

Transient travels

A close look at Yifan Zheng



Singing, traveling, interning, and dreaming big are all quintessential elements of **Yifan Zheng's** fascinating story.

Growing up in the small city of Tangshan, China, Yifan discovered her passion for music in middle school. From there, she started studying professional singing in the form of Sheng Yue, a traditional Chinese singing technique.

"During my freshman year of high school, my family moved to Beijing so that I could attend an international school. I was still really interested in studying Sheng Yue, but couldn't at the new school," Yifan said.

Although she was unable to study the form any longer, Yifan competed in a national singing competition for her city and won. Before she could move on to the next level of the competition though, her plans changed. After completing her first year of high school, her family moved again, but this time they journeyed all the way to Sweden.

"At first, I was not excited about moving. I was very happy at my old school in China, and I knew I was going to miss all of my old friends, but I ended up really liking Sweden" she said. "I was the only international student in my high school, and I didn't speak the language, but everyone there was so friendly. I learned Swedish, and even joined the choir at school. I performed in the school musicals, and I really enjoyed those experiences. We performed *Legally Blonde* one year, entirely in Swedish, and that was the moment that I felt really involved and a part of the society and culture in Sweden. I made a lot of really close friends while I was there. I don't really talk about Sweden a lot because I miss my friends so much. My

friends there, they taught me how to be independent, how to live a strong and brave life, and about pursuing my dreams. Living in Sweden was the time I got to really grow up."

After living in Sweden for four years, Yifan decided to move to the United States to pursue her college career. She attended Indiana University (IU), and graduated in the winter of 2017 from the IU Media School. She studied journalism, concentrating in public relations, advertising, and design with a minor in marketing. From there, Yifan learned about Cook Medical and is now the Email Marketing intern at Park 48.

"I found out about Cook after attending the company's Media Day, and now I'm here. I've really enjoyed getting to have a lot of freedom in doing what I'm interested in and doing things that are going to help me with my career," Yifan said. "I'm most excited about my capstone presentation. I'm looking forward to pushing what I've been working on this summer to the next level, and sharing it with my department. I am also excited because after this summer, I'm going to attend the University of Southern California (USC) for graduate school to study digital social media."

During all of her traveling, Yifan has had the unique opportunity to visit a lot of different places. Some of her adventures include visiting more than six states in the United States, along with traveling to Norway, Finland, France, England, Germany, the Netherlands, Japan, and South Korea.

"I enjoy traveling and experiencing different cultures," she said. "I think it's a really unique experience for me to have been able to experience so many cultures at my age. It's really hard for



Yifan at Park 48.

me to call a place home because I've spent eight years abroad, which is a third of my entire life, so sometimes it can be hard traveling so much, but it's also really special. It's helped make me more accepting and open-minded person. I've loved getting to learn so many different things and meet so many people. Because of it, I am a mix of everywhere I've been."

Because of her travels, Yifan is fluent in Chinese, Swedish, and English. She even pursued French at one point as well.

"French was tricky because I would mix it up with Swedish. I remember one time I was having a pronunciation exam for French, and my teacher asked me a question. He said that I had the answer in my mind, but I didn't know how to say it in French, so I answered him in Swedish

instead. He was so confused, but we both laughed," she said.

Outside of school and work, Yifan explained that she still enjoys singing karaoke with her friends, sometimes even in the traditional Sheng Yue style. She also tries to visit her family and friends in China and Sweden whenever she can. Along with these important parts of her life, Yifan is focused on working hard for her dream job.

"I have this hope to own my own coffee shop, and have it set up like a cat café, but with bunnies running around instead," she said. "If there could be a garden behind the shop that would be perfect. I would love to sell coffee and flowers, like a florist café with bunnies. It's my motivation for working hard, studying hard, and saving money."