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## Spectacular Wows Calgary Audiences

By **Andrea Hayley**

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**Epoch** Times Staff on assignment in Calgary



Diane Colley-Urquhart, deputy mayor of the City of Calgary is interviewed by reporters after seeing the Spectacular on Monday May 14: "I have attended many oriental performances but I have never been to any like this. This is spectacular." (Linda Chen)



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The Divine Performing Arts Chinese Spectacular, which finished its second and final show in Calgary on Tuesday night, has

quickly gained renown as a world-class act. With its pool of highly talented performers, it's no wonder audience members are raving about the show.

Calgary resident Chris Ruiz said, "It was awesome. I've never seen anything like that. The first time you see it, it blows you away."

Eric Dennings, who bought his ticket just before the show started, called his experience "a journey that gave him great peace."

"It was really, really fun and very unique," he added. "I've never seen a show that comes even close to that. I'm blessed to have seen it."

Large-scale classical Chinese dance pieces dominate the show, the graceful dancers adorned in exquisite traditional Chinese dress. Many of the dances enact the myths and legends of ancient China, with the feast of color and movement bringing the tales alive.



Suzy Judson, and Dennis Garnhum, artistic director of Theatre Calgary pose for a photo in the lobby of the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium Tuesday May 15, 2007. (Andrea Hayley/Epoch Times)

The dances are supported by a full orchestra that blends classical western and eastern instruments. Erhu soloist Xiaochung Qi, graduate of the Shanghai conservatory of music, impressed the audience with a moving piece she played on the ancient three-stringed instrument.

"I thought it was really quite beautiful and mesmerizing to see how she played, and the dexterity of her skill," said Dennis Garnhum, artistic director of Theatre Calgary.

At Monday's show Diane Colley-Urquhart, deputy mayor of the City of Calgary, said she was "awestruck" with the talent and the "absolute dedication" of the performers.

"Every movement is so well thought through; I have never seen anything like this. It is amazing. You have elevated us to a new level tonight."

Also on Monday, [Colin Jackson, CEO and president of EPCOR Centre for the Performing Arts](#), said shows that play in Calgary are usually much smaller.

"One of the very pleasing things about this performance is the number of people who are so well rehearsed," said Jackson.

The tightly choreographed dance pieces, paired with the full sound of the orchestra, reflect the credentials of the choreographer and conductor of the show. Rutang Chen, the show's conductor, managed China's Central Philharmonic Society Orchestra, the predecessor of the China National Symphony Orchestra, from 1983-1990.

Choreographer and lead dancer Eily Xu won several awards for her dancing and choreography in Liaoning Province in China before coming to United States. One of China's most celebrated contemporary tenors, Guan Guimin, also performed in the show.

The Divine Performing Arts Chinese Spectacular will conclude its global tour in Edmonton at the Northern Alberta Jubilee

Auditorium on Wednesday night.

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Chris Ruiz saw the Spectacular for the first time in Calgary: "It was awesome. I've never seen anything like this. The first time you see it, it blows you away." (Andrea Hayley/Epoch Times)