

Music: Bright-eyed and bushy-tailed

Now in its 10th year, Smile Taiwan gathers together some of the country's best musicians

By Catherine Shu / Staff Reporter



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Smile Taiwan (微笑台灣) celebrates a decade of spotlighting Taiwanese musicians tomorrow afternoon with an outdoor concert at Huashan 1914 Creative Park (華山1914).

This year's lineup includes rock group Wonfu Jr (小旺福, formerly known as Wonfu), Pau-dull (陳建年, better known as Chen Jian-nian), Yan Yung-neng (嚴詠能) and Takaorun (打狗亂歌團) and Beautiful Haiyan (美麗心民謠). All the acts have been nominated for or won Golden Melody Awards (金曲獎).

The event was launched in 2002 by the publishers of Commonwealth Magazine (天下雜誌) as part of their 319 Townships (319鄉) program, which promotes tourism to off-the-beaten-path locations throughout the country.

“We want to let Taiwan shine,” 319 Townships director Wang Sheng-feng (王聖鳳) says.

Smile Taiwan’s organizers look for groups that play lively, upbeat music.

“We want bands that are exciting, but at the same time we also look for ones that create a warm, welcoming atmosphere,” Wang says.

Wonfu Jr’s newest album, Flying to You, Flying to Me (飛向你飛向我), was inspired by the group’s 2009 visit to the Rock ’n’ Roll Camp for Girls in Portland, Oregon, where girls aged eight to 18 were encouraged to explore different styles of music ranging from heavy metal to country. After returning to Taiwan, the group added “Jr” to its name to pay tribute to the rocking youngsters. Released last month, Flying to You, Flying to Me is intended to expand the musical horizons of its young listeners, with tracks featuring unusual percussion instruments such as conga drums and tap dance shoes to create a playful sound.

In addition to being an award-winning singer and songwriter, Pau-dull also serves as a policeman in Taitung County. His music combines influences from American folk, blues and jazz with melodies from his Puyuma Aboriginal background.

Beautiful Haiyan’s repertoire also includes traditional Puyuma music, as well as contemporary Aboriginal songs sung in Mandarin.

A folk singer who performs mainly in Hoklo (commonly known as Taiwanese), Yan and his group Takaorun were the surprise winners of the best Taiwanese-language album award at last year’s Golden Melody Awards ceremony for Ta Yuan I Chia Nung Chu Lai (大員一家農出來).

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