

POP STOP



Despite the recent success of his eponymous album, Jam Hsiao is still a bargain-hunter.

PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

Taiwan's top super-model **Lin Chi-ling** (林志玲) has the media abuzz over a rumored engagement to **Scott Qiu** (邱士楷), the son of a toilet magnate. The rumor emerged when Lin was spotted at an awards ceremony last month sporting a diamond ring, reports the *Liberty Times* (the *Taipei Times*' sister paper).

Lin's mother, **Wu Tzi-mei** (吳慈美), emphatically denied the reports, even though Qiu has made numerous appearances with Lin in public, including a late-evening hot pot date. This isn't the first time marriage rumors have surfaced for Lin, whose past romances are said to include Chinese billionaire **Yang Linchuan** (楊林川) and singer **Jerry Yan** (言承旭).

The public obsession with *Cape No. 7* (海角七號) continues, but the attention has backfired slightly for the homegrown box office hit's lead actor, **Van Fan** (范逸臣). The Amis pop singer has been slapped with some unwelcome comparisons this week to Hong Kong singer-actor **Edison Chen** (陳冠希) on Internet discussion boards, reports the *Liberty Times*. No, Van Fan hasn't been filming his sexual exploits with fellow celebrities, but has been accused of plagiarism: on a poster promoting one of his upcoming concerts, Van Fan strikes a pose that resembles a past jeans advertisement featuring Chen.

Van Fan's label, Forward Music (豐華唱片), says any similarities are a complete coincidence, and that the photo on the poster was chosen out of several thousand from a recent shoot. The accusations are unlikely to faze Van Fan, who was once rumored to be a possible replacement for Chen in the upcoming film *Jump* (跳出去). The film, which is being co-produced by Columbia Pictures and **Stephen Chow's** (周星馳) company Star Overseas, axed the Hong Kong actor's scenes following his "sex photo scandal." Van Fan's agent denies any knowledge of a potential role, however, and says the singer is sticking to concerts this month.

Meanwhile, death metal band **Chthonic** (閃靈) continues to enjoy international attention after its tour of Europe and the US last year. The group says that it is now being courted by record labels in Finland, the US, the UK and Germany to release its upcoming album, *Mirror of Retribution*, with the highest offer totaling tens of millions of NT dollars. But Taiwan's renowned headbangers, who have another



Van Fan seems to be riding on Edison Chen's coattails.

PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

international tour planned for next year, are not rushing into any deals at the moment, saying that "there are many things to consider."

Chthonic's lead singer, **Freddy Lim** (林經佐), has chimed in about Guns N' Roses' provocatively titled new album, *Chinese Democracy*, which has been officially banned in China. In an interview with Reuters, Lim said, "I think Guns N' Roses' new album shows the true rock spirit of the rock artist, of the rock culture, because we have to speak out loud our beliefs and our faith. If we believe in democracy, we believe in freedom, we should just speak out loud. Guns N' Roses has made a perfect example."

And as the belts tighten with the global recession, Pop Stop concludes this week with a look at how a few performers are faring in these challenging times.

William So (蘇永康) might have to think about moving to smaller venues. The Hong Kong pop singer filled about 3,000 seats at the National Taiwan University Sports Center (台大綜合體育館) last week — just over half of the stadium's capacity.

"Reality" show pop idol **Jam Hsiao** (蕭敬騰) has no qualms about footing a NT\$600,000 dental bill for his brother and sister, says a *Liberty Times* report, but as for himself? According to Hsiao's manager, he constantly compares prices for tissues and in shopping for a piano, his first stop was a second-hand shop. On his own dentist visits, the pop crooner travels the extra distance just to save NT\$7 in processing fees.

For her show last week at the Taipei Arena (台北小巨蛋), singer and actress **Rene Liu** (劉若英) spent NT\$2 million on six different costumes (which didn't reveal much more than her shoulders, to the disappointment of the *Liberty Times*' concert reviewer). And that figure doesn't appear to include the five Austin Minis that circled the stadium for one of her songs.

And **Jolin Tsai** (蔡依林) will still be laughing all the way to the bank. According to the *Apple Daily*, the pop starlet is reportedly ready to sign a deal with Warner Music that would exceed the value of her previous two-year contract with EMI, which was a cool NT\$120 million.

— COMPILED BY DAVID CHEN



Bruckner's monumental Eighth

Eco activists grab the 'rhinoceros' by the horn

Demonic possession, typhoid, infantile convulsions and impotence. These are some of the ailments traditional Chinese medical practitioners in Taiwan and China believed ground rhinoceros horn could cure, which helped push the animal to the brink of extinction in the 1980s.

At the time, Taiwanese officials and doctors ignored calls from the international community to ban the sale of rhinoceros horns, using as an excuse the fact that Taiwan wasn't a member of the international organization calling for its prohibition.

For Calvin Wen (溫炳原), a member of Green Party Taiwan's central executive committee, the above example is useful as an analogy when discussing climate change.

"Most of global society has a target [to reduce climate change]. Because Taiwan is not a UN member it is very common for government officials and even some scholars to say they don't have to take any measures to reduce [carbon] emissions," he said.

Taiwan's refusal to eliminate the importation of rhinoceros horns led the Clinton administration to impose sanctions on Taiwan — the first time the US had used trade sanctions to protect the environment. Wen fears that if Taiwan's business and political leaders don't act to reduce the island's carbon emissions, a similar scenario might play out.

A group of civic organizations including the Green Party are organizing a march and festival tomorrow to highlight the need for

Taiwan to reduce carbon emissions. The march begins at 1:30pm at Taiwan Democracy Hall's Liberty Square (自由廣場) and will proceed first to the Presidential Office and then to Da-an Forest Park (大安森林公園), where a music concert is scheduled to start at 3pm.

"Civil society has done a lot to cut carbon emissions," he said. "But we still think that the government should do more with their policy."

Taiwan's Environmental Protection Agency, meanwhile, has sent a delegation to Poznan, Poland, to take part in an intergovernmental meeting for drawing up a new agreement to reduce global warming to succeed the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012.

Wen, however, remains skeptical. He cites a litany of examples that illustrate how the government puts business interests before the environment, with the Suhua Highway project, Formosa Plastics steel plant and, most recently, the consumer voucher scheme being the most glaring examples.

"They could have at least encouraged green consumption," he said of the vouchers.

The Climate Change, Taiwan Cares march and festival (對抗地球暖化—台灣行動) begins tomorrow at 1:30pm at Taiwan Democracy Hall's Liberty Square (自由廣場) and will proceed first to the Presidential Office and then to Da-an Forest Park (大安森林公園) where a concert will be held. For more information, visit tw-climatecampaign.blogspot.com.

— NOAH BUCHAN

Gunther Herbig is an ideal conductor for the majestic symphonies of Anton Bruckner. Back in Taipei from his home in Michigan, Herbig will tonight conduct the National Symphony Orchestra in the Austrian master's by turns serene, resonant, spiritual, free-ranging, but above all spacious Symphony No.8 in the National Concert Hall. It should be a memorable occasion.

Bruckner's self-doubting, naive, but heart-on-the-sleeve approach to an orchestral form that had by the 1890s already chalked up masterpieces by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Mendelssohn and others had its mockers at first, and even today musicians can be found who admit to coming late to an admiration of the self-taught Catholic recluse. Nevertheless these expansive, rhapsodic works have attracted some of the world's most celebrated conductors, and the Eighth is without doubt one of the greatest of them.

It was Brahms who first mockingly called them "boa-constrictor symphonies." But this is not entirely a condemnation. They do indeed coil inexorably round you, then squeeze you, though possibly not to death, in gigantic climaxes that resemble muscular spasms. But this can be a thrilling experience, though possibly not one that the chaste Brahms, genius that he is, was entirely disposed to appreciate.

The reason Herbig is so suited to this music is that he is a Romantic at heart, and Bruckner's symphonies are among the outlying peaks at the end of the great mountain range that was Romanticism. They may almost totter under their own weight, but their combination of nobility, lyricism and sheer ambition makes them high summits indeed.

Herbig has always been a proponent of the great 19th-century classics as opposed to their often short-lived modernist successors. But he is also an austere conductor with the power to

rein in Bruckner's tendency to prolixity and diffuseness, and shape the parts into the architecture of a titanic, visionary whole.

The Bruckner symphony, well over an hour long, occupies the second half of tonight's program. The first half is taken up with the Toru Takemitsu's *Requiem*, his first work for concert performance, written in 1957.

Takemitsu was Japan's most famous 20th-century composer. He was enormously productive, writing the scores for 93 films (including such classics as Hiroshi Teshigahara's *Woman in the Dunes* and Akira Kurosawa's *Ran*) and incorporating elements from jazz and American popular music, of which he had an encyclopedic knowledge, into works that on the surface had more in common with the European avant-garde.

Much of *Requiem*, for string instruments only, is soaring and yearning and far from abstruse, however. A short clip can be heard on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QwZwYJe92o.

Tonight's concert begins at 7pm, not the more usual 7.30pm. Don't be late — if you are you can guarantee the sleek attendants at the National Concert Hall won't let you in until the interval. Why they can't quietly admit latecomers to the back of the upper level, as is the custom in some other auditoriums, I've never been able to understand.

— BRADLEY WINTERTON

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

WHAT: Gunther Herbig conducts the National Symphony Orchestra in Takemitsu and Bruckner
WHERE: National Concert Hall, Taipei City
WHEN: Tonight at 7pm
TICKETS: NT\$400 to NT\$2,000; call (02) 3393 9888 for details

Gunther Herbig, left, knows how to handle Bruckner.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TENG HUI-EN

TOP FIVE MANDARIN ALBUMS

NOV. 21 TO NOV. 27

- 1 Mayday (五月天) and *Poetry of the Day After* (後青春期的詩) with 49.22 percent of sales
- 2 Jing Huang (黃靖倫) and *Jing-Jing's Note* (倫語錄) with 3.89%
- 3 Judy Chiang (江蕙) and *Jia Ni Lan Lao Lao* (甲你攞牢牢) with 2.74%
- 4 Original sound track from *Cape No. 7* (海角七號) with 2.91%
- 5 Jessie Chiang (江語晨) with *Teruterubozu* (晴天娃娃) with 2.05%



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

Classical music

NSO Meet the Master — Heavenly Symphony (NSO 遇見大師系列 — 天國的音樂) brings conductor Gunther Herbig, a protege of Herbert von Karajan, to conduct the National Symphony Orchestra in a program featuring two powerful works: Bruckner's *Symphony No. 8* in C Minor and Toru Takemitsu's *Requiem*. [See story above.]
► Today at 7:30pm
► National Concert Hall, Taipei City
► Tickets are NT\$400 to NT\$2,000, available through NTCH ticketing

Brilliant Pipe — Paul Meyer & TSO (炫麗樂壇的笛音 — 華美管大師保羅·梅耶與北市交) sees French clarinetist Paul Meyer perform with the Taipei Symphony Orchestra (台北市立交響樂團) under the baton of guest conductor Heiko Mathias Forster. The program will include Richard Strauss' *Don Juan, Op.20* and *Suite from 'Der Rosenkavalier' Op.59* and Spohr's *Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra No.4 in E Minor* and *Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra No.2 in E Flat Major*.
► Tomorrow at 7:30pm (Taipei) and Sunday at 2:30pm (Hsinchu)
► National Concert Hall, Taipei City and

the Performance Hall of the Bureau of Cultural Affairs, Hsinchu City (新竹市文化局演藝廳), 17, Tungta Rd Sec 2, Hsinchu City (新竹市東大路二段17號)
► Tickets are NT\$200 to NT\$1,000, available through NTCH ticketing

Concerto de Los Angeles (天使的協奏曲首演) is a concert featuring guitar virtuosos from Japan, South Korea and Taiwan with Shingo Fujii conducting. The performers include Shinichi Fukuda, Liu Shih-yu (劉士瑋), Kim Yong-tae and Yasuji Ohagi. The program includes arrangements for guitar duets and trios of works by Rossini, De Falle, Toru Takemitsu and Shingo Fujii's own *Concerto de Los Angeles for Solo and Guitar Orchestra*.
► Sunday at 2:30pm
► National Concert Hall, Taipei City
► Tickets are NT\$400 to NT\$1,200, available through NTCH ticketing

Theater

The president's daughter is cast in the role of Juliet in Tainaner Ensemble's (台南人劇團) humorous play within a play **K24 (Chaos)**. The K24 Bureau of Investigation discovers that an attempt will be made on the first daughter's life on opening night and tries to uncover

Highlight

Up for a little slap and tickle this weekend? Dr Renculous Lipz and the Scallyunz are having a release party for their first CD, *Journey to the East*, at VU tomorrow with guests Point 22 (.22) and New Hong Kong Hair City. Both Dr Lipz and the members of .22 have naughty lyrics that could be misinterpreted if you don't listen carefully for the tongue-in-cheek (and other places) aspect of their message. They aren't bad boys, they just sing that way. Lipz is a whiz with words, and .22 are veteran performers who put on a silly show with serious talent. It's an interesting lineup: hip-hop from the Doctor, a shot of alt-country and psychedelic rock from .22 and hair-curling rock-based funk with heavy metal saxophone from Hair City. See this Monday's *Taipei Times* for a full story and surreal interview with Dr Lipz (aka Nick Sylvester) himself
► Dr Renculous Lipz and the Scallyunz *Journey to the East* "seedy" CD release party with guests Point 22 (.22) and



Dr Renculous Lipz, right, mugs for the camera with Daddy Phat Saks of the Scallyunz.

COURTESY OF DR RENCULOUS LIPZ

New Hong Kong Hair City
► Tomorrow from 10pm until late at VU Livehouse, B1, 77, Wuchang St Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市武昌街二段77號B1). Call (02) 2314-1868 for more information
► Tickets are NT\$250, which includes a drink and a CD
► On the Net: www.drลิปz.com/index.html
► On Facebook: Journey to the East (under "events")

► Tonight and tomorrow at 7:30pm and tomorrow and Sunday at 2:30pm
► Tickets are NT\$500, available through NTCH ticketing

The Little Matches Girl (賣番仔火的小女孩) 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 (納豆劇場), 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

National Guo Guang Opera Company (國立國光劇團) revises its **Journey Through Hell (閻羅夢·天地一秀才)**, a Beijing Opera based on the classic Chinese novel of the same name written by Chen Yaxian (陳亞先). Guo Guang's Wang An-chi (王安祈) transforms the original work into a sumptuous performance that emphasizes the philosophical underpinnings of the original.
► Tainan Municipal Cultural Center (台南市立文化中心), 332, Chunghua E Rd Sec 3, Tainan City (台南市中華東路三段332號).
► Tomorrow at 2:30pm
► Tickets are NT\$300 to NT\$1,000, available through NTCH ticketing

Contemporary

Tomorrow at **VU Live House** it's

Taichung's Point 22 (.22), which plays "trash-can funk with some humorous punk" one-man hip-hop act **Dr Renculous Lipz**, who is celebrating the release of his new CD [see Highlight] and funk rockers **New Hong Kong Hair City**.
► B1, 77, Wuchang St Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市武昌街二段77號B1). Call (02) 2314-1868 for more information
► Tomorrow at 11pm
► NT\$250 entrance includes one drink

Tonight **The Wall** hosts garage-rock band **Rabbit Is Rich** (兔子很有錢), opening for Southern Taiwan punks **Fire Ex (滅火器)**. Tomorrow is an ear-piercing showcase of metal with a lineup that includes **Triple Six** (666), **Dizzy Butterfly** (旋轉蝴蝶) and **NMR**. Nu-rock and nu-metal are the sounds on Sunday with **Poguang Shefan** (波光折返), **Undersoul**, **Sideffect** and **Beright**.
► 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 visit www.the-wall.com.tw for more information
► Starts at 8pm tonight, tomorrow and Sunday
► NT400 tonight; NT\$500, NT\$666 or NT\$1,000 tomorrow (for more info visit www.rockclub.com.tw); and NT\$300 on Sunday

[EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT]