

Interview: David Choi

Oct 25, 2011

Music Designer [Janica Quach](#) recently spoke with YouTube sensation/singer/songwriter [David Choi](#) about his music, inspiration, and his newly released third album.



Janica Quach: Thank you so much for doing this interview with us!

David Choi: Not a problem!

JQ: *How did you get started writing songs?*

DC: I started writing when I was 16. Before that, I was taking violin and piano privately and I hated it. In high school, this kid brought in a CD and played it for the class and he said he made it, and I was thinking in my head, "Oh, wow! You can actually create music as opposed to just reading and practicing music that's already been made." So, I went home that night and started working on my first instrumental piece on a keyboard that I had lying around and that's the beginning.

JQ: *Cool! So what are your musical influences? Who inspires you?*

DC: I actually think everything that I listened to growing up has influenced me one way or another. Right now, I'm listening to a lot of R&B, soul, India.Arie, Babyface, Stevie Wonder... I actually listen to the same music all the time. I'm one of those people that listen to something for a while and just kind of stick to it. But yeah, the classical music definitely did do something and jazz, definitely jazz influenced me. Just a mixture of everything, actually...

JQ: *You play a lot of instruments. I was just listening to your cover of "Like a G6" on the banjo, and I was thinking, "I totally wanna play banjo!" (laughing)*

DC: It's pretty easy, actually! You just strum it without hitting anything; it's already a chord, so you've got that right there. I just play by ear, so I just kind of figure out what certain things sound like and then I can kind of just go from there, but I don't think I'm a master of any instrument, just kind of picked up a bunch of instruments.

JQ: *Is there any instrument that you haven't played but that you really want to learn how to play?*

DC: You know what is really hard - is playing a trumpet. I can get some of the notes, but it's really hard for me and it just sounds really bad. You have to have training with your mouth, your lip [embouchure].

I played a little bit of trombone when I was in high school and that was really fun. I took a little concert band class for a semester, and it was really fun, but the trumpet is way harder than trombone.

I was in orchestra too... Well, I only did it because it was an easy "A" for me even though I did not get an A with some of the instruments because I goofed off (laughing). But yeah, I was always doing music, especially in elementary; it was a good excuse to leave class.

JQ: *You talked about being able to play things by ear. What is your songwriting process like? Do you sit down and say, "I'm going to write a song," and then write a song, or do the songs just pop into your head?*

DC: As far as my own stuff goes, like what I release on my CDs and what is supposed to represent me, I write those songs when I feel it. I was signed to Warner/Chappell Publishing for a couple of years as a staff writer/producer, and those two years definitely trained me to write a song when someone told me to write a song. So, there is the craft of it, there's always the craft where you have certain boundaries and rules, and then break them, there's that sort of writing for me, and then there's the more inspirational, where I feel like I need to say something; I just want to share a story or something like that. Those are the two ways I write. As far as melody and lyrics go, usually it's kind of simultaneous, both melody and lyrics when I'm writing, or I just jot down lyrical ideas throughout the day whenever I feel it or get something in my head. I just jot it down and then use it for later; the results are possibilities.

JQ: *That's really cool that you can do both.*

DC: The writing one is like actually forcing yourself to kind of write, but it's still good practice and I am trained in that, I guess.

JQ: *You've done a lot of collaborations with other artists and also other artists on YouTube. Is there anyone in particular that was the most memorable for you?*

DC: Well, I have a friend named Kina, we've done quite a few collaborations; Kina Grannis, she's gonna be pretty big, I think, real soon...

JQ: *Yeah, she's awesome, too!*

DC: She signed to One Haven Record Company and I think she's going to do really well in the future. She's definitely one of those good friends that I have that I really enjoy working with. There are a lot of other ones, too, like Chloe Temchine, who's not really that popular on YouTube, but I really enjoy writing with her; songs just flow out when we are writing together, like a machine.

JQ: *Is there anyone in particular who would be your dream collaboration?*

DC: I'd really enjoy writing... well, let me think. I don't know... It would be a lot of pressure to write with somebody whose music that I really, really enjoy, like whom I am a huge fan of. But it would be cool to write with Babyface; I really like him. I really like Babyface; I really like India.Arie, and that's just for the moment. That'll change, but I really have been listening to them a lot, for the past... a lot, a long time, probably like a year! Whenever I get in my car that's what I listen to. Besides that I just listen to music on my YouTube, music that people share with me or what I hear on the radio. I really like that song by Lil Wayne. I don't usually listen to Lil Wayne but I really like that song, "How to Love." I don't know if you've heard that song?

JQ: *Yeah, I have.*

DC: It's a really good song. I really like that song.

JQ: *(laughing) There's nothing wrong with listening to Lil Wayne.*

DC: No, no, but it's not usually my choice of music (laughing). But I really like his new single that's out right now.

JQ: *So how did you start posting videos on YouTube and when did you realize that this was going to be something huge?*

DC: Well, I never really did it expecting anything. I didn't even want to pursue doing the artist thing, actually. I posted out of boredom. I went outside, tore a sample, and thought that maybe a couple of people would see it and get a laugh out of it. But then I posted it and within a couple of weeks, it got featured on the homepage of YouTube and a week after, it got a half a million views. That's what got the ball rolling, I guess. A little bit of luck and I guess the song was funny or something. I wrote about YouTube and called it "YouTube (A Love Song)." It just kind of exploded and even for a year after that happened, I didn't do any shows. I actually didn't do any shows until 2009; before that I was just doing YouTube and posting videos just because people were asking. People were asking "Do you do shows?" "Do you have a CD?" and I didn't do any of that until a few years later.

JQ: *So, you're working on your third album right now?*

DC: Yep, my third album.

JQ: *Cool. Can you give us a sneak peek into what your third album influences are going to be and what we can expect to be different?*

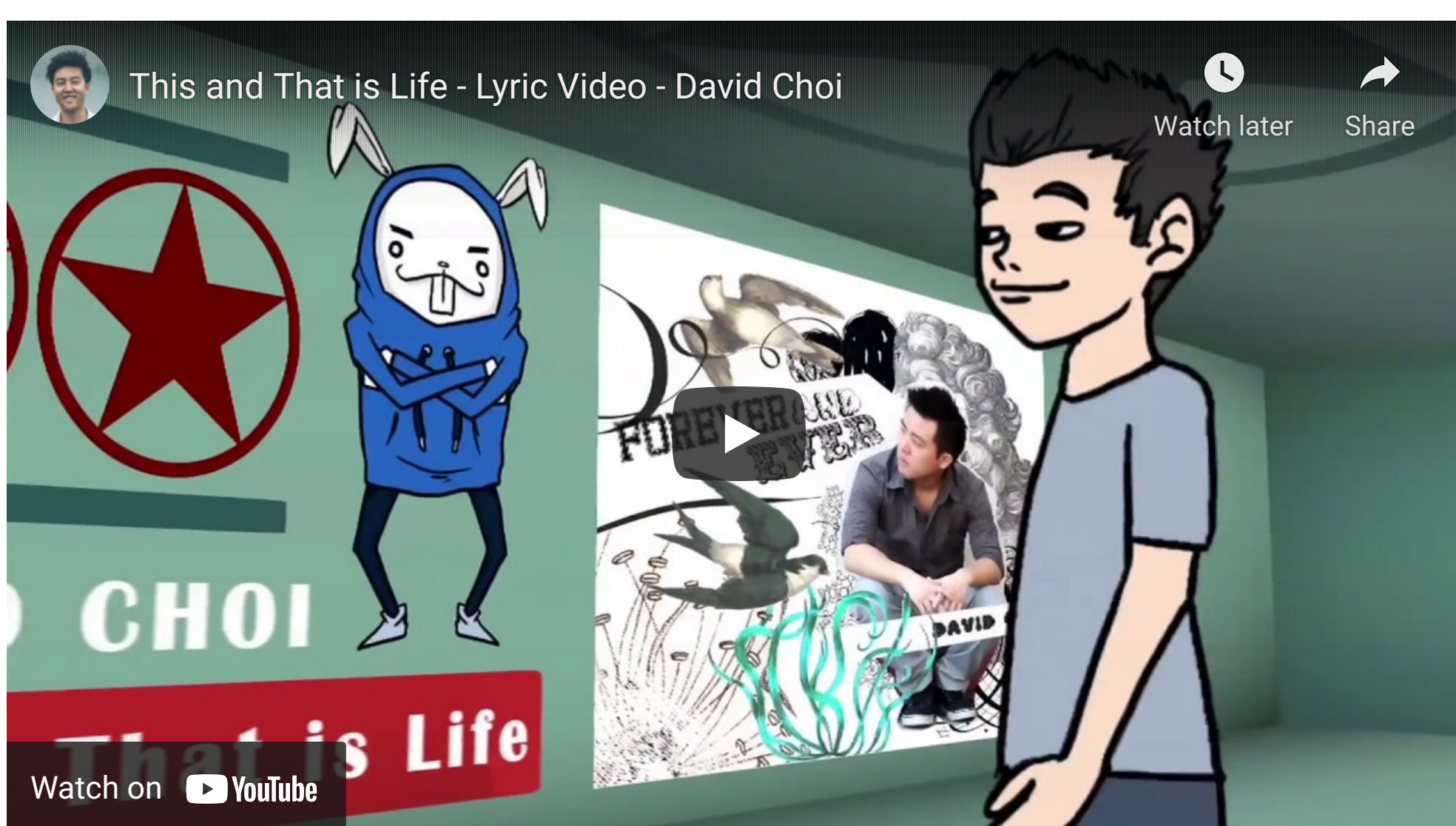
DC: Well, yeah, it is going to be different, definitely. I said it was a little bit of my first, second album, but just a little bit different. Different songs; maybe a little more pop? More instrumentations, a different style...the overall tone is a little brighter than the last two.

A little more old town, it's a little brighter than the last two. The last two were pretty mellow and sometimes sad, and I do have some of that in this third one. I think it's happier than the other two.

JQ: *I was going to ask you what your guilty pleasure song of the moment was, but I think you answered it with Lil Wayne.*

DC: You know what? That is my guilty pleasure song, yes.

David's third album, *Forever And Ever*, is out today and is available on his [website](#) and digitally on [SonicTap](#) and [iTunes](#).



- Submitted by [Janica Quach](#), Music Design

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