

Title:

A Glorious Feast of Traditional Chinese Dance

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Summary:

New Tang Dynasty Television's Chinese New Year Spectacular offers a truly tantalizing variety of dance this year, featuring all-new dance troupes and drawing upon 5,000 years of history spanning a vast range of different folk traditions, from Mongolia to Tibet to the Yunnan region of China.

Keywords:

Chinese new year,china,ntdtv,dance,classical Chinese dance,spectacular

Article Body:

New Tang Dynasty Television's Chinese New Year Spectacular offers a truly tantalizing variety of dance this year, featuring all-new dance troupes and drawing upon 5,000 years of history spanning a vast range of different folk traditions from Mongolia to Tibet to the Yunnan region of China.

Acclaimed choreographer Yung Yung Tsuai has been working with the Spectacular since its inception in 2004. Ms. Tsuai came to the United States in 1970 to study contemporary dance on a Martha Graham Scholarship. She stayed on with the Graham Company and still teaches at the Martha Graham School of contemporary dance today.

Ms. Tsuai says the Spectacular is a particularly meaningful production for a lot of people because "over the last 100 years, much of China's rich traditional culture has been destroyed. People have lost their roots," Ms. Tsuai says. "Our performers want wholeheartedly to convey their culture and traditions to the audience to remind them, and themselves, of who the Chinese are."

Hundreds of dancers from all over the United States and Canada rehearsed almost every day for over a year. Yung Yung Tsuai is but one of six dance teachers, all of whom graduated from China's top dance schools, resulting in a combined total of more than a hundred years of training and experience. With so many expert teachers, Ms. Tsui says, "collaboration is a major part of the project."

Although choreographers use traditional themes and styles, many dances actually combine the styles of both east and west, fusing ballet techniques with the

expressiveness of classical Chinese dance. All the dancers train extensively in both. Ms. Tsuai says ballet helps the dancers develop the skill needed to execute the classical Chinese movements.

For Ms. Tsuai, what is unique about the Spectacular is not just the dances themselves or the dazzling costumes, it is how the dances affect the audience. For those few minutes that each piece is presented on the stage, she says viewers will feel they have entered a time and place governed by chivalry, loyalty, and honesty—a place where beauty and peace prevail. “We are not just showing people traditional Chinese culture; we are waking up the part of them that yearns for beauty and goodness,” said Ms. Tsuai.

This is what draws her back every year, sometimes as a choreographer, sometimes as a dance teacher. And, she says, this is what motivates the hundreds of dancers who give their lives over to the handful of days a year when the show comes to the stage.

“Art is the food of the soul,” said Ms. Tsuai. “If you see art that promotes peace and harmony, you will bring that home with you. That’s what’s important. In the past people lived as if they were in a divine realm. Daily life wasn’t necessarily religious but it was very spiritual. When art presents the beauty and positive side of human nature, it can positively influence people in how they relate to others in their daily lives.”

Ms. Tsuai is confident the audience will leave NTDTV’s Chinese New Year Spectacular feeling not only entertained but nourished and rejuvenated by this veritable feast for the soul.