>19/12/2012 (Wed), 7:30pm</td>
<td>Band Stand for New Energy Source</td>
<td>Youth Square</td>
<td>Supper Moment, RedNoon, ToNick, PeriM, Ekee and Night Ghosts, Ever, A-Day, Chi Tung (tie-shu-lan), Joey Ou</td>
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<td>Youth Square</td>
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<td>59.</td>
<td>31/1/2013 (Thu), 8:30pm</td>
<td>Zhaoze (The Swamp)《1911》 Live In Hong Kong</td>
<td>89268 and Music Week</td>
<td>Zhaoze</td>
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<td>Fringe Club</td>
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<td>60.</td>
<td>27/2/2013 (Wed),</td>
<td>MC HOTDOG World Tour Concert in Hong Kong</td>
<td>Yiu Wing Entertainment (耀榮娛樂), Rock Records (滾石)</td>
<td>MC Hotdog, Edison Chen, Chang Chen Yue (張震嶽)</td>
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<td>Hong Kong Coliseum</td>
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<td>No.</td>
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<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Venue/Location</td>
<td>Localisation</td>
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<td>61.</td>
<td>31/8/2013, 8:15pm</td>
<td>倫永亮 One Voice Ten Fingers演唱會 2013</td>
<td>Pro Production, Honger Music, Tomson International Entertainment 恆巖國際娛樂</td>
<td>Queen Elizabeth Stadium</td>
<td>$480, $380, $280</td>
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<td>62.</td>
<td>5, 7, 13/9/2013</td>
<td>(Music critique workshop) 我的第 X 篇樂評！</td>
<td>Bitetone</td>
<td>The Coming Society 實現會社</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>63.</td>
<td>29/9/2013, 8pm</td>
<td>Suede Live in Hong Kong 2013</td>
<td>Midas Promotions Event</td>
<td>Suede</td>
<td>Hall 10, AsiaWorld-Expo 亞洲國際博覽館 10 號館</td>
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<tr>
<td>64.</td>
<td>11-13/10/2013</td>
<td>SMF2013 Silvermine Bay Music Festival</td>
<td>Dirty Loops (Sweden), Match Box, MoreLoops, ZOOOOM</td>
<td>Silvermine Bay, Mui Wo</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>65.</td>
<td>31/10/2013</td>
<td>my little airport 金石為開音樂會加開 31/10 萬聖夜特別場</td>
<td>Harbour Records</td>
<td>My Little Airport</td>
<td>Hang Out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66.</td>
<td>14-15/12/2014</td>
<td>Freespace Fest</td>
<td>West Kowloon District Authority (89268/POPM as Production Team)</td>
<td>West Kowloon District</td>
<td>Free Admission by Registration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Curriculum vitae

Academic qualifications of the thesis author, Miss LEUNG Pui Yee:

– Received the Degree of Bachelor of Art (Honours) in Humanities (First Class) from Hong Kong Baptist University, November 2007; and

– Received the Postgraduate Diploma in Creative Industries Management from The University of Hong Kong School of Professional and Continuing Education, March 2010.

December 2014