

# Cal Performances Presents

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Friday, November 24, 2006, 8pm  
Saturday, November 25, 2006, 2pm & 8pm  
Sunday, November 26, 3pm  
Zellerbach Hall

## Golden Dragon Acrobats



*Cal Performances' 2006–2007 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.*

## Golden Dragon Acrobats

### Cast

#### *Female Performers*

Li Na Cao  
Jia Chen  
Qui Yu Chen  
Rui Chen  
Jing Li  
Cui Cui Liu  
Hong Dan Yang  
Rui Ping Zhang  
Shuang Li Zhang  
Xiao Fei Zheng  
Xiao Hong Zheng

#### *Male Performers*

Xiao Liang Cao  
Wan Chao Hu  
Chao Li  
Pu Liu  
Tao Wu  
Shou Gang Yang  
Deng Bo Yao  
Zhuo Yao  
Xiang Lei Zhang  
Wan Jun Zhang

### Crew

Danny Chang	<i>Creator, Producer, Director</i>
Angela Chang	<i>Choreographer, Costume Designer</i>
Eric Huang	<i>Road Manager</i>
Randy S. Williamson	<i>Production Director</i>
Jamie Keating	<i>Stage Technician</i>
Dick Liu	<i>Company Manager</i>
Jessie Chang	<i>Company Secretary</i>

# Program Notes

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## A Brief History of Acrobatics in China

The ancient art of Chinese acrobatics is an old and longstanding tradition that began in China more than 2,000 years ago. Over its long and rich history, it has developed as one of the most popular art forms among the Chinese people. While many historical records provide evidence for the development of Chinese acrobatics as far back as the Xia Dynasty (4,000 years ago), it is most commonly held that the art form did not become widely popular until approximately 2,500 years ago, when it first captured the attention of the country's powerful emperors.

During the Warring States Period (475–221 BC), acrobatics in China began to evolve from the working lives of its people. Instruments of labor, such as tridents, wicker rings and articles of daily use, such as tables, chairs, jars, plates and bowls, began to be used as performance props. This unorganized form of entertainment and leisure eventually evolved into a form of performance that became recognizable to the Chinese people.

Then, during the Han Dynasty (221 BC–220 AD), these rudimentary acts of acrobatics developed into the “Hundred Plays.” More contents and varieties were soon to develop. Musical accompaniment was soon added to the performance as interest in the art form grew among the emperors. During the Tang Dynasty, the number acrobats greatly increased as the skills of each individual performer slowly began to become much more precise and amazing.

Since these early times, acrobatics have evolved into many various forms of performance, including dance, opera, *wushu* and sports. However, the impact of Chinese acrobatics goes far beyond the boundaries of performance, as it has played an important role in the cultural exchange between China and Western nations, including the United States. The citizens of China continue to present their acrobatic art for to the world today, as it portrays the hard working nature of their people and sets forth an example of the rich traditions of Chinese culture.

## About the Artists



The **Golden Dragon Acrobats** represent the best of a time-honored tradition that began more than 27 centuries ago. With its main office in Dallas, Texas, the company, hailing from Hebei, China, has traveled around the world, performing in all 50 states and in more than 65 countries on five continents, at such prestigious venues as the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Germany's Elspe Festival, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Caesar's Palace in Atlantic City and the Seattle Children's Festival.

With performers trained in the rigorous art of Chinese acrobatics since early youth, the Golden Dragon Acrobats have garnered international acclaim. The troupe counts among its awards seven National Association of Campus Activities Entertainer of the Year Awards and the Campus Activities Today's Performer of the Year Award.

**Danny Chang** (*founder, producer, director*) began his training at the age of eight with his family's school, the Chang Family Acrobatic School

of Taipei. By his 10th birthday, Mr. Chang was performing professionally with the school's touring wing, the Chinese Golden Dragon Acrobats. Since that time, he and the troupe have performed in more than 65 countries around the world. Mr. Chang is one of the world's leading impresarios for Chinese acrobatics, his reputation solidly based on his talents as both acrobatic and artistic director. Honored by the Taipei Trade Union of Acrobatic Dance, he has twice received Distinguished Skill in Performance awards from the Republic of China's Ministry of Education, and he was awarded the most prestigious Medal for International Faith and Good will by the Republic of China's Coordination Council for North American Affairs.

**Angela Chang** (*choreographer, costume designer*) has served as choreographer and costume designer for the Chinese Golden Acrobats for more than 20 years. An accomplished student of Chinese culture, Ms. Chang studied both music and dance during high school in Taipei.

## About the Artists

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She earned her undergraduate degree in Chinese Folk Dance at the Chinese Cultural College of Taipei. Eight years as Coordinator of Cultural Programming for the Taiwan Television Corporation has provided Ms. Chang with the extensive experience in arts management that she brings to the troupe. In partnership with her husband, Danny Chang, Ms. Chang's education, training and talent have been instrumental in making the Golden Dragon Acrobats the leading troupe of Chinese acrobats in the world today.

**Randy S. Williamson** (*production director*) is very pleased to be back with the Golden Dragon Acrobats, having worked with them many times in the past. While he was away, he worked with Cirque du Soleil, first as Assistant Technical Director and then as Operations Production Manager for its Las Vegas production of *Mystère*. He also worked for the Joffrey Ballet of Chicago as its Technical Director. His other credits include the Arkansas Repertory Theatre, Western Michigan's Cherry County Playhouse and, in his native state, Theatre West Virginia.

**Eric Huang** (*road manager*) was born in Taiwan in 1978 and moved to Texas at age 13. Before entering the entertainment business, Eric studied emergency medicine and computer science. He began his internship with Asian Artists Productions Inc. in winter 2001. After earning his degree from University of Texas at Dallas in 2002, he officially became the Road Manager for the Golden Dragon Acrobats. For the past three years, Eric has helped to institute many of the company's current management policies and to help the company grow into a more technologically equipped operation. Eric is also the main translator for the acrobats.

**Dick Liu** (*company manager*) graduated from the University of Taipei in 1974 and worked in a chemical plant for 25 years. During 11 years of that span, he served as the Director of Operations. Prior to the recent tour, Dick toured

with the company for a year in 1992. Because of his prior abundant experience in operations, he currently specializes in the company's personnel management and merchandising.

**Jessie Chang** (*company secretary*), the youngest daughter of Danny and Angela, was born in Taiwan in 1984 and moved to Texas at age 12. In May 2006, she graduated from the University of Texas at Dallas with a degree in business administration. Jessie started working with Asian Artists Productions Inc. in summer 2002, after graduating from high school. While working with the troupe, she developed a great interest in the culture and history of Chinese acrobatics. After assisting in the office for two years, she officially became the company's secretary, specializing in documentation, translation and communications.