

Friday, March 21, 2008, 8pm
Saturday, March 22, 2008, 2pm & 8pm
Sunday, March 23, 2008, 3pm
Zellerbach Hall

Peking Acrobats



Peking Acrobats

PROGRAM

Adagio for One
Keep It Under Your Hat
Hoop Diving
Feet Balancing
Teeter Board Bowls
Jar Juggling
Chutes and Ladders
Water Meteors
Kung-Fu Surprise
Double Pole Position

INTERMISSION

The Nose Knows It
The Happy Chefs
Let the Spinning Plates Spin
Get Strapped In
In the High Chair
Pagoda of Chairs
Human Pyramid / Bicycle Pagoda
Finale

There will be one intermission.

The Peking Acrobats reserve the right to make alterations in the order of the program or in the cast due to illness or any cause whatsoever. The use of cameras, flash or video photography and tape recorders is strictly prohibited.

The Peking Acrobats recommend that you advise your children that what they see on stage takes years of practice and should not be tried at home!

Cal Performances' 2007–2008 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank.

Peking Acrobats Staff

Ken Hai	<i>Company Director</i>
Shao K. Wan	<i>Group Leader</i>
Fei Liu	<i>Technical Consultant</i>
Quan Yang	<i>Stage Manager</i>
Yuan Yuan Zhang	<i>Orchestra Director</i>
Adam Troughear	<i>Technical Director</i>
John Varesio	<i>Assistant to the Technical Director</i>
Erin Sparks	<i>Lighting Designer</i>

Tour Credits

IAI Presentations, Inc.	
P.O. Box 4	
Pismo Beach, California 93448	
(805) 474-8422	
Don Hughes	<i>President</i>
Cynthia A. Dike-Hughes	<i>Vice President</i>
Marissa Bywater	<i>Marketing and Production Associate</i>
Rebekah Golde	<i>Production Associate</i>

International Asia, Inc.
P.O. Box 546
Walnut, California 91788
Ken Hai *President*

Tour Direction

SRO Artists, Inc.
(608) 664-8160
sroartists.com

Since their debut in 1986, the **Peking Acrobats** have redefined audience perceptions of Chinese acrobatics. They perform daring maneuvers atop a precarious pagoda of chairs; they are experts at treacherous wire-walking, trick-cycling, precision tumbling, somersaulting and gymnastics. They defy gravity with amazing displays of contortion, flexibility and control. They push the envelope of human possibility with astonishing juggling dexterity and incredible balancing feats, showcasing tremendous skill and ability. They are masters of agility and grace. Accompanied by live musicians skillfully playing traditional Chinese instruments and high-tech special effects that coalesce with the music, featuring the acrobats' awe-inspiring feats, an exuberant entertainment event appears before your eyes, featuring all the excitement and festive pageantry of a Chinese carnival.

Many of the magnificent acts we see today, despite their sophistication, were performed in ancient times. The history of Chinese acrobatics is rich in tradition and dates back over 2,000 years. Throughout the history of China the acrobatic arts flourished, but in varying degrees. Originally, court entertainments were formal and monotonous, quite the opposite of the lively, folk arts of the people. And, it did all begin with folk arts: tumbling, juggling ordinary household objects and balancing. Common games of the people, such as "Rang Hitting," or throwing a small wooden strip the size and shape of a shoe sole at a target, developed accuracy. Modern day Whip Feats are traced back to this game. Myth and religion also influenced the acrobatic performing arts. The Lion Dance is Buddhist in origin. The lion was seen as the reincarnation of a woman who was teased into revealing her true identity. This dance was a symbol of spiritual renewal and also revered for dispelling bad luck.

Eventually, however, the excitement of the acrobat's amazing feats caught and held the attention of the ruling class. Acrobatic performers were routinely invited to the court to entertain and impress visiting dignitaries. The varied acts of tumbling, singing, dancing and juggling became known as "The Hundred Entertainments" during the Han Dynasty (206–220 AD). Records of acrobatic acts can be found as early as the Ch'in Dynasty

(221–207 BC) and Chinese acrobats through the ages have continued to perfect what has become an evolving folk art form. The Peking Acrobats ability to perform the astounding is rooted in centuries of this Chinese history and folk art. Tradition demands that each generation of acrobats add its own improvements and embellishments. Generations of families carry on this highly acclaimed and popular tradition. Children begin training at a young age and adhere to a rigorous training schedule which they follow for the rest of their lives. Today, the acrobat in China is considered an artist. Because of the unusual and difficult nature of the feats involved, high honor is conferred upon those skilled enough to become acrobats; an acrobat can be considered the Chinese equivalent of an American opera star. It is telling that the Chinese acrobatic tradition just gets stronger, due to the continued innovation of the artists and the endless enthusiasm from their adoring public.

The Peking Acrobats have been featured on numerous television shows and specials, including *The Wayne Brady Show*, *That's Incredible*, *ABC's Wide World of Sports*, NBC's *Ring in the New Year Holiday Special*, *Artistgalla*—a benefit show that was filmed live at the Drammens Theatre in Oslo—and on Nickelodeon's new hit show, *Unfabulous*. They set the world record for the Human Chair Stack on Fox's *Guinness Book Primetime*, where they astounded audiences with their bravery and dexterity as they balanced six people precariously atop six chairs 21 feet up in the air without safety lines! The Peking Acrobats are also making the scene on the silver screen: Company members were featured in Stephen Soderbergh's hit films *Ocean's 11* and *Ocean's 12*, playing alongside Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt and George Clooney. Qin Shaobo, an alumnus of the Peking Acrobats, appears in *Ocean's 13*, featuring many of the original cast members as well as Ellen Barkin and Al Pacino. The Peking Acrobats were also the featured performers at the Hollywood premiere party of *Ocean's 13*, where they impressed the star-studded audience with their incredible acrobatic feats.

The Peking Acrobats are also pleased by the tremendous success of their first commercial DVD, released on their 2006 North American Tour and filmed in 2005 as a television special for HDNet.

About the Artists

This crystal-clear and thrilling DVD is available for sale at the performance and on the internet at www.iaipresentations.com. The show, shot in High Definition format, has aired many times on HDNet. The Peking Acrobats are honored to have been selected by HDNet to participate in this technological innovation, thereby putting this art form on the cutting edge of modern technology.

The Peking Acrobats have performed for symphony concert audiences across America. Fans will recall that this milestone in their career was reached when they debuted at the Hollywood Bowl, performing as part of the the Bowl's Fireworks Season Finale, blending their unique brand of acrobatics with the majestic sound of the 100-piece Hollywood Bowl Orchestra to create a multicultural, multimedia spectacular. Concerts such as this have led to many other performances with orchestras across the United States, such as the San Francisco Symphony, the San Diego Symphony, the Buffalo Philharmonic and the Cincinnati Pops.

In December 2006, the Peking Acrobats returned to Europe for a six-week tour of the Netherlands, Belgium and Holland. Sparked by their tremendous success during their five-week, 12-city debut tour of Italy in 2005, this tour took them to many exciting and fascinating locales, where they enjoyed sharing their ancient artistry with an ever-widening European audience. They visited Amsterdam and many Dutch cities, as well as Bruges in Brussels and several cities they had yet to visit in Italy. They returned to the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy in October of 2007 for their third European tour, where they also debuted in Switzerland.

A performance by the Peking Acrobats brings with it the opportunity to view the epitome of a rich and ancient folk art tradition, highlighted by today's technology, melding the ancient and traditional with the modern wonders of the 21st century. So, sit back, relax, and enjoy as these stellar performers reveal to you their mastery of an ancient art form, thousands of years in the making.