

AROUND TOWN

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The Government Information Office digs deep every year to fund albums produced by some of the country's best indie bands. The results go on show tomorrow in a marathon seven-hour concert

Singing for their supper

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TAIWAN MUSIC CULTURE INTERNATIONAL ALTERNATION ASSOCIATION



The 14 bands performing at tomorrow's Taiwan Band Festival each received NT\$400,000 from the Government Information Office to produce and release a new album.

BY **ANDREW C.C. HUANG**
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Want to sample the latest music from Taiwan's indie bands? Look no further than tomorrow's Taiwan Band Festival (台灣樂團節) concert.

Currently in its third edition, the festival was initiated by the Government Information Office (GIO) to promote independent bands and fund new work.

To apply for subsidies to release their music, bands must submit a demo and proposal to be reviewed by a panel of industry professionals chosen by the government. Earlier this year, 15 bands were picked to receive NT\$400,000 each to produce and release a new album.

To cap off the past year's hard work, 14 of these groups will perform highlights of their music in a marathon free concert, which runs from 2:30pm to 9:30pm at Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall.

The festival's organizers aim to arouse public interest in the bands, whose music runs the gamut from disco rock and punk to acoustic folk and electronica.

"It's important to encourage indie bands because mainstream music is very limited," said Terri Wu, project planning executive of the Taiwan Music Culture International Alternation Association (台灣音樂文化國際交流協會), which was commissioned by the GIO to organize the festival. "Indie music is the arena in which musicians can experiment ... and that innovation can then be borrowed by the mainstream."

This year, the association helped bands such as Go Chic and Telephone Booth (電話亭樂團) finish debut albums and assisted veteran bands such as Marty Young and Double X (which is returning to the music scene after a 20-year hiatus) reconnect with their fans.

At the request of the GIO, the Taiwan Band Festival has decreased the number of bands it subsidizes from 27 groups in its first year to 15 this year.

This downsizing is being publicized as a choice of quality over quantity.

"The main goal of this event is to help the groups produce and release albums," says Wu. "We decided to limit the number so that each group could have more money for their production."

For Wu, the health of the independent music scene can be gauged by how prosperous the "live house" scene is. "These days, there is literally a performance available on any given night in Taipei," he said.

FESTIVAL NOTES:

WHAT: 2009 Taiwan Band Festival (台灣樂團節)
WHEN: Tomorrow, from 2:30pm to 9:30pm

WHERE: Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall (中正紀念堂), 21 Zhongshan S Rd, Taipei City (台北市中山南路21號)

ADMISSION: Free

ON THE NET:
(Chinese only) www.taiwanbandfestival.com.tw

THE LINEUP:

2:30pm to 2:55pm
Come On! Bay Bay! (來吧！痞痞！) (indie pop)

3pm to 3:25pm
Stay Cool (folk rock)

3:30pm to 3:55pm
Miss Silk Stockings (絲襪小姐) (indie rock)

4pm to 4:25pm
The Girl and the Robots (electro-pop)

4:30pm to 4:55pm
Punkhoo (胖虎樂團) (punk)

5pm to 5:25pm
Nature Morte (靜物樂團) (concept rock)

5:30pm to 5:55pm
Telephone Booth (電話亭樂團) (indie electronica)

6pm to 6:25pm
La Petite Nurse (小護士) (indie pop-rock)

6:40pm to 7:05pm
Go Chic (electro-rock)

7:10pm to 7:35pm
Passiwali (巴西瓦里) (acoustic folk)

7:40pm to 8:05pm
Marty Young Band (instrumental rock)

8:10pm to 8:35pm
The Chairman (董事長樂團) (indie rock)

8:40pm to 9:05pm
Double X (post punk)

9:10pm to 9:35pm
Cosmic Man (宇宙人樂團) (disco rock)

Back to the blues

Musicians from the US, Japan, Canada and Taiwan congregate in Taipei tonight and tomorrow for Blues Bash 6

BY **DAVID CHEN**
STAFF REPORTER

"Blues is the roots, everything else is the fruits," the legendary bassist and songwriter Willie Dixon once said. This saying rings true for many of the performers at Taipei's annual Blues Bash, which features a dozen acts tonight and tomorrow.

Festival headliner Darrell Raines started out with the "fruits." The 44-year-old guitarist, pianist and singer began his career playing in gospel, reggae and calypso bands in Miami, and trained in jazz during high school and college.

He didn't start playing blues full time until 1996 when he joined the backing band of Joey Gilmore, the award-winning bluesman who toured Taiwan last month.

After a 10-year stint with Gilmore's band, a time that included constant touring in Florida and Europe, winning the International Blues Challenge in Memphis and getting nominated for the Albert King Award for most promising guitarist, Raines decided to embark on a solo career and form his own group.

His latest release, *Moanin' Time in Arkansas* (2008), is full of smooth, laid-back



Nacomi of Japan brings her R 'n' B style of blues to Taipei for Blues Bash 6.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BLUES BASH

vocals and blistering guitar work. Raines acknowledges Gilmore's B.B. King-inspired playing as an influence, as well as a long list of guitar heroes: Buddy Guy, Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Joe Pass, Wes Montgomery, and even rockers Steve Vai and Eddie Van Halen.

Raines enjoys the "free expression" possible in blues and, like Gilmore, says the diversity he experienced in the south Florida music scene has shaped his personal style.

"I like all kinds of music," Raines said on the phone from Florida. "But I put all kinds of music in the blues. You're going to hear some jazz in it, you're going to hear some rock in it. It depends on how I'm feeling, what kind of mood we're in, what kind of song it is."

American singer and guitarist Adam

EVENT NOTES:

WHAT: Blues Bash 6
WHEN AND WHERE: Tonight from 9pm to 1am at Roxy Roots, 90 Songren Rd, Taipei City (台北市松仁路90號); tomorrow from 5:30pm to midnight at the Dream Community (夢想社區), 95, Minzu 2nd St, Sijih City, Taipei County (台北縣汐止市民族二街95號), near the intersection of Hucian Street (湖前街) and Kangning Road (康寧路)
ADMISSION: NT\$500 each night, includes one drink and a raffle coupon. Raffle prizes include an electric guitar and a saxophone
ON THE NET: www.bsot.org; www.infine-art.com/bluesbash

Posnak, another feature act this weekend, likes to dig beyond the roots. For him, blues are one part of what he likes to call "old-time music," or "historical American music" for unfamiliar listeners.

Posnak, who grew up in Georgia and hails from Fayetteville, Arkansas, performs traditional music that originated in the American south at the turn of the 20th century.

His repertoire includes country blues songs by African American musicians like Charley Patton, Frank Stokes and Furry Lewis — all of whom were highly influential figures in the formation of blues music during the 1920s and 1930s but also played old-time folk songs shared among white performers.

Listen to Posnak's raspy vocal delivery and fingerpicking-style of guitar playing, and you wouldn't guess that he was only 36 years old. (Nor would you peg him as a potter — he holds an MFA in ceramics and is currently an artist-in-residence at the Tainan National University of the Arts).

But he's not out to reproduce old recordings note by note. Citing some contemporary inspirations such as Tom Waits and indie-folk group The Low Anthem, Posnak's end-goal "is to make original music that somehow gets to

the root of those old songs, feeling-wise."

This year's Blues Bash, now in its sixth run, takes place with concerts tonight at Roxy Roots in Taipei and tomorrow evening at the Dream Community's (夢想社區) indoor theatre and cafe.

Japanese blues acts have been a fixture in recent editions of the festival and this year is no different. Festival favorite Shun Kikuta, who is based in Chicago and served as Koko Taylor's guitarist until the singer passed away earlier this year, will be backed by local outfit Black Sheep. Also appearing is Nacomi, a guitarist and singer whose R 'n' B style brings to mind Bonnie Raitt, and Chicago-style blues guitarist Mr Oh Yeah.

Local expat performers include Louisiana native and "one-man band" Jack Conqueroo, electric blues outfit BoPoMoFo (ウタロロ), and my group, the Muddy Basin Ramblers.

BoPoMoFo bandleader DC Rapier says he's "energized" to see more Taiwanese bands exploring the roots of rock 'n' roll — one of the reasons he started Blues Bash and founded the Blues Society on Taiwan.

This year's event, he notes, features three local acts in the lineup, including the recently formed AGoGo Blues Band and Celluloid (賽璐璐), a beloved veteran group in the underground scene that plays blues-infused garage rock.

Tonight at Roxy Roots

Show starts at 9pm. Each act plays a 25-minute set

Jack Conqueroo
Adam Posnak
David Chen and the Muddy Basin Ramblers
Celluloid (賽璐璐)
Mark Howe and the Streuth Blues Band
BoPoMoFo (ウタロロ)
Shun Kikuta and Black Sheep
Darrell Raines



PHOTO COURTESY OF BLUES BASH

Tomorrow at the Dream Community

Dream Theater Stage

6:05pm	AGoGo Blues Band
6:45pm	Mark Howe and the Streuth Blues Band
7:25pm	Out Loop Way Blues Band
8:05pm	Mr Oh Yeah with T-Slim
8:45pm	Blues Vibrations
9:25pm	BoPoMoFo (ウタロロ)
10:05pm	Nacomi
10:45pm	Shun Kikuta and Black Sheep
11:25pm	Darrell Raines

Dream Cafe Stage

6:35pm	The Special Guests
7:15pm	Jack Conqueroo
7:55pm	Adam Posnak
8:35pm	David Chen and the Muddy Basin Ramblers