

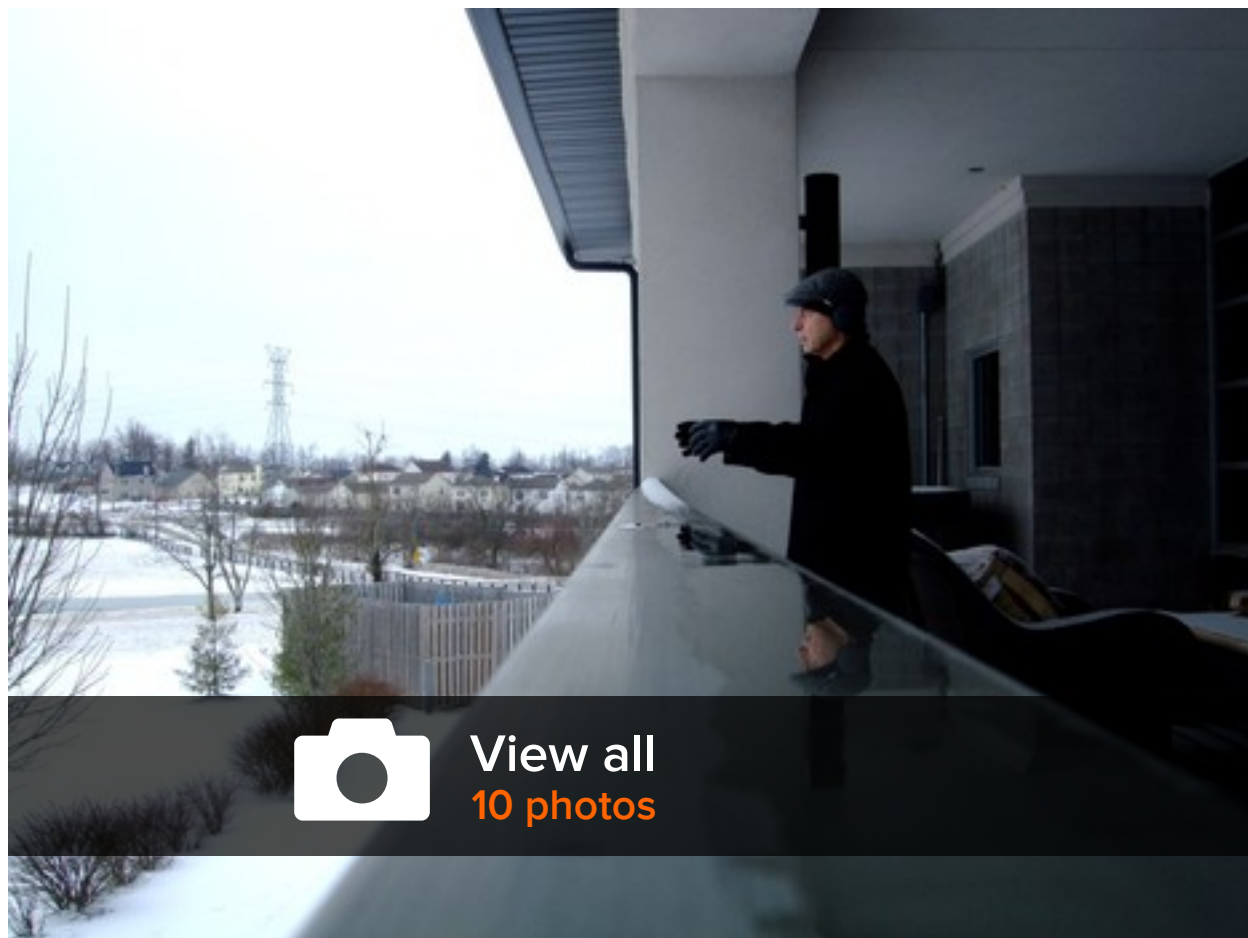
SPORTS / RECREATION / COMBAT SPORTS

# Legendary Record Producer Tony Visconti and Tai Chi Standing Post

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I first met [Tony Visconti](#) in last September when I visited [Master Ren Guangyi's class](#) in Manhattan, New York. Tony was one of the senior students and helped to lead the Chen Style Xin Jia (New Frame) practice when Master Ren was working with the new students. I chatted briefly with him. He is soft-spoken with a great composure. He told me that [Tai Chi](#) helps him control his diabetics.



Tony Vosconti's Tai Chi Standing Post at 9 degree below the freezing temperature

*Tony Visconti*



*Tony Visconti*

When I reviewed the photos I took, I noticed that Tony has good posture and his form is full of Jin (strength), Qi (energy), and Shen (spirit). Later, I saw his Facebook photo album, and some of the photos were wild looking with long hair and heavy eye circles along with his Tai Chi Standing Post photo. So, who is Tony?

I was told that Tony is a legendary record producer. Actually he has produced records for a few biggest stars in the global music industry in the past forty three years, namely **David Bowie**, **T. Rex**, **Thin Lizzy**, **the Moody Blues**, **Kristeen Young**, **Morrissey**, **Richard Barone**, **Alejandro Escovedo**, **Danielle Spencer** (movie star **Russell Crowe's** wife), and the **Kaiser Chiefs**. A record producer's job resembles a movie director's, who works with artists, provides guidance, and brings out the best quality and talent in their performance.

Born in New York and taught by his father how to play the **ukulele** at age five, Tony has been involved with music all his life. Due to his musical gift, he received extra music education in high school. He was playing with both a classical brass band and a traditional orchestra at school in addition to rock'n'roll bands outside of school. Nevertheless, his heart belongs to jazz and rock, and he quit classical music and started playing in local Brooklyn bands at age 15.

Tony is extremely talented and plays a few instruments, i.e. guitar, bass, piano, and tuba. He also sings and had one successful local single, "Long Hair," released in 1966 with his first wife, singer Siegrid. But his true talent is in producing some of the greatest songs of our time. First, he was hired by **the Richmond Organization** to produce music in London and ended up spending more than 20 years there. As a music coach, he draws out the best performance in his singers. He also has the capacity to

cover a wide range of music genres including [hard rock](#), [art rock](#), [alternative rock](#), [Glam rock](#), [progressive rock](#), [folk rock](#), and [pop rock](#). In 2008, he even produced Stephen Emmer's *Recitement*, which is a unique poetry album mixing music and poems recited by famous poets and celebrities with music composed by Stephen Emmer. In February of this year, he received "the Joe Meek Award for Innovation in Production" from the prestigious [Music Producers Guild](#) in U.K.

As a musician himself, Tony's contribution to record production is beyond bringing the best out of singers and the engineering work of compressing and mixing sound tracks; he also writes and plays music. In a coming album sung by a Welsh vocalist, Tony writes the lyrics, composes the melody and music for each of the instruments, plays two different guitars, works with violinists and other musicians to record their music, and eventually he orchestrates 40 plus sound tracks together and makes beautiful songs.

Music not only has brought Tony success and self-fulfillment, music also brought him his second love, Tai Chi. As Tony played in rock'n'roll bands, he was popular with girls, which resulted in an assault by a few jealous school bullies. From that incident, he felt it is important to learn [martial arts](#) for self-defense. He studied [Moo Duk Kwan](#) at age 17. Later he studied Fung Sau and [Wing Chun](#). He heard about the "Grand Ultimate Fist." or Tai Chi, and read much about it. He was fascinated by it. According to Tony, his "obsession" led him to Tai Chi [Master John Kells](#) in London. He studied the Yang Style, sometimes going to classes for seven days a week for a few years. After he returned to New York, he had a hard time finding someone with the same caliber and openness as Master Kells. He did not give it up and continued to practice solo until his friend, rock star [Lou Reed](#), recommended Chen Style lineage holder Master Ren Guangyi.

This switch was not totally unexpected. Tony stated that one time in London, he discovered a book with drawings of a Chen Style Tai Chi form; he was totally intrigued by some movements. He was wondering how a practitioner roots when he is jumping (that is a profound question). His eyes were sparkling when he recalled the finding.

For the past eight years, he has been taking two lessons each week with Master Ren. He helped demonstrate [Silk Reeling](#) in the *Power and Serenity* DVD with Master Ren. He thinks Tai Chi is organic and pure. It provides the grounding that modern people need. He emphasizes that each Tai Chi form starts with a Wuji standing (nothingness), then it becomes Tai Chi (with Yin and Yang), and eventually ends at Wuji. It is very poetic. Tai Chi makes the connection between people and universe. To him, the entire galaxy is Dan Tian (the source and storage of life energy). Everyday, he does not leave home without practicing Tai Chi first. Tai Chi prepares him for the day, and provides him the energy and serenity, and even the strategy he needs for business negotiation.

Since he is benefiting from Tai Chi practice both physically and spiritually, he has been evangelical about it. He promotes Tai Chi on his [website](#) and [Facebook page](#), and he loves to share his

knowledge and experience with people. Tony has written *Tony Visconti: The Autobiography: Bowie, Bolan, and the Brooklyn Boy*, which was a sold out in the U.K. As an author and Tai Chi enthusiast, when asked which Tai Chi books he likes most? Tony replied without hesitation, “Davidine Sim and David Gaffney’s *Chen Style: The Source of Taijiquan* and *The Essence of Taijiquan*, and Dr. Yang Yang’s *Taijiquan*.”

Besides Tai Chi form practice, he does a lot of Standing Post. As a Buddhist, he studied meditation from Tibetan Lama Chime Rinpoche for three years in London in 1970’s. Tai Chi’s Standing Post is a form of meditation, and is very calming to him. Many people are fighting the random thoughts when meditating. Tony said thoughts are like clouds, and we should just let them come and let them go without dwelling on them or fighting against them. Gradually, thoughts will become less and less. He stands and practices Tai Chi for more than an hour each day. During a Tai Chi workshop in LA three years ago, he was standing for 1 hour in a 3 hour class each time with Master Guo Qi Chen. The hard part of Standing Post is on the physical side. If the Kuas (hips joints) are not sitting correctly, or there is a poor alignment of the head, the neck, and the torso, Standing Post can be hard. Even though people need to relax while standing, Tony reminds people to keep the Peng energy (buoyancy) present throughout the body. Tony appreciates the tranquility and warmth that Standing Post brings him on a snowy day when the temperature was 9 degrees Farenheit below the freezing point.

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## SUGGESTED LINKS

- A peek into Master Ren Guangyi’s Tai Chi class
- IKF’s Instructor of the Year: Tai Chi Master Ren Guangyi
- Lou Reed: A highly celebrated Tai Chi practitioner and promoter
- Final Weapon
- Final Weapon will be screened at the Museum of the Moving Image



**Violet Li**

Tai Chi Examiner