

## AROUND TOWN

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PHOTO COURTESY OF ANGEL CEBALLOS

# Peaches

## wants to talk to you

*All there is to fear is fear itself, says the singer, who embraces her fourth decade with open arms*

BY ALITA RICKARDS  
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

The raunchy, uncensored lyrics of electroclash artist Peaches are a breath of fresh air to some, and a miasma of bad taste to others. Whether you love her or hate her, she has proven herself a truly original artist and has achieved mainstream success despite (or because of) her profane, perverted and radical message.

Men had cock rock; women (and hermaphrodites and transsexuals) had the *Teaches of Peaches*. The lyrics she writes are pure clit lit.

As for those who find her music intimidating or offensive, "I feel sorry for them" said Peaches, otherwise known as Merrill Nisker. "All I've ever tried to do is be inclusive. As John Waters says, 'People shouldn't come out, people should come in.'"

This Sunday catch her at The Wall (這牆) while on tour to promote her new album *I Feel Cream*, released in May last year. Supporting band Go Chic also rocks the boat with explicit, funny lyrics, and Eat Me! Black Hole! will finish up the night deejaying pumping electro.

Peaches was named Electronic Artist of the Year at the 10th Annual Independent Music Awards in Toronto and has begun delving into theater and film.

To what does she owe her success? "I have an entertainment gift/disease," she said. "At the drop of the hat I'm able to go from zero to 100, in bringing life to it." Her advice to others belies a more gentle heart than many would guess: "Think about what you have to offer," she said. "Look at your imperfections and mistakes, think of them as advantages. Express them, love them, live them."

Her first album, *Fancypants Hoodlum*, was released under her real name Merrill Nisker in 1995, but it was when the Canadian songwriter went to Berlin to visit old friend Chilly Gonzalez that she exploded on the scene. It's the stuff music legends are made of: Gonzalez helped her get a one-

night gig, a rep from Berlin's Kitty-Yo label saw the show and signed her, allowing her to produce *The Teaches of Peaches* (2000) in Toronto. The success of her album led to tours with Queens of the Stone Age and fellow shock-rocker Marilyn Manson.

With her next album, *Fatherfucker* (2003), she began to diverge from electroclash with occasional forays into rock. She teamed up with Iggy Pop on the single *Kick It*. He later went on to cover a song of hers, *Rock Show*.

*Impeach My Bush*, a protest album of sorts, put her onto the mainstream charts as her lyrics struck a chord with like-minded individuals all over North America. Guest musicians for the album included the legendary Joan Jett. Along with backup band The Herms (short for hermaphrodite), Peaches opened for Bauhaus and Nine Inch Nails, firmly entrenching herself within the alternative scene.

She has collaborated with artists as varied as The Flaming Lips, Pink, Tone Loc, the B52s, and even Yoko Ono.

In her first albums she focused on pioneering a sound with direct, explicit, raw lyrics. "I thought it was about time that I showed the world my diversity as a singer," said Nisker. "That led to the electro-soul stylings of *Talk to Me* and the vulnerable dance tracks *Lose You* and *I Feel Cream*." Gonzalez, who has been with her since the beginning, co-wrote some songs on the album, which features guest vocals by Shunda K on *Billionaire*. "Of course I didn't shy away from my established hard-core style," said Nisker. "I'm really happy with the expansion of my repertoire."

Having recently entered her 40s she mocks those who think age is an issue. "You lick my crow's feet," she sings. She loves being in her 40s and said, "You can't explain to anyone under 40 what it feels like. I feel sorry for them that they can't experience what I experience but I am sure they will one day."

Last month she put on a solo performance of *Jesus Christ Superstar* in Berlin, and she has a role in an upcoming movie *Ivory Tower*.

*Jesus Christ Superstar*? Nisker is not a fan of organized religion, but said that that had nothing to do with starring in the one-woman show. "I think the way that it is portrayed in this musical is that it focuses on a situation that has grown out of control," she said. "One person has a good idea and the people who believe in the idea began to become overcome with fear, thus bringing the downfall of the idea and the person, Jesus." It's a story she sees repeating itself over and over in families, politics, and society.

Entertaining is her gift, and is what she does best. "I know that I am a good communicator in this way, and that motivates me to influence people to understand that they should always think for themselves and get rid of their own fears," said Nisker. "Realize fear is the biggest obstacle in your way."

#### PERFORMANCE NOTES:

**WHAT:** Peaches with Go Chic and Eat Me! Black Hole!

**WHEN:** Doors open at 7pm on Sunday

**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. On the Net: [www.thewall.com.tw](http://www.thewall.com.tw)

**ADMISSION:** Tickets are NT\$900 in advance or NT\$1,200 at the door. Advance tickets available at The Wall; AMPM Studio, Room C, 1F, 5, Alley 205, Ln 26, Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段205巷26弄5號C店面), tel: (02) 2711-0581; and at Screaming Boutique, B1-1, 109 Kunming St, Taipei City (台北市西門町昆明街109號B1-1), tel: (02) 2389-6936; or online at [www.thewall.com.tw](http://www.thewall.com.tw)

[ DANCE ]

## A recipe for choreographic success

*Assembly Dance Theatre describes the creator of its newest performance as a chef, with each dancer's unique skill an ingredient and props as spices*

BY DIANE BAKER  
STAFF REPORTER

Assembly Dance Theatre's (組合語言舞團) latest production, *Premiere* (首映會), opens at the Experimental Theater in Taipei tonight, although its actual premiere was last Friday at the Sinhuang City Cultural Center.

Since its founding in 1993, Yang Kuei-chuan's (楊桂娟) Assembly Dance Theatre has developed a reputation for quirky pieces that combine a minimalist Eastern aesthetic with contemporary modern dance, thanks to her training at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Yang did the bulk of the choreography for the troupe early on, but in recent years the company's productions have been more collaborative, as Yang sought out young Taiwanese and other choreographers to create pieces for the troupe. As a professor in the dance department at National Taiwan University of Arts in Banciao, Yang is well placed to talent spot, for both dancers and choreographers.

One choreographer who has worked several times with the company is Lai Tsui-shuang (賴翠霜). The Chinese Culture University graduate went on to study dance, music and theater at the Folkwang Academy in Essen, Germany, and joined the Folkwang Dance Studio in 1998. Lai has won several awards for choreography, including the 2009 Taishin Arts Award for Capital Ballet's production of *Surround*.

Lai has developed a reputation for fluid and dynamic choreography combined with the imaginative use of multimedia and props, which makes for both very interesting staging and very accessible pieces. Even if an audience member doesn't know anything about modern dance, he or she can still appreciate Lai's creativity.

*Premiere* promises to be as inventive as Lai's previous work, judging from the promotional video, which shows a tottering toddler walking across a star-studded sky segueing into a toddler-sized skeleton before a plate of toast pops up and the slices move around, which in turn are replaced by four dancers moving slowly in a black void, then back to the plate of quickly disappearing toast to mask-clad dancers and then to dancers merging into projections and then an empty plate.

The toast image is key to *Premiere*, which the company has been working on for 10 months, or at least food metaphors are. The troupe describes the choreographer as a chef cooking the "ingredients" — the dancers — in such a way that each dancer's unique skills and personality are revealed, while the props, video animations and other parts of the staging are the "spices." Like a good stir-fry, the dancers sizzle and pop as they jump and leap about the stage under Lai's direction. Fun is definitely on the menu.

After this weekend's shows in Taipei, there will be one more performance of *Premiere* on May 2 at Taoyuan County's Performing Arts Hall.



Members of the Assembly Dance Theatre rehearse their latest production, *Premiere*, which will be performed at the Experimental Theater in Taipei this weekend.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ASSEMBLY DANCE THEATRE

#### PERFORMANCE NOTES

**WHAT:** Assembly Dance Theatre's *Premiere*

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

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

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

**ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCE:** May 2 at 2:30pm at the Performing Arts Hall of the Cultural Affairs Bureau of Taoyuan County Government (桃園縣政府文化局演藝廳), 21 Sianfu Rd, Taoyuan County (桃園市縣府路21號). Admission is NT\$300 or NT\$500