

CULTURE

13

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Below: Comedian Chu Ko Liang, left, pokes fun at Crowd Lu during an episode of *Chu Ko Hui She*, the funnyman's TV show.

PHOTOS: TAIPEI TIMES



Singer Crowd Lu may have achieved fame and acclaim for his singing, but he still has a thing or two to learn about plucking audiences' heartstrings

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

Anyone who is surprised by how geeky indie icon Crowd Lu (盧廣仲) achieved his meteoric rise to stardom need look no further than his gig on Feb. 28 at Riverside Live House (河岸留言西門紅樓展演館) for the answer.

In addition to being a superb musician who composes all his own material, Lu is a consummate entertainer. The concert was an evening of laughter and surprises.

Lu spent the first half of the performance delivering signature hits from his two studio albums, *100 Kinds of Life* (100種生活) and *7 Days* (七天).

The 24-year-old enjoyed a solid rapport with his fans, who were eager to chime in during the choruses.

He mimicked the sound of a mosquito, cracked jokes and played a Japanese flute.

For the second part of the concert he performed cover songs.

"I always liked female singers' songs more when I was growing up. I guess it's because I am more feminine," he said.

He then went on to deliver a surprisingly poignant rendition of singer/songwriter Shunza's (順子) *I'm Sorry*. For someone with such a clownish exterior, he delivered the ballad with heartfelt emotion and vocal precision.

Lu single-handedly performed a riotous rendition of the Hoklo (otherwise known as Taiwanese) duet *Lingering Old*



Love (舊情也綿綿), in which he sang both the male and female parts.

Further comic gambits included his tongue-in-cheek rendition of Christina Aguilera's *Pero Me Acuerdo de Ti* (But I Remember You) and a satirical interpretation of Aqua's *Barbie Girl*.

The climax came when Lu invited Hsiao Wan (小玩), his high school pal and lyricist partner, on stage to sing a ballad they co-wrote in tribute to two girls they pine for.

Hsiao Wan said that the girl he wrote the song for was in the audience. "I know she probably isn't into me. But if you like someone, you should just tell her because it's the rock 'n' roll style, man."

However, the evening felt curiously devoid of emotional resonance by the end. Lu had relied too much on his comic ingenuity rather than music to connect with the audience. The most moving number was his cover of Karen Mok's (莫文蔚) *Oh Lonely Lovers* (寂寞的戀人阿), which he sang as the concert's finale.

For a singer/songwriter who is acclaimed for his songs about everyday subjects, such as *Good Morning, Morning Beauty* (早安晨之美) and *Happy Restaurant* (開心餐廳), Lu resorts to covers of other singers' famed numbers to get the crowd going. A gifted musician and performer, Lu's next challenge lies in how to write songs that go beyond his Average Joe repertoire.

ON THE NET: www.facebook.com/pages/lu-guang-zhong/25444417410

Tricks of the trade

[THE WEEKENDER]

'Snow White' pips Horse at the post

BY **DIANE BAKER**
STAFF REPORTER

The Ballet Preljocaj's performance of *Snow White* at the National Theater on Saturday night was a delight, despite the bizarre diaper/toga costume Jean Paul Gaultier designed for the heroine.

The diaper looked so baggy that it was hard to imagine a two-year-old who could move around in it comfortably. The costume was distracting, not just for its sheer ugliness, but because Japanese dancer Nagisa Shirai often appeared to have to keep making sure the toga portion hanging down at the back would not be in the way as she moved around on the floor.

Gaultier's vision for the evil queen was a dominatrix's dream. I kept waiting for a whip to appear and he didn't disappoint. The rest of the costumes were a bizarre mix of textures and genres — Grecian drapes wrapped in leather straps, a prince wearing a matador's pants (also uncomfortable looking) and tartan-clad dwarves; luckily Thierry Leproust's modernist sets were stunning and the choreography was sublime.

French choreographer Angelin Preljocaj kept the pace moving crisply and some scenes were especially memorable. The aerial ballet of the dwarfs coming down their mountain wall was beautiful, as were the pas de deux for Snow White and her prince, who were in turns shy, tender and passionate.

This, however, is not a Disney version of *Snow White*, although there were a number of children in the audience. It was a very adult show and the scene where the stepmother kills Snow White with a poisoned apple was powerful and brutal.

The company moves to Kaohsiung this week, with performances on Wednesday and Thursday at the Kaohsiung Chiang Kai-shek Cultural Center (高雄中正文化中心). This is a show not to be missed.

Horse's (驢舞劇場) performance at the Metropolitan Hall on Saturday afternoon was a much more uneven affair. While the six-man troupe deserves applause for trying to broaden its scope, the show needed editing. Best on the program were four of the solos.

The show opened with *Proverb*, a poetic solo that American choreographer Eliot Feld created for Chen Wu-kang (陳武康) in 2004 to a haunting sound track by Steve Reich. At first, you caught only glimpses of Chen's body, revealed in portions by the light from the two bulbs he held in each gloved hand. The contrast between the large misty shadows cast by Chen and the glimpses of an expanse of leg, or chest or back was striking. This was the Chen that New York audiences know, but a facet he has rarely shown at home.

The solo Chen created for Chou Shu-yi (周書毅) back in 2005, *Who*, was a lyrical three-part work that showed off Chou's grace in swirls that alternated slow curves with quick spiraling movements and ended up with him twisting his body into pretzel-like linkages on the floor. It was a good reminder both of Chou's beauty as a dancer and Chen's talent when he's creating on his own.

The expansiveness of Chou's dancing in *Who* stood in sharp contrast to the minimalism of his own solo, *Start With the Body*, which began with his standing almost motionless in the swinging spotlight cast by a single overhead light. Clad in a hooded soft jersey jumpsuit that hid his body while defining its musculature, Chou began with simple hand and arm movements held close to the body, alternating with explosive kicks and bursts of energy, gradually widening both the area he covered on stage and his range of motion.

Another surprise came in the form of Feld's new solo for Su Wei-chia (蘇威嘉), *Zeppo*, inspired by the oft-forgotten fourth brother of the Three Stooges. The chunky Su flew about the stage, clad in a modern riff on a 1920s comedian — white long underwear with big black buttons (front and rear), black bowler hat and tie and fingerless gloves. Just about the only time he stopped moving were the few moments it took for him to do a headstand, and then fold his legs over into a graceful backbend. It was a fun little piece and completely unlike anything Su has been seen in before.

Chen Wu-kang performs *Proverb*.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHEN CHANG-CHIH



TOP FIVE MANDARIN ALBUMS

FEB. 26 TO MARCH 4



1 Alan Luo (羅志祥, also known as Show Luo) and *Rashomon* (羅生門) with **29.7 percent of sales**

2 Rainie Yang (楊丞琳) and *Rainie & Love...?* (雨愛) with **15.75%**

3 JJ Lam (林俊傑) and *100 Days* (100天) with **7.81%**

4 Ah Du (阿杜 aka 杜成義) and *Nothing to Fear* (沒什麼好怕) with **6.66%**

5 Huang Xiao-hu (黃小琥) and *Simple/Not Simple* (簡單/不簡單) with **1.73%**

ALBUM CHART COMPILED FROM G-MUSIC (WWW.G-MUSIC.COM.TW), BASED ON RETAIL SALES

PLANET POP

The Harlem drama *Precious* took the best picture prize as it dominated the Spirit Awards, winning four other honors that included trophies for stars Gabourey Sidibe and Mo'Nique.

Jeff Bridges won best actor for the country-music tale *Crazy Heart* during Friday's event honoring independent film, and Woody Harrelson won supporting actor for the war-on-terror drama *The Messenger*. Sidibe won best actress for *Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire*, playing an illiterate teen pulling herself out of an abyss of neglect and abuse. Mo'Nique earned the supporting-actress honor as the girl's loathsome mother.

All four acting winners are up for the same honors at the Academy Awards, where Bridges and Mo'Nique are the front-runners and newcomer Sidibe was nominated for her screen debut.

"Gabby, you are truly a special gift to the universe, baby," Mo'Nique said. "For people to get to know you and be in your presence, they are all honored."

Mo'Nique said backstage that she had not prepared a speech for the Oscars, "because I think the universe would say, 'You have a lot of nerve.'" *Precious* swept every category for

which it was nominated, including directing honors for Lee Daniels as well as best screenplay by a first-time writer for Geoffrey Fletcher. He and Daniels also are nominated at the Oscars, where *Precious* is among the best-picture contenders.

US rapper Snoop Dogg has won the latest round in a long-running battle with British border authorities to be allowed into the country.

The 38-year-old, whose real name is Calvin Broadus, was originally denied entry in 2007, forcing him and fellow rapper Sean "Diddy" Combs to cancel the British dates of their European tour.

The ban relates to Snoop Dogg's arrest at Heathrow airport in 2006 following a fracas involving members of his entourage.

In 2008 the ban was lifted but when the UK Border Agency challenged the decision, it went to an Asylum and Immigration Tribunal. Earlier this week, the tribunal announced its decision that to deny him entry had been wrong.

"We are disappointed by the tribunal's decision in this case," a UK Border Agency spokesperson said on Friday.

"We are studying the determination carefully and will take a decision



Mo'Nique poses with the Spirit Awards' best supporting female gong for her role in *Precious*.

PHOTO: AFP



Snoop Dogg has unfinished business in Britain.

PHOTO: AFP

and accusing her of beating him over the head.

On Tuesday, New York police sought the model over an allegation that she hit her driver in the back of the head while he was driving, causing his face to slam against the steering wheel of the Cadillac Escalade.

But two days later the driver issued an apologetic statement and said he had been over-reacting when he accused Campbell of attacking him with a cellphone from the back seat of the car.

"On March 2nd, I had an argument with Naomi Campbell, I got angry and overreacted. It was a misunderstanding and I regret involving the police," the

statement said.

"This whole thing has been blown out of proportion and I apologize to Ms Campbell for causing that to happen."

Police did not file charges against Campbell and the hot-tempered catwalk diva said the matter was closed and that she just wanted "to put the last few days behind me and move on."

"I try to treat everyone with respect and I am pleased the driver has apologized," Campbell said in a statement. "I would like to put the last few days behind me and move on."

Campbell has a record of violent tantrums.

In 2008, she pleaded guilty to assaulting police officers in London's Heathrow Airport. She also pleaded guilty to throwing her cell phone at a maid in New York.

On Tuesday, according to police, the driver said Campbell hit him, then left the scene on foot after he stopped the vehicle and went to talk to a traffic police officer.

Police said the driver suffered a minor injury under his eye.

Campbell said: "I have worked very hard on correcting my previous wrongdoings and I will not be held hostage to my past."

— AGENCIES