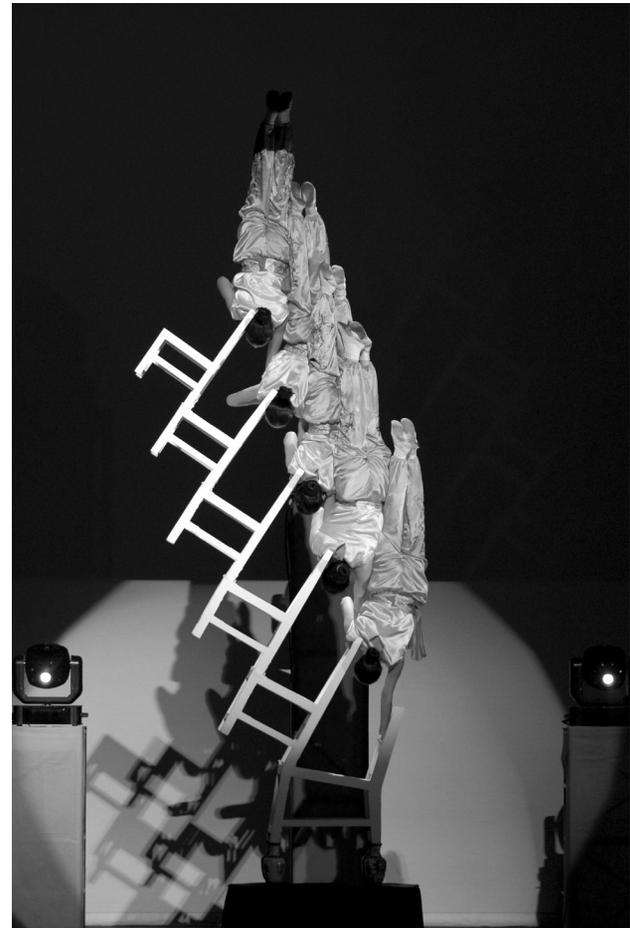


Saturday, January 21, 2012, 2pm & 8pm  
Sunday, January 22, 2012, 3pm  
Zellerbach Hall

## Peking Acrobats



*Brittany App*

*Cal Performances' 2011–2012 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.*

## Peking Acrobats

### PROGRAM

Pole Position  
 Magic Carpet Ride  
 Keep It Under Your Hat  
 Diving Daring Do  
 Let's Have a Ball  
 The Nose Knows It  
 Equilibrium Equinox  
 Daring Diablos  
 A Souped Up Strap Act  
 Flowers on the Tree

### INTERMISSION

Lion Dance  
 Aerial Acrobatics  
 Colorful Contortion  
 The Happy Chefs  
 It's a Tight Squeeze  
 Let the Spinning Plates Spin  
 In the High Chair  
 Human Pyramid/Bicycle Pagoda  
 Finale

*The program is subject to change.*

*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!*

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 feats of daring, 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 the live musicians, playing traditional Chinese instruments with modern flair, high-tech special effects that coalesce with the music, and all of this in harmony with the Acrobats' awe-inspiring feats, an exuberant entertainment event appears before your eyes, featuring all the excitement and festive pageantry of a Chinese Carnival infused with fresh, explosive energy.

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 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 revered for dispelling bad luck.

Eventually, however, the excitement of the acrobat's amazing feats caught on and held the attention of the ruling classes. 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). Records of acrobatic acts can be found as early as the Ch'in Dynasty (221 BC–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. No doubt, the Chinese acrobats of the Han Dynasty would be awestruck and amazed at how their modern-day counterparts have elevated their art form, and the fact that their folk art tradition, begun so many ages ago, is still going strong, even into the 21st century.

Tradition demands that each generation of acrobats add its own improvements and embellishments to their acts. Generations of families have carried on this highly acclaimed and popular tradition. Children begin training at a young age and adhere to a rigorous training schedule which they follow over the length of their careers. 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; in China, an acrobat can be considered the Chinese equivalent of an opera star in the West. 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.

Over the years, 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* and NBC's *Ring in the New Year Holiday Special*. They have also appeared on Nickelodeon's hit show *Unfabulous*, and *Ellen's Really Big Show*, hosted by comedian and talk show host Ellen DeGeneres. They set the world record for the Human Chair Stack on Fox's *Guinness Book Primetime TV* show, where they balanced six people precariously atop six chairs 21 feet in the air without safety lines. Internationally, they have appeared on the *Artistgalla*, a benefit show that was filmed live at the Drammens Theatre in Oslo, Norway.

As part of their 25th Silver Anniversary Tour in April 2011, the Peking Acrobats were filmed live in concert by Center City Film & Television for NBC/Comcast's new 3D Television Channel. This 3D television special was filmed at Popejoy Hall in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and has aired on NBC/Comcast's 3D Television Channel over the last several months. The program features the Peking Acrobats in performance, as well as including interviews with the show's producers, cast, and crew. The Peking Acrobats are proud to once again be on the cutting edge of entertainment technology, with the release of their performances in the 3D format.

The Peking Acrobats are also making the Hollywood scene on the silver screen as former company members were featured in director Stephen Soderbergh's hit film *Ocean's 11*, playing alongside Hollywood's elite, such as Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt and George Clooney. Qin Shaobo, an alumnus of the Peking Acrobats, also appeared in that film's two blockbuster sequels, *Ocean's 12* and *Ocean's 13*. The Peking Acrobats were the featured performers at the Hollywood premiere party of *Ocean's 13*, and they impressed the star-studded audience with their incredible acrobatic feats.

The Peking Acrobats are pleased to announce the release of their second DVD, this time commemorating the 2011 25th Silver Anniversary Tour. The DVD was filmed in High Definition format, and those who enjoyed their first release should not miss this thrilling new DVD. Their DVDs, both in High Definition format, has aired many times on HDNet television.

The Peking Acrobats continue to perform for symphonic concert audiences across America. A milestone in their career was achieved when they performed as part of the Hollywood Bowl's Fireworks Season Finale, where the company blended their unique brand of acrobatics with the majestic sound of the 100-piece Hollywood Bowl Orchestra. The acrobats infused Bowl audiences with their powerful maneuvers in a multicultural, multimedia spectacular. Concerts such as these have led to many other performances with symphony orchestras across the United States, such as the San Francisco Symphony, San

Diego Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic and the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra.

The Peking Acrobats returned to the Hollywood Bowl for three more appearances, most recently performing with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra in September 2008 with Maestro Tom Wilkins conducting. The audience received them warmly, and it was like a homecoming celebration for the performers.

On New Year's Eve 2011, the Peking Acrobats performed with the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra, Mariusz Smolij conducting. At the gala event, attended by thousands of people, the Peking Acrobats treated the crowd at the Amsoil Arena in Duluth, Minnesota, to their special form of artistry, combined with the sound of the 80-piece symphony. The Peking Acrobats also played family shows on New Year's Day at the Reif Performing Arts Center in Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

The Peking Acrobats have also expanded their reach into the European market. For the past five years, they have toured throughout Europe and visited Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland. They have traveled to several of these countries two and three times, performing in Milan, Bologna and Naples in Italy, Bruges in Belgium, and Amsterdam and the Hague in the Netherlands. They will return to Europe in November and December 2012, when they will tour throughout the Netherlands and across the continent, marking their sixth European Tour.

For their 2012 North American Tour, the Peking Acrobats' live performances feature all-new acts and new twists on old favorites. As in previous years, the Peking Acrobats feature live musicians playing traditional Chinese instruments with 21st-century style and sophistication, adding yet another dimension of grace and beauty to the Peking Acrobats' artistry.

A performance by the Peking Acrobats, therefore, 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. It is with much pride and pleasure that the Peking Acrobats embark on their 26th North American Tour.



Brittany App

#### *Peking Acrobats Staff*

Ken T. Hai	<i>Company Director</i>
Wan S. Kun	<i>Group Leader</i>
Zhang W. Ping	<i>Technical Consultant</i>
Jiang F. Jun	<i>Stage Manager</i>
Hu W. Feng	<i>Orchestra Director</i>
Mark Mallory	<i>Technical Director</i>
Shane Kelm	<i>Assistant to the Technical Director</i>
"Tony" Chu (Chao Ming)	<i>Translator</i>
Zhang W. Ping	<i>Assistant Translator</i>

#### *Tour Credits*

IAI Presentations, Inc.	
Don Hughes	<i>President and CEO</i>
Cynthia A. Dike-Hughes	<i>Vice President and COO</i>
Jason Hughes	<i>General Manager</i>

International Asia, Inc.	
Ken T. Hai	<i>President</i>

#### *Tour Direction*

SRO Artists, Inc.  
www.sroartists.com