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World champion swimmer Sun Yang overcame some nerves to perform with local singer Li Shuo during last night's opening ceremony at the Shenzhen Bay Sports Center.

Sun woos fans with stirring performance

DREAM COMES TRUE FOR WORLD RECORD HOLDER AT STUNNING EVENT

By SUN XIAOCHEN
CHINA DAILY

SHENZHEN — The new men's 1,500m freestyle world record holder, Chinese star Sun Yang, stole the show after singing an inspiring finale at the opening ceremony of the 26th Universiade in the boisterous main stadium of the Shenzhen Bay Sports Center last night.

Sun, who broke Australian legend Grant Hackett's 10-year-old record at last month's FINA World Championships in Shanghai with a time of 14 min 34.14 sec has become one of China's favorite sports figures, behind retired basketball icon Yao Ming and Olympic champion hurdler Liu Xiang.

At the end of the two-hour opening show, Sun appeared with famous local singer Li Shuo on center stage to sing the song *Love Together* amid thunderous applause.

During the two-minute performance, Sun called on youngsters all over the world to march hand in hand and open their hearts to each other.

The 19-year-old Zhejiang province native said he was nervous before stepping onto the stage.

"Waiting for my turn during the last practice of the opening ceremony, I felt a little bit nervous. I just hope I can perform normally," Sun said on his micro blog after the final rehearsal on Aug 10.

Before singing the song, Sun also took

part in the final torch relay inside the stadium as one of the holders of the flame.

Carrying the torch at a major international event on home soil was a long-time dream of Sun's.

After missing out at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and last year's Guangzhou Asian Games, Sun finally fulfilled it in the presence of his mother, Yang Ming, who accompanied her son to Shenzhen for the show.

"My dream came true," Sun said emotionally after the ceremony.

Sun, a student at Zhejiang University, won't compete at the Shenzhen Games, but has set his eyes on next year's London Olympics where he is expected to deliver at least two gold medals for China.

Fanfare for common man

By SHI YINGYING
CHINA DAILY

SHENZHEN — If you were expecting a grand and glitzy spectacular at the opening ceremony of 2011 Universiade at Shenzhen Bay Stadium last night, you would have been in for a surprise. Last night's opening ceremony was free of fireworks and celebrity performers.

"I was confident about directing a perfect ceremony, but my biggest concern was whether the audience, especially the Chinese, would accept such a way of holding an opening ceremony," said Dong Xuehai, deputy director of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies Department.

"The Chinese are so into song and dance that they expect lots of performances in the opening ceremony of any major sports event held in this country," said Dong. "But you couldn't find any of those in the opening for the Shenzhen Universiade. It was purely a ritual."

All of the performances were simply there to support the main ceremony, according to Dong. "We made the ceremony into a work of art. For example, the drum dance, after the raising of the Chinese flag, was only there because we wanted that moment to be spectacular."

Without the expense of celebrities and fireworks, money saved from the budget for this "green" ceremony will be used to establish a foundation to help young sportsmen with financial difficulties to study abroad.

"To start with, we've selected 10 athletes from five continents," said Shi Gang, director of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies Department.

"Some of them will come to study in China and the chosen Chinese athletes will have opportunities to go overseas."

Three of the first 10 athletes chosen were torchbearers at the opening ceremony.

"That's really a good idea," said Claude-Louis Gallien, the incoming president of the International University Sports Federation. "That will help lots of young athletes."

As well, there were many environmentally-friendly elements in the opening ceremony. For example, about 11 million empty water bottles were placed under the central stage to enhance the lighting effects.

"It's a moveable stage and light falls on the bottles once it rises. Refraction (of the light on the empty bottles) produced a good effect," said Dong.

"We thought about putting water in the bottles to make an even better effect, but decided against it due to security concerns."

Some people may have wondered why there were more than 300 cyclists on the stage right before the torch relay arrived. Shi Gang explained: "Bicycle riding is a low-carbon transport method that we encourage. Plus, it was full of youthful spirit."