

New live house joins bevy of brethren in Taipei's rock scene

After years of waiting for the right opportunity, musician and club owner Geddy Lin (林正如) has opened a new live-music venue at the historic Red House Theater (西門紅樓) in Ximending.

The Riverside Live House (河岸留言西門紅樓展演館), which held its first show last month, boasts a top-of-the-line sound system and seating for 800 people.

The new venue is the next logical step for the session guitarist and teacher, who started the Riverside Cafe (河岸留言), a small basement bar now known as one of Taipei's best live-music venues for both up-and-coming and established artists.

It's time for a venue like this, according to Lin, who has seen a lot of "original bands, artists that have grown up on stage" at Riverside Cafe. As the bands have matured, their audiences have grown, says Lin, who wanted to open a new venue three years ago but lacked the funds.

Lin's luck came through when the Taipei City's Department of Cultural Affairs (台北市文化局) offered him space at the Red House Theater at non-commercial rental rates, in a bid to improve Taipei's live-music scene. The low rent allowed Lin and a business partner to put NT\$10 million into new stage and sound equipment.

Covering 400 ping (1,322m²), the mid-sized venue will be able to accommodate more intimate shows from bigger name artists: Taiwan's "King of Rock," Wu Bai (伍佰), is slated to appear in January.

But Lin intends to stick to the spirit of the Riverside Cafe in choosing acts: it's not important what kind of music a band plays, he says, but whether it's "good music" and whether the band can put on a "good performance."

He acknowledges that there will be pressure to fill seats, which he hopes to address in the future by also holding daytime events and music seminars. The venue now runs a bar, and will eventually serve lunch and dinner.

For now, Riverside Live House is open for shows in the evening from Wednesdays through Sundays. This weekend features indie band Jacuzzi and pop/jazz combo Sunny 4 tonight, and pop-rock band Rock Oriental Express (搖滾東方) tomorrow. Renowned jazz-fusion bassist Alain Caron performs on Nov. 19.

Riverside Live House is located at 177 Xining S Rd, Taipei City (台北市西寧南路177號). Tel: (02) 2370-8805. On the Net: www.riverside.com.tw.

— DAVID CHEN



The recently opened Riverside Live House, located in the historic Red House Theater, features NT\$10 million worth of new stage and sound equipment.

PHOTO COURTESY OF RIVERSIDE LIVE HOUSE

Ever since it premiered in 2003, Declan Donnellan's *Twelfth Night*, an all-male Russian-language production of the much-loved Shakespeare comedy, has received rave reviews. It will be showing at the National Theater this weekend with, said the organizers, Chinese and Russian subtitles. English speakers hoping for a fix of the Bard had better know their text.

Twelfth Night is a joint production by Donnellan and the Chekhov International Theater Festival, and is one of many innovative Shakespearean productions that have won Cheek by Jowl, Donnellan's production company, a three-year residency at London's Barbican Theater.

Cheek by Jowl — the name comes from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* — has a long-standing devotion to the classics, but is famous for the freshness of its adaptations.

The production, which premiered in Moscow but has since toured Europe, the UK and US. According to a *New York Times* review, Donnellan's production has discovered "an alchemical substance in Shakespeare that transcends the verbal." Whatever this substance is, local directors, who continue to flail about when adapting Western works — most notably in James Liang's (梁志民) recent bloodless reworking of *Othello* (針峰對決) — should be looking hard to discover what exactly that is.

For most, Shakespeare's genius is thought of largely in linguistic terms, but Donnellan seems to have transcended this barrier, and in the same review: "The words, it seems, are but steppingstones to a universal pattern of images and insights about human behavior and the perplexing world that thwarts and shapes it. Shakespeare's first language, it would seem, is not English, after all; it's Theater."

Similar experiments in non-linguistic drama are in the works: Ethan Chen's *The Drought Goddess* (大神戲), which will premiere at the Experimental Theater from Dec. 19 to Dec. 21



Declan Donnellan's *Twelfth Night* transposes the Bard into Russian.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NATIONAL THEATER AND CONCERT HALL

The play that shook the world

as part of 2008 New Ideas Theater Festival (2008新點子劇場), includes a mix of Chinese dialects and singing styles that the director referred to as "rubbish talk."

For beleaguered theater directors in Taiwan grappling with

the problem of adapting of Chinese opera to contemporary theater, Donnellan's success in England and the US with a foreign-language production of England's greatest poet is likely to be encouraging.

— IAN BARTHOLOMEW

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

WHAT: Declan Donnellan's *Twelfth Night*

WHEN: Tonight and tomorrow at 7:30pm; Sunday at 2:30pm

WHERE: National Theater, Taipei City

TICKETS: NT\$500 to NT\$2,500, available through NTCH ticketing



In the beginning there was techno and trance. But there's not much dancing going on to either in Taipei City's clubs anymore. While many of Taiwan's most well-known veteran DJs have their roots in these genres, their heyday was short-lived, and now parties playing this sort of electronic music are getting harder and harder to come by.

However, if you're a sucker for techno or someone who's bored with run-of-the-mill club music nowadays, we've got some good news. Earworm, a party dedicated to techno/minimal, is coming up next weekend. Here's a little preview from the organizers, **DataBass** (Liu Zi-cheng, 劉子誠) and **BB** (Benoit Bouquin):

Taipei Times: How did you get into techno?

DataBass: I've been into music from the West since I was a kid. I started spinning music when I was in college, and it was the album *Erotic Discourse* by **Paul Woolford** that got me totally crazy about minimal.

BB: I come from France. My musical influences are from Radio Nova in Paris, which I've listened to since I was in high school.

Nova had different DJs every night, such as **Ivan Smaghe** (Kill the DJ), **DJ Gilb'r** (Versatile), **DJ Deep** and **Laurent Garnier**. I developed a very eclectic taste during that period: techno, house, deep house, electro.

TT: What prompted you to organize this party?

DB: To be honest, the party was only meant to be a small gathering at first, but after receiving lots of support from friends and some great feedback from the previous events (at Air and Luxy), I realized there was a demand and I had to keep it going.

BB: Our goal is to create a small underground techno scene in Taiwan. Another reason why I wanted to organize parties was to help people become more open and curious about music. I hope one day I can play a two-hour set of old-school 1988 Chicago acid house in Taiwan.

TT: What do you think about the dance music scene in Taiwan?

BB: I'm not really into the club scene here. Sometimes I feel the clubs are



Last train to Mashville.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF BENOIT BOUQUIN

more about entertainment than about music itself. The scene lacks a venue with a consistent DJ program, a place owned by people who are themselves really excited about music and willing to take some risks. But I also see this slowly developing with the "NuRave" movement and all these kids completely dressed up and dancing like crazy at parties such as Back2theFuture (B2TF, 回到未來) or DaaaanceRock. I'm happy about the excitement, although musically I find it a bit limited.

TT: How does Earworm appeal to its audience?

DB: Fresh music and great DJs are our major concerns and also what we expect people to come for. Many clubs are using hot girls, sexy pole-dancers and an all-you-can-drink policy to lure the patrons, but we don't believe in gimmicks like that. So behind the decks next Saturday, we'll have BB and his eclectic tastes, ranging from nu-disco and Chicago house to minimal.

A-Tao, owner of Species Records, is going to mix classic techno tracks with new gems from his shop, and finally there will be myself, mixing Cuban and African tribal rhythm into my minimal set.

Earworm happens Nov. 15 at VT Artsalon, B1, 47 Yitong St, Taipei City (台北市伊通街47號B1). Admission: NT\$400. Another upcoming goodie is "High Heels & High Tops." This new underground hip-hop monthly with a dress code kicks off at Copa Bar tomorrow night. Rotating DJs: **Marcus Aurelius**, **CAP**, **The Sofa Kings**, **Digit** and **2 Hands**. No cover charge, but an RSVP (e-mail DjMarcusA@gmail.com) is required.

High Heels & High Tops takes place tomorrow at Copa Bar, 2, Ln 137, Yanji St, Taipei City (台北市大安區延吉街137巷2號).

— QUEEN BEE

【EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT】

Indie-musician and producer **Wang Chun-chieh** (王俊傑) performs

a solo piano and vocal show tonight at **Witch House** (女巫店). Tomorrow night also features a solo piano and vocal performance, this time by **Chou Yi-wen** (周意紋), followed by punk-garage band **White Eyes** (白目), which won the battle of the bands at this year's Ho-Hai-Yan Rock Festival.

► 7, Ln 56, Xinsheng S 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.witch-house.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

► Entrance fee for music shows is NT\$300, includes one drink

Appearing tonight at **Riverside Cafe** (河岸留言) is the big-band jazz ensemble **Dizzy Jazz Band** (底細爵士樂團). Tomorrow evening features a pair of indie-rock bands: all-female four-piece **Nekojoband** (妮可醬) and **Red Flower** (紅花樂團).

► 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 tonight; 9pm tomorrow

► Entry is NT\$400 tonight and tomorrow

The owners of **Riverside Cafe** recently opened **Riverside Live House** (西門紅樓展演館), a new venue located in Ximending's historic Red House Theater (西門紅樓). Tonight features indie-rockers **Jacuzzi** (賈庫西) and pop-jazz combo **Sunny 4**, which won first prize at this year's Mercedes Benz Amateur Jazz Competition. Tomorrow night, the spotlight shines on pop-rock group **Rock Oriental Express** (搖滾東方).

► 177 Xining S Rd, Taipei City (台北市西寧南路177號). Call (02) 2370-8805 or visit www.riverside.com.tw for more information

► Show starts tonight and tomorrow at 8:30pm

► Entrance is NT\$450 tonight and tomorrow and includes one drink

Experimental musician **Jen Shyu** appears tonight at **Sappho de Base**. [See story on Page 13.] She will be followed by the **Blues Vibrations**, which plays funky blues and surf-rock. Tomorrow night, the **Double J Band** plays funk, disco and hard rock. On Tuesday night, the **Sappho Jazz Band** performs, with an open jam afterwards, while Michael Haack's **Phase-In Jazz Quartet** takes to the stage on Wednesday. Thursday night, the venue welcomes for the first time **T and T Jazz and Friends**.

► 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 admission fee

Tonight at **Tone 56 Live Bar**, a restaurant near the corner of Fuxing North and Minquan East roads, is the funk and R'n'B band **Kenyatta Trio**, led by New Orleans native Nbugu Kenyatta. Tomorrow pop-rock band **Spider** makes its first appearance at the venue, while on Sunday the **Dafu Jazz Trio** takes to the stage.

► 1F, 56, Minquan 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 Road (復興北路) and Minquan East Road (民權東路). Call (02) 2517-3869 for more information

► Music shows go from 9:30pm to 12:30am tonight and tomorrow, and 7:30pm to 9:30pm on Sundays

► No admission fee

Every Wednesday night at the **Cosmopolitan Grill** there's a blues open mic, held by the **Blues Society on Taiwan** and hosted by Torch Pratt. All are welcome to bring their instruments and sit in on guitar, bass, or drums.

► 1F, 218 Changchun Rd, Taipei City (台北市長春路218號1樓). Call (02) 2508-0304 or visit www.cosmo.com.tw for more information

► From 8pm to 11pm every Wednesday

► No admission fee

Exhibition

Homelandscape II — His Death — Liu Ho-jang Solo Exhibition (家景計畫二 — 他的濃度 — 劉和強個展). Beginning in 2005, the artist grew then sheared off his hair to make a wig for his father and documented the process, which examines intergenerational conflict.

► Chi-Wen Gallery (其致畫廊), 3F, 19, Ln 252, Dunhua S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段252巷19號3樓). Open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 11am to 7pm. Tel: (02) 8771-3372

► From tomorrow through Dec. 27

The Mythology of Japanese Contemporary Art (日本當代神話) features works by three leading figures of Japanese contemporary art: Takashi Murakami is best-known for embracing fashion and pop culture; Yayoi Kusama's art is influenced by minimalism, surrealism, Art Brut, pop art and abstract expressionism; and Yoshitomo Nara's legendary pop art exudes a childlike purity.

► Metaphysical Art Gallery (形而上畫廊), 7F, 219, Dunhua S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段219號7樓). Open Tuesdays through Sundays from 11am to 6:30pm. Tel: (02) 2771-3236

► Until Nov. 23

Resonance — Tseng Wei-hao's Solo Exhibition (身音雜記 — 曾偉豪個展). Continuing Tseng's exploration of the relation between

human body, space and sound, the artist's new interactive installation invites visitors to sense and feel sounds with their bodies.

► Galerie Grand Siecle (新苑藝術), 17, Alley 51, Ln 12, Bade Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市八德路三段12巷51弄17號). Open Tuesdays through Sundays from 1pm to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2578-5630

► Until Nov. 23

Women's Writing Equation: Yiyi Wan's Solo Show (陳性書寫方程式: 萬一一個展) features a series of digital records and printouts of Wan's performance art piece titled *Mr Toilet-Cover Respects Women*. Together with art professors Kao Jung-his (高榮禧) and Glydas Chiang (江足滿), the artist will hold a panel discussion tomorrow from 3pm to 5pm.

► Shin Leh Yuan Art Space (新樂園藝術空間), 15-2, Ln 11, Zhongshan N Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市中山北路二段11巷15-2號). Open Wednesdays through Sundays from 1pm to 8pm. Tel: (02) 2561-1548

► Until Nov. 23

Retrospective Exhibition of Yuyu Yang (齊豫之端 — 楊英風回顧展). The exhibition features more than 40 pieces of Yang's sculpture that illuminate the late artist's worldview and aesthetics.

► Capital Art Center (首都藝術中心), 2F, 343, Renai Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市仁愛路四段343號2樓). Open Tuesdays through Sundays from 10am to 7pm. Tel: (02) 2775-5268

► Until Nov. 30

RESTAURANTS

Ibuki Japanese Restaurant

Address: 7F, Far Eastern Plaza Hotel (台北遠東國際大飯店), 201, Dunhua S Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路二段201號)

Tel: (02) 2376-3241

Open: Daily from 11:30am to 2:30pm and 6pm to 9:30pm

Average Meal: From NT\$1,000 per person

Details: English menu available, credit cards accepted

Far Eastern Plaza's newly revamped and renamed Ibuki (formerly operated under the Suntory franchise), has kept aspects of its old self, but under the leadership of new Japanese head chef Eiji Nakamura, has also extended its menu and its ambitions. Ibuki covers all the bases, but also offers some pleasant surprises.

Japanese food places a premium on freshness and Chef Nakamura has taken this a step further by introducing a range of dishes made from locally sourced organic ingredients. These are presented in some of the simplest items on the menu, such as the organic multi-grain rice with grated Japanese yam and pickles (NT\$270). This is really no more than a puree of raw yam over rice, but it is the sort of dish that brings the diner's focus directly onto the taste and texture — it asks you to treat simple things such as rice and yam in the same way as an expensive cut of tuna.

Another deceptively simple dish that Nakamura has brought onto the menu is the herbal pork neck with Himalayan rock salt on hot stone (NT\$350), which uses local organic pork fed exclusively on herbs that give the flesh, which is otherwise unseasoned, a delightful fragrance. This is another dish that you really do need to take a little time over, savoring the delicate flavors. Fortunately, the subdued environment of the private booths that make up about half of the seating at Ibuki is perfect for this.

Nakamura's concern with giving Ibuki a local identity goes beyond sourcing ingredients locally; he has also created new dishes that have a Taiwan theme, such as his signature Taiwan maki roll (NT\$320), which uses steamed chicken and preserved mullet roe in a delicious variation on the California-roll idea.

No Japanese restaurant would be complete without a wide selection of sashimi, and Nakamura offers both imported and local fish and seafood with plenty of little surprises. Ibuki's platinum sashimi platter (NT\$1,800), which would be a good starter for a table of four, mixes and matches flavors and textures and is as much a visual delight as a gastronomic one. Customers can also dine directly at the counter on delicacies prepared to an agreed budget.

For those who find the intricacies of Japanese a la carte dining a little daunting, there are 12 business set menus starting at NT\$680 and a six-course kaiseki set menu for NT\$1,280. Dinner sets start at NT\$1,680. If time and convenience are at a premium, Ibuki also offers lunch box sets starting at NT\$980, which are particularly popular for working lunches in which diners do not wish to be bothered with the fussy array of dishes of a typical kaiseki meal.

Nakamura's emphasis on freshness means that the menu is constantly changing to reflect the seasons, and there are always some delightful surprises in the use of fruits, vegetables and seafood. To end the meal on a sweet note, the dessert sampler (NT\$250) is guaranteed to produce a smile with its creativity. On the day I visited, a chestnut and red bean cake proved to be particularly entrancing.

For more information, visit the restaurant's Web site at www.shangri-la.com/en/property/taipei/fareasternplaza/dining/restaurant/ibuki.

— IAN BARTHOLOMEW



Real men do eat quiche.

PHOTO: NOAH BUCHAN, TAIPEI TIMES

Paul

Address: 107, Renai Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市仁愛路四段107號)

Telephone: (02) 2771-3200

Open: Daily from 11am to 10pm; bakery opens at 8am

Average meal: NT\$400

Details: Chinese and English menu; credit cards accepted; reservations recommended

The man at the next table plunks down two BlackBerrys on top of a stack of reports. He has the typical businessperson's habit of peppering his Mandarin with English words like "finance," "report" and "amazing *de* (的)" performance."

At Paul, the newly opened restaurant and bakery at Renai Circle, tuning out of neighboring diners' conversations is difficult as the lunch and dinner crowds are made up of businesspeople and the dining setup follows the French cafe tradition of placing tables just centimeters apart.

The French bakery and restaurant opened a few months back to much media fanfare, partially because most of Paul's recipes use ingredients — no melamine here — sourced from France.

The restaurant has a banquet running along three walls and one six-seat table in the center and is crammed with two-person tables that can be pushed apart or together. The walls are painted a soothing autumnal yellow, and the small antique-style wall lights, Vermeer-like paintings and heavy curtains lend the place a rustic atmosphere. Large wooden beams crisscross the ceiling and complete the country farmhouse feel.

In keeping with the decor, the limited menu of quiches (NT\$395), sandwiches (NT\$385), salads (NT\$385) and crepes (NT\$385) is country-style cooking inspired by France. A la carte items can be ordered for takeout at the bakery.

While all items on the restaurant's menu are set meals, which include main course, soup of the day and choice of coffee, tea or soft drink, items from the bakery can be ordered separately for dessert.

I went with the vegetarian quiche.

The mushroom soup arrived steaming hot in a small bowl just moments after it was ordered. The broth was creamy and full-flavored with generous chunks of freshly chopped mushrooms and topped with a thin baguette crouton.

The quiche was served on a large plate accompanied by a fresh garden salad tossed with red wine vinaigrette and thickly cut slices of baked tomato and zucchini. Swathed in olive oil and sprinkled with herbs, this accompaniment contrasted nicely with the heaviness of the quiche.

The quiche, held together with a rich and flaky pastry crust, which crumbled into pieces under a little pressure from my fork while the body still managed to retain its shape — a sign that Paul takes its pastry seriously — contained chunks of eggplant, zucchini and tomato. Hints of pesto and Parmesan added a complexity to the vegetables.

The portions at Paul tend toward the large and I didn't have enough room to sample the wide array of pastries and desserts from the bakery next door. That will have to wait for another visit, which will likely be in the near future.

— NOAH BUCHAN