



Singing in Singapore

Youth of the Singapore Stake learned the blessings of sacrifice and hard work by preparing a musical production.

By Michelle Hsieh and Cerys Ong

When the alarm went off at 5:00 a.m., 17-year-old Yee Mun Lim got out of bed and got ready for the day. She left the house at 5:20 for seminary. At 6:30 a.m. she hurried to school, where she stayed until 7:00 p.m. for classes and cocurricular activities. Then she rushed to the stake center by public transport to practice for the stake musical production.

This was the standard routine of most youth in the Singapore Stake every Friday for five months. Sometimes exhaustion and fatigue set in, but throughout the entire preparation for the musical production, *When a Prophet Speaks*, there were no complaints or regrets, because the youth felt that the sacrifices they made were worthwhile. “This is the most amazing, awesome, spiritually uplifting, fun-filled, and heartwarming event I ever took part in,” said Yee Mun.

How It All Started

“Our initial purpose was to unite the youth,” said Kate Loreto, the stake Young Women president. “We have youth in eight different wards and from various

cultural backgrounds. It's hard for them to interact with each other. So we thought, why not do a musical to bring them together?"

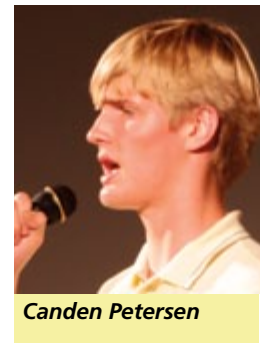
The leaders chose music inspired by the list of B's from President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008).¹ This music was chosen "so the youth could internalize the lyrics of the songs, feel the Spirit, and live the standards," said Connie Woo, the general director of the production. "We wanted to involve as many youth as possible," said Sister Woo. In all, 78 youth performed.

Perhaps not all of the youth came with the same motive at the beginning, but almost all of them kept coming to rehearsals because they enjoyed the friendship, the singing, and, most of all, the Spirit.

Testimonies and friendships were strengthened as youth of the Singapore Stake performed together.

the youth looked.

Camden Petersen, age 15, was appointed choir president to help make sure that every practice ran smoothly. His responsibilities included assigning prayers, rallying and herding the youth for practices and games, and announcing seating on the stage. "I was also asked to have some young men help set up and take down the set and oversee the youth in fulfilling their assignments," he said. "I felt that this responsibility was good for the youth. Hopefully it helped them understand that the Lord calls leaders now, not just from among the adults. They can and should sustain their leaders whatever their age or experience level."



Getting Involved

After the theme was chosen and practices were organized, the youth were assigned to different parts in the production and to different committees that suited their talents.

Ally Chan, age 18, volunteered to help on the costume committee. "We needed to choose something that was modest, which was very important, and it had to be economical, youthful, and at the same time look good on the stage," she said. Not only did she learn how to make decisions based on gospel standards and working with others, but she was also happy about how

Kandace Lim, age 18, helped by taking multiple roles, including being a member of the costume committee, the choreography committee, and the photography committee and also by singing a solo. About her many responsibilities, she said: "It was my mum who inspired me to take on these assignments. She taught me that if there's a chance to serve, just go for it. If you accept the task and put in your best effort, the Lord will definitely help you get through any difficulties you might face."

Besides these administrative responsibilities, performers were also needed. John Lee, age 17, was one of the brave souls to

volunteer for a solo part. His reason was simple: “I just like to sing! And it makes me feel special.”

Ezra Tadina, age 17, didn’t feel like he could sing, so he found another way to contribute. “I chose to be involved,” he said, “and I am actually the one who narrated the part about being involved. I feel the message because I know it’s true.”

No Small Sacrifice

The practices extended from November 2009 until March 2010. During this time, the youth gathered at the stake center to rehearse every Friday night, except on holidays. The amount of time and commitment required of the youth was no small sacrifice, considering the strenuous schedule of a typical Singaporean youth.

First-year junior college student Olivia Hoe chose to participate because “no matter how life throws mud at me, at the end of the day, it’s the gospel that’s going to keep me standing and pull me through the rubble. Knowing that there’s One who’s looking out for me and loving me completely gives me plenty of comfort, and I think that’s more than enough to get me going every day.”

Many of the youth had other commitments, but they knew that the Lord had laid a path for them. Such was the case of 16-year-old Amanda Ho. “I had dance practice, which clashed with some of the rehearsals for this musical, but miraculously the school changed the practice schedule, which enabled me to turn up for the musical rehearsals,” she explained.

It’s Showtime

After months of practice, the show was finally ready to be performed. Thanks to the teens’



Kandace Lim



Ezra Tadina



Ally Chan



Cerys Ong



John Lee

enthusiastic promotion, more than 700 people showed up to watch them at three performances. As the youth shared their message through songs, dance, instrumental music, and their own testimonies, many in the audience were touched.

The group was also challenged to invite non-member friends to see their performance and to make it a missionary opportunity. Michael Lee, age 18, took this challenge seriously. “I invited six friends to come, and three of my schoolmates and a schoolteacher came,” he said. Their performances especially left an impression on his teacher. “He said that it was a great experience. He even requested a copy of the *For the Strength of Youth* booklet. He said that he felt the energy through the many hopeful hearts of the youth.”

The leaders’ initial purpose of bringing the youth together was certainly fulfilled. “As I sat there and looked up at each of them during the performance, my heart was filled with joy,” Sister Woo said. “It was not about how good they looked, how well they sang and played, or how well they delivered the narrations. It was not about which school or country they came from. They were one.”

The Message in the Music

The musical helped many gain a stronger testimony. Some say they hum the tunes and sing the lyrics of the songs wherever they might be, and the message in the songs helps them get through their daily challenges. Many of them became not just good friends but spiritual supports who can lift each other up when the going gets tough. They can help each other stay on the narrow path and grow spiritually. **NE**

NOTE

1. The nine B’s are be grateful, be smart, be involved, be clean, be true, be positive, be humble, be still, be prayerful; see Gordon B. Hinckley, *Way to Be!* (2002); see also “A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2001, 30; *New Era*, Jan. 2001, 4.