



Extensive range of archival news...



Happenings | News | Show | Sports | Tech | Guide

ON THE NEWS STANDS TODAY

...e hopes | EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW | Son says Mr M's sarky tong

SUN 15 MARCH 2009



SPONSORED BY FairPrice

COLUMNISTS

SEARCH

Tnp.sg

Singapore

FIND

Powered by rednano.sg

ARCHIVE

- Select -

RSS News Feed

ADVERTISE

FEEDBACK

ASIAONE

Got a story? E-MAIL US CALL US 1800-7334455

ELECTRIC SHOW

'Loneliness made me sensitive'

Taiwanese singer credits lonely childhood for songwriting skills

By Tan Kee Yun

March 15, 2009

AMERICAN poet Maya Angelou once wrote that music allowed her to 'crawl into the space between the notes and curl my back into loneliness'.

For Taiwanese singer-songwriter Cheer Chen, it's a sentiment that rang true while she was growing up in Taipei.

Raised by a single parent, loneliness played a pivotal role in shaping her into the maverick craftsman of folk rock we know today.

'I had a pretty alienated childhood, as my mum was the super strict sort. She didn't allow me to watch television or play rowdy games,' said Cheer, 33, in an interview with local reporters recently.

'Other kids in the neighbourhood would be playing hide-and-seek and I'd just hide in a corner to steal peeks at them.'

Looking radiant with long, flowing tresses, she was in town to promote her new album, Immortal, as well as her upcoming concert at the Singapore Indoor Stadium on 4 Apr.

She also attended the Singapore Entertainment Awards celebration party on 7 Mar, where she picked up the Best Lyrics (Regional) Award for her song Failure's Flight.

'There was a long road I had to take to go to school and I remember humming songs to myself as I trudged down that same path every day,' she said with a laugh.

'But in a way, it was precisely my childhood that shaped a large part of who I am.

'I tinkered a lot on the piano and learnt to live with myself. Loneliness cultivated a sensitive, emotional side to me, which aided in my future song-writing greatly.'

If you're wondering where she gets the inspiration for her lyrical songs, it could be from as diverse as a beautiful Monet painting ('I was on holiday in Paris and this work of art touched me so much, I just stared at it, captivated for a long time') to a tough personal experience ('I wrote the song Fish - her first single in Immortal - after being severely ill for weeks').

Though she tends to give the impression that she is soft-spoken and easy-going, there is a latent streak of rebelliousness in her.

She shared how as a college student, she insisted on studying philosophy as her major, despite her mother's objection.

'My mum felt philosophy was impractical, she wanted me to take economics, but I was simply put off by numbers,' she said.

'To show that I was firm and would stand by my decision no matter what, I shut myself in my room for days, refusing to eat or drink, or talk to her at all.

'She realised I was unhappy and had no choice but to give in eventually.'

Unconventional

The rebel in her continues to pop out from time to time in the course of work.

One of her most haunting songs, Sentimental Kills, contains a conspicuous four-letter word and she is known for not censoring herself during live performances of the song.

She is coolly unconventional too, in the way she records her albums.

Unlike artists who prefer the comforts and familiarity of a recording studio, she has done recordings in odd, offbeat places, such as the Taipei Station, the zoo and more recently, in her own wardrobe!

With a grin, she said she and her producers chose the wardrobe as it 'would give us a clean, warm sound'.

'It's actually fun and refreshing, just that I had to get used to the heat and slight stuffiness, because obviously, there was no air-conditioning.'

Fans looking forward to her concert next month can expect a performance just as



GOOD PRACTICE: Cheer (above) says she used to hum songs to herself on the way to school. -- PICTURE: ROCK RECORDS



Story index

HOLLYWOOD can be a pain

Spears giggles after blooper

From Potter boys to men

## The Electric New Paper, Singapore - ...

electrifying, if not more, than her previous gig at The MAX Pavilion here two years ago, which had a record-breaking total of five encores.

'That's the spontaneous side of me, I can get quite reluctant to leave the stage when I see everyone still high and energetic.'

---

### FYI

**WHAT:** Cheer Chen 'The Sun' Singapore Concert 2009

**WHERE:** Singapore Indoor Stadium

**WHEN:** 4 Apr, 8pm

**TICKETS:** \$148, \$128, \$108, \$88, \$68 from [www.sistic.com](http://www.sistic.com)

[➤ Back to Show](#)

### Ads by Google

#### [Aussie Dad Makes Big](#)

See How To Work Online From Home 6 figure income potential. It works  
[www.youcanhavewealth2.com](http://www.youcanhavewealth2.com)

#### [Custom made Closet System](#)

American concept closet Gallery walk-in & built-in wardrobe system  
[www.closetdesign.com.sg](http://www.closetdesign.com.sg)

#### [Bedroom Furniture](#)

Online Bedroom Furniture Store Free Delivery Anywhere in Singapore  
[www.beds.sg](http://www.beds.sg)

#### [Used Cars from Singapore](#)

Great news for importers + dealers! Wide range of Singapore stocks.  
[www.tradecarview.com](http://www.tradecarview.com)

#### [Singapore Condominium](#)

Find 1000's of Properties For Sale & Rent In Spore. With Photos & Maps  
[www.PropertyGuru.com.sg](http://www.PropertyGuru.com.sg)