

Editor's Note

While Shanghai offers a broad spectrum of mainstream entertainment, what about the not-so-mainstream? The biweekly column focuses on more experimental and avant-garde arts, movie, music and drama.

Music

New releases from High Note Records

Artist: Various Artists
Title: In House 6
Genre: House, dance, electronica, down-tempo
The most enjoyable sessions keeping up with dance/house/down-tempo/indie-dance music waves, the album includes all billboard and UK Chart No. 1 hits. Also included are masterworks from the world's No. 1 and champion DJ Armin van Buuren as well as French House legend Bob Sinclar.

Artist: Various Artists
Title: Les Parfums de Paris
Genre: Jazz, French pop



Paris' intoxicating music has kept people longing for more. "Les Parfums de Paris" opens the door to an enchanting journey, sprinkled with adoration and joy, as well as a dash of tears and yearning. Twelve completely reinterpreted masterpieces such as "Lar Mer" from French Kiss, "La Vie en Rose" from La Mome and much more.

Artist: Various Artists
Title: OM Miami 2009
Genre: House
Om Miami 2009 reflects the current sound that has taken underground dance music by storm. On top of consisting of all the newest tracks from the label's highly respected arsenal such as Mark Farina, Fred Everything, Home & Garden, Mike Monday, and Chuck Love.

High Note Records
Address: 455 Fahuazhen Rd
Tel: 5259-9922

Live Music

"Happy Avenue" with their new album

The Beijing rock band, celebrating their 10th anniversary today, has released their second album last year. Tonight, they will play at Shanghai's veteran music warehouse Yuyintang, part of their national tour promoting the album.
Date: April 10, 8pm
Venue: Yuyintang, 1731

Yan'an Rd W.
Tel: 5237-8662
Tickets: 60 yuan

"Glorious Guitar" Live

It's a party for all guitar lovers, with live performances by veteran band "Old Street" and "Third Party." Band members will stay to join the party too, with barbecue and some independent movies.
Date: April 11, 8:30pm
Venue: 021 bar, 1436 Jungong Rd
Tickets: 60 yuan

Movie

Screening of Films by Hou Hsiao-hsien



The Taiwanese director is one of those young film lovers who started the Taiwan New Wave Movement in 1980s. It's almost 30 years and they probably haven't revived the film market completely as they wished. But their master works will always be part of the film history.
Date: April 10, 12, 15, 18pm
Venue: 021 bar, 1436, Jungong Rd
Tickets: 30 yuan

April Screening of LomoPlay at Loft

LomoPlay is a small studio in a deep land at Hongkou District, the original site of China's first movie theater. Twelve selected films will be shown during the weekends of April.
Date: Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, 7pm
Venue: LomoPlay, No. 15, Lane 316, Haining Rd
Tel: 136-619-90524
Tickets: 30 yuan

Drama

"Le You Yuan"

Every member of the cast and crew was born after 1980s, a once criticized generation. The absurdist drama invites and even pushes audiences to ponder on the destined and the absurd in life.
Date: April 17, 24, 25, 7:30pm
Address: Mecooon, 3/F, No. 100, Lane 200, Longcao Rd
Tickets: 30 yuan
Tel: 5403-8841

Reviving 'lost art' of improvising music for silent movies



Enjoy classic silent movies, like old Charlie Chaplin, as they were meant to be enjoyed — with live improvised music. "Silent" concerts start tonight at River South Art Center. Yao Minji reports

Eunice Martins improvises piano melodies to accompany William Wellman's 1927 classic "Wings," starring the flapper of the 1920s Clara Bow. That was the year "The Jazz Singer" came out, marking the end of the golden period of silent movies and the emergence of the talkies.

Germany pianist and composer Martins improvised music for silent films last weekend at the Hong Kong International Film Festival, which for the first time featured live music for old silents. In the old days, silent movies required music, sometimes even an orchestra.

The improv/old movie segment was so popular that it's expected to become a regular festival fixture.

"My improvisation is my interpretation of the film, but I don't aim to impose my interpretation on the audience or to manipulate viewers," Martins tells Shanghai Daily.

"It's more like I open up a space where you are all invited to explore and it would be a great pleasure for me if you even get inspired," she says.

Starting tonight, Martins will perform at Shanghai's River South Art Center, a factory-turned-creative space on Suzhou Creek. Her performances will also mark the opening of the South River Art Festival, organized by the art center and running through May 3.

For her six performances, Martins will play for selected scenes from Charles Chaplin's "The Kid" (1921) and "City Lights" (1931), as well as Fritz Lang's "Metropolis" (1927) and F.W. Murnau's "Nosferatu, the Vampire" (1922), the earliest vampire flick.

"City Lights," one of the last silent movies made, is a pleasure with Martins' accompaniment. Starting to make the film in 1927, Chaplin encountered enormous pressure as the rest of Hollywood had already moved into the era of the talkies. The director and comedian finally completed it, and it was a box office success.

"Nosferatu" is intriguing, as it was the first time vampires were presented on the silver screen. It was also one of the earliest suspense films, making great demands of music.

Like many of her colleagues, Martins

stepped into live music accompaniment for silent movies by accident. Twelve years ago, she was offered a small job playing for a series of short films. She made a collage of pre-existing film scores and classic music pieces.

Today she is a resident pianist in a cinema in Berlin, where silent movies are shown regularly. She has her own collection of compositions for different themes. Martins considers her experience improvising for silent movies very different from playing a concert.

"In a concert, it's really me interpreting the music. But this is really a triangular relationship among me, the movie and the audience. It's an ongoing process," she says.

"During the performance, I sense how the audience perceives the film and reacts to my interpretation, and I'll echo their reactions right away. So the audience plays a big part in the performance."

Martins recalls how surprised she was to see a hall of 13-to-14-year-old students waiting to watch Fritz Lang's "Metropolis," with her live music. She worried about their short concentration span and whether teenagers could grasp the old classic.

"That day, I added a lot of Hollywood-style suspense and thrilling elements and they loved it, since they are more used to this kind of film score," Martins says.

She also teaches, composes film scores and improvises for contemporary experimental films in German.

Two years ago, Martins threw a small performance in Shanghai. She played to around 100 expats and locals who really enjoy it.

"I only want to open a space for a fun journey," says Martins. "If the audience is open and willing to go with me on that journey to create that interaction, let's see what happens. Let's just go for it."

Eunice Martins' "Silent" Concert Series

Date: April 10, 11, 17, 18 (7-9:30pm); April 12, 19 (2:30-5pm)
Venue: River South Art Center, 1247 Suzhou Rd S.
Tickets: 380 yuan
Tel: 6359-8989