

BYU PERFORMING ARTS MANAGEMENT PRESENTS

Encore

2025



BYU Performing Arts Management

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BYU Performing Arts Management

Our Story and Mission

At BYU Performing Arts Management, we represent Brigham Young University's premier touring ensembles and connect student performers with audiences around the world. Since our founding in 1971 as the Program Bureau, we have coordinated tours, outreach programs, devotionals, and off-campus performances that showcase the artistic excellence and Christlike spirit of BYU student performers. Our office oversees booking, logistics, and promotion.

Each ensemble is directed by faculty and staff across BYU campus, including from the School of Music and the Department of Dance, and every tour provides opportunities for learning cultural competence and for building

testimony. From our home in Provo, Utah, we continue to engage the performing arts to advance the university's mission of education, faith, and service.

Encore magazine celebrates this mission by sharing stories from tours and by offering a behind-the-scenes look at the people and purpose that help make BYU performing arts thrive. Published by BYU Performing Arts Management, *Encore* connects audiences, presenters, students, alumni, and supporters with the experiences that define our global outreach and artistic legacy.

Now, please take your seats and settle in. Let the music, movement, and stories move you. Turn the page and enjoy the show!



Our newly updated website makes it easier to explore events, stories, and resources from BYU Performing Arts Management. Scan the QR code or visit pam.byu.edu to check it out.



NOTEWORTHY & VOCAL POINT

Where Music Meets the Heart

Combining our talents, Vocal Point and Noteworthy created a special kind of magic that touched hearts on tour in Nevada and Arizona. One of our favorite magic moments happened with a choir from a local high school we workshopped with. The students said they couldn't afford tickets to the evening show, so arrangements were made for them to attend free of charge. That night, those young singers in the audience electrified our energy to a new level.

Noteworthy beatboxer Kassie Sanders had a memorable experience when an audience member approached her after a show with tears in her eyes. The woman shared that the music had brought her peace as she mourned the loss of her sister, a former BYU performer, and that she felt her sister's presence during the show. The tender exchange strengthened her faith and reassured her that God was aware of her. We love sharing God's love with His children!

“The kids were stoked to be there, and their rows in the back were louder than the rest of the audience combined. After the show, they were first in line to talk to us and thank us. We learned how to ‘enlighten the hearts and minds of those within the sound of our voice.’”

—STERLING STOWELL,
VOCAL POINT



Midsemester Tour



BALLROOM DANCE COMPANY



Weaving Stories on the Road



Our midsemester tour took us along beautiful coastlines and through vibrant cities of California. Every performance, rehearsal, and long bus ride became part of a shared journey that helped us learn how to support each other.

For first-time tour member Darby Jo Hart, the experience was transformative. “I grew not only as a dancer but as a person,” she reflected. Interacting with audiences and taking time for quiet moments between shows strengthened her connections with others.

“The stage became a place to connect on a deeper level,” said dancer Michael Fisher. Through his time performing with the company, he has learned the art of storytelling through movement, growing his understanding of how our performances resonate with people emotionally and spiritually.

By the tour’s end, we carried not only performance memories but lasting bonds—with each other and with our audiences.

“The tour reshaped my perspective. I found new purpose as I mentored younger dancers. It’s about using our talents to help others feel something more.”

— WYATT JENNINGS,
BALLROOM DANCE COMPANY

Midsemester Tour



INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE ENSEMBLE



Like Long-Lost Friends

Stepping into the crisp Oregon air, we exchanged excited glances. Months of rehearsal had led to this. A high school gym transformed into a dance hall as students first shuffled tentatively and then joined joyfully in a Polish polka. A woman from Indonesia wiped away a tear watching the saman dance. A Ukrainian beamed, eyes locked on the hopak. Every culture is a gift from God. Our tour to Oregon reminded us why we dance—not for applause but for people.

Our last visit to Sisters, Oregon, had been in March 2020, just before the world shut down. The community welcomed us back like long-lost friends. One dancer felt a quiet reassurance from God that things work out in His time.

After a performance, a woman told us with gratitude, “You have no idea what this meant to me.” Another night, a wide-eyed audience member asked, “How do you smile the whole time?” The answer: Our joy is real!



“Reaching out to the one is always worth the effort. As I’ve looked for ways to serve, I’ve come to better understand the love our Savior has for all of us.”

— AMY HAWKES,
FOLK DANCE ENSEMBLE

Midsemester Tour



LIVING LEGENDS

The Unseen Audience

During one performance on our tour to Wyoming and Colorado, the auditorium was unusually quiet. In that stillness, one performer was overcome by the Spirit and had a profound impression: While her eyes took in the audience, her soul felt the presence of ancestors who had come to witness and support us. The energy in the room shifted, as if an unseen audience surrounded us, amplifying every movement and story. We no longer performed for numbers—we performed for the generations that came before us.

An audience member shared how a dance brought back memories and healed old wounds. A dancer bore testimony of how the tour had strengthened their faith in the Savior. “Christ lives and is with us,” declared Derick Ortiz.

We returned home with an even deeper sense of our mission as ambassadors for Christ, with a renewed awareness that our message touches hearts in eternal ways.

“Living Legends has blessed me in every aspect of my life. It has helped me connect my cultural heritage with my spiritual heritage. I will carry with me for eternity the experiences and character I’ve gained.”

—ISA BENJAMIN,
LIVING LEGENDS



Midsemester Tour



YOUNG AMBASSADORS

A Journey of Connection and Growth



Our tour to southern Utah and California was a transformative experience that revealed how the power of performance can connect God’s children. “Every performance felt like a conversation,” said Luke Christensen. “It was like our way of saying, ‘We’re here with you.’”

At an assisted living facility in St. George, we saw how music can comfort. “It was about leaving something behind that helped others grow too,” said Lucy Daurio. And our theater workshop with local students reminded us that learning flows both ways.

The magic of the tour unfolded in other offstage moments—bus rides, late-night conversations, and shared exhaustion. “Those in-between moments were just as special as the performances,” reflected Christian McCleary. “That was what made this experience unforgettable.”

As the tour ended, we realized we had gained more than we had given. “We came here to share our music,” Christensen explained, “but we walked away with more than we ever expected.”

“I’ll never forget singing ‘I Am a Child of God’ in front of the Christus statue or teaching Tarzan songs to second graders or slow dancing at a retirement community. That’s what the Young Ambassadors is all about: spreading the light and love of our Savior through our art.”

—CURTIS ALLEN,
YOUNG AMBASSADORS

Midsemester Tour



WINTERFEST

A Celebration of Art, Faith, and Community

As winter settles over Utah, a special warmth fills the Mid-Valley Performing Arts Center in Taylorsville. It's not from stage lights or packed seats—it's from the energy of live performance, the harmony of voices, and the sweeping movements of dancers bringing stories to life. This is Winterfest, an annual tradition in which our BYU performing groups share their talents and testimonies with our neighbors beyond campus.

"Winterfest isn't just a series of performances—it's an opportunity to spread joy and the light of Christ," said Eliza Lyons, regional performance coordinator for BYU Performing Arts Management. "It allows our students to 'go forth to serve' in the broader Utah community."

This year's festival brought major changes: a new venue and midweek performances instead of weekends. The response? Overwhelmingly positive. Lyons shared, "We love the venue, and we've received a lot of positive feedback regarding the

switch to midweek performances."

The work to make Winterfest happen is as intricate as the choreography onstage. Planning begins more than a year in advance. From navigating contracts and travel logistics to carefully balancing ticketing and marketing, even the smallest hiccup—like a vanishing order of sandwiches—can send organizers scrambling.

But all that behind-the-scenes effort is worth it when the audience responses pour in. One enthusiastic attendee, Kathleen Nielsen, remarked, "The venue was perfect, the price was outstanding, and it was great to feel the Spirit of the Lord during the performance. I can't think of anything I would change—please, please, please do Winterfest shows again next year!"

We invite everyone to come experience the power of art, faith, and community through performing arts at Winterfest. Don't miss out on next year's unforgettable experiences!

Sponsorships

Join the Story

Every ensemble and every tour needs a team behind the scenes. Our performers go out into the world to spread light, build bridges, and share the spirit of BYU. But they can't do it alone.

Behind every tour is a group of supporters, mentors, cheerleaders, and friends who make it possible. You can be part of that story.

At BYU, students "enter to learn; go forth to serve." Touring with Performing Arts Management is one way they live that motto—growing as artists, leaders, and disciples while sharing their gifts with the world.

There are so many ways you can contribute: by giving, sharing our story, or just starting a conversation. When you support our performers, you're not just helping put on a show—you're helping students become who they're meant to be.

How You Can Be Involved

GIVE A GIFT Help cover tour costs so that no student is held back by finances.

SPONSOR A TOUR Partner with us to support a specific ensemble or destination.

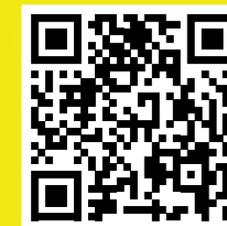
SHARE OUR STORY Tell others who might want to be part of this work.

GIVE NOW

This is your invitation to help us share light.
Contact Hayley Shepherd to explore your options.
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**YOUR NEW
FAVORITE
PLAYLIST
STARTS
HERE.**





Summer tour

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Striking a Chord



We miss Australia so much! The people, the concerts, the koalas—we are incredibly grateful for the chance we had to experience it all. Being part of the BYU Chamber Orchestra and making music with so many talented students is a blessing, and having the chance to share that music and serve God’s children across the world deepened our sense of purpose.

It was an especially meaningful opportunity to go from being students to being teachers as we visited several schools and connected individually with young musicians. Just like us, these students love music and want to hone their craft. The

mentorship experience had a deep impact on cellist Summer Braithwaite. “As a music education major, meeting and working with young students is the most fulfilling and encouraging part of my learning. Playing with these students reaffirmed my commitment to teaching music and gave me a unique global perspective in music education,” she shared. “The connections and memories I made with close friends from the orchestra will carry me throughout my life and career as I help my future students become the best musicians and people they can be.”

Even though a lot about Australia is different, there are many things that felt just like home. Violinist Megan Reimann related

“Whether it was helping with a service project, performing, or teaching children, each chance I had to talk to Australians was a moving experience. . . . I have learned that wonderful people and beautiful music can have a spiritually uplifting impact in every corner of the world.” — JOHANNES BOWMAN, CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

the following experience: “One of my favorite performances was when the Hobart Chamber Orchestra joined us. I sat next to a woman named Tara who was feeling a little overwhelmed and said she might not come to the performance. I tried to comfort her at the end of rehearsal by giving her a hug and telling her that I have cried after many performances because I felt I didn’t play well enough. I told her that I was excited to perform with her tomorrow and that it would be fun regardless of how many notes we got right. Afterward I prayed that she would come and play in the concert. And Tara came! Not only did she come, but she gave me a thank-you card and a gift. I gave her a BYU pin to remind her of her time playing with the BYU Chamber Orchestra. I am so glad I was able to make a new friend in Tasmania. I am also grateful for the opportunity to make music with people on the other side of the world and for music’s ability to help people come together.”

Thank you to Australia for being so good to us. As the Aussies would say in farewell, “Hooroo!”

“In Melbourne, we attended a Chinese branch where we played a musical number, and two musicians bore their testimonies in Chinese. The Spirit was strong and the light of Christ filled the room. I am so grateful to be a part of a school and orchestra that supports our faith and strives to serve and love everyone around them.”

**— PARIS RASMUSSEN,
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**



Summer tour

Living Legends

Spirit of Healing

As we look back on our time in Idaho, Montana, and Canada, there is one word that continually comes to our minds: healing.

It was healing to perform on Red Dress Day, with handprints on our faces to honor missing and murdered Indigenous women. We were humbled to pay reverent respect to those who have come before us, as well as remember that none of us are defined by the hardships that happen to us.

On a cold Sunday in Alberta, Canada, we visited the former St. Paul's Indian Residential School on the Kainai Nation reserve and heard the experiences of former student Ramona Big Head. She shared that the horror stories surrounding these schools were true, describing how Native American children were stripped of their culture and abused. We came together to sing a song of healing not just for her but for the many spirits still lingering. This moment gave us a new appreciation for Christ's work in mending all of God's children.



“I think Living Legends combines the most important things: our testimony of Jesus Christ, the Book of Mormon, and our family, specifically our ancestors. I feel like being part of the group has helped me to use my talents to bring the spirit of Elijah into my life.”

— MELISSA OGDEN, LIVING LEGENDS

“The greater purpose of being a part of Living Legends is not really performing; it's ministering to the one,” said Brandon Malu. “As we've had opportunities to perform, the ultimate goal has been to portray the message of belonging. That's what I've felt, and that's what I hope people feel as they watch our shows.”

“Go, my son, go and earn your feather. Make your people proud of you,” we sing in our show. Visiting teammate Treygan Bragg's hometown in Idaho gave us the opportunity not only to remember where we come from and represent our cultures but also to earn our feather and share it with our people. To us, earning your feather means accomplishing life goals such as seeking greater education and serving our communities.

Another impactful experience was performing for Native American children at the Lower Nicola Indian Band School in British Columbia. We joined them on their playground, sharing songs and laughter together. As they clung to us, we were reminded of Christ's love for the children He visited.

Ivette Galvez Laparra said, “Establishing these connections with other daughters and sons of God who aren't like me is very important. It helps me know how to be a better disciple of Jesus Christ.”

Overall, this tour opened our eyes and awakened our hearts. We are grateful to be who we are and to share who we are with other children of God.

“This tour has helped me know and understand that there are eternal things at stake in our lives, and it's important that we continue to follow God. We're doing more than just dancing—we're being part of His work and spreading happiness, peace, and the light of Christ.”

— IAFETA TOSO, LIVING LEGENDS

Summer tour



A Dance for the King

Our tour through Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam was unlike anything we've experienced before! From day one, it was nonstop in the best way. We were able to learn, grow, dance, and, above all, build connections everywhere we went.

Performing for royalty in Thailand was something we had looked forward to, and the occasion did not disappoint. Tyran Heaton noted, "We contributed to the king smiling, which we were told rarely happens." Definitely not your average Tuesday. Before the visit, we took extra care to prepare and learn how to show proper respect for His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochaoyuhua and Her Majesty Queen Suthida Bajrasudhabimalalakshana—from understanding local customs to practicing how to bow and participate in the royal anthem. In Thai culture, the monarchy is deeply revered and royal events follow strict formality, so even a small gesture like a smile from the king carries great significance as a sign of appreciation. Standing before the king of Thailand, whose role carries profound cultural and national significance, we felt the weight of representing BYU and the privilege of sharing something mean-



ingful through dance. Performing alongside traditional Thai artists was also extraordinary. It wasn't just another show; it was a true exchange of culture and goodwill that reminded us how powerful art can be in connecting people and cultures.

Outside the spotlight, the tour offered moments of wonder and reflection. Michael Fisher spoke in awe about the sheer cliffs and emerald waters of Ha Long Bay in Vietnam. "Exploring Ha Long Bay by kayak, surrounded by friends and perfect weather, felt like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness a part of God's creation I'd only ever dreamed of seeing," he said. Experiences like these deepened our appreciation for the

"Performing on stages of very different sizes was a testament to our adaptability. From packed theaters to a tiny church stage, every venue brought us joy and connection no matter the situation or setting." —TYRAN HEATON, BALLROOM DANCE COMPANY

"Learning about the HeroRats that detect unexploded bombs was both fascinating and inspiring. It's incredible how these tiny animals can save so many lives."

—DARBY JO HART,
BALLROOM DANCE COMPANY

world's beauty and prepared us to understand more of its history and resilience.

Decades of war and conflict in Cambodia left the country littered with millions of landmines that still threaten lives and limit access to farmland and villages. To help safely locate and remove these explosives, organizations now train giant pouched rats to detect the scent of buried mines. While in Cambodia, we had the rare opportunity to hold these specially trained rats, knowing



▲ Her Royal Highness Norodom Arunrasmy of Cambodia accepts a gift from BYU Ballroom Dance students.

they play an incredible role in making once war-torn areas safe again for families and farmers. It was a humbling reminder of how much there is to learn beyond our own borders. We also visited the Cu Chi Tunnels in Vietnam, an extensive network stretching more than 120 miles that was used by soldiers and civilians for shelter, communication, and supply routes during the Vietnam War. Seeing how people transformed the earth beneath them into a means of survival was both sobering and inspiring.

We came for the dancing but fell in love with the people and traditions. We wandered through ancient temples, shared meals with new friends, and found connection through dance that needed no translation. Coming home was an adjustment, but we returned with friendships and memories that will stay with us for a lifetime.



Summer Tour

**YOUNG
AMBASSADORS**

United as a Family

During our tour in Brazil, we were privileged to see the power that music and storytelling have to connect hearts. Not only did we share our stories with people from Natal to Rio, but we also gathered stories from those we visited and served.

This was illustrated for us while visiting places like the ASPADOR center for rare diseases and the Fernanda Bianchini ballet association for blind dancers. Miori Kennedy shared, “There’s something really powerful about music and the arts. It’s not just words. It’s a beat and rhythm and dance and all these things that bring people together. It’s a universal language.”

Meeting and connecting with people who have such different lives and experiences from us yet love music and art with the same intensity has been such a blessing. We have learned to be kinder, more compassionate, and better

“Enjoying home evening with families in Brazil reminded me that everyone is a child of God and that individuals all over the world go about their lives sharing experiences. Even though we didn’t share a language, we connected through music and faith, singing the same songs of worship.”

— **DAKOTA CLEMENT,**
YOUNG AMBASSADORS

listeners. As Olivia Stoddard Martin put it, “All of us have the ability to hear, but it is a choice to listen.” We have felt in our hearts through each performance and each service opportunity that God is mindful of all of His children, and we are responsible to love and take care of one another as He would have us do.

While performing onstage is always a highlight of our tours, it’s often the service opportunities that leave the deepest impression. Carlie McCleary shared one of her favorite experiences from the tour: “Getting to sing to the mothers of premature babies and perform for the children with terminal illnesses were experiences I’ll keep in my heart forever. I think so often we take for granted our own health and privilege. Meeting new people and seeing their joy despite challenging circumstances reminded me to find the joy in everything, even my own struggles.”

Brooklyn Belnap had a deeply personal experience with this service opportunity. After injuring her leg during a performance, she learned that she would



need to return home early for medical care. During her final hours on tour, holding the struggling babies reminded her of God’s love for her as she faced her own challenge. Just as she held those babies, she felt her Savior holding her too. “I’m so happy that I got to end this experience being reminded that Christ is holding me,” Belnap shared. “He’s holding me, and He has me near His heart.”

Every Young Ambassadors performance ends with the song “I Am a Child of God.” It is always a tender experience to share such a simple and powerful truth with others. Perhaps our greatest takeaway from our time in Brazil was that each of us is a beloved child of God and that He holds us through every struggle. This truth unites us as one family, and as we share our talents and stories, that family grows even closer.

“I loved all the opportunities we had to serve during the tour. It made the experience even more meaningful. Plus, being able to share our talents is always a blessing from God! My time in Brazil will be one of the highlights of my life for sure.”

— **CARLIE MCCLEARY,** YOUNG AMBASSADORS



“It feels like BYU Singers is helping me to fulfill the measure of my creation, and I mean that very literally. There’s no way to know how big our impact is, but when you’re on tour you feel that this is where God wants you to be.”

—TRACE GLICK, **BYU SINGERS**

Summer tour

SINGERS

When Music Is a Passport

From Italy to Greece to Switzerland to Belgium, we sang in museums, courtyards, and stairwells and in sacred spaces of breathtaking beauty that have stood for a millennium. We sang about God with a gifted choir of children

and youth. We sang alongside some of the best amateur choirs from around the world (and took home gold!). Across generations and traditions, worship through song endures—and we gratefully added our voices.

Angie Whiting had a delightful encounter after a concert in Italy. “There was a wonderful elderly man seated in the front row who was cheering us on, clapping wildly for every song and even singing along with us to ‘I Am a Child of God,’” Whiting shared. “While talking with him after the show, I found out that he was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and had driven over an hour to come to our concert. He told me he loved to sing and dance, showed me videos of him dancing, and even sang for me. I asked if we could adopt him as

our grandpa, and he said, ‘Of course!’ It was so beautiful to connect with him and see how much it meant to him that there were other members of the Church who cared about him.”

These moments with new friends from the Church added a special spirit to our trip. We also had the honor of performing for a local congregation in Greece, where only two branches of the Church currently exist. To draw positive attention to the Church, we staged a flashmob-style performance for the public. Trace Glick recounted, “It was meaningful to be a support to members of the Church who may feel lonely, isolated, or threatened in their faith.”

Between concerts and festival performances, we explored historical sites, practiced our language skills, and confirmed that Swiss chocolate more than lives up to its reputation. It was surreal to experience history that felt more present than past. “Singing in the cathedral in Mel was something so unreal for me because I had never in my life sung in such a beauti-

ful place meant and built for singing,” Justin Palmer reflected. “The venue was intimate, the music was sublime, and the community was so welcoming.”

The bus ride to the airport was unusually quiet—a sharp contrast to the previous weeks filled with music, laughter, friendship, and testimony. We’ll miss the warmth of the people and sharing our love with them in return.

“In collaboration with a children’s choir, we sang ‘Every Child Has Known God’ as the finale. Singing that song with children was so impactful. I was reminded that every child, regardless of religious belief, culture, or language, had known God. And that God pleads with us to come dance with Him, to come and rejoice in His love.”

—ANGIE WHITING, **BYU SINGERS**



Summer tour

INTERNATIONAL
FOLK DANCE
ENSEMBLE

 **MOUNTAIN
STRINGS**

Summer of Amicizia

The air in Italy seemed to move with music. From the ringing of church bells to the laughter of children in the streets, everything had rhythm. This summer, we added our own beat to that song as we shared American folk dance and discovered how deeply the arts can connect people.

At the Latium World Folkloric Festival in Cori, dancers from every corner of the world filled the town square with color and sound. Later, in Apiro, we performed alongside ensembles from Colombia and Turkey. Together we clapped, sang, and learned one another's steps, realizing how quickly friendships form when joy leads the way.

"It was such a special experience to see how we were able to overcome language and cultural barriers through dance," Emily Hanson said. "That is the power of the arts. They connect us in ways words never could."

One afternoon in Cori, we had downtime in the lodging we shared with the other groups. So BYU Mountain Strings decided to play their instruments in the hallway. The music drifted through the building, and soon the Mexican ensemble excitedly joined in, followed by the Colombians. Within minutes, the space was alive with performers. "It reminded us how music and movement can bridge any divide," said Shaun

"BYU has enabled me to do so much good with my talents, and that is what I want to do most in this life: to do good and foster incredible experiences for other people in the world."

— **SHAUN HICKEN,**
INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE
ENSEMBLE

Hicken. "There's just such a joy that comes from dancing with other people and being able to smile and laugh and connect."

That joy carried through every performance. In Apiro, the festival director told our director, "When you dance, you are like a ray of sunshine. There is something different about you." Those words stayed with us. We knew the difference he felt came from the light of Jesus Christ. We cannot proselyte on tour, but we can share our faith through how we live and the way we dance.

"From living with other groups, I realized how unique BYU students are," Hanson said. "I hope our unity as a team and our devotion to the Savior were clear in the way we interacted and performed. I hope they felt the Spirit so that when they meet missionaries someday, they will recognize that same light."

Not every moment was picture-perfect. On one day, we performed poolside in full costumes under the blazing Italian sun. Locals in swimsuits gathered to watch as we danced. It was equal parts funny and heartwarming, especially when the children joined in the dancing. "That was one of the moments when I felt closest to Jesus



Christ," Hicken said. "He would have loved the people, danced with them, and been a good influence in their lives."

For many of us, this tour was our first chance to see the world. It opened our eyes to new ways of living and deepened our gratitude for the gospel of Jesus Christ. We danced to lift hearts and to let the light of Christ shine. Hicken reflected, "There is no way to put a price on the opportunities we've had to share our light and feel the light of others."

"This tour opened our eyes to how different people live their lives, and our appreciation for the gospel of Jesus Christ grew."

— **EMILY HANSON,**
INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE ENSEMBLE



福州

Summer Tour

BYU | CHOIRS

WOMEN'S CHORUS

Bilingual Friendship



The streets of Fuzhou and Beijing overflowed with song this summer as more than 1,000 Chinese and American performers gathered for the Bond with Kuliang: China-US Youth Choir Festival. Performing for the people of China was a once-in-a-lifetime experience and an opportunity to be beacons of light to the world.

The Bond with Kuliang festival is part of China's initiative to invite 50,000 American youth for exchange and study programs over a five-year period as part of an effort to nurture people-to-people ties and improve relations between the two countries. It was an incredible honor to be representatives of Brigham Young University and the United States.

The theme of the festival was "Singing for Peace," an especially meaningful aim for us as disciples of Jesus Christ. We're continually reminded that the world needs peacemakers and unifiers now more than ever. "Music connects people in powerful ways," shared Macey Fisher. "Whenever I travel and sing

with choirs from other parts of the world, I feel that connection. No matter our cultures or languages, music helps us understand each other."

When we weren't performing in formal concerts, we joined exchange performances with local schools and even serenaded people on the streets. One of the most memorable moments came during an exchange with students from Fujian Normal University in Fuzhou, where we sang a bilingual rendition of "Auld Lang Syne," a fitting symbol of friendship between cultures. Reflecting on the experience, Amelia Davis wrote, "Connecting with people in that way is something I'll never get anywhere else."

Bella Thurgood described the welcoming nature of the Chinese people, saying that you could instantly make a friend by offering "just a smile and a wave." Standing side by side with people who had been strangers only days before, we felt the joy of new friendship through the power of music.



Another unforgettable moment came in Sanfang Qixiang, a thousand-year-old neighborhood in Fuzhou, where we delighted passersby with a flash-mob performance beneath the famous heart-shaped tree, a fitting symbol of the love we hope to share with the world. After the performance, Al Sorensen said it was deeply rewarding “to share what we’ve practiced for so long in such a beautiful place and to bring a joyful surprise to people who weren’t expecting it.”

The festival was an extraordinary adventure filled with learning and spiced with spontaneous singalongs. China had once been a place we’d only read about in textbooks and seen in photos, but it now lives in our memories as a vibrant, welcoming home away from home.

Reflecting on the experience, Angie Whiting shared, “This tour was important because it broadened my horizons and expanded my view of the world. It’s so easy to get caught up

“We had the opportunity to see many groups rehearse and perform, each with its own unique style, from the traditional BYU sound to children’s choirs, gospel ensembles, and beautiful Chinese choirs. It was inspiring to experience, and I’ve gained a deep appreciation for Chinese music and cultural expression.”

—AMELIA DAVIS, BYU CHOIRS



in what’s happening at home, but by going out to serve and lift others, I was reminded that you find yourself and your purpose much quicker when you’re serving others. Those I interacted with may not remember me, but I hope they remember feeling loved and lifted, even if only for a brief moment. I hope they felt the love of Jesus Christ through us and know that they matter.”

While the rush of traveling to such a charming place was thrilling, it was even more meaningful for us to be ambassadors of peace, love, and friendship through our music. “I hope audiences know that we love them and that we love music!” Davis proclaimed. “We felt so much love from them, so I just hope they felt that in return.”

Director Sonja Poulter echoed, “In a world that is so divided about many things, love and culture can bring us together.”

“Going to China with BYU Women’s Chorus was quite honestly the most unique and rewarding experience I’ve ever had!”

—ANALEIGH SIMS, WOMEN’S CHORUS



THE WORLD IS OUR STAGE