

## Sounds from the Diaspora: Asia Indie Music in Canada

by Alex Tse - Sunday, August 05, 2012

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Youtube has propelled Asian talents like Kina Grannis, Andrew Garcia, and Clara C to the forefront of DIY music fame. These Californian artists have garnered an overwhelming share of social media attention and it begs the question: do Canada's indie industries compare? Are we capable of producing our own indie, Asian music celebrities?

We know that the Canadian indie genre is wildly successful, as evidenced by internationally celebrated bands like Stars and Arcade Fire. But it is difficult to find comparable Asian music from Canada, and as a Canadian of Chinese descent, I find this particularly distressing. Is Asian Canadian music not getting the recognition it deserves, or are Asian Canadians simply not musically talented?

Clearly, it is not a case of the latter, so I became determined to scout out these musical obscurities. Some of the most notable Asian songsmiths in the country include Youtube stars Andrew Gunadie and Andrew Huang, or [gunnarolla](#) and [songstowearpantsto](#) on Youtube, respectively. Gunadie is the co-producer of Canadian Please, a viral video hit that invokes fuzzy feelings of true north patriotism with lyrics like, "Where else do you find mounted police / Or go to the hospital and not pay fees? / Yeah I know that you wanna be Canadian, please."

Huang must first be commended on his perfectly triangular eyebrows, but his claim to Youtube fame is otherwise based on his fearless creativity and his enterprising internet sass. The headline on [www.songstowearpantsto.com](http://www.songstowearpantsto.com) says, "Andrew makes songs based on your ideas" and in a blog post he writes, "I've yet to be met with a song idea or a style of music that I can't make happen." In the past, Huang has met even the most challenging submissions head-on, including the suggestion: "I think you should write a song about a man ordering a burrito and being extremely intimidated by the size of it. [The music should be Celtic techno.](#)"

Gunadie and Huang both hail from Toronto, but [No Luck Club](#) is one of Vancouver's own. "There's a lot of hippies in Vancouver," says laptop sampler Trevor Chan, "so we know when we do our funky thing, people are gonna throw down." Along with his brother Matt Chang and DJ Paul Delen, the trio make up an electronic hip hop band which produces music in a chameleonic range of genres - from Hong Kong gangster movie soundtracks to activist sound collages.

It is all too easy in Canada to celebrate the success and prominence of our indie music industry and to forget that music from ethnic minorities still remains relatively unknown. The number of prominent Asians in the Canadian music scene speaks to our level of cultural diversity and is therefore worthy of our attention and support. Indie music will be even more a source of nationalistic pride when it is enriched by our sense of multiculturalism.

*\*Note: Know any other Asian Canadian musicians? Let me know about them in the comments! It was especially hard to find female Asian Canadian musicians other than Sook-Yin Lee and some of the members from Ohbijou so please let me know if you know of any.*