

Home is where the ivories are

Pianist Hu Ching-yun (胡靜云), these days resident in the US, is one of Taiwan's most celebrated musical luminaries. It's true that Taiwan is particularly adept in producing these classically trained superstars, but among the younger ones Hu stands close to the top of the A-list. Her appearance with the Evergreen Symphony Orchestra (長榮交響樂團) on Sunday evening in Taipei's National Concert Hall is therefore a major event.

Hu was born in Taipei but moved to the US at the age of 14. Now she's an international celebrity, and it's a huge tribute to the Evergreen orchestra that she's chosen to perform with it on this particular visit back home. Her Web site at www.chingyunhu.com is very informative, and also provides a link to her YouTube channel and an interview she gave in Israel in October 2008 in which she describes her feelings on revisiting Taiwan.

Summer in Taipei is generally a slack period for classical concerts. The National Symphony Orchestra (國家交響樂團) doesn't kick off its new season until Sept. 17, though the Taipei Symphony Orchestra has a keenly anticipated opera production of *Rigoletto* in Taipei's Metropolitan Hall on Sept. 3 and Sept. 5. But the ever-welcome Evergreen Symphony Orchestra is here to plug the gap with this

concert on Sunday evening.

The program, conducted by Gernot Schmalzfuss, consists of Weber's *Oberon* overture, Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 2* and Richard Strauss' tone poem *Ein Heldenleben* (A Hero's Life).

Rachmaninoff's second piano concerto is probably the most popular piano concerto ever written. With its jazz-like overtones anticipating such populist composers as Gershwin, it's a surefire success. But the real draw this weekend will be of course the soloist.

In *Ein Heldenleben*, Strauss created another of his famous "tone poems," orchestral works that tell stories and summon up atmospheres without recourse to the traditional symphonic format. *Heldenleben* is one of the best of them, a typically Straussian mix of sumptuous harmonies and astringent novelties. The hero, Strauss himself, emerges, encounters his foes (the critics), finds happiness with his wife, then meets his final "consummation." Rich horns and strident piccolos interweave and carry you away in the manner of an enfant terrible of music now grown middle-aged, but no less the wizard for that.

PERFORMANCE NOTES

WHAT: Hu Ching-yun & Evergreen Symphony Orchestra Concert (英雄浪漫琴懷 — 胡靜云與長榮交響樂團)

WHEN: Sunday at 7:30pm

WHERE: National Concert Hall, Taipei City

ADMISSION: Tickets are NT\$500 to NT\$1,500, available through ERA ticketing or online at www.ticket.com.tw. Also available through 7-Eleven ibon, FamilyMart FamiPort and Hi-Life Life-ET kiosks

Sunday's concert is primarily important because of the appearance of Hu, but also because Schmalzfuss is such a great and lovable enthusiast, and *Ein Heldenleben* such very wonderful music. Together they should make an electrifying combination.



Hu Ching-yun returns to the land of her birth for a concert with the Evergreen Symphony Orchestra. PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTIAN STEINER

EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Theater

Shakespeare's Wild Sisters Group (莎士比亞的姊妹們的劇團) and theater director Wang Chia-ming (王嘉明) are reviving **Michael Jackson**, which played to a full house when it premiered in 2005. The King of Pop's *Thriller* (1984), *Bad* (1988) and *Dangerous* (1991) thread the narrative together.

■ Zhongshan Hall (台北市中山堂), 98 Yanping 5 Rd, Taipei City (台北市延平南路98號)
■ Tonight at 7:45pm, tomorrow at 2:45pm and 7:45pm, Sunday at 2:45pm
■ Tickets are NT\$400 to NT\$1,600, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

Part of the 12th Taipei Arts Festival (第十二屆台北藝術節), **Lipsynch** by French Canadian director Robert Lepage is an eight-and-a-half hour-long theatrical epic that weaves together the life stories of nine characters across seven decades and four countries. Weekend "marathon" performances include four intermissions and a 45-minute dinner break. The play can also be seen in three separate segments, each of which runs two-and-a-half hours.

■ Metropolitan Hall (城市舞台), 25, Bade Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市八德路三段25號)
■ Tomorrow and Sunday at 1pm, Tuesday through Thursday at 7:45pm
■ Tickets are NT\$3,400 and NT\$4,200 for weekend performances, NT\$1,200 and NT\$1,500 for weekday shows, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

8213 Physical Dance Theater (8213肢體舞蹈劇場) presents **Ripple Effect** (漣漪效應), a dance performance that combines physical grace with digital technology. [See story on Page 14.]
■ Experimental Theater, Taipei City
■ Tonight at 7:30pm, tomorrow at 2:30pm and 7:30pm, Sunday at 2:30pm
■ Tickets are NT\$500, available through available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

VM Theatre Company's (瓏演) musical **Daylight** tells the story of five young urbanites who cross paths at a night club. The production is in Chinese with English subtitles.
■ Crown Theater (皇冠小劇場), 50, Ln 120, Dunhua N Rd, Taipei City (台北市敦化北路120巷50號)
■ Tonight and Monday to Thursday at 7:30pm, tomorrow and Sunday at 2:30pm and 7:30pm
■ Tickets are NT\$600, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

Performed as part of the 2010 Kaohsiung Theater Festival (2010正港小劇場), **The Dragon Chasers** (尋龍之書) by Sun Son Theatre (身聲劇場) tells the story of three young warriors who follow a dragon into a world of myth, legend and magic. Like the company's previous productions, *The Dragon Chasers* is a fusion of modern theater, dance, chant and world music.

■ Kaohsiung's Pier 2 Arts Center (高雄駁二藝術特區), 1 Dayong Rd, Yancheng Dist, Kaohsiung City (高雄市鹽埕區大勇路1號)
■ Tomorrow at 2:30pm and 7:30pm
■ Tickets are NT\$300, available through ERA ticketing or online at www.ticket.com.tw

Classical music

As part of the **International Chopin Festival 2010 (20X10蕭邦CHOPIN國際音樂節)**, pianist An Ning (安寧) will perform a selection of impromptus, rondos and mazurkas by Chopin in two concerts, one in Taipei, the other in Taichung.

■ Tomorrow at 7:30pm (Taipei) and Wednesday at 7:30pm (Taichung)
■ National Concert Hall, Taipei City and Taichung Chungshan Hall (台中市中山堂), 98 Syueshieh Rd, Taichung City (台中市學士路98號)
■ Tickets are NT\$400 to NT\$1,000 (Taipei) and NT\$350 to NT\$1,000 (Taichung), available through ERA ticketing or online at www.ticket.com.tw. Also available through ibon, FamiPort and Life-ET kiosks

Hu Ching-yun & Evergreen Symphony Orchestra Concert (英雄浪漫琴懷 — 胡靜云與長榮交響樂團) presents young Taiwanese pianist Hu Ching-yun (胡靜云) performing a program that includes Weber's *Oberon* overture, Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 2* and Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben*. She will be performing with the Evergreen Symphony Orchestra (長榮交響樂團) under Gernot Schmalzfuss. [See story above.]

■ Sunday at 7:30pm
■ National Concert Hall, Taipei City
■ Tickets are NT\$500 to NT\$1,500, available through ERA ticketing or online at www.ticket.com.tw. Also available through ibon, FamiPort and Life-ET kiosks

Chou Chun-shiang Double Bass Recital (周春祥低音提琴獨奏會) has double bassist Chou Chun-shiang (周春祥) showing off the range of an instrument that is normally relegated to a supporting role. The program includes music by Hans Fryba, Gottfried von Einem, Norbert Sprongl and Fritz Lietermeyer. Chou will be accompanied on piano by Lin Hui-ying (林慧英).
■ Today at 7:30pm
■ National Recital Hall, Taipei City
■ Tickets are NT\$500, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

Contemporary

Legacy Taipei, located in a former warehouse at Huashan 1914 Creative Park (華山1914), hosts top Taiwanese pop performers and international acts. Tonight features a lineup of four groups: emo-punks **Punkhoo** (胖虎), all-girl rock band **Cherry Boom** (櫻桃幫), metal-core/emo band **831** (八三十一), and aspiring Mando-pop and R'n'B group **Magic Power** (魔幻力量). No shows are scheduled for tomorrow as of press time. On Sunday it's rap act **Nan Quan Mama** (南拳媽媽), which opens for local rock guitar hero **Marty Young** (楊沛霖). Indie band **Chemical Monkeys** (化學猴子) and funk rock group **Coach** (教練樂隊) take the stage on Wednesday.
■ Huashan 1914 Creative Park (華山1914), Center Five Hall (中五館), 1, Bade Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市八德路一段1號)
■ Shows start at 8pm tonight and Sunday, 8:30pm on Wednesday
■ Entrance is NT\$500 tonight (NT\$400 in advance), NT\$800 on Sunday (NT\$600 in advance) and NT\$500 on Wednesday (NT\$400 in advance). Tickets can be purchased at ERA ticketing outlets, online through www.ticket.com.tw or www.legacy.com.tw or at 7-Eleven ibon kiosks

Lin Zhe-yi (林哲儀), better known to partygoers as **Mykal**, spins tunes late tonight at **The Wall** (這牆). Also appearing is DJ **NT89**. Tomorrow Aboriginal folk artist **Suming** (舒米恩) makes an appearance to promote his new album [see story on Page 13]. On Sunday the venue hosts several well-established Japanese underground rock bands: girl punk legends **Shonen Knife** and indie punk band **Bloodthirsty Butchers**. Also appearing is Japanese post-rock group **Mass of the Fermenting Dregs** and two popular bands from Taiwan's indie scene, **Orangegrass** (橙草樂團) and **Boyz and Girl**.

■ 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
■ Shows start at 11:30pm tonight, 8pm tomorrow, 6pm on Sunday
■ Entrance is NT\$800 tonight (NT\$500 in advance), NT\$500 tomorrow (NT\$400 in advance) and NT\$1,300 for Sunday's show (NT\$1,000 in advance). Tickets can be purchased online through www.thewall.com.tw or tickets.books.com.tw

Tonight **Witch House** (女巫店) hosts a pair of solo performers who are banding together: guitarist **Su-jeer** (舒語) and singer-songwriter **Anie Fann** (范安婷). Tomorrow Mando-pop songwriter **Debbie Hsiao** (蕭瓊碩) performs with New York jazz pianist **Alex Pryodny**. On Thursday German expat **Santa Klaus** and **Taipei Blues** take the stage.
■ 7, Ln 56, Xinsheng S Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市新生南路三段56巷7號), Tel: (02) 2362-5494. On the Net: www.witchhouse.org
■ Performances start at 9:30pm. Restaurant/bar with queer/feminist bookstore and large collection of board games open 11am to midnight Sundays through Wednesdays, 11am to 1am Thursdays through Saturdays
■ Entrance for music shows is NT\$300

Tonight **Riverside Cafe** (河岸留言) hosts rock and fusion group **E Zzy Band**. Tomorrow folk rocker **Elisa Lin** (林依霖) shares the bill with **Rock Bang** (洛客班). On Sunday it's saxophone and bass duo **Men's Ride** (旋律的駝客). The venue hosts its weekly open jam on Monday.
■ B1, 2, Ln 244, Roosevelt Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路三段244巷2號B1), next to Taipei Power Building (台電大樓), Tel: (02) 2368-7310. On the Net: www.riverside.com.tw

HIGHLIGHT

BY DAVID CHEN



All for a good cause.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WORLD VISION

The **Watato Children's Choir**, which hails from Uganda, arrived in Taiwan earlier this week to begin a series of fund-raising concerts for Christian charity World Vision. Many of the members of the choir are children who lost their parents to civil conflict and AIDS. As such, the concerts aim to raise funds to help children in Uganda, as well as street children in India and disabled children in China, according to a press release from World Vision. The choir, which sings in English

and Swahili, performs tomorrow in Taichung at the Ming-der Girls Senior High School (明德女中) and in Hualien next week. The choir's performances in Taipei this coming Tuesday and next Saturday are already sold out. For more information, visit World Vision's Web site: www.worldvision.org.tw.
■ Tomorrow at 7pm, at Ming-der Girls Senior High School (明德女中) at 84 Mingde St, Taichung City (台中市南區明德街84號)
■ Tickets are NT\$500, reservations required. Call (02) 2175-1995

instruments." **Fusion Planet** performs on Thursday.
■ B1, 1, Ln 102, Anhe Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市安和路一段102巷1號B1), Tel: (02) 2700-5411. On the Net: www.sappho102.biz
■ Music shows begin at 10:30pm tonight and tomorrow and 10pm on all other nights
■ Entrance is NT\$150 tonight and NT\$100 tomorrow, free on other nights

EZS Live House hosts Mando-pop singers backed by a live band every night. Highlights for the week ahead include Mando-pop songstress **Julia Peng** (彭佳慧) and male crooner **Shin Lung** (辛龍), who performs every Saturday.
■ 211, Anhe Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市安和路二段211號), Tel: (02) 2738-3995. On the Net: visit www.ezs.com.tw
■ Music shows run from 9:45pm to 12:30am
■ Entrance fee (includes two drinks) ranges from NT\$600 to NT\$850, depending on the performer

Tonight **Roxy Roots** hosts rock cover band **Rubber Band**. Tomorrow night is an evening of roots, reggae and dub with **Zion Express**, **Otaku3**, **Mary Bites Kerry**, DJ @Ilenblow and DJ Shorty.
■ 90 Songren Rd, Taipei City (台北市松仁路90號), Tel: (02) 2725-3932. On the Net: www.roxy.com.tw
■ Shows start at 10pm tonight, midnight tomorrow
■ Entrance fee for music shows is NT\$300 (NT\$200 credited toward food and drinks)

Taipei Swing holds dance socials on Friday nights at **Capone's**, with live music from blues band **BoPoMoFo** (ㄅㄛㄇㄛㄝ). Dancers of all levels are welcome, and beginner's lessons are offered while the band takes a break. Tomorrow it's light rock music from **Sopernova**.
■ 312, Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段312號)
■ Live music from 9pm to 11:30pm on Fridays, 8pm to 11:30pm on Saturdays
■ On Fridays there's a minimum charge of one drink and dancers receive a free drink coupon. On Saturdays the minimum charge is NT\$300

The Wall (這牆) programs regular live rock shows at Kaohsiung's Pier 2 Arts Center (高雄駁二藝術特區). Tonight features a trio of Japanese groups: girl punk legends **Shonen Knife**, indie punk band **Bloodthirsty Butchers** and Japanese post-rock group **Mass of the Fermenting Dregs**. Also part of the bill is Taiwanese indie group **Orangegrass** (橙草樂團). Tomorrow it's post-rock group **Bugs of Phonon** (醬子蟲) and Hoklo-singing indie rockers **Windmill** (風車坊).
■ 1 Dayong Rd, Yancheng Dist, Kaohsiung City (高雄市鹽埕區大勇路1號), On the Net: pier-2.khcc.gov.tw, www.thewall.com.tw
■ Shows start at 6:30pm tonight and 7:30pm tomorrow
■ Entrance is NT\$800 tonight and NT\$400 tomorrow

Tomorrow at **The Mercury** (水星酒館), an indie rock club in Kaohsiung, it's Taichung all-girl punk band **BB Bomb** (BB彈).
■ 46 Liwen Rd, Zuoying Dist, Kaohsiung City (高雄市左營區立文路46號), Tel: (07) 550-8617. On the Net: mercurybar.blogspot.com
■ Show starts at 9:30pm
■ Entrance is NT\$200, includes one drink

THE VINYL WORD

BY QUEEN BEE



The cat is out of the bag. PHOTO COURTESY OF CUBE PRODUCTION

Summer Aquarian founder Lee Wei (李威), aka **DJ Cougar**, has probably one of the more interesting back stories of any DJ in Taiwan. He was head of a branch of the infamous Bamboo Union Gang (竹聯幫) and had achieved a notorious reputation as a gangster before he started deejaying. But despite his checkered past, the 53-year-old comes across in person as a friendly family guy who's obsessed with the latest tunes and possesses a knack for taking listeners on a musical journey when in the mix.

Vinyl Word: How did you start deejaying?

Lee Wei: I used to go to Edge a lot and ran a club called Shiva Space in Ximending. Slowly I started to collect music, and then bought my first set of DJ gear in 2002. When I went to a party, I'd observe the DJs and that's how I learned to deejay. The first gig I played was at the first Summer Aquarian in Hualien in 2002. After that I went to Europe and South America to visit some DJ friends and check out the music scenes — that really opened my eyes.

VW: What do you play?

LW: Progressive house. But actually, I just play anything that sounds good to me.

VW: How do you promote yourself?

LW: I don't. I never ask anyone to book me, but I guess lately a lot of people have listened to my mixes on Mixdj (a Web site) or Facebook and got to know me. I'm just doing my thing and I've never cared what other people think. It still surprises me sometimes when I realize, "I'm a DJ!"

VW: So you used to be a gangster? What was that like?

LW: Yeah. Before that I was a high school Chinese teacher until one day I got beat up by some students and my gangster friends got revenge for me so I lost my job. It was hard to find another job then so I joined the gang and started my mobster life. During that time I committed murder, became a fugitive, went to jail and was sentenced to life in prison. But luckily I got out and was running hostess bars until [then-Taipei City mayor] Chen Shui-bian's (陳水扁) anti-prostitution campaign shut us down.

VW: Do your gangster friends support you as a DJ?

LW: They do. I was very surprised to see a big group of them booking all the VIP booths at the beach party last Saturday. They said they just wanted to hear me play. Knowing that I prefer to keep low-key, they brought me six bottles of champagne to share with my friends and told me I could just ignore them and they wouldn't be offended.

VW: How do you prepare for a set?

LW: I listen to music every day and when I get enough new stuff I try to put it together and make a playlist. I never play the same track twice because I have too many good new tunes to go through. Beatport just gave me a lifelong discount — 20 percent off — but considering that I've spent about US\$20,000 on their Web site, it's no wonder they did that! [Laughs.]

VW: Has anything interesting happened to you recently?

LW: Yes, I was totally moved by a piece of fan mail I received recently. It was from someone who's deaf but he said he'd come out for my music with a hearing aid every time. It was really inspiring and I feel like I have more responsibilities now.

DJ Cougar plays at Floating, a rooftop party tomorrow in Ximending at the Star Hotel (絲達爾精緻商旅), 11F, 36-3, Xining S Rd, Taipei City (台北市西寧南路36-3號11樓). The party runs from 10pm to 5am. Admission is NT\$350.