

POP STOP



The Beijing Olympics came to an explosive end on Sunday night with Chinese director **Zhang Yimou's** (張藝謀) less-than-creative closing ceremony. There was a massive fireworks display and hundreds of performers. More than 60 pop stars also took part in the extravagant festivities, with entertainment big shots including **Jackie Chan** (成龍), **Andy Lau** (劉德華), **Wang Lee-hom** (王力宏) and **Emil Chow** (周華健) all battling to get camera time as they sang songs with schmaltzy titles such as *Beijing*, *Beijing*, *I Love Beijing* (北京·北京·我愛北京).

Though the average screen time for each of these A-list stars was less than one minute, gossip columnists where not slow to point out that they did better than the artists taking part in the opening ceremony, who got no screen time at all due to its sheer length. *The Liberty Times* (the *Taipei Times*' sister newspaper) caustically commented on the "ambient sounds that served to see off tens of thousands as they vacated the stadium," to describe the concert telecast from the opening ceremony.

"It didn't feel nice," said Chan's actor son **Jaycee Chan** (房祖名), commenting on Chan's discontent over his cursory treatment at the closing ceremony by Chinese-speaking media. Chan was on screen for 45 seconds according to figures released by Southcn.com (南方網), a news Web site. This was significantly better than **Stefanie Sun** (孫燕姿) who, according to the same source, only garnered one second of screen time. Pop Stop knows it must be hard for Chan, especially considering that the aging kung fu superstar is one of China's most trustworthy ass-kissers.

One of China's least favorite celebrities, actress **Tang Wei** (湯唯), became a citizen of Hong Kong on Monday, a change in status that should allow her to continue her acting career, which had stalled following her performance in *Lust, Caution* (色戒) in 2007. According to a report posted on Internet site Now News (今日新聞), Tang has had bans placed on her appearing on TV and other media because of her steamy performance in that film. As a citizen of the former British colony, it is suggested, she will now

Tang Wei's acting career has been on the skids since *Lust, Caution*. PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

be able to pursue her goal of becoming the next **Zhang Ziyi** (章子怡). As for Zhang herself, her acting credentials are in danger of being overshadowed by gossip about her relationship with **Vivi Nevo**, an Israeli capitalist and major shareholder in Time Warner. She is also working the floor with high-society types, and at a charity party held in Beijing last Friday, the 25-year-old star was spotted exerting her charms on Britain's former prime minister **Tony Blair**. Even an unintended reunion with ex **Huo Qishan** (霍啓山) didn't cause Zhang to lose her cool. The media-savvy star demonstrated how a lady should act in such an unflattering situation. She politely kissed her old flame and passionately hugged his dad, who happens to be a powerful political magnate in China.



Askia Yang may share the same fate as the egg tart. PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

Turning to Taiwanese gossip tidbits, CTTV "talent" contest *One Million Star* (超級星光大道) alumnus **Askia Yang** (楊宗緯) might once again be a victim of his own arrogance. Promotions for the DVD recording from his May Taipei Arena (台北小巨蛋) concert, which hit record stores two weeks ago, have reportedly been suspended indefinitely due to continuous squabbling between the crooner and his agent Tehsu International (特許國際). Having decided that he didn't like the terms he had agreed with Tehsu, Yang fired the assistant the agent had assigned to him and hired a lawyer as a go-between. Pop Stop's advice to the star: don't overestimate your staying power. Taiwanese consumers are notoriously fickle. Just look at what has happened to Hello Kitty and the craze for egg tarts. Is Yang heading for the same kind of oblivion?

— COMPILED BY HO YI

Below: World music ensemble A Moving Sound performs with DJ Shiuan Liu at the Red House on Sept. 6 and Sept. 7 as part of the Taipei Fringe Festival. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TAIPEI FRINGE FESTIVAL



Left: Ex-Theater Asia artistic director Chongtham Jayanta Meetei performs in a one-person play based on Dario Fo's *A Tale of a Tiger* as part of the Taipei Fringe Festival. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE TAIPEI FRINGE FESTIVAL

Taipei welcomes the fringe

With the 10th Taipei Arts Festival under way, theater buffs get to see some highly accomplished and well-established performance troupes. But the organizers — Taipei City's Department of Cultural Affairs (台北市文化局) and the Taipei Cultural Foundation (台北市文化基金會) — also see festival time as an opportunity to showcase new artists, while audiences are in the mood.

Enter the first ever Taipei Fringe Festival, which starts tomorrow and takes place at different venues throughout the city until Sept. 14. The event features 61 local artists in 166 shows over the next two weeks. The performances cover a wide spectrum, from solo theater and modern dance to classical music recitals and rock bands. There's even a theater performance combined with a real wedding banquet.

The spirit of the festival lies in experimentation, "free of limits for artists," says Yoyo Kung (貢幼穎), a project manager for both the Taipei Fringe Festival and the Taipei Arts Festival.

The Taipei Fringe Festival is inspired by the Edinburgh Fringe, which started in 1947 as an alternative to the Edinburgh International Festival, a major European event for classical music, opera, theater and dance.

As large crowds were expected at the international festival, alternative and underground theater groups saw an opportunity to try their material on new

audiences, so they went to Edinburgh uninvited and put on their own shows in neighboring venues. The number of "fringe" groups grew over the years, which prompted the formation of the Festival Fringe Society, which helped the groups find venues, and handled ticket sales and publicity. Today the Edinburgh Fringe is considered a major training ground for aspiring artists. Past participants have included well-known entertainers such as Hugh Grant, Eddie Izzard and Emma Thompson.

The society adhered to one basic, but important principle: there would be no artistic vetting or juries — a core idea that remains with the festival and other similar events in Australia, Canada and France, and one that the Taipei Fringe Festival has adopted. To participate in Taipei, artists only needed to show that they were either Taiwan citizens or part of a legally registered performing group, and then submit their application on time.

The Taipei version also aims to play a supporting role for "emerging and independent artists," says Kung. The festival covers all venue, equipment and box-office costs, and helps promote the show.

In keeping with the fringe spirit, participating artists are both novices and experienced performers, and content ranges from silly comedy to avant-garde. Here are a few shows of note:

The Story of a Tiger features Chongtham Jayanta Meetei, an actor and

artistic director of Taipei-based Ex-Theater Asia (亞洲劇場). Based on Italian dramatist Dario Fo's *A Tale of a Tiger*, Meetei tells the story of a Chinese soldier injured while fighting Chiang Kai-shek's (蔣介石) army and is saved from starvation by a mother tiger.

The Aiki Art Group (合氣藝團), a group of middle-aged and elderly Aikido students, use music, dance, and drama to tell the story of their master and his teachings in *Music and Dance in Honor of the Legend — A Predetermined Relationship With Aikido*.

World music sensation A Moving Sound is teaming up with rising star DJ Shiuan Liu (劉軒) to present new compositions with improvisational and electronic elements. Come ready to dance.

In *Happy Wine of Jimio* (張吉米的喜酒), which is already sold out, experimental actor Jimi Zhang is staging his "Taiwanese-style" wedding at the Red House Theater next Wednesday, complete with a traditional banquet dinner. On his blog Zhang says he wanted take advantage of the free venue provided by the Taipei Fringe Festival, but he assures that the event will be "both a wedding and performance."

The full event schedule and venue locations can be viewed at the festival's Web site (www.taipeifringe.org), but it's easier to navigate through the print version of the program, available at Eslite Bookstores and NTCH ticketing outlets.

— DAVID CHEN

Left: The Turtle Theater and Ren Jian Dance Company perform *Setting Out* at the Taipei Artist Village tomorrow and Sunday as part of the Taipei Fringe Festival. Lower left: Sarah Kane Theater performs *Mala, Mad, and Matitiao* on Sept. 4, Sept. 5, and Sept. 6 at the Guling Street Theater. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE TAIPEI FRINGE FESTIVAL

FESTIVAL NOTES:

WHAT: The Taipei Fringe Festival (台北藝穗節)

WHEN: Tomorrow until Sept. 14

TICKETS: Varies show to show; available at the door, at NTCH ticketing outlets and at www.artsticket.com.tw

ON THE NET: www.taipeifringe.org

DETAILS: Printed programs available at Eslite bookstores and NTCH ticketing booths

PARTICIPATING VENUES:

- » **Somebody Cafe:** (凱拾陸巷), 3F, 131 Xining S Rd, Taipei City (台北市西寧南路131號3樓)
- » **Red House Theater** (西門紅樓), 10 Chengdu Rd, Taipei City (台北市成都路10號)
- » **Taipei Artist Village** (台北國際藝術村), 7, Beiping E Rd, Taipei City (台北市北平東路7號)
- » **Ximending Cinema Park** (西門町電影公園), 19 Kangding Rd, Taipei City (台北市康定路19號)
- » **IP Dance School**, 3F, 114-4 Wuchang St Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市武昌街二段114-4號3樓)
- » **Nanhai Gallery** (南海藝廊), 3, Ln 19, Chungging S Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市重慶南路二段19巷3號)
- » **Guling Street Theater** (姑嶺街小劇場), 2, Ln 5, Guling St, Taipei City (台北市姑嶺街5巷2號)
- » **Huashan Culture Park** (華山創意文化園區), 1, Bade Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市八德路一段1號)

HIGHLIGHTS:

Happy Wine of Jimio

What: Theater performance combined with the wedding of actor **Jimi Zhang** (張赫米)

When: Wednesday at 7pm

Where: Red House Theater

Tickets: NT\$880 (sold out)

The Story of the Tiger

What: Solo performance based on Dario Fo's *A Tale of a Tiger* featuring **Chongtham Jayanta Meetei** of Ex-Theater Asia

When: Sept. 5 at 8pm and Sept. 6 at 8pm

Where: Red House Theater

Tickets: NT\$350

A Moving Sound and DJ Liu Shiuan

What: Collaboration between classically trained pianist **DJ Shiuan Liu** and world music group **A Moving Sound**

When: Sept. 6 at 3:30pm and Sept. 7 at 7:30pm

Where: Red House Theater

Tickets: NT\$500

Music and Dance in Honor of the Legend — A Predetermined Relationship With Aikido
What: A group of elderly Aikido students — members of the **Aiki Art Group** — present the teachings of their master through music, dance and drama

When: Aug 31 (Sun), 10:30am

Where: Taipei Artist Village

Tickets: NT\$300

Setting Out

What: A dance performance that explores travel, dreams and connections between the city and the countryside, performed by the **Turtle Theater** and **Ren Jian Dance Company**

When: Tomorrow at 7:30pm and Monday at 3pm and 7:30pm

Where: Taipei Artist Village

Tickets: NT\$250



TOP FIVE MANDARIN ALBUMS

AUG. 8 TO AUG. 14

1 Askia Yang (楊宗緯) and *Star! Start! Live Concert* (星空傳奇) with 20.88 percent of sales

2 Y2J and *Live for You* (為你而活) with 8.8%

3 Jam Hsiao (蕭敬騰) and *Jam Hsiao* (蕭敬騰) with 7.97%

4 Yoga Lin (林有嘉) and *Mystery Guest* (神秘嘉賓) with 3.52%

5 Wilber Pan (潘瑋柏) and *Future Tense* (未來式) with 3.39%

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

[EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT]

Theater

The long-anticipated, Chinese-language production of Shakespeare's **Othello** (針鋒對決) by the Godot Theater Company (果陀劇場) premieres in Kaohsiung, with headliners Li Li-qun (李立群) and Chin Shih-jie (金士傑), two of Taiwan's most accomplished stage actors.

► Tomorrow at 7:30pm and Sunday at 2:30pm (Kaohsiung), Sept. 6 to Sept. 7 (Hsinchu), Sept. 13 (Tainan), Sept. 18 to Sept. 28 (Taipei), Nov. 8 to Nov. 9 (Taichung)

► This weekend's performances will be held at the Kaohsiung Cultural Center's Chih-te 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\$1,000 to NT\$4,000 (Taipei); NT\$500 to NT\$4,000 at all other venues. Tickets are available through TRCH ticketing or from Godot Theater Company at www.godot.org.tw

Hong Kong director Mathias Woo (胡惠威) brings his esoteric multimedia stage performance **Hua-yen Sutra — Mind as a Skillful Painter** (華嚴經之心如工畫師) to Taiwan as part of the Taipei Arts Festival. The performance is a mixture of chanting, music, dance and digital images that is meant to replicate the Buddha's insight that the world is forged entirely by the mind.

► Metropolitan Hall (城市舞台), 25, Bade Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市八德路三段25號)

► Today and tomorrow at 7:30pm and Sunday at 2:30pm

► Tickets are NT\$500 to NT\$2,000, available through NTCH ticketing

The Timid Little Chicken (膽小小雞)

by Song Song Children's and Puppet Theater (九歌兒童劇團) is a puppet performance for the whole family. A mother chicken tries to teach her offspring the ways of the world, but the little chicken is too afraid to learn. But when the mother chicken brings the youngster to a park, what began as fear turns into curiosity.

► Taipei Cultural Center, Wenshan Branch (社教館文山分館), B2, 32 Jingwen St, Taipei City (台北市景文街32號B2)

► Tomorrow and Sunday at 2pm

► Tickets are NT\$200, available through NTCH ticketing

Classical Music

The Magic of Taiwan Folk Songs — The Sounds of Liang Hsi-wen (台灣歌謠的清新魅力—聆聽梁西文的弦外之音)

The highly regarded local violinist Liang Hsi-wen (梁西雯) will be presenting a selection of Taiwanese folk songs with piano accompaniment by Lu Yi-tsi (盧易之).

► Today at 7:30pm (Taichung) and tomorrow at 7:30pm (Hsinchu)

► National Taichung Library Chung-hing Concert Hall (台中市中國圖書館), 291-3 Chingwu Rd, Taichung City (台中市精武路291之3號) and the Hsinchu Municipal Performance Hall (新竹市立演藝廳), 17 Tungta Rd Sec 2, Hsinchu City (新竹市東大路二段17號)

► Tickets are NT\$200 to NT\$800 at both venues, available through ERA ticketing

Za Ondekoza ("demon drum group," 鬼太鼓座) is back for yet

another tour of Taiwan in their ever popular program of percussion and bare buttocks. They perform in Taipei this Sunday and will go on to tour Zhongli, Chiayi and Kaohsiung through September.

► Sunday at 2:30pm and 7:30pm

► National Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall (台北國父紀念館), 505, Renai Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市仁愛路四段505號)

► Tickets are NT\$800 to NT\$2,500, available through ERA ticketing

Flute Fantastic — Recital by Trevor Wye

(崔佛懷長笛獨奏會)

has flute virtuoso Trevor Wye performing a program that includes Telemann's *Trio Sonata in G minor* and Couperin's *Three Pieces for Flute Damour and Piano* and *The Carnival of Venice*. Piano accompaniment will be provided by Hsu Chia-chi (徐嘉琪).

► Tomorrow at 7:30pm

► Lujhou Branch of KHS Musical Co Music Hall (蘆洲功學社音樂廳), 162 Jhongshan 2nd Rd, Lujhou City, Taipei County (台北縣蘆洲市中山二路162號)

► Tickets are NT\$300, available through NTCH ticketing

Kai-Hsuan Wang Flute Recital

2008 (2008王凱璽長笛獨奏會)

brings this emerging young flautist to the stage to present a program with Gary Schocker's *For Dad*, Frank Martin's *Ballade Pour Flute et Piano*, Jean-Michel Damase's *Sonata for Flute and Harp*, Georges Hsu's *Fantasia* and other pieces.

► Thursday at 7:30pm

► Kaohsiung City Concert Hall (高雄市音樂館演奏廳)

99 Hesi Rd, Kaohsiung City (高雄市河西路99號)

► Tickets are NT\$200, available through NTCH ticketing



Musician Matthew Lien plays a free show at Da-an Forest Park tonight to promote the use of renewable energy. The concert will be powered entirely by biodiesel fuel made from recycled cooking oil. PHOTO COURTESY OF WIND MUSIC

Upcoming

Tonight at Da-an Forest Park (大安森林公園), musician and environmental activist **Matthew Lien** performs in a free show, which is being billed as the first concert in Taiwan to be powered fully by renewable energy. According to the show's sponsors, the Bureau of Energy, the concert will be powered by 100 percent biodiesel fuel made from recycled cooking oil. The bureau will also run exhibition booths providing information on renewable energy, with the exhibitions powered by wind and solar energy. The bureau says the goal of the concert is to promote the use of biodiesel from waste cooking oil at all outdoor activities and night markets in Taiwan.

Since coming to prominence in Taiwan in 1995 with his runaway hit album *Bleeding Wolves*, Lien has established himself as a spokesperson for environmental causes in Taiwan. His latest album *Adventures in the Hakka Heartland*, features recordings with Hakka musicians from all over Taiwan.

► Matthew Lien live in concert at Da-an Forest Park (大安森林公園)

► Tonight at 7pm; exhibition booths on renewable energy open at 3pm

► Free admission

Contemporary

It's **Jazz Your Mind** tonight at

Sappho de Base, Taipei's favorite late-night venue for impromptu jazz sessions. Appearing tomorrow night is New Orleans funk outfit **Kenyatta Trio**. On Tuesday night the **Grace Jazz Trio** plays a set, with an open jam afterward. Wednesday features the **Chris Stiles Jazz Trio**, and on Thursday it's **DJ Zulu**, spinning 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 on weekends, 10pm on weekdays

► No entrance fee

Tonight there's an evening of heavy metal at **The Wall** (這牆), with **Anhelion** (幻日), **Desecration**, **Vulcan**, **Demise** (殲) and **Beyond Cure**. No shows are scheduled for tomorrow, but Sunday features punk-rock bands **Broken Flowers** (碎紙花), **Damnkidz** and **Punk Hoo** (群虎). Alt-pop band **13** (拾參) appears on Wednesday, and Asia-based UK rock band **Transition** takes to the stage on Thursday.

► B1, 200, Roosevelt Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路四段200號B1). Call (02) 2930-0162 or log on at www.the-wall.com.tw for more information

► 7pm tonight; 8pm Sunday, Wednesday and Thursday

► NT\$450 tonight (NT\$400 for advance tickets); NT\$350 on Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday

► Free admission

Pop-rock band **Abandoned Ma-**

chines (留聲機工廠) and alt-rock band the **Silent Toads** (嗽吉蜥蜴) hit the stage tonight at **Underworld** (地下社會).

Appearing tomorrow night is **Shao-long to the Sky**, a Japanese trio that plays indie-rock and pop, along with local acts **FreeWill** (自由意識樂團) and **Jacuzzi** (賈庫西).

► B1, 45 Shida Rd, Taipei City (台北市師大路45號B1). Call (02) 2369-0103 or visit www.upsaid.com/underworld for more information

► Live shows go from 9:30pm to 11:30pm. The bar is open from 8pm daily, closed Mondays

► Entrance tonight and tomorrow is NT\$300 and includes one drink

Indie-electronica singer **Veraqueen** appears tonight at **Witch House** (女巫店).

Tomorrow it's alt-rock band the **Silent Toads** (嗽吉蜥蜴). On Thursday it's a night of trip-hop and electronica with **Nylas** (耐拉斯).

► 7, Ln 56, Xinsheg 5 Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市新生南路三段56巷7號). For more information, call (02) 2362-5494 or visit www.witchhouse.org

► Performances start at 9:30pm.

Restaurant/bar with queer/feminist bookstore and large collection of board games open 11am to midnight Sundays through Wednesdays; 11am to 1am Thursdays through Saturdays

► NT\$300 entrance includes one drink

Tonight **Riverside Cafe** presents the **RAY Band** (雷樂隊), a trio of veteran session musicians who play power rock originals and covers. Taiwanese alt-rock pioneers **Back-quarter** (四分衛) perform tomorrow night. On Sunday metal-core/emo band **831** (八三天) plays in the early evening, followed by a solo show from RAY Band bassist **Yen** (韓賢光).