

The Musical "New Heaven, New Earth"

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Performed on the Second Anniversary of Foundation Day



The Korean performing arts field is experiencing a musical renaissance. Musicals have become a common art form again. Thus, selecting that genre as a way of expressing a narrative of God's providential history for humankind through True Parents was opportune.

In the past, the Korean headquarters attempted to prepare musicals for our celebrations. Later, the Cheongshim Corporation hired professional actors and produced large-scale musicals for our events, including the high-standard performance we saw at True Father's Seonghwa anniversary last year.

Each time, however, some members voiced the opinion that they had been unable to connect in heart with the performances, because with nonmembers having written and performed them, those musicals failed to express fully our ideals. The prevalent viewpoint was that nothing much remained, despite the enormous investment into producing these musicals.

People began advocating the idea of producing a musical by and for our members. Thus began our audacious attempt to reflect True Mother's desire.

Planning and script writing

The preliminary meeting to prepare for the Foundation Day commemoration occurred last September. The Korean headquarters organized all aspects of the events, but the History Compilation Committee produced the musical. Within this framework, the History Compilation Committee held sessions from October to brainstorm on the storyline and held several workshops to prepare props, benchmark other musicals and flesh out the script. The script went through an arduous process of writing, rewriting, discarding and writing again.

In the end, the initial draft was completed and the Korean headquarters began to recruit actors from December among second- and third-generation members interested in the project. Another important purpose of the project was to provide an opportunity to raise the cultural personnel resources within our movement.

As the first deadline neared, roughly twenty candidates had applied. This was not enough to produce the musical we had in mind, so we had to recruit actors by posting announcements on the Korean headquarters web site and approaching Sun Moon University CARP students.

Forming the team

Time, unfortunately, was not on our side. On January 6, we began rehearsing with about thirty actors including three History Compilation Committee staff members and six professionals.

On January 24, we held the project's opening ceremony at which our team had the opportunity to present a portion of the songs written specifically for the musical.

On February 3, after about a month of practice, twelve more CARP students joined the team, now fifty-two people. The musical team finally pulled up anchor and began its voyage.

Training process



Despite, these preparations, the training and rehearsal process was rocky. Initially, we asked all members to stay at the Guri Central Training Center during the rehearsal period.

Many members not used to dancing sustained ankle injuries. The nonmember actors' lack of understanding of God's providence was also difficult. As we suffered delays, we had to replace a number of actors that we had been going to use.

A number of students joined the team a month after rehearsals began. They had to go through painstaking effort to catch up. These passionate students practiced late into

the night.

With each passing day, we could see improvement in their singing and dancing. Not wanting to fall behind, the non-member actors worked hard, too, and soon became close to and mentored the other team members.

All of them stayed on even during the lunar New Year holiday to practice. Eye contact alone was enough to harmonize and adjust their performances. We sent a preliminary video to True Mother in Hawaii. You could feel that the performers were growing confident with the intent to fulfill their duty as children through this performance.

Structure of the script

The script was part of a longer one, three acts and seven chapters, on True Parents' course. The first act portrayed the end of the cold war and True Parents' ongoing contribution to Korea's reunification. The second covered their investment in promoting religious harmony, Father's time in Danbury prison, and his coronation as the King of Peace. The third act portrayed the proclamation of Foundation Day and celebration of Cheon Il Guk and noble families. The cast sang twelve songs in the whole performance including "New Heaven, New Earth" and "Until the Day of Our Death." We were happy to be able to create songs that will become part of our cultural heritage.

Foundation Day performance

The pressure of standing on the Cheongshim Peace World Center stage overwhelmed the less-experienced actors, but in onstage rehearsal, they began to find focus and confidence.

A week before Foundation Day, the musical team performed four songs from the musicals at True Parents' birthday banquet. They had a chance to perform and to obtain a preliminary evaluation of their performance. Despite the audience's praise, we knew we had a long way to go. This realization spurred us even more to practice.

March 3: Snow fell on the day commemorating Foundation Day. Our team put on make-up and costumes for the main performance. The curtain rose, spotlights came on, and they were off like wild animals, performing onstage without any regrets. The first scene portrayed a showdown between Soviet agents supporting the coup d'état and young Russians who studied Divine Principle. The visuals added tension to this spectacular performance.

Tensions were high when the tanks rolled onto the streets. True Parents' meeting with Kim Il Sung focused on the psychological nuances exchanged during their discussions.

Another scene attempted to portray True Father's heart as he stood in front of his parents' graves, while restraining tears and the ineffable emotions sweeping through his heart. In the scene showing True Parents' efforts to bring interfaith harmony, the actors performed a lively song and dance portraying True Father's victory in prison in Danbury. During the third act, acrobatic performances and visuals created an image of True Parents' boat cruising through the ocean as they sang the boat song.

In the scene of the festival celebrating the birth of heavenly tribal messiahs, the lively song, Cheon Il Guk Bounce, was played inducing the entire audience to sing and dance along with the music. True Mother also responded, which the actors reacted to heartily.

During the epilogue, they performed "New Heaven, New Earth" and the musical ended amid loud applause. The journey, though long, bore the fruit of each drop of sweat shed during practice. We felt our hearts fill with joy; standing in line onstage we fervently waved to the audience.

Many of our second-generation members had had no experience doing a musical. Yet, they overcame their limitations and put their strengths together to splendidly perform for fifty-five minutes.

People rated the performance as having done a good job of visually rendering the providential story. They commended the musical for its scale and detail and for the laughter, tears and beauty displayed. This performance, a joint effort by the Korean headquarters and the History Compilation Committee, was considered a success in displaying the level of our movement's culture and as a chance for our second- and third-generation members to develop their performing arts skill and create synergy. In the future, we plan to form a Tongil Cultural Performance Team from those who performed this time and to support them in cultivating their professional skills.