



COMPILED BY HO YI

Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) legislator **Wu Yu-sheng's** (吳育昇) extramarital tryst with 40-something piano teacher **Rebecca Sun** (孫仲瑜) earlier this month sparked a media frenzy that has seen TV anchors devoting much of their primetime news slots to yapping on about the matter like rabid Chihuahuas.

Now comes news that **Chung Yiu-kwong** (鍾耀光), the married director of the Taipei Chinese Orchestra (臺北立國樂團), has been accused of doing the dirty with **Ma Tsui-yu** (馬翠好), a 26-year-old musician with the orchestra.

The two were spotted by shutterbugs from the *Liberty Times* (the *Taipei Times*' sister paper) holding hands and cuddling like a couple of young lovebirds in the East District (東區) on Tuesday of last week.

The 52-year-old Chung defended his behavior by saying he was just trying to help ease Ma's work pressure. Ma was more creative, saying it was only natural for her to snuggle up with her gay friends.

The *Liberty Times*' interview with Chung's wife, Chang Hsin-ni (張欣霓), deserves to be quoted at length.

Reporter: We have photos of your husband dating another woman.

Chang: I think I know who she is.

Reporter: We want to know your opinion.

Chang: I have no opinion. It's his business.

Reporter: Hmm ... so you know he has a girlfriend?

Chang: Yes, and it's not the first time.

Reporter: So you don't care about what he does with other women anymore?

Chang: That's right.

In other news, former sex goddess and leading lady of Taiwanese New Wave cinema **Lu Hsiao-fen** (陸小芬) is returning to the big screen, 17 years after she retired from the movie business. The 53-year-old Golden Horse award-winning actress is set to take the lead in slapstick director **Chu Yen-ping's** (朱延平) upcoming black comedy, which was inspired by the 2004 assassination attempt against then-president **Chen Shui-bian** (陳水扁).

Chu is the first Taiwanese commercial director to tap into the political drama surrounding the incident. Hong Kong director **Laurence Lau** (劉國昌) first visited the subject with *Ballistic* (彈道).

On the other side of the Taiwan Strait, **Faye Wong** (王菲) is reported to be planning a concert tour of China next October. Speculation is rife as to what might be motivating the 40-year-old pop diva's potential comeback bid, which many gossipmongers attributing the development to a marital crisis.

Crisis or not, with Wong reportedly expected to earn as much as



Edison Chen is in the toy business.

PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

NT\$50 million from the tour, she would certainly enjoy another luxurious break afterwards.

Another semi-retired star on the comeback track is Hong Kong's **Rachel Lee** (李麗珍), adored as a pioneering figure in the fields of nude photo books and erotic *sanjipian* (三級片), the term for restricted films in Hong Kong. The 44-year-old is taking her clothes off again for a weight-loss company's television commercial after shedding 12kg, giving a younger generation the change to see her 32Cs, which were widely celebrated in the 1990s.

Edison Chen (陳冠希) made a two-day public visit to Taipei last weekend. Chen, whose sex photo scandal roiled the Chinese-language entertainment world and damaged the careers of several actresses two years ago, came in his capacity as the owner of Clot Media Division Limited to promote a limited-edition toy he helped design. Another purpose of the visit was to spread news of the impending arrival of his street-wear brand Clot, which will open a store in Taipei's East District next spring.

When asked if he would choose Taiwan as a base for an attempt to return to show business, Chen — who said in a press conference last February that he had “decided to step away from the Hong Kong entertainment industry” to “heal myself and to search my soul” — replied: “I never said I would stop working in Taiwan, so it's not an issue.” (Before last year's press conference, Hong Kong crime figures, who are widely believed to play a major role in the city's film industry, were reportedly offering US\$100,000 to anyone who hacked off one of Chen's hands.)

In music-related news, singer and television host **Harlem Yu** (庾澄慶) and his friends have spent a fortune on Legacy Taipei, a new venue for live music located in Huashan 1914 Creative Park (華山1914) (formerly known as Huashan Culture Park, 華山文化園區).

The opening concert is on Dec. 4 and it features **Cui Jian** (崔健), revered as the father of Chinese rock 'n' roll. The venue's Web site is www.legacy.com.tw.

BY DIANE BAKER

Growing up is hard to do

This has been a busy year for the Horse Dance Company (驢舞劇場). The group took its 2008 collaboration *Bones* to the Joyce Theater in New York City at the beginning of 2009 and then became heavily involved in choreographing the opening ceremony for the Deaflympics in Taipei in September, in the process learning to move 2,000 people around.

The all-male dance collective is marking its fifth year with a piece aptly titled *Growing Up* (正在長高), a work that has made the company's veterans confront what it means to be getting older, both physically and emotionally.

In an interview at the company's studio in Banciao, artistic director Chen Wu-kang (陳武康) said the topic first came up in conversations with colleague Su Wei-chia (蘇威嘉), who's usually just called “Fat Boy,” when they were in New York.

“Life itself is quicksand. In movies, there is always a branch or a rope to slow you down, but in real life there is

(張子凌), who last appeared with the company in 2007's *Velocity* (速度). The other two — Hung Huai-te (黃懷德) and Chang Chien-chih (張堅志) — just finished their undergraduate degrees this year.

“The new guys are a good fit so far

but they are still following. But they have so much energy they don't stop,” Chen said.

Chang has a bit of professional experience under his belt, having danced with LAFA & Artists this year.

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Age is the central concern in Horse Dance Company's *Growing Up*.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHEN CHANG-CHI



PERFORMANCE NOTES:

WHAT: Horse Dance Company (驢舞劇場), *Growing Up* (正在長高)
WHEN: Dec. 4 at 8pm, Dec. 5 at 2:45pm and 7:30pm, Dec. 6 at 2:45pm
WHERE: Taipei National University of the Arts Showcase Arts Center Experimental Theater (國立臺北藝術大學展演藝術中心戲劇廳), 1 Xueyuan Rd, Beitou Dist, Taipei City (台北市北投區學園路1號)
ADMISSION: Tickets are NT\$500, available through www.artstickets.com.tw or at the NTCH box office. The Dec. 4 and Dec. 6 performances are already sold out. Some tickets remain for the Dec. 5 show
GETTING THERE: Take the Danshui MRT line to Guandu Station (關渡捷運站), then catch a taxi or take the TNAU shuttle from the bus stop outside the station

THEATER

BY DIANE BAKER

Crown Arts Festival closes with a reality check

Closing out the 14th Crown Arts Festival (第14屆皇冠藝術節) at the Crown Theater this weekend will be the 8213 Physical Dance Theatre (8213肢體舞蹈劇場) with *Comic 1.0* (卡漫1.0).

Company founder Sun Chuo-tai (孫稅泰) is known for his avant-garde, often message-heavy work. This weekend, however, Sun and company will be just having fun, with a child-friendly humorous piece that mixes games, black humor, cartoons, music, dance and the theater as it asks: How real is our real life?

The company takes the notion of *kuso* (惡搞) or parody as its starting point for its non-linear exploration of daily life in Taipei City, with sketches of everything from the mix of students and office workers early in the morning at breakfast stands to sunbathing cats to viewing life as a series of snapshots from cellphone cameras.

In addition to his regular dance and choreographing partner Casey Avaunt, Sun will be joined by actress-dancer

8213 Physical Dance Theatre's *Comic 1.0* investigates how real is real life.

PHOTO: LIU REN-HAO, COURTESY OF 8213 PHYSICAL DANCE THEATRE

Vera Chen (陳雪甄), actor-singer Kevin Feng (馮光偉) and special guest dancer-performer Mauro Sacchi.

“It will be a fun show, humorous yet hopefully meaningful ... the speaking will be in English for the most part. I

think kids, teenagers and adults will all be entertained,” Avaunt said in an e-mail interview.

For those who want to know more about the workings of 8213 Physical Dance Theatre and this particular show, there will be a short discussion session after each performance.

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

WHAT: 8213 Physical Dance Theatre (8213肢體舞蹈劇場), *Comic 1.0* (卡漫1.0)
WHEN: Tonight and tomorrow at 7:30pm, tomorrow and Sunday at 2:30pm
WHERE: 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)
ADMISSION: Tickets are NT\$450, available through www.artstickets.com.tw or at the NTCH box office

RESTAURANTS

BY CATHERINE SHU

Olife (呷飯店)

Address: 12, Ln 68, Shida Rd, Taipei City (台北市師大路68巷12號) **Telephone:** (02) 2369-8667

Average meal: Most meals with a drink are NT\$120 to NT\$170; the lowest minimum order is NT\$100 per person

Details: Chinese menu; credit cards not accepted **Open:** Lunch 11:30am to 2pm, afternoon tea 2pm to 5pm, dinner 5:30pm to 9pm

Olife (呷飯店) is one of the few vegetarian restaurants in the area around Shida Road, with all its dishes prepared from organic ingredients. But its real appeal comes from the interior's peaceful ambience. Traditional Chinese carved wooden screens split the dining area into nooks without making it seem claustrophobic. On one visit, we saw a table set up for a tea ceremony with ceramic cups; on another, sitting next to us was a woman curled up with a book and mug of tea in a booth with tatami seating.

Olife's extensive menu consists mostly of noodle, rice and soup dishes. The Korean-style kimchi bibimbab (韓式泡菜石鍋飯, NT\$130) was served sizzling in a hot stone bowl. The white rice was topped with kimchi, bok choy, bean sprouts, pepper, julienned carrot, savory dried seaweed sprinkled with toasted sesame seeds and vegetarian “pork” made from tofu. The mix of flavors (the crispy veggies, juicy bok choy, the crunchy rice “crust” at the bottom of the bowl) combined with the sweat-inducing spiciness of the kimchi, made the bibimbab one of the best dishes we had at Olife.

Lovers of spicy food will get a culinary kick out of the mala stinky tofu hot pot (麻辣臭豆腐鍋, NT\$130).

The pot contains, in addition to the tofu, glass noodles, watercress (a favorite topping at Olife), carrot and enokitake mushrooms.

The stinky tofu was not as gloriously pungent as it could have been, but the large cubes soaked up the very piquant *mala* broth like sponges.

Some of the more unusual dishes on Olife's menu include their series of *yaoshan* (藥膳) food, including noodles, a hot pot and soup. *Yaoshan* literally means “medicine meal” and is prepared with plants used in traditional Chinese medicine, including anise seedpods, ginseng, goji berries, dried dates and ginger. The yaoshan noodle soup (藥膳湯麵, NT\$130) consisted of the latter three ingredients and thick white noodles, as well as chopped white cabbage, tender pumpkin slices and “pig's blood cake” (豬血糕), which was actually made from seaweed and white rice. *Yaoshan* food supposedly strengthens the body's immune system during winter, and the broth itself was, as expected, mildly medicinal tasting with a slightly bittersweet flavor.

A simpler comfort food is the sesame sauce cold noodles (麻醬拌麵, NT\$80). Olife's version of this classic dish is a winner. The sauce, made from ground sesame seeds mixed with sesame oil, soy sauce, vinegar



Life is sweet.

PHOTO: CATHERINE SHU, TAIPEI TIMES

and a little bit of garlic and brown sugar, was wonderfully thick and tasted a little bit like a sweeter, more delicate version of peanut butter. Slices of bean curd tofu, julienned carrot, bok choy and the ubiquitous watercress also topped the al dente noodles.

Olife started as a chain of teahouses 20 years ago and the Shida restaurant is connected to a drink stand that serves the standard assortment of bubble milk teas, blended juices and iced coffees. Fresh ingredients and Olife's relatively light hand with sweeteners, however, make the beverages stand out from nearby competitors. Try Olife's grass jelly (仙草) drinks, made with real grass jelly extract (unlike the artificial flavoring used at many other stores).

Opened in October, Fifteen Pizzeria Napoletana is off to a good start. Its gallery-like but casual interior was probably the attraction for the three or four families with kids dining there on a recent visit.

The pizzas are very good and well worth the prices, which range between NT\$260 and NT\$460. Although cracker-thin crust Roman pizzas are now an established trend in Taipei, Fifteen has gone in a different direction with its Napoli-style pies, which are cooked faster and at a higher temperature. The dough is thin towards the middle but has a puffer crust, and its consistency is springier and only slightly chewy.

There are nearly a dozen varieties. The wait staff will recommend the Fiorentina, topped with spinach, bacon, cottage cheese, Grana Padano and an organic egg cracked over the top. For something slightly less rich, the pizza with dry-cured Parma ham strikes a pleasing harmony with the saltiness of the meat, the bitterness of the fresh arugula and the sweetness of the cherry tomatoes and cheeses. I found little to complain about my order — it arrived piping hot and charred to perfection at the bottom. Both pizzas are NT\$360. Grana Padano, which is

similar to Parmesan cheese, is a standard topping on many of the selections including the vongole (NT\$400), which has clams, garlic, parsley and mozzarella. The cavolfiore (NT\$420) is topped with cauliflower, “Italian bacon,” smoked mozzarella and extra virgin olive oil.

Skip the cheese altogether with the marinara (NT\$260), which has tomato sauce, oregano, garlic and olive oil. And what would a pizzeria be without the margherita (NT\$300)? Fifteen does a commendable job on its, although it would be better with fresh basil. A buffalo mozzarella version will soon be available.

All pizzas listed on the menu are 10 inches, but 8-inch pies are available for NT\$60 less. The prices also drop for take-out: subtract NT\$50 for the 10-inchers and NT\$110 for the 8-inchers.

The menu is simple and well laid out, but save yourself a meltdown and don't look at the enticing antipasti page. Owner Nick Chen (陳新帆) decided to nix the items just before opening, but he does offer salads and soups, which change regularly. On my visit, they were serving a cauliflower soup with Parma ham (NT\$120), which was a nice and hearty complement to the pizza on a chilly autumn day.

Fifteen will inevitably draw

comparisons to another restaurant that serves Napoli-style pizza, Primo Trattoria on Zhongxiao East Road. Those watching their wallets will appreciate Fifteen's slightly lower prices and food that is equally as good. The atmosphere also feels less uptight, perhaps given its locale in a neighborhood full of restaurants catering to National Taiwan University students.

The decor is contemporary rustic, with faux brick walls painted in white. The restaurant sits on a corner and the wall-sized windows offer views of the adjacent park. The main seating area is a spacious bar that surrounds the pizza oven in the center of the room and accommodates around 15 people, who sit on leather-upholstered bar stools from where the cooks can be watched as they work.

Fifteen offers German brews on tap, including Bitburger Premium Pils (NT\$220), Kostritzer Schwarzbier (NT\$220) and Licher Weizen (NT\$240). Several other Bitburger bottled beers are available starting from NT\$150.

The restaurant is located on an alley on the southwest corner of Fuxing South and Heping East roads.



The pizza with prosciutto di Parma at Fifteen, which serves Napoli-style pizzas.

PHOTO: DAVID CHEN, TAIPEI TIMES

TIDBITS

BY HO YI

A decade ago, food writer Yeh Yi-lan (葉怡蘭) set up a Web site to share her fondness for good dining and drinking with fellow foodies. In 2003, Yeh opened the online store Pekoe (www.yilan.com.tw/html/modules/mymall), which sells gourmet ingredients and premium kitchenware. Her customer base expanded and demand for a brick-and-mortar location increased, so Pekoe opened a store in the East District (東區) last year. The location includes a cozy dining space for patrons to sample products sold at the shop.

Pekoe ensures a slick grocery-shopping experience, provided that you are willing to fork out over NT\$400 for a small pot of Japanese green tea, more than NT\$200 for a bottle of mineral water, or NT\$9,680 for cookware.

Products made in Taiwan are more wallet-friendly and include juices, rice, noodles and tea.

Among the most popular items on offer are jams and jellies by French patissier Christine Ferber, olive oil by Italy's Felsina, honey from Alsace, and premium chocolate by Italy's Amedei, Zotter of Austrian and French chocolatier Michel Cluizel.

Pekoe's dining area can comfortably accommodate a dozen seated customers. The decor by renowned interior designer Lu Shichieh (陸希傑) is warm and chic.

Pekoe is located at 7, Ln 295, Dunhua S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段295巷7號). Tel: (02) 2700-2602. The store is open daily from 11am to 8pm.