

MERIDIAN MAGAZINE

Receive These Things, a New Musical Production Raises the Bar on Roadshows

By Sally Johnson

If you want to increase your understanding of the Book of Mormon and would like to share teachings from the Book of Mormon with your family in creative way, then participate as a cast or audience member in Receive These Things, a new musical!



The purpose of the show is to strengthen faith. Prophets and latter-day characters mingle onstage and grapple with challenges common in both ancient and modern times: temptation, wayward children, death of a loved one, financial hardship, and finding courage to leave home to serve the Lord's purposes.

Them, There, Then --- Us, Here, Now

This musical play consists of a series of scenes that juxtapose ancient wisdom and inspiration with modern challenges. Nephi's broken bow becomes a metaphor for a man who has lost his job. Ammon's strength to cut off the arms of the robbers reminds a young woman on a date to remove a rude young man's arm from her shoulders. Alma's words while watching women and children being consumed in the fire brings comfort to a mother when her young child unexpectedly passes away. Sariah's willingness to leave her home behind forever gives an older sister courage to serve a foreign mission, and parents with a wayward son are given counsel by Lehi to turn to the Savior.



Inspired by a Prophetic Vision and a Challenge

President Benson prophesied in 1988 that he could envision great themes and great characters from the Book of Mormon being featured in various art forms. When President Hinckley challenged everyone to read the entire Book of Mormon in 2005, the members of the North Field Third Ward, Pleasant Grove, Utah, created *Receive These Things* to celebrate their success in reaching that goal.

The bishopric called a group of talented individuals to create the script and music. Lynn Shurtleff, a former member of the General Church Music Committee; Rebecca Hawkes Martin, a Composer's Guild and Church Music award winner; and Daniel Johnson, a young composer and piano performance major at BYU, all contributed original music. These musicians played their songs onto a keyboard, and local producer Drew Williams used his technical expertise to craft an orchestral soundtrack for the show's opening and closing numbers.



Maria Humphrey Sanchez attended a performance of the original production that featured members of the North Field Stake, and their families, in all of the roles. She was so impressed by the show's concept and music that she offered to provide the funds to fully orchestrate all of the songs in the show. She also recommended LDS celebrity voices to provide the vocals on the soundtrack. Sister Sanchez's involvement attracted some outstanding LDS musicians and actors to lend their skills to the creation of the complete soundtrack, including Merrill Jenson, Janice Kapp Perry, Roger Hoffman, Sandra Turley, Daniel Beck, Kevin Mackley, Jared Young, Darin and Kim Underwood, Michele Baer, Danny Davis, Artie Hemphill, Zachary Hess, Taylor Olson, and Dyanne Riley.



The Show is Designed to Be Presented By Local Church Units

The professional soundtrack was created for the express purpose of making the show available to wards and stakes everywhere, using local talent in the acting and singing roles. Receive These Things is user-friendly because of the following features:

- Entire families can participate as cast members. The opening and closing choruses can contain as many, or as few, individuals of all ages who want to participate.
- Because the songs can be learned from the professional soundtrack, group rehearsals can be kept to a minimum. The “minus” version of the soundtrack can be used during the performance.
- The costumes, set, and props can be simple or elaborate. They can be made from items easily obtained.
- The songs have memorable melodies and choruses, with rhythmic structures that are both energetic and dignified. The lyrics are intended to be faith promoting. They appeal to children, youth, and adults.
- The dialogue that the prophets speak was not invented, but was taken directly from the scriptures. However, there are no long scriptural recitations. The passages have been edited, and are extremely short, so that the play moves quickly.
- The length of the entire production is geared to the attention span of those who don't enjoy sitting too long on hard cultural hall chairs, and to families with young children. The running time of the whole show is approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes.
- There is no traditional story line. The show can be presented as a whole, or in parts. Each scene stands alone and can be presented by itself as a mini-drama to enhance a meeting with a specific theme or purpose.

Listed below is a brief synopsis of each scene:

Scene One: The ensemble mines for gold while Mormon makes the plates

Scene Two An older sister seeks the courage to serve a mission

Scene Three: A married couple struggles with their wayward son

Scene Four: A teenage girl is tempted to lower her standards

Scene Five: A jobless man struggles to regain his faith

Scene Six: A mother's anguish over the unexpected death of her child

Final Scene: Moroni buries the plates as the cast invites the audience to “receive these things”

- The show is available to all who would like to use it. A small donation is requested, to help reimburse production and distribution costs, but is not required.

Comments from Cast and Audience Members



Receive These Things can increase understanding of the Book of Mormon and its themes, and can strengthen a testimony of its truthfulness. Here are some comments from cast and audience members who have participated:

“This show changed the way that I read the Book of Mormon. Sariah, in particular, became real to me. I’ve thought many times about what it must have been like for her to leave her home.”

“It brought the Book of Mormon alive for me.”

“My teenage sons played roles in the Ammon scene. They learned both sides of the story by being robbers. My 10 year old and 8 year old loved singing the songs from the show. It expanded our family’s knowledge of Book of Mormon teachings.”

“This production touched on the problems that face us, and our children, in this day.”

“My 5 year old daughter participated in the production. When our family read the scriptures about Alma and Amulek and the women and children being consumed in the fire, she wept. She’s read this scripture before with our family, but playing a role helped her to feel sorrow for those who suffered.”

“I was very impressed with the music, the lyrics, and the spirit. Every age group was represented. I felt very uplifted. Everyone should have an opportunity to see it!”

Receive These Things is Available



If you would like a copy of the Receive These Things soundtrack, or if the members of your ward, stake, or family would like to participate as a cast or audience member, please check the website and encourage your ward and stake leaders to do the same: www.receive-these-things.com. You may also contact Marjorie Fairbanks at (714) 633-7975.

Professional Soundtrack Artists' Brief Biographies

Award winning composer Merrill Jenson generously offered his talents and expertise by creating custom orchestrations for each of the original songs. Brother Jenson's work has been heard on many church films, including Legacy, The Testaments; of One Fold and One Shepherd, and Joseph Smith, Prophet of the Restoration. Brother Jenson recently scored Emma Smith: My Story, and also has an extensive resume of Hollywood films, including several directed by Academy Award winner Kieth Merrill.

Sandra Turley, who starred on Broadway as Cosette in Les Miserables, provides the voice of a grieving mother whose only child has passed away.

Actor and recording artist Daniel Beck sings the role of Alma, who comforts her. Brother Beck has played a number of roles in the Liken the Scriptures DVD series, and recently released an album entitled Daniel Beck; Love Like That.

Kevin Mackley, the speaking voice of Moroni on the soundtrack, has more than two decades of experience in broadcasting, acting, and voice-over work. His voice has been featured in thousands of commercials, both nationally and internationally, for clients such as Novell Inc., Ford Motor Company, BYU, Elder John K. Carmack, and Subway. He was recently featured in the film Forever Strong, and has also starred in several roles off-Broadway.

Jared Young sings the role of Moroni. Most know him as Nephi in the Liken the Scriptures film series, but many might recognize him as Simba and Tarzan from the BYU Young Ambassador show. Jared also has toured Europe with the pop sensation T-Minus Friday, singing lead vocals on two separate albums. His most recent musical theater credits include: Chad in All Shook Up, Mereb in Aida, Judas in Power in His Touch & Matt in the Original Cast of The White Star.

Roger Hoffman is the composer of "Consider the Lilies," one of the best-known choral works throughout the church. Brother Hoffman is also a recording artist and soloist with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir on Music and the Spoken Word and also on their CD Come, Come Ye Saints. He sings the role of Lehi, who counsels the distraught parents of a wayward son to turn to the Savior.

Darin and Kim Underwood sing the roles of the parents of the wayward son. Brother Underwood performed with the Young Ambassadors at BYU, touring in the former Soviet Union and Germany. He has done recording for Michael McLean and Power Productions, and has performed extensively with his wife, Kim. Sister Underwood has a degree in Music Theatre from BYU, where she toured with the Young Ambassadors and taught

voice on the faculty. She has done recording on several albums for such LDS artists and composers as Michael McLean, Kurt Bestor, Sam Cardon, Janice and Steven Kapp Perry, Greg Hansen, and Tyler Castleton. Kim has performed in theatre in the Salt Lake area, including Hale Centre Theatre, Kingsbury Hall, and the LDS Conference Center Theatre, where she played Mary Magdalene in Savior of the World.

Janice Kapp Perry, perhaps the best known LDS female composer, was invited to sing the role of the grandmother. She was hesitant to participate, claiming that she was not a trained singer or actress. However, Sister Perry's sweet humility and testimony were perfect for the role.

Michele Wood Baer, who sings the role of Sariah, is a popular speaker and performer at firesides, benefit concerts, bookstores, and Especially for Youth. Labeled a "new Karen Carpenter" because of her smooth vocal style, Sister Baer promised the Lord that she would continue to develop her voice only to inspire people to repent and come unto Christ. Sister Baer has 3 albums to her credit: Out of the Dust; Never Give Up: Songs of Faith and Family; and You're Worth It All.

Danny Davis sings the role of Nephi. Brother Davis, a BYU graduate and a former Young Ambassador, has also been a performer on Disney Cruise Lines. He has been an adjunct professor at UVU and currently teaches singing and dancing at a studio in Salt Lake and performs in a professional variety show with his sister.

Artie Hemphill lends his soulful country baritone to the project by singing the role of a jobless man who is struggling to regain his faith. Artie's voice has been featured on many studio recordings for country songwriters. His authentic Nashville sound, backed by the Iron Horse band, is currently charming audiences throughout the Intermountain West.

Zachary Hess, currently a student at BYU and a Young Ambassador, sings the role of Ammon. While a student at the Orange County High School of the Arts in Southern California, Brother Hess traveled extensively with a youth performing group called Celebration USA as a featured soloist in many venues, including Provo 's Stadium of Fire. He plans to serve a full time mission from 2010 to 2012.

Taylor Olson sings the role of a teen girl who is tempted to lower her standards in dating and dress. Taylor was recently a featured soloist and host with the Youth Celebration DVD Brand New Year, and is also a student of David Archuleta's vocal coach Dean Kaelin.

Choral director Dyanne Riley has been teaching at Utah Valley University for 15 years, where she has twice received honors for her teaching. She is Director of Choral Activities and an Associate Professor. She sang with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir for almost 10 years, and helped train new members coming in to the choir as the Vocal Specialist for 4 years.

Guitarist Mike Fjerstad and pianist Daniel Johnson are also featured as instrumentalists on the soundtrack.