

MUSIC



WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT THIS MAN ONCE SUPPORTED OZZY OSBOURNE?

NEVER MISS A BEAT

WANG GE WOULD PREFER TO SAY AUF WIEDERSEHEN TO RUSTIC

Stars are in town! I'm sure my colleague Iain Shaw has told you about **DJ Premier** on June 24 at Yugong Yishan, and I'm here to talk about Mr. **Michael Bolton** at Beijing Exhibition Center on June 5. People in my office have shown enormous curiosity about his hair, but I do think some of them secretly want to go, just like how I felt when The Backstreet Boys came to town in March. But seriously, this time I have no interest. Oh, right – word is also in that **Usher** will be performing at Wukesong Arena on July 11.

Usher's got a new album, and so do Beijing's bluegrass/old country lovers **The Redbucks**. The difference is you'll probably only be able to watch Mr. Raymond IV from a wild distance but you can actually see The Redbucks up

close at Yugong Yishan (Jun 5) and Jiang Hu Liveshow Bar (Jun 12).

Outside of the Americans, the French are definitely the most active foreign community in Beijing's music scene this month: folk rock group **Zenzile** (Jun 11 at Yugong Yishan), glam rock personality **Matthieu Chedid** (aka -M-, Jun 19 at The Star Live) and jazz pianist **Cedric Hanriot** (Jun 23 at CD Blues Cafe & Bar) ... it's a shame that I took German in college.

Beijing's metal mega **13 Club hosts a three-day festival** on June 14-16, with daily themes of folk, metal and emo – I just can't imagine that place being quiet, so I'm going to check out the folk day for sure. More on metal: **Spring Autumn** is celebrating their ten-year anniversary at Mako Live House on June 18, playing both

plugged and unplugged. In the mood for a dance? My picks are Chengdu-based ska boys **The Trouble** (Jun 4 at D-22 and Jun 5 at Hot Cat Club) and Beijing's homegrown reggae troupe **Long Shen Dao** (Jun 12 at 2 Kolegas) – go find out how they make Mandarin sound Jamaican.

Shijiazhuang boys **Rustic**, who recently won the Global Battle of the Bands, are back home; they play with **King Khan & the BBQ Show** (straight from Montreal's alt-rock underground) and Maybe Mars flagship band **24 Hours** on June 12 at D-22. Dare I confess that Rustic still aren't really doing it for me? However, I'm going to give myself another chance to like them – it seems that everyone else working at an expat magazine in Beijing loves Rustic.

HAVE YOU MET



BLOODY WOODS

This neofolk group, originally from Sichuan, now has its side project in Beijing, with a line-up of vocal, guitar, flute and percussion. They started with exploring medieval folk and now have released three albums under Midnight Production, a Jiangxi-based independent label.

The buzz

Medieval music, Celtic ballads, Chinese folk songs

The Chinese ...

Die Streuner or Cara Dillon

Key track

"Colour" and "Apocalypse of the Sound"

They say:

"Zyliry is my sister, she dances with a doll."

We say:

After listening to it, who would've thought they're from China?

See them at:

YGYS on Jun 4, D-22 on Jun 13

THE PLAYLIST



WANG XU

"**I Don't Want U**" is the first song from Blonde Redhead's debut album. It sounds like a movie intro soundtrack. I love both the composition and the mood of it.

"**Casio Bossa Nova**" by Holy Fuck. I just love their live performances. The arrangement between drum and bass particularly interests me.

"**Gamera**" by Tortoise. Tortoise is an awesome post-rock band. The sounds of different instruments gradually come in, making the song very penetrating.

"**KC Accidental**" by Broken Social Scene. I like the noise gate and the melodious vocal lines.

"**Josh Likes Me**" by Mom. The acoustic guitar is a masterpiece – it's simply natural and beautiful.

Wang Xu plays at D-22 (as White+ with Shouwang) on May 26.

THIS READILY ASSIMILATIVE PEOPLE 这个易同化民族

LONELY CHINA DAY 寂寞·夏·日



I've heard most of these songs at LCD's live shows, and I have to say that the studio versions are almost as volatile and intense. After 2006's highly acclaimed album *Sorrow*, this three-piece post-rock band is shifting from guitar-driven rock towards synth-dominated compositions. It's hardly unexpected – the latter part of *Sorrow* foreshadowed such changes with songs like "Beijing Realize."

This Readily Assimilative People comes in highly instrumental structure, although the electronic soundscape can be sometimes overused against the vocals. Having said this, LCD still possess what made them great in the first place: the lack of semitones, Deng Pei's tender-but-explosive singing and soft guitar strums that suggest their traditional Chinese musical influences. Behind the modern techniques, it's the spiritual originality that hasn't been compromised. *Wang Ge*

Standout tracks: "Rise Up" (上升) and "An Unhealthy Declaration" (不良宣言)
Like This? Try ... Fuck Buttons or Radiohead

BLOOM EP 盛开

MISERABLE FAITH 痛苦的信仰



Those that weren't into the punk aggression of early Miserable Faith were likely converted with 2008's *The Music Won't Be Stopped*, which saw a softer side of lead singer Gao Hu and more melodies via the addition of guitarist Song Jie. *Bloom* continues in the band's new direction, with the opening and title track displaying more introspective lyrics and gentler harmonies. Three of the EP's six tracks feature accordion, in particular on a re-recording of "The

Most Perfect Day in Life" (生命最美丽的一天), adding a new artistic dimension to what before was strictly a punk rock band. Though just an EP, *Bloom* already presents a Miserable Faith that's more mature and refined, yet still wild and wandering in spirit. *Sophie Tsai*

Standout track: "Inner Space" (空隙)
Like This? Try ... Red Hot Chili Peppers

THIS IS HAPPENING

LCD SOUNDSYSTEM



"If you got a copy of the record early and you feel like sharing it with the rest of the world, then please don't." These are the words of James Murphy of LCD Soundsystem, and I couldn't agree more. Listening to this record, it's hard to understand his fears. These disco-punk giants have a huge following but it seems to be a case of the emperor's new headphones. Everything to hand in a recording studio has been thrown at nine tracks of epic electronic, of which

only one is under five minutes. That would be the lead-off single, "Drunk Girls." A sample of the lyrics: "Drunk boys keeping pace with the pedophiles." Oh, those hilarious hipsters. Don't pass it on – just pass on it. *Jonathan White*

Standout track: "One Touch"
Like this? Try ... Hot Chip, Crystal Castles

CRYSTAL CASTLES (II)

CRYSTAL CASTLES



The first few times I heard this album, I was underwhelmed. It's not quite the equal of the first album, whose full-on sonic onslaught had inspired jaw-dropping awe. Crystal Castles seemed to have achieved the impossible in this day and age: creating a fresh sound when most bands are content to churn out derivative, predictable bilge. After repeated listens, though, I decided that this was an inspired follow-up. The Atari squelches are still there, and

the twisted, synthesized vocals, throwing the listener into a deafening maelstrom, but it's the calmer moments, like on "Celestica," where Alice Glass appears to be actually singing, which are the most arresting. "Baptism" veers between both extremes. A brave digipunk manifesto. *Mike Robinson*

Standout track: "Celestica"
Like this? Try ... The Knife, Klaxons, CSS



BACK TO THE LAB

THE "SOVIET POP" EXPERIMENTS

by Wang Ge

Experimental duo Soviet Pop are made up of Li Qing and Li Weisi, both members of Carsick Cars and Snapline. Compared to their famed cigarette-throwing ritual and repetitive drum machine beats, their new side project certainly sounds different.

On the concept of "Soviet Pop" ...

"We found the USSR to be a country with many interesting characteristics. Despite its leading role in technology, most of its achievements were fully functional yet lacked quality. This is the exact concept we want to convey in our music, which breaks away from the rules, or what we refer to as 'shells' (compositions and melodies), while

only expressing the core values that serve a purpose. As for 'pop,' it comes from the Russian vision of the Pop Art Movement that differentiates itself as a collection of spontaneous creations by artists living outside the system of a centralized nation state."

On their musical style ...

"Sounds coming from old analogue devices with lyrics drawing ideas from falsificationism, which finds the truth by proving the false through experiments."

On experimental music ...

"Broadly speaking, experiments

are operated through hypothesis, application, verification and conclusion. Experiments in music are similar to that – application and verification can be quite straightforward, but the key parts are hypothesis and conclusion. Any music which includes all these four elements can be considered experimental, and the ones that can come up with a hypothesis and reach a conclusion are the good ones."

On time travel ...

"We'd like to fast-forward one hundred years to find out what science has done to us, or go backwards to the 1870s to see the Second Industrial Revolution and feel the shock of having control over electricity for the first time in human history."

On alien life ...

"Until this point we believe that firstly no material can be absolute zero in quantity; secondly, the infinity of the universe. That means if you put the existence of aliens into an infinitely expanding environment like the universe, the probability of the existence won't change no matter how small it is. But the probability for human beings of finding aliens can turn into 100 percent."

Soviet Pop plays D-22 on Jun 15.