

## Left with a smile

March 7, 2011



Brighton Pier. Photo by Collin Heyward

Hello everyone! Brighton, if I left your city with anything, it was definitely a smile on my face. The first thing we noticed about this spunky town upon our arrival is its beautiful beach. One of the main attractions of Brighton is its famous pier, which extends out into the English Channel. I didn't get a chance to actually go on the pier, which is full of thrilling carnival rides and arcade games, but Fana did and she thoroughly enjoyed it.

Everyone was in a London state of mind during this segment of our tour. I debated for a while whether I wanted to visit the city of royalty, and said, "The heck with it! When will I ever get the chance again to venture around London?" So, the next morning, Renaldo, Sarah, Slim, Yusaku, and I were on the next train to London, smiling from cheek to cheek.

The travel time takes about forty-five minutes, so we all snuck in a power nap before our quest began. We did everything a London tourist should do: We saw Westminster Abbey, Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, rode the London Eye, and shopped till we dropped. The day ended with much satisfaction and exhaustion as we headed back to Brighton by mid-evening.

We had two performances at the Brighton Dome, which is linked to the town's historical Royal Pavilion. We also had a mini-performance, where we performed excerpts from the repertoire in the night's corresponding program. Mini-performances are a way for the company to reach out to the community and educate children about dance and the performing arts. For all mini-performances, Troy Powell, our Associate Artistic Director, gets onstage and asks for verbal participation from the audience, sort of like a "repeat after me" ritual. It was cute hearing all of the young British accents echoing throughout the dome.

Both night performances went well, but the second show definitely outweighed the first. As a company, we had more energy during the second performance and I think the audience fed off of that and reacted with extraordinary applause. It got to the point where the audience was stomping the ground thunderously with their feet at the end of *Revelations*. The ovation continued as we ended the night with an encore. I think it's justifiable to say that we blew the top off the dome that night. I wouldn't trade remarkable moments like this for anything in the world.

So Long Brighton,  
Collin =)



Sarah Daley, Collin Heyward, Yusaku Komori, and Renaldo Gardner all smiles on our way to London. Photo by Slim Mello



Yusaku Komori styling with his matching bumble bee backpack. Photo by Collin Heyward



My London postcard. Photo by Slim Mello



Top of the Brighton Dome, interior shot. Photo by Collin Heyward



Slim is also our barber on tour. Photo by Major Nesby