

# Young performers celebrate Children's Day at Beijing gala

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Students from Fu Luen School in Macao perform a space-inspired dance during the "We Grow Together: My Country and Me" gala at the National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing on May 31. [Photo provided to China Daily]

On the evening of May 31, 13-year-old Yang Guangyu lifted a *lusheng*, a traditional Miao reed-pipe instrument, and took a deep breath. Moments later,



to share the traditions of my own with more people."

Yang was among the young performers at the eighth annual "We Grow Together: My Country and Me" gala celebrating International Children's Day.

Jointly organized by the China Soong Ching Ling Foundation, the China Welfare Institute and the NCPA, the program brought together more than 1,000 children and teenagers.

Yang was one of 10 students from Zhouxi Primary School in Kaili in the Qiandongnan Miao and Dong autonomous prefecture, Guizhou province. They performed the Miao Lusheng Dance, a practice listed as part of China's national intangible cultural heritage in 2006.

Though only 13, Yang has spent the past two years learning the instrument. To prepare for the gala, he and his classmates rehearsed for nearly six months.

"The venue is so large and impressive," he said. "The moment I arrived, I felt all the hard work had been worthwhile."

At Zhouxi Primary School, the Lusheng Club has been running for 11 years, said instructor Pan Fujian.

"Students begin learning the instrument and the dance in first grade. Even their between-class exercises include the distinctive dance steps," Pan said.

Among the youngest performers was 10-year-old Wu Xingqiao, who said she initially found practice difficult.

"The movements must be bold and energetic, otherwise the dance loses its natural beauty," she said.

When Wu learned she would perform in Beijing, she was "both surprised and excited". It was her first time away from her hometown and parents.

Pointing to her costume, she said the embroidery was hand-stitched, the phoenix-shaped headdress was made of silver ornaments, and the fabric was dyed using traditional techniques.



groups. Through music and dance, they showcased ethnic traditions, revolutionary heritage, cultural diversity and China's modern achievements.

In the final chapter, the performance turned toward the future, as children from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan presented technology-themed performances.

Among them were 22 dancers from Fu Luen School in Macao. Aged 8 to 12, they performed a modern dance inspired by space exploration. Nine-year-old Chan Puicheng played a curious girl traveling through space, while 12-year-old Lao Chi-kei portrayed an astronaut accompanying her across the solar system.

For Lao, it was her second appearance in the gala. "The last time I came, I was being taken care of by older students," she said. "This year, I'm helping younger teammates. I feel I've become more independent."

Eighteen-year-old breakdancer Oscar Kwok, born in Hong Kong and raised in Beijing for nine years, attended with eight dancers from Youth Outreach, a Hong Kong youth service organization.

"My mother is from Beijing. This event gave me a chance to return to my hometown, so I'm very excited," Kwok said.

During rehearsals, he met two 11-year-old dancers from a mainland troupe who had already trained for five years. He was struck by their dedication.

"The communication really brought us closer," Kwok said. "I couldn't believe children much younger than me were already so experienced."

Chen Yan, an 18-year-old breakdancer from Hong Kong, agreed. In Hong Kong, she usually measures her progress against familiar peers. "But coming to Beijing gave me a much broader stage," she said. "I've seen more dancers and styles, which helped me understand where I can keep improving."

Beyond rehearsals, the young performers also visited cultural, technological and historical landmarks in Beijing, including the Palace Museum, tech company Tencent and the Former Residence of Soong Ching Ling.



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experienced it firsthand," she said. "The event also gave them an opportunity to express their love for the motherland through shared dance and music, creating memories that will become a meaningful part of their growth."

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