14 發光的城市 AROUND TOWN

N ow that Chu Ko Liang (豬哥亮) has been found and made a promising return to showbiz in a television commercial that first screened in April, pundits are engaged in heated debate over the whereabouts of other former stars who retired from the celebrity scene. The ultimate subject of this hunt is **Bobby Liu** (劉 文正), a pop idol who rose to superstardom in 1970s and abruptly hung up his mic in the prime of his career some 27 years ago.

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Rumors about his bloated figure and/or death have periodically done the rounds. Veteran singer Yu Ya (尤雅) recently asserted that Liu has gained so much weight over his years in the wilderness that he now looks like Pai Yun (白雲), a blubbery funnyman known for consuming two lunchboxes for every meal.

Infuriated by Yu's accusation, Liu's former manager and close friend Hsia Yu-shun (夏玉順) threatened to sue anyone who dares to insinuate that the erstwhile prince of pop is porcine.

So, speculating on the death of a star is fine, but gossiping about his or her weight is beyond the pale.

According to Hsia, Liu, 56, looks as dashing as ever and shows absolutely no interest in making a comeback. "We are not in debt like Chu Ko Liang," Hsia was quoted as saying.

The *Liberty Times* [the Taipei Times' sister paper] reports that the former crooner owns more than 100 properties in the US alone and lives comfortably on his accumulated wealth, which tops US\$100 million. The paparazzi face a daunting task catching up with the elusive retiree, as he reportedly has numerous hideaways in Singapore, Malaysia, Las Vegas, Los Angeles





Following A-mei's lead, Big S also wants a piece of deliciously tanned young jock pie.

and New York City. Chasing down an A-lister is much easier if you're a local athlete. They seem to be in vogue these days among the female celebrity clique, partly, commentators say, thanks to the pairing of basketball heartthrob Sam Ho (何守正) and Mando-pop diva A-mei (張惠妹).

Pop star and actress Barbie Hsu (徐熙媛), better known as Big S (大S), Patty Hou (侯 佩岑) and top model Patina Lin (林嘉綺) were last week spotted wining and dining at a Japanese barbecue restaurant in Taipei's East District (東區) with basketball players from Taiwan Beer and the Yulon Dinos at what appeared to be a group blind date.

The presence of China's Huang Xiaoming (黃曉明), however, hints that the rendezvous might have been a stunt to generate free publicity for his new television soap opera series Summer's Bubbles (泡沫之夏), which coincidentally costars Big S.

Cynics could also be forgiven for interpreting the latest tidbit on One Million Star (超級星光大道) alumnus Jam Hsiao (蕭敬騰) as a bid to hype the singer's latest album, which comes out in a few weeks.

After discovering his latent claustrophobia earlier this year, Hsiao began experiencing severe headaches. At a press conference, the star's manager said the initial diagnosis was worrying and, in the worstcase scenario, the idol might need to have brain surgery.

We all know what happens to stricken celebrities: just



Once he puts his helmet on, Bob Log III enters another dimension — as do some of the audience.

Shock and roll

When Bob Log III took to the stage at the Urban Nomad party on April 23, wearing a cannonball stunt suit and a big silver helmet, the crowd went wild. And not just for his music.

He is back in Taipei on Tuesday night, with his bizarre stage antics — including those he gets the female portion of the audience to engage in. The Tuscon, Arizona, native is as well known for these as he is for his whiskey soaked Mississippi Delta blues or the fact that he is a one-man band. Women bounce along on his knee to his song I Want Your Shit on My Leg.

He exited the stage by crowd-surfing in a dingy while still playing. Whether you view his antics as sexist, post-feminist, ludicrous, or artistic, they are first and foremost entertainment.

Speaking prior to the show, sans helmet, he was respectful, supportive and almost deferential when dealing with members of Rock in Hose Burlesque, of which I'm a member, who shared the bill with him. Of his on-stage requirements for audience participation all he said, in a soft-spoken, polite drawl, was, "You ladies can set it up any way you want, I'll do anything I can to help you, but once I'm on stage, I'm on my own in the helmet and I'm doing my thing.'

Supporting on Tuesday is a band that has had only one show, and that was a three-set affair at Bliss. The Homo Jews admit that "more than anything else it's definitely the name" that got them the show, said Tomer Feldman, best known as lead guitarist for Neon.

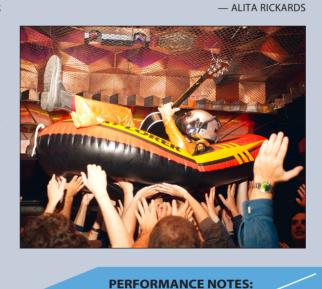
The inflammatory name could be attracting, rather than repelling listeners, though. "People were coming from China White saying, 'We want to see the Homo Jews," said bassist James Murray.

Drummer Dan Plimmer, and vocalist Nate Javens are already well known in the local scene from their

Are they worried about a backlash similar to the one punk band Consider the Meek experienced after placing a post on Facebook looking for a drummer, in which they said "no reg-GAY"? The Meek was subjected to much online flack and ended up contacting a gay right's group in Australia and publicly apologizing for the incident.

Not a chance. "We're not calling someone else Homo Jews," said Feldman, who is Israeli. "We're calling ourselves Homo Jews!"

"We're certainly not attacking homos or Jews," said Javens. "People who don't recognize the absurdity of our name wouldn't get our music anyway.





Mulan takes a humorous look at gender identity and love.

The army makes a (wo)man of you

The rehearsal space for National Taiwan University's theater department could serve as a metaphor for the difficulties facing Taiwan's performance art scene - at least at the university level.

There are frighteningly large cracks in the walls, some shoddily cemented over. The equipment appears to be decades old and there is no permanent seating. It is the kind of rehearsal space that raises more problems than it solves. And this is at Taiwan's top institution of learning. And yet, these obstacles pale in comparison to other problems that needed to be overcome to stage Mulan (木蘭少女), a musical that opens tonight at Taipei City's Metropolitan Hall (城市舞台).

"Most of our theater students — even graduate students - don't have vocal and physical training," said Lu Po-shen (呂柏伸), the production's director and founder of Tainaner Ensemble (台南人劇團). The solution, he said, was to hold early auditions (they took place last summer) and employ industry professionals to hone the actors singing and dancing skills.

It is a formula that seems to have paid off. At a run through earlier this week, the many dance numbers were well executed and the songs evoked the necessary saccharine emotions.

The musical has 25 actors on stage, with a 23member live orchestra performing 18 original songs written specifically for the production. The script, written by Tsai Po-chang (蔡柏璋) of K-24 fame, is based on a Chinese morality tale called Hua Mulan (花木蘭), which dates back to before the Tang Dynasty.

As with the original *Mulan*, the musical tells the story of a woman named Hua Mulan who joins an all-male army. But that's pretty much where the similarities end. In the original work, Mulan wants to prove her mettle and establish her family's reputation by fighting for her country — a contrast with the musical's heroine, who loafs around the house all day and only gets off the couch to go shopping.

Through a series of events, however, Mulan's parents force her to disguise herself as a man and enlist in the army. The conceit works: a heterosexual childhood friend, who joins the army at the same time and fails to see through the disguise, falls in love with her anyway. So too does a gay general. The love triangle that results involves Mulan humorously attempting to keep her identity hidden, while trying to decide which suitor to choose.

In the performance, the rituals and customs of the traditional Taiwanese family and village, as well as life in the barracks, are lampooned to great effect.

Taken together, the musical investigates in a humorous and light-hearted manner the issue of gender identity, raising the question of whether it is learned or innate. It also reveals that, although funding for amateur performance art in Taiwan is somewhat limited, the nation's up-and-coming artists still have much to offer audiences.

	think Jade Goody. A second opinion was sought after a magnetic resonance imaging test, or MRI, at Taipei Veterans General Hospital on Monday. The result: The Hsiao's unbearable headaches were caused by muscle strain from playing basketball and he requires no serious treatment. Sweet relief. — COMPILED BY HO YI Is Jam Hsiao the boy who cried wolf?	The band name comes from Feldman calling Murray a "homo" while play fighting, which Murray responded to by calling Feldman a Jew. An Israeli friend of Feldman's who was visiting told them they were "all a bunch of ADM	T: The Wall (這牆), B1, 200, Roosevelt Rd Sec 4, Taipei 此市羅斯福路四段200號B1). Call (02) 2930-0162 or ww.thewall.com.tw for more information L: Tuesday at 9pm SSION: Tickets are NT\$400 HE NET: boblog111.com	<i>Mulan</i> (木蘭少女) runs at Metropolitan Hall (城市 舞台), 25, Bade Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市八德路三段 25號) today and tomorrow at 7:30pm and tomorrow and Sunday at 2:30pm. Tickets cost from NT\$400 to NT\$1,500 and are available through NTCH ticketing. — NOAH BUCHAN	
		TOP FIVE MANDARIN ALBUMS MAY 22 TO MAY Wilber Pan (潘瑋柏) and 007 (零零七007) with 39.98 percent of sale		and Out of the Blue (破天荒) with 7.03%	
		2 eVonne (許慧欣) and Love*Over=Lover with 8.09%	5 Claire Kuo (郭靜) with <i>Singing in the Tree</i>		
[EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT]					

Theater

To celebrate the Xiahai City God's (霞海城隍) birthday, five Taiwanese opera troupes are staging the **2009** Taipei Xiahai City God Temple Cultural Festival (台北霞海城隍文化 季), a 15-day marathon of performances in Dadaocheng (大稻埕).

- For more information, visit www. tmseh.gov.tw.
- ▶ Daily from 3pm to 5pm and 7pm to 9pm until June 14 ▶ Yongle Square (永樂廣場), 21, Dihua St Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市迪化街一段
- 21號) ▶ Free admission

From Barcelona's gypsy quarter comes 13-year-old flamenco prodigy El Yiyo, who became a professional dancer at the age of 8. A question and answer session after tomorrow's show will be a rare chance to meet and talk to Yiyo and the ensemble of award-winning flamenco musicians and dancers from Spain. [See story on Page 15.] ▶ Tonight and tomorrow at 8pm and Sunday at 3pm (Taipei), Monday at 7:30pm (Pingtung) and Tuesday at 7:30pm (Chiayi)

▶ Novel Hall (新舞台), 3-1 Songshou Rd, Taipei City (台北市松壽路3-1號): Pingtung County Art Center (屏東縣藝 術館), 427, Heping Rd, Pingtung City (屏東市和平路427號); Chiayi Performing Arts Center (嘉義縣表演藝 術中心), 265, Jianguo Rd Sec 2, Minsyong Township, Chiayi County (嘉 義縣民雄鄉建國路二段265號) ▶ Tickets are NT\$500 to NT\$2,000 (Taipei), NT\$200 to NT\$800 (Pingtung) and NT\$400 to NT\$1,500 (Chiayi),

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

Land of Clouded Leopard (雲豹之

鄉) sees choreographer Liu Fengshueh (劉鳳學) team up with awardwinning composer Gerland Shih (史頡 詠), cinematographer Deng Wen-bing (鄧文斌) and an ensemble of 59 Aboriginal performers to tell the story of two Aboriginal baseball players' pursuit of their dream against all odds. [See story Page 15.] ▶ Today and tomorrow at 7:30pm and

Sunday at 2:30pm ▶ National Theater, Taipei City Tickets are NT\$400 to NT\$1,500, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

Reflections (重返宓若思), the latest modern dance production by Sun-Shier Dance Theatre (三十舞蹈劇場), reflects on the myriad facets of femininity. [See story on Page 15.] Tonight at 7:30pm, tomorrow at 2:30pm and 7:30pm and Sunday at 2:30pm

Experimental Theater, Taipei City ▶ Tickets are NT\$450, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

Acme Physical Theatre's (極至體能舞蹈 團) unique dance production Puppet Ballet (掌中芭蕾) combines

the tradition of Chinese hand puppetry with Western ballet. The performers assume different puppet roles and dance to a wide range of music, from traditional beiguan (北管) to electronica.

Tonight (Hsinchu) and tomorrow (Miaoli) at 7.30pm

Hsinchu Municipal Performance Hall (新竹市立演藝廳), 17, Tungta Rd Sec 2, Hsinchu City (新竹市東大路二段17號); Miaoli County Cultural Center Performance Hall (苗栗縣文化局演藝 廳), 50 Tzuchih Rd, Miaoli City (苗栗市 自治路50號)

Tickets are NT\$300, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

Classical

Live from Buena Vista — The Havana Lounge (樂士浮生錄-記憶哈瓦那) brings some of the

biggest stars of Cuban music to Taiwan for three concerts in Taichung, Taipei and Tainan. The lineup includes vocals by Julio Alberto Fernandez Colina, Maria Victoria Rodriquez Sosa and Regla Teresa Garcia Caturla with an orchestra of outstanding

instrumentalists. Tuesday (Taichung), Wednesday (Taipei) and June 13 (Tainan) at 7:30pm ▶ Taichung Chungshan Hall (台中市中 山堂), 98 Syueshih Rd, Taichung City (台中市學士路98號); National Concert Hall, Taipei City; Tainan Municipal Cultural Center Performance Hall (台南 市立文化中心演藝廳), 332, Jhonghua E Rd Sec 3, Tainan City (台南市中華東路

三段332號) ▶ Tickets are NT\$600 to NT\$2,500 (Taichung and Tainan) and NT\$600 to NT\$3,000 (Taipei), available through ERA ticketing or online at www.ticket.com.tw

Masters & NSO — Miraculously Poem Music (名家與NSO的對話系 列一音幻之形、異想之間) sees the

National Symphony Orchestra (國家交 響樂團) performing under conductor Lu Shao-chia (呂紹嘉) and featuring soloist Gautier Capucon on cello. The program includes Debussy's Jeux: Poeme Danse, Bloch's Schelomo, Hebraic Rhapsody, Mahler's Adagio from Symphony No. 10 and Bartok's The Miraculous Mandarin Suite, Op. 19. Lu will conduct the orchestra in a second concert titled **Pastorale** in which the NSO will perform Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 in F Major and Brahms' Piano Ouartet in G Minor. Op. 25 as arranged by Schonberg. Sunday and Thursday 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 度跨界音樂會一擊樂人聲) once again shows Ju Percussion's (朱宗慶打擊樂團)

versatility in a concert featuring works that continue to push the art of percussion music to new levels. Tuesday at 7:30pm

Sun Yat-sen Hall of the National Sun Yat-sen University Art Center (高雄中山 大學逸仙館), 70 Lianhai Rd, Kaohsiung City (高雄市蓮海路70號)

Tickets are NT\$400 to NT\$1,200, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

Contemporary

Tomorrow night **VU Live House** hosts the premiere of *Control*, a music video by DJ and producer Sona, a

Dallas transplant popular in Taipei's house scene

- ▶ 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

Indie-pop trio Tizzy Bac puts on a doubleheader this weekend at The Wall (這牆), with shows tonight and tomorrow in support of their latest album, If I See Hell I Won't Fear the Devil (如果看見地獄,我就不怕魔鬼). After the band's set tonight, it's Science of Sounds Round 2, a dance party with DJs Impulse from Spain, local legend A-tao and D7, as well as VJ Bruno, also from Spain. [See Vinyl Word on Page 15]. On Sunday, it's alt-rock bands Understory (地下歲月) and Wavelight (波光折返). On Tuesday delta blues-punk rocker and one-man band Bob Log III returns for another show [See story above]. A new and expressly un-PC expat band, Homo Jews, is the opening act.

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 for Tizzy Bac and 11:30pm for the dance party, 8pm tomorrow and Sunday and 9pm on Tuesday

Entrance fee for Tizzy Bac is NT\$500 tonight and tomorrow; NT\$600 for tonight's dance party at the door or NT\$400 in advance; Sunday and Tuesday's shows are NT\$400 each. All tickets include one drink. Advance tickets are available at White Wabbit Records inside The

Wall's shopping complex

Renowned fingerstyle guitarist **Dong** Yun-chang (董運昌) puts on a solo show tonight at Witch House (女巫 店). Following Dong's show is another acoustic performer, Koumis (蓓麗). Tomorrow indie-electronica band Nylas, which just released its latest album, takes to the stage. On Thursday, it's solo acoustic act **Easy** and folk-pop singer Jasmin (假死貓). 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

Tonight goes classical at **Riverside** Cafe (河岸留言) with the longrunning student group Taipei Symphonic Band (台北青年管樂團). Tomorrow the venue hosts John Suming (約翰淑敏), singer and multiinstrumentalist from the popular college rock band Totem (圖騰). Performing on Sunday are hip-hop rockers Living Force (存活勢力) and

young rockers Hi-Jack. 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 and 9pm tomorrow and Sunday

▶ Entrance is NT\$400 tonight and tomorrow and NT\$350 Sunday

Tonight's concert with songwriter David Huang (黃大煒) at Riverside Live House (西門紅樓展演館) has

been canceled. But the weekend carries on with several Mando-pop singers. Tomorrow it's female vocalist Shadya (藍又時). Then on Sunday it's singer Peter Pan (潘裕文).

▶ 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

▶ Tomorrow at 8:30pm and Sunday at 7:30pm

▶ Entrance fee is NT\$450 tomorrow and NT\$650 Sunday

Taking to the stage tonight at Sappho de Base is the Jo Jo Ma Quintet, a group led by saxophonist Joseph Marchione, a founding member of the Austin, Texas, large jazz ensemble the Creative Opportunity Orchestra. Tomorrow it's Canadian singer-songwriter Mister Green and Highway 9 (九號公路). On Tuesday US saxophonist **Dan Perkins** appears with his quartet for an exclusive show [see story on Page 13]. Tammy and Friends play jazz and funk on Wednesday. Emo Jazz Trio takes to the stage on Thursday.

▶ 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 Fridays and Saturdays, 10pm on weekdays

▶ No admission fee