#### TAIPEI TIMES • FRIDAY, AUGUST 1, 2008

PHOTO: CATHERINE SHU, TAIPEI TIMES

RESTAURANTS

Sweet Rice Dream (甜米夢)

Telephone: (02) 8771-7221

Dream reopens on Thursday)

treated them to the dessert.

authentic American flavor and texture.

Average meal: NT\$80

Address: 1F, 37, Ln 177, Dunhua S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City

Open: Daily from 2pm to 10pm. (The proprietors will be taking

their annual vacation from tomorrow to Wednesday. Sweet Rice

**Details:** English and Chinese menu; credit cards not accepted

Taipei obviously has no shortage of rice, but until recently it

has been difficult to find creamy, sweet American-style rice

pudding in the city. With the opening of Sweet Rice Dream (甜

米夢) in April, however, you no longer have to stare forlornly

at your bowl of eight treasures porridge (babao zhou, 八寶粥).

Road, the small restaurant offers two flavors of rice pudding

combos, and the option to pick your own mix-ins.

(original or brown sugar), seven different pudding-and-topping

grew up in a family of rice pudding lovers and indulged in his

grandmother's recipe at every family gathering. When Taiwanese

"They thought it was amazing. They said, 'we eat rice all the

who was a chef and restaurant manager in New York City before

friends came to visit him in New York City, Gardner, of course,

time in Taiwan, why don't we have this here?" says Gardner,

working in corporate consulting for 15 years. His toppings

— including fruit, cream and chocolate — are all imported,

while the pudding, based on his grandmother's recipe, is made

from locally grown rice that Gardner selected to preserve that

My dining companion and I picked the Wimbledon (strawberry,

chocolate syrup and whipped cream, NT\$80) with original-flavor

rice pudding, and the mango madness, a limited-time combination

of original-flavor rice pudding, mango chunks and mango sorbet

(NT \$85). Both were delicious — the tart sweetness of the mango

chunks in the mango madness balanced well with the creaminess

of the rice pudding, while the sorbet was a refreshing touch. The

strawberry and whipped cream is always a winning combination,

and when mixed into rice pudding, definitely scores a Grand Slam.

even without all of the fixings. The texture of the rice is well bal-

anced — the individual kernels are satisfyingly firm without being

not oily, with a combination of cream, egg and cinnamon flavors.

mentioned mango madness and The Obama: The Sweet Taste of

chocolate chips, Oreos, whipped cream, NT\$85), which Gardner

created in tribute to his favorite US presidential candidate. Gardner

also designed T-shirts for fellow Barack Obama fans that spell out

the Democratic presumptive nominee's surname in Chinese (歐巴

馬) on the front and in English on the back; these are available for

— CATHERINE SHU

Change for America and the World (brown sugar rice pudding,

(sweet potato, chocolate syrup, whipped cream, NT\$80), very berry (dried strawberries, blueberries and cherries, whipped cream, NT\$75) and drunky monkey (banana, chocolate syrup, rum, whipped cream NT\$85). The summer specials include the above-

hard and they don't clump. The pudding itself is decadently rich but

Other flavor combos at the restaurant include southern belle

The star of the show, the rice pudding, would be quite delicious

Wimbledon was definitely the standout, however — chocolate,

Located tauntingly near California Fitness on Zhongxiao East

Sweet Rice Dream is run by American Jonathan Gardner, who

## Let the games begin

lip, revealing the glint of braces. Looking up shyly, a strand of hair falling from her tidy ponytail, she says "my songs are about teenage girls, love stories ... breakups."

Ten minutes later, Gao Xiao-gao (高小 糕) of punk/garage band White Eyes (白 ■) appears on stage. She's changed into brightly colored tights and has painted an inch-wide strip of glitter from cheekbone to cheekbone. Grabbing the mic, she utters a guttural yell and begins shouting lyrics and leaping across the stage, shaking her head. She sounds like a plaintive cat wailing, with echoes of PJ Harvey's wrenching moans. If her songs are about love stories, they are tumultuous ones indeed.

White Eyes, which translates roughly as "retarded," a name lead guitarist Telecat (鐵樂貓) said they chose "because we are," is one of the treasures to discover at this weekend's Olympic Music Festival, which is being organized by MaxParty.

There are bigger names playing this three-day event at Huashan Culture Park (華山文化園區), namely Tizzy Bac, Wonfu (旺 福) and MC Hotdog; as well as electronica heavyweights Lisa Lashes, a hard house and trance DJ who was the first and only female DJ ranked among the Top 10 in the world by DJ Magazine (in 2000), The Thrillseekers, an English trance DJ the magazine ranked No. 52 last year, and local DJs Blueman, SL (劉軒) and Vertigo.

Other notable acts include Jimmy Chen, J-Six with live vocals by Angie (李嘉), Code, Sunstar aka Noodles, F. Daniel and Satan!!!

Scheduled for early in the evening (4pm to 10:30pm tonight) are indie bands like White Eyes, Go Chic!, The Shine and Shine and Shine and Shine (閃閃閃閃), Space Cake (太空蛋糕), BB Bomb (BB彈), and Hotpink (熱粉紅). Several of these bands are allfemale, and all of them are girl-fronted.

As with many recent youth-oriented festivals, there will be a "creative market" with original fashions and art from more than 30 local designers. Proceeds from the market will be donated to the Chinese Taipei Olympic Games Committee.

The Maxparty 2008 Olympic Music Festival (2008奧運奪金嘉年華) is at Huashan Culture Park (華山文化園區), 1, Bade Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市八德路一段1號) tonight from 4pm to 4am, tomorrow from 2pm to 4am and Sunday 2pm to 6:30pm. Tickets are NT\$600 per day or \$1,500 for the weekend, available at the door. Visit olympic 2008. maxparty.com.tw — ALITA RICKARDS

A petite 22-year-old girl sits, hands twisting in her lap. She bites down on her lower

# Pirates of the pas de deux



he full-length *Le Corsaire* is a ballet that few ballet dancers outside of Russia ever get to perform and few dance fans have seen, though the grand pas de deux from the ballet is one of the most famous in the world.

Taipei audiences have the chance to see it this weekend at the Metropolitan Hall for two performances only, in an abridged two-hour production by the Taipei Royal Ballet (台北皇家芭雷舞團).

Though French in origin and from some of the same minds who created Giselle, including the composer Adolphe Adam, Le Corsaire has had a very checkered history since its 1856 Paris Opera premiere (there were earlier ballets but without the staying power of the French version). It was kept alive in Russia, though repeatedly amended by the dance masters of the Imperial Ballet (the Kirov), including Jules Perrot, Marius Petipa and, much later, Agrippina Vaganova, as well as the Bolshoi Ballet.

Pepita and others also tinkered with the score, adding musical material by Leo Delibes, Richardo Drigo, Peter Tschaikovsky and others.

Few in the West remembered the ballet until Rudolph Nureyev restaged Le Corsaire Pax de Deux, turning it into

ballet gala requirement. It's hard to keep track of all the changes that have been made to this ballet, but its storyline is no less confusing, involving a shipwreck, pirates, kidnapped slave girls, a pasha's garden and was very loosely based on Lord Byron's 1814 epic, The Corsaire. The plot doesn't matter anyway because it doesn't make much sense. You just



Johnny Depp meets ballet in Taipei Royal Ballet's version of Le Corsaire. PHOTOS COURTESY OF TAIPEI ROYAL BALLET

need to remember the main characters are Conrad, a pirate who falls in love with Medora, a kidnapped Greek girl, who is helped by Gulnare, a slave girl.

Not afraid of challenges, Taipei Royal Ballet director and prima ballerina Wu Ching-vin decided two years ago to tackle Le Corsaire.

"I have guts," Wu said in an interview. "I had never seen the full-length ballet, so I did the research, got the music from the St Petersburg Radio Station Orchestra and the Boston Ballet orchestra, and stared working."

That was two years ago, after Wu wrapped up her company's Don Quxiote. Like others who have staged the ballet, Wu tinkered with the choreography, "to make the male parts even bigger, the steps more demanding.'

"The biggest challenge was unfamiliarity with the whole ballet's music. You have to see what parts you like, what you want to change," she said.

Given that many people now associate

the word pirate with the Disney movie franchise, Wu felt free to expand her choice of costumes.

"The costumes are more movie-like, more Johnny Depp, less ballet," she laughed.

Dancing the role of Conrad to Wu's Medora is her partner and fiance, Hong Kang-jie (洪康捷), who said the pirate role was demanding because of the level of technique required.

"Ching is a very good partner, a very good dancer, so that makes it easy," he said, adding that he didn't have trouble portraying a pirate because "I'm a wild person, so it's easy to feel the part."

Two years is a long time to work on one production, but Wu said she needed to bring her dancers in her six-year old company up to the level needed for the ballet. It was also hard because not everyone could attend rehearsals at the same time, so she had to teach each section over and over again.

"I've been working the last two years for these two performances because I believe in quality. I'm so overworked, two performances is enough for me," Wu said, referring to the difficulty of maintaining classical ballet standards in a country known for its modern dancers, and in running a company while teaching ballet at the Taipei National University of the Arts and the Cloud Gate Dance Theatre.

When asked what her next production would be, Wu looked at Chong and grinned.

"We're getting married next year. We got engaged last year but there was no time to get married," she said, adding that while the engagement party was her side's responsibility, the wedding is traditionally the groom's job. — DIANE BAKER

#### **PERFORMANCE NOTES:**

**WHAT:** Le Corsaire

**WHEN:** Tomorrow and Sunday at 7:30pm WHERE: Metropolitan Hall (城市舞台), 25, Bade Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市八德路三

TICKETS: NT\$300, NT\$600, NT\$800, NT\$1,000 and NT\$1,200; available at www.artsticket.com.tw



by Pan Africana Cultural Troupe. The group of musicians from Ghana, South Africa, Saint Vincent's, Canada, Dominica, Cameroon, the Caribbean, Trinidad and the US put on highly entertaining, danceable shows with music that ranges through genres such as reggae,

funk, hip-hop and even rock. The troupe's drumming in particular had crowds at this year's Spring Scream, Peacefest, and the Myanmar Cyclone Relief Concert, grinding and a groovin' in a manner rarely seen here.

The range of instruments they use is astounding: from the familiar bass guitar, drums, congas, castanets and maracas to the more exotic *djembe* and *doundoun*,

which are hide-covered West African drums,

experiences playing in Los Angeles "bring adding "authentic Caribbean flavor," African roots, and soca to produce a fusion of sounds. "We try to come together and make it work with really hot, hot, hot grooves." he said.

While Vibe has had a reasonable turnout for its live shows, there has been a dead zone from around 1:45am to 2:45am when people who attend the live shows leave. At one point last Friday, there were less than a dozen in the entire bar during unhappy hour. Several were overheard bemoaning the lack of a party vibe and eventually left.

By 3:30am the place was packed, with bodies gyrating on the dance floor, lushes drinking at the upstairs bar, couples flirting, phone numbers being exchanged



The nightclub can go two ways. It can either play host to two separate crowds and never the twain shall meet, or some of the band audience could stay on after the live shows, while some of the club crew could turn up earlier.

stay until close at 7am, a night at Vibe becomes a marathon.

One of the benefits of Vibe as a venue

Pan Africana Cultural Troupe performs at the Myanmar Cyclone Relief Concert in May of this year.

place where, as one clubber put it, "anything goes ... you don't have to put on any pretensions, and no one cares what you do."

Tomorrow is the Roots Dub Session at The Wall with Taimaica Soundsystem, High Tide, and DJs Taili and Katzu.

Both events offer party people a chance to get down to some soulful music with a different flavor than most weekend club fare.

Pan Africana Cultural Troupe performs tonight at 10pm at Vibe, located at B1, 155, Jinshan S Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市金 山南路一段155號B1). Cover is NT\$300 and includes one drink. The Roots Dub Session begins tomorrow at 11:30pm at The Wall, at B1, 200 Roosevelt Rd Sec 4 (北市羅斯福 路四段200號B1). Cover, which includes a drink, is NT\$350. —ALITA RICKARDS

Apparatus, Huang Hsin-chein uses

digital installations to reinterpret

the interaction between human

that mimic human organs such

as the ears, eyes and lips make

beings and machines. Apparatuses

sounds and movements according

to visitors' responses, with the aim

miscommunication between the two.

▶ Taipei Fine Arts Museum (台北市立美術

館), 181, Zhongshan N Rd Sec 3, Taipei

City (台北市中山北路三段181號). Open

Until Sept. 14

Tuesdays through Sundays from 9:30am

to 5:30pm; closes at 8:30pm on Saturdays

Intangible Culture — Solo Exhibi-

tion of Chen Shih (非物質文化遺

**產—陳實作品展)**. The Chinese artist

makes mosaics out of printed advertise-

human memory in the information age.

Zhongshan N Rd Sec 3, Taipei (台北市中

山北路三段30號1樓之1). Open Tuesdays

through Saturdays from 10am to 6pm.

Call (02) 2591-4302 for more information

ment to point to the fragmentation of

▶ Jia Art Gallery (家畫廊), 1F-1, 30,

From tomorrow to Aug. 26

The Epic Stitched on Miao's

of highlighting the absurdity of

Given most acts start at 10pm, if you

and furtive groping going on in one corner. is the association many have with it as a

#### At Peking Gathering Garden Restaurant, two out of three ain't bad. **Peking Gathering Garden Restaurant** (北平聚園餐廳)

Address: 39, Alley 25, Ln 113, Minsheng E Rd Sec 3, Taipei City

(台北市民生東路三段113巷25弄39號) **Telephone:** (02) 2718-5477

NT\$400 each

Open: Daily from 11am to 2pm and 5pm to 9pm Average meal: NT\$1,200 for a party of four **Details:** Chinese menu; credit cards accepted

Nestled down a narrow lane five-minutes from the Zhongshan Junior High School (中山國中) MRT Station, Peking Gathering Garden Restaurant serves up Peking duck in the classic "one duck, three ways" (一鴨三吃) style. This trio of dishes must be ordered at least one hour in advance and consists of a roast dish, soup and a fried dish (NT\$980).

Peking Gathering is a plain, family-style restaurant consisting of two large rooms, with fastidious waitresses and large circular banquet tables that, on weekends, are packed full of diners.

On a recent Sunday our party decided to order a few starters before moving on to the duck. The flat mung bean noodles with shredded chicken and sesame paste (雞絲拉皮, NT\$158) excited the taste buds with a zesty hint of wasabi that contrasted nicely with the sesame flavor. The minced shrimp cooked with a fried bread stick and wrapped in fresh lettuce (生菜蝦鬆, NT\$378) was also excellent. The shrimp was fresh, and the savory bread stick combined with the lettuce to leave a light aftertaste on the palate, which prepared us for the duck.

After removing the appetizers, our server returned with the first of the three "one duck, three ways" courses: a plate of duck skin and dark meat thinly sliced off the top of the duck served with a bowl of black hoisin sauce (海鮮醬), a stack of warm pancakes, and a plate of horizontally sliced fresh spring onions and cucumber. You fold the meat and vegetables into the pancake — the sauce is usually added by dipping the scallions into the bowl before placing them on the pancake — and eat the wrap by hand.

Our table generally agreed that the duck meat was a little dry, a sign that it had been overcooked, and the skin was too chewy and not crispy enough. The meat's texture disappointed my fellow diners because they had all eaten at Peking Gathering several times before and on previous visits had always found the meat to be moist and succulent.

The second course, however, was far more satisfying. This was soup made from the duck's bones, with glass noodles, tofu, scallions and pickled cabbage — the latter adding a sour flavor to balance the saltiness of the marrow. The vegetables and tofu absorbed much of the oil in the broth, leaving it with a light aftertaste.

Our table didn't order the third dish, duck meat fried in pickled cabbage. My friends said that while the cabbage provides a delicate balance to the flavor of the duck in the soup, it overpowers the meat in this dish. — NOAH BUCHAN

### [ EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT ]

Veteran jazz combo **JEG** (這個爵士樂 團) plays standards, Latin, funk, rock and fusion tonight at **Riverside** Cafe (河岸留言). Girl alt-rockers Cherry Boom (櫻桃幫), who were nominated for Best Band at this year's Golden Melody Awards, share a bill with pretty-boy pop-rock group **Rock** Oriental Express (搖滾東方). On Sunday it's quiet electronic sounds from Anie Fann, followed by

- indie-folk duo U.TA (屋塔樂團). ▶ B1, 2, Ln 244, Roosevelt Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路三段244巷 2號B1), next to Taipower Building (台電 大樓). Call (02) 2368-7310 or visit www.
- riverside.com.tw for more information ► Shows start at 9:30pm ▶ NT\$400 tonight and tomorrow,
- NT\$350 on Sunday. Admission includes one free drink. There is a onedrink minimum on Monday Tonight at **Tone 56 Live Bar**, a new

restaurant on the corner Fuxing North (復興北路) and Minquan East (民權 東路) roads, is **Rubber Band**, which plays rock, pop and dance music. The group plays every Friday. Tomorrow it's house band **Loaded**, which plays "rock classics to today's hits." Sundays feature a regular rotation of bands. This Sunday is **Dafu Trio**, playing jazz and blues.

- ▶ 1F, 56, Minguan E Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市民權東路三段56號1樓), near the corner of Fuxing North (復興北路) and Minquan East (民權東路) roads. Call (02) 2517-3869 for more information ▶ Music shows go from 9:30pm to
- 12:30pm on Fridays and Saturdays, and 7:30pm to 9:30pm on Sundays ▶ No entrance fee
- The Diner's (樂子) new branch on Dunhua Road hosts The Diner Jam, an

- open mic every Thursday. ▶ 6, Ln 103, Dunhua S Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路二段103巷6號), just off Anhe Road (安和路), in the lane behind Carnegie's. Call (02) 2700-1680 or visit www.thediner.com.tw for more
- ▶ 9:30pm to midnight every Thursday ► Free admission

**Jef Stott** plays "bangin electro beats and bellydancin breaks" tonight at **89k**, while tomorrow night is a CD release party for expat indie-rockers The Doolittles, with special guests The Money Shot Horns and Johnny and Eeyore (強尼屹耳). [See the Highlight.]

- ▶ 25 Daguan Rd, Taichung City (台中市 大觀路25號). Call (04) 2381-8240 for more information
- ▶ Show starts at 9pm tonight and 10:30pm tomorrow night
- ► Entrance fee NT\$300

#### **Exhibition**

#### Tracing the Che School in

Chinese Painting (追索浙派). Since the 17th century, the term Che School has been used to refer to a group of painters based in China's Zhejiang province during the Ming Dynasty. Che school landscapes are often filled with auspicious subjects painted in a vigorous folk manner. In the last years of the school, some painters developed an increasingly free form of brushstrokes to pursue more dramatic visual effects. The exhibition is divided into two parts, each of which runs for three months.

▶ National Palace Museum (國立故宮博 物院), 221, Zhishan Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市至善路二段221號). Open



## Highlight

Electro-global-fusion DJ Jef **Stott** brings his blend of Middle Eastern sounds and modern dub and dance music to Taipei and Taichung this weekend to groove with DJs Nate D and Jez Bob and a troupe of Taiwanese belly dancers. Stott — who is signed to the highly regarded San Francisco label Six Degrees — improvises with electronica and global remixes while sampling live percussion and the oud. For more information, visit for Sababa; NT\$400 for Vibe; www.jefstott.com, www.myspace. com/theatx or www.bellydancing. ▶ 9pm tonight at 89K, Takuan Rd,

Mondays through Sundays from 9am

to 5pm; closes at 8:30pm on Saturdays. Call (02) 2881-2021 for more information unique fusion of electronica and world music to Taiwan. PHOTO: RON BROWNLOW, TAIPEI TIMES

Nantun Dist, Taichung City (台中市南 屯區大觀路21號); 5pm tomorrow at Sababa (DJs only), 17, Ln 283, Roosevelt Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北 市羅斯福路三段283巷17號); 10pm tomorrow at Vibe, B1, 155, Jinshan S Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市金山南 路一段155號B1); 10pm Sunday at Underworld (DJs only), B1, 45, Shida Rd, Taipei City (台北市師大路45號B1) ► Entrance is NT\$400 for 89K; free and NT\$350 for Underworld. NT\$350 pre-sale tickets for Vibe are available at Taipei City Sababa

The Art of Mortal Apparatus: Huang Hsin-chein Solo Exhibition (人間機關術:黃心健 個展). In the series The Art of Mortal

Clothes (穿在身上的史詩—苗族服 **飾特展).** The exhibition introduces visitors to the rich diversity of costumes that exists among the Miao people of China's mountainous Guizhou Province.

> Exquisitely embroidered and dyed, each clan's traditional apparel uses different patterns and weaving skills. ▶ National Museum of Natural Science (國立自然科學博物館), 1 Kuanchien Rd, Taichung City (台中市館前路1號). Open Tuesdays through Sundays from 9am

to 5pm. Call (04) 2322-6940. ▶ Until Feb. 28, 2009

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