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Hong Kong composer Lora Chow's unusual journey from finance to writing Cantonese musicals

Lora Chow's musical Dr Clown will feature at the coming Fringe Festival in Hong Kong. We look at her eclectic career path, driven by passion

Reading Time: 3 minutes

**Chloe Loung**

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A new Cantonese musical written by Lora Chow Hiu-ching, a Yale

University-trained soprano and composer, is one of the highlights of the coming Fringe Festival in Hong Kong.

Called *Dr Clown*, it is the tale of a doctor who is so convinced that patients need emotional and psychological support alongside clinical care that he decides that his new calling is to become a hospital clown. Meanwhile, his nephew, a first-year medical student, secretly dreams of being a filmmaker.

Like the titular character, Chow has followed an unconventional career path to fulfil her passion and commitment to bringing joy to people through art.

She started playing the piano at the age of four and has picked up the violin, trumpet, harp and organ over the years, travelling to perform with choirs and orchestras abroad as part of her schooling in Hong Kong and the UK. This laid a foundation for an artistic spirit that refused to be confined.



Composer Lora Chow is pictured at the Fringe Club in Hong Kong. Her new musical, *Dr Clown*, is one of the highlights of the coming Fringe Festival. Photo: Jonathan Wong

She majored in music and economics at Yale University, and “fell so much in love with opera” through productions with the Yale Baroque Opera Project. She spent summers performing in Germany and Italy, but the itinerant and often lonely reality of a professional musician’s life prompted a pivot.

“You pour all your energy into a show and then it ends and suddenly you’re alone. It felt very heavy and difficult,” she says.

She returned to Hong Kong after graduating and took up a stable job in finance. This is the Hong Kong way after all, she says, which sees any student with top marks steered towards traditionally respectable and solid careers. The same kind of pressure also saw one of her friends from

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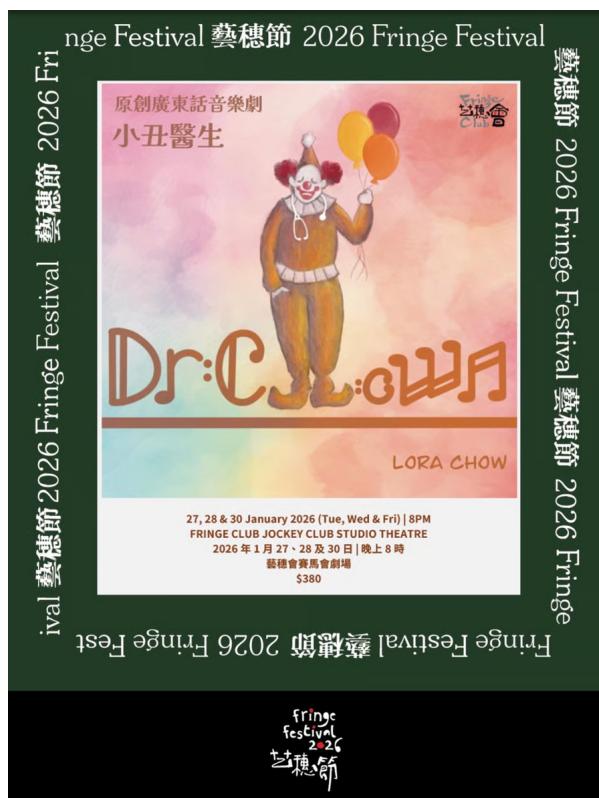
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primary school, who once dreamed of being a clown, became a lawyer – the original inspiration for *Dr Clown*.

Unlike the childhood friend, Chow has refused to stay away from her creative calling. After a period of picking up freelance gigs and occasionally performing in concerts, she started writing her own music.

“I always had new music playing in my head. I felt it was a waste not to write it down,” she says.



The official poster for *Dr Clown*, set to be performed at the Fringe Festival at the end of January. Photo: Fringe Festival

She decided to enrol in the Chigiana film scoring programme in Siena, Italy, where she studied under mentors with experience in Hollywood. It was a “life-changing experience”, she says.

Today, she juggles multiple projects on top of her nine-to-five; she has stayed in finance apart from a brief interlude in 2025, when she took up a role as an associate music director at Shanghai Disneyland, composing and arranging music for park shows and events.

One of Chow's most recent projects is *Sleepless Moon*, a “fusion opera” that blends Cantonese opera with Italian *bel canto*. The East-meets-West love story is still being developed, but a preview version premiered at Hong Kong's Xiqu Centre in November 2024.

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Chow has even found the time to release two solo piano albums of original compositions. The first, *Reflections on Ivories*, came out in 2025. *Pursuits from the Roots*, an 18-track album inspired by nature and inner growth, was released in January 2026.



Chow's latest album, *Pursuits from the Roots*, was released earlier this month. Photo: Lora Chow

She is also working on the score of an upcoming Canadian indie film, *The Way You Dance*.

The soundtrack for *Dr Clown* is already available on streaming platforms. It was recorded with the Budapest Scoring orchestra, known for its work on numerous Netflix series and films, and it will accompany the performance at the Fringe Festival, starring local artists Tiffany Lee and Eric Luk.

Chow premiered a shorter version of *Dr Clown* in November as part of the [Horizons Festival](#) in Tai Po, shortly after [the devastating fire](#) at Wang Fuk Court. Defending her decision to go ahead when many events were cancelled as a mark of mourning, Chow said that it was during such tragic moments that the true purpose of art became clearer than ever.

“Music has a unique power to cut through the darkness, to connect people and to remind us of our shared humanity. It is in our most challenging moments that we need it the most,” she says.

“Some family members of the victims told me personally that the music

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brought them peace. That touched me so deeply. And so, the show must go on."

Dr Clown, Fringe Festival 2026, Jockey Club Studio Theatre, Fringe Club, 2 Lower Albert Rd, Central, January 27, 28 and 30, 8pm.

The Fringe Festival 2026 runs until February 15 and features over 300 artists who applied through an open call. For more information on schedules and ticketing, [click here](#).



Chloe Loung [+ FOLLOW](#)

Chloe Loung is a reporter at the Post. Born and raised in Hong Kong, she is dedicated to covering the local scene with a special interest in its evolving culture and identity. She previously

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Profile | How Nancy Sit went from a princess of Cantonese cinema to Hong Kong's beloved TV matriarch

After leaving the spotlight at the height of her fame, Nancy Sit overcame personal struggles, reinvented herself and returned to superstardom

Reading Time: 4 minutes



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Chloe Loung

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SCMP Series

Hong Kong's pop culture icons

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This is the 68th instalment in a [biweekly series](#) profiling major Hong Kong pop culture figures of recent decades.

With her signature forehead mole, infectious laughter and seemingly ageless, indomitable spirit, Nancy Sit Ka-yin has earned her title as the “elder sister” of Hong Kong’s entertainment industry.

To the generations who grew up watching her, she is simply Ka-yin Je (Big Sister Ka-yin), or Ka-yin Mama, a symbol of warmth, resilience and unshakeable joy. Yet, to view her journey solely as one of longevity is to miss the point.

Sit’s story, spanning from the final golden years of black-and-white Cantonese cinema to the digital age of streaming, is one of metamorphosis: a precocious child star who evolved past her ingénue years, a woman who rebuilt her life from shattering personal despair, and an actress who grew into the warm, steadfast matriarch for the city.



Nancy Sit in 1968. Sit made her acting debut in 1960, with the film "The Grand Re-Union". Photo: SCMP

Born in Hong Kong to a Fujianese family in 1950, Sit has seen her contributions to the arts and the community recognised with prestigious honours, including the HKSAR Medal of Honour in 2000, making her the first actress to receive it.

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