

Crushing barriers with music

Multinational band — CRUSH — on Penang sojourn for three months

CRUSH — a nine-piece band made up of performers from various countries — is in town at Soju Club at the Penang Times Square in George Town.

The band led by Michael Willingham or better known as Mickey from the United States, who is a vocalist, rapper and dancer, plays various songs ranging from oldies, R&B, hip-hop to the latest hits.

Already an international phenomenon, the band consists of members coming from the United States, Thailand, the Philippines, Canada, Brazil and Columbia.

Besides Mickey, the other band members are fellow American drummer Richard Anthony Harry (Tony), Thai lead singer Lukeson Pajchimkaanthong (Mikey), guitarist Narathip Kulwiboonanunt, Filipino vocalists Myra Mendoza Quirante (Maui) and Junko Capison Aquino, Canadian bassist Tyson Ronal Rothenberg, Brazilian dancer Rosimere Ramos da Silva (Rose) and Columbian keyboard player Harold Enrique Mendoza Fortich (Chico).

Formed in Jakarta in 2002, the band started out as a seven-piece live band but expanded as they performed in various places like Las Vegas, Taiwan, Tokyo, Dubai, China, Macau, Thailand and Atlantic City.

Fresh from their recent performance in Siam Square, Bangkok, Crush is at Soju Club for their debut performance in Penang.

However, this is not the first time the band has come to Malaysia as they had performed in Kuala Lumpur's Hard Rock Hotel a few years back.

Mickey said the band was happy to perform in Penang after receiving an invitation to per-



New act in town: Band members (from left) drummer Tony, lead singer Mikey, dancer Rose, guitarist Kulwiboonanunt, vocalists Aquino and Maui, keyboardist Chico, bassist Rothenberg and vocalist Mickey.

form here a couple of months back.

"Wherever we perform, we will adapt to the local culture by singing in the local languages," said Mickey, who sings in Mandarin and Malay and even belts out Bollywood songs.

"Generally, we are impressed with Penang and waiting to try out all the local food here," he said.

Filipino vocalist Maui, 36, said the members stayed close with each other as "we believe that music breaks cultural barriers and unites us all."

Mickey said their band's name Crush means "conquering and taking over in a good and positive way."

The band, which has won accolades includ-

ing the GMM Grammy International Award in 2005 and Best Band in Bangkok in 2004, get their inspiration from legends like Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson and Kurt Cobain.

The band will be performing at the Soju Club from Monday to Saturday from 10.45pm for the next three months.