

## **DR DAVID TONG (Sidcup)**

Dr David Tong was one of my cancer consultants at Guy's and St. Thomas'. I took a photo of him when he visited me.

Cancer was a traumatic experience. I had been to various hospitals and seen by many medical professionals. Some, though kind, could be of few words and even taciturn. Dr. Tong was willing to spend time to talk to patients. He even set time aside for patients who wanted to talk with him. He was kind to me when I was needy. Because he was so kind and sympathetic, at an appointment I suddenly burst out crying, thus releasing bottled up fear, anger and grief. I usually find it hard to cry for myself though I can cry buckets for others.

Dr Tong wrote poetry. When I started working on my ***Music is Happiness*** CD & book project after surviving cancer for the 2nd time, he wrote lyrics for ***Magic Banyan Tree***, the last piece in the CD, which I later made into a music video.

<https://youtu.be/dX4ipdb-3Qw>

Jokingly, he said I should credit him in the video as David Brailsford Tong, or people would think he's Chinese, came from Hong Kong and was my cousin (he's Norman). When ***Magic Banyan Tree*** was performed at Trafalgar Square's Chinese New Year Celebrations, in the presence of the London Mayor Ken Livingstone, the Lord Mayor and the Chinese Ambassador, Dr Tong gladly attended on stage to be acknowledged as the lyricist. He also wrote poems for ***Permutation*** and ***Tai Chi***, two other pieces included in the CD. All these were beautifully narrated by Jane Webster before the music.

**N.B.** You are welcome to a free copy of ***Music is Happiness*** (CD & book) at St. Andrew's.

When I had cancer for the third time, during the time between two operations, I wrote ***Songs of the Traveller*** for soprano and symphony orchestra, so as to take my mind off the impending major operation. For lyrics, I used a poem Dr Tong dedicated to me, together with three other of his poems. Here you can see my preliminary sketches.

Dr Tong died of COVID-19, and coincidentally on my birthday.