

## AROUND TOWN

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## Spirit in the sky

Music-theater group A Moving Sound celebrates the release of its newest CD tomorrow with performances at Red House Theater in Taipei

BY DAVID CHEN  
STAFF REPORTER

A Moving Sound's performances are hard to categorize, but easy to enjoy. The group's music draws from an eclectic mix of sounds including traditional Taiwanese and Aboriginal music, African drumming and Middle Eastern melodies, while co-founder Mia Hsieh's (謝韻雅) mesmerizingly agile vocals and dance movements, both choreographed and improvised, are attention grabbing. Fresh from a well-received European tour this summer, the group is celebrating the release of its latest CD with two shows tomorrow at Red House Theater (紅樓劇場).

As with A Moving Sound's previous two albums, *Starshine* displays a penchant for blending ethnic folk music from across the world into accessibly modern songs. Fans can expect more intensity this time around.

"I think this CD has a larger, wider range of emotions," said Scott Prairie, Hsieh's husband and collaborator who co-founded the group in 2001. "The joy is more high and the dark is more dark."

Because of this, Prairie says *Starshine* was the hardest of A Moving Sound's albums to make. As both the band's producer and main songwriter, he found it a challenge to draw more "breadth and depth" from the group's backing musicians.

It was not an easy task to take an *erhu* (二胡) player, a guitarist and percussionist — all accomplished musicians in jazz and Chinese classical music — out of "their comfort zones."

"It was like a free fall [for them]," said Prairie. He sums up his approach to recording and composing: "Here's the feeling I want, and I want you to go into your own emotions and meet me in this story."

The results came, but perhaps not without the degree of introspection that Prairie also encourages as a painting teacher. "For me, that's what makes it meaningful. That's why we do the art," he said.

The new album has more "spiritual" elements than the group's previous work, which Prairie says he and Hsieh have increasingly embraced in their music as they get older and the band evolves. The title track is inspired by the concept of incarnation and contains an eerie Buddhist chant, while *An Appearance* has an ethereal, meditative feel.

In the CD liner notes, Prairie writes: "The music is the result of a deep commitment to an artistic practice intertwined with spiritual practice ... it comes from a surrender to life and a willingness to be transformed."



A Moving Sound plays two shows tomorrow with guest artists from the group's new album, *Starshine*. PHOTOS COURTESY OF A MOVING SOUND

This is also why he enjoys live performances. "[Hsieh and I] think of the creative process as a precious, life-giving thing. So then, a show is a chance to give people a taste, a dose, of this energy and encourage them to find it in their life," he said.

"I feel like we give good energy. We like to connect to the audience. I feel like we have something that is quite beneficial to people ... part of our intention with art is to open people, to encourage people."

Tomorrow's performances promise to be festive events, showcasing a large cast of musicians and performers. Guest artists from *Starshine* will make appearances, including Janelle Chang (張宜蓁), who plays the *satar* (薩塔琴), a bowed instrument commonly used in Uighur music, and a group of backing singers and dancers who also work with Hsieh on her own choreography projects.

Also appearing at the show is a fire dancer (who will use LED lights in deference to Red House Theater's safety rules) and DJ Xuan (鄒軒), formerly known as SL, who will improvise using Hsieh's live vocals.

## PERFORMANCE NOTES:

**WHAT:** A Moving Sound — *Starshine* CD release concert

**WHEN:** Tomorrow at 2:30pm and 7:30pm

**WHERE:** Red House Theater (紅樓劇場), 10 Chengdu Rd, Taipei City (台北市成都路10號)

**ADMISSION:** NT\$500, available at the door or through [www.artsticket.com.tw](http://www.artsticket.com.tw), also available for advance purchase by sending an e-mail to [amovingsound@gmail.com](mailto:amovingsound@gmail.com)

**ON THE NET:** [www.amovingsound.com](http://www.amovingsound.com)

## [ ARTS &amp; CULTURE ]

## 'Best artists' and 'best audiences' to meet at culture fest

The upcoming Shanghai Culture Festival includes four complete 'kun' operas, free outdoor performances in the Xinyi District and a film festival at SPOT

BY IAN BARTHOLOMEW  
STAFF REPORTER

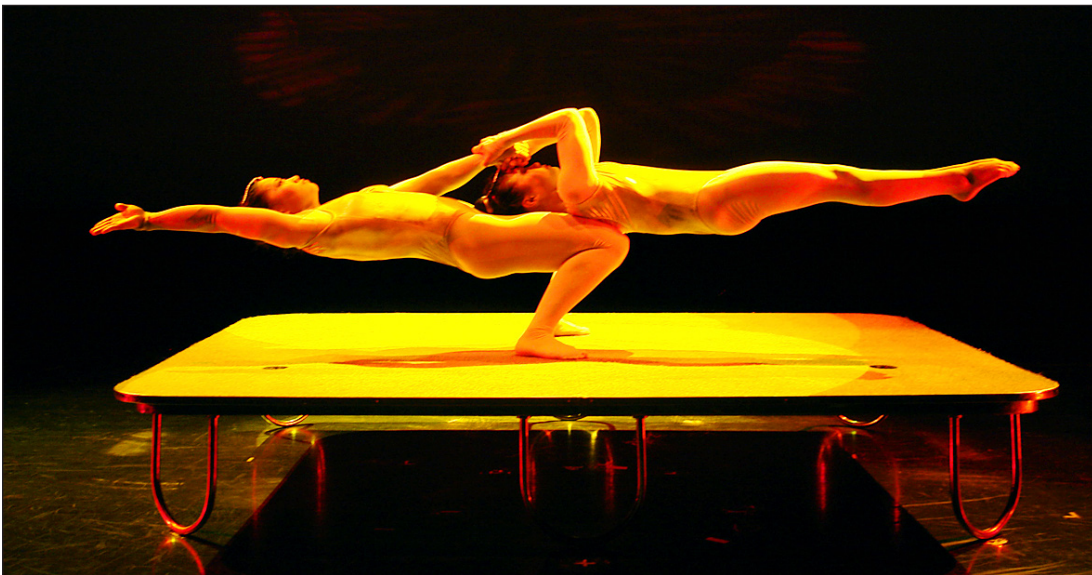
Cultural exchanges with China have developed apace over the past decade. With the Cross-Strait Intercity Culture & Arts Exchange's (兩岸城市藝術節) Shanghai Culture Festival (上海文化週), which opens next month, the progression of this relationship will reach a new milestone. Sponsored by the Taipei City Government's Department of Cultural Affairs and organized by New Aspect Cultural and Education Foundation (新象文教基金會), this event follows the Beijing Cultural Festival held in Taipei in 2006 and precedes next year's Taipei Cultural Festival in Shanghai.

New Aspect founder Hsu Po-yun (許博允) said the need for established festivals to host ongoing cross-strait cultural exchanges has become more important because the market has changed considerably over the past two decades. Many top Chinese artists now have an international market, and booking them requires long-term planning.

Money is also an issue, Hsu added. In the early days of Taiwan's business expansion into China, companies sponsored the arts to build good relations with local governments. "Those relationships are now well-established, and the funding has consequently dried up," Hsu said.

Despite these obstacles, exchanges large and small, especially in the traditional arts, are now almost continuous, and many Chinese artists spend a significant amount of time in Taipei. Zhang Qingxian (張靜嫻), Liang Guying (梁谷音) and Zhang Mingrong (張銘榮) are just three of the big names who now regularly feature in local *kun* opera productions, bolstering the lineup of Taiwanese artists with their considerable experience.

Hsu said this was a match made in heaven, because many of this older generation of Chinese *kun* artists enjoy a passionate following in Taiwan. "Artists live for the acclaim of their fans, and they [the performers] say that while China might have the best artists, Taiwan has the best audiences."



## SHANGHAI CULTURE FESTIVAL SCHEDULE:

**WHAT:** Opening performance by the Shanghai Kun Opera Company of *kun* opera highlights

**WHEN:** Oct. 15 at 7:30pm

**WHERE:** Zhongshan Hall (台北市中山堂), 98 Yanping S Rd, Taipei City (台北市延平南路98號)

**ADMISSION:** NT\$500 to NT\$2,000, available through NTCH ticketing or online at [www.artsticket.com.tw](http://www.artsticket.com.tw)

**WHAT:** Performance of four complete operas and one program of highlights by the Shanghai Kun Opera Company

**WHEN:** Oct. 20 to Oct. 24 at 7:30pm and Oct. 25 at 2:30pm

**WHERE:** Metropolitan Hall (城市舞台), 25, Bade Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市八德路三段25號)

**ADMISSION:** NT\$500 to NT\$2,500, available through NTCH ticketing or online at [www.artsticket.com.tw](http://www.artsticket.com.tw)

**WHAT:** The Best of Shanghai Youth Acrobatics (上海少年雜技薈萃)

**WHEN:** Oct. 13 and Oct. 14 at 7:30pm

**WHERE:** Zhongshan Hall, Taipei City

**ADMISSION:** NT\$400 to NT\$1,000, available through NTCH ticketing or online at [www.artsticket.com.tw](http://www.artsticket.com.tw)

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**WHAT:** Outdoor Variety Show

**WHEN:** Oct. 16 to Oct. 18 at 7:30pm and Oct. 17 and Oct. 18 at 4pm

**WHERE:** Shin Kong Mitsukoshi Xinyi Plaza (信義新光三越香堤大道), 11 Songshou Rd, Taipei City (台北市松壽路11號)

**ADMISSION:** Free

**WHAT:** Shanghai Film Festival

**WHEN:** Oct. 16 to Oct. 19

**WHERE:** SPOT — Taipei Film House (台北光點), 18, Zhongshan N Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市中山北路二段18號)

**ON THE NET:** [www.spot.org.tw](http://www.spot.org.tw)

**WHAT:** The Shanghai Story — From the Collection of the Shanghai Art Museum (上海故事 — 上海美術館館藏作品展)

**WHEN:** Oct. 16 to Nov. 8

**WHERE:** Taipei Fine Arts Museum (台北市立美術館), 181, Zhongshan N Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市中山北路三段181號)

**ON THE NET:** [www.tfam.museum](http://www.tfam.museum)

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NEW ASPECT

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