

POP STOP COMPILED BY IAN BARTHOLOMEW

BY HO YI

EVENT

For the likes of **Sonia Sui** (隋棠), resolving financial difficulties is as easy as getting undressed. One of Taiwan's top models, Sui has been relatively conservative about stripping down for the camera. But after a tiff with TV station SetTV (三立電視台) over appearances on a rival station's show and the purchase of an expensive new property in Taipei's Xinyi District, the NT\$2.5 million contract for modeling a new line of lingerie will come in handy.



Fanny: You don't want to know.

PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

This is a bit of a turnaround for Sui, who in May scorned offers by an online maljong game site to pose in a bikini. According to *Next Magazine*, Sui was more than a little shy in the studio, and demanded that all unnecessary staff leave during the actual shoot. The reason for this turnaround is partly attributed to her boyfriend **Yao Yuan-hao** (姚元浩), since it was her appearance on his new program *Rookies' Diary* (新兵日記) on FTV (民視) that caused her problems with SetTV. Yao reportedly was a gentleman about the whole thing, providing flowers and support for Sui in her ordeal before the camera.

Another touching little romance that is going on out in celebrity land is the unlikely coupling of Malaysian-born singer-songwriter **Rynn Lim** (林宇中) and *otaku* lust object **Tina Li** (李毓芬). The story has acquired further savor because Li's name has long been romantically associated with **Show Luo** (羅志祥). Lim and Li have been photographed openly consorting with each other, and there are suggestions that he has even written songs for Li, who is scheduled to release a new album in the not-too-distant future. There have been no sparks of romantic rivalry from Luo as of yet, but watch this space.

Rumors that Hong Kong sweetheart **Karina Lam** (林嘉欣) has got herself knocked up have surfaced in the media as an explanation of why the award-winning actress suddenly left Hong Kong in March. She flew back to her family home in Canada, leaving behind a career already set for ever greater success. According to the *Liberty Times*, an unnamed Chinese media group received information this week that the reason for Lam's precipitate departure was that she was

pregnant. The father is said to be commercial director **Steve Yuen** (袁劍偉), who is already very much married. The relationship was something of an open secret, with Lam even moving into the same apartment building as Yuan at one time. The pregnancy is still very much at the rumor stage, but celebrity gossip hounds are no doubt already hard on the trail.

F4 girl **Fanny** has decided to be Fanny no more, and *Next Magazine* reports that she aims to follow in another F4 girl's footsteps and break into the music business under her own name: **Liu Yue-yan** (劉樂妍). The wisdom of this move is questionable as Liu has always been more appreciated for her looks than her musical talent.

She has also taken the opportunity to publicize the fact that she now sports shaved private parts, adding to her luster. Shaving and adorning the delta of Venus is not a new ploy for attracting attention in celebrity land, though the story behind Fanny's smooth look reveals the price a girl has to pay for art. Basically, it was all film director's **Tsai Ming-liang's** (蔡明亮) fault. According to *Next Magazine*, while working on Tsai's film *Help Me Eros* (幫幫我愛神), Fanny, to help save money, checked into a cheap, and as it turned out, not very clean motel. After using a bath towel provided by the establishment, she broke out in a rash, and to facilitate the application of medicated cream, opted for a shaven maven. Whether she will have the area encrusted with crystals, in the manner of **Pauline Lan** (藍心湄), or have a boyfriend's initials tattooed there, in the tradition of **Jill Yu** (于婕), remains to be seen.



Improv Everywhere stages pranks in cities around the world.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF IMPROV EVERYWHERE

## Meet up, make a scene

It was a wintry Saturday afternoon at New York's Grand Central Station. Passengers rushed through the main concourse without taking note of what was happening around them. Suddenly, more than 200 people froze at the exact same time and held their positions for five minutes. Bewildered at first, passersby soon started to laugh, and some took photographs.

This was one of the public pranks that pushed Improv Everywhere into the international spotlight. Tens of millions of people have reportedly seen the group's iconic stunts on YouTube, including such antics as the annual No Pants! Subway Ride where pranksters collectively shed their trousers on the subway.

Now the New York-based group is looking to hook up with like-minded people in Taipei. Impro Everywhere is bringing two of its more popular stunts, the *Mp3 Experiment* and *Freeze*, to

Taipei as part of the three-month long 2010 Good Time Public Art Festival (2010好時光公共藝術節), a session of public performances, art exhibitions, guided tours, lectures and artist-led workshops that runs through Nov. 20.

Touted as the largest network of pranksters ever assembled, the collective was set up by Charlie Todd in 2001 after the then-aspiring actor succeeded in passing himself off as pop singer Ben Folds at local bars, garnering free drinks and telephone numbers and getting his picture taken with strangers.

To date, Impro Everywhere has pulled off more than 100 "missions" involving tens of thousands "agents," as Todd calls them. The group now presides over an e-mail list of some 50,000 would-be agents, according to Matt Adams, who has produced videos of all Impro Everywhere missions for the past three years and is currently

in Taipei to help orchestrate the upcoming stunts.

Never before staged in an Asian city, the *Mp3 Experiment* will take place at 228 Peace Memorial Park (二二八和平紀念公園) at 2pm on Sunday. Wanna-be agents must download a 45-minute-long MP3 file but cannot listen to it prior to the event. Participants must also synchronize their watches to an atomic clock on the group's Web site (<http://improveverywhere.com>). Detailed instructions can be found at <http://improveverywhere.com/missions/the-mp3-experiments/taipei>. A Mandarin version of the audio file can be downloaded from [http://www.goodtimepublic.com.tw/goart/MP3\\_Chinese.MP3](http://www.goodtimepublic.com.tw/goart/MP3_Chinese.MP3).

The second event, *Freeze*, is a variation of the aforementioned *Frozen Grand Central* mission and has spread to more than 70 cities in 34 countries. Those interested in participating should

assemble in front of the National Taiwan Museum (國立台灣博物館) at 2 Xiangyang Rd, Taipei City (台北市興陽路2號) at 4:30pm for a pre-mission briefing. Freeze will last 15 minutes starting precisely at 5pm in front of the Shin Kong Mitsukoshi Department Store (新光三越) across from the Taipei Railway Station (台北火車站).

"As adults, we have jobs and work hard, but we don't look for new things anymore. [Improve Everywhere] gives people an excuse to break out of the set of routines they feel comfortable with, to feel present and be alive again," Adams said.

Those with further inquiries regarding the missions can call (02) 2523-8852 X14 or send an e-mail to [joannasun@v-e-r-y.com](mailto:joannasun@v-e-r-y.com).

For more information about the Good Time Public Art Festival, search for "好時光公共藝術節" on Facebook.

## MUSIC

BY BRADLEY WINTERTON

### Open season



The National Symphony Orchestra performs artist and composer I-Uen Wang Hwang's *Diptych of Taiwan* on Sept. 17 to open its 2010-2011 season.

PHOTO COURTESY OF I-UEN WANG HWANG

The National Symphony Orchestra opens its 2010-2011 season on Sept. 17 with a concert combining the highly traditional with the totally new.

The connection between music and painting has always been strong, though more often implied than openly expressed. The terms impressionism, post-impressionism, modernism and post-modernism, though originating in the visual arts, have been applied equally to both mediums. I even attended a jazz concert in Taipei a couple of years ago where a painter completed an entire new picture during one improvised item.

But the link is rarely as explicit as in next Friday's concert at the National Concert Hall where the 22-minute *Diptych of Taiwan* by Taiwanese artist and composer I-Uen Wang Hwang (王怡雯) will form the main item in the first half of the evening.

In the European Middle Ages a diptych was a pair of paintings hinged together, usually for display in a church. Hwang has therefore composed a piece in two movements, each based on her own paintings. The first pair of paintings depict the goddess Guanyin (觀音) and the mountain in Tamsui named after her. The second pair evoke a Matsuo (媽祖) festival.

The music for the two movements is

unsurprisingly very different, but both feature the *erhu* (二胡) and *guzheng* (古箏). The first movement suggests the sunsets for which Tamsui is famous and so is slow to start, then resplendent, then finally fades away, like all sunsets. The second is boisterous, noisy and crowded with incidents like all festivals, though with a tranquil middle section that represents Matsuo's blessing.

Hwang studied in the US and won two important prizes at the University of Pennsylvania (one of them twice). And in 2004 she won the New York Musicians' Club piano composition competition.

For the rest, the NSO will play Mahler's Symphony No. 5, hoping perhaps to attract patrons with the famous Adagio, the symphony's fourth movement, undoubtedly the best-known piece of music Mahler ever wrote. The evening and the NSO season opens with Mendelssohn's overture *The Hebrides*. The orchestra's maestro Liu Shao-chia (呂紹嘉) will conduct.

Season Opening Concert — Mahler No. 5 (NSO馬勒系列開季音樂會—馬勒第五), Sept. 17 at 7:30pm at the National Concert Hall, Taipei. As of press time, only NT\$600 and NT\$800 tickets were left. Tickets are available at the NTCH box office, online at [www.artsticket.com.tw](http://www.artsticket.com.tw) or by calling (02) 3393-9888.

## RESTAURANTS

BY NOAH BUCHAN

BY HO YI

### Milano Indonesian Cuisine (印天下)

Address: 11 Pucheng Street, Taipei City (台北市浦城街11號)

Telephone: (02) 2363-1106 Open: 11am to 9pm

Average meal: NT\$500 for two

Details: Picture menu in Chinese, English and Indonesian, credit cards accepted

On my first visit to Milano, the oddly named Indonesian restaurant that opened four months ago in an alley close to Shida night market (師大夜市), I kept making eye contact with a man who was furiously waving a fan in a futile attempt to keep cool. Only one of the dining room's two air conditioners was on and it took repeated requests before the servers turned on the other. So much for service, I thought.

Two weeks later, on my second visit, the air was cooler and the service had improved considerably: So much for first impressions. With Taipei's large Indonesian population, it's surprising that there aren't more restaurants serving the country's cuisine. Milano is a welcome addition to Shida night market, which of late has seen a number of restaurants opening that are heavy on hamburgers.

As I am unfamiliar with Indonesian cuisine, my initial visit saw me play it safe: chicken soto (soup) with glass noodles (NT\$100), yellow chicken curry (NT\$150) and fried morning glory with baby shrimp and red chilies (NT\$100). These dishes all stood out for containing a minimum amount of oil (especially surprising for the soup and curry) and cooked to bring out the natural flavors of the ingredients.

Satisfied that the kitchen staff knew what they were doing, my next visit saw me become a little more experimental with flavor combinations. The grilled fish with spicy Balinese dressing (NT\$170)



Milano's menu of spicy and savory Indonesian dishes hits the spot.

PHOTO: NOAH BUCHAN, TAIPEI TIMES

was a delightful combination of flavors. The spicy and sour sauce coating the fish went well with the light flavor of the flesh and served as an interesting counterpoint to the fiery hot Balinese dressing. The sauce that came with deep-fried crispy egg pancake stuffed with vegetables (NT\$80) also packed a spicy punch.

With my mouth aflame from the sauces, the arrival of the six-piece chicken satay (NT\$160) granted a degree of relief. The savory chunky peanut gravy and slightly sweet barbecue marinade went well with the taste of the grilled meat. We also ordered nasi goreng (NT\$120), an Indonesian fried rice that was infused with baby shrimp, sliced fish balls and topped with a fried egg and chicken drumstick. It didn't make much of an impression and seemed more like a lunch box served on a plate.

Milano features a number of Indonesian-inspired desserts and drinks that are worth a try. I went with cendol

(NT\$60), a dessert consisting of coconut milk, brown sugar, green jelly (similar to the kind found in pearl milk tea) and ice. After the spicy meal, it was very refreshing and not too sweet.

As the majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim, my server assured me that all the food on the menu is halal, or permissible according to Islamic law. Balinese masks and tapestries depicting the country's famous puppet theater adorn the vanilla walls and add to the restaurant's Indonesian atmosphere.

Milano has a second location in Tianmu at 33 Zhenxing St, Taipei City (台北市振興街33號).

When Tsui Yungmei (崔詠梅) moved with her Taiwanese husband from Dalian, China, to Taiwan, she brought her home cooking too.

The couple opened Dalian Eatery in 2002, and with her highly regarded Chinese fare, served in a homely setting, they built up a steady stream of patrons.

Dalian Eatery's most popular items are its pickle and pork hot pot (酸菜白肉火鍋), as evidenced by the copper pots bubbling away on many a dining table, and scallion pancake with pork (蔥肉大餅).

The hot pot is even a popular order during the dog days of summer. Luckily the air conditioner is set at a no-sweat temperature.

On a recent visit, my dining partner and I ordered our usual: the hot pot (NT\$490), which is enough for two.

The pot comes with vegetables, tofu, pork belly, handmade pork balls, chunks of pig blood cake, cellophane noodles and Chinese cabbage that has been pickled for 20 days and is the star of the show.

Compared to other restaurants' versions of the hot pot, Dalian Eatery's pickled cabbage, which is tart yet fruity, dominates the other ingredients.

The pork belly is boiled to remove excess fat and then cooled before being served. As it's already been cooked, precision is key when immersing the pork in the pot — a tad too long and it quickly spoils.

A selection of dipping sauces is available, including fermented tofu, garlic and chili versions, and the restaurant's signature seasoning, which is a little bit of everything mixed together.

The hot pot comes in two larger sizes (NT\$1,100 and NT\$1,600) and can be customized from a wide selection of ingredients, including shrimp (NT\$280), mutton (NT\$260), pork intestine (NT\$220) and jelly fungus (木耳, NT\$80).

Unfortunately, the blood sausage (NT\$220), a northeastern Chinese delicacy, is available only during winter months.

A trip to Dalian Eatery isn't complete without eating the scallion pancake with pork (NT\$180). It's a satisfying combo of smoked pork slices and fresh scallion wrapped in a warm pancake smothered in a sweet and savory sauce.

Also worth a try is the chive



The pickle and pork hot pot and scallion pancake with pork are two must-orders at Dalian Eatery.

PHOTO: HO YI, TAIPEI TIMES

### Dalian Eatery (大連風味館)

Address: 175-1, Fuxing S Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市復興南路二段175-1號)

Telephone: (02) 2325-4877 Open: 11am to 2pm and 5pm to 9pm

Average meal: NT\$400

Details: Chinese menu, credit cards not accepted