FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2009 · TAIPEI TIMES

dison Chen (陳冠希) has been threatened with a letter containing a bullet, a Hong Kong television station reported yesterday.

For anyone who has been hiding under a rock or living in a cave for the past year, the Edison Chen photo scandal broke in January 2008 when nude snapshots of the Chinese-Canadian actor *in* flagrante delicto with eight female starlets — including **Gillian Chung** (鍾欣桐), Cecilia Cheung (張柏芝) and Bobo Chen (陳文媛) — were stolen off of his laptop and subsequently plastered all over gossip rags and entertainment blogs.

Hong Kong's Cable TV said an anonymous English-language letter warned Chen not to appear at any promotional events and threatened him with harm if he did. The station said it received the letter on Wednesday.

Hong Kong's entertainment industry has long been tainted by its connections with organized crime, and last year gangsters were allegedly offering HK\$500,000 for one of Chen's hands.

The TV report yesterday did not say if the letter, which was mailed with a gold-colored bullet, explicitly linked the threat with the sex photo scandal, and did not specify the type of harm Chen could suffer if he ignored it.

The envelope that carried the letter had US postage stamps stuck onto it and the return address was in Pennsylvania, Cable TV said.

Chen and the women featured in his homemade porno stash have only recently started to resurface. The 28-year-old testified two weeks ago against a computer technician accused of stealing the photos from his laptop, and he attended a promotional event at a Singapore hamburger restaurant later that week. Gillian Chung and Cecilia Cheung, who are also 28, have discussed the scandal in television interviews in recent weeks.

In a tearful interview with iCable earlier this month, Cheung raged at Chen for not personally apologizing to her after the photos were leaked, even as he made a somber public mea culpa to his fans. Chen stated last month in a court hearing in Vancouver that he had been determined to protect the women's privacy, but Cheung said he hadn't even bothered to call her manager back at the height of the scandal.

Not to be outdone, Chung also gave a tearful interview, which was aired shortly after Cheung's. The blubbering Chung said she blamed herself for her "stupidity" and lamented the very public loss of her dignity. Chung also revealed that she had contemplated suicide after the photos were leaked. The scandal blew apart the starlet's squeaky-clean image as one-half of the Cantopop duo Twins.

On Tuesday, Chung appeared

Gillian Chung's hangin' tough

at a press conference to promote a jeans brand, her first endorsement deal since Chen's privates became public. The Canto-pop star wore a purple T-shirt that said "tough" and unveiled a billboard ad that showed her with a serious expression, surrounded by models wearing monster masks.

"This was a very long year. It was very hard to get through. I was lucky to have many people who supported me," she said.

Also bemoaning the loss of his dignity this week was Taiwanese actor Jonathan Chen (陳俊生), who was photographed fighting with his 19-year-old girlfriend in Taipei. Highlights included Chen screaming, "That is not a real apology! I'm not going to accept that! I want a real apology!" and his girlfriend accidentally smacking him in the nose when she reached out to placate him before collapsing to the ground in tears.

Reports of the brouhaha also delighted in reminding the public that seven years ago Chen was caught at the Core Pacific City Mall (京華城) dressed as a "big-boobed hottie." At the time, Chen said his gender-bending get-up was a publicity stunt for a film, but the incident led to ceaseless speculation about his sexual orientation. In the last few years, Chen has reinvented himself as a businessman after developing a digital learning system that is supposed to improve users' memories. His screaming match with his teenage lover, however, is one more incident he probably wants the entire world to forget. When a reporter from the Liberty Times (自由時報) called for comment, Chen said in exasperation, "Let's stop talking about this, okay?'

Fellow Taiwanese actor Jamie Weng (翁家明) also had an unforgettable but regrettable week after news broke that he'd been caught diddling a flight attendant, which threw his marriage with actress Grace Yu (俞小凡) into a crisis. The matter wasn't helped when reports surfaced that Weng had also been spotted escorting their daughter's married kindergarten teacher to a hotel for some alleged hanky-panky.

The actor issued a statement saying that he'd flown to Shanghai, where Yu is shooting a movie, to beg his wife for her forgiveness. In an interview afterwards, Yu said she had faith in her husband's sincerity, but hadn't forgiven him yet and planned to separate from Weng for the time being. This was apparently news to her husband, who the Liberty Times said heard about Yu's decision from reporters.

> — COMPLIED BY CATHERINE SHU WITH AP, HONG KONG

Come on, feel the noise

66 TX 7 hen it is windy, I can hear the sound of [a] train far away from my window. It is nice," said singer Yasuko "Yako" Onuki,

describing one of her favorite non-musical sounds. But Yako's band, Melt-Banana, sounds more like trains colliding at full speed — and that's putting

The Japanese four-piece, which performs at The Wall (這牆) in Taipei tonight, is often described as a "noise rock" band. Their music has bits of hardcore, thrash metal and punk rock, but played at even faster and more furious speeds.

For many fans and patient listeners, noise is just part of Melt-Banana's music. What sets the group apart is how it wields chaos: Yako's vocals range from manic, rhythmic barks to melodic chirps. Guitarist Ichirou Agata, who wears a surgical mask on stage, looks like a mad scientist as he twists the knobs on a dizzying array of effects pedals, drawing out endless variations of howls and screeches from his instrument.

This penchant for sonic experimentation is not just some passing phase. Melt-Banana has been at it since 1992, and over the years has become associated with some high-profile indie-music figures.

The late British DJ John Peel was a fan and hosted the band on his BBC radio program; Jim O'Rourke (producer and musician of Sonic Youth and Wilco fame) and recording engineer Steve Albini have helped produce past Melt-Banana albums; the band has toured with proto-grunge group The Melvins and Grammy-winning metal band Tool.

But despite having cultivated a loyal fanbase through repeated and extensive tours of the US and Europe, Melt-Banana has a less obvious following in Japan. Do they lament the relative lack of enthusiasm for experimental and noise rock at home?

"It does not bother us, but it would be nice if more people know that there are many musicians who play many kinds of music in the world [outside of] musicians on TV," wrote Yako in an e-mail

interview with the Taipei Times.

"Then my relatives [will] stop asking me when I will be on TV," she said.

She also noted that the band sees less diversity in ages at shows at home. "We sometimes see children like 6 or 7 years old and also



when we play in Europe and [the] USA. It does not happen in Japan."

The band's show tonight, which was organized by Taipei party crew Back 2 the Future (B2TF, 🗉 到未來), marks its first time in Taiwan, and Yako is expecting a lively crowd.

Yako said she met Mogwai's Stuart Braithwaite at the band's Tokyo gig, who told her that Taiwanese audiences are more energetic than those in Japan.

"Japanese audience[s] are basically quiet unless it is punk or metal show," she wrote. Yako, who says she would like to visit Jiufen (九份) as its scenery inspired scenes in Hayao

Miyazaki's film Spirited Away, said the band's set tonight will mostly draw from their latest albums Cell-Scape (2004) and Bambi's Dilemma (2007). These albums are considered Melt-Banana's most accessible works. Songs like Chainshot to

Have Some Fun from Cell-Scape run at the band's typical breakneck pace, but their chord changes and catchy refrains have a near-pop feel.

But die-hard fans need not worry. Yako said the band will also play a few gems from its early days, including some that run under 20 seconds.

While the band dabbled in improvisation on albums like 1994's Cactuses Come in Flocks, they prefer "designed structure" in their music. "I sometimes enjoy improvising, but I think I enjoy the process of building the structure of the song,"

For now, most of Melt-Banana's fans in Japan are likely to remain at the college age, but Yako has a

few keen listeners from a different generation. "Yes, my parents have listened to my records. They say it is getting better," she said.

— DAVID CHEN

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

WHAT: Melt-Banana of Japan; also appearing are metal band Ashen and DJ Two and a Half

WHEN: Tonight at 9pm

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). Tel: (02) 2930-0162

TICKETS: NT\$800

ON THE NET: www.myspace.com/azap; www1.parkcity.ne.jp/mltbanan; www.thewall.com.tw

Ball

CONTINUED FROM P13

Usually twins JT and JD Long have their mother help out with producing their band T-shirts, but this year the design is too risque — a sexy retro girl posing — so they did it on their own. What is the obsession with the pulp fiction pinup girls that features prominently on their fliers, CDs and T-shirts? "They're hot!" said Copps.

"We're a little bit retro," said JT Long. "It's classy, like when rock and roll first started, when girls first started modeling their sexy lingerie." Last year some people "didn't really get it, didn't know what burlesque was," he said. "Some guy in Tainan was like, 'Hey I heard there were going to be some strippers,' and I had to tell him, no, it's a real show, it's not strippers."

New troupe Rock In Hose Burlesque will make its debut this weekend at the circus.

Big pretty much everywhere

PHOTO COURTESY OF MELT-BANANA

else except Japan.

Lustsluts Burlesque, the Hualien-based troupe that performed last year, has disbanded, but it was a huge inspiration to the formation of this new, Taipei-based group (I know because I'm a member).

Copps said this year they worked on getting bands with energetic showmanship. JT Long said when they see a band, they know if it's "circus material."

The Vibes met The Drexel while on tour and convinced them to come to Taiwan for the shows. Their sound is "clean rockabilly like when Elvis first started," said Copps.

Metal band Chrome Relic performs both covers and original tunes, and dress up "like '80s rockers with Twisted Sister wigs and cut-off jean shorts,"

He elaborated on the concept: "It's not just a

musical performance, your body's in there ... we've been together for five years and it's not about 'can I play the drums or can he play guitar' anymore. It's about getting up there — we write songs together, and it's a feeling when we get on stage where you completely get into the show.'

They want to do something different, said Copps: "it's a chance for people who are shy to have fun and do some stupid stuff ... to get involved." JT Long remembers when Copps first said he wanted to "do a show with all this going on, not just rock and roll" and "get people that don't normally go out" to do so. "The circus thing attracts all kinds of people," he said, and is "definitely getting a name.

"It's like Halloween but in the middle of March," said Copps.



TOP FIVE MANDARIN ALBUMS FEB. 27 TO MARCH 5

- Wang Lee-hom (王力宏) and Heart Beat (心·跳) with 23.74 percent
- of sales
- Jolin Tsai (蔡依林) with Jeneration (J世紀) with 9.52%

Fish Leong (梁靜茹) and Fall in Love & Songs — Don't Cry for Him Anymore (靜茹&情歌 — 別再為他流淚) with 8.23%

- Khalil Fang (方大同) and Orange Moon (橙月) with 4.32%
- Cheer Chen (陳綺貞) and Immortal (太陽) with 4.29%

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

[EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT]

Theater

Canadian theater company Lemieux. Pilon 4D Art uses innovative virtual technology in **Norman**, a multimedia production that combines elements of theater, dance, cinema and music to examine the life of award-winning animator and filmmaker Norman McLaren. Directed by Michel Lemieux and Victor Pilon, the work combines film and animation in a solo piece where dancer and choreographer Peter Trosztmer interacts with projected images

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

Italian theater company Compagnia T. P.O. fuses dance, visual art, mechanical installation and lighting effects in **The Japanese Garden**, an interactive

- children's theatrical play. National Experimental Theater, Taipei
- ▶ Today at 5pm and 8pm, tomorrow at 10:30am, 2:30pm and 8pm, Sunday at 10:30am and 2:30pm
- ► Tickets are NT\$600, available through available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

Choreographer Jade Hua (華碧玉) combines a classical approach with modern techniques in Jade & Artists Dance Troupe's (肢體音符舞團) latest

dance, Vipashyana. [See story on Page 15.]

- ▶ Novel Hall (新舞臺), 3-1 Songshou S
- ▶ Today and tomorrow at 7:30pm
- online at www.artsticket.com.tw

Stand-up comedy meets the musical in **My Goodness!!??**, a lighthearted and humorous examination of Taiwan's consumption of American

- ▶ Crown Art Center Theater (皇冠小劇 City (台北市敦化北路120巷50號B1)
- ▶ Today at 7:30pm, tomorrow at 2:30pm and 7:30pm and Sunday at 2:30pm

Based on British playwright Timberlake Wertenbaker's play of the same Group (動見体劇團) dramatizes Charles Darwin's idea of survival of the fittest in this play-within-a-play

- toting captain of the HMS Beagle, and the two actors who play the respective characters. ▶ National Taiwan University Theater
- ► Today at 7:30pm, tomorrow at 2:30pm and 7:30pm and Sunday at 2:30pm

- Rd, Taipei City (台北市松壽路3-1號)
- ► Tickets are NT\$500 to NT\$1,000, available through NTCH ticketing or

culture staged by Yumiko's Warehouse Theater (裕美子的倉庫劇團).

- 場), B1, 50, Ln 120, Dunhua N Rd, Taipei
- ► Tickets are NT\$350, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

title, After Darwin by MOVE Theatre centered around conflicts between Darwin and Robert FitzRoy, the Bible-

- (台大劇場), 1, Roosevelt Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路段四段1號)
- The Taipei County Government's ▶ Admission is free

Classical

In Zheng Recital Over the Stars (眼神與星空的對話), zheng specialists Fan Wei-tzu (樊慰慈) and Huang Wenling (黃文玲) share the stage with Little Giant Chinese Chamber Orchestra (小巨人絲竹樂團) to present arrangements of traditional works and the world premiere of Fan's Spirit of

- the Eyes (眼神). National Recital Hall, Taipei City
- ▶ Tomorrow at 7:30pm
- ► Tickets are NT\$300 to NT\$700, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

Sounds From Pampas (彭巴斯草原 之音) presents harpist Giselle Boeters, who will perform with the Taipei Symphony Orchestra (臺北市立交響樂 團) under guest conductor Georg Fritzsch. The program will include Kagel's Variations Without Fugue, Ginastera's Harp Concerto, Op. 25 and

- Debussy's Images Pour Orchestre. ▶ Zhongshan Hall (台北市中山堂), 98 Yenping S Rd, Taipei City (台北市延平南 路98號)
- ► Tomorrow at 7:30pm ► Tickets are NT\$200 to NT\$800, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

Contemporary

Bitan Music Festival (碧潭音樂節) continues every weekend until March



Highlight

Japanese bossa nova singer **Lisa Ono's** Asian tour brings her to Taipei's Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall (國父紀念館) tomorrow night. The 46-year-old singer and guitarist has released more than 20 albums to date, and her latest project is a pair of albums of jazz standards: Cheek to Cheek — Jazz Standards From Rio and Look to the Rainbow — Jazz Standards From LA. Ono, who was born in Sao Paulo, started playing at the age of 15 and helped popularize bossa nova in Japan. She has recorded with legends such as Antonio Carlos Jobim and jazz samba musician Joao Donato. Ono enjoys a strong following in Taiwan. Her album, Jambalaya – Bossa Americana, went platinum in 2007, and Taipei is a regular stop

Bossa nova singer Lisa Ono returns to Taiwan for a concert tomorrow night at Taipei's Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall. PHOTO COURTESY OF YU KUANG MUSIC

for her regional tours. While concert promoter Yukuang Music (余光音樂) declined to say what material Ono would be playing, audiences tomorrow should expect more of the same — a topnotch band backing Ono's intimate, smooth voice. For more on Lisa Ono, visit her Web site at

- www.onolisa.com. Lisa Ono at Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall (國父紀念館), 2F, 505, Renai Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市仁愛路四段 505號2樓)
- ► Tomorrow at 7:30pm ► Tickets are NT\$600 to NT\$3,600, available through ERA ticketing or online at www.ticket.com.tw

- 29 with free outdoor performances at the Bitan (碧潭) riverside area outside of Xindian MRT Station. Tomorrow's program features Vietnamese singer and guitarist **Toan Nguyen** (全阮). On Sunday it's **Blue Sky** (藍天樂團), a rock group formed by Thai migrant workers that plays regularly in Taipei County. ▶ The festival takes place at the Bitan riverside area, just outside of Xindian MRT Station (新店捷運站). For more
 - information and full schedule, visit www.2009bmf.com.tw ▶ Shows go from 3pm to 5pm,
 - Saturdays and Sundays until March 29 ▶ No admission fee

Tomorrow **VU Live House** hosts The

Rock 'n' Roll Circus, a night of rockabilly, punk and indie rock with **The Deadly** Vibes, Tainan rockabilly group Fullhouse, expat comedy-rock band Chrome Relic, indie-rock favorites 88 Balaz (八十八顆芭樂籽) and Japanese rockabilly and swing band The Drexel. [See story on Page 13.] ▶ B1, 77, Wuchang St Sec 2, Taipei City

- (台北市武昌街二段77號B1). Tel: (02) 2314-1868
- ▶ Show begins at 9pm ► Entrance fee is NT\$350, includes one drink

Tonight at **The Wall (這牆)** it's **Melt Banana**, an experimental Japanese noise-rock band with a large following in the US and Europe [see story above]. Metal band Ashen and DJ Two and Half Stars (兩星半) open the show. Taking to the stage tomorrow is pop rock band Lumei (露魅), hip-hop rockers **Living Force** (存活勢力) and

punk group **Beright**. On Sunday it's electronica and rock groups **Yoga** Soul, Green!Eyes (綠色眼睛) and Telephone Booth (電話亭). On Wednesday, the venue hosts French singers Coralie Clement and Berry in a show sponsored by the French Institute in Taipei.

- ▶ 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 ▶ Starts at 9pm tonight, 9:30pm tomorrow, 8pm on Sunday and 7pm on Wednesday
- ► Entrance fee is NT\$800 tonight, NT\$400 tomorrow and NT\$300 on Sunday. Wednesday's show is NT\$880 for advance tickets (contact the venue for details) or NT\$1,000 at the door

Acoustic act **Lao Die** (老爹) performs tonight at Witch House (女巫店), along with folk rock group Windmill (風籟坊). Tomorrow it's indie-rockers **Neon**, led by charismatic singer/ songwriter Jun Lee (李昀熹). Grunge rockers The Capelin (柳葉魚) and solo acoustic artist **Gelresai** (陳世川) appear on Thursday.

- ▶ 7, Ln 56, Xinsheng S 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