

AROUND TOWN

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2010

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[MUSIC]

A-Lin makes a rare appearance

*The Aboriginal songstress performs at Riverside Cafe tonight*BY ANDREW C.C. HUANG
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

A-Lin (real name Huang Li-ling (黃麗玲), an Aboriginal R 'n' B songstress whose anthem *Lovelorn, Not Guilty* (失戀無罪) inspired numerous tributes by TV talent show contestants, performs a rare public concert titled A-Lin September's Happiness Party (A-Lin 九月幸福 Party) at Riverside Cafe (河岸留言) tonight.

The pop siren, known for her Mariah Carey-esque range and poignant delivery, will tackle covers of Wan Fan (萬芳) and Sandy Lam's (林憶蓮) songs.

In stark contrast to the sentimental and melancholic love songs usually found on the Mando-pop charts, A-Lin is known for her empowering ballads, such as *Lovelorn, Not Guilty* and *Before After*.

"The songwriter wrote *Lovelorn, Not Guilty* as a song to encourage people who suffer from a broken heart," A-Lin said in a telephone interview yesterday.

Her views on romance shun sentimentality. "If you don't love me, just leave me," she said. "I don't like to be a victim and cry at home."

"I am an optimistic person. I want to encourage people to face life with a happier outlook," she said.

As well as singing inspirational songs, A-Lin admires accomplished female performers.

"I think Momoko Tao (陶晶瑩) is really a strong female model for all of us," she said. "I read the Web site started by Tao about female issues."

Performing in pubs since the age of 16, A-Lin was discovered by her current agent while singing Christina Aguilera's *Beautiful* at Taipei's EZ5 live house.

A member of the Amis tribe (阿美族), A-Lin was handpicked by A-mei (張惠妹), also an Amis, to star in her hit 2006 musical *Carmen* (愛上卡門) in the supporting role of Micaela.

Since her debut album *Lovelorn, Not Guilty* in 2006, A-Lin released *Natural Diva* (天生歌姬) in 2008 and *Before After* (以前以後) in December last year.

A-Lin plans to release her next album this December, for which she says she'll move into more up-tempo territory.

PERFORMANCE NOTES

WHAT: A-Lin, September's Happiness Party (A-Lin 九月幸福 Party)

WHEN: Tonight at 9pm

WHERE: Riverside Cafe (河岸留言), B1, 2, Ln 244, Roosevelt Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路三段244巷2號B1), Tel: (02) 2368-7310

ADMISSION: Tickets are NT\$400, are available at www.riverside.com.tw

ON THE NET: www.avex.com.tw/alin

View to a thrill

BY DAVID CHEN
STAFF REPORTER

Some of Taiwan's best-known indie-rock bands are part of a weekend festival that starts tonight on the rooftop gardens of Eslite Bookstore's flagship store on Xinyi Road.

Rooftop Live!, which Eslite started in 2007, was inspired by the Beatles' legendary rooftop concert in London, held just before the group disbanded.

After a hiatus last year, the event returns with popular acts such as Tizzy Bac, Sugar Plum Ferry (甜梅號) and 1976 lead singer Chen Ray-kai (陳瑞凱), aka Ah-kai (阿凱).

Indie-rock fans will have the rare chance to enjoy live performances in an idyllic setting, at least compared to the usual venues such as The Wall (這牆) or Underworld (地下社會).

Eslite's seventh floor rooftop gardens, which can hold more than 1,000 people and offer close-up views of neighboring Taipei 101 and the East District (東區), are only open to the public for the Rooftop Live! concerts, said Evelyn Tsai (蔡孟庭) of the store's PR department.

This year the event is taking on a space fantasy theme, with Eslite's glass window complex and terrace serving as "Station No. 11" (named after the store's address) for the event's "rock spaceship."

Tsai says concertgoers can expect to see futuristic decor in the stage design, as well as a few "surprises."

The modern rock from this weekend's lineup of solid bands ought to suit the sci-fi theme. Unsurprisingly, Tizzy Bac's show tomorrow is already sold out.

Tonight's headline act is Bearbabes (熊寶貝), a versatile trio whose sound ranges from slow-core rock to catchy power-pop.

Also on the bill are polished indie-rockers 13 (拾參樂團), and Ah-Kai of 1976, who will make a guest appearance with Bearbabes.

On Sunday, Sugar Plum Ferry, one of Taiwan's first and longest-running post-rock groups, headlines a program that also features Orangegrass (橙草), which mixes post-rock grooves and emo vocals, and female-led indie-pop outfit Miss Stocking (絲襪小姐).

Beer and other refreshments will be on sale. The concerts will still go on in the event of light rain, says Tsai, but check the event's Web site for possible rescheduling announcements.

Tickets will only be available through 7-Eleven ibon kiosks (they can be booked through indievox.com), and not at the door. For last-minute ticket-buyers, there is a 7-Eleven store in the basement of Eslite.

EVENT NOTES

WHAT: Rooftop Live! A weekend of concerts on the seventh floor outdoor terrace at Eslite Xinyi Store (誠品信義店), 11 Songgao Rd, Taipei City (台北市松高路11號)

WHEN: Starts at 7pm tonight (doors open at 6pm), 5pm tomorrow and Sunday (doors open at 4pm)

ON THE NET: www.rooftoplive.com.tw

ADMISSION: Tickets are NT\$850 per night, available at 7-Eleven ibon kiosks (no ticket sales at the door). Tomorrow's show with Tizzy Bac is sold out

DETAILS: As Tropical Storm Fanapi could affect the weather this weekend, check with the venue for last-minute schedule changes



SCHEDULE

TONIGHT

Bearbabes (熊寶貝)
13 (拾參樂團)
Ah-kai (阿凱) of 1976

TOMORROW (SOLD OUT)

Tizzy Bac
Come On Baby Baby (來吧！
焙焙)
Hola Sisters

SUNDAY

Sugar Plum Ferry (甜梅號)
Orangegrass (橙草)
Miss Stocking (絲襪小姐)



Clockwise from top: Miss Stocking, Bearbabes, Sugar Plum Ferry and 13 perform at Rooftop Live!, an annual indie rock festival held on the rooftop terrace of Eslite Bookstore.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ESLITE BOOKSTORE



PHOTO COURTESY OF AVEX TAIWAN

Expect the unexpected

*Guessing what a capella group B Vocal will come up with in any particular appearance is part of the attraction*BY BRADLEY WINTERTON
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Spanish a capella group B Vocal returns to Taiwan for their third visit this weekend. They're five men from Zaragoza, currently on tour in Asia. How to categorize them is difficult, except to say that they are very, very funny.

They're not in their first youth, yet they perform a huge variety of songs and other musical items. All you see is five men in black suits with hand-held microphones, and indeed that's all they are. But with their voices alone they impersonate famous artists past and present from Elvis Presley to Robbie Williams, together with opera singers and Renaissance madrigalists, and in addition fill in any instrumental backing that's appropriate (or not), all with their voices alone.

They've been hugely popular, both in concert halls, on Spanish TV, and at all kinds of receptions, expos and festivals. They're just what's required, it seems, to get

everyone into a good mood, and there's no limit to the events that welcome exactly that.

Is it possible to take a serious line on them? Only in as far as comedy always has its serious implications. They're certainly satiric, but because they're satiric of just about everything and anything it's hard to discern any particular point of view.

Do they ever take anything at face value? Yes. They perform madrigals and jazz classics, and indeed just what they're going to come up with in any particular appearance is always part of the attraction. Comedy isn't often far away, though, with a dog barking and a cat howling emerging above at least one Renaissance vocal line.

The only way to find out what they have in store for Taiwan this time is to go along. They're appearing in Kaohsiung tonight, at Novel Hall (新舞臺) in Taipei on Sunday and in Taichung on Monday.

Meanwhile, the National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) is offering altogether more weighty material in Taipei's National Concert Hall next weekend. We're not giving advance notice in any expectation that tickets will sell out — far from it. Bruckner has never appealed much to Taiwanese tastes, and it's not hard to see why. Long ago he was coupled with Mahler as one of a pair of eccentric Viennese. Today Mahler's stock is riding high, while

poor old Bruckner continues to puff his way laboriously along, often at enormous length. Some modern conductors have even expressed their uncertainty as to whether his symphonies are really worth the effort.

But the NSO is plunging into his Fourth Symphony as if there were no tomorrow, with conductor Lu Shao-chia (呂紹嘉) opting for the work's 1878-1880 version. Bruckner, country bumpkin that he always thought he was, was forever re-writing his works in the hope of making them more attractive to his sophisticated city patrons. In the case of the Fourth Symphony, he actually wrote seven versions. The one the NSO will play was the one performed at the work's premiere

in 1881. It lasts 70 minutes, so if you go along you'd better get prepared for the long haul. On the other hand, this symphony, in this version, was Bruckner's first major success with the smart Viennese, and it remains his most popular composition today.

The concert begins with Weber's *Sechs Stucke* ("six pieces") for Large Orchestra, also in a revised version, in this case undertaken in 1928. This work, though important in the history of serial composition (i.e. a composition not in any specific key, and so sounding excessively dissonant to most ears), will doubtless make many grateful for the courtly harmoniousness of Haydn's First Cello Concerto, which follows. The soloist will be the charismatic German cellist Alban Gerhardt (also on an Asian tour). You can see him and hear him playing on his Web site, and also read his blog, at www.albangerhardt.com/english/index.html.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW ASPECT

PERFORMANCE NOTES

WHAT: B Vocal

WHERE: Kaohsiung Cultural Center's Chih-teh Hall (高雄市立文化中心至德堂), 67 Wufu 1st Rd, Kaohsiung City, (高雄市五福一路67號); Novel Hall (新舞臺), 3-1 Songshou Rd, Taipei City (台北市松壽路3-1號); Chunghsing Concert Hall, Taichung (台中中興堂), 291-3 Cingwu Rd, Taichung City (台中市精武路291-3號)

WHEN: Tomorrow at 7:30pm (Kaohsiung), Sunday at 7:30pm (Taipei), Monday at 7:30pm (Taichung)

ADMISSION: Tickets are NT\$400 to NT\$1,500 (Kaohsiung), NT\$500 to NT\$2,000 (Taipei), NT\$400 to NT\$1,600 (Taichung), available online at www.artsticket.com.tw or by calling (07) 226-5998 in Kaohsiung, (02) 3393-9888 in Taipei or (04) 2208-0128 in Taichung

WHAT: National Symphony Orchestra, Passing On — From Modern Through Classic to Romantic (NSO維也納世世代對話系列—穿越浪漫200年)

WHERE: National Concert Hall, Taipei City

WHEN: Sept. 25 at 7:30pm

ADMISSION: NT\$400 to NT\$1,500, available at the National Concert Hall box office, online at www.artsticket.com.tw or by calling (02) 3393-9880