

RESTAURANTS



PHOTO: NOAH BUCHAN, TAIPEI TIMES

La Marche's corn beef sandwich is no Reuben, but the tiramisu is to die for.

La Marche

Address: 9, Ln 199, Xinyi Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市信義路四段199巷9號)

Telephone: (02) 2755-1055

Open: 11:30am to 10pm; closed Mondays

Average meal: NT\$350 for lunch; NT\$600 for dinner

Details: Chinese and English menu; credit cards accepted

On the Net: www.lamarche.com.tw

Basil, mint, rosemary and thyme were some of the herbs I noticed growing in pots on a wooden deck out front of the recently opened La Marche on a sunny afternoon last week. Any prospective diner would be forgiven for assuming that the restaurant uses these fresh ingredients in its food.

Entering the French and Italian-style affair was a somewhat overwhelming experience. The front section was stocked with teas, dry pastas, oils, vinegars, mustards, jams and biscuits — all imported and for sale. A large display case farther in contained cold meats, cheeses, desserts and the odd imported beer.

In the middle of this mini supermarket were four tables that stretched back to a bar midway through the restaurant. Beside the dark wooden bar is an entranceway that leads into a large, bright dining room. I took my seat at the front with views of the small herb garden.

As it was afternoon, dinner was out of the question (served from 5:30pm). That was just as well because the handsomely designed menu revealed that La Marche serves pastrami sandwiches (NT\$200) — a personal favorite. I went with the set menu (add NT\$120), which included soup, salad and coffee (tea and juice are also available).

Moments later a waiter sidled up with a huge hunk of meat: they were out of pastrami. Would corned beef suffice? After considering the menu's sandwich selection, which included chorizo, Spanish prosciutto, Italian salami and smoked turkey breast, (NT\$180 each), I acquiesced to the corned beef.

The hearty tomato and vegetable soup was somewhat of a disappointment. Looking at the herbs out front, it's a wonder how none made it into the soup with the onions, carrots and stewed tomatoes. The home-baked bread served with the soup, however, contained small bits of roasted red pepper and black olives — a nice zesty touch. The salad was of the iceberg lettuce variety — a letdown compounded by an oil and balsamic vinegar dressing that was herb-free.

Though the sandwich came well presented on lightly toasted ciabatta and contained an ample portion of corned beef and a slice of cheddar, the unimaginative mayonnaise topping condemned it to banality. Where was the mustard or horseradish, or sauerkraut that is usually found in Reuben sandwiches? Still, the fries were large, crispy and yummy and the side salad of olives and cherry tomatoes was a nice touch.

The tiramisu (NT\$160) isn't available on the set menu, and when it arrived at the table the reason why became readily apparent. The slice, or more accurately slab, was larger than the corned beef sandwich and far more creatively put together. The fingers of sponge cake (infused with orange liqueur, Kahlua and hazelnut schnapps) wobbled on layers of whipped mascarpone and cream. It was a rich dessert that will keep me coming back — unlike the corned beef sandwich.

— NOAH BUCHAN



PHOTO: CATHERINE SHU, TAIPEI TIMES

Hi Sushi is not shy about dumping liberal amounts of mentaiko on its dishes.

Hi Sushi (海壽司)

Address: B1, 45, Shifu Rd, Taipei City (台北市市府路45號B1), in the Taipei 101 food court. For other locations, visit hisushi.com.tw

Telephone: (02) 8101-8358 **Open:** 11am to 11:30pm

Average meal: Sushi plates cost NT\$40 to NT\$150 each

Details: Chinese, English and Japanese menu; credit cards accepted

With five locations in Taipei, Hi Sushi (海壽司) is a step up in quality (but just a step) above the ubiquitous chain Sushi Express. Both restaurants offer self-serve conveyor belt sushi, but Hi Sushi's prices are higher and its menu slightly more extensive. The fun of eating in these restaurants is picking plates of sushi as they come gliding past you, but on weekdays and during off hours on weekends, diners in the Hi Sushi in Taipei 101 have to order most of their food off of a menu. Without the novelty of the self-serve format, Hi Sushi's sushi becomes just inexpensive (and slightly boring) sushi.

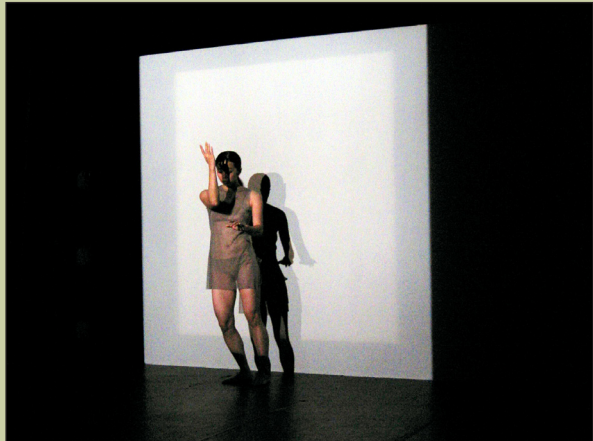
The secret to eating at conveyor belt sushi restaurants without accidentally spending a fortune is to load up on lower-priced basics. Hi Sushi does most of the basic nigiri, like eel (鰻魚), squid (花枝) and salmon (鮭魚) well (all NT\$60 per plate), with the latter two being standouts for quality. The tuna nigiri (鰹魚), however, was sliced too thin and was generally lifeless with little flavor.

Hi Sushi does a better job with its shellfish sashimi. Its freshwater shrimp nigiri (甜蝦, NT\$80) was very sweet and topped with salmon roe, and its scallop nigiri (干貝, NT\$100) was also very good. The restaurant's more adventurous selections, however, are hit and miss. Its lobster salad tasted like a 7-Eleven rice ball when made into nigiri (龍蝦沙拉, NT\$40), but was more successful as a hand roll wrapped in crispy seaweed (NT\$40). The restaurant was out of California rolls (加州捲, NT\$40) every time I visited last week, but the server recommended Hi Sushi jumbo rolls (花壽司, NT\$60) as a substitute. The giant sushi roll is stuffed with an assortment of sundry food items including pickles, imitation crab meat and tamago, or cooked egg, but the thunder was taken away from it by the cling wrap that I had to unpeel first and very clammy and hard sushi rice, which made it clear that the roll was not freshly made and had probably made plenty of rounds on the conveyor belt before I got to it.

Hi Sushi also has a couple of items that make liberal use of mentaiko, or marinated cod roe, and mayonnaise sauce including squid with mentaiko (NT\$60) and shrimp with mentaiko nigiri (NT\$100). On a recent visit, the Taipei 101 Hi Sushi also had bowls of chopped squid meat liberally drizzled in mentaiko (NT\$100), which resembled macaroni and cheese, on its conveyor belt. The macaroni probably would have been a better substitute for the squid meat, which was completely lost underneath the very salty and creamy sauce.

— CATHERINE SHU

Cinema enters stage right



Is it possible to make background imagery the key subject in theater? How would artists from outside the theater use imagery to represent their art on stage?

When Tony Wu (吳俊輝) was asked last year to organize the 2009 Guling Street Little Theatre Arts Festival, these questions, and many more, weighed heavily on his mind. The result is three weekends of performances that examine the image-making process by presenting audiences with the techniques and equipment that usually remain hidden in cinema.

"Traditionally, all the filmmaking processes are concealed from us when we go to a movie theater. To me, there exists a sense of openness in contemporary art and theater. [They are] open to an instant happening, enable audiences to see images being made right on the spot and artists to rethink the elements that are eclipsed in conventional forms of filmmaking," Wu said.

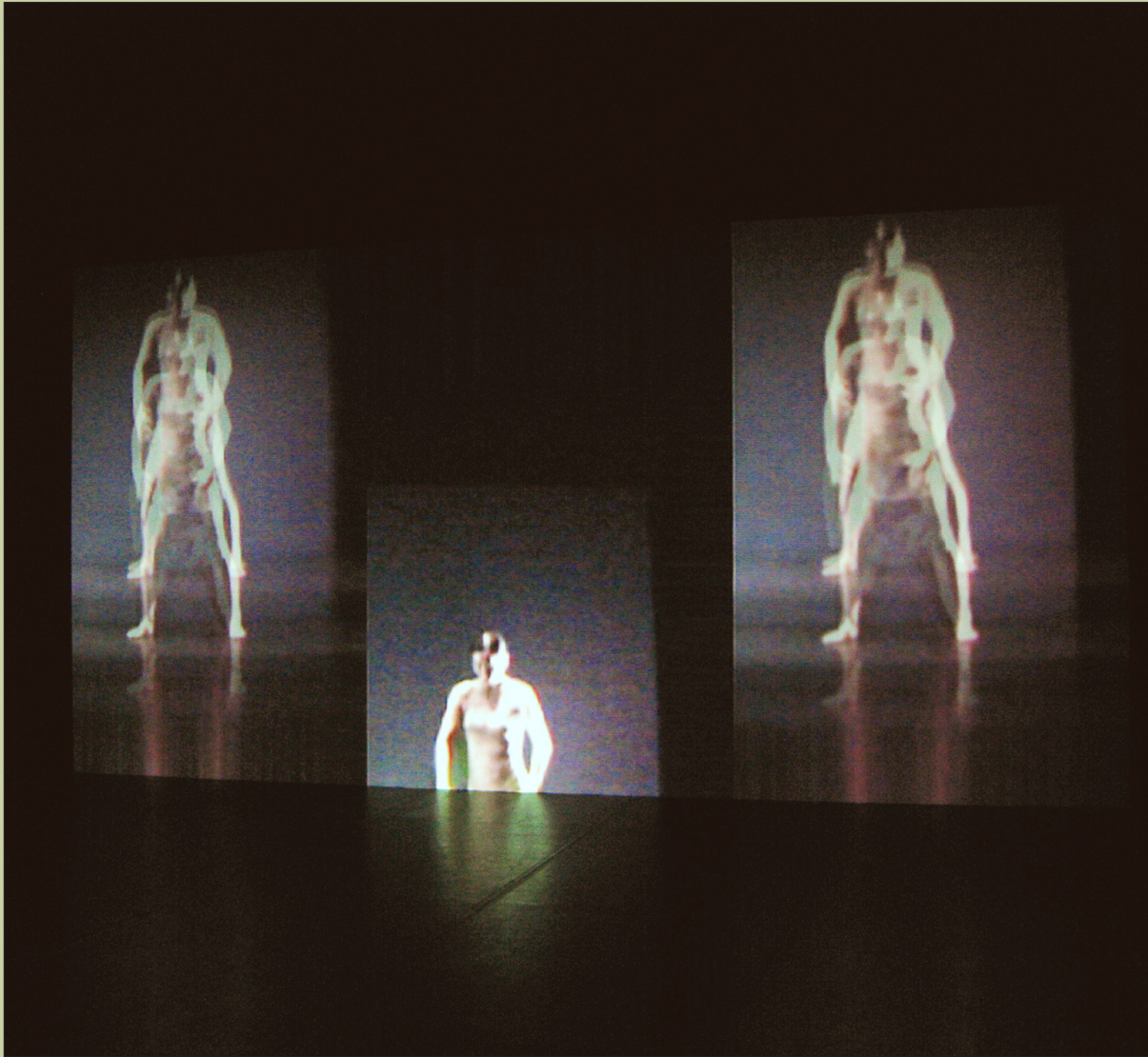
Known for her "Performative Cinema" series, which has been shown in galleries and museums but never before in a theater, Malaysian artist Au Sow Yee is an experimental filmmaker whose interests are light and the passage of time.

In *Performative Cinema VI: Songlines*, Au improvises and plays with a fallen leaf, a butterfly wing or her own fingers in front of a film projector, thereby creating images through her performance art.

Immediacy and improvisation are also highlighted in *Live Cinema* by experimental filmmakers Guy Sherwin from the UK and Lynn Loo of Singapore. Their work involves four projectors playing four original 16mm films simultaneously onto the stage to create a dazzling theatrical performance.

Taiwanese dancer and choreographer Su Wen-chi (蘇文琪) opens the festival tonight with *Loop Me*. The performance is divided into two parts with Su dancing a slow solo in the first half, which will be recorded and projected onto the backdrop in the second half of the show.

In the latter segment, Su retires from the stage and the digitally manipulated images are played in a continuous loop, which creates a new on-stage character. The idea behind the work: is a performance without a performer still a performance?



Scenes from dancer and choreographer Su Wen-chi's *Loop Me*.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GULING STREET LITTLE THEATRE

"The work starts with the concept of looping in contemporary video art. The question that follows is about how a body presents an idea ... Today, when living things, cities and even human progress can be duplicated, I reflect on my own survival as a dancer. To me, dancing in a loop signals a sense of irreversible destruction," Su said.

The lineup for this weekend includes musician Sandra Li's (李婉菁) experimental musical *Dark Baroque* (黑暗巴洛克). A former keyboard player with heavy metal band Chthonic (閃靈), Li teamed up with rapper Chang Jui-chuan (張睿銘), heavy metal vocalist Chi (小祇) and soprano Chen Wen-yu (陳文鈺) to put together a hybrid theatrical show of classical music, hip-hop and heavy metal sounds. The performers' images will be transformed in real time by VJ Nina Sky into a visual orchestra.

Tickets for *Dark Baroque* are selling fast. — HO YI

FESTIVAL NOTES:

What: 2009 Guling Street Little Theatre Arts Festival — With(out) Cinema (2009枯嶺街國際小劇場藝術節—形影相析/斷)

When: Today through May 31, Fridays at 7pm, Saturdays at 2:30pm and 7pm and Sundays at 2:30pm

Where: Guling Street Little Theatre (枯嶺街小劇場), 2, Ln 5, Guling St, Taipei City (台北市枯嶺街5巷2號)

Admission: Tickets are NT\$350 per performance, NT\$700 for two shows on one day, NT\$1,500 for six shows, available through NTCH ticket outlets or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

On the net: www.wretch.cc/blog/glttheatre



The former leader of one of hip-hop's most influential groups, Grandmaster Flash and The Furious Five, and a pioneer of scratching, sometimes using his feet, elbows and toes, **Grandmaster Flash** is widely perceived to be one of the most important figures in the genre's history. He returns to Luxy for the fourth time tomorrow.

Flash, real name Joseph Saddler, was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2007 — the first hip-hop artist to garner the accolade.

With so many achievements under his belt, it's not surprising that this living legend has a few good stories to recount.

His memoir, *The Adventures of Grandmaster Flash: My Life, My Beats*, was published last year. "This book is for people who don't have perfect families, for people who don't have a perfect job, perfect career, or perfect life," he told Chris Yandek in an interview. "What I want people to get out of this book is that although things might appear to be gloomy and it looks like there's no light at the end of the tunnel, I kind of want people to believe in faith, believe in yourself, and believe that you can come through it."



Grandmaster Flash, bridging the divide.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LUXY

In the book, Flash talks about the bright and dark sides of his life, such as his brush with drug addiction. "I've been through quite a few things ... I went deep into cocaine. Eventually I started smoking it, walking away from my turntables. And by the time I realized what it was doing to me, I was hooked ... As years went by, I returned to me ... I want people to remember Grandmaster Flash as a DJ, so I had to take the long walk back into the business," he said.

In February, Grandmaster Flash released *The Bridge*, his first studio album since 1988's *On the Strength*, and he's now touring Asia and Europe.

"The album title represents all the bridges I've crossed worldwide," Flash said in an interview with Strut. "It's also a mirror of international talent that I have been lucky enough to experience while traveling the world."

"On the track *We Speak Hip-Hop*, there's a mix of international MCs rapping in different languages. I wanted to create an album with a diversity of tracks to reflect the diversity of hip-hop, pairing famous MCs with unknown MCs and American MCs with international rappers."

Grandmaster Flash, tomorrow at Luxy, 5F, 201, Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段201號5樓). Admission is NT\$700 before 11pm and NT\$900 after.

On the Net: www.grandmasterflash-thebridge.com, www.luxy-taipei.com.

— QUEEN BEE

[EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT]

Kate Jazz Trio plays tonight at **Sappho de Base**. Tomorrow there's **T&T Jazz & Friends**, while **Rick Taira Quartet**

performs on Tuesday. **Dawid Vorster** and **Martijn Vanbuel** take the stage on Wednesday. **Grace Jazz Trio's** gig on Thursday is followed by an open jam session.

► B1, 1, Ln 102, Anhe Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市安和路一段102巷1號B1). Call (02) 2700-5411 (after 9pm) or visit www.sappho102.biz for more information

► Performances begin at 10:30pm on weekends, 10pm on weekdays

► No admission fee

Every Wednesday night at the **Cosmopolitan Grill** there's a blues open mic, held by the Blues Society in Taiwan. Performers from all walks of life are welcome.

► 1F, 218 Changchun Rd, Taipei City (台北市長春路218號1樓).

Call (02) 2508-0304 or visit www.cosmo.com.tw for more information

► 8pm to 11 pm every Wednesday

► No admission fee

Indie rock group **Homa** and indie-electronica outfit **Alluvial** (阿路米爾) share the bill tonight and tomorrow at **Underworld** (地下社會). On Wednesday, **Deepest** (深層樂團) and **Pifuf Monster** perform

► B1, 45 Shida Rd, Taipei City (台北市師大路45號B1). Call (02) 2369-0103 or visit www.upsaid.com/underworld for more information

► All shows start at 9pm

► Entrance is NT\$300 tonight and tomorrow and includes one drink, Wednesday's show is NT\$100

Talk

The quest for cultural identity and the experience of culture shock are the main themes of **Taking Stock: Who Am I, Where Am I From, and Where Am I Going?**, a panel discussion, hosted by the Lung Ying-tai Cultural Foundation (龍應台文化基金會).

The four panelists — a Harvard graduate, a surgeon and two educators — are all under 30 years old and were raised and educated overseas. They will talk about their experiences of returning to Taiwan to work and live and examine the reasons why they returned to Taiwan, how living abroad affected their cultural identity and the importance of intercultural communication. The talk is in English.

Admission is free but attendees must preregister by calling (02) 3322-4907, or visiting www.civictaipei.org.

► Yue-han Hall (月涵堂), 110 Jinhua St, Taipei City (台北市金華街110號)

► May 23, from 2pm to 4:30pm

Exhibitions

A black-and-white photograph shows an armed officer moving through a trashed up Cleveland, Ohio, home following an eviction — the consequence of a mortgage foreclosure. The cop has to make sure that the house is clear of weapons, and that the residents have moved out. The shot, taken by American photographer Anthony Suau for *Time* magazine, took top honors at the **52nd World Press Photo Contest**. An exhibition of the winning photographs in 10 different categories is currently on display at Dunhua EsLite Bookstore.

► EsLite Gallery (誠品書廊), B2, 243, Dunhua S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段243號B2). Open daily from 11am to 10pm. Call (02) 2775-5977

► Until May 30

Liu Shih-tang (劉時棟) revises the Chinese folk art tradition of paper cutting and merges it with a contemporary aesthetic in **Start From Eyes** (始於眼).

The exhibit features 36 of Liu's mixed-media collage paintings. ► Main Trend Gallery (大趨勢畫廊), 209-1, Chengde Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市承德路三段209-1號). Open Tuesdays through Saturdays from

11am to 7pm. Tel: (02) 2587-3412. On the Net: www.maintrendgallery.com.tw

► Until June 6

Taiwan's plants, animals and folk customs serve as Hsiao Mei's (蕭梅) visual language in her solo exhibit **Here Is Where We Meet** (邂逅·境遇). The show features more than 30 of her dreamlike oil paintings that were created between 2003 to 2009.

► Taipei Fine Arts Museum (TFAM), 181, Zhongshan N Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市中山北路三段181號). Open Tuesday to Sunday from 9:30am to 5:30pm; Saturdays open until 8:30pm. Tel: (02) 2595-7656. On the Net: www.tfam.museum

► Until June 26

Landscape, Taiwan (風景·台灣) is a solo exhibition comprised of 21 landscape and seascape oil paintings by Taiwanese artist Yeh Tzu-chi (葉子奇). The works are a visual diary of the artist's past, where place and memory merge in romantic depictions of the country's natural scenery.

► EsLite Xinyi Bookstore (誠品信義店), 5F, 11 Songgao Rd, Taipei City (台北市松高路11號5樓). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 11am to 7pm.

Telephone: (02) 8789-3388 X1588

► Until June 7

Legend of Future (未來的傳說)

is a group exhibition featuring 11 of Asia's top artists working in the mediums of sculpture and painting. The show includes South Korea's Kwon Ki Soo, Japan's Yoshitomo Nara and Yoshitaka Amano, and Taiwan's Yang Mao-lin (楊茂林) and Hung Yi (洪易). The works on display are inspired by the aesthetics of anime and manga.

► Metaphysical Art Gallery (形而上畫廊), 7F, 219, Dunhua S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段219號7樓). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 11am to 6:30pm. Tel: (02) 2771-3236

► Until May 31

Chang Dai-chien: Memorial Painting and Calligraphy Exhibition (張大千110—書畫紀念特展) displays 96 works by one of the 20th century's most revered painters working in Chinese art.

From his early output, which was firmly rooted in tradition, to his later paintings, which were influenced by modernism, this exhibit provides insight into the painter's evolution as an artist and the different schools of thought that influenced him.

► National Museum of History (國立歷史博物館), 49 Nanhai Rd, Taipei City (台北市南海路49號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2361-0270.

On the Net: www.nmh.gov.tw

► Until June 14