TAIPEI TIMES • FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2009

Another blissful night of theater

resh of off its surprisingly successful debut performance this spring, the Taipei Players acting troupe is back for more. In March, the group presented 7 Stories in front of a sold-out audience at Bliss. The upstairs live house space was transformed into a mini-theater for 50 seated guests. "I think it was a really great response

found the community support "overwhelming. On Sunday, this "eclectic group of actors, musicians, and yoga teachers" will present five comedies, said Zittrer. Each short is from 10 to 20 minutes in length.

from the audience," said organizer Sarah Zittrer, who

Oral Report and Alternative Lifestyle is a double comedy by Jack Neary about three old ladies gossiping on the porch. It features Katie Partlow, and organizers Zittrer and Mandy Roveda.

Roveda, who directs four of the five plays in Sunday's show, arrived in Taiwan last August. "I have to do theater no matter where I am," she said.

Actors Klaire Wu (吳青樺), Ben Lind and Peter Balfry perform in Time Flies, David Ives' comedy about two mayflies on a date who discover they don't have long

Men Are From Milwaukee, Women Are From Phoenix, by M. Lynda Robinson, performed by Brian Domenget and Holly Harrington, uses an argument between a married couple to lampoon the book Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus and the lack of communication between the sexes.

Anton Chekhov's *The Bear* is the only play not directed by Roveda, with Josh Myers taking the reins in this story of a grieving widow and the landowner her husband was indebted to. The piece features Taichung Improv Theater members Jenny McManus and Nick Ford. — ALITA RICKARDS

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

WHAT: The Taipei Players

WHEN: Sunday at 4pm and 8pm

WHERE: Bliss, 148 Xinyi Road Sec 4, Taipei City (台北信義路四段

ADMISSION: NT\$300, includes one drink

DETAILS: Contact Sarah Zittrer at 0938-437-161 or Mandy Roveda at 0983-020-978, or send an e-mail to taipeiplayers@gmail.com for further information or to pre-book seats



Ben Lind, left and Klaire Wu and in Time Flies.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AMANDA ROVEDA



Last Saturday's Reggae Beachfest at Cianshui Bay (淺水灣) marked an impressive beginning to the summer outdoor party season. With a turnout exceeding 600, it was a big thumbs-up to Island Jam, a group that's been striving to make all things reggae-related happen for the last five years. Hopefully there will be more fantastic outdoor events like this to come — especially the ones with venues as sweet as (if not sweeter than) this one.

This weekend, if you are a sunshine-lover who fancies making a splash, be sure to check out this season's first

Oasis Pool Party at Taipei Country Club, a beautiful hillside spot that's easily accessible from the city. Their spring-water swimming pool is just simply amazing, and the music is going to be more on the hip-hop side of the dance music spectrum. When: Tomorrow from

Zulu, from Barcelona.

Where: Taipei Country Club (台北鄉村俱樂部), 1 Qingyun Rd, Taipei City (台北市青雲街1號).

Admission: NT\$350. Tonight, A State of Sound at Luxy is bringing Manchester's Tribal Session DJ lain Taylor for a spin. Taylor is a renowned specialist in break beat, techno, house, hip-hop and funk, and he's no stranger to the Taipei scene — he played at MoS four years ago on the Tribal Session tour with Yoda. After the success of the last A State of Sound, **Hooker**, the event's organizer, says that "the party is more of a cutting-edge take on music and less dependent on sticking to the tried and true classics."

When: Tonight from 10pm to 4am. Where: Luxy, 5F, 201 Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段201號5樓).

Admission: Free before 11pm, NT\$600 after. Dance Rock Taipei is celebrating its first anniversary today. Having hosted and co-hosted 10 indie-dance events — including last year's memorable gig with **Steve Aoki** and **Uffie** at The Wall — **Spykee** says he's excited that the scene is finally coming together. "The Wall is really a

great venue — the decor is minimal with no frills and it definitely has a unique kind of vibe. Most of our following are hipsters who are open to new music but frustrated with the music at the ordinary dance clubs." Besides residents Spykee and F Dragon, this bash features Clash PHOTO COURTESY OF GODFREY ZWYGART The Disko Kids (Singapore), as well as Taiwan's very own

veteran indie-dance turntablist Mykal (林哲儀).

When: Tonight from 11:30pm to 4:30am. Where: The Wall (這牆), B1, 200, Roosevelt Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路四段200號B1).

Admission: NT\$800.

Tomorrow evening, there will be a small outdoor party named Sunset at Siam House in Ximending. It's a free event, but it'll have all the essentials and even a VJ. The lineup: Shelter, 5on (Revox Records) and A-Tao (Species Records) playing progressive and minimal techno.

When: Tomorrow from 6pm to 11pm. Where: Siam House (暹邏紅樓), 179 Xining S Rd, Taipei City (台北市西寧南路179號).

Admission: free.

And lastly, if you'd like to learn more about Latin music and culture, don't miss out on the Latin Festival that's going down at Riverside Live House tomorrow. What exactly is this party about musically? There will be a live Latin band, Mandinga (曼丁家拉丁團), and dance music from Zulu, who says they "will try to offer a different view of Latin music in order to cover a wide spectrum of what 'Latin music' really means all over the world." Expect to hear "Latin-jazz, boogaloo, salsa vieja, nuyorican roots, Afro, Caribbean, Brazilian, Latin hip-hop, Latin house and good fusion."

When: Tomorrow from 7:30pm. Where: Riverside Live House (河岸留言西門紅樓展演館), 177 Xining S Rd, Taipei City (台北市西寧南路177號). Admission: NT\$750.

RESTAURANTS

El Toro

Address: 508-2, Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 5, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路五

Telephone: (02) 2726-4902 Open: 12pm to 2pm and 6pm to 9pm (closed on Monday nights)

Average meal: Most dishes range between NT\$250 to NT\$550 On the Net: Chinese and English menu; credit cards accepted

El Toro, which opened near Yongchun (永春) MRT Station late last year, updates traditional Spanish cuisine with molecular gastronomy. The resume of the restaurant's chef, Daniel Negreira Bercero, includes a stint at El Bulli, the restaurant in Catalonia that is regarded as one of the foremost innovators in molecular gastronomy.

But what exactly is molecular gastronomy, which to uninitiated ears sounds more like a science experiment than a gourmet treat?

"The point of molecular gastronomy is to keep the original taste of the ingredient, but change the shape and create something new,"

Molecular gastronomy, El Toro-style.

PHOTO COURTESY OF EL TORO

Because the textures and colors (foam is one trademark) created by molecular gastronomy cooking techniques are novel to many diners, Bercero suggests that first-timers at El Toro let him customize a menu based on their budget and food preferences. We set a price of NT\$1,500 per person and received nine courses, including dessert.

Molecular gastronomy is highlighted in the strawberry "caviar" that floated on top of the glass of chilled almond soup that kicked off our meal. This traditional Spanish dish is usually topped with grapes. El Toro swaps those for the sweet spheres, created by slowly dripping strawberry juice into an acid, which causes a thin membrane to form around each drop of liquid. The caviar felt smooth against our tongues before we popped them and added a dash of fruitiness to the creamy soup.

Our second dish consisted of a seared mussel on a base made out of ground kiwi that had been mixed with vodka and protein and sliced into a small round. Garnishes included a honey vinaigrette made with red onion and black olives, a sprig of dried guava, and foam created from a mixture of water taken from the mussel when it was opened and Curacao liquor, which lent its taste and a hint of blue to the dish. We were told to eat the whole thing at once, which allowed us to enjoy the tartness of the kiwi slice against the mellow sweetness of the mussel.

The following dish was a grilled octopus tentacle served with a glass test tube filled with a sauce that was made from a reduction of juice from the octopus meat. The meat itself was grilled very well: tender without being chewy.

The second soup of our meal was also made with cream, but this time flavored with clam broth. The soup was served separately for us to pour over three plump clams and a dollop of sea urchin.

Our next dish was a slice of salmon belly that had been slowly seared so that the fat of the salmon melted but stayed trapped within the skin. On a visual level, it looked very simple next to the more intricate dishes, but the taste was also novel. The fish was garnished with an unexpectedly sweet and complex mustard freshly prepared from mustard seeds, vinegar, Angostura bitters, parsley, honey, garlic and olive oil.

Seafood dominated our customized menu, but El Toro's pork offerings are also noteworthy. Our meal was rounded out by a slice of foie gras wrapped in slow-cooked, tender pig ear, and two servings of sausage, including a very piquant slice of chorizo and a buttery piece of blood sausage. Despite the restaurant's gourmet pedigree, the atmosphere is decidedly casual. We visited on a Saturday evening and while the staff was busy and somewhat rushed, Bercero made a point of being on hand to answer diners' questions about his food and cooking methods. Weekday nights might be better for diners who want a more detailed explanation of how their dishes are prepared. — CATHERINE SHU

DSR (大車輪火車壽司)

Address: 53 Emei St, Taipei City (台北市峨嵋街53號) **Telephone:** (02) 2371-2701 **Open:** 11am to 9:30pm Average meal: NT\$250 to NT\$350 per person Details: Credit cards not accepted On the Net: www.dsr.tw

Remember the first time you tried Sushi Express? Grabbing your food from the revolving conveyor belt was half the amusement, if not

most, given the forgettable food. But at Dai Sya Rinn (大車輪) in Ximending, revolving sushi is fun all over again. Instead of a conveyor belt, the dishes make the rounds on a toy freight train that chugs along at a relaxing pace. There's plenty of time to both choose a dish and



Revolving sushi is fun again.

PHOTO: DAVID CHEN, TAIPEI TIMES admire the train. The decor and atmosphere is full of Japanese rustic charm (lots of wood) with Taiwanese warmth (friendly waiters). Diners eat at a bar that takes up most

of the room and seats around 40 people total. Japanese paper

lanterns are strewn all over the place, almost haphazardly, and knick-knacks seem to hang everywhere. Even when crowded, it feels cozy. The wait staff, who wear robes and hats, move like clockwork: they're constantly keeping busy — washing, chopping, clearing plates — but always seem to be right there when you need them. The nakashi music playing on the stereo is dated but soulful. It feels like a good place to share

sake (NT\$120) or a beer (NT\$85 for Taiwan Beer, NT\$110 for The food isn't mind-blowing or imaginative, but fairly priced and certainly a few steps above Sushi Express. The only thing that gives Dai Sya Rinn away as a chain restaurant is a poster menu with stock photos; choices include fried tempura (星鰻天婦 羅, NT\$200), Tokyo-style sirloin (沙朗東京燒, NT\$280) and Matsu-

saka pork (松板豬肉和風燒, NT\$280). There are also paper banners on the walls listing other items, but it's easiest to pick off the cart. The prices are colorcoded: dishes with green flags are NT\$30, NT\$45 for yellow, NT\$70 for red and NT\$80 for white. Be aware that the dishes wrapped in cellophane are just display samples — order those

through the waiter. We started with a plate of *inarizushi*, rice tucked inside fried tofu skin. Dai Sya Rinn's version had the typical Taiwanese touch, with corn, sliced ham and cashew nuts, but was surprisingly not bad. The soul-satisfying steamed egg (蒸蛋, NT\$70) has chunks of chicken and mushroom, and I made a note to remember this one for the winter. The cold spinach noodles (日式菠菜冷麵, NT\$88), on the other hand, make a good choice for the summer.

The tuna nigiri (NT\$90 for two pieces) was a little bland; one of the tuna slices hadn't thawed properly. But the salmon nigiri (NT\$160 for four pieces) was tender and tasty. There's no need for wasabe, as the waiter will remind you there's plenty packed

under each slice of fish. The place was packed with high school students at dinnertime on a visit last week. They were probably taking advantage of the reasonably priced individual meals, which include the barbeque pork lunchbox (燒肉便當, NT\$138) and udon noodles (烏龍湯麵

NT\$88). From a glance at the person sitting next to me, the fried pork lunchbox (豬排便當, NT\$128) looked appealing. We wound up ordering more than we could finish, but this was more a testament to the atmosphere than the food. But another visit is definitely on the list. — DAVID CHEN

I EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT 1

Quartet, which presides over an open jam session later on. The **Chris Stiles Trio** plays modern jazz on Wednesday. Jo Jo Ma Quintet, a group led by saxophonist Joseph Marchione, plays 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 weekends, 10pm on weekdays ▶ No admission fee
- Every Wednesday night at the **Cosmopolitan Grill** there's an open mic hosted by Jake Stanley of

the acoustic duo **Stoked Pokey**. All are welcome to participate, and participants receive 20 percent off drinks. ▶ 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.
- ▶ Wednesdays from 8:30pm to 11pm ▶ No admission fee

EZ5 Live House hosts

Mando-pop singers backed by a live band every night. Highlights this week include male crooners Su Tzu (蘇子) tonight and Hsing Lung (辛隆) tomorrow. Julia Peng (彭佳慧), one of the venue's major draws, appears

- every Tuesday. ▶ 211, Anhe Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北 市安和路二段211號). Call (02) 2738-3995 or visit www.ez5.com.tw for more information
- ▶ Music shows run from 9:45pm to 12:30am
- ► Entrance (including two drinks) ranges from NT\$600 to NT\$850, depending on the performer. Call the venue for exact fees

- Psychedelic alt-rock band Flat Club (假文藝青年俱樂部) appears with La Petite Nurse (小護士) tonight at Underworld(地下社會). Tomorrow metal bands Anti Cross and **Catapult** take to the stage. Splitting the bill on Wednesday are **Tough**
- Black Tea and Soundboss. ▶ 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
- ▶ Shows are from 9:30pm to 11:30pm on Fridays and Saturdays and 9pm to 11pm on Wednesdays
- ▶ Entrance is NT\$300 tonight and tomorrow and includes one drink, NT\$100 on Wednesday

Franz and Friends (城市舞台藝文 沙龍), an upscale restaurant and

performance space in Taipei's East District, hosts music shows every night. The music tends to play it safe, ranging from wistful love songs and opera to lounge jazz. Weekly highlights include **Denise Juan** (阮 丹青), a former pop singer turned piano teacher, television presenter and traveler, and her band **Sunshine Costa**. They play tonight. Tomorrow it's **Buona Sera**, a group featuring soprano Chang Hsiao-ni (張曉倪).

- ▶ 25, Bade Rd, Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市 八德路三段25號B1). Call (02) 2579-0558 for reservations, or visit www.franzandfriends.com.tw for
- more information. ▶ Minimum charge of NT\$300 on Fridays and Saturdays, one-drink minimum other nights

Exhibition

X Beyond O: Calligraphy-Sign-Space (無中生有:書法 符號 空間) mixes calligraphy, architecture and

design to bridge the gap between traditional and contemporary media. The collaborative exhibition includes calligrapher Tung Yang-tze (董陽孜), Hong Kong director Matthias Woo (胡恩威) and architect Roan Ching-yueh (阮慶岳).

- ▶ Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei (MOCA, Taipei), 39 Changan W Rd, Taipei City (台北市長安西路39號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2552-3721. On the Net: www.mocataipei.org.tw
- ▶ Until Aug. 9

Ariel Kuo (郭芃君) uses photography and painting to deconstruct the color and atmosphere of Tainan in her solo exhibit Place (地方).

- ▶ Dogpig Art Cafe (豆皮文藝咖啡館), 2F, 131, Wufu 4th Rd, Kaohsiung City (高雄市五福四路131號2樓). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 5pm to 12am. Tel: (07) 521-2422
- ▶ Until June 28

Cultural Insights From Taiwanese Documentary Photography (台灣美術系列 紀錄攝 影中的文化觀) explores Taiwan's cultural values and social environment through 152 photographs covering the past century. The images are culled from the

museum's permanent collection. ▶ National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts (國立台灣美術館), 2, Wucyuan W Rd Sec 1, Taichung City (台中市五權西 路一段2號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 9am to 5pm. Tel: (04) 2372-3552 ▶ Until July 19

A Thousand, Thousand **Churning Waves — The** Legendary Red Cliff Heritage (捲 起干堆雪—赤壁文物特展) is an exhibit on the Battle of Red Cliffs (赤壁之戰), a famous engagement fought at the end of the Han Dynasty. The National

Highlight

Tanguisimo Tango Space's founders, riding high on the success of their Milonga coproduction with Riverside Live House last month, have been offering workshops this week with a pair of visiting Argentine tango masters, Ezequiel and Geraldin Paludi. The couple are well-known stage performers and teachers in Argentina. Tomorrow night they will be performing at a **Grand** Milonga, or tango dance party, at

the Tanguisimo Tango Space. They are also offering master classes at the studio tonight, tomorrow afternoon and Sunday. ▶ Tomorrow from 8pm to 1am at Tanguisimo Tango Space (探戈

藝文沙龍), 7F-4, 169, Zhongxiao E

Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (忠孝東路四

段169號7F-4) ▶ Tickets are NT\$700, available by calling (02) 2779-1136 or sending an email to info@ tangotaiwan. com. Space is limited so reservations



PHOTO COURTESY OF EZEQUIEL AND GERALDIN PALUDI

Palace Museum revisits this legendary event with historical documents, books, works of art and prints depicting the period and its people. ▶ National Palace Museum (國立故宮 博物院), 221, Zhishan Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市至善路二段221號). Open

Tuesdays to Sundays from 9am to 5pm, open until 8:30pm on Saturdays. Tel: (02) 2881-2021. On the Net: www.npm.gov.tw

▶ Until Aug. 31

Pan Ping-vu (潘娉婷) weaves together a variety of media such as fabric, wire, colored beads and spangles into dreamlike sculptures in **Eternal**

Nature (永恆是情景的回復)

► 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 Tuesdays to Sundays from 9:30am to 5:30pm, open until 8:30pm on Saturdays. Tel: (02) 2595-7656. On the Net: www.tfam.museum

Taiwan's plants, animals and folk

▶ Until June 28

customs serve as Hsiao Mei's (蕭媺) visual language in her solo exhibit Here Is Where We Meet (飄遊·境 遇). The show features more than 30 of her dreamlike oil paintings created

between 2003 and this year. ▶ 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 Tuesdays to Sundays from 9:30am to 5:30pm, open until 8:30pm on Saturdays. Tel: (02) 2595-7656. On

the Net: www.tfam.museum ▶ Until June 26

Japanese artist Maruyama Junko uses recycled materials such as cooking oil and plastic bags for installations and sculpture in her solo exhibit Cancam. ▶ Taipei National University of the Arts—Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts (台北藝術大學關渡美術館), 1 Xueyuan Rd, Beitou Dist, Taipei City (台北市北投 區學園路1號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am to 5pm. Tel: (02) 2893-8871

▶ Until June 21