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East meets West



The BYU Chamber Orchestra and the Beijing Dance Academy performed a 22-minute piece called "When We Encounter: Dance and Music from East to West."

Chamber Orchestra collaborates with Beijing Dance Academy for performance

By KRISTI SMITH

Two worlds came together last week to create a stirring performance in one of BYU's most significant collaborations with an outside institution.

The BYU Chamber Orchestra joined the Beijing Dance Academy for their first public collaborative performance. The 22-minute choreographed piece titled, "When We Encounter: Dance and Music from East to West," illustrated the process of meeting new people through four distinct sections: Confusion, Discovery, Gathering and Harmony.

"We're so different," said BYU dance professor Jiamin Huang. "We have different cultures, different histories, different beliefs ... but we have a lot to share."

The collaborative piece with both live music and dancers was the first project of its kind for Huang to work on.

"I wanted to use my knowledge

and link with another art form and through this combine two cultures together," she said.

After attending the Beijing Dance Academy herself, Huang came to BYU with her husband in 1996, where she completed a master of arts in dance and choreography. Since then, Huang has become an associate professor of dance and has been heavily involved in helping students participate in cultural exchange experiences in Beijing.

After learning of plans for the BYU Chamber Orchestra to perform in China, Huang began collaborating with her colleagues at the Beijing Dance Academy to create an opportunity for these talented students to work and perform together.

"I just followed through and added new ideas," Huang said. "I linked both sides."

The two performing groups rehearsed on their own before coming together in Beijing to prepare for two weeks before opening night.

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Photo by Mark Philbrick

Members rehearse for the BYU Chamber Orchestra and Beijing Dance Academy production.

ARTS

Groups agree to collaborate again

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To overcome the long-distance challenge, Huang often negotiated with Beijing choreographers via telephone, email and Skype.

"I felt so happy with the whole process because we inspired each other," Huang said. "We didn't stop at one level. We kept challenging ourselves, trying to find an appropriate way to carry out our message."

Huang said the performance was a chance to exemplify intercultural communication.

"They came from two different countries, but their hearts were totally linked to each other," she said. "They appreciated each other."

Huang hopes this is just the beginning of BYU collaborative efforts in the performing arts and it seems there will be more endeavors. Just before the performance, President Xu Li of the Beijing Dance Academy and Dean Stephen Jones of the College of Fine Arts Communication signed a letter of cooperation promising to continue to work together in future collaborations.

"I think this is a good way to show our faith and philosophy at BYU," Huang said. "Part of our mission is to make more friends. There should be lots of ways to link and connect with each other."

Huang said the most impressive part of the performance for her and for the Chinese

audience was a violin solo by BYU senior Aubrey Woods.

"It's not just the technique," she said. "She understood the culture. She interpreted the piece very well."

Woods performed one of the most famous works of Chinese music titled, "Butterfly Lovers' Concerto," which is similar to the story of "Romeo and Juliet."

"Afterward, I felt such a connection between the cultures that we both come from," Woods said. "It was so surreal."

Woods said working with the Beijing Dance Academy was one of the best experiences of her life.

"I realized they're people just like us, developing their talents and working hard," she said. "Just like us, but on the other side of the world."

The collaboration with the Beijing Dance Academy was one of eight performances by the BYU Chamber Orchestra on its tour in China. Kory Katseanes, who conducted the orchestra, said the tour was extremely successful.

"The musicians played spectacularly," he said. "Audiences were in tears and rushed to the stage to shake hands and take pictures and mingle. There was a remarkable outpouring of response to the music we played, but also to the orchestra itself, to the students."

Katseanes said he was happy to have witnessed and been a part of the collaborative process in Beijing.

"Everyone finds their own messages within music depending on the kind of thing they're looking for, why they're there, how they hear things," he said. "The arts itself is a universal language. It doesn't need translation or description to be powerful."



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Jiamin Huang
BYU dance professor

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Kory Katseanes
Orchestra conductor

杨百翰大学室内乐团访华音乐会在津举行

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天津网讯 天津日报视觉中心记者 姚文生 即时播报 5月6日，美国杨百翰大学室内乐团访华音乐会在天津市音乐厅举行，这个著名的乐团已经多次来中国演出，并以较高的演出水平受到广大观众欢迎。



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【大 中 小】

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