

# The 4th English Festival 1



Dear Shantou University Students:

As Director of the English Language Center at Shantou University, I would like to offer my heartiest congratulations to the success of the 2005 English Festival.

This 4th annual event featured the Grand Musical, *Pippin*, a spectacular show and unique experience for college students in China, followed by two intense intercollegiate competitions – speech and singing – thanks to three participating universities – Peking University, Shenzhen University and University of Macau.

This special issue of *the Shantou Beat* is devoted to revealing different perspectives of this English Festival in order to help understand why we are doing what we are doing, and how the English Festival has been received by Shantou University Community. It is my sincere hope that this year's English Festival together with numerous co-curricula activities will help you build more confidence in learning and using English and be more motivated to participate in all kinds of activities we have organized for you and with you.

Happy New Year!

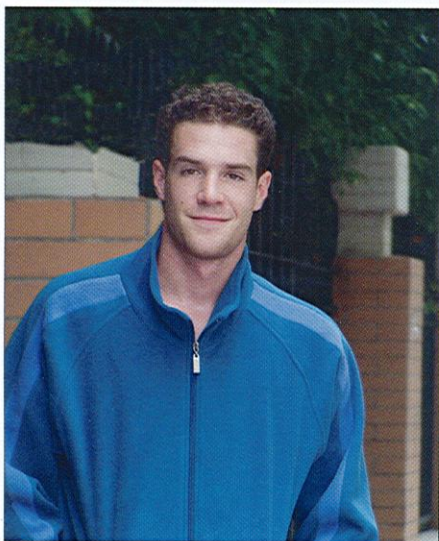
Jun Liu, Ph.D.

Professor and Executive Director

The English Language Center

Shantou University

## Shantou University's English Language Center holds 4th annual English Festival



Shantou University's English Language Center successfully concluded its annual English Festival this past weekend. This year's 2005 English Festival was the fourth festival held by the English Language Center and proved to be one of the best. The festivities began on the evening of December 8th with a performance of the Broadway Musical *Pippin*, a first ever performance of its kind to be held in the city of Shantou. During the following

two evenings, audiences gathered to watch intercollegiate speech and singing contests which included participating students from the University of Macau, Peking University, Shantou University and Shenzhen University.

The purpose of the English Festival is multi-fold and has become an integral part of the English Language Center at Shantou University. For the past four years it has served as an opportunity for students to participate and showcase their talents, provide opportunities for collaboration between ELC faculty and STU university students, and promote communication and interaction between STU students and visiting schools. More importantly, however, the English Festival is an event that gives the English Language Center a chance put its teaching and learning philosophy into practice.

The festival began December 8th at 7pm in Shantou University's Great Hall with the debut performance of the musical *Pippin*. Director Ryan Kellett

worked with an all STU student cast and crew to put on a show that amazed two sold out audiences with its professional quality singing, dancing and acting. The cast and crew worked all semester rehearsing lines, sewing costumes and practicing a musical score in preparation and they were welcomed on their opening night with a fully sold out crowd.

However, *Pippin*'s crowd was not merely limited to STU students and faculty. Both performances, Thursday evening's opening night and a later Sunday matinee drew students from neighboring high schools and local educators, business people, and families from downtown Shantou City.

The following night competition between Shantou University and visiting schools began with the Intercollegiate Speech Contest whose theme was "Growth and Stability." Ten contestants from the four schools competed in two rounds prepared and impromptu speeches, each followed by a short question and

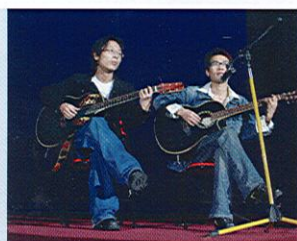
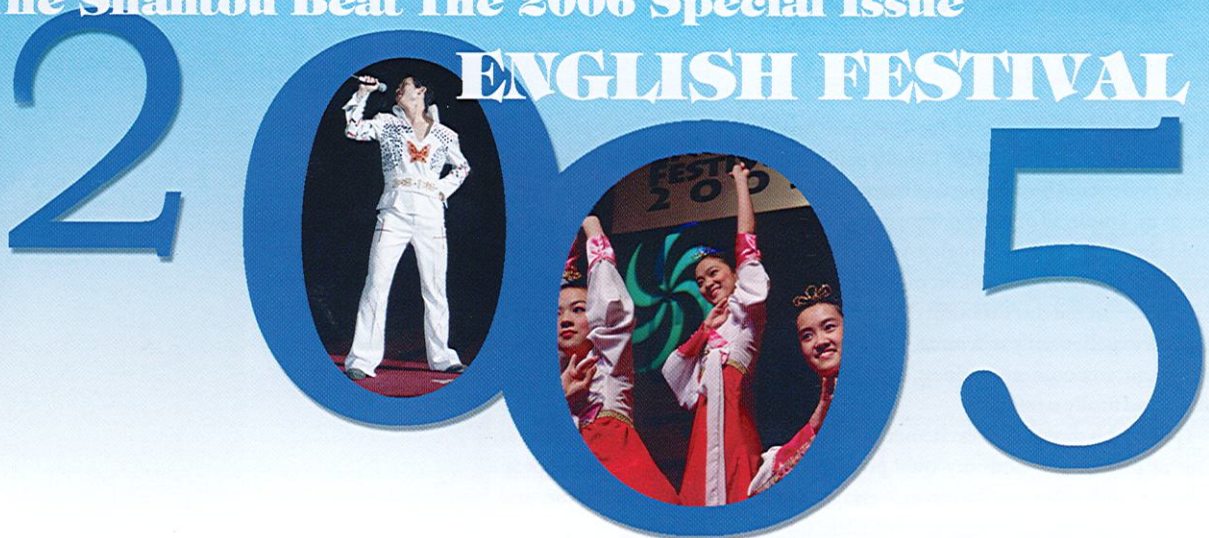
answer period. At the end of the night Peking University's Emma Zong took first place, Effie Zhang from Shantou University won second place, and third place was awarded to Iris Huang from Shenzhen University.

The singing contest wrapped up the weekend on Saturday night as 14 contestants from the four schools competed in two rounds of singing competition. First place went to Siva Wang from Shenzhen University, second place to Winny Lu from Shantou University, and third place to Shantou University's Lara Chen.

Considering the audiences' enthusiastic response to *Pippin*, and the successful placement of STU students in the top three in both the singing and speech contests, it would be no stretch to say that this year's English Festival was an overwhelming success and that students, faculty and the Shantou community are looking forward to what next year has in store.

*Matt Van Osdol*

The Shantou Beat The 2006 Special Issue





## Pippin: The Cord That Ties Us Together

Lucky, 03 English

I am happy to see the musical *Pippin* finally turned out to be successful. Other people could hardly understand how important its success was to me, to us, I mean all of us who were involved. Nor could they imagine how tough it was for us at the beginning and how much effort each of us put into this show. In the three months of preparation for *Pippin* I experienced excitement, pressure, disappointment, anxiousness, tiredness, happiness, inspiration, and finally satisfaction.

I joined this show full of excitement. However, a lot of problems, both my own problems and problems with other cast members, disappointed me. I used to be a confident guy, but at that time I could not help losing confidence in the show be-

cause of many unpredictable difficulties. Later, I began to worry about the show because I knew very well what would happen if this show did not turn out to be great. Seeing the effort of the back stage people who supported us with costumes, sets, lights, etc, I was inspired. At the same time, the entire cast began to work very hard on the show and we had very good time during which we overcame all kinds of difficulties. Finally, we finished successfully.

*Pippin* is not a show anymore, but a cord that ties together a group of people who spent three months helping, caring for, and most importantly, loving each other.



## The Voices of Pippin

Money, 03 Journalism and Sabrina, 03 English

"Performing *Pippin* was a great challenge for the actors and actresses because they hadn't done anything like this before and there were so many complex scenes. Their pronunciation was very nice. The musical was fantastic. All the performers did a great job!"

—Some ELC foreign teachers

"I believe they (the actors) worked very hard memorizing lines and lyrics because the words they said and sang were mostly the same as what I read on the screen."

—Ann, a junior majoring in Chemistry

"The music was great! *Pippin* was my favorite actor because I enjoyed his wonderful songs. They (the student performers) are good at singing, dancing and acting. I especially admired the leading player. He was amusing and sang good songs."

—Zhang, a junior from college of Liberal Arts

"I absolutely didn't understand what they (the actors) were talking about and the words on the screen were changing too fast. But I could more or less follow the story

from their gestures."

—A sophomore from college of Liberal Arts

"The name of the musical was so attractive that I have been waiting to see it for a long time. But it's a pity that during the English Festival I went back home for something important. It is really a regret in my college life."

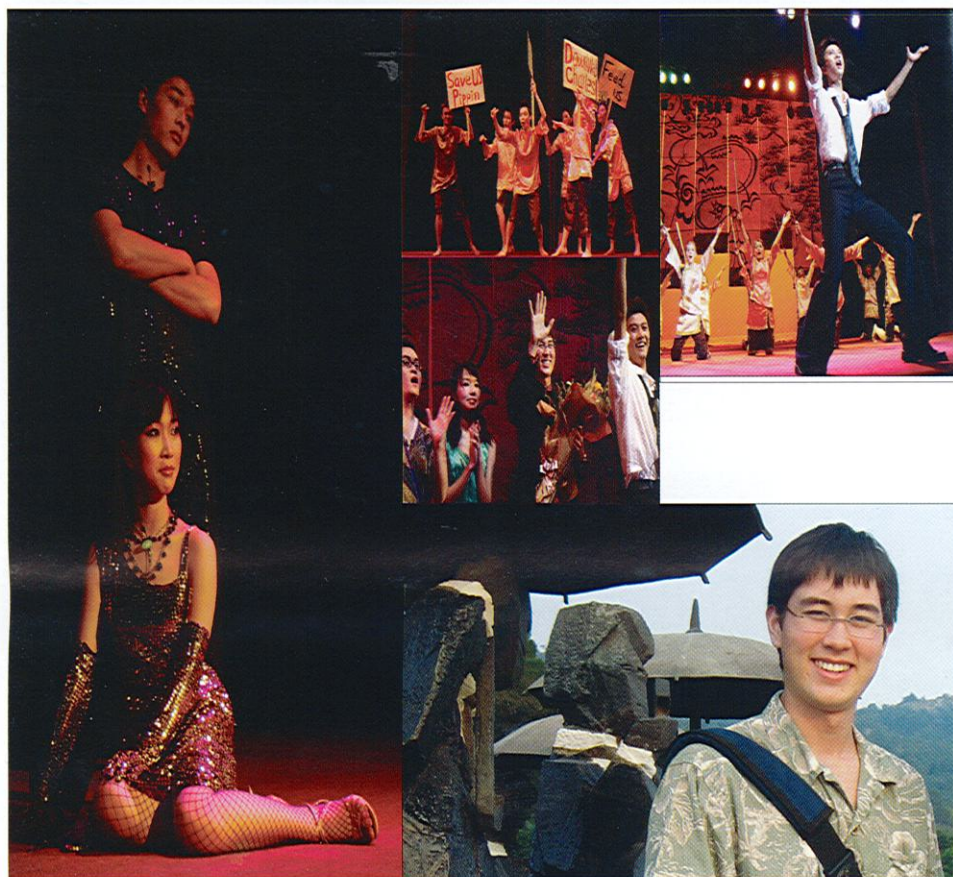
—Sunny, a junior from the Journalism School

"It is the first time I have watched a musical, listened to a musical, enjoyed a musical, and it all happened at STU! To be honest, it was much better than what I expected. All the leading players did a great job. Their efforts deserve praise and flowers. Can you tell me how their memories are so excellent?"

—Ying Lisa, a teacher in E dormitory office

"Generally speaking, this musical turned out a success. Although the show was not as good as the one performed on Broadway, they (the actors) are just students not professionals. Anyway, I appreciated their performance."

—Lynn, a dormitory assistant



**Q: Why did you come here to do this musical?**

A: After spending more than 13 years in school, I decided to take a semester off both to refresh my passion for learning and to do something different for a while. I planned on taking a job in Hong Kong with a theater company but found the job too limiting. Julia Xiao, a primary school classmate of my mother, insisted I come to Shantou University. The idea of putting on a musical in China enticed me here, and Julia gave me great creative freedom with the show.

**Q: Why did you choose *Pippin*?**

A: I chose *Pippin* because it is one of the most flexible musicals ever written. Our production has taken advantage of this flexibility by adapting the show to a Chinese audience as well as scaling the show to size of the University and the strengths of our students. The message of *Pippin* also fits really well with an educational in-

stitution. It examines a problem that faces all graduates of higher education:

What to do when one leaves school and walks out

me greatly. Musicals require a lot of effort, energy, and work. It's by no

students who arrive late or for mobile phones ringing during rehearsal.

limit the ability of students to participate in extracurricular activities such as the musical. There is great value in these activities and the University should provide the time to the students to get involved. The University should push the activities to continually improve their educational aspects as well. Students must also make a real commitment to whatever they choose to participate in. Far too many students are involved in too many campus activities each demanding their limited time. The University should also think about inter-departmental cooperation on a higher plane. Projects, like the musical, have shown the amazing work that can happen when the University collaborates instead of staying within their own departments to put on events. This University is known for doing things differently than the rest of the Chinese Universities. I would hope that the notion of taking risks carries on here in many new projects, especially in the arts.

## To the Audience: An Interview with Ryan Kellett, Director of Pippin

into the scary world. The show ultimately shows the audience to follow your heart, not what others tell you.

**Q: How did you deal with the fact that many of the students you work with are older than you are?**

A: Age has nothing to do with learning. What's more important is that I am teaching something entirely new to them. You can learn something from all kinds of people, your peers, classmates, friends, elders, parents, siblings, acquaintances, etc.

**Q: What impressed you the most?**

A: The students' energy impressed

means easy. It was amazing to see students take the risk to audition for the show. This musical does not have the best singers, dancers, and actors in the school. However, it has the risk-takers that are bold enough to try something new. That energy of never giving up is truly amazing.

**Q: Did you often get angry and frustrated at the students?**

A: I expect great things from the students. I have high expectations, and I will push them to do their very best. A lot of the time that requires being very picky and hard on them. Every detail counts in theatre. So I tried to run rehearsals with an eye on details. My cast knows that I will not stand for

Those little things create a community that is focused on the work ahead of them. The commitment is much more than having a good time. We are striving for excellence, striving for an amazing product not just kind of good. There is a great personal reward and the students understand that is why I push them so hard in this extracurricular activity.

**Q: What is the future of musicals at Shantou University?**

A: I think there is a great future for theatre at Shantou University. However, there are still some challenges to overcome. The University must think critically about its schedule. Classes from 8AM to 10PM severely



This is my first year as a Shantou University student. I was fortunate enough to become one of the

finalists in the Speech Contest to compete with students from other universities. This was a unique experience for me and I really enjoyed myself.

When I look back on the past month, many feelings pour over me. I have tasted happiness, tiredness, excitement and hopelessness. But now only happy memories are left.

I'm happy because I gained a lot. I can not conceal the fact that it was very difficult to prepare for the Speech Contest, but

I did make slow progress each day I rehearsed and practiced. To be honest, I didn't take the Speech Contest very seri-

ously at the beginning. When I failed I told myself it was okay because I am just a freshman. As time went by, though, I did try to improve my speech through every

common compositions. Thanks to Matt I can now stand on stage and speak naturally without fear. It was Susan's workshops that gave me a general idea about pub-

lic speaking in English. These are the things which I could not learn from a textbook. But, I finished the speech contest without understanding just how much I had gained.

Only later did it dawn on me that I made a very wise decision in joining the Speech Competition. The Speech Competi-

## A Happy Memory

Sally, 05 Journalism



When I see her in class what I notice about Effie is a sunny smile, a fresh hair style, and fluency in oral English. She is also the runner-up of the 2005 Intercollegiate Speech Contest. She is a lovely girl and humorous enough to make her conversations nice and fun.

"What helped me win such a good prize was simply the lucky chocolate Lindsey (her trainer) gave me that night," Effie told me. I was surprised at once, but then realized she was joking as usual. In fact, Effie worked very hard preparing, correcting, and memorizing her speech. Talking about hard-work Effie showed great thankfulness to her trainer.

## Effie Reaps More Than Seond Prize

Germany, 04 English

"Lindsey gave me a lot of suggestions," she said, "and trained me through various methods. She's a wonderful trainer and a kind friend." Effie obviously gained a lot from the long training process.

However, during the interview, what impressed me most were her ideas and mental state on stage. "Among so many talented people, I realized the most important things I needed to do were to calm my mind and organize my thoughts well," she explained. Rome was not built in one day. Effie told me daily practice and her work at the English Corner were quite useful to her. Seizing the provided opportunities she made gradual progress.

As Effie stressed, the Speech Contest taught her a lot. She learned how to organize a speech, communicate with an audience using eye contact, use stage presence, and how to make her speech understood. "Public speaking is no longer a stressful problem for me now!" she proudly said. Effie will cherish not only the valuable skills she learned, but also the precious new friendships she made with other students from all over China.

"The Speech Contest will always be a great and remarkable memory of my university life," she concluded.

## Reflections on the Intercolleiate Speech Contest

Karen, 04 Liberal Arts

This year's Speech Contest was a great success! After the furious competition in the preliminary and semi-final rounds, four finalists from Shantou University arose to compete against students from Peking University, Shenzhen University and the University of Macau on Dec.

9th, 2005. At the end of the night first prize was awarded to Emma from Peking University, Effie from Shantou University placed second, and Iris from Shenzhen University took third place.

Professor Xiu, who led a group of students from Peking University to this years English Festival said, "The Speech Contest was very excellent. So many excellent students were in-

involved." When asked whether Peking University holds such an event, she explained that Peking did hold a contest for its students, but no other universities are invited to participate. She said, "It's better to have an intercollegiate speech contest than a con-

test just for one college. An intercollegiate contest allows for communication among the students and teachers from different universities. It's a good opportunity to widen our view."

Professor Xiu was most impressed by



the contestants in this year's competition during the "Q&A" section of the speeches. She explained, "Though some of them didn't understand the question, they tried their best and were brave enough. Their participation is more important than their

results. That's because they learn how to present themselves and learn to be social."

Talking about this year's topic, both Professor Xiu and the audience thought "growth and stability" is a really heated topic in China today. "Although it is too large and too general, it is good because it allows contestants to choose any topic that relates to the big one freely," Professor Xiu explained. Furthermore, the audience said discussing this topic helped college students build up their sense of responsibility to society. Cinta, a contestant from Shenzhen University, thought the "growth and stability" topic made her think deeply about the current Chinese society.

"We are surprised at you, students from Shantou University!"

Professor Xiu said. "All of you are so enthusiastic to learn English and take part in English activities," she continued, "I hope my students can be as enthusiastic as you." In addition to the contestants' excellent performances, the success of the Speech Con-

test also depended on the hard work of all the students and faculty advisors who spent so much time preparing for the event. Rachel Monn and Lindsey Gehrig, co-chairs of the Speech Contest Committee, would like to thank all the student volunteers who dedicated many hours to make the Speech Contest run smoothly.

The 2005 Speech Contest truly was a tremendous success and leaves little doubt that next year's competition will be even better.



# English Festival - Singing Contest 4

## Contestants Leave Their Sparks All Over the Stage

All of the contestants in the 2005 Intercollegiate Singing Contest were so unbelievably gifted that excitement from their performances ran high long after the show was over. As no two leaves look the same, so each contestant had specific characteristics. They each created their own sparks, stimulating everybody's enthusiasm.

### \*The Most Supported Contestant—Justin from Shantou University

A talented guitar player, Justin definitely had irresistible charm. A large group of his adorable friends came out to cheer him on in the final. They made his name out of shining sticks and waved while Justin was singing. In order to prepare these sticks, his friends came to the auditorium almost an hour before the show started, taking only bread for supper.

### \*The Most Gorgeous Make-Up—Siva from Shenzhen University

To go with Avril Lavigne's wild and explosive song, Siva put on a fashionable face-painting that could be called "smoky eyes." Siva's make-up focused on dark eyelids making her eyes shine brilliantly.

### \*The Most Creative Costume—Jack from Shantou University

Jack's t-shirt was just as outstanding as his acapella performance. Jack bought the shirt, which had his portrait on the front, in his hometown in Hunan Province. He said that the magic shirt was a symbol of self-trust

and really meant a good deal to him. It helped him calm down, made him feel less tense, and reminded him to perform confidently on stage.

### \*The Warmest Applause—The Entire Audience

When the drama "Tears of Buds" unexpectedly experienced technical problems all of the audience waited patiently and encouraged the performers with warm handclaps. Luckily, the problems were solved quickly. It was the effort of the staff and the understanding of the audience that helped the competition end successfully!

All of these individual sparks made up a colorful night. Since music is a global language it is another effective way for us to communicate. What's more, the 2005 Intercollegiate Singing Contest led us on a fantastic musical journey, while at the same time awakening our desire for improvement of our English skills.

Lee Ann, 05 Biotechnology



## Sounds Flying: The 2005 Intercollegiate Singing Contest

Daisy, 05 Journalism

The Intercollegiate Singing Contest featuring students from Peking University, University of Macau, Shenzhen University and Shantou University was held December 10, 2005 at 7:00 pm in the Great Hall. After nearly three hours of fierce competition, the top five were finally announced. This year's winners are: First Place, Siva Wang from Shenzhen University; Second Place, Winny Lu from Shantou University; Third Place, Lara Chen from Shantou University; Fourth Place, Kevin Lin from Peking University; Fifth Place, Morgan from Shantou University.

The Intercollegiate Singing Contest is one event of the annual English Festival presented by the students and faculty of Shantou University and organized by the

English Language Center. The 2005 contest was the 4th annual competition following three successful events in 2002, 2003, and 2004.

During the past three months there have been a series of events and competitions leading up to this year's Singing Contest final. In late October fifty Shantou University students uploaded their songs to the Singing Contest website to be evaluated by judges and the vote of campus-wide listeners. The top sixteen singers from this round moved on to the semifinal. The top eight from the live semi-final event were chosen to compete in the final with five contestants from the three visiting universities.

As with other great undertakings, many people devoted themselves to making the

2005 Singing Contest a success. The Singing Contest Co-Chairs Susanne Rizzo and Leah Wilde, members of English Corner, and other volunteers from STU spent many hours working hard for the Singing Contest. Susanne said there were only a few problems during preparation for the Singing Contest. The biggest difficulty was that time was limited. Students had to prepare activities while at the same time keep up with their studies.

The night of the final the Great Hall was filled with excitement. Throughout the evening the audience fervently shouted as their favorite contestants performed. It was a highly competitive event and ran smoothly

all night. The contestants performed well, conducted themselves professionally, and received good evaluations from the judges.

There were some changes to the 2005 Intercollegiate Singing Contest compared to previous competitions. For example, this year advertising for the event was greatly improved. Excellent posters and lively videos effectively attracted a large audience and strengthened the atmosphere. Additionally, scenery, lighting and blocking were much better than in past years.

With colors flying and bands playing the 2005 Intercollegiate Singing Contest was a huge success. We look forward to the next excellent one!

## Singing Contestants

### Siva: "It belongs to my teacher"

Siva, a contestant from Shenzhen University, became the champion of the 2005 Intercollegiate singing Contest. The audiences' enthusiasm ran high when she was performing on stage. ELC teacher and Singing Contest judge Christin Allen said the champion had a powerful voice.

Siva studies English and French at Shenzhen University. She takes part in many activities on her campus, but this contest was special for her. Siva thought the other students' performances were also very good. She said that before the results were announced she never imagined that she would win.

Siva prepared for the Singing Contest for the last two months since a teacher asked her to attend. Siva said that she wanted to thank the teacher who came with her to the competition. Her teacher always encouraged and took care of her. When the contest was over, Siva gave her first prize award to her teacher saying, "It belongs to you!" (Lindsay, 04 Journalism)

### Winny: I will be better

"There's a hero. If you look inside your heart, you don't have to be afraid of what you are..." This beautiful song was sung by Winny Lu, the runner-up of the Singing Contest. Her wonderful voice attracted all of the audience's attention.

Winny Lu is a pretty girl majoring in English. She is grateful to her family and friends because they are always behind her and always encourage her.

She has been interested in singing and has had a thirst for performing for many years. When she was still in kindergarten Winny gave her first performances.

This semester she was active on the stage at Shantou University. She is a popular singer because she has previously competed in the final of the Top Ten Campus Singers Competition. She said her singing improved a good deal because of this year's Singing Contest, and she will prepare much better for next year's competition. Fans are looking forward to her next performance. (Nikki, 04 English)

### Morgan: Lucky to be here

My experience as a contestant came to an end as the Singing Contest stage curtain fell. I couldn't believe I had won 5th prize in the contest, but I had.

Singing on stage has been my dream for some time, but my first chance didn't come until I arrived here at Shantou University. Because I have always considered myself an amateur, I thought I would be eliminated during each round with so many talented singers to compete against. I was lucky to sing alongside so many wonderful singers.

I was also lucky to have Leah Wilde and Susanne Rizzo, Co-Chairs of the Singing Contest, giving me advice. They kept suggesting different ways to open my throat patiently. Without their help I still would have been straining my throat loudly on stage during the final.

The Singing Contest has given me a stage, a wider horizon and a group of new buddies. I'll always treasure this piece of my memory. (Morgan, 05 Biotechnology)

### Kevin: I hope that I can come again!

"I'm excited and amazed!" Peking University contestant Kevin Lin said after the Singing Contest. His excitement, enthusiasm, and happiness shown as a big friendly smile on his face even after his performance. Kevin is full of sunshine.

When asked that how to keep calm during the whole contest he said, "Staying confident is very important. The audience is exciting and attractive, so when I face the crowd I feel very confident, relaxed and free." Moreover, Kevin appeared to be a good dancer and singer. He said he once participated in the top ten singing competition at his university, which involved both singing and dancing.

Though it was his first trip to Shantou University, Kevin said he felt very comfortable on this campus because people here were hospitable and gave him much support. "I hope that I can come to Shantou University again," Kevin smiled. (Joemy, 03 English)