

AROUND TOWN

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FESTIVAL NOTES:

WHAT: 2008 Urban Simple Life (簡單生活節)**WHEN:** Tomorrow and Sunday from noon to 10pm**WHERE:** 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 for more information**TICKETS:** 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 or at 7-Eleven stores; NT\$1,200 for one-day passes purchased the day of the show**ON THE NET:** simplelife.tw.streetvoice.com

Crowd Lu, left, and 1976 perform at the 2008 Urban Simple Life festival.

PHOTOS: TAIPEI TIMES

Britpop icons Jarvis Cocker and Brett Anderson headline the 2008 Urban Simple Life (簡單生活節) festival, a combination outdoor concert/street fair that takes place this weekend at Taipei's Huashan Culture Park (華山文化園區).

On the musical side, Simple Life features popular local acts including 1976, Sodagreen (蘇打綠), Chang Chen-yue (張震嶽) and Free 9, Tizzy Bac, and Lin Sheng-xiang (林生祥), as well as guitar-playing and composition competitions. Street fair-style attractions include a "street market" for vendors selling original designs and handicrafts, a T-shirt market and a market for organic products.

Ex-Pulp frontman Jarvis Cocker, who released a critically acclaimed solo album in 2006 and is fresh off the heels of his UK tour in support of the 30th anniversary of Rough Trade Records, is one of this year's main attractions and performs on the festival's Sky Stage (天空舞台) at 7pm tomorrow.

Brett Anderson, formerly lead singer for the quintessentially English alternative rock band Suede, caps the weekend's festivities when he plays the Sky Stage on Sunday at 7pm, followed by local favorites and Golden Melody Award-winning folk-rock band Sodagreen at 8:50pm.

This is the second installation of Simple Life. The first iteration happened in 2006 and was headlined by Canadian soft rocker Daniel Powter, Angie Hart, formerly of Australian group Frente, and Wu Bai (伍佰) and China Blue.

Simple Life is organized by Neutron Innovation (中子創新), the group that runs the www.streetvoice.com Web site and organizes the TK Rock (台客搖滾嘉年華) festival.

TK Rock took the idea of *taike* (台客) — originally an ethnic slur used by Mainlanders to denigrate native-born Taiwanese — and ignited a national trend in the form of music by artists such as MC Hot Dog's *I Love TW Girls* (我愛台妹) and gloriously tacky fashions that riffed on Taiwanese night-market styles.

Simple Life aims to achieve something similar by packaging aspects of Taipei street culture, including its indie-rock scene, the growing number of outdoor markets such as Campo Life Art Carnival (CAMPO生活藝術狂歡節) and small shops run by young businesspeople in areas such as Yongkang Street (永康街).

Only this time the nascent trend's target market isn't just Taiwan, it's China.

In an interview earlier this year, Neutron Innovation's Landy Chang (張培仁), formerly an executive at Magic Stone and Rock Records, elaborated on the concept: "I figured out during the last 20 years when we were selling records" by Taiwanese musicians to the Chinese market that "we maybe sold, if you include pirated albums, one billion copies. This is *one billion copies*."

"I don't think [Taiwanese record labels] are selling CDs or songs or singers [in China]," he continued. "We are selling only one thing — that is Taiwan's better lifestyle."

For Chang the music that best embodies the attractive aspects of the Taipei way of life is not bawdy, raucous *taike*-style hip-hop and rock, but the acoustic, reflective "urban folk" sounds of artists such as Deserts Chang (張懸) and Sodagreen, which provide solace from the confusion and hectic pace of life in Asia's crowded urban centers.

"If you have a certain lifestyle you have a philosophy," Chang said. "You have your sense of beauty, your unique art sense, your unique style — *that* will make a trend."

"If people buy it it's not only to buy a song; they're buying a better lifestyle," he said.

A major inspiration — Chang called it a "role model for Simple Life" — was a visit in 1993 to Granville Island, an old industrial area in Vancouver that has been converted into a tourism mecca, with art galleries and produce and seafood markets, a market for children, buskers, an art school, and a water park that opens during the summer.

Campo and other outdoor fairs — such as the monthly market held at the Eslite Bookstore Dunnan Branch (敦南誠品書店), which evolved from an illegal street market that popped up outside the store in the evenings — have been developing a similar vibe in Taipei over the past few years.

"Everyone wants to have something to do with the creative market thing," said Kristy Cha Ray Chu (曲家瑞), director of Shih-Chien University's (實踐大學) Institute of Fashion and Communications Design, told the *Taipei Times* last year. "Before, these people used the make these things at home behind closed doors. Now they have a stage."

With this year's Simple Life, that stage is about to get a whole lot bigger.



Brett Anderson, former lead singer of Suede, plays in Taipei this Sunday at the Urban Simple Life festival.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BRETT ANDERSON

A rocker finds freedom in quieter simplicity

Brett Anderson and his band Suede shook up the UK rock scene in the 1990s with their edgy pop-rock. Now out with a new solo album heavy on atmosphere and mood, Anderson is happier than ever with his music and life after Suede

BY RON BROWNLOW
STAFF REPORTER

Keep it simple



Jarvis Cocker plays in Taipei tomorrow at 7pm.

PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

WHAT: Brett Anderson, live**WHEN:** Sunday at 7pm**WHERE:** 2008 Urban Simple Life Festival, Sky Stage; festival takes place at Huashan Culture Park (華山創意文化園區)**ADVANCE TICKETS:** NT\$900 for the entire day of bands, NT\$1,500 for a two-day pass; tickets available at 7-Eleven stores and tickets.books.com.tw**TICKETS AT THE DOOR:** NT\$1,200 per day**ON THE NET:** simplelife.tw.streetvoice.comBY DAVID CHEN
STAFF REPORTER

Brett Anderson and his former band Suede stirred up the British rock scene in the 1990s with pop-rock music full of David Bowie-esque glam and suburban angst. Considered the inspiration for a generation of groups referred to as "Britpop" bands (a term and category Anderson doesn't like), the band was notorious for indulging in the excesses and pomp associated with the rock 'n' roll lifestyle, played out in tales of drug addiction and in-fighting.

Things are calmer today for the 41-year-old singer-songwriter, who released his latest solo album this past summer and appears in Taipei on Sunday at the Urban Simple Life festival. Anderson holds no regrets about Suede, but is happy that those days are over.

"I had a lot of fun, but there was a lot of darkness as well ... but you know, there's no better way to spend your [20s] jumping up and down in front of thousands of screaming kids — there really isn't," he said earlier this week on the phone from London. "I heartily recommend it to anyone but I don't want to still be doing that, I've done that and it was great, but I'd be really sad if I was still trying to look like a 25-year-old, still trying to act like a 25-year-old."

One won't find such youthful exuberance on Anderson's second solo work, *Wilderness*, but instead a quiet, intense passion. Anderson stepped away from the standard pop-rock instrumentation, whittling down the album's overall sound to just his voice, cello and piano, and the occasional acoustic guitar. This minimalist approach allowed him to focus on the album's mood: melancholic and darkly romantic.

"I think successful albums are one mood, one sort of feeling, [where] you're taken to a world, you're taken to a little universe in 45 minutes, and I think that it's really an interesting kind of way of making a record," he said.

For Anderson songwriting starts with melody. "That's what music is to me. Words in music are secondary to the feeling, because music is all about feeling."

He sought to capture a feeling of raw immediacy by recording each song live with minimal takes and little overdubbing.

He also used older technology, cutting the tracks on 2-inch tape instead of a computer hard drive.

"Yeah, I just wanted to make an album that sounded really natural. I think modern musicians have too many options. I mean, you have [all sorts of] those computer programs ... and they're great if you can use them in the right way but if you get seduced by them, you end up making very plastic-sounding music," he said.

Sky Stage (天空舞台)

Day 1 (Saturday)

2:20pm 1976
3:50pm Crowd Lu (盧廣仲)
5:20pm Khalil Fong (方大同)
7:00pm Jarvis Cocker with special guest Faith Yang (楊乃文)
8:50pm Cheer Chen (陳綺貞)

Day 2 (Sunday)

2:20pm Tizzy Bac
3:50pm Tanya Chua (蔡健雅)
5:20pm Atari Kousuke (中孝介)
7:00pm Brett Anderson
8:50pm Sodagreen (蘇打綠)

Breeze Stage (微風舞台)

Day 1 (Saturday)

1:40pm Totem (圖騰)
3:10pm Taimaica Soundsystem (台買加環繞音效)
4:40pm Miss Stocking (絲襪小姐)
6:10pm Pixel Toy (人山人海)
8:00pm Lin Sheng-xiang (林生祥) and Ken Ohtake (大竹研)

Day 2 (Sunday)

1:40pm Hao-en (昊恩) and Jia-jia (家家)
3:10pm Panai (巴奈)
4:40pm Ma Nien-hsien (馬念先) and MC Hot Dog (熱狗)
6:10pm Ciacia (何欣穗)
8:00pm Deserts Chang (張懸) and Sandy Chen (陳珊妮)

Greenhouse Live Stage (綠音舞台)

Day 1 (Saturday)

2pm 929
3pm Bearbabes (熊寶貝樂團)
4pm Peggy Hsu (許哲珮)
5pm Waa Wei (魏如萱)
6pm 13 (拾參樂團)
7pm Hsu Chia-ying (徐佳瑩)
8pm Jyotsna Pang (彭靖惠)
9pm Bobby Chen (陳昇)

Day 2 (Sunday)

2pm Huang Jie (黃玠)
3pm Nylas (耐拉斯)
4pm Shi Chen-lan (史辰蘭)
5pm Natural Q (自然捲)
6pm Echo (回聲樂團)
7pm Huang Yun-ling (黃韻玲) and Pick (痞克四)
8pm Valen Hsu (許茹芸)
9pm Chang Chen-yue (張震嶽) and Free 9

Streetvoice Stage (音樂自在)

Day 1 (Saturday)

1:10pm PIA
1:50pm Staycool
2:30pm Jacuzzi
3:10pm Queen Suitcase (皇后皮箱)
3:50pm Koumis
4:30pm U.T.A. (屋塔樂團)
5:10pm Louisixteen (路易十六條柴)
5:50pm AB (白安)
6:30pm Daximen (大囍門)

Day 2 (Sunday)

1:10pm Fran
1:50pm logoS!
2:30pm Joker
3:10pm Passiwali (巴西瓦里)
3:50pm Sunny4
4:30pm Lee Guitars (fingerstyle guitar playing contest)
5:10pm Lee Guitars (guitar composition contest)
5:50pm Ban Ban (班班)
6:30pm Monkey Pilot (猴子飛行員)

— COMPILED BY DAVID CHEN