



In these straitened times, it's reassuring to know that some things in life are still free. Just ask those who have been to High Heels and Hi-Tops. Not only do music-savvy foreigners and Taiwanese dig the night, but the Top-40-loving type of clubber can also get a kick out of it.

It's the slowest month of the year, but the High Heels crew is touring the country with stops in Taipei, Taichung and Kaohsiung. They're also supporting **Tittsworth** at Plush on Jan. 29.

Tittsworth is a world-renowned US DJ famous for playing "Bmore club"—a mash-up of club, rock, electro, drum and bass, hip-hop and house.

The combination of five DJs and one MC (**Marcus Aurelius, Cap, Sofa Kings** aka LEO37 and **Charles, Digit and 2Hands**) is rooted in hip-hop, but the crew swears their party isn't all about hip-hop.

"There's a lot of funk thrown in there along with electro, dancehall and even some sweet soul music at the end of the night when everyone is feeling it," Aurelius says.

But that's not the only thing that differentiates High Heels from other parties. "We have a very unique DJ rotation in that everyone gets a chance to play twice a night, instead of once. And all the DJs involved have very different styles," says LEO37. "Thanks to all these factors, we're able to appeal to everyone. So even if you don't like a song now, you will shortly ... in that sense, everyone not only leaves happy, but they take away some great songs and moments that they wouldn't have received at a standard party."

But High Heels is more than just one night at a party with DJs. "We are also blogging like mad, giving out 'MPfreees' and sharing our musical knowledge and opinions with everyone else," says Aurelius.

On the Net: www.highheelsandhitops.wordpress.com. High Heels and Hi-Tops lands tonight at 1981 Bar, 1, Alley 2, Ln 70, Yanji St, Taipei City (台北市延吉街70巷2弄1號). Admission is free. From 11pm to 3am. Tomorrow it's at the Pig and Whistle from 9pm to 4am, 199 Siwei 4th Rd, Kaohsiung City (高雄市四維路199號). Entry is free.

What is dub, a term that is banded about quite liberally these days? According to Wikipedia, the bastion of reliability and font of all knowledge: "The dub sound consists predominantly of instrumental remixes of existing recordings and is achieved by significantly manipulating and reshaping the recordings, usually by removing the vocals from an existing music piece, emphasizing the drum and bass frequencies or 'riddim,' adding extensive echo and reverb effects, panoramic LR delay, and dubbing occasional snippets of lyrics from the original version." Capiche?

If you still don't have a clue, get educated tomorrow at The Dub Supervisors. The sound system is being beefed up with a 1000-watt subwoofer for the show.

"We have gathered an all-star line up of reggae bands, hip-hop MCs, rockers and DJs to assemble The Dub Supervisors," says **Saucey**. "And because of all our busy schedules, we can only host this show once in a blue moon."

The Dub Supervisors are High Tide, **Stephan, Saucey, Rankin Kim, Shaman, Richie Patridge** and selectors **Ting, Katzu** and **Taill**. Entry is NT\$350 with one drink. VU Live House, B1, 77, Wuchang St Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市武昌街二段77號B1). Doors open at 11pm and the party begins at 11:30pm. — QUEEN BEE

Meet The Sofa Kings.
PHOTO COURTESY OF JOE RUSSO



Dafu Jazz Trio performs tonight at **Sappho de Base**, while Canadian-UK folk and roots group **The Dana Wylie Band** appears tomorrow night. On Tuesday it's **Free Breathing Ensemble** (世界軌跡), which features the sounds of tabla, bass, accordion and violin. On Wednesday, **The Chris Stiles Jazz Trio** plays original compositions, while the **Sea Journey Jazz Combo** (海洋知音爵士樂團), a four-piece group with vibraphone, bass, drums and guitar, plays on Thursday.

► B1, Ln 102, Anhe Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市安和路一段102巷1號B1). Call (02) 2700-5411 (after 9pm) or visit www.sappho102.biz for more information
► Performances begin at 10:30pm on weekends, 10pm on weekdays
► No admission fee

Tonight at **Tone 56 Live Bar** **Rubber Band** plays rock, pop and dance music. House band **Loaded**, which plays rock covers, appears tomorrow. On Sunday it's an open acoustic jam.
► 1F, 56, Minquan E Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市民權東路三段56號1樓), near the corner of Fuxing North (復興北) and Minquan East (民權東) roads. Tel: (02) 2517-3869
► Music shows go from 9:30pm to 12:30am tonight and tomorrow, and 7:30pm to 9:30pm on Sunday
► No admission fee

Tonight at **Underworld** (地下社), it's psychedelic alt-rock band Flat

Club (假文藝青年俱樂部) and hip-hop rockers **Living Force** (存活勢力). Tomorrow **Sons of Homer**, a rocking quintet of mock-hipsters [see story on Page 15], and **The Originals**, a band that plays mash-ups of popular rock, take to the stage. On Wednesday it's **Summerbred** (夏生—人大樂隊) and **Red Coat**.
► B1, 45 Shida Rd, Taipei City (台北市師大路45號B1). Call (02) 2369-0103 or visit www.upsaid.com/underworld for more information
► Music shows tonight and tomorrow are from 9:30pm to 11:30pm, and 9pm to 11pm on Wednesdays. Bar open daily from 9pm, except Mondays
► Entrance for the music shows is NT\$300 tonight and tomorrow and includes one drink; shows on Wednesdays are NT\$100

Tonight **Bliss** hosts **Sons of Homer**. [See story on Page 15.] Tomorrow electro-rock and multimedia band **Gross Fugue** appears with disco punk DJs **Sound Sister Syndicate**.
► 148, Xinyi Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市信義路四段148號), one block east of Dunhua South Road (敦化南路). Call Bliss at (02) 2702-1855 or log on at www.bliss-taipei.com. For more information on live performances at Bliss, visit www.myspace.com/blisslivehouse
► Tomorrow at 10pm. Bar/kitchen open from 7pm daily. Ladies night Fridays; women get one free cocktail of their choice
► NT\$200 cover for the music shows tonight and tomorrow



Glaswegian quintet Mogwai is on the road again promoting a sixth studio LP.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WALL

Mogwai: celestial euphony or solar wind?

"If the stars had a sound, it would sound like this." A bold statement and the promotional plug for Scotland's post-rock ensemble Mogwai, which plays live tonight at The Wall (這牆).

Taken from the opening sample of *Yes! We Are a Long Way From Home* on their debut LP *Young Team*, the line marks both a musical dawn and now a return to Taipei for the Glaswegian quintet, this time peddling their latest studio album *The Hawk Is Howling*.

Often likened to their better-known Icelandic peers Sigur Ros and the Canadian collective Godspeed! You Black Emperor, Mogwai — Martin Bulloch on drums, Stuart Braithwaite on guitar, Barry Burns on guitar and various instruments, Dominic Aitchison on bass and John Cummings on guitar — are master-craftsmen of richly detailed, layer-cake rock.

A miscellany of tone and style, *The Hawk* features the band's climactic heights, rock action and lucidity that are found in varying degrees in its discography. A feature (or non-feature) most notable to first-time listeners would be the complete absence of lyrics or vocal melody.

Though *The Hawk* may be dissected in terms of style and form, without words Mogwai's greater message remains clouded and is arguably better determined by the listener than the band.

Best-selling crime writer and fan Ian Rankin recently commented on the absurdity of describing Mogwai's work: "It's completely redundant ... Mogwai paint pictures in sound; no words needed," he said.

Nonetheless we thought it worth offering them the chance. Last week, Stuart Braithwaite answered a few of our questions by e-mail.

Taipei Times: Which tracks have you been playing most on the tour? What goes down well?

Stuart Braithwaite: We've been playing six songs from the new record on tour as well as a few from each of our old records. I think that the song that has been best received has been *Batcat*.

TT: Can you tell me about your set list for Taipei? What should people expect who go to see you in Taipei?

SB: I don't know yet exactly but probably 12 or so good Mogwai songs with very few mistakes.

TT: What do you perceive to be the highs and lows of your output to date and what have been the biggest factors in shaping that?

SB: I think that we've mostly kept quite a high standard in our records but my favorites are *Come On Die Young* and *Happy Songs for Happy People*. I think that the reason for those being so good was that they were fun to make, which makes a big difference.

[EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT]

Exhibitions

You Are My Flowers (你是我的花) 名家花卉小品展 Capital Art Center celebrates the New Year with an exhibition on flowers that includes water colors, oil paintings and multi-media works in impressionistic, expressionistic and post-modern styles by renowned artists including Max Liu (劉其偉) and Chang Yi-hsiung (張義雄).
► Capital Art Center (首都藝術中心), 2F, 343, Renai Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市仁愛路四段343號2樓). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am to 7pm. Tel: (02) 2775-5268
► Until Jan. 24

New Animamix (新動漫) features works by such renowned figures in Asian art as Yoshitaka Amano, from Japan; Kim Don Yoo, Kwon Kisoo, Eddie Kang and Lee Lee Nam from South Korea; China's Tang Zhigan (唐志岡) and Taiwan's Liao Yu-an (廖堉安) and Hung Yi (洪易). Also included in the exhibit are works by super-realist, post-pop artist duo Thukral & Tagra, from India. Animamix is an art movement that draws from the aesthetics of anime and comics.
► Metaphysical Art Gallery (形而上畫廊), 7F, 219, Dunhua S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段219號7樓). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 11am to 6:30pm. Tel: (02) 2771-3236
► Until Feb. 28

Special Recipe of Galerie Grand

Siecle (私房菜) Galerie Grand Siecle has invited multimedia and performance artist Chen Yung-hsien (陳永賢) and digital artists Kuo I-chen (郭奕臣) and Wang Ya-Hui (王雅慧) to celebrate its 10th birthday. The six works on display consist of the trio's rarely seen video, installation and digital pieces, which were made between 2002 and 2007.
► Galerie Grand Siecle (新苑藝術), 17, Alley 51, Ln 12, Bade Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市八德路三段12巷51弄17號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 1pm to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2578-5630
► Until Feb. 2

Masters' Collection Exhibition (名家典藏展) is an exhibition of more than 40 paintings by celebrated realist artists from Taiwan, China and Russia. The works include portraits, landscapes and still lifes.
► Cathay United Art Center (國泰世華藝術中心), 7F, 236 Dunhua N Rd, Taipei City (台北市敦化北路236號7樓). Open Mondays to Saturdays from 10am to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2717-0988
► Until Feb. 6

Cyber-ring (虛擬迴圈), the latest extension of the "Cyberbeings" series that Laza Wu (吳梓寧) has been working on since 2004, is a fantastical representation of cyber space with a glass floor and 360-degree projections.
► National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts (國立台灣美術館), 2, Wuchuan W Rd Sec 1, Taichung City (台中市五權西路一段2號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 9am to 5pm. Tel: (04) 2372-3552
► Until Feb. 8

RESTAURANTS

Ala-din Indian & Pakistani Kitchen (阿拉丁)

Address: 101 Raohe St, Taipei City (台北市饒河街101號)
Telephone: (02) 2765-9991
Open: Daily from 5pm to 1am
Average meal: NT\$350 for sit-down dining; NT\$80 for roti rolls from the grill
Details: English and Chinese menu; credit cards not accepted

Ala-din Indian & Pakistani Kitchen (阿拉丁) is in the middle of the crowded Raohe Street night market, and if your stomach is growling it might be hard to resist the temptation to sate yourself on the rows and rows of finger food and fried desserts you pass as you wind your way to the restaurant. But if you hold out long enough, Ala-din's roti rolls will satisfy your hungry belly and its spicy curries will have your forehead beading with sweat.

The restaurant's grill is out in front to entice browsers with kebabs and vegetables cooking on skewers; a plain and narrow but neat dining room stretches behind. With the exception of a famous oamisia shop at 49 Raohe St (饒河街49號), you'd be hard-pressed to find a better snack (or light meal) in this night market than Ala-din's roti rolls (NT\$80): the chapatti is made right before your eyes from dough that's twirled then heated on a dry tava, and the portions of meat and vegetables come hot off the grill and are not to be scoffed at.

Because of their extensive menu and customizable set meals, Ala-din's ordering system for sit-down diners might seem somewhat Byzantine — but, to be honest, the only reason the process was complicated was the two waitresses who hovered around our table and recited a list of options several times despite our insistence that we wanted to take our time with the menu. Perhaps the staff is used to dealing with customers who lack basic familiarity with South Asian cuisine, in which case such over-attentive service might be a plus.

In the end, we picked a beef masala set meal (牛肉濃汁瑪沙拉, NT\$650) for two, as well as a plate of beef kebab (牛肉巴比Q, NT\$260). Another order for channa masala, or chickpeas cooked in curry, was never delivered, but that ended up being a good thing because of the amount of food in the set meal: the beef masala, a bountiful heap of basmati rice, naan, a plate of vegetables, bowls of tomato and vegetable soup, Indian tea and lemon honey juice.

Diners have the options of having their curries prepared slightly spicy, medium spicy or very spicy. Our beef masala was slightly spicy, but still hotter than curries at other popular Indian and Pakistani restaurants in Taipei, while the chunks of beef were reasonably tender. The vegetables, however, which included squash, peas and cabbage, were a tad overcooked and soggy and both drinks were forgettable, but the basmati rice, soup and naan were delicious. The latter, a flatbread baked in a tandoori oven, was particularly good: chewy and dense enough to scoop up plenty of curry with. The extra order of beef kebab outshone the beef masala. It was tender, savory and moist.

— CATHERINE SHU



Let them eat microwaved meatballs.

PHOTO: IAN BARTHOLOMEW, TAIPEI TIMES

Cafe Bastille III

Address: 7 Wenzhou St, Taipei City (台北市溫州街7號)
Telephone: (02) 2362-9981
Open: Daily from 8am to 11pm
Average meal: NT\$200
Details: Chinese and English menu; free wireless Internet

When the first Cafe Bastille opened off Shida Road (20, Ln 60, Taishun St, Taipei City, 台北市泰順街60巷20號) nearly six years ago, people went there for the Belgium beer and the slightly artistic and alternative vibe. It has since expanded with a second location near National Taiwan University (91 Wenzhou St, Taipei City, 台北市溫州街91號) and last month opened its third, on Wenzhou Street near the corner with Heping East Road (和平東路).

This expansion has seen facilities upgraded, but in other areas Cafe Bastille has dropped the ball.

The space itself at the newest addition is appealing, with big windows and a narrow veranda to make the most of sunny days. Tables are nicely spaced, giving some level of privacy, and the mismatched contemporary furnishings show a good eye for design. The menu is large, but unfortunately variety does not make up for quality.

There is breakfast, there is afternoon tea, there are quick meals ranging from Thai lemon fish to meatballs, there are finger foods, sweets, Belgian beer, cocktails, wine and numerous varieties of coffee and tea — all designed for quick, easy preparation, which is evident in what comes to the table.

While it is certain that the Belgian beers, which constitute one of Cafe Bastille's principle appeals, are unaffected, the meals (from NT\$170) are so obviously out of a packet that I was somewhat aghast. "Brazen" is the word that came to mind.

There is a plentitude of "coffee shops" that sell pre-packaged food around the Shida area, but most make some effort, no matter how pathetic, to disguise or at least decorate the contents of the can (or packet) of food they serve. Bastille III is above, or below, such deception. It didn't help that the staff didn't know how to operate a microwave, serving up a plate of barbeque meatballs and penne that was partially cold. This discovery was particularly galling as I only dug into the meatballs after overcoming a very real abhorrence to the sight of the slimy khaki substance that was supposed to be the gravy.

Japanese teppanyaki, Italian lasagna and French seafood paella round out this international tour de farce. The tapas menu, which is how the range of finger foods was described, includes popcorn (NT\$150), mozzarella sticks (NT\$280), a variety of cocktails and, of course, Belgian beer. Service was minimalist, though a member of staff was kind enough to point out the conveniently situated power sockets so that I could use my laptop. The Wi-Fi connection was excellent, and the coffee adequate.

As a place for drinks with friends, the pleasant, airy space and the huge menu have a certain appeal, but the sophistication of Bastille III extends no further than the decoration and beer.

The restaurant/bar has a basement area that can be used for small performances and exhibitions.

— IAN BARTHOLOMEW