

AROUND TOWN

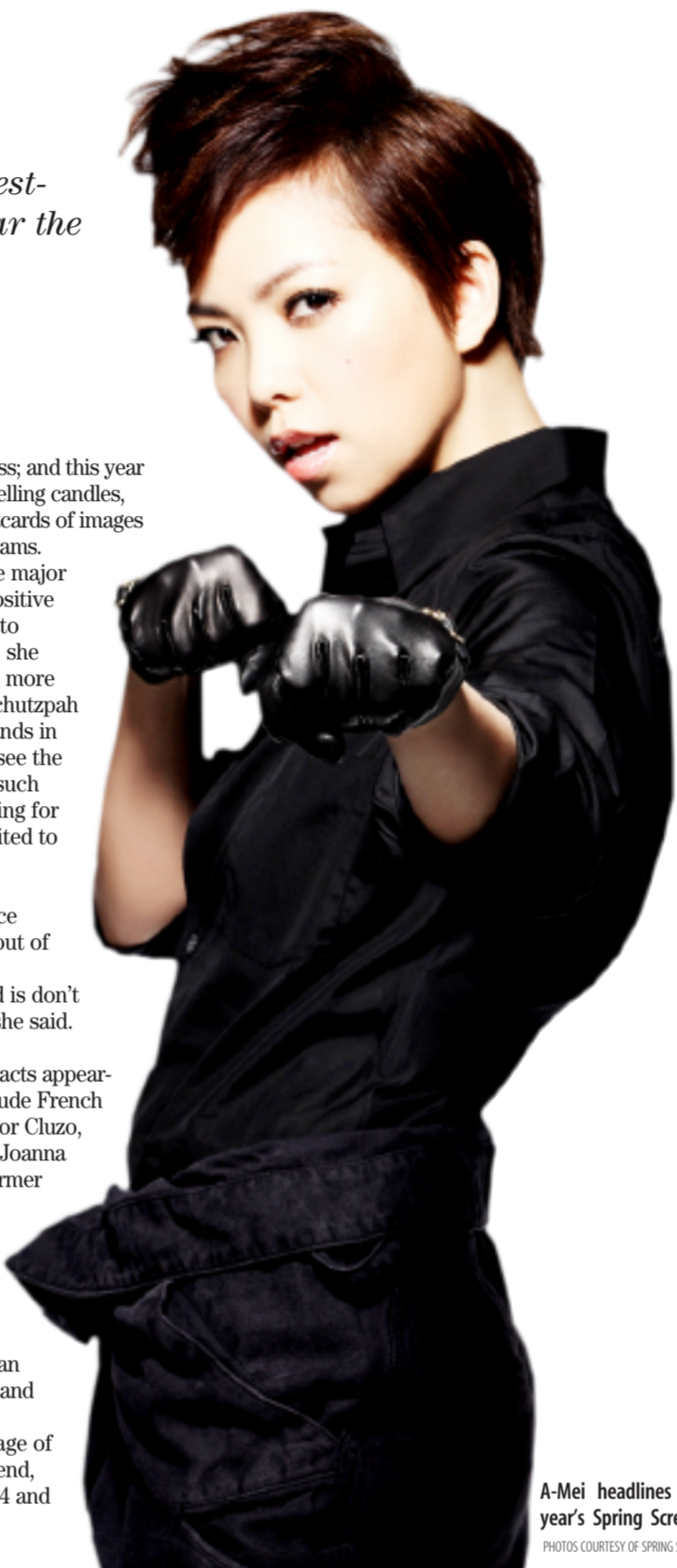
FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 2009

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STEADY AS AN OX

It's time once again for Spring Scream, Taiwan's longest-running and most revered indie-music festival. This year the event features its biggest headline act to date

BY DAVID CHEN
STAFF REPORTER



A-Mei headlines this year's Spring Scream.
PHOTOS COURTESY OF SPRING SCREAM

Like an old friend, Spring Scream seems like it hasn't changed and never will. That is, until you look back.

What started as a small beach party in Kenting with a few ragtag bands 15 years ago has become an annual mecca for thousands of college-age revelers and adventurous expats, as well as a showcase of Taiwan's best indie music.

And this year's festival, officially titled Ox 2009 Spring Scream (春天吶喊2009), boasts its biggest headline act ever: Amit (阿密特), the on-stage alter ego and Aboriginal name of pop star A-mei (阿妹).

Mulling the presence of Taiwan's queen of pop in the band line-up brings up another Spring Scream ritual: questioning whether the festival has become too big and too commercial.

For founders and organizers Wade Davis and Jimi Moe, it's become an inevitable question as the festival has grown. They say they hemmed and hawed this year about whether to even have a "big stage" with major Taiwanese acts, one major change of the past two years when the festival moved to its current location at Oluanyi Lighthouse National Park (鵝鑾鼻燈塔公園).

Ultimately the two knew they wanted to continue cultivating Spring Scream's audience, which numbered up to 5,000 on Saturday (the peak day) last year, according

to Davis. They decided the additional crowds that A-mei and other major acts draw would be a boon for the event.

"This way more people can 'enjoy all the other bands,'" said Davis, referring to the some 200 indie acts scheduled to play on eight different stages tonight, tomorrow and Sunday.

More importantly, Davis said, the original DIY spirit of Spring Scream and its bands will always be there, big stage or not.

"We'd like to attract people that haven't been [to Spring Scream] that would be inspired by that or would possibly enjoy it," he said on the phone from Taichung.

"Otherwise they might wind up at some other event that may not be as inspiring," he said, referring to the handful of festivals that festivals and parties that make up the annual Tomb Sweeping Day weekend landscape in Kenting.

But A-mei or not, revelers can expect Spring Scream to be as wild as ever.

"The thing that's the same, you always know it's going to be a good party. You always know that you're going to see good music," said American expat Karin Parmelee, who says she has been to every Spring Scream since it began.

The Taichung resident has also participated in the festival in nearly every way possible: she helped clean up as a volunteer in the early years; she performed on stage with her now-

defunct band 69 Across; and this year she's running a stall selling candles, photographs and postcards of images from past Spring Screams.

For Parmelee, one major change has been a positive one: the bands seem to get better every year, she said. She has noticed more costumes and stage chutzpah among Taiwanese bands in particular. "I love to see the young Taiwanese in such get-ups and really going for it, and they're so excited to be there," she said.

From experience, Parmelee offers advice for getting the most out of Spring Scream.

"What I've learned is don't have expectations," she said. "Enjoy what it is."

Other major local acts appearing this weekend include French rock duo The Inspector Cluzo, pop-jazz wunderkind Joanna Wang (王若琳), and former Sticky Rice member and *Cape No. 7* star Ma Nih-hsien (馬念先). Other events include a film festival from the organizers of the Urban Nomad Film Festival and an air guitar contest.

For further coverage of Spring Scream weekend, see stories on Page 14 and Page 15.

TOP ACTS

PICKS BY TAIPEI TIMES REPORTERS DAVID CHEN AND ALITA RICKARDS

The Inspector Cluzo

This French rock duo features the guitarist-and-drummer format made famous by punk-blues bands like the Black Keys and the White Stripes. Several members of Fishbone produced Cluzo's debut album, and the influence shows in the frantic, funky grooves and zany but soulful vocals. Add to that some post-*Spinal Tap* humor: the band has a song called *Fuck the Bass Player*.
www.myspace.com/theinspectorcluzo



Money Shot Horns

Currently Taiwan's favorite party band, this "supergroup" of eight expat musicians will have audiences dancing this weekend with funk, soul and R'n'B. Lead vocalist Dooley Chandler slips Mandarin phrases into his singing without missing a beat.
www.myspace.com/themoneyshotorns



88 Balaz (八八八顯芭樂籽)

This four-piece indie-rock outfit has grown up with Spring Scream. Lead singer Ah-Chang (阿強) was 17 years old when the group made its festival debut; he was so excited (and drunk), he rode a bicycle from the stage into the crowd. The band will surely impress this weekend with on-stage madness, but its tight, energetic guitar rock will steal the show.
balaz88.pixnet.net



Deserts Chang (張懸)

She seemed to come out of nowhere, having gone from solo performer and part-time sound engineer at Taipei's Witch House (女巫店) to revered indie-folk icon. The 27-year-old released her debut album in 2006 through Sony BMG, which has been smart enough to let her do her own thing. Expect a large crowd for her set.
www.myspace.com/desertsmusic



Kou Chou Ching (拷秋勤)

This is a trio of two MCs and a DJ that are into social causes and their Taiwanese roots. The group calls its music "Taiwan traditional hip-hop style": they often rap in Hokkien and Hakka and sample everything from Taiwanese opera to Nanguan (南管) and oldies.
www.myspace.com/koucc



Space Cake (太空蛋糕)

This four-piece band has one foot in post-rock grooves and the other in pop. The result is fun and quirky music full of guitar distortion, playful electronica noises and chirpy vocals from singer Squidgirl.
band-spacecake.blogspot.com



Rising Hedons

This is a blues-rock band, but with djembe and tablas. The grooves are laid-back, but the energy is intense. Lead singer and guitarist Bradley Tindall clearly loves being on stage, making for an entertaining show. It would be surprising if the group didn't play its ode to the Spring Scream locale, *Kenting Sunset*.
www.myspace.com/therisinghedons



Nevada 51

Get your rage on with this South Korean rock and hip-hop group, which describes its music as "rock with conscience." They list bands like Limp Bizkit and Red Hot Chili Peppers as influences, which can be clearly heard in their music. The band plays several sets throughout the weekend.
www.myspace.com/bandnevada51



Neon

These guys were "indie" before indie became too artsy. Many of their songs are driving guitar rock with a melancholic tinge. Lead singer Jun Lee's (李昉熹) soaring, husky voice has a magnetic pull that few can resist.
www.neonband.com.tw



Europa Huang and Agonist (黃建為與興奮劑)

It's easy to forget that there's more to Spring Scream than loud bands with electric guitars. Huang is an up-and-coming folk singer with sharp pop sensibilities. His acoustic-based music leans toward safe melodies and heart-on-sleeve lyrics, but he delivers them well and with sincerity.
blog.roodo.com/europa — DAVID CHEN



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TOMORROW TODAY

A

From 5pm
Arnis sacred rites (阿美族祈福靈祭)
Kancandix2 (棉花糖)
Engine 9 (九號引擎)
Hunlongpo (黃樂炮)
Zero Hour (關鍵時刻)
The Inspector Cluzo
Raie XIII

B

From 6pm
Five Colors (五色樂團)
Slimo (藍凡斯)
CC Zone (唱唱特區)
Jar n Jam (扎一針)
Elesha (伊蕾莎)
UnderStory (地下歲月)

C

From 6pm
Tough Black Tea (硬式紅茶)
Tiger Punch (虎拳)
Living Force (存活勢力)
Finn
Lazy Lady (雷拉雷帝)
Braces (牙套)

D

From 6pm
Recall (Recall樂團)
Alice's Tears (愛麗絲的眼淚)
ElectroCute (電氣愛)
Lumay (露魅)
Mr Dirty (骯髒先生)
Mister Mouth (嘴哥樂團)

E

From 7pm
Joker
Pa Pun Band (怕胖團)
Hekate
The Cotton Field
Respect (尊敬)

F

From 6pm
Consent
Ninedoors
Nevada 51
Dirty Skies
RedNoon (紅色的中午)
City of Earth

G

From 9pm
Listentospoon (聽湯匙)
Snobind
Nixon

From 1pm

Raymond+The Fever Cats (張晉樵+發燒貓)
Rose Din (蝶絲釘)
88 Balaz (八八八顯芭樂籽)
Joanna (王若琳)
Daximen (大顯門)
Nevada51
The Inspector Cluzo
Deserts Chang (張懸)
Circus and Basanyao 831 (八三夭)
Dizzy Butterfly
Amit (張惠妹)

From 1pm (40-minute sets)

Havens (黑凡斯)
Clockworkers (發條人)
Lofty Deity (寸前樂團)
Degenerate
Never Give up (禁區樂團)
Sensitive (敏感帶)
Urban Bitches (電子妹)
Funky Brothers (放客兄弟)
The Cranes (鶴樂隊)
Orange Doll (橘娃娃)
Europa Huang and Agonist (黃建為與興奮劑)
Sorry Youth (拍謝少年)
The Shine & Shine & Shine (閃閃閃閃)
Shy Kick Apple (害羞踢蘋果)
Space Cake (太空蛋糕)
Punkhoo (胖虎)

From 2:40pm (40-minute sets)

Rolling Muni (翻轉木妮)
Zenkwun (神棍樂團)
PenSauce (筆醬樂團)
Sun of Morning (晨曦光輝)
CastAway (漂流者)
Black Faith With Sonic Pace (黑色信念)
跟隨著音速腳步樂隊
Bugs of Phonon (聲子蟲)
The Tic Tac (錫克塔克)
La Petite Nurse (小護士)
Zulin (志琳)
Full Count (關鍵時刻)
929 (九二九)
Sloth Scamper (樹懶連連)
.22 (Point 22)

From 2:40pm (40-minute sets)

Curly Eyelashes (翹睫毛樂團)
Cheeze (去死)
Obsess
Shockmall (夏卡毛)
Ride to Where (騎去哪)
Flat Club (假文藝青年俱樂部)
Inhuman Band (非人)
Kook (庫克)
Mosquilephant (蚊子大象)
Overdose
Children Sucker (表兒)
New Yorker (紐約客)
Rockbang (洛客班)

From 2:40pm (40-minute sets)

FIFITwo (緋緋兔)
Yuntech Band (雲鐵客)
DaDooShan (大度山樂鐵隊)
Penguin Bear Like to Eat Chicken Ball (企鵝熊愛吃雞肉球)
B.B.Bomb (BB彈)
Boyz Girl (男孩們女孩)
Fullhouse (富而好施)
My Skin Against Your Skin
Skaraoke
The Angles (角落)
Taimaica Soundsystem (台買加環繞音效)
Inquiry104 (查號104)
Random (隨性樂團)
Higher (女兒樂隊)

From 3:20pm (40-minute sets)

Reider (雷達)
Three Day Bender (醉三仙)
Vroom
The Rising Hedons
Neon
Skunkrice
Moss
Collider
The Juicy Bows (多汁的弓子)
Dr Renculous Lipz and The Skallyunz
High Tide
Sons of Homer
The MoneyShot
Horns (喇叭叭)

From 6pm

The Analog Girl
DJ Tek (低階鐵客)
DJ Charles
DJ Ween
DJ Mixer-T
Rock in Hose
Burlesque
Monkeyfinger
Shakespeare

From 1pm

Kids Djembe (恆春大光國小非洲鼓隊)
Slowdown (緩)
Magic Power (魔幻力量)
Go Chic
Stocking
Tingchu (庭竹)
Ma Nien-hsien (馬念先)
Kou Chou Ching (拷秋勤)
Juicy Bows

From 1pm (40-minute sets)

Blue Velvets (藍絲絨)
Xhen How
陳浩+火星戴拿通樂團)
Daybreak Beginning (原)
The Hand Knife (手刀樂隊)
Ferris Wheel (摩天輪)
Elisa Band (一粒沙)
Traditional Hengchun music (恆春民謠促進會)
Home (後馬樂隊)
Rock 'n' Rap (東頂樂團)
What? Mulan (花木蘭)
The Inspector Cluzo

From 1pm

Master Mock (嘲催大師)
Sponge Body (海綿體)
Magpie (喜鵲)
The Capelin (柳葉魚)
Pray In Silence (寂靜中祈禱)
Corner Band (角落樂團)
Ferris Wheel (摩天輪)
Sunny Charlie
Eccentric (反常樂團)
AMS (幻音樂團)

From 1pm

Twice a Week (一週兩次)
Virulent Hana (豐粟花)
If the World Could Be Better (如果世界更美好)
Si Zong Bu (肆總部)
Noise Steve (噪音史帝)
Newhunters 5 (獵虹)
SM (SM大樂隊)

From 1pm

Ray Band (雷樂團)
Electric Q
OK Bomb
RGY Band (黃綠紅大樂隊)
Slow Motion (慢動作)
I Don't Love You Anymore (我不再愛你了)
Copyplay (攝玩)

From 1pm (40-minute sets)

Holic Jam (狂熱混音)
Vrank (梵妮)
Drivobomb
Native Space
Sugar Club (糖兄妹)
Monstar Star
Tie-Shu-Lan (鐵樹蘭)
New Hong Kong Hair City
To Nick (多尼樂團)
Supper Moment
A-Day (一天)
The DoLittles
The Stackers

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