

'Holiday Wonders' ■ By Sherwood Liu

Thrills Florida Audience



The show in Fort Lauderdale

NTDTV's Holiday Wonders brought its celebration of classical Chinese music and dance to Florida, with two shows at Broward Center for Performing Arts, Fort Lauderdale and two shows at Progressive Energy Center for Performing Arts (Mahaffey Theater), St. Petersburg, and the audience heartily approved.

Produced by the Divine Performing Arts, the show features classical Chinese dance, vocal performances, and musical instruments; acrobatics; drumming; legends set to song and dance; and a vibrant array of costumes based on designs from China's 5,000-year-old culture.

"The turnout is great," said Jimmy Johnson, mayor of Seminole, Florida. "This is football time. To have this many people attend is truly remarkable, truly amazing."

"I have been to London, New York—half-way around the world—and this has to be the most beautiful show that I've seen," continued Mayor Johnson. "It's so colorful, so intriguing, and you can hardly wait until the next number. I wish everyone could see this." Mayor Johnson especially liked the performance about forbearance and the "Mongolian Bowl Dance."

Thomas Barnhorn, vice mayor of Seminole, said the show was an eye-opener to Chinese culture and history. "The vast beauty is overwhelming. They showed the Communist Party coming in and not allowing freedom of speech. ... To me, being here in the United States, I can't imagine that taking place.

Frank, from Deland, Fla., who had worked for the U.S. government in China for more than 30 years, would agree. He said that in China, you'd never be able to have a show like this that encourages people to seek out the truth on their own.

He added, "The performance was much better than I expected. I saw a lot of cultural

shows in China, and this one was much better choreographed and much more interesting."



The Mahaffey theatre was filled with appreciative viewers

The mission of the Divine Performing Arts is to rediscover and promote "the essence of true, traditional culture" and to present artistic performances that "celebrate human dignity and positive values ... to provide an experience of consummate beauty and goodness."

Frances Font had invited her two daughters to the show as a holiday gift. Her daughter Valerie came out after the show with a smile on her face: "I really liked the acts where there was a story. It was quite a spectacle."

Frances appreciated "the peacefulness that prevailed, and the tolerance—it's what the world needs now." They knew the show would be fun, festive, and joyful, but also found the message powerful.

Kerry Chen, director of the St. Petersburg International Folk Fair Society, said: "I thought it was absolutely spectacular. It was my first time ever seeing something so grand and so well put together."



Thoram Charanda, a chemistry manager for life support in the Walt Disney Company,

Thoram Charanda and his family enjoyed the show at St. Petersburg's Mahaffey Theater on December 29.



Seminole Mayor Jimmy Johnson: "It's truly amazing. I am very intrigued—the talent, the cultural exchange, and it's so inspirational."

watched the Holiday Wonders show with his family at St. Petersburg's Mahaffey Theater on December 29. Thoram said, "I enjoyed it very much. I enjoyed the Buddhas, the Falun Gong and the drumming that were phenomenal. I think the young virtuoso pianist was amazing. It was very beautiful, so I enjoyed it very much.

"I learned more about the Tang Dynasty, and the story about the divine counterpart bringing the renaissance or the Golden Age of China's civilization and how that came about through divine inspiration."

"I thought it was really good. I liked the first performance (Creation). I liked all of it," said the Thoram's eldest daughter.

Shata Ben-Avari, Thoram's wife, told a reporter, "It was beautiful, with all of the dancing pieces with the fans and the long-sleeved dresses, and I thought it was all really beautifully done. I loved these performances that have been integrated with the Chinese culture. This is a beautiful fusion of art, culture and costume design in an incredibly divine presentation."

Holiday Wonders presents China's traditional art forms in a modern setting. The performance integrates classical music, traditional dance, artistically animated backdrops, and intricate stage design to convey the essence of Chinese culture.

New Times Culture and Education Center, the local presenter of Holiday Wonders, expressed that they will make the show a new holiday tradition for Florida, bringing the shows to more cities in Florida next year.

The Divine Performing Arts will hold holiday shows in 50 cities around the world this year with an estimated audience of 650,000. For dates and times visit www.bestchineseshows.com/en/buytickets.