

Taiwanese Indie Bands Rock the AXEAN Festival 2024 in Bali

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Asian indie music, Credit Photos: TAICCA.

GATRA DEWATA - Bali once again became the focal point for Asian indie music lovers during the AXEAN Festival 2024, held at Jimbaran Hub. The event introduced fresh vibes with the arrival of three indie bands from Taiwan: The Dinosaur's Skin, I'm Difficult, and The Chairs. Each band captivated the

Indonesian audience with their unique musical styles, making the festival a memorable experience for both performers and attendees.

The Dinosaur's Skin delivered an unforgettable performance, bringing their concept of Jurassic Pop to life. The band, comprising two members with stage names Trex and Triceratops, took the audience on a prehistoric journey through music. Their songs are narratives from the perspective of dinosaurs who have come back to communicate with humanity.

"We are part of a species that's long extinct, and we're using music to talk to the modern world," they explained in an interview before their performance. Their music revolves around the theme of reconnecting with the present, using a dinosaur's point of view to tell stories about relationships and life. In Taiwan, The Dinosaur's Skin already has a dedicated fan base, many of whom specifically requested the band to perform in Indonesia—a wish that finally came true at this festival.

The warm reception from Indonesian fans left a strong impression on the band, rivaling the enthusiasm they've seen back home. Trex and Triceratops also revealed that their upcoming album, *I Dig You*, will be released on October 23. It marks a significant milestone in their career, as they previously only released singles and EPs. The album title carries a playful double meaning—"dig" refers to both the act of excavation, fitting their dinosaur theme, and the slang phrase meaning "I like you." This wordplay perfectly encapsulates the quirky yet profound nature of their music.



Meanwhile, I'm Difficult, performing in Indonesia for the first time, shared their own experience. The band, consisting of Hsuan (synth bass, vocals), Ernest (keyboard, lead vocals), Eason (guitar, vocals), and Jason (drums), was deeply moved by the overwhelming response from the Indonesian audience. "This is our first time in Indonesia, and the crowd here is so expressive, unlike in Taiwan or

Japan where audiences tend to be more reserved,” said Ernest, the lead vocalist.

Their performance was filled with energy, reflecting the vibe they got from the audience. “They truly showed their appreciation for our music, which gave us the drive to perform at our best,” he added. I’m Difficult expressed their desire to return to Indonesia after such a positive and impactful experience, particularly as Indonesia embraced their music so warmly.

The band also discussed the challenges they’ve faced in their journey. While they’ve won several music awards in Taiwan across multiple categories, they continue to explore their identity. “We want to delve deeper into personal struggles because everyone has challenges within, and it’s time to embrace them and channel that energy into our music,” they said. This introspective approach has resonated with international audiences, as shown by the enthusiastic reception they received during their performance.

The Chairs, the third band from Taiwan, brought their blend of folk rock heavily inspired by The Beatles. The trio, made up of Zhong (vocals, guitar), Jing (vocals, guitar), and Benson (bass), has already released five albums, gaining recognition worldwide. Despite their love for The Beatles, the band admitted they are on a quest to carve out their own distinct sound and move beyond being labeled as replicas of the legendary British band.

“We’re so excited to be performing in Bali. This is our first time here, and the welcome has been incredible,” Jing said enthusiastically. He also mentioned how touched they were when Indonesian fans sang along to their songs during the performance. “It was amazing. We felt so inspired by the atmosphere here, and I’m already thinking about writing a song dedicated to this place so we can remember this moment forever.”

The Chairs draw inspiration for their lyrics from a variety of sources, including films, books, catchy slogans, personal emotions, and philosophical reflections on life and love. Their performance at the AXEAN Festival was seen as a significant opportunity for them to showcase their evolving musical identity.

The AXEAN Festival is an essential platform for indie musicians across Asia to expand their audience. Initially launched as a virtual event during the pandemic in 2020, it has now become a live gathering, bringing together musical talents from across Asia, including Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The participation of The Dinosaur’s Skin, I’m Difficult, and The Chairs at this festival demonstrates the growing recognition of Taiwanese music on the international stage.

With support from the Taiwan Creative Content Agency (TAICCA), these three bands have successfully introduced their music to new audiences, including Indonesia, where they were met with enthusiasm and high energy. The festival not only brings together musicians from different countries but also opens the door to future international collaborations, with Indonesia’s audience proving to be one of the most passionate.

AXEAN Festival 2024 has once again shown that the fusion of Asian indie music with an international audience brings a fresh, exciting energy. Through the remarkable performances of these three Taiwanese bands, the festival has

demonstrated that music knows no cultural boundaries, and every note has the power to unite people from all walks of life in extraordinary ways. (RIs)