

# AROUND TOWN

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2010

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Horse learns new tricks

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHEN CHANG-CHI

**PERFORMANCE NOTES:**

**WHAT:** Horse, M-Dans 2010

**WHEN:** March 5 and March 6 at 7:45pm, March 6 and March 7 at 2:45pm

**WHERE:** Metropolitan Hall (城市舞台), 25, Bade Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市八德路三段25號)

**ADMISSION:** NT\$500 and NT\$700, available at the NTCH box office or through [www.artsticket.com.tw](http://www.artsticket.com.tw)



PHOTO COURTESY OF YI-CHUN WU

Just three months after their last show, the men of Horse (驢舞劇場) will open next Friday with a full-length program unlike anything they've tried before.

This time the troupe is focusing on individually created works, a mix of solos, duets and group pieces, along with two solos by American choreographer Eliot Feld.

Given that Horse has basically done just a show a year since it was founded in 2005 as a dance collective, a logical question would be why another show so soon?

Blame it on Cloud Gate Dance Theatre (雲門舞集) founder Lin Hwai-min (林懷民).

"We wanted them to choreograph because Mr Lin said 'You guys should work like real choreographers, choreographing every day,'" Horse artistic director Chen Wu-kang (陳武康) said in a telephone interview on Tuesday morning.

"We keep doing collaborative stuff, but it starts to look the same. I love that, but we are afraid that one day they will lose themselves and [won't be able to] choreograph on their own ... we have to give them a chance to explore," he said.

Taiwan's first all-male dance company breaks with tradition to stage its second show in less than three months

BY DIANE BAKER  
STAFF REPORTER

The "we" Chen was referring to was another cofounder of the company, Su Wei-chia (蘇威嘉), and the "they" were Chang Tzu-ling (張子凌), Hung Huai-te (黃懷德) and Chang Chien-chih (張堅志).

One member of Horse who is in no danger of losing his own voice is Chou Shu-yi (周書毅), fresh from his triumph at Sadler's Wells Theater in London, the first winner of its Global Dance Contest. Chou will be performing his own solo *Start With the Body* as well as a piece that Chen created for him back in 2007.

"I've known him for so long but that was the first time I really looked at him," Chen said of Chou. "It's a long solo, nine minutes ... you'll see a person struggling for air. I wanted to get all the juice out of his body and I think I succeeded."

Chen said Taipei audiences will see him in an unusual light when he performs *Proverb*, a 14-minute solo Feld created for him in 2004.

"I wear doctor's gloves and hold two light bulbs in my hands. I decide which part of my body will be seen. It's a little poetic, theatrical dance. I will dance like you have never seen here, the old-fashioned way," he said.

Feld's *Zeppo* will have its world premiere next Friday. It is a solo he created for Su after seeing him in Horse's 2008 show *Bones*.

"Feld said 'I have to work with that boy if he can give me four weeks' ... so Wei-cha went to New York," Chen said, adding that Feld has since decided to turn *Zeppo*, which is about the fourth brother of the Three Stooges, into a full-length work, and Su will return to New York to work with him on it.

Su's own piece on the program, *In*, is an attempt at improvisation.

"We don't like improv so we forced ourselves to do it," Chen said. "The music is set but the sound team can decide when to play it. Four cues, they can decide even when we go on stage."

Hung's piece *Sunday* is a solo he created by "playing with all the props in the studio," including a bicycle and a mop, Chen said, while Chang Chien-chih's duet is "all playground."

Rounding out the show is Chen's five-man piece *Landscape*, which was influenced by the Vincent Van Gogh exhibition now on display at the National Museum of History, while Chang Tzu-ling's *That's It* is a trio set to John Adams' *Hoodoo Zephyr*.

## Catch a fire

Black Reign presides over Firerama 2010, an all-night dancehall party tomorrow at The Wall

BY DAVID CHEN  
STAFF REPORTER

Black Reign International Sound, a group of expat DJs, is offering a fresh start to the Lunar New Year with Firerama 2010, an all-night dancehall party that takes place tomorrow at The Wall (這牆) in Taipei.

Firerama is now in its second year, and for Black Reign founding members Thierry Cuvillier, aka Taiji, and Oliver Hartley, aka Lion, the event presents a chance to remind revelers and teach newcomers about the importance of fire as an element in reggae.

"Fire is a symbol in the dancehall. Whenever we do a show, fire's in there somewhere," said Lion, a Jamaica native who explained that fire represents cleansing and purification in Rastafarian culture and reggae music. In Jamaican dancehalls, people often hold up cigarette lighters or ignite flames from aerosol cans to signal their approval of a song or performance, he said.

Black Reign hopes this tradition will catch on at Firerama. They are inviting people to bring "lighters, matches and flamethrowers," although the latter would probably best be left to professionals. To get people in the mood, the party features a show by the Orange Fire Dance Group of Taiwan (橘舞火舞團), who perform *poi*, a Polynesian art that combines music, dance and swinging objects that are lit on fire.

Fire won't be the only thing that rejuvenates the spirit at the party, said Lion. "Playing music cleanses your body, you know? You play good music, you have a good dance, you enjoy yourself, you wake up in the morning and you feel like, OK, I can go again."

Also appearing tomorrow are DJs Japan Taro and Yahman from Tokyo, both long-time participants in Japan's lively reggae scene. The two have been making repeat visits to Taiwan in recent years for parties run by Islandjam, the name that Taiji and Lion use for promoting their events.

The two are anxious to see Taiwan's reggae scene grow, especially after a recent visit to Japan, where Black Reign did a weeklong run of shows. "There's a reggae bar in every small town," Lion noted.

Considering the parties Islandjam has held over the past several years, Taiji and Lion have already established a firm footing for their goal. They now have an annual event for every season: a live band showcase in the spring, Reggae Beachfest in the summer and Caribbean Carnival in the fall.

With tomorrow's edition of Firerama, Black Reign aims to show what it does best, said Taiji. "The feeling of the party is the special thing we bring to it," he said. "It's not just we are just mixing ... we [create] the feeling, to make people crazy on the dance floor."

**PERFORMANCE NOTES:**

**WHAT:** Islandjam's Firerama 2010 reggae dancehall party

**WHEN:** Tomorrow from 11pm until late  
**WHERE:** The Wall (這牆), B1, 200, Roosevelt Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路四段200號B1). Tel: (02) 2930-0162

**ADMISSION:** NT\$450, includes one drink  
**ON THE NET:** [myspace.com/taiji9](http://myspace.com/taiji9) or search for Islandjam on Facebook

Black Reign holds annual events each season under its promotional arm Islandjam.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BLACK REIGN INTERNATIONAL SOUND AND ISLANDJAM



## Dancing with a crane

Huang Yi hasn't even finished graduate school, but he's already carved out a sizeable reputation as one of Taiwan's foremost young choreographers

BY DIANE BAKER  
STAFF REPORTER

Choreographer Huang Yi (黃翊) is a young man in love with bodies, movement, speed and technology. Especially technology.

He's also a young man in a hurry. He will finally finish school in June, graduating from the Taipei National University of the Arts with a master's of fine arts in choreography. Graduation means he'll have to put his career on hold for a year while he completes his mandatory military service. Being on hold is not something that one associates with Huang.

He has already carved out a sizeable reputation. He has worked with Cloud Gate 2 (雲門之舞集) for the past two years, collaborated with Horse (驢舞劇場), won the 2007 Taishin Arts Award for Horse's *Velocity*, been invited to perform

in France, created an installation piece for the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts and been invited by the National Theater to create a piece for the Experimental Theater. And he's just 26.

Starting tonight, he will present *Spin 2010* for five shows at the Experimental Theater — four of which are already sold out. The 50-minute *Spin 2010* builds on work Huang has been doing since 2006, creations that combine his love of dance and his love of video.

In 2006 Huang made a video he shot while moving next to the dancers. He used that video to apply for a Lo Man-fei (羅曼菲) dance scholarship grant in 2007 and spent the grant on a crane arm to hold his camera. He used the crane to create a piece to take to France



The *Spin 2010* dancers and support crew pose in their studio.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LIU JHEN-SHANG

that same year and to create the Taichung installation in 2008.

"The first (2006), second (2007) and third year (2008) I did different things. The first was a lot of improvisation," Huang said in a telephone interview on Monday. "In 2007, the crane was spinning,

it was controlled by hand so we didn't know where it would go, where it would stop ... In 2008 everything was set ... how many circles the crane will go, how many degrees [up or down]."

Last year was spent working on the technology and on *Spin 2010*.

**PERFORMANCE NOTES:**

**WHAT:** Huang Yi, *Spin 2010*

**WHEN:** Tonight through Sunday at 7:30pm, tomorrow and Sunday at 2:30pm

**WHERE:** Experimental Theater (國家戲院實驗劇場), 21-1, Zhongshan S Rd, Taipei City (台北市中山南路21-1號)

**ADMISSION:** NT\$500, available at the NTCH box office or through [www.artsticket.com.tw](http://www.artsticket.com.tw)

**DETAILS:** Only a few seats remain for the Sunday evening performance. All other shows are sold out

lighting," he said. "Visually it's very different from before. This time I added many upside down video or mirror effects."

Not only has the technology grown, so has the number of dancers, which means more avatars to play with. Huang used five for the 2007 and 2008 projects, but expanded to 10 for this weekend's show. As of Monday night, however, he was down to nine, possibly eight, because of injuries.

This is a much bigger production than he has ever had to deal with before — it's not just the number of dancers, there's also Fishbone, which built the crane (see the Youtube video at <http://bit.ly/d1SdLo>), and a much larger production crew. Huang even hired a manager.

A very calm-sounding Huang, however, said he wasn't nervous, just excited about the show.

"In 2010 everything was auto control. We added LCD lighting and a [laser] projector for the