

## POP STOP

Liz Yang fights the good fight for Wookies everywhere. PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES



When the media resort to dredging up old romances, readers know that the gossip rags are scraping the bottom of the barrel.

This week's tantalizing tidbits ("tit-bits" might be more appropriate in the circumstances), include *Fun Taiwan* presenter **Janet Hsieh** (謝怡芬) being manhandled in public by *Super Idol* judge **Wang Chi-ping** (王治平) at an event held to promote the upcoming 2008 Urban Simple Life (簡單生活節) festival and **Ethan Ruan** (阮經天) who, according to *Next*, developed a pocket rocket



Is that a pencil in your pocket, or are you hugging a sexy fan? PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

while embracing a fan at a charity clothing auction.

They're just the warm-up acts, though. Speculation is rife that singer **Stanley Huang** (黃立行) may be re-igniting a 13-year-old relationship with **Faith Yang** (楊乃文).

The relationship stalled more than a decade ago as the two Golden Melody Award-winning singers (Yang won best female singer in 2000 and Huang won best male singer in 2005) each focused on developing their careers and engaging in separate romantic interludes.

Huang, who has worked his way through a formidable list of singers, TV personalities and models, even being associated with **Jolin Tsai** (蔡依林) for a short time, has always insisted that his only serious girlfriend had been Yang.

Both icons of cool, Huang and Yang could have been made for each other, and the gossip rags are salivating at the prospect of further developments.

Huang is scheduled to release a new album on Dec. 5, the title of which roughly translates as "In the End You Can Only Lie Down" (最後只好躺下來). The new work might not be completely unrelated to the star's pursuit of his old flame, the vernacular press suggests.

The fascinating observation that body hair is not an insuperable obstacle to success as a model in Taiwan is the other issue that has caught the interest of *Next* magazine's editors this week.

Supermodel **Liz Yang** (楊俐恩), who has publicly commented that she is "hairy," was selected over better-known models **Bianca Pai** (白歆惠)

and **Sonia Sui** (隋棠) to act as the spokeswoman for beauty product manufacturer COTA, for a fee of NT\$2 million.

The economic downturn seems to be just a rumor in such circles and clearly doesn't have much bearing on the lives of supermodels. Liz Yang, who is of mixed Taiwanese-Guatemalan descent, has cut a swath through the country's modeling world with her bold poses, attitude and romantic involvements.

While Liz Yang may be riding a wave that lifts her above the troubled waters of these troubled times, other beautiful people are definitely struggling.

Television shopping channels have taken a beating, and hosts such as **Si Rong** (斯蓉), the "queen of consumer electronics," have been forced to rely more heavily than ever on such tricks as plastic surgery to maintain their appeal with fickle audiences and nervous TV producers.

There is nothing Si won't sell, according to *Next*, and she has lost a further 8kg off her surgically sculpted body to make herself even more appealing before the camera so she can help you decide to buy that diamante cummerbund you've always wanted.

While some have to go under the knife to ensure the fat monthly paycheck keeps rolling in, others just lay back and think of England. Well, in the case of **Michelle Reis** (李嘉欣), she was probably thinking about dollar signs.

The Macau society belle with a roving eye for wealthy, married men has wed **Julian Hui** (許晉亨), the son of Hong Kong construction baron **Hui Sai-fun** (許世勳).

*Next* magazine reports that parental approval for the match had been withheld until it was revealed that Reis was already two months pregnant. Hui Senior was definitely not in a fun mood for the event, especially as the family had gone out of its way to protect Junior from the clutches of entertainment industry gold diggers.

The Hui clan had put the kibosh on Junior's relationships with **Carina Lau** (劉嘉玲) and **Gigi Lai** (黎姿), but Reis played hardball and won.

Although the nuptials were a relatively low-profile affair, Reis was not going to let this stop her being the belle of the ball, and *Next* magazine reports that she spent NT\$21.5 million on two wedding gowns and five evening gowns for the occasion. Now that the Lothario and the gold digger are man and wife, the story, as far as the gossip rags are concerned, has only just begun.

— COMPILED BY IAN BARTHOLOMEW

If there's one fixture in Taipei's ever-changing live music circuit, it's Nbugu Kenyatta. Since arriving 16 years ago, the drummer and singer has been rocking Taipei with the groove-oriented music of his hometown, New Orleans.

Nowadays the 54-year-old plays with his band, the Kenyatta Trio, at the Tavern every Friday and Capone's on Saturdays. The group covers many styles, ranging from R'n'B and soul to reggae and funk.

In the early 1990s Kenyatta made a splash as part of the house band at the now-defunct club TU, breathing fresh air into Taipei nightlife with the sounds of traditional New Orleans jazz. Later on, club owner Ted Su (蘇誠修) asked Kenyatta to bring his electric band, ARRR, which played classic funk and R'n'B in the spirit of acts like the Meters, Dr John and the Neville Brothers.

They played up to four hours a night, seven nights a week, and Kenyatta loved every minute of it. "They actually had to ask us to stop playing and take a vacation because ... being from New Orleans we're used to playing 24 hours, 24-7," he said, sipping on a beer at Capone's.

Kenyatta, also known by his original name Abe Thompson, developed a passion for music at the age of 10, when he would spend hours waiting for his brother to give him a turn on the drum kit. The first song he learned was James Brown's *Cold Sweat*.

By high school he was practically eating and breathing music. He sang with his five brothers and two sisters in a Motown-style group called the Tempressions (inspired by the Temptations and the Impressions), played the snare drum with his high school marching band, and performed psychedelic rock and R'n'B with the Energy Funk Band,

another group formed with his family.

Kenyatta continued to study music while earning his education degree at Southern University at New Orleans, which he says gave him the opportunity to share the stage with greats such as jazz pianist Herbie Hancock, guitarist Carl Le Blanc and avant-garde jazz composer Sun Ra.

One of his most valuable experiences was playing the clubs on New Orleans' Bourbon Street starting from the age of 17, he said. He became proficient in many different styles, including reggae, R'n'B, funk, jazz and blues, all of which are an important part of playing music in New Orleans, he said. "You have to play more than one style. You have to be versatile ... You have to play all of it."

"Fulfilling" is how Ray Anthony, current guitarist for the Kenyatta Trio, describes playing with Kenyatta. "You're playing with people that really enjoy playing the music," he said.

Kenyatta met his wife of 10 years, Kim Wei (魏宜倫), in Taipei. He sees himself as a "liaison" between New Orleans music culture and Taiwan and likes the occasional times when he gets recognized on the street by past audience members. "It gives me such a great feeling that — hey, people know me."

Lately the Trio's set has included Jimi Hendrix tunes, reggae and several original songs by Kenyatta, which he wrote just after recovering from a stroke nearly two years ago.

The health scare hasn't changed Kenyatta's feelings about playing on stage, which he describes as "heaven."

Besides, what would he do without music? "It's a part of me. I can't live without it."

— DAVID CHEN

## PERFORMANCE NOTES:

**WHAT:** The Kenyatta Trio

**WHEN:** Every Friday night from 9pm to 11pm at the Tavern, 415, Xinyi Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市信義路四段415號). Tel: (02) 8780-0892. Every Saturday from 9pm to 11pm at Capone's Restaurant, 312, Zhongxiao E Rd, Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段312號). Tel: (02) 2773-3782

**DETAILS:** No cover charge

## Lessons in liberalism

Samuel Lee, like many South Korean university students in the 1960s, participated in the April Revolution demonstrations that eventually toppled Syngman Rhee's military regime. He later continued his dissident activities in West Germany, where he coordinated a protest movement against Park Chung-hee's dictatorship.

"I had organized a democratic movement ... called [the] Forum for Democracy in Korea," Lee said in a telephone interview with the *Taipei Times*. "We were fighting against the dictatorship in [South] Korea. But after giving ... interviews ... in the German press, I couldn't return to Korea until 1982 — after 14 years [of] staying in Europe, harbored in exile."

His early experiences as a student

dissident at home and political exile abroad informed his later work as a founder of the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy, one of South Korea's most powerful civic organizations, and as Secretary-General of UNESCO's Korean National Commission — experiences he will address in a talk tomorrow titled *Why We Are Where We Are: A Personal Account of South Korea's Path to Democracy*.

The talk, part of the MediaTek lectures hosted by the Lung Yingtai Cultural Foundation (龍應台文化基金會), will be held in English with simultaneous interpretation in Mandarin.

"I would like to describe the process of how we changed our country from



Civil rights activist and former dissident Samuel Lee will give a lecture on South Korea's democratization.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE LUNG YINGTAI CULTURAL FOUNDATION

dictatorial rule to political democracy and also economic development and [the development of] peaceful relationship with North Korea," he said.

Lee, who is currently professor of social philosophy at Seoul's Soongsil University, said that the military dictatorship in North Korea helped justify authoritarianism in the South.

"Many thought that ... democracy could not be realized because of our antagonism and struggle against North Korea and any military government will

say that because of the dictatorship in North Korea we should also have an authoritarian government [in South Korea]," said Lee, who was born in North Korea.

When asked to cite the processes that enabled South Korea to move beyond its authoritarian past, Lee paused before answering.

"Gradually increasing the influence and power of civil society, including the intellectuals and religious leaders," he said. "And also, of course, the student movements."

Samuel Lee's lecture is tomorrow from 2pm to 5pm at the GIS Convention Center, B1, 85, Roosevelt Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路四段85號B1). The lecture is in English. Admission is free, but pre-registration is required. Call (02) 3322-4907, or register online at [www.civictaipei.org](http://www.civictaipei.org).

— NOAH BUCHAN

## TOP FIVE MANDARIN ALBUMS NOV. 14 TO NOV. 20

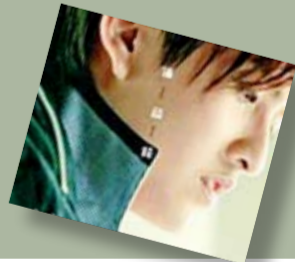
- 1 Jing Huang (黃曉鳴) and *Jing-Jing's Note* (倫語錄) with 29.92 percent of sales
- 2 Mayday (五月天) and *Poetry of the Day After* (後青春期的詩) with 23.7%

3 Rainie Yang (楊丞琳) and *Rainie's Proclamation* — *Not Yet a Woman* (半熟宣言) with 5.39%

4 Original soundtrack from *Cape No. 7* (海角七號) with 2.91%

5 JJ Lin (林俊傑) and *Sixology* (JJ 陸) with 2.53%

ALBUM CHART COMPILED FROM G-MUSIC ([WWW.G-MUSIC.COM.TW](http://WWW.G-MUSIC.COM.TW)), BASED ON RETAIL SALES



## Theater

**Women Write History, Our Spoken Culture** (女人寫歷史·自己說文化!) is part of The Voyageur Theater's (廣場劇團) "Herstories Project" and combines the stories and experiences of 10 women.

► Crown Art Center Theater (皇冠小劇場), B1, 50, Ln 120, Dunhua N Rd, Taipei City (台北市敦化北路120巷50號B1)

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

► Tickets are NT\$250, available through NTCH ticketing

A hubristic engineer attempts to create a purification system to eliminate pollution in **RU-XU Pithead** (如徐礦坑). But the problems he encounters threaten the health of the citizens in the city where he lives.

► Eslite Bookstore, Tainan (台南誠品書店), B2, 181, Changrue Rd Sec 1, Tainan (台南市長榮路一段181號 B2)

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

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

**The Little Matches Girl** (賣香仔火的小女孩) by Taiyuan Puppet Theater Company (台原偶戲團) tells the story of a greedy grandmother who forces

her granddaughter to work in a factory that makes matches. The girl befriends a little boy and together they discover that the matches are alive. One night, a disaster threatens the lives of both children and their match friends.

► Nadou Theater (納豆劇團), 79 Xining N Rd, Taipei City (台北市西寧北路79號)

► Tomorrow at 3pm

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

## Classical music

**Between Black and White — Pascal Roge Solo Piano Recital** (遊藝黑白 — 帕斯卡·羅傑鋼琴獨奏會) sees the celebrated interpreter of French composers perform a program featuring the works of Fauré, Satie, Debussy, Ravel and Poulenc.

► Sunday at 7:30pm (Taichung) and Tuesday at 7:30pm (Taipei)

► Taichung Chungshan Hall (台中市中山堂), 98 Hsuehshih Rd, Taichung City (台中市學士路98號) and the National Concert Hall, Taipei City

► Tickets are NT\$400 to NT\$2,000 for both venues, available through ERA ticketing

**2008 Taiwan Taiko Association Concert — A World of Harmony** (2008鼓動台灣 — 韻響世界)

brings Taiwan's taiko practitioners together with Japanese drummers to celebrate the perennial appeal of taiko

drumming. Over the next two weeks, three joint concerts, in Kaohsiung, Taichung and Sinjhuang, will take place featuring drummers from the Taiwan association and their sister association in Japan.

► Wednesday at 7:30pm (Kaohsiung)

► Kaohsiung Municipal Social Education Center (高雄市立社會教育館), 115 Hsuehfu Rd, Kaohsiung City (高雄市學府路115號)

► Tickets are NT\$300 and NT\$500, available through ERA ticketing

As part of the **2008 Taiwan International Piano Festival** (2008台灣國際鋼琴藝術節), Oxana Yablonskaya and Andrei Yeh (葉孟喬)

will perform with the National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra (國立台灣交響樂團) in a program that includes Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No.3* and Shostakovich's *Piano Concerto No.1*.

► Tomorrow at 7:30pm

► National Concert Hall, Taipei City

► Tickets are NT\$400 to NT\$2,500, available through NTCH ticketing

**Ju Percussion Group Winter Concert — Percussion Happens Daily** (朱宗慶打擊樂團冬季公演 — 擊樂進行式) features works by a host of international composers

including Emmanuel Sejourne, Eric Sammut, Gerard Lecoqte, Aurel Hollo, Toshimitsu Tanaka and Chang Yi-hui (張玉慧), which have been written

## Upcoming

Former Pulp frontman **Jarvis Cocker** and **Brett Anderson**, former frontman of Suede, headline **2008 Urban Simple Life** (簡單生活節), which takes place on Dec. 6 and Dec. 7 at Taipei's Huashan Culture Park (華山文化園區). Also scheduled to perform at the combination music festival/street fair are local acts 1976, Sodagreen (蘇打綠), Chang Chen-yue (張震嶽) and Free 9, Tizzy Bac, and Lin Sheng-xiang (林生祥). Simple Life, which will also feature a T-shirt market, a

"street market" for vendors selling original designs and handicrafts, and a market for organic products, is organized by Neutron Innovation (中子創新), the outfit behind the taiko (台客) TK Rock (台客搖滾嘉年華) festival. See next Friday's Around Town section for a full preview.

► 2008 Urban Simple Life (簡單生活節)

► Noon to 10pm Dec. 6 and Dec. 7



Brett Anderson performs next weekend at Urban Simple Life. PHOTO COURTESY OF BRETT ANDERSON

► 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). Call 0800-612-168 or visit [www.SimpleLifeTW.com](http://www.SimpleLifeTW.com) for more information

► NT\$1,500 a two-day pass or NT\$900 for a one-day pass when purchased in advance online at [tickets.books.com.tw](http://tickets.books.com.tw) or at 7-Eleven stores; NT\$1,200 for a one-day pass purchased at the door

► Sun Yat-sen Hall of the National Sun Yat-sen University Art Center (高雄中山大學逸仙館), 70 Lienhai Rd, Kaohsiung City (高雄市蓮海路70號)

► Today at 7:30pm

specifically for the Ju Percussion Group and which are a showcase for its unique sound and stage presence.

► Today at 7:30pm

## THE BIG EASY IN TAIPEI

Nbugu Kenyatta, a veteran of Taipei's live music scene, plays New Orleans funk, R'n'B and soul music with his band the Kenyatta Trio every Friday at the Tavern and every Saturday at Capone's.

PHOTO: DAVID CHEN, TAIPEI TIMES

