



Paul Au, an audiophile who collects and sells used music records, describing Hong Kong's music scene in the 1960s when local garage bands were influenced by the British beatnik sound. The locally pressed vinyls from that time are now treasured collectibles. (from the episode: Paul, Tarzan of the Vinyl Jungle)

Soundbites from the heart of the city

Hong Kong has a reputation as a place of business where people only work, eat and sleep. In this video series I set out to find locals that believe there's more to life.

By **CLAUDIA HINTERSEER** in Hong Kong

Paul Au is a hippie and a vinyl record aficionado who runs a small record shop in Sham Shui Po. He owns more than 300,000 "orphan" records and hopes, a la Mother Teresa as he told me, for a ripple effect: that people will follow his example if he showed them how to take care of vinyl records. He wishes people would get record players and start listening to old-fashioned vinyls again. He believes vinyl is more valuable than gold.

Diana Chow's is a different story. She's a creative preacher in a church on the top floor of a Wan Chai skyscraper (How typical Hong Kong can it get, a church on a 75th floor!). Her community work and pop-singing "high in the sky" make a fascinating visual story.

Launched in September, Urban Tales is a series of mini-documentaries about a few select Hong Kong-dwellers and the extraordinary capers they indulge in on a daily basis. These include impersonating a head of state,

celebrating a pet dog's birthday and swing-dancing after work among other activities. Ten episodes of personal stories, narrated by the subjects in their own words, have been podcast.

It's been tough editing the series. A lot of exciting material had to be edited out as I wanted to keep each story short and brisk. Diana, for instance, told me about her rebellious childhood and the conflicts with her mom, which didn't make the final cut. Paul's delightful anecdotes about Hong Kong's music industry and how he came to find refuge in our city after fleeing the war in Vietnam had to be dropped as well.

And take Bowie Chan, who at one point in his life owned 700 tarantulas — in a regular 400 square feet Hong Kong apartment! In the final edit there's not even a mention of his spiders as the focus was on Bowie's passion for reptiles and outdoors adventures, looking for local species. Performance-artist Frog King's stories about working alongside some of the famous international painters and creative

minds in New York had to go too.

Still, what's left in these 10 short visual stories show that Hong Kong has quite a few ordinary people with extraordinary passions and routines — tucked away somewhere in its high-floor apartments and narrow alleys — who lend the sort of energy and color that makes the city tick. And that's what this video-series is all about. Check it out via www.urbantalesvideo.com or follow Urban Tales on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/urbantalesvideo/>

Note: There are so many more personal stories to discover in Hong Kong and I plan to do so later this spring. If you have a lead, please e-mail me at claudia@chinadailyhk.com. For the upcoming Urban Tales season I will first point my camera at the inhabitants of Beijing. Stay tuned for the launch date by liking [UrbanTalesVideo](https://www.facebook.com/UrbanTalesVideo) on Facebook.

Contact the writer at claudia@chinadailyhk.com



Online
See all 10 episodes by scanning the code.

PHOTOS BY CLAUDIA HINTERSEER / CHINA DAILY

URBAN TALES



Pop-Preaching High in the Sky — that's Diana Chow's call, besides helping young children and teenagers with finding their path in life. (from the episode: Diana, Pop-Preaching High in the Sky)



Swing dancing brought Michael Wu out of his shell. The day-time financial analyst especially likes to dance the Lindy Hop. (from the episode: Michael, Swing Dancer in Modern Hong Kong)



Impersonating Kim Jong-un — and flirting with girls — is Howard's second nature. (from the episode: Howard, Impersonating Kim Jong-un)



Chairing the Hong Kong UFO Club, Moon Fong dedicates her earthly leisure time to alien research and organizing international events for the club (from the episode: Moon on a Mission)



Jacqueline Wong celebrating her dog Monnay's fourth birthday. The pet lover invited a bunch of Monnay's doggy friends and their human parents. (from the episode: Jacqueline and Her Dog's Life (not))



Kwok Mang-ho, aka the Frog King, is one of the city's most eccentric performance artists. Even after more than 50 years in the business, Kwok is still going strong. (from the episode: Frog King Kwok, An Artist Life)