

POP STOP



While **Jay Chou** (周杰倫) basked in the music industry limelight with a batch of nominations and gongs at the 19th Golden Melody Awards (第19屆金曲獎) on Saturday, his former girlfriend and rival, **Jolin Tsai** (蔡依林), has hit the skids.

She failed to receive one nomination in any major award category, despite the critical success of her *Special Agent J* (特務J) album, which was released in September of last year, and she was the subject of an all points bulletin issued by the fashion police for turning up to the awards ceremony in a NT\$200,000 dress by Giambattista Valli, in which, according to **Chen Wan-ruo** (陳婉若), the former general manager of the Eelin (伊林) modeling agency, she looked like a barbeque-ready squid on a stick.

Worse still, her new album, *Etude of Love* (愛的練習曲), which was scheduled for a February release, is being held up by EMI for reasons unknown, and this has cost her, according to *Next Magazine* (壹周刊), an estimated NT\$20 million in lost earnings.

The diva's romantic life lies in tatters, after her mother and former beau **Eddie Peng's** (彭于晏) manager put the kibosh on the pair's blossoming relationship.

But, despite past bad blood, it looks as though Tsai is finding moral support from old boyfriend Chou, who is encouraging her to follow his example and start her own production company. The pair got into some tit-for-tat sniping over the sales figures for *Special Agent J* late last year, with Chou claiming they had been inflated, and that his own album, *On the Run* (我很忙), released at the same time, had really outsold Tsai's.



Jolin Tsai, above, looked like a squid at the Golden Melody Awards. But at least she's moved on from wannabe actor **Eddie Peng**, below.

PHOTOS: TAIPEI TIMES

Tsai's good friend **Little S** (小S) is having no trouble getting satisfaction, or so it seems from reports received from sources, who revealed to *Next Magazine* that the mom-of-two and TV show hostess is a frequent visitor to her neighborhood sex shop.

She strongly recommends the Ribbed Bullet, to many of her friends, reportedly, although she has yet, as far as Pop Stop is aware, failed to, publicly, er, plug the product on her show. The device, according to the packaging, makes use of "HS III" technology that "allows you to choose vibration speeds and thrilling motions to create pure ecstasy." This is probably not something that Peng could do, even on a good day, so Pop Stop would advise Tsai to follow her friend's advice, although in the interests of full disclosure, Pop Stop cannot vouch for the product's claims.

While Tsai may be fretting over the millions of dollars she is losing because of EMI's prevarication, **Chang Yun-ching** (張芸京), the winner of SetTV's talent show *Super Idol* (超級偶像) is pulling her hair out over the cash that has reportedly been skimmed off her income by her agents, which has left her without enough even to pay the rent on her NT\$5,000-a-month room.

Next Magazine reports she has yet to receive her prize money, and her agents are netting 60 percent of all her other earnings, leaving the former graphic designer with little more take-home pay than she had received from her office job. For all the smiles, it's a tough world out there in showbiz land, and wannabe celebrities need to hone their survival skills to make it through the snake pit of corporate interests behind the cameras, just as they need to impress the judges in front of them.

— COMPILED BY IAN BARTHOLOMEW

TOP FIVE MANDARIN ALBUMS

JUNE 27 TO JULY 3

- 1 Jam Hsiao (蕭敬騰) and *Jam Hsiao* (蕭敬騰) with 15.23 percent of retail sales
- 2 Yoga Lin (林育嘉) and *Mystery Guest* (神秘嘉賓) with 7.89%
- 3 Elva Hsiao (蕭亞軒) and *Three Faced* (三面夏娃) with 6.29%
- 4 Tsai Rung-tsung (蔣榮宗) and *Magic Music College* (魔法音樂學院) with 5.88%
- 5 Claire Kuo (鄧靜) and *The Next Dawn* (下一個天亮) with 5.38%



ALBUM CHART COMPILED FROM G-MUSIC (WWW.G-MUSIC.COM.TW), BASED ON RETAIL SALES

Theater

The Homecoming is a Harold Pinter play that tells the story of an English married couple who return to Albion after a prolonged absence. Their homecoming to the husband's family home, where his father and three brothers tease each other in a battle of one-upmanship, reeks of sexual and violent innuendo and challenges the morality of family life.

► Guling Street Theater (牯嶺街小劇場), 2, Ln 5, Guling St, Taipei City (台北市牯嶺街5巷2號)
► Today and tomorrow at 7:30pm; tomorrow and Sunday at 2:30pm
► Tickets are NT\$300, available through NTCH ticket outlets

Water, cobwebs, bubbles and dry ice are some of the methods **Slava's Snow Show** uses to wow audiences. There are also clowns and a snow blizzard of confetti that blankets the audience in this award-winning tragicomedy that follows the life of a clown who tries to find meaning in a hostile world.
► National Theater, Taipei City
► Tonight and tomorrow at 7:30pm; tomorrow at 2:30pm; Sunday at 1:30pm and 6pm
► Tickets are NT\$800 to NT\$3,600, available through NTCH ticketing

Heart of Ocean (海洋之心) is a diabolo dance performance by Diabolo Dance Theater (舞鈴劇場) that portrays life underwater.
► Kaohsiung Cultural Center's Chih-Teh Hall (高雄市立文化中心至德堂), 67 Wufu 1st Rd, Kaohsiung City, (高雄市五福一路67號)

- Tomorrow at 7:30pm
- Tickets are NT\$300 to NT\$1,100, available through NTCH ticketing

Classical music

Family Concert — The Magic Fairly Tale Fox (管風琴親子音樂會—魔力童話) is a regular popular event for which highly regarded musicians are brought together by NTCH to perform popular classics. On this occasion, the music will be accompanied by performances from Eyuan Puppet Theater (元偶戲團).
► Today at 7:30pm
► National Concert Hall, Taipei City
► Tickets are NT\$400 to NT\$800, available through NTCH ticketing

ABQ Farewell Concerts in Taipei — In Memory of Mr and Mrs Hsu Yuan-tung (阿班貝爾格四重奏世界告別—許遠東先生暨夫人紀念音樂會) is a quartet performance comprising Gunter Pichler and Gerhard Schulz on violin, Isabel Charisius on viola and Valentin Erben on cello playing two concerts in memory of Hsu Yuan-tung, the former director of the Central Bank of China.
► Tomorrow and Sunday at 7:30pm
► National Concert Hall, Taipei City
► Tickets are NT\$500 to NT\$5,000, available through NTCH ticketing

2008 Young Stars Series (2008兩廳院樂壇新秀) is a sequence of concerts to be held through the coming week showcasing emerging local talents. Tomorrow's performance is a recital by soprano Huang Li-chin

HIGHLIGHT

The three-day **Ho-Hai-Yan Gung-Liau Rock Festival** (台北縣貢寮國際海洋音樂祭) begins at Fulong Beach (福隆海灘) this afternoon with more than 50 bands scheduled to play throughout the weekend, among them some of Taiwan's top indie-rock groups and artists from France, Switzerland and Japan. Tonight features established independent bands from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China: **Mojo**, **AniDa** and **Gloria Tang**, **88 Balaz** (88芭樂仔), **Deserts Chang** (張懸), **Crowd Lu**, **Queen Sea Big Shark** (后海大鯊魚), and **Sodageng** (蘇打綠), which won the Golden Melody Award for best band for the second time in a row last Saturday. Tomorrow there's a battle-of-the-bands competition, followed by a set from last year's winner, the *taike* band **Children Sucker** (表兒). On Sunday, it's the international lineup, which includes US-Taiwanese electro rockers **Jindowin**, Korean rock group **Phonebooth**, Swiss metal band **Djizoes**, Japanese punk rockers **Dum-Dum Dan**, Australian-Chinese alt-rock chanteuse **Faith Yang** (楊乃文) and French electronica act **Zombie Zombie**. See *Taipei Times*, July 7, 2008, Page 13 for a full festival preview. Organizers say more than 400,000 people are expected

(女高音黃莉錦獨唱會), a student at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris who has won many international awards. She'll perform a program that includes arias by Handel, Mozart and Puccini, *Three Dickinson Songs* by Previn and songs by Debussy. On Sunday, there's a recital by countertenor Chuang Cheng-ying (殷聲男高音莊承穎獨唱會), a Birmingham Conservatoire graduate who has won many awards in Taiwan. His program includes opera arias by Handel and Britten, and songs by Brahms, Debussy and Ravel, as well as some Chinese folk songs.

- Tomorrow and Sunday at 7:30pm
- National Concert Hall, Taipei City
- Tickets are NT\$400 to NT\$600, available through NTCH ticketing

2008 Chung-Lin Lee Flute Recital — French Tradition (2008 李宗霖長笛獨奏會「左岸時光」) sees flautist Lee Chung-lin (李宗霖) performing works by Boismortier, Devienne, Borne and Jolivet, accompanied by pianist Hsieh Shu-ya (謝舒雅). A second concert will be held at the Forum Auditorium (十方樂集音樂劇場演奏廳) in Taipei City next Friday.
► Today at 7:30pm



PHOTO COURTESY OF TAIWAN COLORS MUSIC

Indie rockers 88 Balaz play tonight at the Ho-Hai-Yan Rock Festival at Fulong Beach.

to attend this year. They are encouraging festivalgoers to travel by train and to use the area's camping facilities. Additional trains have been scheduled to run between Taipei and Fulong today, tomorrow and Sunday. Trains run approximately every 30 to 45 minutes, with the last train from Fulong to Taipei departing at 12:10am. Visit www.railway.gov.tw/index.htm for a detailed schedule.
► Ho-Hai-Yan Rock Festival
► Tonight, starting at 4:30pm; tomorrow and Sunday, starting at 4pm
► Admission is free
► On the Net: www.hohaiyan.com

► Kaohsiung Cultural Center's Chih-Teh Hall (高雄市立文化中心至德堂), 67 Wufu 1st Rd, Kaohsiung City, (高雄市五福一路67號)
► Tickets are NT\$150, available through ERA ticketing

Forum Music's Music E-Touch (十方樂集Music E-Touch) is part of an ongoing series of concerts that features experimental music. This year's concert showcases the work of Georges Aperghis, the French composer who is known for his experimental music theater and whose *Les Goutteurs de Sons* was

Hsu Ya-fen gets religion

A new *gezai* opera by the Hsu Ya-fen Opera Company (許亞芬歌子戲劇坊) titled *Dharma Master Wu-Da's Penance* (慈悲三昧水懺) premieres today at the Metropolitan Hall (城市舞台) in Taipei City. While Buddhist themes are not unusual in *gezai* opera, Hsu Ya-fen (許亞芬), the company founder and star of the new opera, has taken the unusual step of taking monastic vows, albeit temporarily, to better enter into the spirit of her role as Dharma Master Wu-Da (悟達國師).

The opera tells the story of the monk Wu-Da who as a humble aesthetic shows great compassion for those around him, but after finding favor with the emperor becomes arrogant and overbearing. Supernatural forces of retribution cause him to develop a terrible sore on his knee; this sore is able to speak and tells him of an evil deed committed in a past life, retribution for which had only been averted until this time due to his goodness. Eventually, Dharma Master Wu-Da pacifies this apparition and finds redemption from his sins both past and present. He writes down the story of his arrogance and salvation as penance. The story takes place during the Tang Dynasty, the apogee of Buddhist development in China.

In an interview with *Taipei Times*, Hsu said she had consulted with many monastics in preparing this opera, in the course of which she decided that she wanted to fully engage with her role by the taking of monastic vows for the duration of the rehearsals and performances.

Hsu said her decision to take monastic vows, although temporary, had made it easier for her to understand the lives and attitudes of the monk she portrays, and made a real connection with the religious ideas that the original story of *Dharma Master Wu-Da's Penance* represents. "The nature

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

WHAT: Dharma Master Wu-Da's Penance (慈悲三昧水懺)
WHEN: Today, tomorrow, July 18 and July 19 at 7:30pm, and Sunday and July 20 at 2:30pm (Taipei); July 25 and July 26 at 7:30pm, and July 27 at 2:30pm (Kaohsiung)
WHERE: Metropolitan Hall (城市舞台), 25, Bade Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市八德路三段25號); Kaohsiung City Labor Recreation Center (高雄市政府勞工局勞工育樂中心), 132 Chungshan 3rd Rd, Chienchen Dist, Kaohsiung City (高雄市前鎮區中山三路132號)
TICKETS: NT\$500 to NT\$3,000 (Taipei); NT\$300 to NT\$2,500 (Kaohsiung), available through ERA ticketing or from the venue
ON THE NET: www.yafenopera.com

of the story is such that it can only be realized if the time and the motivation are right," Hsu said. Although not originally a devout Buddhist, Hsu added that the performance had faced many difficulties in production, and it was her newly found commitment to Buddhist practices and ideas that had helped her work through them. "It has been a very educational experience," she said.

Hsu, who comes from a theatrical family, has been a *gezai* opera performer for two decades. She opened her own company two years ago and aims to extend the range of her performances to incorporate other performance styles. With *Dharma Master Wu-Da's Penance*, she has already incorporated elements taken from Beijing opera and also some aspects of traditional Chinese dance.

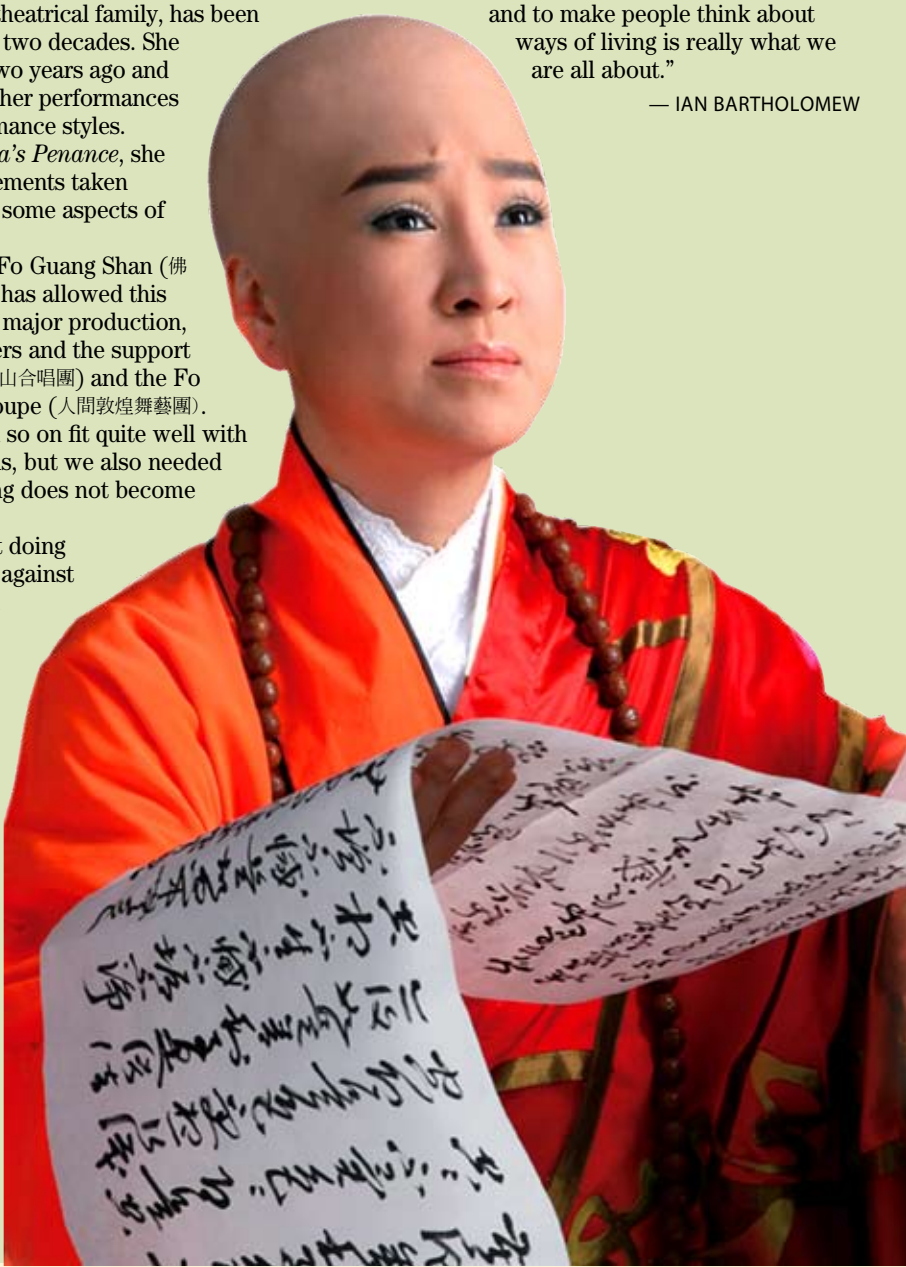
The participation of the Fo Guang Shan (佛光山) Buddhist organization has allowed this performance to grow into a major production, with more than 30 performers and the support of the Fo Guang Choir (佛光山合唱團) and the Fo Guang Dun Hang Dance Troupe (人間敦煌舞藝團). "The Buddhist chanting and so on fit quite well with *gezai* opera in musical terms, but we also needed to make sure the whole thing does not become too solemn," Hsu said.

Her company started out doing public service *gezai* operas against the dangers of drug use and government corruption, which proved enormously successful with young audiences. *Gezia* opera, as with much traditional Chinese opera, has always

had a strong moral dimension, so this move merely brings some of the issues up to date.

In addition to pushing beyond the conventional limits of Chinese opera in terms of performance, Hsu said that the company maintains a very active online presence with a blog and comments board. "Many young people write to reflect on what they have seen," she said. "Theater is a reflection on life, and to make people think about ways of living is really what we are all about."

— IAN BARTHOLOMEW



Gezai star Hsu Ya-fen shaved her hair and took monastic vows for her role as Dharma Master Wu-Da.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HSU YA-FEN OPERA COMPANY

A rumble and a tumble in Nangang

The K-1 World Grand Prix 2008 in Taipei takes place on Sunday at the World Trade Center in Nangang. No local competitors have entered the Grand Prix section, which will be held in Taiwan for the first time.

The man to beat is 2007 K-1 World finalist Ruslan Karaev, who'll enter the ring in quarterfinal action against the relatively unknown Tatsufumi Tomihira. Aleksandr Pichkunov, another favorite, first faces Japan's Nobu Hayashi.

The K-1 World GP '08 Asia Final is an eight-man elimination tournament. Bouts are contested under K-1 rules, with each consisting of three, three-minute rounds.

The winner of the Taipei elimination tournament will go on to compete in the Asia K-1 Final Elimination Grand Prix, scheduled to take place in Seoul on Sept. 29. Winners from that competition will head to the K-1 World GP elimination rounds in Osaka, from which eight

winners will go on to compete in the K-1 finals in Tokyo at the end of the year.

K-1 combines elements of kung fu, kickboxing, karate, taekwondo and other martial arts, with many of the fights ending in a knockout.

Up-and-coming talents participating in the Taipei elimination-round bouts include Young Hyun Kim (South Korea), Saiseelek Nor-Seepun (Thailand) and Zhang Qing-jun (張慶軍, China).

Complimenting the Grand Prix action are three K-1 Superfights.

The K-1 World Grand Prix 2008 in Taipei will be held Sunday at Taipei World Trade Center Nangang Exhibition Hall (台北世界貿易中心南港展覽館), 1 Jingmao 2nd Rd, Nangang Dist, Taipei City (台北市南港區經貿二路1號), beginning at 4:30pm. NT\$1,000 to NT\$8,000 tickets are available through ERA ticketing. Detailed information can be found at www.k-1.co.jp/k-1gp/top858.htm.

— NOAH BUCHAN



Semmy "Hightower" Schilt, right, a 212cm-tall, 137.4kg powerhouse from the Netherlands, lands a knee strike on Glaube "Brazilian Kicks" Feitosa in last year's K-1 World Grand Prix Finals.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BROOKERS BROTHERS HERALD

[EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT]

inspired by T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. The concert includes performances of Lin Kuei-ju's (林桂如) *Music Theater: Belonging* (音樂劇場: 離心的居所) and Chung Yiu-kwong's (鍾耀光) *The Fire Sermon* (火誦).

► Today at 7:30pm
► Forum Auditorium (十方樂集音樂劇場演奏廳), 4, Ln 187, Minzu W Rd, Taipei City (台北市民族西路187巷4號)
► Tickets are NT\$250, available through ERA ticketing

Contemporary

The **Taipei International Jazz Festival** continues with a free show tomorrow night at the outdoor square in front of Taipei Zhongshan Hall (台北市中山堂). Featured performers include **Wish Project '08**, a quartet inspired by the 1993 jazz album *Wish*, by saxophonist Joshua Redman. **Brussel Van Taipei**, a Taiwanese quintet that studied jazz together in Belgium is also playing. See Page 13 of the June 20, 2008, edition of the *Taipei Times* for the full festival preview.
► 98 Yenping S Rd, Taipei City (台北市延平南路98號)
► Performance begins at 6:30pm
► No entrance fee

The Antidote Shanghai 2008, a DJ collective from Shanghai, spins in Taipei tonight at the **VU Live House** (地下絲絨). The line-up includes all-female electro-rock band **Go Chic**, **DJ Trix vs. Shaolinpunk**, **DJ D.Soto**, **DJ Ozone** and **DJ Funkstar**. See story on Page 15 of today's *Taipei Times*.

- B1, 77, Wuchang St Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市武昌街二段77號B1)
- Show begins at 10pm
- Entrance fee is NT\$300

Appearing tonight at **Center Stage** (formerly the Living Room, now under new management) is **Gross Fugue**, which combines "an intense rock show, electronic dance music, and edgy videos," and Ilan County-based expat rockers **Sons of Homer**. Tomorrow it's **Barrelhouse Fire**, whose music "explores the less traveled terrain of the blues, from ragtime to Delta fingerstyle and beyond."
► 3F, 8, Nanjing E Rd Sec 5, Taipei City (台北市南京東路五段8號3樓). Call (02) 8787-4154 or visit www.myspace.com/taipeicenterstage for more information
► Shows start at 10pm
► NT\$200 entrance fee

Visiting from France, jazz guitar and trombone duet **OrBe** and a piano and dance trio **Voy** appear at **Sappho de Base** tonight. (See story on Page 15 of today's *Taipei Times*.) Tomorrow it's Texas-style electric blues with **Black Sheep**. On Tuesday night the **Grace Jazz Trio** plays a set, with an open jam session afterwards. **Michael McLaughlin** presents his jazz project *Tall Boy* on Wednesday, and on Thursday **DJ Zulu** spins what he calls "timeless and positive black sounds."
► B1, 1, Ln 102, Anhe Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市安和路一段102巷1號B1). Call (02) 2700-5411 (after 9pm) or visit www.sappho102.biz for more information
► Performances begin at 10:30pm
► No entrance fee