



Can Wei Te-sheng save Taiwanese cinema?

PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

What happens when you say former president **Chen Shui-bian** (陳水扁) should "eat shit" (吃大便) on national television? If you're TVBS-N's **Liao Ying-ting** (廖盈婷), you become a household name overnight — and get a promotion.

Last Saturday, while the network was airing a report on how pro-independence activists were urging Chen to use campaign funds that had been wired overseas to establish a political party, Liao was overheard chatting with other reporters in the news room. "This is nuts," she said. "How on earth will Chen ever take out the money? [He should] just go and eat shit."

TVBS punished Liao by docking her two merit points on her performance record. However, it was quickly realized that the disgraced newswoman would be perfect as a motor-mouth pundit on political talk shows — a job that pays a lot more than real journalism.

Amid the heavy rains and strong winds brought by Super Typhoon Jangmi last weekend, a miracle occurred. Homegrown film *Cape No. 7* (海角七號) beat Hollywood blockbuster *The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor* at the box office. *Cape* has broken the NT\$200 million mark in box office takings and could end up being the highest-grossing film of the year, an achievement no one over the past three decades would have thought possible for a Taiwanese film. Some observers are even predicting that *Cape* will reach the NT\$300 million mark by the end of the year, making it the highest-grossing Chinese-language film ever screened in Taiwan. As a result, big investors are now said to have become more interested in local productions.

Is Taiwanese cinema set for a renaissance? Pop Stop has seen previous predictions concerning the rebirth of the country's film industry fall flat. It remains to be seen whether **Wei Te-sheng** (魏德聖), who directed *Cape No. 7*, will be equally successful with his next project, *Seediq Bale* (賽德克巴萊), an ambitious Aboriginal epic that stands a greater chance of becoming a hit with the critics than it does of making a lot of money, since it lacks two key ingredients needed for a local hit: youth drama starring pretty-faced idols, and patriotic appeal, as was best exemplified in last year's hit *Island Etude* (練習曲).

Moving on to more frivolous matters, 42-year-old **Pauline Lan** (藍心湄) has reportedly taken an interest in a younger man — again. The object of her desire this time around is theater actor **Na Wei-hsun** (那維勳), who was observed spending the night at Lan's mansion last weekend.

Gossip columnists are keen on the alleged Lan-Na tryst because it combines two of their favorite themes: infidelity, and a young man dating a rich, older woman. (Na is married and Lan, seven years his senior, is reportedly worth more than NT\$1 billion.) Pop Stop thinks something is wrong with the prevailing notion that it's perfectly normal for a male tycoon like **Terry Gou** (郭台銘) to bed a woman young enough to be his granddaughter, while a successful woman like Lan stirs controversy by receiving a visit from a man who's only a few years younger than herself.

Angela Chang (張韶涵) was recently spotted by *Next* magazine visiting her local Mercedes-Benz dealer sans makeup, a sure sign, *Next* says, that the pop star has lost her marbles.

You know the signs: Working hard to further one's music career for five years running, buying a home and an expensive car, gaining weight during a vacation in Canada, frequenting nightclubs and leaving the house without first applying makeup — yep, it's obvious that Chang is a just few clowns short of a circus.

— COMPILED BY HO YI

Rockin' responsibly at Earthfest

The organizers of Peacefest, the annual anti-war music festival in Taoyuan County started by a group of expats, are shifting their attention to the environment.

Held in collaboration with local activists, Earthfest is a weekend of live music in the scenic forest area of Kunlun Herb Gardens in Taoyuan County, which starts next Friday. More than 40 bands and DJs, both expat and Taiwanese, will be performing, and proceeds will go to several of the country's non-profit environmental groups.

Given the locale and people involved, the event will likely feel a lot like Peacefest, but the theme has a more practical bent. "Peacefest is more about 'why,' and Earthfest is the 'how' ... how to actually do something positive for the environment," says Sean Wratt, one of the organizers.

The festival aims to put green ideals into practice. All stage equipment and lighting for the music will be powered by bio-diesel fuel made from recycled cooking oil. Organizers are trying to arrange workshops on solar-powered cooking, organic farming and composting. The roving art fair and market Campo will sell environmentally friendly products at the event.

The organizers have also applied the concept of sustainability to financing the festival. Earthfest operates as a non-profit organization that pays its workers, whereas Peacefest relies solely on volunteers.

But Earthfest workers get paid only if the festival turns a profit; if the festival loses money, the workers have to fork out themselves. And to ensure that charities receive a robust share of the revenues, there is a limit on

how much they can earn.

This system aims to create a "sense of financial responsibility" among workers while ensuring "their hearts are in the right place," according to a document posted on Earthfest's Web site.

The event is a good opportunity to bring like-minded people together, says Calvin Wen (溫納原) of the Taiwan Friends of the Global Greens (全球綠人台灣之友), a Taipei-based environmental advocacy group that helped organize the festival.

Wen's group will run a booth at Earthfest to publicize its work, which includes organizing local rallies for this year's Global Day of Action on Dec. 6, scheduled to coincide with the UN's annual meeting on climate change.

Other NGOs aim to raise public awareness of local issues including nuclear waste and the Fourth Nuclear Power Plant and the conservation of the Chinese White Dolphin along Taiwan's west coast.

Bands appearing at Earthfest include a long list of crowd-pleasers and Peacefest regulars: Mister Green and Highway 9; Militant Hippie; and the Money Shot Horns.

Prominent Taiwanese acts include punk-garage rockers 88 Balaz (八十八顆芭樂籽), traditional Taiwanese hip-hop outfit Kou Chou Ching (拷秋勤), and nu-metal funk rockers Coach. On the electronic music front, S.U.N. Project and DJ Marco Menichelli will be visiting from Germany.

Both camping accommodations and onsite hotel rooms are available. Visit the Earthfest Web site for details.

— DAVID CHEN



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NTCH

In youth we learn

Monday sees an unusual event in Taipei's National Concert Hall. Called Un Bel Di — Puccini Festival, it's the central scene from *Madama Butterfly* and the complete one-act opera *Gianni Schicchi*. The latter was performed to great acclaim by the Taipei Symphony Orchestra (TSO) earlier in the month, and many of the same soloists will be

taking part again. But this time the orchestra will be the Hsin Tien Youth Orchestra (國立新店高中音樂班管絃樂團), the role of Butterfly will be sung by a teacher at the Sindian Senior High School, Flora Wu (吳秋萱), and the assistant director of January's *Idomeneo*, Dennis Chung-kuang Lin (林中光), will sing Gianni Schicchi as well as directing both operas!

So, what on earth's going on? The reality is that this mix of professionals, educationalists and students and is an admirable exercise in expanding the experience of Taipei's young. The 45-strong orchestra, all seemingly in their teens, will be flung into a public performance with some of the best of Taiwan's opera soloists. To add to the challenge, the Butterfly part of the program is some of the most beautiful operatic music ever penned, while *Gianni Schicchi* follows hard on the heels of a fully-staged professional production.

All this is every reason to go along and take a look. Prices are extremely reasonable (NT\$300 to NT\$800). It will be semi-staged, which means full costumes but limited scenery (though it's hard to believe that the TSO's *Gianni Schicchi* set won't for the most part be used).

And some of the soloists couldn't be bettered anywhere in Taiwan. The production's biggest catch is Grace Lin (林慈音) who'll sing the crucial role of Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*. But there's also Yang Lei (楊磊), so very strong as the young lover Rinuccio for the TSO, who will sing the same part again on Monday. And Liao Chong-Boon (廖聰文) will be Sharpless, the American consul, in *Madama Butterfly*, as well as repeating his role of Simone in *Gianni Schicchi*.

All in all this looks like a performance not to be missed, and there are apparently plenty of tickets still available.

Un Bel Di — Puccini Festival is at the National Concert Hall on Monday at 7:30pm. For tickets, call (02) 2341-9898 or visit www.ticket.com.tw

— BRADLEY WINTERTON



This Amis shaman will appear at Earthfest, a rock festival promoting environmental awareness, which is run by the organizers of Peacefest.

PHOTO COURTESY OF RYAN HARRINGTON

FESTIVAL NOTES:

WHAT: Earthfest 2008 (地球藝術節)

WHERE: Kunlun Herb Plant Tourism Garden (崑崙藥用植物園), 8-2, 1st Neighborhood, Kaoping Village, Lungtan Township, Taoyuan County (桃園縣龍潭鄉高平村1鄰8-2號)

WHEN: From Oct. 10, 4pm, to Oct. 12, 6pm

ON THE NET: www.earthfest.tw

TICKETS: NT\$700, NT\$600 with flyer (available in Taipei City at The Wall, VU Live House, Witch House and Underworld; in Kaohsiung City at ATT; and in Taichung City at Emerge Live House, 89K and the Pigpen)

GETTING THERE: If you are driving, take the National Highway No. 3 to the Lungtan Interchange and follow the brown signs to Shihmen Reservoir (石門水庫) for 7km. Turn right where Provincial Highway 4 meets Provincial Highway 3, and follow the signs to Kunlun Herb Gardens. There are buses to Lungtan (NT\$65) from the Guokuang (國光) bus depot near Taipei Main Station; the Yalan (亞聯) bus stops on Renai Road (仁愛路), Xinsheng South Road (新生南路) and in front of Gongguan MRT station (NT\$90); the Tailien (台聯) bus can be caught at Sungshan Airport and the Zhongxiao-Dunhua MRT station. From Lungtan you can get taxis up to the garden

TOP FIVE MANDARIN ALBUMS

SEPT. 19 TO SEPT. 25

1 S.H.E with *FM S.H.E — Retro Version* (我的電台FM S.H.E — 復古電台版) with 35.81 percent of sales

2 Y2J and *Live for You* (為你而活) with 7.71%

3 Ronald Cheng (鄭中基) and *The Best of Ronald* (怪胎) with 4.93%

4 Fish Leong (梁靜茹) and *Today Is Valentine's Day* (今天情人節) with 4.47%

5 Original Sound Track of *Turn Right, Turn Left* (向左走向右走) with 4.14%

ALBUM CHART COMPILED FROM G-MUSIC (www.g-music.com.tw), BASED ON RETAIL SALES

Upcoming

A long weekend is always an excuse to party, and next week's **Lost Lagoon 10/10 Weekend Getaway** is no exception.

Perpetual Motion is holding a three-day bender near Wulai with 16 bands, 10 DJs and an amazing venue. The site has three pools, a poolside bar that will be open 24 hours, hot springs, private hot tubs, public restrooms and showers, and free camping. There will be events scheduled, such as tequila volleyball, but the main attraction is the music. Bands include **Coach** (教父), **Public Radio**, **Pan Africana**, **88 Balaz** (88顆芭樂籽), **The Deadly Vibes** and the **Money Shot Horns**, with DJs including **Marcus Aurelius**, **Fratzuki**, **JR** and **Megan**, **Antihero**, the **Taimaica Sound Crew** and **Hooker**.

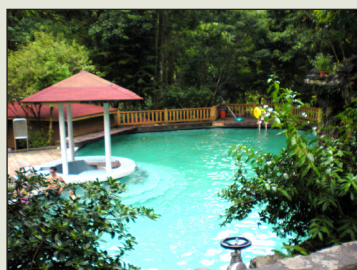
Food and drink will be available around the clock, and in an original and much-welcomed ode to hydration, in addition to all the pools and hot springs, there will be free drinking water. The camping area and dancing areas are covered, so 10/10 is going to go on rain or shine. Also, after the 24-hour music fiasco that culminated with daybreak techno at this year's Peacefest, the Lost Lagoon's entertainment schedule is a sane and reasonable midnight to 4am. Partygoers will be able to rest up and sleep in between bouts of dancing, swimming and socializing. There will be a pre-party for 10/10 at COPA, 2, Ln 137, Yanji St, Taipei City (台北市延吉街137巷2號) tomorrow at 11pm with Marcus

Aurelius and other DJs.

► The Lost Lagoon 10/10 Weekend Getaway, 100 Xinfu Rd (信福路100號), near Wulai (烏來). Free shuttle buses run from the Wulai (烏來) bus stop, the last stop on the Xindian (新店) bus line, to the site every 25 to 30 minutes. Look for the white, gray and black sign that reads Perpetual Motion. Buses run on Oct. 10 from 7pm to midnight, on Oct. 11 from noon to 10:30pm and on Oct. 11 from noon to 5pm. For more information, go to taipeimotion.com

► From 9pm Oct. 10 to 6pm Oct. 12. Music scheduled from midnight to 4am on Friday and Saturday, and from noon to 4pm on Sunday

► Presale tickets are NT\$700 until tomorrow or NT\$800 next week; NT\$900 at the door. Tickets are available in Taipei City at Sababa, 17, Ln 283, Roosevelt Rd Sec 3 (台北市羅斯福路三段283巷17號), Toasteria, 2, Ln 248, Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4 (台北市忠孝東路四段248巷2號), and KGB, 5, Ln 114, Shida Rd (台北市師大路114巷5號); and in Taichung City at 89K, 25 Daguang Rd, (台中市大觀路25號). Or call Tristan Newman at 0936-376-440



It's going to be a wet and wild weekend in Wulai.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PERPETUAL MOTION

Theater

Taiwan's expulsion from the UN in 1971 serves as the background for Ping-Fong Acting Troupe's (屏風表演班) latest work **Stand by Me** (六義舞). Written and directed by Hugh Lee (李國修), the story follows six youths who use an air-raised shelter as a meeting place to discuss their roles in history.

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

► Tonight, tomorrow, Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday at 7:30pm and tomorrow and Sunday at 2:30pm

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

Shang Orienttheatre (上默劇團) continues its tradition of adapting the teachings of Tibetan Buddhism to the stage with its latest work **Bardo Dodel** (我從遙遠來了解死亡是深入生命的開始). The troupe uses scriptures from the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* as a means of gaining a deeper understanding of death so that we can live our lives better.

► Red House Theater (西門紅樓), 10 Chengdu Rd, Taipei City (台北市成都路10號)

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

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

The Puppet and Its Double Theater (無獨有偶工作室劇團) revises its **The Happy Prince** (快樂王子), a puppet performance based on Oscar Wilde's fairy tale by the same name.

► Experimental Theater at No. 20 Warehouse, Taichung (台中市二十號倉庫實驗劇場), 6-1, Ln 37, Fuxing Rd Sec 4, Taichung City (台中市復興路四段37巷6-1號)

► Tomorrow at 2:30pm and 7:30pm

► Tickets are NT\$400, available through NTCH ticketing

Happiness Part 1 & 2 (浮浪真開花 Part 1 & 2) is a light and carefree Taiwanese musical by Golden Bough Theater (金枝演社) that tells the story of a young bohemian searching for happiness and the interesting places where it is found.

► Chiayi Performing Arts Center (嘉義縣表演藝術中心), 265, Jianguo Rd Sec 2, Minsyong Township, Chiayi County (嘉義縣民雄鄉建國路二段265號)

► Part 1 plays tomorrow at 3pm; Part 2 plays tomorrow at 7:30pm

► Tickets are NT\$300 to NT\$1,200

Tellus Theater continues its tradition of adapting classical Western theater to the local stage with its version of Euripides' **Medea**, the story of a woman who takes revenge on the husband who betrays her. The production is in English.

► Lien Te Vegetarian Restaurant (蓮德品素天家), B1, 82 Ningpo W St, Taipei City (台北市寧波西街82號B1)

► Tomorrow at 3pm and 7pm

► Tickets are NT\$350, available through NTCH ticketing

Classical music

Sinfiororchester des Norddeutschen Rundfunks under **Christoph von Dohnanyi** (北德廣播交響樂團 — 杜南伊與奇瑪曼) brings the renowned German conductor Christoph von Dohnanyi to Taipei. He rose to fame as the leader of the Cleveland Orchestra, which was consistently regarded as one of the US' best under his direction. As part of this tour, he will conduct two concerts with the Sinfiororchester des Norddeutschen Rundfunks (North German Radio Symphony Orchestra) at the National Concert Hall, the first, tomorrow, featuring violinist Frank Peter Zimmermann for the Sibelius *Violin Concerto in D Minor* Op. 47. Tomorrow's program will also include Beethoven's *Egmont Overture*, Op.84 and Brahms' *Symphony No. 2 in D Op.73*. The program for Sunday includes Beethoven's *Leonore Overture*, Op. 72a, *Symphony No.4 in B-Flat Major*, Op. 60 and *Symphony No.5 in C Minor*, Op. 67, "Destiny".

► Tomorrow and Sunday at 7:30pm

► National Concert Hall, Taipei City

► Tickets are NT\$1,800 to NT\$4,800, available through NTCH ticketing

Un Bel Di — Puccini Festival (美好的一日 — 普契尼生日慶典) is a presentation of a semi-staged Puccini evening. The program will include a repeat of the TSO's *Gianni Schicchi* from earlier this month and the middle scene of *Madama Butterfly*. [See story

[EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT]

above.] This performance features the Sindian Youth Orchestra (國立新店高中音樂班管絃樂團) conducted by Cheng Li-pin (鄭立彬) and Yang Chih-chin (楊智欽) with some of Taiwan's top opera singers including Liao Chong-boon (廖聰文) and Yang Lei (楊磊).

► Monday at 7:30pm

► National Concert Hall, Taipei City

► Tickets are NT\$300 to NT\$800, available through NTCH ticketing

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (英國皇家愛樂管絃樂團) under conductor Leonard Slatkin and featuring Ukrainian pianist Serhiy Solov will perform a program including Copland's *Appalachian Spring Suite* and Mahler's *Symphony No.1* at the National Concert Hall. This will be followed by a concert at the Chung Hsing University Huisun Auditorium (台中中興大學惠孫堂) on Wednesday featuring Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No.1 in B-Flat Minor*, Op.23 and Mahler's *Symphony No.1*.

► Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:30pm

► National Concert Hall (Tuesday); Chung Hsing University Huisun Auditorium, 250 Kuokuang Road, Taichung City (台中市國光路250號)

(Wednesday)

► Tickets are NT\$1,600 to NT\$8,000 for the Taipei concert; NT\$1,500 to NT\$2,400 for the Taichung concert. Tickets for the Taipei Concert are available through NTCH ticketing and for the Taichung concert through ERA ticketing

2008 Formosa International Guitar Festival (2008福爾摩沙國際吉他藝術節) brings top guitarists to Taiwan for recitals in Taipei and Kaohsiung. The event begins tomorrow with a recital in Kaohsiung by Thomas Viloteau and Tsou Shih-lie (鄧世烈) and continues until Nov. 14. Tomorrow's program includes *Asturias* by Issac Albeniz, *Sonatina* by Moreno Torroba and *Capriccio Diabolico* by Mario Tedesco. This will be followed by a recital in Taipei by Nicolas Papin and Tania Chagnon on Sunday and a concert by the Apuliea Guitar Quatuor on Wednesday.

► Tomorrow (Kaohsiung), Sunday and Wednesday (Taipei) at 7:30pm

► Wei Wu Ying Center of the Arts (高雄縣衛武營藝術文化中心) at 449-1 Nanjing Rd, Fengshan City, Kaohsiung County (高雄縣鳳山市南京路449之1號);

National Recital Hall, Taipei City

► Tickets are NT\$200 for the Kaohsiung recital; NT\$400 and NT\$700 for Taipei, available through NTCH ticketing

Contemporary

Appearing at **Underworld** (地下社會) tonight is **Sen** (仙樂隊), which sounds like a cross between early Wall of Voodoo and Gang of Four, and Brit-pop revivalists **Bitter**. Tomorrow it's new group **Yoga Soul** and the catchy punk-infused rock of **88 Balaz** (八十八顆芭樂籽), followed by party crew **Back 2 the Future** (B2TF, 回到未來), which presents **DJ Pons** from Japan and **Discoattack**.

► 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

► From 9:30pm to 11:30pm tonight; from 9pm to 11pm tomorrow for the bands, with the DJs starting at midnight

► Cover tonight is NT\$300 and includes one drink; tomorrow it's NT\$300 for the bands, including one drink and free admission for DJ set; after 11pm, admission is NT\$200

This year's Migration Music Festival features performers who are based in cities, including Vietnamese-French chanteuse Huong Thanh, from Paris, Romanian jazz-traditional trio StriCat, who live in Amsterdam, and Palestinian singer Sameer Makhoul, who often performs in Jerusalem.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TREES MUSIC AND ART

► 2008 Migration Music Festival — City Borders

► Shows begin at 7:30pm tonight; and at 2:30pm, 5pm and 7:30pm tomorrow and on Sunday

► Zhongshan Hall (台北市中山堂), 98 Yenping S Rd, Taipei City (台北市延平南路98號)

► Tickets are NT\$500 for one concert, NT\$800 for a one-day pass and NT\$1,200 for a two-day festival pass. Tickets are available through NTCH ticketing

► To see a detailed program in Chinese and English, go to www.treesmusic.com/festival/2008mnf/



Panai, who makes music inspired by her Puyuma and Amis roots. Appearing on Sunday are **Huong Thanh**, who sings Vietnamese music combined with jazz and electronic ambient sounds, and **StriCat**, a Romanian group whose music combines jazz, Romanian and Bulgarian sounds. All of the festival's participating musicians will take part in a collaborative performance later in the evening.