

POP STOP

It's been a particularly quiet week for Pop Stop as the celebs seem to have held off from their usual romantic shenanigans. Some amusement was provided by **Rachel Liang's** (梁文音) efforts to establish herself on the TV soap circuit. Liang, who rose to prominence through the *One Million Star* (超級星光大道) pop idol competition, has seen her recently released album *Poems of Love* (愛的詩篇) disappear from the charts with considerable rapidity. Now, *Next Magazine* reports that she has been proving far from adequate as an actress.

Liang, who has been enrolled in the cast of GTV's (八大) soap *Purple Rose* (紫玫瑰), was photographed by *Next* during the reportedly innumerable retakes for one scene in which she is carried through the rain by the scrawny **Tender Huang** (黃騰浩), who quickly became exhausted. The budding starlet's inability to learn her lines or understand director **Lin He-long's** (林合隆) instructions was dismissed as nothing more than the usual learning curve of any young actress by *Purple Rose* producer **Yu Hao-wen** (余尚雯).

While Liang is working hard to carve a niche for herself in the entertainment industry, the "big-breasted bodacious baby face" (童顏巨乳) Kuo Shu-yao (郭書瑤), better known as **Yaoyao** (瑤瑤), continues on a trajectory to superstardom, with *Next* reporting that ever since her success in riding a mechanical horse in a much debated commercial for the online game *Kill Online*, her appearance fee has risen 20 times over.

Yaoyao is already planning a pictorial album, but told *Next* she would preserve whatever modesty she has left. "I don't

With acting skills like these, the sky's the limit for Rachel Liang.



Yaoyao is trying to shut the barn door after her horse has bolted.

PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

want to be like **Shu Qi** (舒淇)," she is quoted as saying. "Not everyone can manage to make the transition as successfully as she did." Shu, whose early career as a glamour model for girlie magazines and actress in soft-core features such as **Chin Man-kei's** (錢文錡) *Sex and Zen II* (玉蒲團二之玉女心經), moved into the exalted circle of big budget cinema.

In news of the amorous, **Alan Luo** (羅志祥) was this week left red-faced after Hong Kong model "Fanny" released details of their online liaisons. He was so embarrassed he deleted his Facebook account. This revelation was followed by three other Hong Kong lookers, model **Annie G**, actress **Vonnie Lui** (雷凱欣) and TV host **Coffee Lam** (林婉霞), claiming that they too are among Luo's online "friends."

There is some suggestion of hanky-panky, but Annie G said that Luo was just one of over 4,000 "friends" on her Facebook page, so the whole discomfiture over these revelations seems to add up to very little.

Coincidentally, or not, Luo's album *Trendy Man* (潮男正傳) clings to the bottom of the Top 20 chart nearly five months after its release.

Is the whole storm in a teacup just a stunt to keep Luo's CD sales up? This would hardly be unusual. But Luo better watch out as earlier this week *Apple Daily* reported that China's State Administration of Radio Film and Television (廣電總局) had put a number of artists, including **Annie Yi** (伊能靜), **Cecilia Cheung** (張柏芝) and **Edison Chen** (陳冠希), all of whom have been involved in romantic or sexual revelations, onto a blacklist of celebs who are said to be corrupting public morals.

A subsequent *Wenweipo* (文匯報) report quotes officials as saying that the blacklist is directed against media organizations rather than a direct attempt to label the A-listers *personae non gratae*.

— COMPILED BY IAN BARTHOLOMEW



PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

Ska + karaoke = Skaraoke

A night out at KTV is one of the many charms of living in Taiwan. There's nothing like singing your heart out to a favorite song while quaffing draft beer with friends.

A couple of years ago, several young Taiwanese musicians "had the idea of re-arranging some of the classic karaoke favorites into ska, hoping to get that sing-along participation from the audience," said Tom Hu (胡世漢). Thus, Skaraoke was born.

Ska music is still a new relatively new genre here. Hu credits DJ @llenblow of Taimaica Sound System (台買加環繞音效) for "spreading the words of ... ska," reggae and dub in Taiwan.

This weekend, Skaraoke joins High Tide for two gigs, held to pay tribute to "the greatest British ska giants," The Specials. They'll play selected Specials songs and original tunes, while @llenblow will "kick down with the classics from the British 2-tone era" until late.

Skaraoke is a big band with a big sound. Hu plays trombone alongside Ru Lin (劉儒霖, guitar), George Lee (鼓俠, drums), Jaco Chang (張朝凱, tenor sax), Sammy Chen (陳聖翔, keyboard), Jun Zen (曾至堯, bass) and John Doo (小杜, trumpet). All seven do vocals.

"Ska music," said Hu, "has evolved and fused with many different styles: ska-punk, ska-jazz, skafo-cuban, swing-ska, techno-ska, ska-funk." So, ska-karaoke, or karaoke, is not such an odd concept.

The band's members bring song ideas to rehearsal, then they "work out the kinks until it sounds good," said Hu.

One of their songs was featured in the opening credits of the movie *Catch* (國士無雙). Another, *Run Formosa*, appears on the Nike Sportswear/TCM Compilation CD, which came out last month.

Some songs are personal, like *Song for Archie*, which is about Archie Lee (李天池



Tom Hu plays karaoke-influenced ska.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF SKARAOKE

aka 阿奇), who was "one of the grooviest musicians" Hu says he ever met.

"He taught me a few things about the Taipei scene and being a musician in this city," said Hu, who wrote the song for Lee "right after he passed away a few years ago."

Other songs are more lighthearted. *The Skaraoke Anthem* is "about heading to the karaoke or KTV for whatever reasons you can think of," said Hu.

"The people of Taiwan love their karaoke. Whether it's the karaoke sound system in your next door neighbor's living room, or the coin-operated karaoke vans at the riverside parks in

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

What: R U Ready 2 Dance with Skaraoke, High Tide and DJ @llenblow

When and where: Tonight at VU Live House, B1, 77, Wuchang St Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市武昌街二段77號B1) from 11:30pm until late. Admission is NT\$350 including one drink. Tomorrow at 89K, 21 Takuan Rd, Nantun Dist, Taichung City (台中市南屯區大觀路21號) from 10pm. Admission is NT\$200 before 10:30pm and NT\$300 after, includes one drink.

Upcoming: Skaraoke plays on May 23 at Riverside Live House (the Nike party); May 24 at The Wall; May 31 at Riverbash and June 6 at the Reggae beach party in Wallei. Check the band's MySpace page for more information

On the Net: www.myspace.com/skaraoke

Wanhua, or the weekend morning KTV sessions with fellow classmates, or even the odd late night after-after-parties at Cashbox, you know you will always

have a great time."

"One of these days, hopefully, we will get people singing Skaraoke songs at KTV," said Hu.

— ALITA RICKARDS

National Chengchi University offers up a Chinese operatic spectacular

The NCCU 9th On-Site Artist Event (國立政治大學第九屆駐校藝術家), which opened yesterday at National Chengchi University (國立政治大學) campus, bridges the weeklong gap between the outstanding traditional *kun* opera (崑劇) performances of the 2009 *Taiwan Kun Opera Theatre All Stars* (蘭谷名華2009崑劇名家匯演) last week and the much anticipated Taiwan premiere of Kenneth Pai's (白先勇) young person's version of the classic opera *The Jade Hairpin* (玉簪記) on May 21.

Yesterday, a panel discussion that sets the tone for the 10-day program of lectures and performances, brought together Pai, one of Taiwan's foremost literary figures and now a self-described "volunteer worker for *kun* opera," and Liao Chiung-chih (廖瓊枝), an almost mythical figure of Taiwan's own *gezai* opera (歌仔戲) tradition.

The On-Site Artist Event, subtitled "passing down tradition, passing on the spirit" (新傳傳心), presents lectures by

both the old and young generations of opera performers, starting today at 10am with a talk by Wang Chih-ping (王志平), director of the Lanting Kun Opera Troupe (蘭庭崑劇團), which is widely praised as one of Taiwan's most innovative *kun* opera companies.

This will be followed by a presentation given by Liang Guying (梁谷音), fresh from her turn with the Taiwan Kun Opera Theatre All Stars, tomorrow at 3pm.

On Sunday at 3pm, the older generation of *kun* masters speak, including one of *kun* opera's all-time greats, Zhang Jiqing (張繼青), who is in town as a consultant for Pai's *Jade Hairpin*.

The lecture series concludes on May 22 with a talk by Hsu Ya-fen (許亞芬), founder of the Hsu Ya-fen Opera Company (許亞芬歌子劇坊), on *gezai* opera's ability to integrate many traditions.

Tonight, the NCCU Kun Opera Society (政大崑劇社), Taiwan Kunqu Opera Theatre (台灣崑劇團) and Shuimo Kun Opera

Troupe (水磨曲集崑劇團) perform opera excerpts, followed by highlights from *The Western Chamber* (西廂記) tomorrow, *Lanhe Mountain* (爛河山) on Sunday and *The Palace of Eternal Youth* (長生殿) on Monday, performed by China's Suzhou Kun Opera Company (蘇州崑劇院).

On Thursday, *gezai* legend Liao shares the stage with the Tang Mei Yun Opera Troupe (唐美雲歌仔戲團).

And if that's not enough, the Shuimo Kun Opera Troupe will hold hour-long demonstrations of *kun* opera tomorrow, Sunday and Monday at 1pm, and Liao will demonstrate her *gezai* art in classes today and tomorrow at 1pm.

For opera lovers, or for those who simply want to dip into the rich world of Chinese opera, the NCCU event is an opportunity to see some of the genre's greatest performers at virtually no cost.

Detailed information about the program can be found at artist.nccu.edu.tw/980SAE.htm.

— IAN BARTHOLOMEW



Gezai opera legend Liao Chiung-chi.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF NCCU

TOP FIVE MANDARIN ALBUMS

MAY 1 TO MAY 7

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 | Li Li-wei (李立威) and <i>You</i> (你) with 4.78% |
| 4 | Compilation album <i>K.O. 3 Anguo</i> (三團鼎立SUGAR大門陣) with 4.02% |
| 5 | Power Station (動力火車) and <i>Moving On</i> (繼續轉動) with 3.74% |

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



Theater

Renowned Japanese performance duo Eiko Otake and Takashi Koma Otake, generally known as Eiko and Koma, open the 2009 Novel Dance series with **Cambodian Stories**. The multi-disciplinary performance, which highlights the duo's unique style of theater that makes use of light, shape, movement and stillness, began when the artists collaborated with art students in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in 2004. [See story on Page 13.]

► Novel Hall (新舞臺), 3-1 Songshou Rd, Taipei City (台北市松壽路3-1號)
► Tonight and tomorrow at 8pm, Sunday at 3pm
► Tickets are NT\$500 to NT\$2,000, available through ERA ticketing or online at www.ticket.com.tw

Inspired by a short story penned by best-selling Chinese author Li Yu (李漁) during the early Qing Dynasty, **He Is My Wife, He Is My Mother** (少年金銀男孟母) by Creative Society Theatre Company (創作社劇團) updates Li's cross-gender spectacle with a 21st-century sensitivity and wit. The play is performed in Mandarin with English subtitles.

► Metropolitan Hall (城市舞台), 25, Bade Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市八德路三段25號)
► Tonight at 7:30pm, tomorrow at 2:30pm and 7:30pm and Sunday at 2:30pm
► Tickets are NT\$500 to NT\$3,000, available through NTCH ticketing or

online at www.artsticket.com.tw

As part of the ongoing celebrations for the 30th anniversary of Lanling Theatre Workshop (蘭陵劇坊), a pioneering experimental theater troupe, Uhan Shii Theatre Group (歡喜扮戲團) extols women's sexuality in **Cat Walk Awakening** (貓仔走醒), which blends Taiwanese ballads with Hakka mountain songs, a genre known for its direct expression of desires and passions.
► Red House Theater (紅樓劇場), 10 Chengdu Rd, Wanhua Dist, Taipei City (台北市萬華區成都路10號)
► Tonight at 7:30pm, tomorrow at 2:30pm and 7:30pm and Sunday at 2:30pm
► Tickets are NT\$400, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

For **Crystal Tun-Hwang** (水晶瓶中的敦煌), Jade and Artists Dance Troupe's (肢體音符舞團) latest production, the group's artistic director and choreographer, Hsu Yu-ju (徐玉如), teamed up with music producer Lin Lung-hsuan (林隆璇) and flutist Eric Chang (張中立) to present a spiritual journey of self-discovery inspired by the murals found inside the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas in Gansu Province, China.
► Zhongshan Hall (台北市中山堂), 98 Yenping S Rd, Taipei City (台北市延平南路98號)
► Tonight at 7:30pm
► Tickets are NT\$200 and NT\$800, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

U-Theatre brings its six-part ode to its Laoquanshan (老泉山) home, **The Mountain Dawn** (夜夜山嵐), to Taichung this weekend for two performances. The production is a contemplative reflection on the tranquil life the group's members lead on the mountain.
► Taichung Chungshan Hall (台中中山堂), 98 Hsuehsi Rd, Taichung City (台中市學士路98號)
► Tonight and tomorrow at 7:30pm
► Tickets are NT\$400 to NT\$2,000, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

Classical music

Main Stadium Inauguration Concert — The World Games Concert 2009(2009 迎接世運之夜 — 世運主場館落成音樂會) opens the new sports venue with a concert featuring the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra under Manfred Honeck, the Konzertvereinigung Wiener Staatsopernchor under Ioan Holender and Taiwan's National Experimental Orchestra (國立實驗合唱團) performing a program that includes Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*, and Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92 and Symphony No. 9 in D-Minor, Op. 125 — *Finale Ode to Joy*.
► Wednesday at 7:30pm
► Main World Games Stadium, Kaohsiung (高雄世運主場館), located at the junction of Jhungai and Junsiao roads (中海路與軍校路口)
► Tickets are NT\$290 to NT\$3,000,

available through ERA ticketing or online at www.ticket.com.tw

Brilliant Light of Choral Music — Mark Anthony Carpio and the Taipei Philharmonic Youth Choir (絢麗的聲音火花 — 菲律賓瑪德利加指揮Mark Anthony Carpio與台北愛樂青年合唱團) brings to Taipei the leader of the Philippine Madrigal Singers as a guest conductor in a concert featuring the Taipei Philharmonic Youth Choir (台北愛樂青年合唱團) supported by the National Hsinchu Senior High School Chorus (新竹高中合唱團), and a program that includes the works of Filipino composers Francisco Feliciano and Ryan Cayabyab, as well as pieces by Javier Busto, John Rutter, Saunders Choi and Christopher Borela.

► Tomorrow at 7:30pm
► National Concert Hall, Taipei City
► Tickets are NT\$400 to NT\$1,500, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

2009 Ju Percussion Group Annual Cross Boarder Concert

— Beatbox (2009朱宗慶打擊樂團年度跨界音樂會 — 擊樂人聲) parades Ju Percussion's (朱宗慶打擊樂團) versatility in a concert featuring works that push the art of percussion music to new levels.
► Monday and Tuesday at 7:30pm
► National Concert Hall, Taipei City
► Tickets are NT\$400 to NT\$1,500, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

AMA Principle Artist Series 12

Contemporary

Tonight, **Understory** (地下歲月) and hip-hop rockers **Living Force** (存活勢力) share the bill at **The Wall** (這牆). Tomorrow, Canadian extreme metal group **Into Eternity** takes the stage, while on Wednesday it's post-rock/emo band **Orangegrass** (橙草) and Indie-rockers **Silver Bus** turn to shake the stage. On Thursday, **GunPowder** performs.
► 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
► Shows start at 8pm tonight and Wednesday, 7pm tomorrow
► Entrance fee for music shows is NT\$400 tonight, NT\$900 tomorrow (special offers are available if you buy the entry ticket and the band's CDs together), NT\$350 on Wednesday and NT\$300 on Thursday, or NT\$350 for

entry and the band's DVD

Performing tonight at **Witch House** (女巫店) is **Shi Ying-ying** (史茵茵), who performs in musicals and whose first solo album, *Someone Is Praying for You*, was released in March.

Taking to the stage tomorrow night are **Haihai** (海海) and **Lanmu** (藍姆), followed by Aboriginal musician **Leo Chen** (陳永龍), who grew up singing about the beauty of the mountains of his home, Nanwang Village in Taitung. On Thursday, indie-folk duo **U.TA** (屋塔樂團) opens proceedings, followed by neo-folk singer/guitarist **Enno Cheng** (鄭宜農).

► 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
► Admission for music shows is NT\$300

Riverside Cafe (河岸留言) tonight hosts percussion virtuoso **Rich Huang** (黃瑞豐) and friends. Tomorrow it's singer and multi-instrument whiz **Suming** (姜聖明), and on Sunday relatively new Mando-pop singer on the block, **Lan You-shi** (藍又時). Other performers next week include, **Happy Circle**, whose EP *Hello Tomorrow* came out in March, and new band **Lidehui** (利得衛) on Wednesday.
► B1, 2, Ln 244, Roosevelt Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路三段244巷

2號B1), next to Taipower Building (台電大樓). Call (02) 2368-7310 or visit www.riverside.com.tw for more information

► Shows start at 9:30pm tonight, 9pm tomorrow, Sunday and Wednesday
► Admission is NT\$500 tonight, NT\$400 tomorrow and Sunday, NT\$350 on Wednesday

Veteran performer, producer and songwriter **Sandee Chan** (陳珊妮) and **Kimmy Chan** (陳怡文) share the stage tonight at **Riverside Live House** (西門紅樓展演館). Pop singer **Victor Wong** (品冠) performs tomorrow, while **Hsiao Hung-jen** (蕭闌仁) and indie-rock outfit **Pen Sauce** (筆醬), which has a new single out entitled *Sorry!! I'm the Queen*, tackle center stage on Thursday.
► 177 Xining S Rd, Taipei City (台北市西寧南路177號). Call (02) 2370-8805 or visit www.riverside.com.tw for more information
► All shows start at 8:30pm
► Entrance fee is NT\$660 tonight, NT\$500 tomorrow and NT\$400 on Thursday

Tonight at **VU Live House** there's The Specials tribute show with **High Tide**, **Skaraoke** and the **Taimaica Sound System**. [See story above.]
► B1, 77, Wuchang St Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市武昌街二段77號B1). Call (02) 2314-1868 for more information
► 11pm tonight
► NT\$350 admission, includes one drink