

Leslie Cheung: Asia’s gay icon lives on 15 years after his death

Notes & Cues:	<p><b>Article:</b></p> <p>For the past 15 years fans of tormented superstar Leslie Cheung, one of the first celebrities to come out as gay in Asia, have gathered at Hong Kong’s Mandarin Oriental Hotel to mourn the day he took his own life.</p> <p>It’s a poignant sign of why the daring and troubled star is still important today.</p> <p>One of Hong Kong’s most popular male singers and actors of the mid-1980s, Leslie Cheung Kwok Wing was not afraid of provoking controversy with his overt sexuality and provocative performances during a more socially conservative era. "The coming out of such a renowned superstar had a huge effect on the general public, " said Travis Kong, an associate professor of sociology researching gay culture at The University of Hong Kong.</p> <p>Cheung’s defining queer performance came in a 2000 concert where he wore tight transparent trousers with waist-length hair and clearly visible stubble. He ended the concert with his self-revealing ballad I. "I won’t hide, I will live my life the way I like under the bright light, " he sang, "I am what I am, firelight of a different colour."</p> <p>Hong Kong still lacks anti-discrimination laws protecting LGBT communities but queer identity and sexual fluidity are no longer so taboo and are part of the social landscape. And 15 years after his death, Cheung is still attracting new fans, including teenagers and millennials, by his charisma and androgyny.</p> <p>"The highest achievement for a performer is to embody both genders at the same time, " he once proclaimed: "For art itself is genderless."</p>
Summary:	