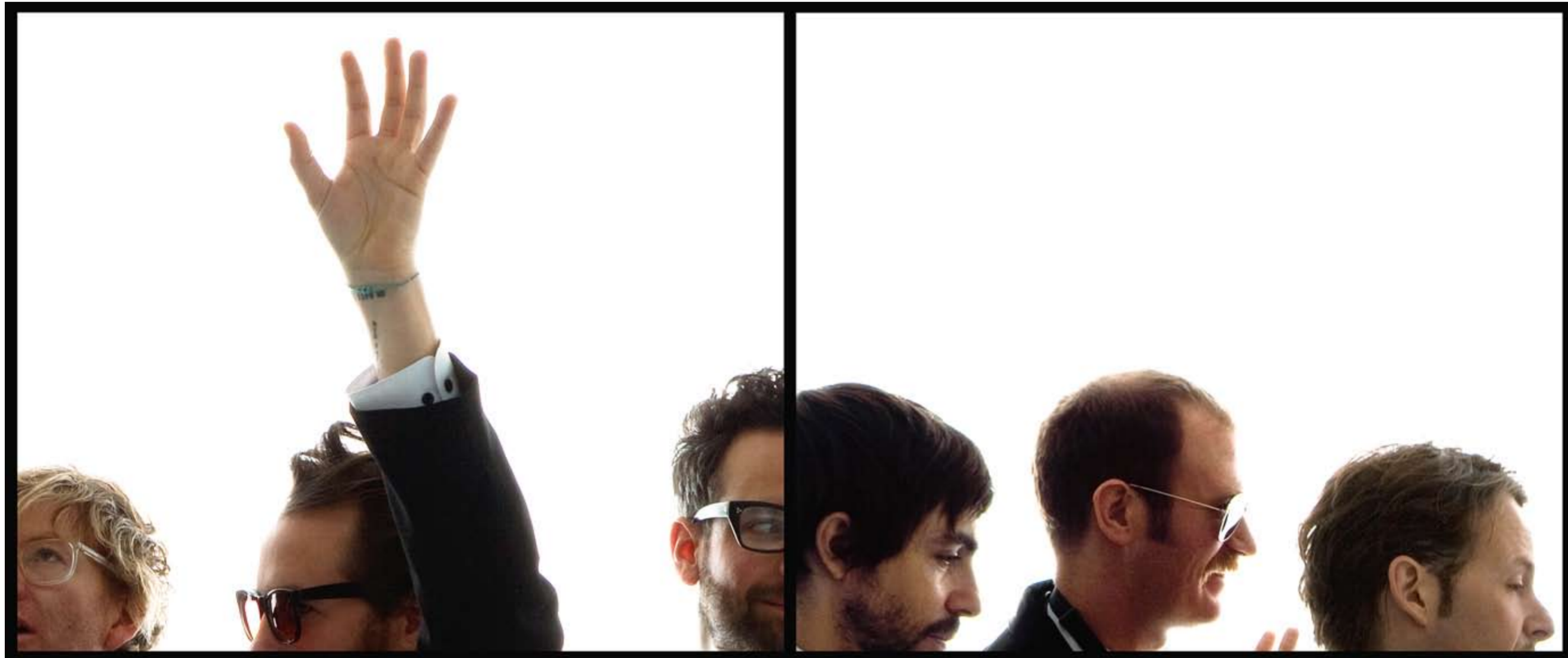


AROUND TOWN

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF WHITE WABBIT RECORDS

Forgive but don't forget

Beloved Canadian indie-rock collective Broken Social Scene returns to Taipei for a concert this Sunday

BY DAVID CHEN AND MAHSA ALIMARDANI
STAFF REPORTER AND CONTRIBUTING REPORTER



Broken Social Scene performs at Legacy Taipei on Sunday, and it's a safe bet that indie-rock fans will be out in full force to see one of the most beloved groups of the past decade.

The Canadian band, often referred to as a musical "collective" because of its rotating cast over the years of between a half-dozen to 19 members, arrives in Taipei this weekend fresh from a European tour and a headlining spot at the Pitchfork Music Festival in Chicago.

Forgiveness Rock Record, the band's first recording in five years, was released a few months ago and has enjoyed a warm reception in both the indie and mainstream music press.

For some, the album's title and subject matter have proven to be timely in light of the violent protests at last month's G20 summit in Toronto, Broken Social Scene's hometown.

The band reacted to the events by posting a music video made by an anonymous fan for its instrumental song *Meet Me in the Basement* (www.youtube.com/watch?v=NiRjwCrCMc) on its official YouTube page, writing, "We are proud to

share this mash-up with you."

The video, a dizzying collage of images and footage that centers on confrontations between G20 protestors and police, was a weary commentary on society and pop culture. Riot scenes in Toronto were mixed with fleeting images of war zones, prominent politicians, Justin Bieber and the BP oil spill.

So does Broken Social Scene see its music — restlessly eclectic in sound and sometimes lyrically obtuse — as a statement on current events?

"A lot of people in the band have a lot to say about what's going on in the world," said Justin Peroff, Broken Social Scene's drummer and a member since the early days of the band, on the phone from Toronto earlier this week.

"I've shared some really interesting conversations with my bandmates over the years [about] topics that we're concerned about," said the 32-year-old, who considers the events in Toronto to be a "shock."

Another topic of concern for the band might be found in the new song *Texico Bitches*, a deceptively carefree-sounding pop tune with lyrics that easily read as a condemnation of big oil companies. It also displays the band's knack for sugarcoating a dark sentiment with a catchy hook.

Peroff says the song makes him think of The Smiths. "They wrote really sweet pop songs, but at the end of the day the juxtaposition was that these sweet pop songs had a lot of sadness and tragedy intertwined and disguised within a pop song," he said.

"I don't think [*Texico Bitches*] was intended to be that way, but it's one of those tunes that has that contrast of pop song with an ultimately sad lyrical context — not in the same way as a Smiths song, but politically, for sure."

Forgiveness Rock Record is perhaps the band's most accessible recording to date. The experimental noise backdrops are still there, but there are fewer wandering jams, and the songs are tighter.

"We were really focused this time

around," said Peroff, noting that a change in scenery helped. For the first time, the band recorded outside of Toronto, relieving its members of the distractions of their hometown and families. They went to Chicago to work with one of their musical heroes, musician and producer John McEntire, best known as a member of the post-rock groups Tortoise and The Sea and Cake.

Peroff says the change in sound is also attributable to McEntire, who gave the production a "cleaner" feel. But even though the band went into the studio with pre-planned songs, they did return to some old habits in the process: "In classic Broken Social Scene form, we couldn't help but write a whole bunch of songs in the moment and in the studio, which is maybe because our attention span is pretty small. In doing so, we ended up writing 45 songs or so."

The band managed to whittle *Forgiveness* down to 14 tracks. As for the album title, Peroff says each bandmember has his or her own explanation. His take: "As far as the word forgiveness goes, any record that any band or musician makes, certainly Broken Social Scene, is a bit of a love letter ... and in any love letter one of the emotions expressed is forgiveness."

Does he need to be forgiven? And for what?

"I'm not asking for forgiveness and not necessarily delivering forgiveness either, but maybe as a collective we are. That seems a bit cryptic, but part of the adventure of music is to interpret it, so I don't want to give away any endings too quickly."

Here's one ending that can be given away for Sunday's concert. Die-hard fans won't be seeing Broken Social Scene's past star female vocalists, each of whom appears on the new album: Leslie Feist, who now enjoys a successful solo career; Emily Haines of new wave band Metric; and Amy Millan, who happens to have an intensely loyal following in Taiwan with her band Stars.

And despite the band's reputation for

its constantly changing personnel, Peroff says that since its self-titled album of 2005, the band has settled on a core group of seven members that includes himself, founders Kevin Drew and Brendan Canning, Andrew Whiteman, Charles Spearin, Sam Goldberg and singer Lisa Lobsinger. For Sunday's concert, they will be joined by several other musicians, including a brass horn section.

On this second visit to Taipei, Broken Social Scene will be playing a bigger venue. Ticket sales for Sunday's show at Legacy Taipei are expected to be almost double the group's last show at The Wall (這牆) in 2008, which saw 500 people attending, according to Sky Tai (戴杏芳), a musician and store manager at White Wabbit Records (小白兔唱片), which is promoting the concert.

Tai says Broken Social Scene's following in Taiwan started off slow but is beginning to pick up. The band's last concert in Taipei might have sealed its appeal.

"They have this feeling of brotherhood [live on stage]," she said. "Everyone likes that."

PERFORMANCE NOTES

WHAT: Broken Social Scene

WHEN: Sunday at 7:30pm. Doors open at 6:30pm

WHERE: Legacy Taipei, located at Huashan 1914 Creative Park (華山1914) 1, Bade Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市八德路一段1號)

ADMISSION: NT\$2,200 at the door, NT\$1,800 in advance, available through tickets.books.com.tw, or at White Wabbit Records' (小白兔唱片行) Shida store, 1-1, Ln 21, Pucheng St, Taipei City (台北市浦城街21巷1-1號), tel: (02) 2369-7915, and at White Wabbit's store at The Wall, B1, 200, Roosevelt Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路四段200號B1), tel: (02) 8935-1454

ON THE NET: www.brokensocialscene.ca

[DANCE]

Poetry in motion

Legend Lin Dance Theatre is heading south for two performances of 'Song of Pensive Beholding'

BY DIANE BAKER
STAFF REPORTER

The National Theater Concert Hall is moving outside its safety zone this weekend by for the first time restaging one of its "flagship" productions at a different venue.

The Legend Lin Dance Theatre (無垢舞蹈劇場) will perform *Song of Pensive Beholding* (Chants de la Destinée, 觀) at Kaohsiung Cultural Center's Chih-teh Hall tonight and tomorrow. The shows are the first time the company — which engenders a cult-like following among its fans and is a favorite on the European festival circuit — will

be performing in Taiwan, but outside Taipei.

December's premiere of *Song* sold out. It was the stunning conclusion to a trilogy that Legend Lin founder and artistic director Lin Li-chen (林麗珍) began 15 years ago.

As she did with 1995's *Mirrors of Life* (Miroirs de Vie, 鏡) and 2000's *Anthem to the Fading Flowers* (Hymne aux Fleurs Qui Passent, 花神祭春芽), Lin created a beautiful, mystical, primitive, meditation-filled world in *Song* that both celebrates the sacred and embraces the profane.

Song tells the story of a race of eagles, led by two brothers

who are united in protecting their land and their people. When one of the brothers falls for the mysterious White Bird, however, their union triggers a sibling clash that spells the end of the brothers' world as they know it.

Lin's choreography is not about leaps and bounds. It is deeply rooted in the earth, in ancient rituals. Her movements are often excruciatingly slow, though never monotonous, and the sudden outbursts of action are all the more startling for their rarity. Time, in Lin's productions, is both at the center of the action and immaterial to it.

For those who missed *Song* in Taipei, the production is well

worth the trip to Kaohsiung.

There were murmurings in December that Lin was beginning to think of retirement. Even if she continues, it takes years for her and her technical team — lighting designer Cheng Fu-chang (鄭富長), stage designer Chang Wang (張志) and Oscar-winning costume designer Tim Yip (葉錦添) — to create a new work. All the more reason to see the company now.

The alternative? You could wait until next year, when the company has been invited to perform *Song* at festivals in Australia and Lyon, France, but both would be much more expensive trips.

PERFORMANCE NOTES

WHAT: Legend Lin Dance Theatre, *Song of Pensive Beholding*

WHEN: Tonight and tomorrow at 7:30pm

WHERE: Kaohsiung Cultural Center's Chih-teh Hall (高雄市文化中心至德堂), 67 Wufu 1st Rd, Kaohsiung City (高雄市苓雅區五福一路67號)

ADMISSION: NT\$300 to NT\$1,500 (NT\$1,200 and NT\$1,500 tickets for tonight are sold out), available online at www.artsticket.com.tw



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL OSK CULTURAL CENTER