



A Creative Approach to Making International Friends

The BYU performing groups have touched the lives of millions across the world beginning in the early 1960s. “It makes a lot of friends for the school and the Church,” said Edward Blaser, BYU Performing Arts Management director. “It breaks down barriers.” Since 1971, the groups have toured one hundred countries and performed over thirty-five hundred times, making a lasting impression on nations worldwide.



For example, BYU is said to be the best-known American university in China. “Americans who go to China will hear about BYU and wonder, ‘Why BYU? Why not Harvard or MIT?’” said Blaser. Since 1979, China Central Television has taped every BYU performance in twenty-one tours to China. “They put them on the air many holidays of the year, so millions of Chinese see them,” he explained.



Performances are designed to appeal to families and promote good values. Because of 9/11, Randy Boothe, Young Ambassadors director, says his group is “committed to building bridges of understanding. We take great care to ensure that our students are prepared to represent the university, the Church, and our nation.” Prior to leaving, each group takes a culture class on the countries they will tour and even learn language basics. While touring, the groups reach out to the margins of society and “take performances to places where the people would not normally be able to see them—hospitals, orphanages, rest homes, schools,” according to Boothe. The tours also provide a unique outlet for students to share their talents. “It’s one thing to perform here on campus for this audience, but it’s quite another to try to please an audience in Stuttgart,” said Blaser.

No Events