

'Chinese New Year Spectacular': A Treat for all Cultures



Toronto Lawyer Mark M Persaud. (The Epoch Times)

With its authentic portrayal of Chinese traditional culture, the critically acclaimed Chinese New Year Spectacular thrilled the audience at Toronto's Sony Centre for the Performing Arts on Friday.

"I have one comment: it's spectacular. I was told I was in for a real treat, and it certainly has exceeded my expectations. It's a beautiful show, it's spectacular, and I'm having a wonderful time," said Toronto lawyer Mark Persaud.

Persaud's credentials are impressive. President of the Canadian International Peace Project, he has been nominated for the prestigious Seoul Peace Prize for the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal as well as for Toronto Man of the Year.

He is also recognized as a leader in his community for the volunteer work he has done for immigrants, refugees and the poor.

Persaud said the introductory performance made a "beautiful impact" and was a good lead into the other performances.

"It's hard to choose one act over the other," he said. "They all brought something unique and special. I was extremely impressed by the richness and variety of the different cultures within China that is represented in the different performances."

The movements and the postures and the costumes are a "feast for the senses," said Persaud. "I keep getting treated to these wonderful presentations of costumes that it's hard not to keep your eyes glued and be 100 per cent fixated on the performances."

In the Spectacular, ancient and modern Chinese stories unfold on stage through classical Chinese dance and music with an authenticity that is said to be completely unique in the world today.

This is spurring something of a renaissance of traditional culture in the Chinese art community and is drawing the attention and admiration of audiences around the world.

In a nod to the growing worldwide interest in all things Chinese, the Spectacular is presented in both languages.

"I must say, the co-hosts are doing a marvelous job," said Persaud. "I'm extremely impressed at the way they were able to make the enjoyment of this Chinese event a — representation of Chinese traditional culture — so accessible to an [ethnically diverse] audience."

Persaud said he attends a lot of ethno-cultural events and very often there is only a "meager representation" of people who are not from that particular ethnic group.

"As we can see tonight, there is a rich representation of a diverse variety of Canadians, many of whom are non-Chinese and you can see that a special effort was put into the preparation and execution of the performers tonight to make sure it was inviting and accommodating.

"I give the organizers great credit for being able to do it so successfully," he said.

Performed since 2004 by the New York-based Divine Performing Arts Company, on its global tour the Spectacular will stage 220 shows in over 60 cities, reaching a total live audience of about 650,000. The tour will span five continents — Asia, Australia, Europe, and North and South America.

After Toronto, the Divine Performing Arts will continue on to play venues in the U.S., Japan, Korea, Paris, Singapore and Australia. The Spectacular will return

to Canada in the spring, when it will to play in Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton.

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The Canadian International Peace Project (CIPP) is a novel and unique non-partisan organisation that has brought together diverse groups and individuals to work on issues and projects relating to local, national and international peace, security and development . Through partnership on events and projects, the CIPP fosters mutual respect and sustainable relationships among diverse groups including those in conflict with each other.

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