



Yaoyao's debut album has ruffled a few feathers in the Mando-pop world.

PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

Pneumatic media personality **Yaoyao** (瑤瑤), real name Kuo Shu-yao (郭書瑤), is climbing off the DD-list with her best-selling new album — but her ascendance in the charts has reportedly reduced one pop rival to tears and another to a hissy fit.

Singer **Angela Chang** (張韶涵) burst into tears at a recent press event, which our sister paper *The Liberty Times* attributed to the fact that her latest album, *5th Season* (第五季), has been superseded by Yaoyao's *Hug of Love: Farewell to 18* (愛的抱抱: 告別18歲) in Taiwan's music charts.

To be fair, Chang has plenty of reasons to cry that have nothing to do with her rival, who was previously best known for riding a mechanical horse braless in a commercial. The pop star and actress is in the midst of a well-publicized feud with her mother and father, who say she is a negligent daughter and left them mired in poverty even as she enjoys the limelight. Chang, on the other hand, accuses her parents of mismanaging her earnings.

Since news of the family scandal broke last month, Chang has pleaded with the media to leave the matter alone and refused to answer further questions. Last weekend marked her return to the public eye after keeping a low profile for nearly a year and a half, with a performance and autograph signing session to promote *5th Season*.

Unfortunately, Chang started sniveling after just two songs. Afterwards she denied that Yaoyao's dominance in the charts had caused the tears, and said she was just touched by the continuing support and affection of her fans.

"It's been 10 years since I was first signed to a record label. I care less about sales numbers than the affirmation of my fans," Chang said.

"If there is a talented new singer out there, people should support him or her," she added.

Fellow pop singer **Peter Pan** (潘裕文), however, was less gracious. The singer's latest album, *Dreamer* (夢想家), received good reviews,

COMPILED BY CATHERINE SHU

but has lagged in the charts. His record label issued a pouty statement after the numbers were in, bemoaning the fact that there is no accounting for taste among listeners. Pan himself sarcastically asked fans for a "loving hug," a play on the title of Yaoyao's album. Yaoyao's own label called the kvetching "pointless."

"Everyone thinks they are number one, so why don't they just proclaim themselves number one?" it said in a statement.

While Yaoyao's album topped Taiwan's two major music charts, **Penny Lin's** (林韋君) twin peaks were getting some attention of their own. *Next Magazine* worked itself into a lather over its beachside photo shoot with the model and soap actress. The gossip rag gloried in the fact that Lin had insisted on going surfing even though the photographer said the waves were too rough; celebrated when the stick-on bra Lin was wearing underneath her bikini top fell into the ocean; panted as said top rolled upwards and Lin's right breast was nearly exposed; and muffled its regret when Lin modestly held the surfboard in front of her chest.

The rest of *Next Magazine's* fluff piece reported that Lin, who split with her boyfriend three months ago, was spotted in a tete-a-tete with actor **Wallace Huo** (霍建華) at a nightclub. Lin insisted that Huo "just came by to say hi," though he clearly had more than that to say, because the chat lasted for three hours.

Hopefully Lin will have more luck in love than fellow actress and model **Kelly Lin** (林熙蕾, no relation), who recently split from her fiance, singer and actor **Ken Zhu** (朱孝天). The break-up came several days after the duo announced they were delaying their wedding and just a few months after Lin and Zhu finally went public with their four-year relationship. Various media reports said that Lin was unhappy with Zhu's income and stalling career. The actor is currently appearing on *MoMo Love* (桃花小妹). Lin thought the TV series would turn her fiance's life around. But instead, he has allegedly fought with crewmembers and showed up to work hungover.

Reports of Zhu partying in nightclubs while filming in Taichung were allegedly the final straw for Lin. The couple met in 2005 when Zhu was at his peak, starting in hit series *Meteor Garden* (流星花園) and performing with popular boy band F4. "She had no idea Zhu would so quickly burst into fatness, become stagnated in his career and find less and less work, while her own light grew brighter," *The Liberty Times* tartly wrote.

BY DAVID CHEN

The Taichung Jazz Festival (台中爵士音樂節) welcomes the autumn season with a diversity of jazz styles, ranging from the be-bop avant-garde sounds of Italian trumpeter Enrico Rava and the tango-infused music of French accordionist Richard Galliano to the vocal harmonizing of German group Stoungers and the electric blues of Joey Gilmore.

The festival, which starts tomorrow and runs until Oct. 25, continues to grow. Last year the event attracted around 290,000 people, according to the Taichung Cultural Affairs Bureau. The bureau touts the festival as "the nation's largest," and expects to break the 300,000 mark for attendance this year.

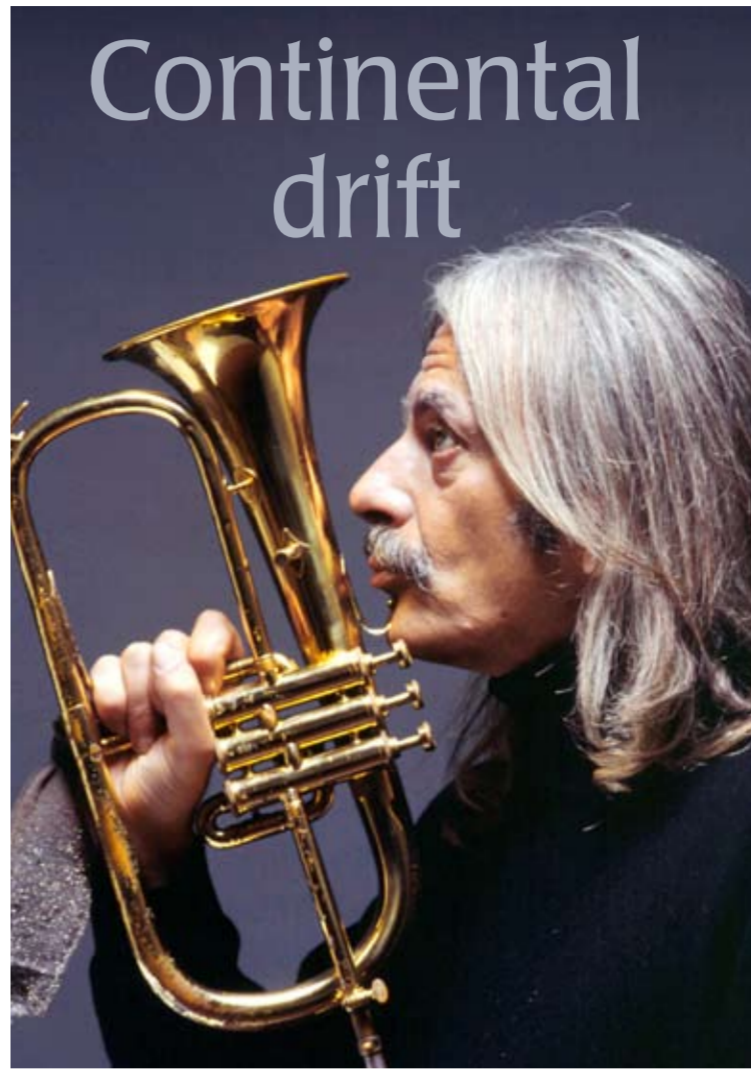
The event takes place along the city's scenic Jingguo Boulevard Parkway (經國綠園道), with the main acts performing at Civic Square (市民廣場).

Many of this year's acts hail from Europe. Enrico Rava, tomorrow night's headliner, is one of Italy's most prominent jazz musicians and a veteran of the international scene. The 70-year-old trumpeter started his career working with Latin jazz saxophonist Gato Barbieri and dabbled in free jazz and avant-garde throughout the mid-1960s, while playing in a quartet with soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy. Rava now mainly performs be-bop.

French accordionist Richard Galliano and his quartet take the stage next Sunday. Galliano, a highly revered figure among accordionists, draws from diverse roots, spanning Mediterranean folk, French Chanson and Museette and classical music. But careful listeners can also discern a

Italian trumpeter Enrico Rava headlines the Taichung Jazz Festival, which starts tomorrow and runs until next Sunday.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TAICHUNG JAZZ FESTIVAL



COMMUNITY

Living the dream

Finding something to do that the entire family or a big group of friends could enjoy for a couple of hours can be difficult. These budget-conscious days have made it even more difficult. But tomorrow afternoon Taipei residents have the chance to experience some spectacular silliness — for free.

The Dream Community (夢想社區) in Shijr (汐止), Taipei County, is putting on its eighth annual carnival parade, starting at Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall at 3pm. The idea of a creative community, with annual parades, festivals and outreach programs, is the dream of Gordon Tsai (蔡聰明), whose incredible energy and drive have made him famous. It's not often you see a middle-aged Taiwanese man covered in purple body paint and wearing little more than a loincloth, wings and a halo (2007) or white bodypaint and a big diaper (2006), running up and down the street encouraging bystanders to try a little samba.

His antics usually leave younger parade participants wide-eyed and giggling. But it's exactly that "not supposed to" attitude that propels Tsai, who says you don't have to be a "professional" artist to be creative and that you don't have to have a lot of money to enjoy making, performing, viewing or supporting art.

"My dream is to create a world-famous Taiwan carnival and to give local communities the confidence to promote their culture, community, environment through the parade... Many people think only money can support their dreams but in many countries it is the poor people who support the local arts," Tsai said on Tuesday.

Tsai's energy and enthusiasm are infectious. They're what keep the community's volunteers, resident foreign artists and scores of students working long hours for minimal pay (the artists) in summer camp-like conditions (for the university students sleeping on floors around the community), building floats and giant puppets and making hundreds of costumes.

Jade Brant, an American costume designer and seamstress, has been in Taiwan for four months. She came to the Dream Community because she met Tsai in New Orleans during this year's Mardi Gras, although she had heard about him from friends who had residencies in Shijr.

"His energy is incredible, he's crazy," she said of Tsai. "These kids are incredible. Most are university students in their first year. They have bottomless energy; some stayed up to 4am the other day working on their projects."

Ho Ying-chi (何英琪), one of the full-time workers at the community, said there were about 10 foreign artists, from Brazil, the US, India and Bali, working on this year's parade, while five Czechs made "master" creations for students to copy or improve upon during a residency earlier this year.

Kalamandalam Shiju Kumar from Kerala, India, was painting some papier-mache pieces for one of the floats. He was a prime example of the Dream Community mantra of "everyone pitches in," since he's a well-known Kathakali dancer and poet in India, not a painter. But since this is his sixth time at the



community, he knew what to expect.

Two Indonesians were hard at work putting the finishing touches on the floor of a float carrying a giant monkey-eating demon, while a dozen students worked on another papier-mache demon. In between was a "rocking Buddha" sculpture, wearing a pair of headphones. There will be a local heavy metal band playing on its float, Ho said.

The theme of this year's parade is the early migrants from China and the Aborigines they encountered here, Tsai said — though it was hard to reconcile some of the floats on view with that idea.

"It's about our ancestors working on their farms, conflicts with Aboriginal people, so we have farmers, pioneers, Aborigines — also a lot of ghosts, especially the ghosts who eat people," he said, laughing.

"Farmers worked hard, suffering, there

Whatever floats their boats. PHOTO: DIANE BAKER, TAIPEI TIMES

was not enough food," said Tsai, whose parents and grandparents farmed the land the Dream Community was built on.

There will also be a boat, buffaloes, a giant pig and samba cows throwing beads, he said, and a lot of samba girls, for a total of about 10,000 participants.

This year's parade route is much shorter — just from CKS Memorial Hall, up Zhongshan South Road (中山南路) to Renai Road (仁愛路) and then onto Ketagalan Boulevard (凱達格蘭大道) — because the parade will be followed by a two-hour stage show. The parade starts at 3pm and is scheduled to finish sometime between 5:30pm and 6pm — it's hard to be precise when you have dozens of floats and 100 marching groups arriving from around the country and no time for a full rehearsal. The show will run from 7pm to 9pm.

RESTAURANTS

BY CATHERINE SHU

A-ching 阿菁

Address: 8 Taishun St, Taipei City (台北市泰順街8號) **Telephone:** 0926-614-364
Open: 11am to 6pm every day; call ahead to confirm business hours
Average meal: NT\$70 **Details:** Chinese and Vietnamese menu

Founded by a native of Ho Chi Minh City, the month-old A-ching (阿菁) is a modest hole-in-the-wall on Taishun Street (泰順街), but the restaurant's short menu is packed with low-priced Vietnamese classics, including a delicious banh mi, or baguette sandwich, for just NT\$50, and sweet Vietnamese coffee for NT\$35 a cup.

The restaurant's banh mi (法國麵包, NT\$50) is the highlight of A-ching's streamlined menu. The fresh baguette is toasted until the crust is flaky while the inside remains soft and chewy, and stuffed with julienned pickled carrots and daikon radish, large strips of sweet pickled cucumber, fresh cilantro and pieces of cha lua, a light sausage made from pounded pork, fish sauce and potato starch.

A-ching's spring rolls (生菜春捲, NT\$50) are also very good. Rice vermicelli, shrimp, pork and scallions are bundled into rice paper and served with a sweet-and-sour dipping sauce made from chopped chili, garlic and

vinegar. For take-out diners, the spring rolls are wrapped in saran wrap, packed in plastic containers and stored in a refrigerator out front. The rolls are frequently made so the rice paper remains tender instead of drying out and becoming tough and chewy. A fried version (炸春捲) is also available for NT\$50. The green papaya salad (涼拌木瓜, NT\$50), which is also kept ready-to-serve next to the spring rolls, is another option for health-conscious diners. The crunchy stripes of unripened papaya are topped with toasted peanuts, carrots, chopped pork, cilantro and shrimp and soaked in a tangy sauce. If you order the salad for takeout, make sure to ask for some slices of lime; the salad tastes best with lime juice drizzled over it.

Ironically, A-ching's two pho selections, which headline its menu, pale in comparison to its side dishes. The pork pho (豬肉河粉, NT\$70) and beef pho (牛肉河粉, NT\$70) are both served with big portions of handmade rice noodles, but only a few lonely bits of overcooked meat that are lost underneath mounds of cilantro and bean sprouts.

The only beverage available at A-ching is Vietnamese coffee (越南咖啡, NT\$35), which is flavored with a liberal dousing of



Modesty is an admirable quality at A-ching.

PHOTOS: CATHERINE SHU, TAIPEI TIMES

sweetened condensed milk and served on ice. A-ching's version is satisfying for sweet tooths, but surprisingly mild, which might come as a disappointment to people who like their coffee to leave them bouncing off the walls.

Arcadia 花岩山林

Address: 104-1, Youmu Rd, Youmu Ward, Sansia Township, Taipei County (台北縣三峽鎮有木里木路104之1號)
Telephone: (02) 2674-9618 **Open:** 10am to 10pm **Average meal:** NT\$50
Details: Chinese menu; credit cards accepted **On the Net:** www.arcadias.tw, arcadias.emmm.tw

There are some restaurants you go to for food, and there are others you go to for atmosphere. Arcadia falls in the latter category. Checking out the Web site, it became clear that the food would be the elegantly presented, highly processed fast variety so beloved in Taipei's business lunch cafes. Its setting on the other hand, in a 6.5-hectare private forest in Sansia Township (三峽鎮), seemed immensely appealing.

Perched on a hillside overlooking a river valley, Arcadia provides magnificent views from its outdoor dining area. Scenic cafes are not exactly a rarity in the hills surrounding Taipei, but Arcadia distinguishes itself with the remarkable efficiency of its operation and careful attention to detail. Seated in an outdoor booth, it was a pleasant surprise to discover sliding glass windows on three sides and also roll-up

blinds, features that give guests full control over the extent of their open-air experience.

Arriving on a wet Sunday after a 20-minute drive along mountain roads, the place was thronged with a lunchtime crowd of families. The menu, though extensive, is predictable and cleverly priced at a comfortable mid-range, just a trifle more than you would expect to pay at a nondescript restaurant in Taipei.

The selection of six hot pots was clearly a favorite among diners; served with a choice of pork, beef or mutton, and with a drink and dessert (NT\$400). The Italian fresh tomato hot pot (義大利新鮮蕃茄鍋) had a powerfully salty soup base that might, despite its name, have originated in a tin, and some rather dodgy mass-market dumplings floating atop.

The serving of meat was not particularly generous, but there were plenty of vegetables, and the whole ensemble appeared appetizing even if flavor-wise it left much to be desired.

Two vegetarian options are available, one a hot pot (NT\$400), and the other pine nut and wild mushroom on spinach tagliatelle (NT\$380, 松子野菇

鮮蔬菠菜寬麵), served with a salad, bread, soup, coffee and dessert. While the tagliatelle was bland, the dish nevertheless carefully observes religious and dietary restrictions.

A children's menu includes spring chicken and a mini five-ounce sirloin (NT\$300), served with fries. Despite my reservations about the highly processed nature of the food, the menu has clearly been meticulously designed to encompass a wide spectrum of tastes.

A large variety of elaborate tea drinks (NT\$160 to NT\$180) are available, as well as, amidst the selection of waffles, French fries and the like, an English afternoon tea special (NT\$320, 英式下午茶) that bizarrely combines bagels, custard puffs, cake and New Orleans spicy chicken wings (available between 2:30pm and 5pm).

One of the waiters said that the outdoor dining area is hot during summer, but with fall in full swing, the setting could not have been more pleasant. Furthermore, a more formal indoor dining area is also an option. Out back, visitors can find a small herb garden that provides a veneer of freshness to the operation, beyond which lie walking trails that lead to various lookouts, as well as picnic and barbecue areas. Arcadia also offers accommodation for those interested in a lengthier stay. While I cannot recommend Arcadia as a place to indulge in fine dining, the food is more than adequate if you know what to expect and, as far as a lovely rustic experience goes, it is certainly an excellent choice.

Go for the view, stay for the view.

PHOTO: IAN BARTHOLOMEW, TAIPEI TIMES

TIDBITS

Starting this Sunday, Roxy Roots is rolling out a monthly Caribbean Pride brunch menu concocted by guest chef, Lilian Molina from Belize, served between 11am and 5pm on the second Sunday of every month.

Dishes include Creole seafood soup, served with butter okra and callaloo greens and coconut rice (NT\$320), fry jacks early bird special, served with stewed chicken, refried beans, fry jacks, fried mashed banana, and a choice of eggs (NT\$280), and goat curry with split peas and coconut rice (NT\$250). Unfortunately, there's no mention of ackee and saltfish patties.

Over at the Marco Polo Restaurant, guest chef Sergio Carboni, whose restaurant held one Michelin star for 18 consecutive years, is cooking up classic Venetian cuisine. A four-course set lunch or dinner menu costs NT\$2,980 with a la carte offerings starting at NT\$350 per dish.

Hailing from Cremona, Italy, Carboni comes from a family restaurant business that has been in operation since 1920.

The four-course set menu includes preserved cod fish tart with zucchini and anchovies, black ravioli filled with goat cheese and the choice of pan-fried beef tenderloin with Amareno wine sauce and black truffle served on red onions or oven-baked sea bass.

To make a reservation, call (02) 2376-3156. The address for Marco Polo is 38F, 201, Dunhua S Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路二段201號).