

Friday, November 28, 2008, 8pm
Saturday, November 29, 2008, 2pm & 8pm
Sunday, November 30, 2008, 3pm
Zellerbach Hall

Golden Dragon Acrobats



Cal Performances' 2008–2009 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank.

Golden Dragon Acrobats



PROGRAM

Thousand Hands Dance, Contortion
Swaying Board Balancing, Table Hoop
Umbrella Juggling, Foot Juggling (Jar & Table), Ball Juggling
De Deux (Ballet Duo)
Spinning Wheel

INTERMISSION

Dancing Plate, Hat Juggling
Power Act, Diablo Yo-Yo
Tower of Chairs
Flags, Bicycle Family
Finale

Program subject to change.

Golden Dragon Acrobats

Cast

Performers

Yuan Cheng
 Yong Xia Ding
 Hui Jie Gu
 Xuan Guo
 Zhao Tao Huang
 Qi Ming Jiang
 Li, Fang Fang
 Hong Jun Liu
 Yong Pu Liu
 Sheng Peng Nie
 Zhi Feng Niu
 Jia Hui Shen
 Jun Liang Wang
 Shao Min Wang
 Shao Zheng Wang
 Yuan Bin Wang
 Huai Yuan Wei
 Ling Zhen Wu
 Chen Chen Xing
 Ying Ying Yang
 Xu Bing Zhang

Music Medwyn Goodall, Kitaro, Narada, Power of Movement, Circles of Life, Himekami

Crew

Founder & Director Danny Chang
Choreographer & Costume Designer Angela L. Chang
Company Manager Eric H. Huang
Production Director Randy S. Williamson
Company Tour Assistant Cullie D. Williamson
Administrative Director Jessie S. Chang

Producer Asian Artists Productions, Inc.
 (www.goldendragonacrobats.com)

Representation Art Fegan Entertainment, Inc.
 (www.artfegan.com)



A Brief History of Acrobatics in China

Body art was one of the first forms of human art. Throughout human history, each culture has developed its own form of body art. 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.



The **Golden Dragon Acrobats** represent the best of a time-honored tradition that began more than 27 centuries ago. With performers hailing from Hebei, China, and trained in the rigorous art of Chinese acrobatics since early youth, the Golden Dragons have performed to international acclaim. With its main office in Dallas, Texas, the troupe 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.

In November 2005, the Golden Dragon Acrobats made their Broadway debut to a sold-out audience at the New Victory Theater, New York's premier theater for children and families. Their six-week run earned standing ovations from audiences of all ages, critical acclaim from the New York press and two New York Drama Desk Award nominations. The troupe performed at the New Victory again last season—the only Chinese acrobatic troupe ever to make a return appearance on Broadway. The troupe's 2008–2009 tour will mark its 30th year of continuous touring in the

United States. The Golden Dragon Acrobats count among their 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 & Director*) began his acrobatic training at the age of eight with his family's school, the Chang Family Acrobatic School of Taipei. By his tenth birthday, he was performing professionally with the school's touring wing, the Chinese Golden Dragon Acrobats. Since then, he and the troupe have performed in more than 65 countries.

Mr. Chang is one of the world's leading impresarios for Chinese acrobatics, his reputation based on his talents as both acrobatic and artistic director. Honored by the Taipei Trade Union of Acrobatic Dance, Mr. Chang has twice received Distinguished Skill in Performance awards from the Republic of China's Ministry of Education, and he was awarded the prestigious Medal for International Faith and Good will by the Republic of China's Coordination Council for North American Affairs. In 2006, Mr. Chang was nomi-

nated for a New York Drama Desk Award in the Unique Theatrical Experience category.

Angela L. 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. She earned an 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 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. In 2006, Ms. Chang received a New York Drama Desk Award nomination for Best Choreography.

Randy S. Williamson (*Production Director*) is very pleased to be back with the Golden Dragon Acrobats, having worked with them many times over the years. He has also worked with Cirque du Soleil, first as Assistant Technical Director and then as Operations Production Manager for its Las Vegas production of *Mystère*, and 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 H. Huang (*Company Manager*) was born in Taiwan in 1978 and moved to Texas at age 13. Before entering the entertainment business, Mr. Chang 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 and then Company Manager for the Golden Dragon Acrobats. Over the past five 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. Mr. Chang also serves as the main translator for the acrobats.

Jessie S. Chang (*Administrative Director*), 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. Ms. Chang began 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 troupe's secretary, specializing in documentation, translation and communications, and has since taken over administrative responsibilities for the troupe.