

Leland and Gray's Journey East will present its first homecoming shows Friday, April 27 at 12 noon and Saturday, April 28 at 7:30 Leland and Gray in Townshend.

The troupe of 29 students, three teachers and three chaperones has just returned from a 32-day program in China, part of Leland and Gray's semester-long Asian studies academy and Sino-American performing arts exchange. Over the course of the month they visited myriad sites from the Forbidden City in Beijing and the Dazu stone carvings near Chongqing to Confucius' birthplace and grave outside Qufu and a Buddhist Lamasary in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia. They enjoyed exchanges at several schools and performed at various venues around China.

In each of the five Journey East programs thus far, the group has created an original music-theatre piece not only to offer Chinese audiences a taste of American music, but also to demonstrate the originality and creativity which is characteristically American. The Journey East 2007 production was created over seven weeks during a daily 90-minute workshop within the Journey East curriculum. Titled *A Beautiful Journey*, it features all original vocal and instrumental music woven into a group-generated story which tells of an innocent child's quest for beauty in an often harsh and violent world. Along the way, the Child discovers that an appreciation for a simple flower can lead to inspiration, harmony and unity. Tom Connor is program director; Matt Martyn, music director; Ann Landenberger, artistic director.

The Journey East homecoming show will also feature a slide show and a Q&A session with Journey East 2007 participants. It is free and open to the public. Donations toward the Maple Scholarship for Arts Education will be cheerfully accepted.

The entire Journey East excursion in China has been documented at www.bookdesign.com/je2007/. For more information on homecoming shows or Journey East, contact Tom Connor at tconnor@fc.wcsu.k12.vt.us