

FEATURES

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The Idea of North, an a cappella quartet, is in town to help raise funds for the training of seeing-eye dogs.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE IDEA OF NORTH

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

WHAT: The Idea of North, in collaboration with the Australian Commerce and Industry Office and Taipei Philharmonic Foundation, for the Taiwan Guide Dog Association

WHEN: Thursday, 7:30pm

WHERE: National Concert Hall (國家音樂廳), 21-2, Zhongshan S Rd, Taipei City (台北市中山南路21-1號)

TICKETS: Tickets range from NT\$500 to NT\$2,000 each and are available at www.artsticket.com.tw

ON THE WEB: Taipei International Choral Festival www.tpf.org.tw/2008festival/index.html; The Idea of North www.idea.com.au; Australian Commerce and Industry Office www.australia.org.tw; Taiwan Guide Dog Association www.guidedog.org.tw



Freddy Lim of Chthonic, which performed on Saturday at the Formoz Rock Festival.

PHOTO: DAVID CHEN, TAIPEI TIMES

[THE WEEKENDER]

Music festivals swing, bop and rock Taipei

BY DAVID CHEN AND NOAH BUCHAN
STAFF REPORTERS

The Taipei International Jazz Festival launched its weekend finale on Friday evening at the 228 Peace Park amphitheater with top-notch performances by musicians visiting from the US, Belgium, and the Netherlands, who taught last week at the Taipei International Jazz Academy, an annual one-week summer camp dedicated to cultivating up-and-coming talent in Taiwan. The finale also featured student performances throughout the evening.

The 2,000 or so audience members didn't seem to mind the typically stuffy summer evening in Taipei as they listened to Dutch vocalist Denise Jannah, who charmed attendees with personable stage banter and her clear, exquisite voice. She sang a variety of styles, ranging from jazz standards to numbers tinged with Caribbean rhythms. The Suriname-born singer's smooth delivery was enhanced by rousing improvisations, in particular from violinist and festival founder Hsieh Chi-pin (謝啓彬) and guitarist Fabien Degryse.

Thousands attended the Formoz Rock Festival, which took place at the soon-to-be-closed Taipei Children's Recreation Center (台北市兒童音樂中心) over the weekend.

On Saturday, a large crowd of 400 or so people jostled in front of the Rock stage to watch festival founder Freddy Lim's (林昶佐) band, Chthonic (閃靈), whose members donned their usual black leather costumes and face makeup. Lim screeched, yelled, and growled as his band played frantic speed metal riffs, which had the audience headbanging and moshing.

In fine Formoz tradition, there was something for every rock fan: on the Fire stage, garage rock band Rabbit Is Rich (兔子很有錢) held a rousing show. The band members got lost in their songs, which started at a mid-tempo hypnotic beat and ascended into a punk frenzy. Meanwhile, a large crowd gathered at the Wind stage, to see popular alt-rock singer Deserts Chang (張懸) and her band.

One of the evening's highlights was the Canadian band Caribou, which played a set of atmospheric but driving indie rock instrumentals, accompanied by a light show. The band's leader and drummer, Daniel Snaith, is a spectacle by himself, perhaps a modern day Keith Moon gone avant-garde. With his drum kit placed at the front of the stage, Snaith's arms swung wildly as he pounded out the beat.

The festival organizers revised the lineup yesterday as typhoon Fung-wong approached the country.

Shots rang out inside Taipei's National Theater on Friday night as balaclava-clad extremists stormed the stage and down the aisle, taking the three-quarters full theater hostage. One burly terrorist planted a bomb two seats over from where I was sitting and then sat down with the trigger device in his hand.

Such was the tense spectacle that La Fura dels Baus confronted its audience throughout *Boris Godunov*, a play by the Spanish theatrical group that fuses the original work by Alexander Pushkin with the story of the Moscow theater hostage crisis when roughly 50 Chechen rebels seized a crowded Moscow theater in October of 2002.

La Fura's meditation on using violence as a means of grabbing power succeeded in revealing the individual motivations behind the terrorists — though without justifying extremism — and in the process humanized them in a way that the media often fails to portray.

Large projection screens were used to great effect and served as both a background set to the actors on stage as well as to show the action outside the theater — such as government officials trying to decide how to proceed with negotiations or police surrounding the building (presumably filmed earlier in the week).

La Fura's greatest success, however, was how it made use of the entire theater. Not content to relegate its actors to the stage, the characters were brought out into — and at several points became part of — the audience watching the show. Doing so helped to create a masterpiece of verisimilitude rarely seen at theaters in Taiwan.

Singers lend paw of support to seeing-eye dogs

Taiwan currently suffers from a shortage of seeing-eye dogs. Proceeds from a charity concert on Thursday will go towards alleviating that scarcity

BY CATHERINE SHU
STAFF REPORTER

Australian a cappella group The Idea of North will give a special charity concert on Thursday to support the training of seeing-eye dogs in Taiwan. The Taipei Philharmonic Foundation and the Australian Commerce and Industry Office are organizing the concert, which benefits the Taiwan Guide Dog Association.

Taiwan, which has an estimated 50,000 visually-impaired people, currently suffers from a shortage of seeing-eye dogs. The Association estimates that there are just 20 trained guide dogs in the country, while at least 500 guide dogs are currently needed. Many people

wait up to three years to get a four-legged helper of their own. To meet the demand, trained dogs are often brought in from countries including the US, the UK, Norway, South Korea and Japan.

The funds raised by the concert will contribute to the building of a seeing-eye dog training center in Taiwan, which will give the Association a safe and convenient place to train the dogs. "At the present, all we have is an office, so we all have to train our dogs on the sidewalk or in parks," says Joyce Feng (馮倩華), the Association's spokesperson. The group also hopes that

eventually it will be able to increase the number of dog trainers in Taiwan and deepen their expertise.

At the present, Feng says, the Association's dog trainers must travel internationally and learn how to work with the dogs from instructors in different countries.

The concert by The Idea of North is part of the Taipei International Choral Festival, which runs from July 26 to Aug. 2 at the National Concert Hall and is sponsored by the Taipei Philharmonic Foundation. The quartet has been performing original songs and covers since 1993, and its cross-genre style

combines influences from jazz, folk, gospel, pop and classical music.

The Idea of North, which consists of Trish Delaney Brown, Naomi Creline, Nick Begbie and Andrew Piper, has produced several albums and was the first group outside the US to win The Harmony Sweepstakes, the largest international a cappella competition in the world. The group's latest CD is *The Gospel Project*, a collection of spiritual and inspirational songs. The Idea of North tours for about a third of each year and has performed in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Finland, the US, New Zealand, Japan, Korea and Malaysia.



Far left and center left: Britney Spears and Kevin Federline's legal battle is drawing to a close.

Left: Filmmaker Youssef Chahine passed away aged 82.

Below: Nana Mouskouri has concluded her farewell tour.

PHOTO: AGENCIES

PLANET POP

It seems that EMI boss **Guy Hands** can't get no satisfaction. After **Robbie Williams** threatened to go on strike and Radiohead quit the record company following his NT\$193 billion private equity takeover last year, the financier suffered another blow when the Rolling Stones decamped to Universal on Friday.

The veteran rockers, led by **Mick Jagger** — who qualified for his old-age pension Saturday — have handed on their entire post-1971 catalogue of such classic albums as *Sticky Fingers* and *Exile on Main Street*. The band will also release all new albums through Universal's Polydor label.

"Universal are forward thinking, creative, and hands-on music people," the Stones said in a statement. "We really look forward to working with them."

The deal brings all the band's output over a 46-year career under one roof, as Universal's Decca label already owns the rights to Stones recordings made before 1971. The pre-1971 rights in the US are held by ABCKO, the company run by the Stones' former manager, Allen Klein.

The Stones turned down the chance to sign up with Live

Nation, the concert promoter that has album deals with the likes of Madonna, U2 and the rapper Jay-Z. Universal capitalized its release earlier this year of the soundtrack to *Shine a Light*, the Martin Scorsese film of a Stones live performance in New York in 2006.

Singer **Britney Spears** will pay US\$20,000 a month in child support to ex-husband **Kevin Federline** for the care of their two children and will make a final payment of US\$250,000 to his lawyers, according to a final custody agreement filed in court on Friday. The monthly child support payment is a US\$5,000 increase over what Spears and Federline, a dancer and rap singer, agreed to last year, the court papers showed.

Two paparazzi in camouflage gear scuffled with bodyguards of **Angelina Jolie** and **Brad Pitt** after they were found hiding on the grounds of the Hollywood stars' French estate, the couple's security chief said on Friday. Tony Webb, head of the team guarding the Chateau Miraval estate where the couple are staying following the birth of their twins earlier this month, said the incident took place on Thursday afternoon.

Egyptian filmmaker **Youssef**

Chahine, Arab cinema's most celebrated director, died yesterday aged 82 after several weeks in a coma, his friend and fellow director **Khaled Youssef** said.

Chahine was flown back to Cairo on July 17 after a month-long stay in Paris where he underwent surgery after suffering a brain hemorrhage and falling into a coma. He was being cared for at the Maadi Military hospital in south Cairo.

"Youssef Chahine died this morning at 3:30," said Youssef, who co-directed Chahine's latest film *Chaos* last year.

Chahine won official plaudits for his pioneering role in Egypt's film industry and was awarded the Cannes film festival's 50th anniversary lifetime achievement award in 1997.

He never shied away from controversy during his long career, criticizing US foreign policy as well as Egypt and the Arab world.

Chahine made his first film in Egypt in 1950 and it was there that he also discovered and launched the career of **Omar Sharif**, who shot to international stardom with *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Doctor Zhivago*.

US jazz tenor saxophonist

Johnny Griffin, who played alongside such luminaries as **Lionel Hampton**, **Art Blakey** and **Thelonius Monk**, died Friday in France, his agent Helene Manfredi said. He was 80.

Nicknamed the Little Giant, Griffin was due to perform Friday evening alongside US organist **Rhoda Scott**, French saxophonist **Olivier Temime** and drummer **Julie Saury**.

Griffin died at home in Mauprevoir, a village in the west-central La Vienne district, where he had spent the last 18 years of his life. The cause of death was not disclosed.

Nana Mouskouri has bid adieu to a remarkable half-century in music with a farewell concert in her native Greece at the foot of the Acropolis in Athens.

Fans filled the ancient Odeon of Herodes Atticus on Wednesday evening to hear the 73-year-old songstress — one of the best-selling recording artists of all time — perform from her wide repertoire.

Hours earlier, the city of Athens bestowed its gold medal on Mouskouri, who has been on a worldwide farewell tour since she announced her plans to retire

