



COMPILED BY DAVID CHEN

**T**he boss might be a funny guy, but the employees aren't laughing. Comedian and TV entertainer **Jacky Wu** (吳宗憲) has been watching his business woes spill onto the gossip and entertainment pages this week.

Wu is under fire as the chief investor and CEO at Alpha Photonitek Corporation (阿爾發光子科技), which has been having trouble paying workers' salaries, according to reports across Chinese-language media.

Alpha Photonitek manufactures LED lights, but those bright, energy-efficient and long-lasting bulbs are already losing their luster for the comedian.

His company has seen the staff decrease from 40 to 10 persons since forming in 2008. Over the past few months, employees have been complaining that their paychecks were arriving late, and so far this month, they have only received half of their salary, according to the *Apple Daily*. Workplace morale took yet another hit after one employee went for a doctor's visit only to find that the company had not paid its health insurance fees.

Wu denied that the company was in "financial crisis," saying it was in the process of reorganizing, which was the reason employees have had to wait on their salaries.

But Wu might have his eggs in too many baskets. He is known for taking the millions of NT dollars he rakes in from hosting his popular TV variety show programs and then investing in an assortment of business ventures, which include restaurants, a record company and a 3D animation studio.

His track record as a corporate executive doesn't exactly shine. Last year, he resigned as CEO of H&T Electronics (翔昇電子) after just a few months because the company was NT\$600 million in debt.

Wu attributed the hold-ups to

Jacky is kryptonite to businesses.

PHOTO: TAIPEI TIME

personal debt, saying, "I myself am short on money. Don't forget I pay taxes and have enormous expenses."

According to the *Apple Daily*, Wu currently makes NT\$4.16 million a month as the host of three television programs.

Another star feeling a bit of pressure is pop singer **Aska Yang** (楊宗緯). Yang is featuring in a stadium concert next month in Taipei along with 14 other fellow former contestants from the TV reality show *One Million Star* (超級星光大道).

The concert has been met with a lukewarm response, at least in terms of ticket sales. So far less than 2,000 of the 9,000 available seats have been taken, according to the *Apple Daily*.

Yang, a fan favorite from the first season of *One Million Star*, acknowledged the show's popularity has waned, but was quoted by the *United Daily News* as saying "we just have to do what we do well."

With his sights set on mega-pop stardom, Yang better hope ticket sales turn around come next month. He is planning to hand over his business affairs to **Jolin Tsai's** (蔡依林) manager, **Ko Fu-hung** (葛福鴻), and has a new album and a self-produced fan magazine in the works.

And then there's his big screen aspirations: Yang is rumored to be in talks to star in a directorial debut by Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) legislator **Justin Chou** (周守訓).

The wedding bells are starting to ring louder for **Selina Jen** (任家萱) of the popular girl group **S.H.E** and her fiancé **Richard Chang** (張承中), who proposed to her on stage during a concert at Taipei Arena (台北小巨蛋) back in May. The *Apple Daily* reports the two are planning to hold their wedding ceremony in April or May next year.

The lovebirds were spotted last week at a restaurant at Taipei 101, where they were attending Jen's father's 60th birthday.

Also in attendance were Jen's bandmates **Hebe Tian** (田馥甄) and **Ella Chen** (陳嘉樺), and Apple obliged readers with an update on their current romances — or lack thereof.

The paper said Tian, who was rumored to be a former flame of **Jay Chou** (周杰倫), has largely been "low-key" about her love interests, which has fueled speculation that she is a lesbian.

Chen, who was rumored to have dated model **Jerry Huang** (黃志翔) and boy band singer **Wu Chun** (吳尊), has only publicly acknowledged one past relationship, with a banker **Tommy Chao** (趙士鏞), which ended when he supposedly cheated on her.

BY DAVID CHEN

MUSIC

## Love is in the air for the Boyz

### PERFORMANCE NOTES

**WHAT:** Boyz II Men  
**WHEN:** Tomorrow at 7:30pm  
**WHERE:** Taipei World Trade Center Hall 2 (台北世貿二館), 3 Songlian Rd, Taipei City (台北市松廉路3號)  
**TICKETS:** NT\$1,800 to NT\$4,200, available through ERA ticketing or online at [www.tickets.com.tw](http://www.tickets.com.tw)  
**ON THE NET:** [www.boyzimen.com](http://www.boyzimen.com)

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BOYZ II MEN



**L**ove 'em or hate 'em, boy bands are a part of the fabric of mainstream pop thanks to groups like Boyz II Men, who perform tomorrow night at the Taipei World Trade Center.

The R 'n' B trio of vocalists, whose members range in age from 37 to 39, began as a quintet during their high school years in Philadelphia. In the 1990s, they produced a line of hits that became staples on the radio, not to mention at high school dances.

Other boy bands such as New Edition, New Kids on the Block and 'N Sync have come and gone, spawning successful solo careers for pop artists like Bobby Brown and Justin Timberlake.

But Boyz II Men have managed to stick together since forming in the early 1990s, which the members — Wanya

Morris, Shawn Stockman and Nathan Morris — say has much to do with their "common denominator," music.

"Before we were friends, we were music partners," said singer Wanya Morris in an e-mail to the *Taipei Times* forwarded by the group's promoter in Taipei.

That partnership produced instantly recognizable Top 40 hits such as their cover of the Motown song *It's So Hard to Say Goodbye to Yesterday* and the Babyface-penned *I'll Make Love to You*.

The group is also credited for helping to bring hip-hop into the mainstream with its 1991 radio single *Motown Philly*. The music video for the song even featured appearances by Black Thought and Questlove of the Roots, who went to the same high school as Boyz II Men's members.

Like many teen idols, Boyz II Men fell out of the spotlight as they grew older, but the group has made a recent comeback. Their 2007 studio release *Motown: Hitsville USA*, a collection of mostly Motown classics, was nominated for a Grammy. On their latest album, *Love* (2009), the trio covers everyone from Sam Cooke and the Beatles to Cyndi Lauper and the Goo Goo Dolls.

As the group's promoter is eager to point out, Boyz II Men's show in Taipei tomorrow coincides with Chihsi (七夕), or Chinese Valentine's Day, which falls on Monday this year. The group says its concert program will oblige the lovebirds in the audience.

"We will be doing the old to the new. We will sing our classic hits, Motown tributes and material from the *Love* album. It will be full of love songs," said Morris.

BY ANDREW C.C. HUANG

## DRAMA

Ann Lang directs this year's Chinese-language production of *The Vagina Monologues*.

PHOTO: ANDREW C.C. HUANG



BY CATHERINE SHU

## V-Day: Not just for the girls

**I**n celebration of V-Day Taipei, an all-new Chinese-language production of *The Vagina Monologues* (陰道獨白) is showing tonight and tomorrow at Guoguang Hall (國光廳) in the Chinese Petroleum Building (中油大樓).

"Every girl should see this show to better understand her own sexuality," said Ho Bi-jhen (何碧珍), secretary general of the National Alliance of Taiwan Women's Associations. "Men should see it too because [they] will spend a lot of time with the vagina."

Directed by theater veteran Ann Lang (郎祖筠), this year's production largely eschews professional actresses in favor of a more diverse range of performers including singer Lai Pei-hsia (賴佩霞); actress Tan Ai-chen (譚艾珍); DJ Ruby Lu (盧春如); Xiaotong (小彤), who writes about gender issues; and Wu Yi-hui (吳宜慧), an advocate for people with disabilities. The play's score was composed by Mando-pop songwriter and producer Kay Huang (黃韻玲).

Lang said her biggest challenge as director was helping castmembers overcome their shyness.

"These ladies may not be as expressive as professional actresses with their body language, but their emotions are direct and real," she said. "My duty was to help them find their characters and let them shine."

*The Vagina Monologues*, an Obie-winning theater sensation written by American playwright Eve Ensler, condenses around 200 real interviews with women into 17 monologues on topics that include masturbation, rape, orgasm and birth. Since its debut in 1996, the thought-provoking and riotously funny play has grown into an international social phenomenon spurred along by local interpretations in numerous countries, including nations in the Muslim world.

A new monologue, titled *Spotlight*, is written by Ensler every year to highlight an issue affecting women around the world. This year's *Spotlight* focuses on women massacred in

war-torn Congo.

The V-Day movement was founded by Ensler and others in 1998 to stop violence against women.

"A girl can bring her boyfriend to this show and decide whether she can marry him based on his reaction," said Lang.

### PERFORMANCE NOTES

**WHAT:** The Vagina Monologues (陰道獨白)  
**WHEN:** Tonight at 7:30pm, tomorrow at 2:30 and 7:30pm  
**WHERE:** Guoguang Hall (國光廳) in the Chinese Petroleum Building (中油大樓), 3 Songren Rd, Taipei City (台北市松仁路3號)  
**ADMISSION:** NT\$400 to NT\$2,000, available through 7-Eleven ibon kiosks or at [www.tickets.com.tw](http://www.tickets.com.tw)  
**ON THE NET:** [www.facebook.com/2010VDAY](http://www.facebook.com/2010VDAY)

BY DAVID CHEN

## RESTAURANTS

### Urban 45 Tapas Parlour 45區公寓

**Address:** 45, Ln 181, Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段181巷45號)

**Open:** Tuesday to Sundays from 5:30pm to 2am

**Details:** Chinese and English menu, credit cards accepted

**Telephone:** (02) 2777-5745

**Average meal:** Most tapas range in price from NT\$160 to NT\$380

**On the Net:** [www.urban45.com](http://www.urban45.com)

**U**rban 45 Tapas Parlour's (45區公寓) slogan is "the art of sharing" and the East District (東區) restaurant certainly gives patrons plenty of options with a menu so extensive it fills not one, but two small books. Tapas originated in Spain, but Urban 45, which opened in June, jumps across cuisines with options like kimchi-flavored fried oysters, tempura rolls and nachos.

Dishes are separated into larger, pricier options (including filet mignon and fresh oysters) and smaller plates with items like French fries and garlic bread. Yet another menu lists the restaurant's extensive selection of beer, wine and cocktails from its full bar. Urban 45's hip decor is filled with details like toy cars in glass cases and a wall with a projection of a clock and brick detailing that make it look like something out of a Dali painting.

Instead of nametags, wait staff wear small LED screens with glowing blue letters on top of their black uniforms, making them look a bit like androids out of a science fiction film. The attentive service, however, is far from robotic. All our dishes arrived quickly and our empty plates were whisked away as soon as we were done eating.

Our favorite tapas was the plate of three shucked oysters topped



with red wine vinegar, cocktail sauce or fish roe (NT\$320). All three sounded like they would overpower the oysters, but the flavors (even the creamy, slightly spicy cocktail sauce) worked well with the robustly briny shellfish.

Lightly drizzled with creamy dressing, crumbled blue cheese and chopped boiled egg, the spinach salad (NT\$180) was basic but served as a welcome break in between our meat and seafood dishes. The duck liver-enriched filet mignon (NT\$380) featured slices of juicy steak topped with two lumps of liver. The dish was served with two yummy pats of fried polenta, crunchy green beans, pickled beets, and gravy

sauce spooned unobtrusively off to one side instead of smothering the meat. My dining companion and I also liked the rack of lamb with rosemary Dijon crust and mustard sauce (NT\$380). The thin crust had just the right amount of bite from the Dijon and its slightly crispy texture was a great complement to the meltingly tender, mellow-tasting meat.

The ahi tuna tartar (NT\$320), served with slices of French bread, was okay, but its delicate flavor paled in comparison to our other dishes. To round off our meal, we ordered French bread with goose rilette (NT\$160); the paste made of meat was smooth, very rich and slightly oily.



Tapas come from Spain, but Urban 45's menu of small dishes has an international slant.

PHOTOS: CATHERINE SHU, TAIPEI TIMES

Out of the seven tapas we ordered, the only disappointment was the honey garlic pork spare ribs (NT\$180). The meat was dry and tough, which was a shame because the sweet, smoky sauce was delicious. We saved no room for dessert, which was too bad because the diners next to us looked happy with the tiramisu, served temptingly in a big glass goblet.

Urban 45 is located at the intersection of Civil Boulevard Section 4 (市民大道四段) and Ln 181, Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4 (忠孝東路四段181巷).

**F**ans of xiaolongbao (小籠包), or soup dumplings, should add Heshanzhi (何善之) to their list of places to try. The restaurant opened in March on Da-an Road (大安路) and is an offshoot of the hot-pot chain of the same name owned by actor-turned-restaurateur Shao Hsin (邵昕).

He appears to be aiming for diners who want a cheaper alternative to Din Tai Fung (鼎泰豐), particularly Japanese tourists who might not want to stand in line at Yongkang Street (永康街). The shop's name is also displayed in Japanese phonetic characters. Heshanzhi's exterior catches the eye with a welcoming set of huge intricately carved wooden doors that slide open automatically, and a large window looking into a steamy kitchen where passersby

can glimpse the chefs at work.

The menu offers a few twists to the standard Shanghai-style fare. Well worth a try is Heshanzhi's house specialty, soup dumplings with Penghu sponge gourd and shrimp (澎湖絲瓜蝦仁湯包, NT\$200). The dumplings contain slightly less broth than the normal xiaolongbao, but are melt-in-the-mouth delicious nonetheless.

The filling, made of chopped sponge gourd, a green vegetable similar in consistency to a cucumber, has a subtle sweet flavor that complements the

Soup dumplings with Penghu sponge gourd and shrimp are Heshanzhi's house specialty.

PHOTO: DAVID CHEN, TAIPEI TIMES



### Heshanzhi Shanghai Soup Dumplings

何善之 精緻上海點心湯包館

**Address:** 231, Da-an Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市大安路1段231號)

**Telephone:** (02) 2707-0185

**Average meal:** NT\$300 to NT\$400 per person

**Open:** 11am to 10pm

**Details:** Chinese menu