

Think global, rock local

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

WHAT: Music for Human Rights (final concert of Amnesty International's Small Places Tour 2008 in Taiwan)
WHEN: Tomorrow night from 6pm to 11pm
WHERE: The Wall (這牆), B1, 200, Roosevelt Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路四段200號B1). Visit www.the-wall.com.tw or call (02) 2930-0162 for more information
TICKETS: NT\$600
ON THE NET: www.smallplaces.tour; www.amnesty.tw

BAND SCHEDULE:

6PM White Eyes (白目)
7PM Aphasia (阿飛西雅)
8PM Lin Sheng-xiang (林生祥) and Ken Ohtake (大竹研)
9PM LTK Commune (濁水溪公社)
10PM Kou Chou Ching (拷秋勤) and Chang Jui-chuan (張君鈺)



Above: Indie folk and pop band 929 plays at the EsLite Bookstore on Xinyi Road in Taipei in October. The group made the show part of Amnesty International's Small Places Tour in celebration of the 60th year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. PHOTO COURTESY OF 929
 Left: Garage rockers White Eyes appear tomorrow at the final night of Amnesty International's Small Places Tour 2008. PHOTO COURTESY OF WHITE EYES

For the past three months, a handful of Taiwanese bands have been rocking the boat in a global way. Groups like heavy metal heroes Chthonic (閃靈) and revered post-rockers Sugar Plum Ferry (甜梅號) billed several of their shows as part of Amnesty International's Small Places Tour, which celebrates the 60th year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, or UHDR 60.

Tomorrow night, Taiwan's portion of the tour concludes at The Wall (這牆) in Taipei when five groups, including anarchist rockers LTK Commune (濁水溪公社) and Hakka singer-songwriter Lin Sheng-xiang (林生祥), perform in a special concert to help Amnesty International Taiwan raise awareness of human rights issues.

"We want to make human rights sound cool," said Chang Tieh-chih (張鐵志), a music writer and political commentator who serves as a director of Arts and Youth at Amnesty Taiwan and organized the tour. He sees the Small Places Tour as a way to introduce the concept of social consciousness to Taiwanese youths. "They don't feel familiar with the idea of human rights," he said. "Our aim is to use popular culture as a weapon to promote human rights."

The Small Places Tour was conceived

by Amnesty International as an awareness and membership drive through music concerts. Endorsements from Peter Gabriel and U2 guitarist The Edge urged musicians all over the world to participate in the tour from Sept. 10 until the anniversary of UHDR 60, which fell on Wednesday. In practice, bands perform according to their regular schedules, but voice their support for Amnesty's campaigns at shows and encourage their fans to learn about human rights issues. The tour's name was inspired by Eleanor Roosevelt's famous speech on human rights, in which she said, "Where, after all, do human rights begin? In small places, close to home — so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world."

The Small Places Tour in Taiwan included over 10 bands and more than 20 different shows, at which Chang and fellow volunteers manned booths, passed out flyers and sold T-shirts. Since the start of the tour, Amnesty Taiwan has collected over 1,000 e-mails from concert attendees — an important step in getting the word out about human rights issues, says Chang.

Chang has been encouraged by supportive responses from musicians and notes that more bands than ever are endorsing social causes. The college rock



band Echo (回聲樂團) recorded a song especially for the tour, titled *Liberation* (解放), and will donate the proceeds from it to Amnesty Taiwan.

Chang highlighted the recent concert in support of the Wild Strawberries student movement, which has been protesting recent alleged police brutality and current restrictions on public demonstrations.

It may, however, take the average young music fan longer to catch on, says Chang, noting that many do not realize mainstream artists such as U2 and REM champion human rights causes.

A streak of rock 'n' roll idealism runs through the 37-year-old Chang, who authored a best-selling book in Taiwan about rock music and social change in the West. "For us rock fans, we have to fight against the mainstream," he said, referring to public apathy. "If we don't care about socially disadvantaged groups, who will?"

Tomorrow's concert includes performances from post-rock band Aphasia, hip-hop musicians Kou Chou Ching (拷秋勤) and Chang Jui-chuan (張君鈺), and garage rockers White Eyes (白目).

In between band sets there will be screenings of short films by Amnesty International introducing each of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights' 30 articles. Amnesty Taiwan will also run a booth to recruit new members and provide information on its current human rights campaigns.

— DAVID CHEN

RESTAURANTS

Yuma Southwestern Grill

Address: 21, Alley 11, Ln 216, Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段216巷11弄21號)
Telephone: (02) 8773-8895
Open: Daily from 11am to 11pm
Average meal: NT\$350
Details: English and Chinese menu; major credit cards accepted
On the Net: yumasouthwesterngrill.com

With several restaurant ventures already under his belt, including the successful Alleycat's pizza chain in Taipei, Alan Pontes is at it again. "I wanted to do something completely different," says the Capetown native. He will certainly please Taipei diners in search of a fresh twist on Western fare with his latest establishment, Yuma Southwestern Grill.



Yuma Southwestern Grill's half portion of baby back ribs, with a side of long-grained rice and homemade coleslaw, makes for a hearty meal. PHOTO: DAVID CHEN, TAIPEI TIMES

Customers are greeted with a spacious dining room that holds 120 people and is painted in earthy yellows and reds. The Southwestern theme had long been in the back of Pontes' mind, as he often traveled through the region by train from Los Angeles to Chicago during his college years in the US. When the chance to start a new restaurant in Taipei came up, three words popped up in his mind: "clean, fresh and dry."

Add festive to that list. Barbecued chicken, ribs, and prawns are the main offerings at Yuma, served in large portions for people to share — a nod to local dining sensibilities and an idea he thinks will resonate with Western clientele. "That's what I found at Alleycat's. People had a lot more fun when they shared their food," he says.

But lone diners need not fear. I found a hearty meal in the half portion of baby back ribs (NT\$370), which comes with a side of coleslaw and long-grained rice. Basted in a cranberry and honey sauce, the meat was succulent and tangy and slid off the bone easily. The ribs are also available with two other sauces: a "dry rub," made of herb seasoning, or "peri-peri," made with chili peppers.

These choices, along with a rosemary and lime sauce, are also available with the grilled chicken at NT\$220 for a half portion or NT\$390 for a whole. The chicken and ribs are marinated for 24 hours in a citrus and herb seasoning, roasted slowly in an oven, then cooked on a flame grill upon order, Pontes says.

Such homemade goodness appears across the menu, even down to the coleslaw (NT\$90 a la carte). Yuma's unique recipe has a zesty lemon-based dressing and cranberries.

Porky's pulled pork nachos (NT\$240) could also be a meal by itself. The nachos arrive as a bed of freshly made tortilla chips, pulled pork, romaine lettuce, bell peppers, onions and jalapenos, topped with melted Monterey jack cheese, corn salsa and sour cream. The dish can also be ordered with shredded chicken (NT\$220) or without meat (NT\$200).

It's worth looking at the extensive menu on Yuma's Web site before visiting so as not to get overwhelmed. Although it lists combination ideas for parties of two to eight people, couples seem at a disadvantage with only three suggestions provided. Pontes says he's already working on a new menu layout and is planning to add burritos to the lunch menu, which includes tortilla wraps ranging from NT\$150 to NT\$195. More vegetarian options are also in the works.

All in all, Yuma offers value for your money, especially for large parties, and then some. There's no service charge and the drinks are inexpensive: Corona is NT\$100 per bottle; Hoegaarden on tap is NT\$130 for a 250ml serving; and margaritas are NT\$390 per pitcher.

Make sure to save room for the Tijuana vanilla and lime flan (NT\$120), a specialty of Yuma's chef, Ronald Chan (陳煥新). The tanginess of the lime adds a refreshing touch to this creamy custard dessert.

Yuma Southwestern Grill is located near Toasteria and Alleycat's on Zhongxiao East Road. To get there by the MRT, go to the Zhongxiao-Dunhua station (on the blue line), leave the station at Exit No. 3, and walk straight ahead along Zhongxiao East Road. Turn right at Lane 248, just before Yanji Street (延吉街). Make a right on the alley just past Mary's Hamburgers.

— DAVID CHEN

So Free Wood Fired Pizza & Cheese

Address: 28, Ln 283, Roosevelt Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路三段283巷28號)
Telephone: (02) 2364-3351
Open: Daily from 11am to 9pm
Average meal: NT\$120
Details: Chinese and English menu; credit cards not accepted

So Free is as much a tribute to the LOHAS spirit as it is a pizzeria serving up some of the tastiest pies in town.

Opened last week, the hole-in-the-wall, located across from a park and up the street from Sababa in Gongguan (公館), resembles the inside of a small rustic cabin. Logs are stacked under the L-shaped bar — fuel for the custom-built brick oven in which the vegetarian pizzas are cooked.

Embers from the oven, which releases a pleasant aroma of burning wood, are placed in traditional wicker baskets and set on the long wooden bar for patrons to warm their hands. Two long wooden benches, the restaurant's limited seating, face the kitchen area.

Like the restaurant's architecture, So Free keeps the menu simple with an eye towards the environment and wholesome fare. There is a choice of six small pizzas (NT\$120), with which there can be no mixing and matching of toppings.

The service is quick and the portions generous but not glutinous. The pizza crusts are thin (those used to Pizza Hut might think a little too thin) and cooked crispy on the outside with the center left soft and chewy.

The basil (pesto) mushroom is the only pie served without marinara sauce and is my favorite so far: slices of fresh king oyster mushrooms and onions on a bed of delicious homemade pesto sauce and topped with just the right amount of mozzarella cheese, and not too greasy.

The potato rosemary pizza sees the pesto sauce replaced with marinara. Generous amounts of diced potatoes make up the "meat" of this pie with dry rosemary sprinkled over the spuds and covered with mozzarella. I spent the first minute smelling the mouthwatering aroma of freshly cooked rosemary before digging in.

The other four pizza selections are mushroom and asparagus, smoked cheese, apple cinnamon and the somewhat bizarre ginger and egg (ginger superman).

The beverage menu is limited to organic barley tea (NT\$20), a malt drink called Karamalz (NT\$35), Perrier (NT\$50) and apple juice (NT\$65).

— NOAH BUCHAN



So Free's pies are thin, relatively healthful and prepared before your eyes. PHOTO: NOAH BUCHAN, TAIPEI TIMES

EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT

THE VINYL WORD

Gone, but not forgotten. After a month of goodbye parties, Junior and Megan bowed out with a final show last weekend in the Onyx room at Luxy, leaving a big hole in the country's house music scene.

Arriving in Taiwan in March 2005, they threw down the gauntlet with funky Chicago house. "Very few DJs have played out as frequently and at such big parties as these guys," said Fratuzki. "When it came to adding their personal touch to the scene, they always kept it fresh with new events at different venues."

Shawn Kidd encapsulated the Junior and Megan experience by recounting one of their earliest gigs at Penthouse in Taichung. "They definitely helped bring a new flavor to the Penthouse in Taichung ... introducing new house music to one of the dirtiest clubs that ever opened its doors in the middle of Taiwan."

"Style-wise, I think they held their



Black Reign, above, and Marcus Aurelius spin reggae, dance hall and hip-hop tomorrow at The Wall. PHOTO COURTESY OF BLACK REIGN

ground with the Chicago sound," said Saucy. "Junior and Megan have had the most consistent sound on the island. Soon as I walk into a bar and hear that bumpity bump, I know it's JAM time."

On their changing style Megan said, "We used to play more funky house when we got here ... now it has a harder, dirtier, 'fidity' sound, like tech house. We have been playing fidity house for a while now and we really like it."

Marcus Aurelius told the Vinyl Word:

"For me, Junior and Megan took house music out from its stuffy and pompous shell and brought it to the people. Instead of being too cool hiding behind the decks, they made people party with them because they loved merrymaking."

As members of Team Scrape, the after-party crew who keep going until Sunday night or later, they were known for shotgunning beers, incredible stamina, Junior's lack of balance toward the end of the night and Megan's infectious enthusiasm.

"My first memory of JAM was in Kenting a few seasons back," said Saucy. "Hooker and I were screaming around on a borrowed motorcycle at six or seven in the morning. We ran into these two cool cats on the street looking for the after-party ... we ended up partying well into the next day. Some things never change."

"The title I think no one could ever take off them," said Fratuzki, is "last people to show up to the party, late, and last people to leave."

"Junior and Megan are boisterous, amusing, entertaining, lively and any other synonym for fun you can think of," said Aurelius.

The two are survived by a party scene that seems a little more lost than usual this weekend. But life goes on. Check out the 1980s party tonight at Copa to drink the blues away with Cap and Kidd taking you back to the era when Megan was a wee child and Junior a teenage George Clinton wannabe.

Tonight, The Last 80s Party at Copa. 11pm until 3am. 137, Yanji St., Taipei City (台北市大安區延吉街137巷2號). Free entry.

It may be a little early for crowning successors to JAM, but all are welcome tomorrow night at Island Jam's Kings and Queens Ball at The Wall (這牆), with Black Reign International Sound and Aurelius playing reggae, dance hall and hip-hop. Dress to impress. A free bottle of champagne will be given away to the "best-dressed maiden of the evening."

Tomorrow, Kings and Queens Ball at The Wall. 11:30pm until late. B1, 200, Roosevelt Road Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路四段200號B1). NT\$350 cover includes one drink.

Go to www.myspace.com/taill9 for more information on Island Jam events.

— TOM LEEMING

Underworld (地下社會)

Tonight Underworld (地下社會) hosts an evening of metal music with Anti Cross, Catapult and One Way to Die. Post-rock band The Peppermints (薄荷葉) celebrate their 10th anniversary tomorrow night.

Punk group Inhuman Band (非人物種), newly formed noise band Shebang-a (死蚊子) and screamo band Yongbi Zai Changge (用筆在唱歌) play on Wednesday.

► 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

► Music shows tonight and tomorrow are from 9:30pm to 11:30pm

► Entrance is NT\$300 and includes one drink

Bliss

Taipei's foremost Chicago blues band, BoPoMoFo (ㄅㄛㄆㄇㄝ), takes to the stage tonight at Bliss. Tomorrow it's dance music with tunes spun by vDub and Sunrise Soup.

► 148, Xinyi Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市信義路四段148號), one block east of Dunhua South Road (敦化南路). Call Bliss at (02) 2702-1855 or go to www.bliss-taipei.com. For more information on live performances at Bliss, visit www.myspace.com/blisslivehouse

► Tonight at 10pm and tomorrow at 8pm. Bar/kitchen open from 7pm daily. Ladies night Fridays; women get one free cocktail of their choice

► NT\$200 for music shows tonight and tomorrow

Cosmopolitan Grill

Every Wednesday night at the Cosmopolitan Grill there's a blues open mic, held by the Blues Society on

Taiwan. 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

► 8pm to 11pm every Wednesday

► No admission fee

Comedy

Hartley's Gone Nuts: Empty Sack Syndrome

Happens tonight at the Comedy Club. English comedian Hartley Pool is back, headlining a stand-up comedy show in Taipei for the first time in 12 months. He is assisted by his own creations, Sammi the Psychic Cat and Corky Clarkson, and by Tom Levene, who is not his own creation, but an actual independent person. Musical relief will be provided by singer-songwriter David Foster.

► Comedy Club, B1, 24 Taishun St, Taipei City (台北市泰順街24號B1). For reservations, call (02) 2369-3730

► Tonight at 10:15pm

► NT\$350 admission includes a drink and a packet of nuts. NT\$80 drink specials all night

Exhibitions

SuperGeneration@Taiwan (小·碎·花·不·亂·變·新·時代)

More than 20 artists born in 1970s and 1980s show off their new attitudes toward art: an embrace of the trivial, the banal and the lighthearted.

Museum of Contemporary Art (台北當代藝術館)

39 Chang'an W Rd, Taipei City (台北市長安西路39號). Open Tuesdays through Sundays from 10am to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2552-3720

► Until Jan 18, 2009

Journey to Natural Path — Calligraphy and Shanshui by Chang Kuang-pin (任其自然—張光賓教授95歲華壽詩畫展)

features recent Chinese landscape ink paintings as well as 300 Tang Dynasty poems in cursive script by the 95-year-old maestro.

► Taipei National University of Arts — Kuandu Museum of Arts (台北藝術大學關渡美術館), 1 Xueyuan Rd, Beitou Dist, Taipei City (台北市北投區學園路1號). Open Tuesdays through Sundays from 10am to 5pm. Tel: (02) 2896-1000 X2432

► Until Feb. 8, 2009

Color Circle (色相環)

is an exhibition of photographic works by six artists who weave together a photographic narrative using their own distinct styles, techniques, color palettes and aesthetics.

► VT Artsalon (非常廟藝文空間), B1, 45 and 47 Yitong St, Taipei City (台北市伊通街45, 47號B1). Open Sundays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 2pm to 11pm and Fridays and Saturdays from 2pm to 1am. Tel: (02) 2516-1060

► Tomorrow through Jan. 3, 2009

Sudden Stillness — Chou Chu-wang Solo Exhibition (一瞬靜止—周珠旺個展)

Chou captures fleeting moments with oil paintings

Upcoming

Contemporary Legend Theater's (CLT, 當代傳奇劇場)

1993 classic *Medea* (樓蘭女) has been revived in a revamped production that looks as new and cutting-edge as it did 15 years ago. Starring Beijing opera diva Wei Hai-ming (魏海敏) and directed by CLT founder Wu Hsing-kuo (吳興國), this new production has recently returned from a hugely successful tour of Shanghai and Hong Kong.

Wu has repeatedly emphasized that *Medea* is not an opera production, but a piece of contemporary theater built on the technical foundations of Beijing opera. The costumes by Tim Yip (葉錦天) have lost none of their freshness, and the production sports a new and "organic" set design by Lin Keh-hua (林克華), Taiwan's foremost theater designer.

Performances will be in Mandarin with both Chinese and English subtitles. *Medea* will be performed

at the National Theater, Taipei City from Thursday to Dec. 20 at 7:30pm and on Dec. 21 at 2:30pm. Tickets costing NT\$1,300 to NT\$3,000 are still available and can be purchased through NTCH ticketing.

► Until Dec. 28

Joint Exhibition by Li Yung-yu and Hsueh Yu-chun (李永裕·薛幼春雙人聯展)

In this series of oil

paintings, Li uses vivid colors and wild brushstrokes to capture the dazzling movements of flamenco dancers, while Hsueh's expressionist works stir deep emotions.

► Cathy United Art Center (國泰世華藝術中心), 7F, 236 Dunhua N Rd, Taipei City (台北市敦化北路236號7樓). Open Mondays through Saturdays from 10am to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2717-0988

► Until Dec. 27



The new-and-improved *Medea* just completed a successful tour of China. PHOTO COURTESY OF CONTEMPORARY LEGEND THEATER

at the National Theater, Taipei City from Thursday to Dec. 20 at 7:30pm and on Dec. 21 at 2:30pm. Tickets costing NT\$1,300 to NT\$3,000 are still available and can be purchased through NTCH ticketing.

► Until Dec. 27