

A Taipei love affair

By CHRISTINA NG

AMERICAN-CHINESE director Arvin Chen, 32, attempts to **evoke** the feeling of Paris, the city of love, in Taipei, with endearing results.

His first feature film, *Au Revoir Taipei*, currently in cinemas, stars theatre actor Jack Yao and singer-actress Amber Kuo. The two share a bizarre night together on the streets of Taipei.

Yet, the star of the movie is the city itself, as the camera pans across scenes of everyday life, from parks to roadside food stalls. And the 24-hour bookstore where Chen's two leads meet is "the new bar for **intellectuals**", as actress Kuo puts it.

Chen says these locations define his **notions** of romance.

"I never thought sitting on the beach watching the sunset was romantic," he said. "What tugs at my heartstrings are the things that we see around us, but never notice. Taipei always surprises me."

Chen was born in the San Francisco Bay Area, where he grew up. He studied architectural design at the University of California at Berkeley before moving to Taipei to apprentice with Taiwanese film-maker Edward Yang (Yiyi, *A Brighter Summer Day*).

Chen debuted with a 2006 10-minute short film, *Mei*, which was also set in Taipei.

On his love affair with the capital city of Taiwan, the director said: "Taipei has a rhythm of its own... Here, the people and culture **inspire** me."

ncherhui@sph.com.sg

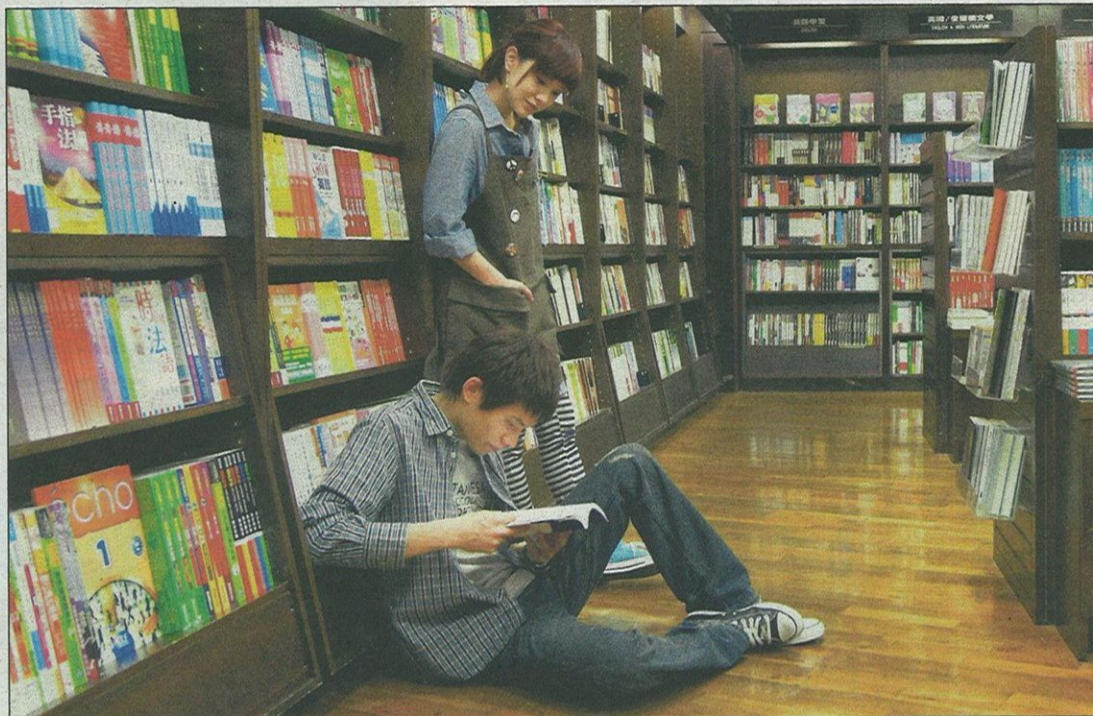
HELPDESK 我的字典

Evoke: 引起 yǐng qǐ

Intellectuals: 知识分子 zhī shì fēn zǐ

Notions: 概念 gài niàn

Inspire: 给予灵感 gěi yǔ líng gǎn



HANGOUT: In *Au Revoir Taipei*, Amber Kuo and Jack Yao browse in 24-hour bookstore Eslite bookstore. Kuo calls it "the new bar for intellectuals". (PHOTO: CATHAY KERIS FILMS)



PRETTY: Actor Jack Yao recommends Yangmingshan National Park as a good spot for night dates. (PHOTO: INTERNET)



DIRECTOR: Arvin Chen. (PHOTO: CATHAY KERIS FILMS)

WHAT THE STARS HAVE TO SAY

JACK YAO

THEATRE actor Yao plays the lovelorn Kai in *Au Revoir Taipei*, who pines for a former girlfriend who left him for Paris.

The 20-something looker tells *my paper* that Taipei is teeming with great date-night spots.

These places include the Chinese Culture University (55, Hwa-Kang Road, Yangmingshan) and Yangmingshan National Park, (Bei-tou District, north of Taipei), which is famous for its hot springs.

"The night views at Yangmingshan are amazing. As for the Chinese Cultural University, which I graduated from, there's a little hill behind it that is perfect for lovers," he said.

AMBER KUO

TAIWANESE artist Kuo, 24, says that her favourite dating spots in Taipei are quaint cafes with tall glass windows.

"My boyfriend and I might be reading books or doing our own thing, but we are together, enveloped in our own little world, while the people on the streets pass us by," she said.

Kuo also names Shi Da Night Market (Ta'an District, Longchuan Street), a famous food hub frequented by Taiwanese university students, as a good date spot. The cafes and restaurants are open until midnight, and the numerous food stands offer a variety of Taiwanese cuisine, she said.

Sixx gig axed, thanks to Kanye West sound check

By JILL ALPHONSO

WHOOOPS! Kanye West has done it again - he's muscled in and stepped on someone's toes.

At yesterday's Singfest, the American rapper managed to bump Singaporean hip hop six-piece, Sixx, off their 20-minute set, which was slated

to begin at 5pm.

Singer Sara Wee, who is not from the band, wrote on Sixx's Facebook page that "Sixx's slot at Singfest got cancelled today...because the retard Kanye West took so long to sound-check".

A representative for Singfest said that sound checks began at

9am, and were still going on at 7pm yesterday. But all the night's performers (there were four other acts besides West and Sixx) had also overrun their sound-check slots, she said. Unfortunately, West's ran into Sixx's performing time.

"We've spoken to Sixx and they're cool," she said. "We will

make it up to them by giving them opportunities at other events."

Last September, West crashed the MTV Video Music Awards stage and interrupted singer Taylor Swift's awards speech. She was there to receive the Best Female Video award.

myp@sph.com.sg