



Saturday, January 24, 2015, 2pm & 8pm

Sunday, January 25, 2015, 3pm

Zellerbach Hall

For Families

The Peking Acrobats

with special guests

JIGU! Thunder Drums of China



Brittany App

Cal Performances' 2014–2015 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

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PROGRAM

Pole Position
Bodacious Body Balancing
Let's Have a Ball!
Diving Daring Do
The Sound of Rolling Walnuts (*featuring JIGU!*)
It's a Tight Squeeze
Let the Spinning Plates Spin
What a "Jar"-Ring Experience!
Acrobatic Amusement
The Happy Chefs
Colorful Contortion
A "Strapping" Kung-Fu Ceremony

INTERMISSION

Aerial Acrobatics
The Lion Dance
Darling Diablos
Keep It Under Your Hat
The Bull and the Tiger (*featuring JIGU!*)
Contortion by Candlelight
In the High Chair
Human Pyramid/Bicycle Pagoda
Finale

The program is subject to change.

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



Brittany App

SINCE THEIR DÉBUT in 1986, **The Peking Acrobats** have redefined audience perceptions of Chinese acrobatics. 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 live musicians playing traditional Chinese instruments with modern flair, and high-tech special effects that coalesce with the music, the Peking Acrobats create all the excitement and festive pageantry of a Chinese carnival infused with fresh, explosive energy.

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,” which involved throwing a small wooden strip the size and shape of a shoe sole at a target, developed accuracy. Myth and religion also influenced the acrobatic arts. An example of this is the Lion Dance, which is Buddhist in origin, seen as a symbol of spiritual renewal and revered for dispelling bad luck.

Eventually, the excitement of the acrobats’ 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 (206–220 AD). Records of acrobatic acts can be found as early as the Ch’in Dynasty (221–207 B.C.), 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 tradition. No doubt, the Chinese acrobats of the Han Dynasty would be awestruck and amazed at how their modern-day counterparts have elevated their art, and that their 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 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 may be considered the equivalent of an opera star in the West. The Chinese acrobatic tradition continues to get 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 celebrity-studded TV 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 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*, 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. Internationally, they have appeared on *ArtistGalla*, a benefit show that was broadcast live across Norway, and filmed at the Drammens Teater in Oslo. On recent European tours, they have appeared on RAI TV in Italy, and in Holland on *Zapp Live* and *Limburg Vandaag*.

The Peking Acrobats are proud to once again be on the cutting edge of entertainment technology, with the release of their performances in 3-D on NBC/ Comcast's Xfinity Channel. A home version DVD of their 3-D special is currently available. This fun and informative program features the Peking Acrobats in performance, as well as interviews with the show's producers, cast, and crew.

The Peking Acrobats released their 25th Silver Anniversary Tour DVD in 2011, filmed in high-definition format. The Peking Acrobats enjoy the continued success of their first DVD, initially released on their 2006 North American tour as a television special for HDNet. All are available at www.iaipresentations.com.

The Peking Acrobats have also made the Hollywood scene on the silver screen as some company members were featured in director Stephen Soderbergh's hit film *Ocean's 11*, playing with Hollywood's elite, including Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt, and George Clooney. Qin Shaobo, a current member of the Peking Acrobats, also appeared in the 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*,

where they impressed the star-studded audience with their incredible acrobatic feats.

The Peking Acrobats also perform for symphony concert audiences across North America. Fans will recall their debut at the Hollywood Bowl as part of the its Fireworks Season Finale, where the company blended their unique brand of acrobatics with the Peking Acrobats Orchestra and the majestic sound of the 100-member Hollywood Bowl Orchestra. Between the "fireworks" on stage and the fireworks in the air, audiences experienced theatrical alchemy at its finest. The Peking Acrobats have returned to the Hollywood Bowl for three separate appearances over the last ten years, and these concerts have led to many other performances with symphony orchestras across North America, including the San Francisco Symphony, the San Diego Symphony, the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra, and the Atlanta Symphony.

The Peking Acrobats' concert engagements bring their special brand of entertainment to a completely new audience. They have also expanded their reach into Europe. For the past seven years, they have toured throughout Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. In November 2014, the Peking Acrobats debuted in Portugal and thrilled Portuguese audiences with their incredible talents and amazing showmanship.

The Peking Acrobats continue to share their culture with ever-widening audiences, building their reputation as the finest Chinese acrobatic troupe in the world. A performance by the Peking Acrobats brings the opportunity to view the epitome of a rich and ancient folk art tradition, highlighted by today's technology, melding the ancient with the modern wonders of the 21st century. It is with much pride and pleasure that the Peking Acrobats embark on their 29th North American tour. So, sit back, relax, and enjoy as our performers reveal to you their mastery of a fascinating and ancient art form, thousands of years in the making, and celebrate over 25 years of entertainment with us.



Peking Acrobats Staff

Ken T. Hai	<i>Company Director</i>
Jian T. Yang	<i>Group Leader</i>
Wan Shaokun	<i>Technical Consultant</i>
Cy R. Schumacher	<i>Technical Director</i>
Krista M. Shuff-Schumacher	<i>Assistant to the Technical Director</i>
Jiang Fujun	<i>Stage Manager</i>
Zhao Wenxi	<i>Orchestra Director</i>
Zhang Weiping	<i>Translator</i>
Qin Shaobo	<i>Assistant Translator</i>

2015 North American Tour Credits

IAI Presentations, Inc.	
Don Hughes	<i>President & CEO</i>
Cynthia A. Dike-Hughes	<i>Vice President & COO</i>

International Asia, Inc.	
Ken T. Hai	<i>President</i>
Melinda Hai	<i>Assistant to the President</i>
Steven Hai	<i>Assistant to the President</i>

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