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PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

COMPILED BY DAVID CHEN

saying that he would be seeking professional help for his drinking. The incident is only the latest in a string of drunken escapades for the Malaysian-born Tsao, who is sometimes called the "Prince of the Ballad" in the Mando-pop world. In July, he was admitted to the hospital with a puffy face and cut finger after getting into a fight at a Taipei nightclub. Even though Lo says his friendship with Tsao remains "unchanged," some damage has already been done: after the incident, Hong Kong promoter BMA canceled a concert next month featuring Tsao, which was entitled "Welcome to My World, Part II."

It was a battle of two crooners last week in Hong Kong — but there was little music heard in this rumble. Golden Melody Award-winning singer Gary Tsao (曹格) upheld his reputation as a psychotic drunk by beating up his friend, Canto-pop singer Justin Lo (Justin), in an extended brawl that started at a bar, continued in a taxi and ended on the street.

The following is Pop Stop's blow-by-blow account of their night on the town, as told by the *China Times*, *United Daily News*, the *Liberty Times* (the *Taipei Times*'s sister paper) and Hong Kong paparazzi.

Round 1: Tsao and Lo are hanging out in a Central District jazz club. Lo tries to crash the stage for an impromptu performance with the house band, but is stopped by another bar patron. Feeling like they have "lost face," Tsao steps up to confront the patron, only to be stopped by Lo.

Round 2: The two start arguing as they leave the bar ("I wanted to stand up for you," said Tsao, "Why did you stop me?"). Tsao takes a swing at Lo, and the two wrestle each other to the ground. Lo and Tsao's friends eventually break up the fistfights. The two make up and decide to share a taxi home, each accompanied by a member of their respective entourages. But the truce doesn't last long.

Round 3: Hong Kong paparazzi hot on the trail film their taxi stopping in the middle of the road, with Tsao jumping out and "bouncing around like Bruce Lee." The door is left open but Lo refuses to come out. Tsao charges at the cab and executes a "flying kick" on Lo while he's still in the car.

Round 4: The cab pulls over, next to a roadside construction site. The paparazzi report hearing Lo's "screams of pain" from inside the taxi. Lo gets out of the car, holding his midsection. Tsao grabs a road sign from the construction site and is about to strike when Lo and Tsao's friends convince him to put it down. The two part ways in separate taxis.

A rueful Tsao held a press conference a few days later to apologize for the ruckus,

BY DAVID CHEN



PHOTO COURTESY OF TREES MUSIC AND ART

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

WHAT: Le Cor de la Plana of France
WHEN: Main show tomorrow night from 7:45pm to 9:15pm, brief appearances tonight and Sunday
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 for one concert, NT\$900 for a one-day pass and NT\$1,500 for a two-day pass (four concerts tomorrow and three concerts on Sunday). Tickets for Nityalila's concert on Sunday are NT\$150 for Filipino nationals. For more information on the Migration Music Festival, visit www.taipeitimes.com/images/2009/09/25/TT-980295-P13-IB.pdf
ON THE NET: www.treesmusic.com/festival/2009mmf

DANCE

Essential oil

The Taipei Dance Circle (光環舞集), one of Taiwan's more unusual modern dance companies, is celebrating its 25th year, a notable milestone in any field. To mark the anniversary of the company he founded with his wife, Maura Yang (楊宛蓉), artistic director Liou Shaw-lu (劉紹維) decided to put away his signature baby oil to return to another of the main themes of his work in recent years, "sight and sound."

Liou created the first program in this series, which examines the partnership between voice and movement, *Sight and Sound — Exercise One*, in 2001. This year's *Silent Dance* is the sixth in the series. As with all the works in this series, Liou has his dancers explore the sounds they emit, including breathing, as they move, while focusing on their own body rhythms.

Liou's choreography has long focused around the dancers' qi, the body's inner energy, as well as their breathing. He believes dancers must first learn to harness their qi before they can free their minds to move their bodies fluidly.

The nine-part *Silent Dance*, which opened yesterday at the Experimental Theater of the National Theater, is a journey for dancers and the audience, an exploration of the world around us and the world within, centered on Liou's reflection

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

WHAT: Taipei Dance Circle, *Silent Dance*
WHEN: Tonight and tomorrow at 7:30pm, tomorrow and Sunday at 2:30pm
WHERE: Experimental Theater (國家戲劇院實驗劇場), 21-1 Zhongshan S Rd, Taipei City (台北市中山南路21-1號)
ADMISSION: NT\$500, available through the NTCH box office or online at www.artsticket.com.tw
ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCES: Oct. 9 at 7:30pm at the Performing Arts Center of the Cultural Affairs Bureau, Hsinchu Municipal Auditorium (新竹市文化局演藝廳), 17 Dongda Rd Sec 2, Hsinchu City (新竹市東大路二段17號) (NT\$400); Oct. 15 at 7:30pm at Tainan County Cultural Center (台南縣立文化中心), 23 Jhongjeng Rd, Sinying City, Tainan County, (NT\$300); Nov. 28 at 7:30pm at the 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), (NT\$200)

of the ecological threat facing mankind. Liou began exploring this theme with last year's *Pilgrims' Dream*, but the flooding and mudslides brought by Typhoon Morakot gave new impetus for his concern.

Romance revival

Le Cor de la Plana sings in a dying language, but the group's music is full of life. This six-man vocal and percussion ensemble performs songs written in Occitan, an ancient Romance language once widely spoken in Le Cor's home of southern France.

Brimming with pulsing rhythms delivered in slaps, claps, stomps and dance, the Marseilles-based group's sound conjures up a multicultural fusion of Mediterranean folk singing, North African percussion, Balkan polyphonic harmonies and hints of Arabic scales.

Le Cor de la Plana, whose name means the "The Heart of La Plaine quarter," the Bohemian section of Marseilles, is popular on the world music circuit and has played major events such as Peter Gabriel's WOMAD.

They appear tonight, tomorrow and Sunday at the Migration Music Festival in Taipei.

Occitan, once the language of medieval poets and troubadours, now has an estimated 500,000 speakers in France — most of whom are elderly people living in rural areas. Preserving the language has been difficult in a country with proud and stubborn Francophone policies.

"When you're involved in Occitan singing, you're involved in Occitan militancy," said singer Manu Theron, who founded the group in 2001.

"Because the language issue in France is very touchy ... as soon as you sing or speak in Occitan, all the people around you ask you 'Why?'"

"It's subversive to use another language in France," adds singer Rodin Kaufmann. "Most people [think] you're French and that's it. It's a mono identity, [but] everyone has a plural identity, and that's the main idea that we try to show."

One reason Theron likes to sing in Occitan is for its beauty — there are lots of "open vowels," he says. Another is the unconventional narrative structure of traditional Occitan songs. "They're not normal stories with a beginning, a middle and an end. Sometimes there's no ending. Sometimes there's no middle."

Such is the case with *Fanfarnetta*, the story of a woman, Francesca, who pines for a lover who is stuck in jail. Most of the song is a dialogue in which Francesca explains to her parents that she has no desire to marry a rich aristocrat. The story ends abruptly with Francesca in jail, hanging by a noose alongside her lover. None of the verses explain how she got there. But the song, says Kaufmann, is not about love as much as arranged marriage.

One of Le Cor's original numbers, *Tant Deman*, which translates as "maybe tomorrow, don't worry," observes how Marseilles is starting to become more "French" or more like a northern European city, where everything is "fast and strict." To Theron, Marseilles is more akin to cities like Naples, and is closer to the "urban habits" and sensibilities of the ancient Greeks.

"We kept also a spirit, a kind of philosophy towards life, meaning that life is much more important than what happens — or doesn't happen. And that human feelings are more important than life itself," he said.

Occitan musical and dance "traditions" are something of a paradox since much of the culture has been either quashed or diluted by the French, said Theron. Le Cor's music borrows from other places — the group's polyphonic harmonies are inspired by Macedonian music; they also use non-local instruments like the *bendir*, a Moroccan frame drum. "We had to, in a way, rebuild what was ours," said Theron.

In addition to tomorrow's concert, Le Cor de la Plana appears briefly tonight with all other Migration Music Festival performers at an outdoor show at Bitan, Xindian, Taipei County (台北縣新店碧潭高灘地). They will also take part in a collaborative performance on Sunday.

Other performers at Migration include Marseilles musician Sam Karpienia, Filipina singer-songwriter Nityalila Saulo and Malian guitarist Habib Koite. For a full schedule, go to www.treesmusic.com/festival/2009mmf.

BY DIANE BAKER



PHOTO COURTESY OF TAIPEI DANCE CIRCLE

As with *Pilgrims' Dream*, the score for *Silent Dance* is a mix of genres. Last year it was the sounds of wind and waves combined with contemporary Indian music and the chanting of Buddhist monks. This year Liou turned to three composers, Lu Yen (盧炎), Tseng Yuh-chung (曾毓忠) and Lee Tzy-sheng (李子聲), to create a score that mixes Western modern classical with a soundscape of electronic "noise."

In a rare treat for Taipei Dance Circle audiences, cellist Liu Shu-chuan (劉殊輝) and pianist Hsieh Hsin-jung (謝新榮) will be sitting off to the left of the stage, accompanying the dancers through the series of duets, solos and quartets.

In *Silent Dance*, Liou said he tried

to use the body to convey an absence of vulgarity, emptiness and clumsiness, and at the same time show refinement, amorousness and vivacity.

At a press preview on Wednesday afternoon, however, I found the movements of Liou and his five dancers to be somewhat stiff and clumsy looking, tentative even, but I realized that was because I am so used to seeing them gliding about the floor on slicks of baby oil. Without the lubrication, they are back to appearing as mortal as the rest of us.

Following this weekend's performances in Taipei, the company will take *Silent Dance* on tour, with one performance each in Hsinchu, Tainan and Chiayi.

RESTAURANTS

BY NOAH BUCHAN

Yogurt Art

Address: 96-5, Xinsheng S Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市新生南路三段96-5號)
Telephone: (02) 2362-3721 **Open:** 11:30am to 10pm
Average meal: NT\$125 **Details:** Chinese and English menu; credit cards not accepted

Yogurt Art turns customers into creators — at least for the two minutes it takes to create a dessert.

The recently opened self-service joint in Gongguan (公館), located across the street from National Taiwan University's main gate, serves frozen yogurt and a multitude of toppings.

Becoming an aesthete is as easy as walking through the door, choosing a cup — 390ml, 520ml or 750ml — and then filling it with any combination of the eight yogurt varieties dispensed from four machines.

Then it's off to the display counter to add any (or all) of the 24 toppings, weigh the object d'art and pay. A warning to those who don't want to create a monumental canvas: the 390ml size is more than enough for a masterpiece that will satiate one person's appetite.

The palette of yogurt flavors includes berry tart, white chocolate macadamia nut, country vanilla, cable car chocolate, New York cheesecake, cappuccino, green tea tart and plain tart. Yogurt Art changes the flavors once a month. There are 30 in total.

On my first visit, I paired berry tart with New York cheesecake — a little country living combined with downtown

flair. Then, it was on to the toppings counter where I added strawberries, kiwi, peach and blueberries. Weighing in at just over 200g, it cost NT\$123.

The only disappointment was the peach, which was canned. If my first creation tended toward "environmental art," a second attempt a few days later was pure decadence.

The underpinning was a grisaille of cappuccino, cable car chocolate and white chocolate macadamia nut. As the base looked somewhat bland, I added Gummi bears, marshmallows, M&Ms and pieces of Oreo cookie. The cost: NT\$107.

Rich chocolate and macadamia nut — what can go wrong?

The cappuccino was lost among the stronger flavors, none of which were too sweet. I deserved a critical review for the overpainting of toppings, though. The Gummi bears and marshmallows were difficult to chew because the frozen yogurt had hardened them into a texture resembling that of rubber. And the M&Ms were as hard as pebbles.

Next time I'll stick to toppings possessing a similar texture to that of the Oreos pieces, such as Froot Loops, granola or Cheerios, which are smaller in size and easier to eat. Other



Yogurt Art turns consumers into artists.

PHOTO: NOAH BUCHAN, TAIPEI TIMES

add-ons include whole and sliced almonds, walnut pieces, dried cranberries and raisins.

Yogurt Art's interior is geared towards the up-market health-conscious crowd. High ceilings painted vanilla are framed by large picture windows that provide gentle natural lighting and views of the passing crowds. The friendly and helpful counter staff is kept busy cleaning the store's eight tables, yogurt dispensing machines and the area around the toppings counter.

Yogurt Art also has a location at 14, Alley 8, Ln 216, Zhongxiao E Rd, Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段216巷8弄14號). Tel: (02) 8771-5366.

Koledo 高烈堂沖繩創意味理

Address: 16, Ln 190 Dunhua S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段190巷16號)
Telephone: (02) 2773-8617 **Open:** 11:30am to 2pm; 5:30pm to 10pm
Average meal: NT\$200 **Details:** Chinese and Japanese menu; credit cards not accepted

In search of something slightly exotic, Koledo, which bills itself as serving "innovative Okinawa cuisine," sounded unusual, particularly its signature dish, a Japanese-style curry sporting Okinawa black sugar as a key ingredient. Okinawa "black sugar" has become popular in the last few years as a substitute for the more highly refined brown sugar because of its supposed health-giving properties. It is believed to decrease the levels of cholesterol in blood and increase resistance to stress. Be that as it may, it also has a rich flavor that can often give a new twist to all kinds of food. Its use in a version of Japanese curry called forth a spirit of adventure that overcame concerns over the rather too extensive menu and the high profile of "budget" lunch specials.

For a small place packed in among the popular eateries off Zhongxiao East Road Section 4 (忠孝東路四段), near the junction with Dunhua South Road Section 1 (敦化南路一段), Koledo emanated a pleasant ambience with its dark wood interior, colorful cotton prints and various knickknacks arranged on shelves behind the cozy little booths that line a central aisle. With large tankards of Okinawa draft beer for NT\$120, and a wide-ranging menu of snacks, from chilled tofu (NT\$60) to marinated baby octopus (NT\$90), it is not an unpleasant spot to drink and nibble, but if you are there for the food rather than atmosphere, Koledo is something of a disappointment.

The curry set menu (NT\$160), which came highly recommended, managed to fail on all counts. It lacked substance, with some pitifully small pieces of meat floating about in the sauce; it lacked flavor, the black sugar failing to



Prepare for the expected.

PHOTO: IAN BARTHOLOMEW, TAIPEI TIMES

BY IAN BARTHOLOMEW

TIDBITS

BY IAN BARTHOLOMEW

This weekend at Sun Moon Lake, two premier destinations have something to celebrate. The Lulu (湖景樓) has invited Alistair Barnes, the executive chef of the Canadian Rocky Mountain Resort, to present a menu of Rocky Mountain cuisine for its Canadian Food, Wine and Music Festival, which runs until Oct. 14. Providing the music will be Martin Mayer, a well-known Canadian pianist and composer. Diners will have the opportunity to take part in a lucky draw, with a first prize of a round-trip business-class ticket to Calgary. For more information, go to www.thelalu.com.tw/en/e05_food/canada-e.php.

On the other side of the lake, the Fleur de Chine Hotel (雲品酒店) celebrated the opening of its spectacular roof-top Sky Lounge. Four cocktails were created especially for the bar by the godfather of Taiwan bartenders, William Wang (王靈安), and feature unusual local ingredients such as pine needles. The hotel expects to see considerable interest for this rooftop venue for exclusive parties and wedding receptions because of the spectacular 270° panorama of Sun Moon Lake that it offers. To book Sky Lounge for the night costs NT\$30,000, but visitors can also check it out over afternoon tea or after-dinner drinks. More information can be found at www.fleurdechinehotel.com.