

AROUND TOWN

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2010

The beast with 40 backs

This year's Freak Out Da Beast turns up the noise with a larger lineup — just the ticket to scare away the Nian Shou monster

BY TAYLOR BRIERE
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

The annual Freak Out Da Beast (少年獸) festival takes place this weekend at the Red House Theater (西門紅樓) in Ximending with a lineup of more than 40 music acts playing on four stages and an independent arts and crafts market.

"Lunar New Year is a time of reunion, so we host the Freak Out Da Beast festival every year so friends can party with us," says Jerry Fang (方宜正), a member of both promotion group Shibishou (詩筆獸), which is organizing the event, and electronica duo KbN (凱比鳥), which performs at the festival.

Now in its fifth year, the festival's roster ranges from electronica to hip-hop to rock to folk and features some of the country's most enduring acts, including KbN and indie-rock group The Peppermints (薄荷葉), as well as fresh talent.

"We've invited some new blood," said Fang. "Pleasure Science (愉悅科學), My Skin Against Your Skin, Sunset Rollercoaster (落日飛車) and Plover are some cool new bands that are playing."

Other notable acts include energetic garage rockers White Eyes (白目樂隊), who have been compared to the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, and shoegazer band Boyz and Girl, which is preparing to release its debut album. They will be joined by eclectic reggae/dub act Down in Air (盪在空中) and psychedelic space rockers The Tic Tac (小茶).

Electronica musicians and DJs are setting up camp inside the Red House Theater itself. Included in the mix is the video-game inspired fare of Unfamiliar Friends Party (不熟的朋友派對) and the experimental sounds of Zephec.

Handmade clothes, jewelry and fashion accessories comprise the majority of goods for sale at the arts and crafts market.



Hip-hop crew Kou Chou Ching.

PHOTO: WANG WEN-LIN, TAIPEI TIMES

It is terrified of loud noises and hates the color red. On Lunar New Year's Eve it is customary to set off firecrackers to scare the beast away.

"It's a story from all of our childhoods" said Cheer Hsieh (謝青翰), also a member of both KbN and Shibishou. "Ask any Taiwanese person and they will know the story of the beast."

Organizers originally envisioned a block party, but had to alter their plan so adjacent roads could remain open. Much of the funding for the event comes from the Taipei City government's Cultural Affairs Bureau (台北市政府文化局), and despite the "endless meetings" needed to make such a collaboration possible, Fang believes the endeavor is well worth it as the week leading up to Lunar New Year is something of a cultural vacuum.

"We want to do something around Lunar New Year because everyone is leaving Taipei to go back home," said Hsieh. "Why not throw a party?"

Freak Out Da Beast follows the same formula as the music and arts festivals held by White Label and CAMPO over the past few years. All of them share the same goal: to reclaim urban spaces on behalf of the community and to provide an opportunity for independent artists and musicians to perform publicly in an environment free from the pressures of commercialism.

Shibishou, whose Chinese name is a homonym for one half of a Chinese idiom (施比受更有福) that means "it is better to give than to receive," plans to keep fighting the good fight.

"Independent bands need a place, too. We don't have many live houses," said Fang. "So we've started to find new places."



Shoegazer band Boyz and Girl.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HSIEH YI-JIN



FESTIVAL NOTES:

WHAT: Freak Out Da Beast (少年獸)

WHEN: Tomorrow from 3pm and Sunday from 2pm

WHERE: Red House Theater (西門紅樓), 10 Chengdu Rd, Taipei City (台北市成都路10號)

ADMISSION: Free, except for the TriPoets' (參劈) gig on Sunday at Riverside Live House (河岸留言西門紅樓展演館), 177 Xining S Rd, Taipei City (台北市西寧南路177號), which is NT\$400

ON THE NET: freakoutbeast.blogspot.com

SCHEDULED PERFORMANCES

Ximen Police Station (西門警局) hip-hop stage

Sunday from 2pm
DJ Mart scratching exhibition (馬特音樂刷交流會)
Kou Chou Ching (拷秋勤)
Down South Boys (壞男孩)
Not Right Brother All Star (歪哥All Star)

Riverside Live House (河岸留言西門紅樓展演館)

Sunday at 8pm
TriPoets (參劈)

South Square (南廣場) rock and folk stage

Tomorrow from 3pm
Mon Mon (蔡孟臻)
Easy
Wang Yu-Chun (王榆鈞)
The Tic Tac (小茶)
Every Planet (美味星球樂團)

Sunday from 3pm

Yoz Tiger (包子虎)
UTA (屋塔樂團)
Summerbred (夏生樂團)
Jellyship (果凍飛船)

North Square (北廣場) rock stage

Tomorrow from 3:30pm
Pleasure Science (愉悅科學)
Windmill (風籟坊)
My Skin Against Your Skin
Come on! Bay Bay! (來吧! 痞痞)
Boyz and Girl
Touming Magazine (透明雜誌)

Sunday from 3pm

Doodle
Sunset Rollercoaster (落日飛車)
Plover
The Fen-Fens (紛紛樂團)



Post-rock group The Peppermints.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HSIEH YI-JIN

The Peppermints (薄荷葉)
White Eyes (白目樂隊)
Down in Air (盪在空中)

Red House Theater (西門紅樓) electronic music stage

Tomorrow from 4pm
Sonic Deadhorse
Pilot K (百樂K)
DJ @llenblow
KbN (凱比鳥)
Zephec
Lee Jun (李駿)

Sunday from 4pm

DJ Kolette
Chill Da Dog
DJ Shorty (劉力予)
Unfamiliar Friends Party (不熟的朋友派對)
DataBass (劉子誠)
DJ Code (吳錫帆)