

BY DIANE BAKER

DANCE

POP STOP

COMPILED BY DAVID CHEN

With newfound stardom comes heartbreak, at least for singer **Hsu Chia-ying** (徐佳瑩), aka Lala Shu, who became a household name after winning the third season of CTV's *One Million Star* (超級星光大道) talent show. The 25-year-old split up with her beau of two years, fellow aspiring singer **Born Lee** (李伯恩), after seeing an incriminating text message from another woman on his mobile phone.



Has A-mei moved on to pastures new? PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

It wasn't a case of snooping, though. The *Apple Daily* helpfully detailed her unceremonious discovery of Lee's infidelity: The two were out having breakfast several weeks ago, fresh from celebrating her five nominations at this year's Golden Melody Awards. Hsu's cellphone ran out of power, so she borrowed Lee's iPhone, whereupon she saw a "suspicious" text message from "Catherine," an up-and-coming actress from a TV talk show for college students.

An *Apple Daily* reporter cornered Hsu after spotting her shopping at Taipei 101, where she denied the text message was the sole reason for the breakup, although "it was the last straw." Asked if there was any chance of reconciliation with Lee, who was Hsu's fellow contestant on *One Million Star* and once declared his love to her on the program, she answered, "Impossible." But she said she has no regrets and the relationship has led to some "soul-searching."

Perhaps Hsu should follow **A-mei's** (張惠妹) example, after all, the diva well knows that celebrity romance isn't easy, but the perks of stardom do offer some solace.

The pop star headed to Los Angeles earlier this week for three concerts and is making the most out of her trip: first-class air travel, five-star hotel, and a trip to Las Vegas during her two-week stay in the US. The *Apple Daily* reports that an American company, Amway, is spending a total of NT\$13.5 million on bringing the Mando-pop queen to LA.

A-mei has set aside NT\$330,000 for a road-trip to Las Vegas with her entourage, which *Apple* suggests is a good chance to heal after breaking up with basketball star **Sam Ho** (何守正).

Not letting the grass grow under her feet, A-mei already has a new crush, so says Chinese pop singer **Na Ying** (那英), who claims that her friend and labelmate at Warner Music is interested in a fellow acquaintance from Beijing. Na accidentally spilled the beans last week at press conference in Taipei, where she is slated to perform next month. Our sister paper the *Liberty Times* later pressed Na for more

details, but she wouldn't budge, except to add that the prospective Prince Charming is not a wealthy businessman or an athlete.

One story racking up hits on the Internet this week is the court battle between actress **Alyssa Chia** (賈靜雯) and her ex-husband **Sun Chih-hao** (孫志浩). Chia recently won custody of their five-year old daughter in the US, where she had been living with Sun's family. Sun has retaliated in the Taiwanese courts by suing Chia for custody of "Sister Wutong" (梧桐妹), as their daughter is referred to in the press, her half of a shared apartment in Shanghai and NT\$26 million in cash.

Sun says this hefty sum is to reclaim the NT\$5 million he gave to the Chia family when they got married, as well as further monthly payments of NT\$100,000. Chia and her lawyer have balked at the suit and countered that the money had already been returned several years ago, and that Sun has failed to pay any of their daughter's living expenses. And it's not as if Sun needs the cash. The *Apple Daily* says Sun rakes in NT\$230,000 a month through his father's cargo transport firm and his family holds over NT\$100 million in real estate assets, which include properties in Shanghai, Los Angeles and Taipei.

Spectacular failure seems to go hand-in-hand with celebrity romances, at least on the gossip pages, but here's a happy beginning: **Selina Jen** (任家萱) of the popular girl group S.H.E received a surprise marriage proposal from her boyfriend **Richard Chang** (張承中) on stage during a concert at Taipei Arena (台北小巨蛋).

The stunt, which Chang conceived after consulting with Jen's bandmates and their record label, didn't exactly go as planned, according to the *China Times*. After picking up a microphone and rambling on about his well wishes for the group in front of a cheering audience of 10,000, Chang became flustered. Instead of getting down on bended knee to ask for her hand in marriage, the lawyer blurted out "My wife, I love you." Jen had already gotten the message anyway, and was in tears.

Head over heels



PERFORMANCE NOTES

WHAT: Dance Body Company, *The Blooming Age*
WHEN: Tonight and tomorrow at 7:30pm, tomorrow at 2:30pm
WHERE: Red House Theater (西門紅樓), 10 Chengdu Rd, Taipei City (台北市成都路10號)
ADMISSION: Tickets are NT\$500, available at NTCH box office or www.artsticket.com.tw

Dance Body Company draws far-ranging parallels in its newest production.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DANCE BODY COMPANY

a telephone interview earlier this week. The theater has a kind of "lost in time" or "timelessness" quality, he said.

The multimedia, multi-technology program runs 90 minutes, with intermission, and is divided up into three dances, segmented into decades yet connected by a common thread.

Starting from the differing attitudes to love held by men and women, Lee uses the changing code of conduct for love and sexual relations in the modern era as a metaphor for the relationship between business and state, between governments and even manages to draw a connection to the international flower expo that Taipei will be hosting starting in November.

"The expo is coming up and there are going to be so many flowers in the city, they have really opened things up," he said, "opening up the mind as well to new ideas."

The interaction of relationships is explored — the body language between a man and a woman, or a man and man, or a woman and woman — whether as conversations between lovers, friends, colleagues, bystanders — whether friendly or war-like. How do you sit, how do you stand, how do you fight, how do you say you're sorry, how do you move in a post-war survival game — all of these were ideas that Lee explored, in what the production notes call "Body Challenge 2010."

It will be challenging indeed for a seven-dancer company to pull off, but Lee is confident that his team is up to the task.

Love is blooming, Taipei is blooming, the very air is alive with possibilities. Or so the 10-year-old Dance Body Company (體相舞蹈劇場) would have you think.

But they also want you to think about all the complications, not just of love, but the modern age, whether that is war or exhibitions of flowers.

The Blooming Age (花漾流年) — staged as part of the Shining Star Festival that began in mid-April — is the second crossover effort by the troupe, following last fall's *The Lost Part* (天堂的缺口) at the Experimental Theater.

For *Lost Part*, the troupe joined forces with Taipei

Symphony Orchestra flute player Yu Ya-hui (游雅慧) and Taiwanese opera performer Chien Yu-lin (簡玉琳). Yu is back for *The Blooming Age* and has brought a TSO colleague, violinist Roger Chiang (姜智諱), with her.

Moving to a bigger venue for this production — the Red House Theater (西門紅樓) in Ximending — gave the troupe more room to play around, as well as providing another source of inspiration for company founder and choreographer Lee Ming-cheng (李明正).

The history of the theater and its atmosphere makes it very easy to conjure up a variety of feelings, he said in

DRAMA

BY NOAH BUCHAN

Six degrees of deceit

Tainaner Ensemble (台南人劇團) returns to the stage this weekend with *Q&A* (Question and Amnesia — 首部曲), the first installment in a trilogy whose backdrop takes in Taipei, London and Berlin. The performance begins at 7:30pm tonight at Metropolitan Hall.

Written by Tsai Pao-chang (蔡柏璋), whose previous work for Tainaner includes *Mulan* (木蘭少女), a musical based on a Chinese morality tale, and the episodic and satirical *K-24*, *Q&A* returns to basics and presents a realistic and narrative-driven comedy (in the Shakespearean sense) complete with generational struggles, romantic misunderstandings and lots of deceit.

The first installment is told through the experiences of Liuyi (played by Tsai), who has just returned from Berlin. A morose and violent character, Liuyi's relationships, with family, friends and lovers, are tempestuous. While walking on a Taipei street one day he is knocked down by Fuyenxin, an alcoholic who is driving drunk. Frightened that she will be thrown in jail, Fuyenxin leaves the scene of the crime.

PERFORMANCE NOTES

WHAT: Tainaner Ensemble, *Q&A* (Quest and Amnesia — 首部曲)
WHEN: Tonight and tomorrow at 7:30pm, tomorrow and Sunday at 2:30pm
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: Tickets are NT\$500 to NT\$2,400, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw (as of press time NT\$2,000 and NT\$2,400 tickets were sold out)

Suffering guilt pangs, Fuyenxin visits Liuyi, who now suffers from amnesia — a condition that transforms his personality from disaffected youth to optimistic adult. While at the hospital, she encounters Liuyi's parents who mistake her for their son's girlfriend, Gigi. Too



Tainaner Ensemble's *Q&A* is a narrative-driven comedy complete with generational struggles, romantic misunderstandings and plenty of deception.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TAINANER ENSEMBLE

embarrassed to reveal her true identity, Fuyenxin plays along.

Deception follows deception and Fuyenxin soon falls in love with the man she almost killed. The first installment ends on New Year's Eve when a police officer shows up to the home of Liuyi's parents to divulge the identity of the hit-and-run

driver. Upon entering, the cop is shocked to see Fuyenxin with Liuyi.

Although I didn't catch a rehearsal (there were none as of press time), the intricacy of the script and Tsai's increasingly mature character development should provide audiences of *Q&A* with much to laugh at and think about.

RESTAURANTS

BY STEVE PRICE

BY NOAH BUCHAN

The Burger Stop

Address: 26, Ln 137, Yanji St, Taipei City (台北市延吉街137巷26號) **Telephone:** (02) 2711-7079
Open: Sundays through Thursdays 11am to 9pm, Fridays and Saturdays 11am to 10pm
Average meal: NT\$200 **Details:** Chinese and English menu; all items are available for takeout
On the Net: www.burgerstop.com



Burger Stop goes back to basics.

PHOTO: STEVE PRICE, TAIPEI TIMES

Not all burgers are born equal. The gamut runs from chef Hubert Keller's aristocratic FleurBurger 5000 (US\$5,000), made with Kobe beef, foie gras and black truffle and served with Chateau Petrus 1990 at Las Vegas' Fleur de Lys, to McDonald's plebeian version, prepared with, among other ingredients, high fructose corn syrup and propylene glycol alginate.

So where on the spectrum does The Burger Stop, a new venture opened three weeks ago by Californian David Liston on Yanji Street (延吉街), fall? It's advertised as the true American-style burger.

"I'm making the original burger that became famous in the 1950s, when the car hops started and you could drive up in your car and get a shake and burger," Liston said. "The burgers they made back then weren't the giant gourmet burgers you'll find about town."

That means patties made from USDA chuck steak ground up every morning, American yellow processed cheese added during the grilling process so it melts into a gooey mess that oozes down the side, crispy European-style bacon (add NT\$15), soft buns, slices of beef tomato, which on a recent visit were slightly pulpy but in a salad yesterday were flavorful, crispy iceberg lettuce, pickle, onion and thousand island-type sauce. The patty is a 10 percent fat/90 percent meat mix, which is on the leaner side, said

Liston, but juicy enough to leave fingers satisfyingly sticky.

Though several contributors to a local online forum found them too salty, the fries are what you'd expect, but the standout side is Burger Stop's onion rings (NT\$60, or with soda as a combo NT\$70), which are coated in a light peppery batter whose flavor kicks in just as the onion's sweetness begins to dissipate.

The menu, which can be found on Burger Stop's Web site, is limited, with a small selection of burgers (beef NT\$120 to NT\$150, chicken NT\$120, pork NT\$130), shakes made with ice cream and milk (vanilla, chocolate, strawberry, NT\$70), soft drinks (Coca-Cola, Sprite, Nestea, NT\$40), coffee (NT\$35), black tea (NT\$35) and beer (Coors Light, Miller Chill and Budweiser, NT\$90).

And for patrons unhungry enough not to order a burger, there's garden salad (NT\$90, add grilled chicken for NT\$30), a mix of iceberg lettuce, black olives, croutons, grated Parmesan and slices of tomato and cucumber. The latter component came unpeeled, which added an unwelcome bitterness, though this was offset by the creamy savoriness of the Ranch dressing.

With black-and-white tiles that resemble a checkered flag and rosso corsa and white walls, sections of which are covered in corrugated steel, Burger Stop, which takes up two floors

and seats about 40, reflects the classic American burger theme in its decor, which riffs on 1950s car racing culture.

"Most Taiwanese people think that an American burger is a McDonald's burger or a Burger King burger, or it's this giant, monstrous gourmet burger thing," Liston said. "This is more of a classic burger." And a tasty one at that.

First-time customers can receive a free portion of French fries or soda.

Mr Sausage's Kitchen

Address: 5-1, Alley 4, Ln 12, Bade Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市八德路三段12巷4弄5-1號)
Telephone: (02) 2579-0396 **Open:** Wednesdays through Saturdays 5:30pm to 11pm
Details: English and Chinese menu, credit cards not accepted **Average meal:** NT\$250



Mark Goding deserves to be crowned Taiwan's sausage king.

PHOTO: NOAH BUCHAN, TAIPEI TIMES

Mark Goding's rugby teammates never passed him the ball. Playing with a squad composed mainly of South Africans (old animosities die hard), he spent most games running up and down the pitch ignored. But that all changed after they tried his sausages. From then on he was one of the team, becoming known as Mr Sausage.

"They even started throwing me the ball," he said, between slugs of fresh fruit juice (a glass of which he generously offered my sniffing dining companion).

After a bite of his version of chorizo I can understand why. Located in an alley directly behind the TTV (台視公司) building on Bade Road (八德路), Mr Sausage's Kitchen serves up the tastiest sausages I've tried in Taipei (you may have tasted them before: The Brass Monkey and Alley Cats are among his clients).

The chatty man from Down Under calls himself a "fiddler." His kitchen, located in the back of the sparsely decorated and simply furnished restaurant of wooden booths and tables, is his workshop where he spends several hours daily grinding meat, chopping vegetables and adding spices before casing the creations into traditional classics such as Andouille, frankfurter and Lincolnshire to more exotic varieties such as a Guinness sausage and Thai green curry.

Our two-man party went with the bangers and mash (NT\$250), which came with a choice of two sausages, a mound of mashed potatoes with gravy, two slices of fresh beer bread, sauerkraut and salsa salad (four sausages, NT\$420). A vegetarian sausage roll and meat sausage roll (NT\$50 each) got the ball rolling.

The 6-inch rolls arrived heated on a plate with vegetable sticks drizzled with tzatziki dressing. Puff pastry topped with black sesame seeds wrapped the fragrant and spice-infused sausage.

Chorizo and Thai green curry were my sausage choices for the bangers and mash, while my dining companion went with the bratwurst and chicken "classic." Though the menu says that the chorizo contains tequila, I didn't notice it through the rich and spicy flavor of the chilies. And yet, the chorizo didn't overpower the delicate flavor of the green curry, which had subtle hints of coconut and basil. Both were delicious and cooked so that the outer skin was slightly crispy. A Fuller's London Porter stout (NT\$200 for a 500cc bottle) seemed the perfect accompaniment.

Mention should be given to the light-tasting gravy pooled in the center of the mashed potatoes as well as the salsa salad, drizzled with the pesto tzatziki dressing — the tangy sauce of the latter setting off the stronger flavors of the meat.

My dining companion, while uttering "very good, very good" (好吃好吃) in between bites, allowed me to taste the bratwurst, which had a peppery flavor and a hint of nutmeg that was quite mild. I preferred the more robust flavor of the chorizo.

Though stuffed, we made room for an order of homemade apple pie with sultana raisins and Taiwanese plums.

I was so impressed with Goding's sausages that I took half a kilogram (NT\$225) home, along with six sausages rolls.

Mr Sausage's menu features beers (NT\$120 to NT\$240) from Germany, Scotland, Australia and of course, England.