

ACCOMPANIED BY THE SPIRIT

Before the curtains opened, I stood nervously backstage in the dark silence. Many precious hours were sacrificed in preparation for this moment. The curtains opened to reveal a high school choir poised and ready to sing. Our conductor stood in the wing across from me. She caught my eye and smiled before entering the stage.

I was the accompanist for the high school concert choir. Our conductor chose a series of songs that meant a great deal to her. The music was difficult, especially for a high school choir. I had labored long and hard over these songs, attempting to perfect each note. At this moment, however, I wondered if I had done enough to prepare. I worried that I might not live up to my conductor's expectations.

I cautiously stepped onto the stage, sensing a thousand pairs of eyes on me

as I sat down at the piano. Although shaking, I positioned my hands for the first chord and waited for my conductor's cue. She looked into my eyes, and together we began the piece. Immediately, I felt a change come over me. The notes came easily and comfortably to my trembling fingers. It seemed that I was not playing the piano alone—something else inside of me was. I believe that the Spirit was there, guiding my fingers and calming my heart. Each song was better than the last. The choir sang with surety and deep emotion. I had never felt the Spirit so strongly in my young life.

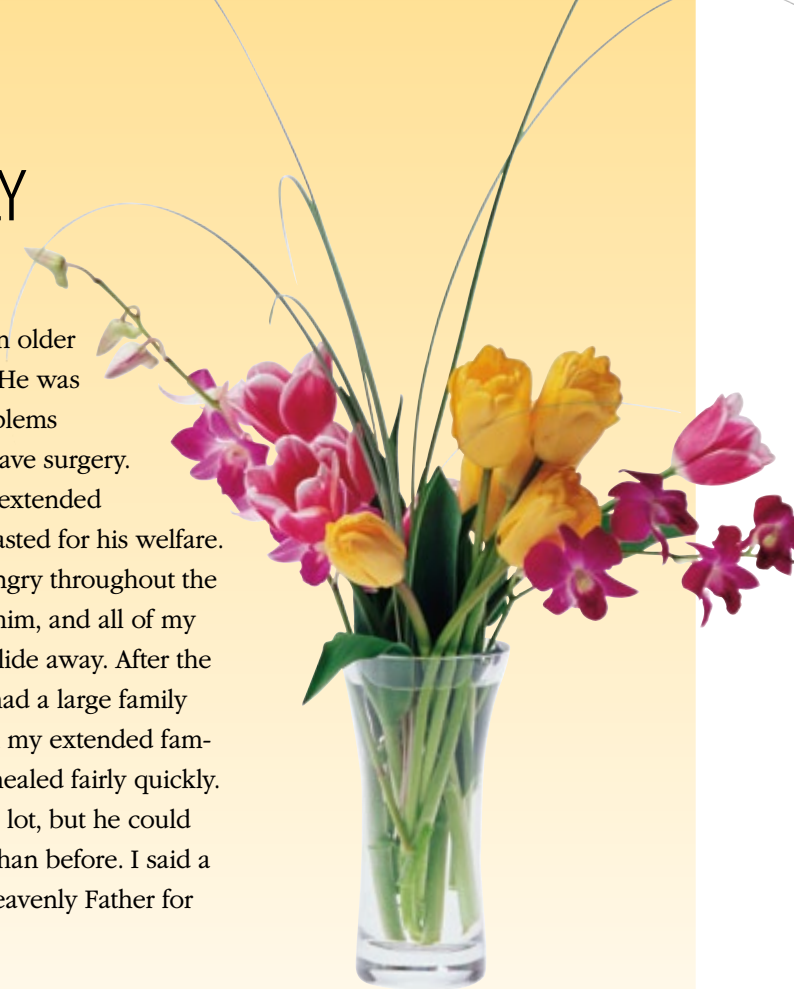
My eyes brimmed with tears as the last notes lingered on the piano. The audience was struck silent for a moment before they applauded and gave us a standing ovation. They had also felt that overwhelming influence of the Spirit. After taking our bows, my conductor and I left the stage. She fell into my arms and we both cried because the Spirit had touched us so deeply. I received many compliments, but in my heart, I knew that I did not play those beautiful pieces alone that night. Something much more powerful than I had delivered those songs with such divine beauty.

Just as I did my part to practice the music, I know that when I do what the Lord asks me to do, He will bless me and guide me. My efforts were blessed that night on the stage and are continually blessed in my daily life as I strive to do my best to obey His commandments. I may fall short, but He can make up the difference. I gained a testimony one night on a bright stage while sitting at a piano.
Adrienne B., Colorado, USA

A FAMILY FAST

I once fasted for an older relative of mine. He was having back problems and was going to have surgery. A great deal of my extended family in the area fasted for his welfare. Whenever I felt hungry throughout the day, I'd remember him, and all of my selfishness would slide away. After the day of fasting, we had a large family home evening with my extended family. Thankfully, he healed fairly quickly. His back still hurt a lot, but he could do so much more than before. I said a prayer, thanking Heavenly Father for watching over him.

Luke E., Texas, USA



COMFORT IN THE SCRIPTURES

I turned to the scriptures for comfort the night before my first day of high school. My family had moved from Utah to Australia just two weeks before, and I felt nervous about starting school halfway through the year in a place and culture that was new to me. The uniform and strict rules against makeup and jewelry made me feel even more unsettled. Then I read Doctrine and Covenants 84:81–84:

“Therefore, take ye no thought for the morrow, for what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed.

“For, consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin; and the kingdoms of

the world, in all their glory, are not arrayed like one of these.

“For your Father, who is in heaven, knoweth that you have need of all these things.

“Therefore, let the morrow take thought for the things of itself.”

It was like Heavenly Father was speaking directly to me. My fears about the coming day were calmed as I realized that whether I wore what I wanted was not important and that Heavenly Father was aware of my specific situation and would help me through it. I know Heavenly Father speaks to us through the scriptures, and we can always find comfort and guidance when we turn to them.

Kimberly C., Utah, USA

THEN SINGS MY SOUL

Sister Simmons, my MTC companion, loved to sing. She had a beautiful voice. Sometimes at night while we were in our beds, with the lights off, she would sing a comforting lullaby, and we slept soundly.

After we left the MTC, I didn't see her for several months. Then I was transferred into her area. Stake conference came around, and she sang an arrangement of "How Great Thou Art" (*Hymns*, no. 86). She sang for everyone, but it felt like she sang just for me.

As she sang, I realized how meaningful the words of the hymn are. She began to sing smoothly, beautifully, until verse three when she stopped with tears running

down her cheeks. She had to just speak the words. She faltered and then started again strong, with passion and feeling. Beautifully, with tears in her eyes, she continued to verse four. "When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation"—she smiled, and I smiled. "And take me home"—she paused. Home, our true home. "What joy shall fill my heart! Then I shall bow in humble adoration and there proclaim, 'My God, how great thou art!'" She finished strong and with power, smiling.

When she said "then sings my soul," I felt my soul singing in tune with her words. That was being in tune with the Holy Ghost. That feeling was worship. That is why we have hymns. That is why we sing in church. That was my soul singing.

Heather G., Utah, USA

