

BY ALITA RICKARDS CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

New (and improved) Hong Kong Hair City



A few days at any Taiwan-based music festival reveals a disconcerting absence on the scene. While there are plenty of male-fronted bands, both Taiwanese and expatriate, and a thriving Taiwanese girl band ethos, finding a foreign band with a female lead is like finding a four-leaf clover — a rare instance of luck.

When New Hong Kong Hair City appeared in 2006, lead vocalist and keyboardist Danielle Sanger's raw lyrics, powerful yet shaky vocals, and female presence (hidden though it was behind a curtain of flaming red locks) were a welcome change from the standard boys in bands fare.

Add to that the unexpected appearance of a saxophone taking the place of a lead guitar with Macgregor Wooley blowing out rocking riffs and adding his own lyrics and vocals, original bassist Tom McCann, and the final original member, Kyle Bajcer, pounding out funky beats on drums, and New Hong Kong Hair City was born.

When McCann had to leave Taiwan unexpectedly, the band teamed up with talented bassist Mike Tennant and added guitarist

Tristan Newman, from Wooley's other band, Doublewide. This, combined with Sanger's coming into her own as both a vocalist and a performer, has amped up the band from a funky fun time outfit to a force to be reckoned with.

"I cringe when I think of myself performing back when we started," said Sanger. "I would shake until my fingers couldn't hit the right keys. I hated performing and being the singer." Though she credits her "professional improvement" over the years to the guys in the band, she also shows a rare candor in admitting that though she always loved music and singing it took her until recently to "really find my voice and a niche."

"Practicing regularly has let me get to know my abilities and the limits that they have," she said, while "performing lets me know whether or not I can do it under pressure."

She has gone from a shy, sometimes strident singer to a powerful, smoky vocalist with a gritty edginess to her sound that can transform into a smooth and sexy growling reminiscent of a young PJ Harvey. She may be the best female

vocalist in the Taiwan expat scene, and could hold her own anywhere. On stage she can range from humble to absolutely electrifying.

When the group performs, the audience's reaction speaks for itself. The crowd dances and cheers along to the music, irresistibly drawn to bust a move, while fans of the band sing along to the choruses of their favorite songs.

"My two favorite parts of playing in NHHKC are writing new songs with the boys and jumping about on stage watching all the people in the audience do the same," said Sanger. "I feel like it is a dream to be able to walk onto a stage and instead of dreading the possibility of failing, I get to have a huge grin on my face exchanged between myself and four awesome musicians and performers."

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

WHAT: New Hong Kong Hair City

WHEN: Nov. 28 at 9:30pm

WHERE: Roxy Roots, 90 Songren Rd, Taipei City (台北市松仁路90號)

ADMISSION: Free

Good hair day.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TRISTAN VALENTINE

EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Theater and dance

Dancer/choreographer Lin Wen-chung (林文中) and his WC dance troupe bring their traveling production of **Small** to the Wenshan Branch of the Taipei Cultural Center this weekend. The former Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company member created the piece for the premiere of his own company last year. Lin confines his dancers to a plexiglass cube, yet creates a wide world of possibilities within that small space.

■ Tonight at 7:30pm, tomorrow and Sunday 22 at 2:30pm at the Children's Educational Center Theater of the Taipei Cultural Center, Wenshan Branch (台北市社教館文山分館兒童劇場), B2, 32 Jingwen St, Taipei City (台北市景文街32號B2); Dec. 4 at 7:30pm and Dec. 5 at 2:30pm and 7:30 pm at the Experimental Theater at No. 20 Warehouse, Taichung (台中二十號倉庫實驗劇場), 6-1, Ln 37, Fuxing Rd Sec 4, Taichung City (台中市復興路四段37巷6-1號)

■ Tickets are NT\$500 for this weekend, NT\$350 for the Taichung shows, available through www.artstickets.com.tw or NTCH outlets

The legendary I Wan Jan Puppet Theater (亦宛然掌中劇團) presents one of its masterpieces, **300 Years of Ching Dynasty — Keng Yao** (清宮三百年之興衰). Premiered in 1948 under the direction of late troupe founder and puppet master Li Tien-lu (李天祿), the show toured across the country for the following 13 years and has come to be known as the forerunner of Taiwan's golden light puppetry (金光戲). The puppet show is divided into two parts, which are performed tomorrow and Sunday respectively.

■ Central II Hall at Huashan 1914 Creative Park (華山1914中二館) (formerly known as Huashan Culture Park, 華山文化園區), 1, Bade Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市八德路一段1號)

■ Tomorrow and Sunday at 7:30pm

■ Tickets are NT\$100 to NT\$500, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

The Village (寶島一村) takes a nostalgic look at Taiwan's veterans' villages, or **juan cun** (眷村), through the lives of three families, from 1949 to the present day. Television producer Wang Wei-chung (王偉忠) teams up with respected director Stan Lai (賴聲川) to produce a dramatic and humorous work about the communities that did much to shape modern Taiwan.

■ National Theater, Taipei City

■ Tonight and tomorrow at 7:30pm, Sunday at 2:30pm

■ Tickets are NT\$500 to NT\$3,000, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

Part of the Young Stars, New Vision 2009 series of dance and theater performances initiated by the National Theater and Concert Hall to showcase emerging talents, Theatre II (戲劇—穿梭虛與實) consists of two shows: **The Smell of ...** (臭子記) is director Wang Ke yao's (王珂瑤) experiment that incorporates the sense of smell in theater, while **Encounters in Space** (與我·相識在宇宙盡頭) by Aimee Liu (劉岱雲) plays out as a fantasy where high school student Harry has an encounter with three other Harrys who all claim to be him.

■ Experimental Theater, Taipei City

■ Tonight and tomorrow at 7:30pm, Sunday at 2:30pm

■ Tickets are NT\$300, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

As part of the 14th Crown Arts Festival (第14屆皇冠藝術節), **The Two of Us** (我們) by Comedians Workshop II (可以演戲劇團) sees experienced performers Huang Shi-wei (黃士偉) and Hsieh Yi-ching (謝宜靜) play twins, a brother and sister who decide to be cruelly honest with each other on their 40th birthday.

■ Crown Theater (皇冠藝術中心小劇場), 50, Ln 120, Dunhua N Rd, Taipei City (台北市敦化北路120巷50號). On the Net: www.ntat.org/14caf

■ Tonight at 7:30pm, tomorrow at 2:30pm and 7:30pm, Sunday at 2:30pm

■ Tickets are NT\$450, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

Man Gang — The Unarmed Men (男人幫—霸王卸甲) is a play by Taiwan Drama Performance (台灣戲劇表演家) that tells a story about five middle-aged men, their memories, yearnings and lost loves.

■ Chiayi Performing Arts Center (嘉義縣表演藝術中心演藝廳), 265, Jianguo Rd Sec 2, Minhsiung Township, Chiayi County (嘉義縣民雄鄉建國路二段265號)

■ Tomorrow at 2:30pm and 7:30pm

■ Tickets are NT\$250 to NT\$1,200, available through ERA ticketing or online at www.ticket.com.tw

Classical music

Mercedes-Benz Classical Music Festival — Yo-Yo Ma Cello Recital (世紀古典音樂年2009 — 馬友友大提琴演奏會) sees one of the world's most renowned cellists performing a program that includes Brahms' *Sonata No. 1 in E Minor* and Franck's *Sonata in A Major*, as well as a number of popular works such as Ennio Morricone's theme music from *The Mission*, Gershwin's *Prelude No. 2* and Piazzolla's *Soledad*. Ma will be accompanied on piano by Kathryn Stott.

■ Tomorrow at 7:30pm

■ National Concert Hall, Taipei City

■ Tickets are NT\$1,800 to NT\$6,000, available through ERA ticketing or online at www.tickets.com.tw

A Night of Cellos — Ou-Yang Ling-yi and Her Cello Orchestra (大提琴重奏音樂之夜 — by 歐陽伶宜大提琴重奏團) presents a group of cello students from Soochow University (東吳大學) led by mentor Ou-Yang Ling-yi (歐陽伶宜) in a program of music arranged for an orchestra of cellos. The program includes Handel's *Allegro Maestoso From Water Music*, Corelli's *Concerto Grosso in G Minor*, Telemann's *Concerto for Cello Quartet in G Major*, and Erik Satie's *Gymnopédie No. 1*.

■ Today at 7:30pm

■ Forum Auditorium (十方樂集音樂劇場演奏廳), 4, Ln 187, Minzu W Rd, Taipei City (台北市民族西路187巷4號)

■ Tickets are NT\$250, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

Grass Mountain Yearly Concert (2009華山風雲樂會) brings together young Chinese musicians to perform a mix of popular folk favorites and classics from the Chinese orchestral tradition.

■ Monday at 7:30pm

■ National Recital Hall, Taipei City

■ Tickets are NT\$500 to NT\$1,000, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

Contemporary

No shows are scheduled tonight at the **The Wall** (牆壁), but tomorrow is a triple-header of hard-hitting rockers: metal group **Assassin** (刺客), **Gang X** (流氓樂團), and alt-rock pioneers **The Chairman** (董事長樂團). On Sunday it's Japanese group **te'**, a band that performs rock instrumentals full of hardcore verve and pleasing melodies. Pop singer **Huang Hung-sheng** (黃鴻升) appears on Wednesday, and emo-punks **Punkhoo** (群虎) perform on Thursday.

■ B1, 200, Roosevelt Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路四段200號B1). Tel: (02) 2930-0162. On the Net: www.thewall.com.tw

■ Music shows start at 8pm tomorrow, 7pm on Sunday, 8pm on Wednesday and Thursday

■ Entrance fee is NT\$400 tomorrow, NT\$1,000 on Sunday (NT\$800 in advance), NT\$300 on Wednesday and NT\$300 Thursday. Tickets can be purchased online by visiting www.thewall.com.tw or tickets.books.com.tw

Singer-songwriter **Mayonnaise** (美乃滋) opens tonight at **Witch House** (女巫店) for pop-rockers **Soundboss** (驢包). Golden Melody Award-winning singer-songwriter **Debbie Hsiao** (蕭賀碩) takes the stage tomorrow with her backing group, the **Bad Jokes Band** (冷笑話樂團). Acoustic guitarist **Su-jeer** (舒詩) and keyboardist **Anie Fann** perform on Thursday.

■ 7, Ln 56, Xinsheng S Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市新生南路二段56巷7號). Tel: (02) 2362-5494. On the Net: www.witchhouse.org

■ Performances start at 9:30pm. Restaurant/bar with queer/feminist bookstore and large collection of board games open 11am to midnight Sundays through Wednesdays; 11am to 1am Thursdays through Saturdays

■ Entrance fee for music shows is NT\$300

Fusion Night performs jazz tonight at **Riverside Cafe** (河濱留聲). Singer-songwriter **WeiBird** (韋禮安) presents soul pop material tomorrow. On Sunday **YanJue** (嚴爵), who plays blues, funk and folk, opens for singer **Devin Wu** (吳曉珊). Young Mando-pop talent **A-bin** (方炯鏞) takes the stage on Monday.

■ B1, 2, Ln 244, Roosevelt Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路三段244巷2號B1), next to Taipower Building (台電大樓). Tel: (02) 2368-7310. On the Net: www.riverside.com.tw

■ Shows start at 9:30pm tonight, 9pm tomorrow and on Sunday, 8:30pm on Monday.

■ Entrance fee is NT\$400 tonight and tomorrow, NT\$350 on Sunday and NT\$400 on Monday

Tonight **Riverside Live House** (西門紅樓展演廳) hosts **Issue Chen** (陳以勳), a singer featured on the TV reality show *Super Idol* (超級偶像). The venue hosts a different singer from the program for the next four Fridays. Tomorrow night pop singer **Shi Ying-ying** (史茵茵) throws a CD release party for her Christmas album *Silent Night* (平安夜). On Sunday rock session bassist **Billy Sheehan** holds a master clinic sponsored by Yamaha. On Thursday Puyuma guitarist and singer **Hao-en** (吳恩) shares the bill with Mando-pop singer-songwriter **Debbie Hsiao** (蕭賀碩) and her

backing group, the **Bad Jokes Band** (冷笑話樂團).

■ 177 Xining S Rd, Taipei City (台北市西寧南路177號). Tel: (02) 2370-8805. On the Net: www.riverside.com.tw

■ Shows start at 8pm tonight, 8:30pm tomorrow, 7:30pm on Sunday, 8:30pm on Thursday

■ Entrance fee is NT\$500 tonight, NT\$450 tomorrow, NT\$250 on Sunday and NT\$400 on Thursday. Tickets can be purchased online through www.riverside.com.tw/livehouse or tickets.books.com.tw

Japanese punk bands **Teention**, **V/cation** and **Devcornelius** appear tonight at **Underworld** (地下社會). [See Highlight below.] Tomorrow nu-metal band **RJ45** (石頭樂器) takes the stage. **Oh!Serena** and **Smells Good** split the bill on Wednesday.

■ B1, 45 Shida Rd, Taipei City (台北市師大路45號B1). Tel: (02) 2369-0103. On the Net: www.upsaid.com/underworld

■ Music shows run from 9:30pm to 11:30pm on Fridays and Saturdays and 9pm to 11pm on Wednesdays. Underworld is open daily from 9pm, closed on Mondays. Happy hour on Tuesdays and Thursdays before midnight

■ Entrance is NT\$500 tonight (NT\$400 in advance) and NT\$300 tomorrow, which includes one drink. NT\$100 on Wednesday

Fleur Daguerre, a jazz quartet that plays everything Bach to Bjork and Ornette Coleman to the Ramones, performs tonight at **Sappho de Base**. Tomorrow **Black Mirror** takes to the stage. The **Yohei Jazz Trio** is on Tuesday, **Ash and Friends** perform jazz on "unorthodox" instruments on Wednesday, and the **Sappho Jazz Band** appears on Thursday.

■ B1, 1, Ln 102, Anhe Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市安和路一段102巷1號B1). Tel: (02) 2700-5411. On the Net: www.sappho102.biz

■ Music shows begin at 10:30pm on weekends, 10pm on weekdays. Sappho is closed on Sundays and Mondays

■ Entrance is free

EZ5 Live House hosts Mando-pop

HIGHLIGHT

BY TAYLOR BRIERE

Japanese bands **Devcornelius** (胖胖小山田) and **V/cation** come to Taipei for two shows this weekend, one tonight at **Underworld** (地下社會) and the other tomorrow night at **APA Lounge 808** (阿帕808). They will play with Taiwanese band **Teention**, which is the product of a collaboration between local punk rock record labels Chngin Records and Psychoyouth Records. **V/cation** is billed as a next-generation Japanese Circle Jerks, and although **Devcornelius** lists a wide range of influences, from Motown to bossa nova, its music is firmly grounded in hardcore punk. Expect punk, and lots of it with machine gun rhythms, thrashing guitars and screaming vocals. Tomorrow's show at APA Lounge 808 includes the relatively mellow ska and reggae sounds of **Down in Air** (墜在空中) as well as indie rockers **Touming Magazine** (透明雜誌), both local bands.

► **Devcornelius**, **V/cation** and **Teention**, tonight at 9pm at



Japanese punks **Devcornelius** perform at **Underworld** tonight and **APA Lounge 808** tomorrow.

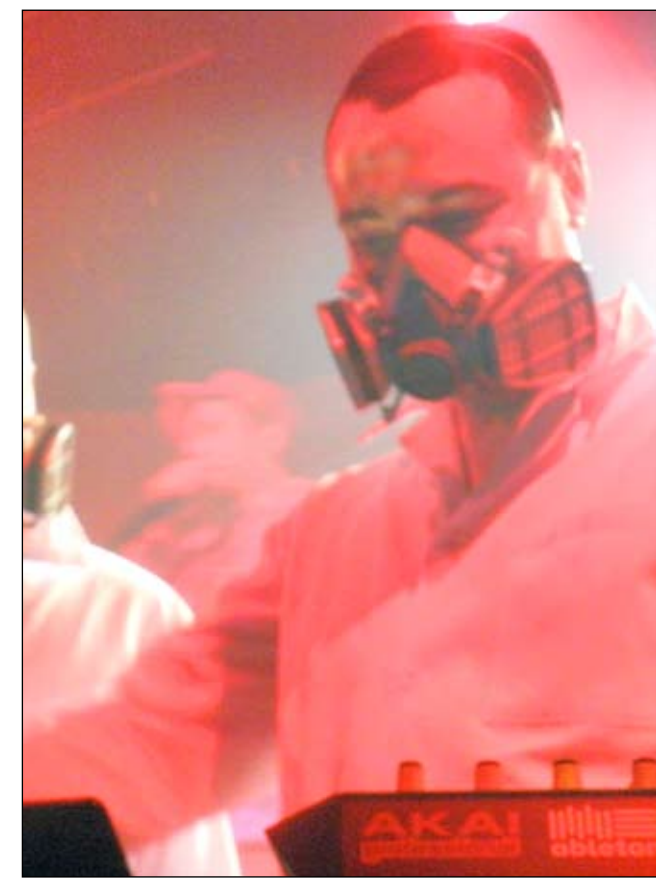
PHOTO COURTESY OF CHNGIN RECORDS

Underworld (地下社會), B1, 45 Shida Rd, Taipei City (台北市師大路45號B1), tel: (02) 2369-0103; and tomorrow at 8pm at **APA Lounge 808** (阿帕808), 6F, 152, Zhonghua Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市中華路一段152號6樓), near Ximen MRT Station (西門捷運站) exit No. 6, tel: (02) 2381-5378

► Admission for each show is NT\$500 at the door. Tickets for the show at Underworld include a free drink

THE VINYL WORD

BY TOM LEEMING



Music, it's in their genes.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DOMANIK TYLISZCZAK

Judging by recent and future events, talk that Luxy is experiencing some growing pains may be little more than flinflamm. Last Friday, A State of Sound showed that foreign DJ talent is absolutely top notch and that the club can throw a cracking party.

As with any super club after a few years, the freshness wears off. However, at the end of the night, it is all about the BPM and sound system.

Burn Electric, comprising **Hooker** on the mixing board and **Stefan Kostarelis** on electric guitar, took the audience apart with gorgeous fat melodies and homegrown beats.

Kostarelis' licks sit imperiously over Hooker's carefully managed, intelligent yet driving electronica. Having played together many times on the Onyx stage, their presence was authoritative yet subtle, the usually gregarious Kostarelis hiding under a hoodie, while Hooker cut loose in a white boiler suit, displaying his craftsmanship, produced on Logic Studio and mixed live with Ableton.

After their stint, Genetically Modified Beats, made up of **Eben** and **Schism**, got right in the Ableton action at the front of stage and threw down a little bit of a monster set of dark and dirty electro while showcasing their own work. Hobbyist DJs they are not. The white doctor coats and gas masks worn throughout their set were a nice touch and carried on where Burn Electric's hoodie and boiler room-plumber feel left off.

Tomorrow sees an all-Taiwanese affair at China White with Winter Rave. **Code**, **Tiger** and **Cougar + Point** will be displaying their wares at this intimate venue. A very different feel to the massive Onyx room for those who would like a change of atmosphere, and get to see how the local boys throw down.

Winter Rave is tomorrow from 10pm until 5am at China White, 2F, 97-101, Dunhua S Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路二段97-101號2樓). Admission is NT\$350 with a drink.

Luxy is going up against China White with Taiwanese team **Tommy** and **MC Hotdog** (熱狗) and their new album release party. Not exactly hip-hop as Top 40 lovers would know it, this music — Hotdog's hard-edged voice over gritty and bouncy turntablist beats incorporating 2-step and garage — is real Taiwanese.

Tommy and MC Hotdog album release party is tomorrow from 10pm until 4:30am at Luxy, 5F, 201, Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段201號5樓). Admission is NT\$600 at the door.

If Taiwan's music makers don't do it for you, then consider the alternative; the world's number one DJ. Voted top dog by readers of *DJ Mag* three years straight, **Armin van Buuren** appears tonight at Luxy where he will play cutting-edge trance.

Armin van Buuren at Luxy, tonight from 10pm until 5am. Door damage is NT\$1,300 and includes a drink.