

BY DIANE BAKER

DANCE

# POP STOP

COMPILED BY CATHERINE SHU

Taiwanese singer and 1980s icon **Monique Lin** (林慧萍) shocked the entertainment world last week when she and her now ex-husband, **Terry Pan** (潘博照), announced that they had quietly signed divorce papers last month, ending a decade-long marriage.

The singer, known as a Jade Lady (玉女) for her good looks and elegant demeanor, moved to Los Angeles after she got married but recently returned to Taiwan to revive her pop career. Until this summer, Pan made a point of showing up and cheering his wife at her appearances, and in July the duo hosted a dinner party together.

Lin and Pan cited "personality differences" (個性上的差異) and took pains to state that no one else had been involved in their decision to split. This, of course, did not prevent rampant speculation in the media. The *Liberty Times* (the *Taipei Times'* sister newspaper) reported that friends of the couple had long been aware of Pan's chronic womanizing, but the husband-and-wife team hid their problems to prevent Lin's golden-girl image becoming tarnished.

Other news reports named **Vivian Hsu** (徐懷瑛), a former employee of Pan's (not to be confused with the famous Taiwanese singer/actress with the same English name (徐若瑛)), as the third wheel. The two allegedly embarked on an affair last year, though Pan, Hsu and Lin have all vigorously denied the rumors. Reports about the alleged love triangle focus on Hsu's good looks, her lively personality, penchant for hot pants and miniskirts and the fact that, at 43, she is three years younger than Lin.

Someone who might have been following the flurry of media reports about Lin's divorce is pop singer **Chao Cheng-ping** (趙正平) of JXT BOY (傑行聯男孩), who had little else to do while laid up in bed after earning the dubious

distinction of being the first Taiwanese entertainer to come down with swine flu.

Zhao was admitted to the hospital and diagnosed with the disease last week after coming down with a fever. He was ordered to stay away from people as he recovered, including fellow bandmembers **Vincent Liang** (梁赫群) and **Lin Chih-hsien** (林智賢). Their manager said the 41-year-old bachelor was subsisting on frozen dumplings, but fans need not fear for their idol — his record label will send him more provisions if need be and his mommy is also looking after him.

**Angela Chang** (張韶涵), on the other hand, won't be counting on her mother for chicken soup and pats on the back any time soon. The Taiwanese pop singer and her estranged family have been using the media as a battlefield for a volley of angry messages. Chang's mom told reporters that her daughter is a cold-hearted ingrate, while Chang said her parents had mismanaged her earnings.

The singer, who spent her adolescence in Canada, returned to Taiwan to launch her entertainment career after graduating from high school in 2000. Her mother was her constant companion and advisor until last year, when the two suddenly fell out. Chang reportedly kicked her mom out of their shared home, launching a feud that has dragged other family members into the mire.

Gossip rags say that even though Chang's mother and father are divorced, the two have united against their daughter, claiming that her luxurious lifestyle is in stark contrast to their own. Chang's father says he makes a pittance selling noodles in a night market, while her mother sells slippers and works in a store.

During a terse press conference last week, Chang expressed frustration that her family feud had become public and said she hoped to resolve it as quickly as possible. She added that after returning to Taiwan from Canada last year, she discovered her mother had made off with her earnings and was refusing to disclose where the money was.

A Linfair Records (福茂唱片) representative also defended its star, stating that "Angela has been supporting her family for years," before adding that her newest record would drop on Sept. 25.

Angela Chang is on the outs with mom and dad. PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

Dancer/choreographer Sun Chuo-tai (孫悅泰) decided to call his company 8213 Physical Dance Theater (8213肢體舞蹈劇場) because he wanted the name to convey the idea that the company and its productions would be about more than "just dance."

He wanted to break the mold, blur the boundaries between the dancers and the audience, between dance and theater, between movement and text — as well as examine the connections between them.

Connections, or rather the growing lack of them, are a common theme in Sun's work. He examines them once again in the company's newest production, *Electron* (電子), which began a four-day run at the Guling Street Theater (梧槽街小劇場) last night.

"*Electron* ... We wanted to bring down the size of electricity, wanted to give a feeling to the topic, so we chose loneliness," Sun said on Monday during an interview at the theater. "In society we have a lot of gadgets now, we don't need to talk to one another. We're a little more removed today."

He said he wanted to examine what the proliferation of technology in our everyday life is doing to us.

"Last year my house lost electricity for one week. I thought 'Oh, my God,' it's not convenient. Just to do your normal life — if you want to go to the bathroom, there is no light. I'm also a businessman; I need a cellphone, a laptop, a lot of electronics," Sun said. "If you forget your cellphone, you panic. These things control your life."

"We use these things to create a distance. We are connected but you don't need to see one another. There are 'no feelings,' people even break-up by electronic devices. So finally we are



## PERFORMANCE NOTES:

**WHAT:** 8213 Physical Dance Theater (8213肢體舞蹈劇場), *Electron* (電子)  
**WHEN:** Tonight and tomorrow at 7:30pm, tomorrow and Sunday at 2:30pm  
**WHERE:** Guling Street Theater (梧槽街小劇場), 2, Ln 5, Guling St, Taipei City (台北市梧槽街5巷2號)  
**ADMISSION:** Tickets are NT\$280, available through www.artsticket.com.tw or at the door  
**ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCE:** Sept. 25 at 7:30pm at the Hsinchu Iron-Roof Theater (新竹鐵屋頂劇場), 3F, 1, Ln 227, Gongyuan Rd, Hsinchu City (新竹市公園路227巷1號3樓)



PHOTOS COURTESY OF 8213 PHYSICAL DANCE THEATER



# Sparks fly in 'Electron'

at a great distance [from each other]. You close yourself off or use iPods to disconnect," he said.

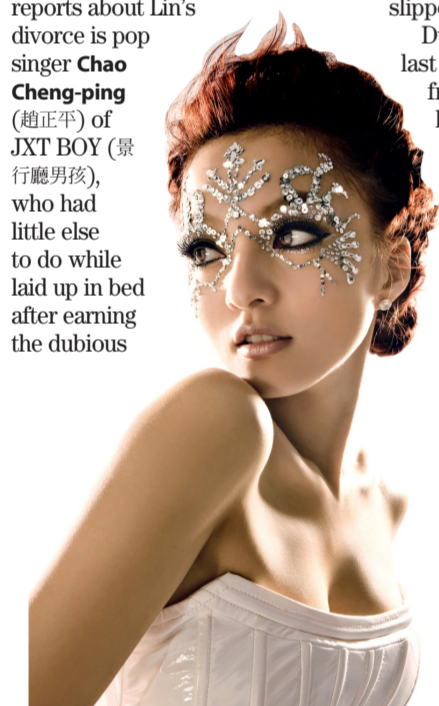
The company has been rehearsing the piece for four months, although the project has been in the works for a year. It's a smaller production than last year's *Boundless: My Bliss* (無國界——我的天堂), featuring just Sun, dancer/choreographer Casey Auaunt and an old classmate and colleague of Sun's from National Taiwan University of the Arts and Taipei Dance Forum, who now goes by the name of Yogi (Chan Tien-chen, 詹天甄).

While Sun said the smaller number of dancers was both a budgetary and a creative decision, it did allow him to add a musician, Chen Shih-hsing (陳世興), for both the rehearsals and the performances.

Sun and Auaunt collaborated on the choreography. A big part of the process, they said, was working out the "why" of each movement.

To reflect electricity, the movements have a lot of vibration and sharp moves, they said, adding that they had to create the basic movements and then find a way to explain to themselves and others "why we are doing this movement."

"The idea was clear in the beginning, the rehearsals just worked it out," Auaunt said, though Sun was quick to add that the "working out" meant a lot of negotiating.



## RESTAURANTS

BY NOAH BUCHAN

BY IAN BARTHOLOMEW

## TIDBITS

### Little Mongolian 小蒙牛麻辣蒙古火鍋

**Address:** 277, Roosevelt Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路三段277號)  
**Open:** 11am to 1am **Telephone:** (02) 2362-7005  
**Average meal:** Monday to Friday, NT\$450 for lunch; NT\$500 for dinner and lunch on weekends and holidays  
**Details:** Chinese menu; English menu available on request; credit cards accepted



Little Mongolian's broths are infused with fresh and dried herbs and spices. PHOTO: NOAH BUCHAN, TAIPEI TIMES

Mongolian hot pot restaurants have become so popular in East Asia that one franchise is even listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. This, perhaps, explains the frequent crowds lining up outside Little Mongolian (小蒙牛麻辣蒙古火鍋), a swanky new restaurant that recently opened across the street from Taipower Building (台電大樓) in Gongguan (公館).

After tasting the broths, it's easy to understand why reservations are generally required. Two varieties of soup are on offer: Mongolian-spicy and non-spicy (a chicken-based broth with Chinese medicinal herbs). Our party of two ordered both, which came in a metal bowl separated by a divider.

The server explained that the broths are made from scratch and infused with fresh and dried herbs and spices. Whole red chili peppers, cardamom, cumin and garlic were among the items that swam among chunks of ginger, slices of spring onion and "secret" ingredients. The spicy half was milder than its mala (麻辣) cousin, though didn't suffer as a result, while the clear broth didn't taste like Chinese

medicine, thankfully.

Little Mongolian differs from the typical all-you-can-eat Taiwanese hot pot restaurant. Rather than store all the ingredients in open refrigerators, staff bring the dishes out as you order. Aside from the meat, which included slices of Angus beef, pork tenderloin and mutton, we also order four combo platters.

This was a mistake. The seafood platter arrived heaped with shrimp, crab meat, cuttlefish, clams and mussels, and the vegetable platter came with cabbage, pumpkin, melon, lettuce and tomatoes. On top of the four meat dishes and plates of assorted mushrooms and dumplings that we ordered, it was far too much food for two people. Such waste is enough to induce a fit of green guilt.

Little Mongolian's interior is somewhat cramped, at least until you sit down. The spacious high-backed booths sit four to six comfortably and offer a reasonable degree of privacy.

The price tag — NT\$399 for lunch and NT\$450 for dinner, plus a 10-percent service charge — includes bottled soft drinks, juices, coffee and iced tea.

Although we couldn't finish the hot pot, we still managed to shovel down a few scoops of Movenpick ice cream.

Little Mongolian also has a location at 2F, 20, Nanjing E Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市南京東路二段20號2樓). Tel: (02) 2536-1333.

This traditional southern Chinese courtyard-style house tucked away in the foothills of Tatun Mountain (大屯山) is worth visiting for many reasons. Operating under a name loosely translated as Inside the Old Wall, the property has been handed down through the Lee (李) family over three generations and serves as an example of how a heritage site can be revitalized with a little love and imagination. Originally built as a family home in 1871, the structure was extensively renovated in 2002, transformed into its current combination of social history museum, restaurant and scenic cafe.

The museum component of Inside the Old Wall is understated, and diners can experience the nostalgia of the restaurant's setting simply by lounging in the courtyard and watching children

play hop-scotch and other simple games on roughly drawn squares. There are plenty of shaded outdoor seats and visitors are protected from the sun not only by large parasols, but also by the big old trees that play as significant a role in shaping Inside the Old Wall's ambiance as the bricks and mortar.

In the summer months, the heat can make dining outdoors quite an ordeal. Sweltering patrons have the option of eating in the attractive two-story wooden structure behind the main house, as the building contains both an air-conditioned dining area and an upstairs cafe lounge.

The food is best described as home-cooked Taiwanese cuisine — the dishes are tasty enough, if not exactly calculated to wow diners. Inside the Old

Wall offers a wide range of stir-fried wild vegetables (NT\$100 and up) not readily available at city restaurants. Dishes such as deep fried eel (香酥鱈魚, NT\$220), spicy eggplant (魚香茄子, NT\$200) and pumpkin with salted duck egg (鹹蛋南瓜, NT\$200) are the restaurant's specialties and are suitable for tables of four and up. While the fare is certainly not fancy, Inside the Old Wall handles salt and oil with an appropriate degree of restraint, which allows the freshness of the ingredients to speak for itself. Service is casual but extremely efficient.

Though the cooking is significantly above par for restaurants found at scenic spots, it is not the cuisine, but Inside the Old Wall's cafe that is attention grabbing. The cafe area is not air-conditioned and instead relies on its large windows to allow a breeze to waft in. The owners, who also operate a boutique cafe in Jingmei (景美區), Taipei City, take their drinks seriously, roasting their own coffee beans in small batches and providing visitors with a diverse spectrum of interesting teas.

Inside the Old Wall's thorough approach to beverages is a rarity. The staff takes its time preparing and serving beverages, leaving patrons at their leisure to enjoy the beautiful mountain scenery. Overlooking the magnificent cherry orchards of Tianyuan Temple (天元宮), the view from the restaurant is particularly spectacular during the cherry blossom season in February and March. Bookings are recommended.



Serenity is on the menu at Inside the Old Wall. PHOTO: IAN BARTHOLOMEW, TAIPEI TIMES

### Inside the Old Wall 石牆仔內

**Address:** 3 Dapaitou, Zhongjiao Ward, Tamsui Township, Taipei County (台北縣淡水鎮忠義里大埤頭3號)  
**Telephone:** (02) 2621-0252 **Open:** 11am to 9pm (cafe closed on Thursdays)  
**Average meal:** NT\$300 **Details:** Chinese menu; no credit cards **On the Net:** shi1871.com

Alleycat's has been around for quite some time and with seven establishments dotted across Taipei, it is familiar territory for diners-out. Its new location at Huashan Culture Park (華山文化園區) sees the chain embarking on a new trajectory, hooking its star, partially at least, to the Huashan 1914 project operated by the Taiwan Cultural-Creative Development Company (台灣文創發展股份有限公司).

The new location sees Alleycat's emerge as an art gallery and live music venue, and according to owner Mark Thomas, the restaurant will be taking an active part in contributing to and supporting activities at the revitalized Huashan venue.

Exciting developments on the eating and drinking front include the imminent arrival of an outdoor bar area that opens out onto the Huashan complex's spacious Art Promenade (藝術大街).

Thomas has recently introduced a new amber ale that is bottled for Alleycat's by a micro brewery in Wales. He plans to explore the Margret River area in Australia to find a suitable wine that might also be sold under the Alleycat's label. If the quality of the beer is anything to go by, the success of this venture is something to look forward to.