

A Song and a Prayer

When Dillon couldn't reach the high note, he reached even higher for the help he needed.

Dillon has a terrible problem: his greatest talent is also his greatest fear. "I love to sing," the 16-year-old Tongan says, "but not in front of people. I get too scared."

Imagine his mixed feelings when the Church in Tonga announced auditions for vocalists to record a Tongan version of the Old Testament seminary soundtrack. He was both excited and scared to death.

Three songs on the soundtrack require a male vocalist. After Dillon had sung the song for which he was auditioning, the producer surprised him by asking him to sing another of the songs on the soundtrack. As nervous as he was, he did it, and the producer said, "We found our boy."

Much to his excitement—and dismay—Dillon was offered the opportunity to record all three songs.

Dillon's Talent, Dillon's Fear

Dillon, a member of the Ma'ufanga Ward, Nuku'alofa Tonga Stake, excels in school. He's one of about 10 percent of Tongan students selected to attend the government school. He also enjoys seminary. "He wakes us up early so he can get to seminary," his mother, Malenita Mahe, says.

But singing is what he loves—though his family didn't even know he could until he was asked to sing a solo during a Primary program one year.

"Dillon's always been shy," his mother says.

He did so well in the Primary program that he was asked to sing during a conference of the Nuku'alofa Tonga Stake. After that he was hooked.

He told his mom, "One day I'm going to use my talent for God." After he was chosen to sing on the soundtrack, he told her, "Mom, I used my talent."

Dillon's older brother, Sione, says he tries to encourage Dillon to sing. "I would love to have the talent he does," he says. "Everybody wants him to share it."

"I like it when he sings," says his sister, Pea.

"I want to sing like him some day," says his nine-year-old brother, Paula.

Dillon is grateful for his family's support. "I love my family," he says. "I'm sure that with their help, I can make my weakness a strength."

Reaching Higher

As Dillon worked with the sound crew to record the songs, he struggled with one note. "I couldn't hit it," he says. "We rehearsed for hours."

Finally, exhausted and discouraged, he went home that night, knowing that the next morning he'd have to record the song.

"I went straight to my room and prayed to my Heavenly Father to help me," he says.

All he could think about was how important the soundtrack would be to the 50,000 members of the Church in Tonga, as well as thousands of others who speak Tongan around the world.

"It was one of the longest nights of my life," he says.

After a long night of prayer and a little bit of sleep, Dillon walked into the recording studio and hit the note.

"Hallelujah," he remembers saying. "I was happy."

Be Not Afraid

One of Dillon's favorite scriptures is Joshua 1:9: "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

To hear one of Dillon's songs from
the Old Testament soundtrack,
visit liahona.lds.org.

Dillon put that promise to the test, and he learned it was true. "I tried my best. I put my best effort and heart into the songs so the listeners will be able to feel the Spirit." As Dillon grows out of his fear and into his talents, he recognizes he has received a lot of help—not only from his family but from his Heavenly Father. "I know," he says, "that God answered my prayers." ■

