
News Release

LIVING LEGENDS

October 2014

Brigham Young University

General

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In a performance of extravagant dancing, culturally-inspired music and intricate costumes, Brigham Young University's Living Legends celebrates the Latin American, Native American, and Polynesian cultures in their show, *Seasons*. Each year, hundreds of BYU students audition for the opportunity to pay tribute to their ancestors through music and dancing. The audition process is competitive—accepting only the best singers and dancers—but all Living Legends members are of Native American, Latin American, or Polynesian heritage.

Spectacular choreography, colorful costumes, and heart-pounding music bring to life the skill, beauty and authenticity of these traditional cultures. From the graceful Hawaiian Hula and Mexican Fiesta dances to the excitement and beauty of a Native American Pow Wow, this year's Living Legends performance reflects the cycle of civilizations through the portrayal of changing seasons and weaves together legends of the past with the reality of today. Living Legends will showcase their performance of *Seasons* to cities in New Mexico, British Columbia, and Alaska for the 2015 season.

The ensemble delighted audiences with eight performances in Northern California and Nevada on their 2014 tour. They also performed nightly in Nauvoo, Illinois to over 3,000 people over a two week period. During the summer of 2013, Living Legends traveled to Central America and performed for enthusiastic crowds in Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Artistic Director Janielle Christensen said that “with a blend of formal performances in world-class venues, to outreach performances for special-needs schools (which our show was benefitting), to visits to

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ancient ruins and indigenous villages, the students were aware daily of the blessings of sharing their cultures through music, dance, light and costumes, and of learning from the precious people and rich culture of these historic countries.”

One of the highlights was a performance in Nicaragua, where the President of the National Assembly, Santo Rene Nunez Tellez, and his council were present in the audience. The next day, Mr. Tellez expressed he was profoundly moved and impressed with the previous night’s show, and told them that “a culture does not die when it dies, it dies when it is forgotten. Your show rescues culture and heritage.”

From April 25 to May 13 of 2011 Living Legends visited Russia, which was the first time a BYU performing group had visited Russia in 10 years. The group inspired thousands throughout their tour and was presented by the U.S. Embassy in the Theater for Young Audiences in Moscow.

Living Legends has also been applauded worldwide in the Pacific Islands, Australia, Canada, Europe, and South America. During the 2002 Winter Olympic Games held in Salt Lake City, Utah, Living Legends had the honor of performing for visitors and athletes in the Olympic Village. Members of Living Legends also had the privilege of participating in *Light of the World*, a production featuring several BYU performing groups.

One of the main goals of Living Legends is to encourage all to take pride in their individual heritage and to continuously to better themselves, as illustrated by a statement from the Office of Culture in Guatemala: “Your performance was wonderful. Your presence here teaches our people something—to have high ideals and to walk proud as a people. We hope this community will not be the same after tonight.”

Living Legends originates in the Department of Dance, College of Fine Arts and Communications, at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. BYU is one of the nation’s largest private universities with an enrollment of 30,000 students from the United States and 120 foreign countries.

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