

# **“Glory to Hong Kong” : A new, unofficial national hongkonger anthem**

Thursday 12 September 2019, by [LANYON Charley](#), [TAYLOR Jerome](#), [ZHAO Yan](#) (Date first published: 12 September 2019).

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## **Hongkongers belt out a new, unofficial national anthem at malls, on streets and in football stands**

**By Jerome Taylor and Yan Zhao (HKFP)**

<https://www.hongkongfp.com/2019/09/12/hongkongers-belt-new-unofficial-national-anthem-malls-streets-football-stands>

A defiant protest anthem penned by an anonymous composer has become the unofficial new soundtrack to Hong Kong’s pro-democracy protests, belted out by crowds at flashmobs in malls, on the streets and in the football stands.

**“Glory to Hong Kong” first appeared on YouTube on 31 August** and has quickly won a huge following among those pushing for greater democratic freedoms in the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

In less than a fortnight the original version has racked up more than 1.3 million views while multiple copycats videos have been made — including one featuring an entire orchestra decked out in the helmets, goggles and gas masks worn by those on the barricades.

<https://youtu.be/oUIDL4SB60g>

Each night this week protesters have gathered at different malls across the city for impromptu flashmob concerts.

At a mall in the town of Sha Tin on Wednesday night hundreds of activists gathered to sing, many of them reading from scraps of paper with the lyrics on them.

*“For all our tears on our land/Do you feel the rage in our cries,”* the latest song begins. *“Rise up and speak up, our voice echoes/Freedom shall shine upon us”*.

Alongside the Christian hymn “Sing Hallelujah to the Lord”, “Glory to Hong Kong” is a riposte to the city’s unelected leaders and Beijing after more than three months of huge and sometimes violent protests.

Little is known about the composer, who gave himself the online pseudonym “Thomas dgx yhl”. But the song’s lyrics and melody have quickly spread within the movement.

During a football match on Tuesday 10 night between Hong Kong and Iran, crowds of local fans booed the Chinese national anthem, and then sang the new protest song as the match began.  
<https://www.scmp.com/video/hong-kong/3026607/chinese-national-anthem-booed-hong-kong-v-iran-world-cup-soccer-qualifier>

Insulting China's flag and anthem is banned on the mainland and Hong Kong's local government are currently trying to pass a similar law.

Critics say that move is another blow to the free speech guarantees Hong Kong is supposed to maintain under the handover deal China agreed with Britain.

In response, dozens of pro-Beijing demonstrators congregated in IFC Mall in Central on Thursday waving five-starred red flags and singing the national anthem. A rival group quickly formed around them, belting out "Glory to Hong Kong."

### **'An anthem that belongs'**

- Christopher Chung, 22, said he planned to sing the new protest song over China's communist anthem "March of the Volunteers."

*"I think the respect people pay when singing a national anthem should come out from one's heart, instead of using law and rules to force people to respect it,"* he told AFP.

- *"We really dislike the Chinese national anthem,"* added Billy, 16, who declined to give his surname. *"That's why we want to sing an anthem that belongs to Hong Kong."*

Hong Kong's summer of rage was sparked by a widely reviled plan to allow extraditions to the mainland.

But after local leaders and Beijing took a hardline it snowballed into a wider movement pushing for democracy and police accountability.

Huge crowds have marched repeatedly throughout the last 15 weeks of protests — and many confrontations with police have turned violent.

Music has long been central to Hong Kong's pro-democracy protest movement.

A host of protest songs have been sung for years at the 4 June vigils commemorating the Tiananmen crackdown.

**During 2014's pro-democracy Umbrella Movement protests**, the three most popular protest songs were

- "Do you hear the people sing", from the musical "Les Miserables",
- "Raise the Umbrellas" — a track written for the movement by a group of Cantonese pop-stars
- "Boundless Oceans, Vast Skies", a famous ballad by Hong Kong rock band "Beyond" from the early 1990s.

Antony Dapiran, a Hong Kong-based lawyer who has written a book on the city's protest movements, said songs sung in 2014 were characterised by optimism that things might change.

But in the five years since — with no concessions from Beijing and protesters embracing more confrontational tactics — the music has darkened to match the mood on the streets.

*"The soundtrack of the movement is much more sombre,"* he told AFP. *"The funeral "Sing Hallelujah to the Lord", the "death rattle" of protesters beating their shields and road signs, and now this solemn, defiant anthem."*

**Additional reporting: Jennifer Creery**

# **Hong Kong protest songs: 7 anthems of the anti-extradition movement - do you hear the people sing?**

**by Charley Lanyon (SCMP)**

<https://scmp.com/lifestyle/arts-culture/article/3026843/hong-kong-protest-songs-7-anthems-anti-extradition-movement>

*From Christian hymns to Canto-pop hits, Hong Kong protesters have been expressing their frustration and solidarity through song.*

*Lyrics like 'Still I am still free/ Still I am independent/ Forever loudly singing my song' embody a movement that shows no signs of slowing down.*

Music has emerged as a potent force over the nearly three months that Hong Kong has been gripped by unrest.

Protesters have turned to song to express both their frustration and solidarity and to literally sing out their identity as Hongkongers.

These songs have run the gamut from Broadway anthems and Christian hymns to television themes and hits from the golden era of Canto-pop. And now, artists in Hong Kong have begun crafting their own anthems to the city.

Do you hear the people sing?

## **Glory to Hong Kong**

Called the Hong Kong national anthem, Glory to Hong Kong is the most recent and most popular of the movement's protest songs.

Thousands of spectators drowned out the Chinese national anthem [1] with this song **during the recent football match between Hong Kong and Iran.**

<https://www.scmp.com/video/hong-kong/3026607/chinese-national-anthem-booed-hong-kong-v-iran-world-cup-soccer-qualifier>

Not much is known about the composer, "Thomas", a full-time musician in his mid-20s who asked to be identified only by his first name.

A video of this song put together by "young creatives" and attributed to the "Black Blorchestra" shows musicians clad in black and wearing gas masks playing as clouds of tear gas roll through their ranks.

<https://youtu.be/oUIDL4SB60g>

## **Sing Hallelujah to the Lord**

This Christian hymn, composed in 1975 by Linda Stassen-Benjamin from the US, has become one of the movement's most popular and most ethereal anthems.

When sung by thousands of protesters, the song turns the city into a kind of cathedral and inspires silent awe in onlookers wherever it is performed.

Spiritual songs have been a mainstay of protest movements for centuries and most famously provided the soundtrack for the American civil rights movement in the 1960s.

## **Do You Hear the People Sing**

Do You Hear the People Sing, the centrepiece of the 1987 Broadway smash hit *Les Misérables*, gained notoriety as a Hong Kong protest song when videos of it being sung at the first major airport sit-in were broadcast all over the world.

The song references the French Revolution, but its lyrics - *“Do you hear the people sing?/ Singing a song of angry men/ It is the music of a people/ Who will not be slaves again”* - as well as its bombast and theatricality have made it a rousing protest anthem for a whole new generation of Hongkongers.

### **Below The Lion Rock**

Before the composer of Glory to Hong Kong was even born, Hong Kong had an unofficial anthem in “Below The Lion Rock”, the theme song of the television show of the same name.

The song made famous by Hong Kong singer Roman Tam continues to unite Hongkongers - especially those of certain age - in admiration for the “the Lion Rock spirit”, the specifically Hong Kong can-do attitude that is said to set this city apart from others around the world.

### **Boundless Oceans, Vast Skies**

This power ballad from legendary hitmakers Beyond took on a greater poignancy when the group’s lead singer died in 1993.

In that time, the song has become something of a unifying call to arms for Hongkongers and has been present at every demonstration, protest and commemoration of the bloody Tiananmen crackdown since.

With lyrics like *“Many times I’ve faced the cold shoulder and ridicule / But I’ve never given up the hopes or ideals in my heart”*, and *“Still I am still free/ Still I am independent/ Forever loudly singing my song”*, it is the perfect fit for pro-democracy demonstrations of all kinds. Think of the song as Below the Lion Rock for a younger crowd.

### **Raise the Umbrellas**

Before the anti-extradition protests there was the Umbrella Movement in 2014 [2], another fertile ground for home-grown protest anthems that still resonate with the city’s activists.

In the early days of the Umbrella Movement, the city’s famous entertainers stayed relatively quiet. That changed with Raise the Umbrellas, a song penned by activist Lo Hiu-pan and composer Lin Xi - who also wrote the theme song for the Beijing Olympics - and performed by stars Denise Ho, Anthony Wong Yiu-ming and Deanie Ip.

For many Hong Kong youngsters, that song represented their first exposure to peaceful civil disobedience and still manages to inspire to this day.

### **Add Oil**

The most recent pop song to address - cynics would say “capitalise” - on the anti-extradition movement is Add Oil by Hong Kong DJ, singer and comedian Jan Lamb.

The bouncy, almost frothy, pop trinket still manages to inspire as it extols Lamb’s countrymen to “add oil”, the defining phrase and ethos of the movement.

The release of Add Oil coincides with Lamb’s new tour, so depending on how that goes, we may see more new “protest hits” coming down the pipe.

### **Links**

[1] <https://www.scmp.com/video/hong-kong/3026607/chinese-national-anthem-booed-hong-kong-v-iran-world-cup-soccer-qualifier>

[2] <https://www.scmp.com/topics/occupy-central>

## VIDEOS :

### Do you hear the Hong Kong people sing ? 香港人

From the musical comedy (1980) and film (2012) adaptation of Victor Hugo historical novel "Les misérables" (1862).

Demonstration version

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mb5wDf-fw2w>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuByqK\\_UNIY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuByqK_UNIY)

Rally inside Airport version

<https://twitter.com/joshuawongcf/status/1160123743701590016>

Students version

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jF64wzIyBOU>

Choir version

<https://youtu.be/zhQIOFdQdCo> Retour ligne automatique

Initial 2012 movie version

<https://youtu.be/gMYNfOlf1H8>

### Glory to Hong Kong (31 août 2019)

Various demonstrations version (with english subtitles)

<https://youtu.be/y7yRDOLCy4Y>

Inside a commercial center (1)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQDVuHU2t0A>

<https://youtu.be/IEhgTBOX2kU>

Inside a commercial center (2)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SzbzSfsctRY>,

With secondary female students

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p1SN54kJTA>

Inside Hong Kong football stadium

<https://www.scmp.com/video/hong-kong/3026607/chinese-national-anthem-booed-hong-kong-v-iran-world-cup-soccer-qualifier>

Symphonic version !

<https://youtu.be/oUIDL4SB60g>

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## **P.S.**

NB : Hong Kong bill criminalising mockery of national anthem to be delayed until at least October.

<https://www.hongkongfp.com/2019/06/20/hong-kong-bill-criminalising-mockery-national-anthem-delayed-least-october/>