

POP STOP

Some couples are content with merely posing cheesily in fields of flowers for their engagement photos, but actor **Jason Lee** (李傑聖) and his journalist fiancée **Zhang Xu-lan** (張旭嵐) decided to base their shoot on classic films — including **Ang Lee's** (李安) *Lust, Caution* (色戒), which apparently counts as an instant classic in the couple's eyes.

The bride and groom stripped to the buff for the photo, which features the artfully lit pair lying in an acrobatic embrace inspired by one of **Tony Leung** (梁朝偉) and **Tang Wei's** (湯唯) infamous bouts of mattress wrestling in the film.

Despite the fact that her legs are stretched clear above her fiancée's head, the bashful Zhang had one request for the photographer: "Don't make my face too clear!"

Scandalous photos also featured in the gossip pages when college student **Miffy Zhang** (張萌) threatened to publish private pictures taken during her recent dalliance with television host and writer **Joe Nieh** (倪震), which nearly destroyed his

the couple's closest relatives and friends in attendance. Famous Hong Kong fortune-teller **Mak Ling-ling** (麥玲玲) told the newspaper that Jan. 5 is an auspicious date, bringing with it the ability to start anew.

Then came a new twist that has everyone scratching their heads. Hong Kong's *East Weekly* reported on Tuesday that Nieh and Chow had already gotten married in San Francisco — 10 years ago. Among the more credible of the conspiracy theories making the rounds, as summarized by the *Apple Daily*, is that Nieh orchestrated the series of events as part of a publicity stunt to revive his flagging career and garner media attention for Chow's upcoming 20th-anniversary concert. Song Zude (宋祖德), a private investigator in China, wrote on his blog that Nieh is in debt to the tune of HK\$5 million and has also spent most of Chow's savings.

In yet more on-off couple news, actress **Ding Ning** (丁寧) and ex-beau **Tang Zhi-ping** (唐治平) may be reuniting half a year after they broke up, reported the *Liberty Times*. The two were spotted in an East District cafe, reminiscing about old times and playing with Ding's dog.

The romantic mood was tempered somewhat by the presence of Tang's mother, who sat near the couple and occasionally reached over to sneak sips from their cups of tea. When Ding and Tang were asked by a reporter if they were reconciling, they quickly answered in unison, "The dog is sick, that's why we met up today."

One couple that seems intent on blowing up all bridges is actress **Jean Wang** (王靜瑩) and soon-to-be ex-husband **Chen Wei-tao** (陳威陶), whose divorce proceedings have been long and acrimonious. The *Liberty Times* reported that after yet another failed settlement negotiation, Wang posted on her blog that while divorce is painful, she did not want her toddler son to grow up in an abusive household.

Chen immediately lashed out, calling for Wang to produce proof of abuse and threatening to sue her if she couldn't come up with the evidence. After Chen's retort, Wang's entry disappeared for a few hours before reappearing.

The two have been battling for custody of their three-year-old son. Chen's family has accused Wang of causing him emotional distress by refusing to let him see the tot, while Wang's side accuses Chen of having an explosive temper.

— COMPILED BY CATHERINE SHU AND DEREK YIU PUI-YUNG



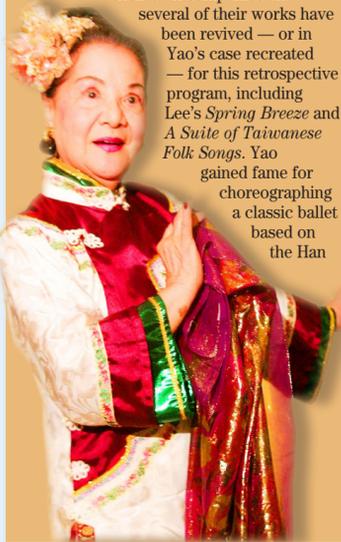
A new trend in wedding photography? PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

The National Theater is closing out the dance year with a look back at Taiwan's dance history, featuring the work of three living "national treasures" who have danced, taught and inspired for decades and are still going strong.

Lee Tseg-o (李彩娥) may be 82, but she shows no sign of slowing down. Henry Yu (游好彥), who was the first Asian man to join Martha Graham's dance troupe (in the 1970s), has been called the "father of modern dance" in Taiwan. Yao Ming-li (姚明麗) is known in Taiwan as the "eternal ballerina."

Both Lee and Yao trained in Japan, while Yu was a student of famed Taiwanese modern dance teacher Tsai Jui-yueh (蔡瑞月) before leaving Taiwan for Europe and the US to expand his training.

All three choreographed and ran their own companies and several of their works have been revived — or in Yao's case recreated — for this retrospective program, including Lee's *Spring Breeze* and *A Suite of Taiwanese Folk Songs*. Yao gained fame for choreographing a classic ballet based on the Han



On

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Taoyuan County has brought in CTV (中視) to organize its event, going head-to-head with Taipei City Hall's big bash, organized by TVBS. The Taoyuan do will take place at the Taoyuan Multipurpose Culture Park (桃園縣多功能藝文園區), at the corner of Jhongjheng Road (中正路) and Tongde 6th Road (同德六街). Mayday and Jolin Tsai (蔡依林) are the headliners, and *Cape No. 7* star Van Fan (范逸臣) and familiar faces from the *One Million Star* (超級星光大道) "talent" show will also be making appearances. More information can be found at www.ctv.com.tw/event/tyec.

Kaohsiung is gearing up

to make sure that southern Taiwan has as much of a blast as up north. Kaohsiung City has brought in TV station SetTV (三立) to organize its big event, which will take place at the Dream Mall (高雄夢時代廣場), at 789, Chunghua 5th Rd, Kaohsiung City (高雄市中區五路789號). It will be headlined by local sons and daughters such as Wu Bai (伍佰) and Tiger Huang (黃小琥), but Sodagreen, Van Fan, and a host of young singers from the broadcaster's *Super Idol* (超級偶像) will also appear. The party starts at 7pm.

The Kaohsiung County Government will be holding a huge event at the Wei Wu Ying Center of the Arts (高雄縣衛武營藝術文化中心), at 449-1 Nanjing Rd, Fengshan City, Kaohsiung County

(高雄縣鳳山市南京路449-1號). The New Year's Eve party kicks off at 4pm with a music and film festival and creative market and will really start to rock at 6pm, when a bevy of celebrities will take to the stage and stoke the party mood until the fireworks show at midnight.

Taichung City will welcome the New Year with an event organized by GTV (八大) at the stadium of National Taiwan Sport University (國立台灣體育大學體育場), 16, Shuangshi Rd Sec 1, Taichung City (台中市雙十路一段16號). The party starts at 7pm and runs to 1:30am. A schedule of the celebrities performing there can be found online at www.gtv.com.tw/SpecialCase/20090101.

The list of city and county governments holding New Year's

Eve celebrations this year is a particularly long one. Perhaps it's all an effort to take people's minds off the hard times. In addition to the above, Keelung will be holding a New Year's Eve party from 7:30pm to 1am at piers 3 East and 4 East in the harbor district. Taichung County is holding an event at Taichung Harbor Sports Stadium (台中縣港區綜合體育館廣場) from 7:30pm to midnight. Changhua will be partying at the Typhoon Plaza in Yunlin Township (彰化縣員林鎮台風廣場) from 7:30pm, Yunlin County at the Paiwu Street Night Market in Huwei (鹿耳門五街夜市) from 8pm, Chiayi at the Chiayi Municipal Sports Ground (嘉義市體育場) from 7:30pm, Tainan at the city government building's

western plaza (台南市政府西側廣場) from 7:30pm, Ilan at the Lancheng Hsin-yue Plaza (宜蘭市蘭城新月廣場) from 7pm, and, if you happen to be stuck in Penghu over the New Year, there will be a party at the Penghu County Government Plaza (澎湖縣政府廣場).

Those planning on attending a New Year's Eve party in a major city are advised to work out their travel plans ahead of time to account for traffic and crowd control measures. If using the MRT in either Taipei or Kaohsiung, be aware that access to certain stations will be restricted. A complete run down of New Year's Eve Party information can be found at 2009ny.emmm.tw [in Chinese only].

Oldies but goodies



Dynasty poem, *Peacock Flies to the Southeast*, the only piece by her on the program. The four works by Yu on the program include *Fisherman and The Hunter* and *Deer*.

At a press conference at the National Theater last month, the trio expressed great surprise that the theater had contacted them and asked them to join the program. They were also delighted that so many people, including former students and dancers, were eager to help them restage their work, much of which was created before videotaping rehearsals or performances became common in Taiwan.

For Lee, dance has always been a family affair, and this weekend's program will be no different.

Eleven of her family members have been or are dancers, including grandson, Hong Kang-jie (洪康捷), who was last seen dancing in August with his ballerina fiancée Yu Ching-yin in her production of *Le Corsaire*.

Hong will partner his grandmother in two of her pieces this weekend, and he said she was an inspiration to him — especially her energy, although perhaps not quite as agile as she was when she was his age.

"She is still an amazing dancer," he said. — DIANE BAKER

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

WHAT: A Retrospective of Three Legendary Taiwanese Choreographers
WHEN: Tonight and tomorrow at 7:30pm and Sunday at 2:30pm
WHERE: The National Theater, Taipei City
TICKETS: NT\$400, NT\$600, NT\$800, NT\$1,000 and NT\$1,200; available through NTCH ticketing or www.artsticket.com.tw

Taiwan's dance heritage takes center stage at the National Theater. PHOTOS COURTESY OF NTCH

EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Theater

Li Ling the Abandoned Hero (半世英雄·李陵) is the fifth experimental *kunqu* (昆曲) play created by 1/2Q Theater (二分之一Q劇場). Han Dynasty general Li Ling, who has been betrayed and captured by the Huns, is waiting to strike back against the enemy, only to find that the emperor has ordered the death of his entire family. Haunted by grief for the rest of his life, Li never returns to his homeland.

► Experimental Theater of the National Theater, Taipei City
► Today and tomorrow at 7:30pm and Sunday at 2:30pm
► Tickets are NT\$500, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

Wonderwork (誰是聖誕老公公), staged by If Kids Theater (如果兒童劇團) for the second time in four years, tells the story of an old man who is inexplicably chosen to be of one of the world's 500 Santa Clauses. As he helps deliver presents to children, it dawns on him that people see him as a greedy, stingy and inconsiderate person.

► Metropolitan Hall (城市舞台), 25, Bade Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市八德路三段25號)
► Today and tomorrow at 7:30pm; tomorrow and Sunday at 10:30am and 2:30pm
► Tickets are NT\$300 to NT\$1,000, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

The president's daughter is cast in the role of Juliet in Tainan 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 the killer's identity. This weekend's performances feature the first two episodes from the six-episode series.
► Preparatory Office, Wei Wu Ying Center for the Arts (高雄縣衛武營藝術文化中心 籌備處) 449-1, Nanjing Rd, Fengshan City, Kaohsiung County (高雄縣鳳山市南京路449-1號)
► Today at 7:30pm and tomorrow at 2:30pm
► Tickets are NT\$200, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

Acting without a script, singing songs without lyrics and playing music without a score, **Guts Improv Theater** (勇氣即興劇場) presents three improvisational shows, each with a specific theme: dramatic games, a play involving audience participation, and a love story. [See story on Page 15.]
► Comedy Club, B1, 24 Taishun St, Taipei City (台北市泰順街24號B1)
► Tomorrow and Sunday at 8:00pm; tomorrow at 10:00pm
► Tickets are NT\$200 or NT\$300 with one drink, available at the door or at a 10 percent discount through tickets.books.com.tw or by calling (02) 2782-1100

Based on the novel by the noted writer Wang Lan (王藍) and newly adapted by the Chinese Confederation of Entertainment Unions (中華演藝工會), **Blue and Black** (藍與黑) tells the story of three young people with lofty ideals during the Chinese Civil War. GIO Minister Vanessa Shih (史亞平) will be on stage during the last show.
► Zhongshan Hall, Taipei City
► Monday and Tuesday at 7:00pm and Tuesday at 2:00pm
► Tickets are NT\$400 to NT\$2,000, available through tickets.books.com.tw or by calling (02) 2782-1100

The **Fifth Chinese Character Festival** (第五屆漢字文化節), which aims to promote the use of Chinese characters and is organized by the Council for Cultural Affairs (行政院文化建設委員會), runs through Jan. 11, 2009 at Huashan Culture Park in Taipei City. Taking place tomorrow night is one of the festival's highlights, In Calligraphy, Tea and Music in Fall (深秋的茶·樂與書), a presentation by Lin Ku-fang (林谷芳), director of Fo Guang University's Graduate Institute of Art Studies.
► Huashan Culture Park (華山創意文化園), 1, Bade Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市德路一段1號)
► Tomorrow at 7:30pm
► Tickets are NT\$600, available through tickets.books.com.tw or by calling (02) 2782-1100

Classical music

Lang Lang Piano Recital (郎朗鋼琴獨奏會) features the internationally renowned Chinese pianist Lang Lang

(郎朗) performing a program that includes Schubert's *Piano Sonata No.20 in A Major, D.959*, Bartok's *Piano Sonata BB 88 Sz.80*, Debussy's *Selections From Debussy Preludes: Book 2, Book 1* and Chopin's *Polonaise Op. 53 in A-flat Major, "Heroic."*
► Today at 7:30pm
► National Concert Hall, Taipei City
► Tickets are NT\$800 to NT\$4,800, available through ERA ticketing

Li and Lin Piano Duo Recital (李美文、林雅敏2008鋼琴對語), sees pianists Li Mei-wen (李美文) and Lin Ya-hsu (林雅敏) performing a program that includes Mozart's *Sonata in D Major for Two Pianos, KV448* and Brahms' *F Minor Sonata for Two Pianos, Op.34bis*.
► Tomorrow at 7:30pm
► National Recital Hall, Taipei City
► Tickets are NT\$300 to NT\$600, available through ERA ticketing

An Evening of Brahms and the Double Concerto (新絕代雙驕——布拉姆斯雙協奏曲之夜) is the final concert for this year by the Evergreen Symphony Orchestra (長榮交響樂團). The program includes Beethoven's *Leonore Overture No. 3*, Brahms' *Double Concerto* and *Symphony No. 3*. The orchestra will be conducted by Gernot Schmalfuss and feature Lin Yun-pai (林允白) on violin and Yeh Ju-pei (葉儒沛) on cello.
► Tomorrow at 7:30pm
► National Concert Hall, Taipei City
► Tickets are NT\$500 to NT\$1,500, available through ERA ticketing

An Evening with Slatkin — 2009 NSO New Year's Concert (麥卡倫極致享宴——2009國家音樂廳新年音樂會) features conductor and multiple Grammy Award-winner Leonard Slatkin conducting the National Symphony Orchestra in a program that includes Holst's *The Planets*, Korngold's *Nocturn* from "Much Ado About Nothing", Mozart's *A Musical Sleigh Ride*, and Strauss' *Blue Danube Waltz*.
► Wednesday at 10pm and Thursday at 7:30pm
► National Concert Hall, Taipei City
► Tickets are NT\$500 to NT\$2,400, available through NTCH ticketing

Contemporary

Tonight **The Wall** (這牆) hosts a CD release party for the compilation album *Da Party*, which

features songs by up-and-coming indie bands. Groups performing tonight include **Ride to Where** (騎去哪), **Moka Apple** and electronica outfit **Go Chic**. Later tonight, another party rolls in with funk and nu-metal band **Coach** (教練) and **DJ Jez F** from electronica outfit KbN (凱比鳥). Tomorrow the venue hosts Punch Party 9, a get-together for a network of 60 Taiwanese bloggers. Each blogger will give a seven-minute talk. On Sunday it's post-rock band **Mosquilephant** (蚊子大象) and garage rockers **White Eyes** (白目).
► 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.thewall.com.tw for more information
► 8pm and 11:30pm tonight; from 7pm to 10pm tomorrow; 8pm on Sunday
► NT\$400 entrance for each event tonight; NT\$300 tomorrow and Sunday

Tonight **Witch House** (女巫

店) hosts **Bitter**, playing music influenced by Manchester rock from the 1980s and 1990s, and electronica group **Veraqueen**. Tomorrow **Hong Shen-hao** (洪申豪) of indie rock band **Touming Magazine** (透明雜誌) puts on a solo show, followed by **Ban Ban** (斑斑), who plays solo acoustic music. On New Year's Eve the venue lets you "game into the evening" with its extensive collection of fantasy board games.
► 7, Ln 56, Xincheng 5 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.witchhouse.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; entrance for New Year's Eve party is NT\$450, and NT\$350 for those who dress in costume.

Upcoming

Tomorrow and Sunday, the Taipei Artist Village (TAV) hosts the Winter Open Studio, a free event featuring workshops by artists-in-residence. There will also be musical performances, beginning with a taiko drum show from **Taipei Drum** (台北極鼓集).

Highlights include an installation by Australian artist **Jayne Dyer**, who created thousands of black butterflies to display at the TAV Gallery as a message of "nature in crisis," and a performance by Taipei's **1/2Q Theater** (二分之一Q劇場), which combines modern dance and theater with traditional *kun* opera (昆劇). Workshop sessions include a demonstration of "contact improvisation" by performance artist **Mauro Sacchi** and vocal experiments from sound artist **Alice Chang** (張惠笙). On Sunday the event concludes with a party and performances from **The Tribe of West Africa**, an African percussion group, **David Chen and the Muddy Basin Ramblers** and



Taipei Drum opens the Taipei Artist Village's 2008 Winter Open Studio, a weekend of free demonstrations and workshops by TAV's artists-in-residence, as well as musical performances. PHOTO COURTESY OF TAIPEI ARTIST VILLAGE

The Dana Wylie Band.
► Taipei Artist Village, 7, Beiping East Rd, Taipei City (台北市北平東路7號). Tel: (02) 3393-7377
► A detailed schedule can be downloaded from www.artistvillage.org/events.php?type=4
► Tomorrow and Sunday from 2pm to 6pm; on Sunday, there is a party from 6:30pm to 10pm
► Entrance to all events is free

TOP FIVE MANDARIN ALBUMS

DEC. 12 TO DEC. 18

- 1 Stanley Huang (黃立行) and *We All Lay Down in the End* (最後只好躺下來) with 14.12 percent of sales
- 2 Rachel Liang (梁文音) and *Poems of Love* (愛的詩篇) with 12.69%
- 3 Mayday (五月天) and *Poetry of the Day After* (後青春期的詩) with 9.62%
- 4 Jing Huang (黃靖倫) and *Jing-Jing's Note* (給語錄) with 4.81%
- 5 Olivia Liao (廖子瑜) and *Olivia* (小魚兒的秘密花園) with 4.47%

