

FEATURES

MONDAY, MAY 4, 2009

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A New Orleans festival of one-shots and shoulda-beens

"You'll be back again," sang Barry & the Remains, starting their headlining set on Tuesday night at the eighth annual Ponderosa Stomp. It's a song about a straying girlfriend, but the Remains could have been singing about themselves and many of the four dozen acts — rockabillys, bluesmen, R 'n' B shouters, swamp-rockers, honky-tonkers, psychedelic bands — playing the House of Blues here in the Stomp's two nights of nine-hour shows.

In the mid-1960s, Barry & the Remains toured the US with The Beatles and made an album of crafty, surly garage-rock. Then they broke up, becoming one more rock-history footnote.

But there are lives beyond the footnotes. Musicians turn to other groups or jobs, and recordings linger, awaiting rediscovery. The Ponderosa Stomp finds the musicians behind the vinyl relics, and on the Stomp's two stages many of its performers defied gray hair and wrinkles to belt 50-year-old songs with rowdy intent.

This year, on Wednesday night, the Stomp reunited the singer Roy Loney and the guitarist Cyril Jordan, the two original songwriters of the Flamin' Groovies, a fuzz-toned, pre-punk, post-psychedelic San Francisco band; they had not performed together since Loney left the band in 1971.

Backed by the garage-rock revivalists the A-Bones, along with the guitarist Ira Kaplan from Yo La Tengo, their songs summed up the Stomp: steeped in older rockabilly and R 'n' B and, in songs like *Teenage Head* and *Shake Some Action*, hopped up on hormones, noise and anarchic glee. Loney and Jordan embraced after the set.

The Stomp's long lineup also included the 80-year-old Alabama bluesman and harmonica player Jerry McCain; Lady Bo, who played guitar in Bo Diddley's band when he made his hits in the late 1950s; Wanda Jackson, a rockabilly singer who had Elvis Presley as a mentor; the gospel-charged soul singers Otis Clay and Howard Tate; the organ-driven garage psychedelia of ? and the Mysterians; the swamp-pop drummer and singer Warren Storm; and the rambunctious rockabilly singer and guitarist Ray Sharpe.

Lazy Lester, the harmonica-playing Louisiana bluesman who released *Ponderosa Stomp* as the B-side of a 1966 Excello Records single, was also on hand, with Presley's longtime guitarist James Burton and the organist Stanley Dural, aka Buckwheat Zydeco, among his backup musicians.

Ponderosa Stomp showcases the musicians behind the vinyl relics and fleshes out rock-history footnotes

BY JON PARELES
NY TIMES NEWS SERVICE, NEW ORLEANS



Top: Cyril Jordan, left, and Roy Loney, formerly Flamin' Groovies bandmates, perform at the Ponderosa Stomp in New Orleans on Wednesday. Above: Classie Ballou plays at the Ponderosa Stomp in New Orleans on Tuesday.

The Ponderosa Stomp festival was started in New Orleans by a record collector devoted to the obscure and the untamed: Ira Padnos, an anesthesiologist who also calls himself Dr Ike and who introduced bands on Wednesday night wearing scrubs and a fez. (On Tuesday he wore an American Indian headdress with horns.) Now a nonprofit foundation, the Stomp in the last two years has presented daytime conferences in which musicians and experts delve into memories for discussions and oral histories.

The foundation has also produced shows in Austin, Texas; Memphis, Tennessee; and, this year, New York City. Dr Ike doesn't just choose musicians; he also, often, persuades them to revive songs they haven't played in years or decades.

Concentrating on lesser-known tunes and performers, the Stomp can stir thoughts about careers, genres, songwriting and luck — not to mention the catalytic effect of ex-girlfriends in the history of rock 'n' roll. Heartache and smoldering lust filled set after set. Dan Penn sang the hymnlike hits he wrote for others (*I'm Your Puppet*, *Do Right Woman*, *Dark End of the Street*) in a duo with the keyboardist Bobby Enmons, revealing a

rich, hickory-cured voice of his own.

Both nights were full of performers citing dates and reminiscing over recording sessions and regional hits and misses. McCain, the Alabama bluesman, introduced one song by saying that when he recorded it in 1959, his manager hadn't gotten it played on radio stations. Then the Fabulous Thunderbirds recorded the song, *She's Tuff*, in 1977: "Worldwide hit," McCain said with a shrug.

Jackson noted that her song *Fujiyama Mama*, which cites Nagasaki and Hiroshima and vows, "I can cause destruction just like the atom bomb," was a No. 1 hit not in the US but in Japan. "I don't think they really understood the lyrics," she said with a smile. She drew a huge response for *Funnel of Love* — an old B-side that, she said, collectors had urged her to perform onstage.

The Stomp also celebrates sidemen: the studio musicians behind memorable licks and solos. Dennis Coffey, the guitarist who psychedelized Temptations songs like *Cloud Nine*, revealed the makings of his jittery wah-wah funk: nearly constant tremolo strumming and twitchy improvisations that make every note palpitate with syncopation.

Herbert Hardesty, the saxophonist who was a mainstay on Fats Domino's recordings, sat in with many performers on both nights, showing his jazz leanings.

One key to the Ponderosa Stomp is its backup bands, enthusiastic students of the songs and musicians they join onstage. Along with the A-Bones, it had Deke Dickerson and the Ecco-Fonics as rockabilly and country specialists and the Bo-Keys for funk and soul. The guitarist Lil' Buck Singal and the Topcats had Buckwheat Zydeco sitting in on Wednesday night as they steamed through New Orleans funk and R 'n' B for the singer Robert Parker.

There's something wistful about the Ponderosa Stomp, with so many performers whose early triumphs were fleeting, and some whose voices haven't been treated well by time. But more often, there's exhilaration, a chance to prove that for many of the musicians, the spirit in their songs has long outlasted their youth. L.C. Ulmer, a bluesman from Mississippi born in 1928, played eerie, droning, irregular rural-style solo blues, now electrified. At one point he was joined onstage by three women in burlesque costumes, shimmying by his side. He finished the song exultantly: "I feel like I'm 16 again!"

[THE WEEKENDER]

And the award goes to ...

Modern ballet and video installation earned top billing on Saturday at the 7th Taishin Arts Award ceremony

BY NOAH BUCHAN
STAFF REPORTER

The 7th Taishin Arts Award (第七屆台新藝術獎) ceremony was held on Saturday afternoon at Taishin Bank's swanky building on Renai circle in a spartan ceremony befitting Taiwan's troubled economy.

Capital Ballet Taipei's (台北首飾芭蕾舞團) *Surround* (井) won the top award in the performance arts category and Wang Jun-jieh's (王俊傑) *Project David III: David's Paradise* (大衛計畫第三部:大衛天堂) took the first prize in visual arts.

Each award comes with a purse of NT\$1 million. The Taishin Arts Award is an annual competition that recognizes artistic excellence in two categories: visual and performance art. There is also a special jury prize. The jury, consisting of journalists, academics and art professionals from Taiwan and abroad, selected the nominees from performances and exhibitions that premiered in Taiwan last year.

Commonplace objects such as tables and boxes were employed in *Surround* as a means of investigating spatial and temporal relationships. The judges cited its accessibility to audiences and the emotional intensity of the show's dancers as reasons why it took top honors.

Wang's five-screen video installation *Project David III: David's Paradise* was created in memory of Wang's deceased friend and contemplates the vicissitudes of life. Art critic and jury member Chen Tai-song (陳泰松) said that the work, with its slow-moving frames that merge into a seamless whole, "leaves a lasting impression" on viewers and is "a classic that later artists will emulate."

The jury award, which included a NT\$300,000 prize, went to Wu Tien-chang (吳天章) for his staged photography series *Shock Shot* (衝相).

The remaining short-listed artists included Chou Yu-cheng (周育正) for his work *Superb Superficialness* (很膚淺), Pan Ta-chien (潘大謙) for *Flashover* (閃爍 — 潘大謙個展) and Taiwan Field Factory (台灣田野工場) for *Art Installation in Tree Valley Park's Public Space* (樹谷園區公共空間藝術設置).

Shakespeare's Wild Sisters Group (莎士比亞的妹妹們的劇團) was nominated twice in the performance art category for *Sylvia Plath* (給普拉斯) and *Listen to Me, Please* (請聽我說 — 豪華加長版).

Other finalists include the *Death and Love of My Mother* — *The Reminiscence of the Diva Daughter* (陳水牡丹 — 廖瓊枝與臺灣國家國樂團) by National Chinese Orchestra (臺灣國家國樂團), Ju Percussion Group's (朱宗慶打擊樂團) *Percussion Happens Daily* (擊樂進行式), *The Sky Crisis* (飛天行動 — 島國預言癡狂喜劇) by the Party Group (同黨劇團), M.O.V.E. Theatre's (動見劇場) *Fable to Be, or Not to Be* (漢字寓言:未來系青年觀點報告), *The Village* (寶島一村) by Performance Workshop (表演工作坊), *Reflex* (Double C舞團 — 反射) by Wu Chun-hsien (吳俊憲) and Chou Shu-yi's (周書毅) *Visible City, People Filled with Air* (看得見的城市 — 人充滿空氣).

MOCA, Taipei is currently holding an excellent exhibition on this year's featuring contributions from each nominee.

The 7th Taishin Arts Award Exhibition runs until May 24 at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei (MOCA, Taipei), 39 Changan W Rd, Taipei City (台北市長安西路39號). Call (02) 2552-3721 for more information. The museum opens from 10am to 6pm, Tuesday through Sunday, and is closed on Mondays. On the Net: www.mocataipei.org.tw.

Members of Capital Ballet Taipei receive the 7th Taishin Arts Award for performance art on Saturday.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TAI SHIN BANK FOUNDATION FOR ARTS AND CULTURE



PIANET POP

A 24-year-old Malawian man who claims to be the father of a girl **Madonna** wants to adopt vowed yesterday to fight the US pop icon's adoption bid.

Speaking one day before Malawi's supreme court was to hear Madonna's appeal against a judge's rejection of her application to adopt three-year-old Chifundo "Mercy" James, James

Kambewa said, "I want Mercy back. I am the biological father of Mercy."

"I don't have the money to pay a lawyer, but I am looking for one so that I can issue an injunction stopping Madonna from continuing

to seek to adopt my daughter," Kambewa said.

Madonna has appealed against a high court decision to reject her request to adopt Mercy, who would have become a sibling to **David Banda**, a boy she adopted in Malawi in 2006.

Three supreme court judges, headed by chief justice Lovemore Munlo, will hear her appeal today.

Kambewa said he had not seen Mercy since her mother gave birth to her and died shortly afterwards. He said he abandoned the baby after the parents of Mercy's mother accused him of killing their daughter because she had died soon after giving birth.

When he learned that Madonna wanted to adopt Mercy, he said, "I discovered it was my daughter and vowed to see if could bring her to my home."

Kambewa works as a

Madonna may have met her match in the form of James Kambewa.

PHOTO: AP

domestic worker in Blantyre, the commercial capital, earning about US\$80 a month.

In other legal news, the son of actor **Ryan O'Neal** has been sentenced to pursue a strict drug rehabilitation program after a series of arrests for drug possession, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office said.

Redmond O'Neal, 24, was ordered back to court on May 28 for a progress report, a spokeswoman for the office said on Thursday.

"If he successfully completes the program, which is at least a year but could be longer, his criminal convictions in two separate cases for drug possession will be dismissed. If he fails, he could face up to four years in state prison," said Jane Robison, the district attorney's press secretary.

O'Neal, whose mother is actress **Farrah Fawcett**, pleaded no contest this month to a felony charge of methamphetamine possession

after drugs were found in a raid on his 67-year-old father's Malibu home in September.

He was on probation at the time of the raid following a guilty plea in June 2008 for possession of heroin and methamphetamines, and driving under the influence.

He was arrested for drug possession again on April 5 outside a prison after visiting a friend. He is due in court May 22 for a preliminary hearing in that case.

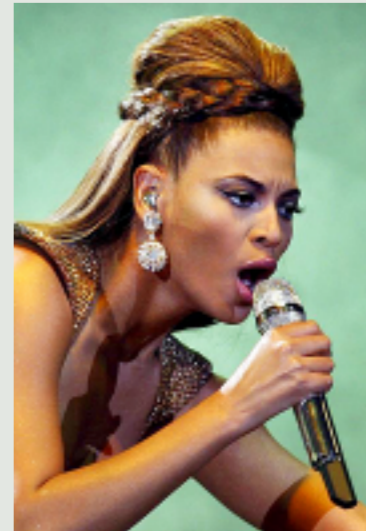
Ryan O'Neal, who received an Oscar nomination for *Love Story* in 1971 and also starred in **Stanley Kubrick's** *Barry Lyndon*, was sentenced in January to 18 months in a drug rehabilitation program.

On the lighter side of celebrity goings-on, a Vienna radio station has admitted that it sent a look-alike of US pop star **Beyonce** as a prank to the Albertina Museum, which was angered after organizing a personal tour, the APA news agency reported.

KroneHit radio said that the

American star, who gave a concert in Vienna on Tuesday, was not aware that the station had hired the German look-alike to walk around the Austrian capital.

Some newspaper reports had previously said Beyonce hired the double to go to the museum while



she went shopping.

"We followed the look-alike around Vienna all day to see how people reacted when they met Beyonce," Andrea Hilber, KroneHit's marketing chief, told APA.

"We had an excellent private visit of the Albertina Museum carried out by its director," Klaus Albert Schroeder, Hilber added.

The Albertina is one of the Austrian capital's most famous museums. Recent visitors include Hollywood stars such as **Brad Pitt** and **Nicolas Cage**.

Originally believing that Beyonce sent a double so that she could go shopping, the museum had said it would protest to the star's management.

"What a cheek," Albertina spokeswoman Verena Dahlitz was quoted as saying.

Not all practical jokes go totally unappreciated, though.

—AGENCES

Beyonce's doppelganger caused a stir in Austria.

PHOTO: EPA