

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

The Peking Acrobats

Friday-Saturday, January 21-22, 2005
Zellerbach Hall

The program for this performance will be selected from the acts listed below. 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.

Double (Pole) Fantasy
Darling Diablos
Jar Juggling
Hoop Diving
Plate Spinning
Nose Balancing
Feet Balancing
Kung-Fu
Lion Dance
Unicycle Bowl Balancing
Souped Up Straps
Water Meteor
In The High Chair
Pagoda Of Chairs
Human Pyramid
Peacock On A Bicycle
Finale

There will be one intermission.

The use of cameras, flash or video photography and tape recorders is strictly prohibited.

The Peking Acrobats recommend that parents advise their children that what they see on stage takes years of practice and should not be tried at home.

This performance has been made possible, in part, by the Friends of Cal Performances.

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM



Welcome to the magnificent world of The Peking Acrobats! Here, the impossible is made possible, and “daring” only begins to describe the performance of these amazing artists. The Peking Acrobats are comprised of the finest acrobatic troupes in China today, and they have received acclaim from countries around the world. An outgrowth of the Great China Circus, popular during the 1920s, this group became an integrated professional acrobatic company in 1958.

Many of the magnificent feats you will see onstage today, despite their sophistication, were performed in ancient times. The history of Chinese acrobatics is rich in tradition and dates back more than 2000 years. It began 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, were popular and helped people develop accuracy when throwing objects. Modern-day Whip Feats are traced back to this game. Myth and religion

also influenced the acrobatic performing arts. For instance, the Lion Dance is Buddhist in origin. The lion was seen as the reincarnation of a woman, and was often teased into revealing her true identity. This dance was a symbol of spiritual renewal and also revered for dispelling bad luck.

Originally, court entertainments involving acrobatics were formal and monotonous—quite the opposite of the lively, folk arts of the people. Eventually, however, the excitement of the acrobat’s amazing feats caught and held the attention of the ruling class, and 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 BC - 220 AD). And of course, the acrobatic arts have always maintained their popularity with the people. Today the acrobat in China is considered an artist. 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.

The Peking Acrobats have traveled the world, sharing their special brand of enchantment with a global audience. They have played to sold-out houses and earned rave reviews and have appeared on many television specials, and they set the world record for the Human Chair Stack on Fox’s *Guinness Book Primetime* show, 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. They have been featured in the hit film *Ocean’s Eleven*, directed by Steven Soderbergh, where they worked with such silver screen luminaries as Brad Pitt, Julia Roberts and George Clooney. Company members also appear in that film’s sequel, *Ocean’s Twelve*.

It is with much pride and pleasure that The Peking Acrobats embark on their nineteenth North American Tour. Sit back, relax and

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enjoy as our performers reveal to you their mastery of an ancient art form, thousands of years in the making.

Producers

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Staff for The Peking Acrobats

Company Director, Mr. Ken Hai
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Technical Director, Mr. Steve Kirkland

