



# Epileptic hoping to hit a high note

Amateur singer wants to record top tunes with a local star

**Annemarie Evans**

Leung Cheong-yiu loves to sing, and does so at every opportunity, particularly numbers from the 1970s and '80s.

The 31-year-old has taken part in more than 30 singing contests held by RTHK, schools, shopping malls, karaoke outlets and community centres.

Mr Leung's enthusiasm for singing provides some happiness to a life restricted by epilepsy.

"When I was four months old, I banged my head on a glass door at a bank and had to have surgery. I had a further two operations. And then, when I was 11, I had my first seizure," he said.

Mr Leung has been taking anti-epilepsy drugs since then, the side-effects of which make him feel tired and weaken his immune system.

He can often be found at the Enlighten Hong Kong support centre in Wan Chai, where he chats with social worker Stephanie Wong Suk-fong and is surrounded



**South China Morning Post**

by people who sympathise with his condition. However, he is ambitious to travel further afield.

"I want to go on a plane," he said. "My family is worried, but my doctors say it's OK to travel."

Enlighten Hong Kong was set up two years ago to provide support to epilepsy sufferers and their families. Its facilities include a paediatric clinic, one-on-one and group counselling sessions and a project that brings together youths afflicted with epilepsy.

Through Operation Santa

Claus, co-organised by RTHK and the *South China Morning Post*, Enlighten Hong Kong is looking for a record company to come forward and grant Mr Leung's wish of recording a couple of his favourite songs with a Hong Kong artist.

Mr Leung is a multilingual singer capable of performing in English, Cantonese, Putonghua and Korean.

"He downloads music from the internet and learns the words," Enlighten Hong Kong executive director Orla Gilroy said. "He is very romantic and likes love songs like the one from *Titanic*."

Mr Leung began entering singing contests after his younger brother won a speech competition.

"As elder brother, I also wanted to win an award," he said.

"Once I joined a competition at a shopping mall in Tsim Sha Tsui, there were 100 contestants and I came sixth, which is my best result to date."