CacheArts Presents

The Peking Acrobats

Friday, February 11, 2022

10-11am

Ellen Eccles Theatre
43 S. Main Street in Logan, UT

Accessiblity needs?
Contact CacheArts at 435-554-7065.

www.CacheARTS.org/Matinees-for-Schools

Bus parking is along 100 West and 100 South. Other options include Garrf Wayside Gardens (115 S 100 W) or JoAnn’s (190 S Main).

Arrive 20-30 minutes before the start of the show to be seated.

Photos may be taken by CacheArts personnel to document event.

Questions? 435-554-7065 or RHoth@CacheARTS.org
Ticket Office: 435-752-0026.
Music (Theatre Etiquette, Instruments, and Chinese New Year)
CONNECT: Describe how music relates to personal and social experience. Explore common genres across cultures and share a favorite song learned at home or describe a musical family tradition.
RESPOND: Demonstrate audience etiquette appropriate for the context and venue.

Dance (Lion Dance, Human Sculptures)
CONNECT: Describe how the movement characteristics and qualities of a dance in a specific genre or style communicate the ideas and perspectives of the culture, historical period, or community from which the genre or style originated.

Drama (Chinese New Year & Lion Dance)
CONNECT: Explain how drama connects oneself to one’s community or culture.

Visual Arts (Chinese New Year)
CONNECT: Create works of art that reflect community cultural traditions. Recognize that people of many cultures make art, and identify a cultural purpose of an artwork.

Science (Chinese New Year, Astronomy Activities)
Earth and Space Science: tilt of the earth, phases of the moon

Physical Education (Acrobatic Training, Signature Acts, Object Balancing, Human Sculpture)
Standard 5: Students will appraise the personal value of physical activity as a tool for wellness, challenges, and interacting with appropriate social skills with friends and family.
Theater Etiquette

Audience members have an important role at a live performance. Your attention helps the performers do their best. Laughter and applause in appropriate places helps and encourages the performers. Here are some tips to make the performance enjoyable for everyone:

- Be thoughtful of those around you before, during, and after the performance.
- The sounds and glare of lighted screens of cell phones, pagers, and electronic devices will prevent you and others from fully enjoying the show. Turn them off before the show starts.
- Leave backpacks, food, and candy at school.
- Cameras, recorders, and laser pointers are not allowed.
- Keep your feet on the floor and avoid bouncing in your seat.
- No children under age 5 are permitted to attend.

Self Check

Are the people around me able to enjoy the show? Is my behavior keeping others from seeing the show? From hearing the performers? Distracting or detracting from the experience? Create a list of when certain behaviors may be appropriate and inappropriate.

Remember that some people are really energized by lighting effects, sound volume, and crowds while others are more easily overwhelmed. Be patient and understanding of each other's differences—whatever they may be. If the lights or noises of the show become overwhelming, ask an usher or the house manager for ear plugs or to watch the show in a slightly more removed setting.

A Little History

The Ellen Eccles Theatre opened in 1923. Patrons came to see Vaudeville acts, local performance companies, and movies. John Phillip Sousa and Abbott & Costello performed on its stage.

What else happened in 1923? Founding of The Walt Disney Company; insulin used to treat diabetes; first successful brain tumor operation; Yankee Stadium opened; the tomb of Tutankhamen was opened; first known use of the words “Mayday” and “Guestimate.” Popular consumer products included phonograph records, radios, electric refrigerators, and cars. Many enjoyed dancing, jazz, and going to the movies. Silent films were gradually replaced by “talkies” (talking pictures) by 1930.

WWI ended in 1918. Women were allowed to vote nationally in 1920. Prohibition of alcohol was in practice in the U.S. from 1920-1933. The great depression began in 1929.

You are invited to enjoy the beautiful history and artistry of our building before the show:

How many kinds of animals can you find? What people can you find? Look for cherubs, Zeus, Poseidon, and the Muse of the theatre. What else can you find? The colorful bird featured in the large mosaics is the mythological bird the Phoenix. Do you know the legend of the Phoenix?
Ellen Eccles Theatre

The Muse

Zeus & Poseidon

Cherubs

Phoenix

Ram

Eagle

Original relief sculptures by Joseph Conradi (1867-1936). Photos by Mike Johnson.
Every dollar counts. Student matinees of national touring performing artists costs CacheArts between $14 and $27 per attending student, so each student's dollar is matched many times over by funds from generous public and private sponsors.

In the early 1900s, a former Utah legislator named Alice Merrill Horne encouraged communities across the state to start collections of original art. She encouraged school children to bring their lunch money, five to ten cents, and matched those funds with city, county, and state funds to purchase artwork by artists like J.T. Harwood, Minerva Tiechert, and John Henri Moser. Cache County School District still has the art collection she started.

Alice Merrill Horne was a legislator 20 years before women in the rest of the United States even had the right to vote. She was Utah's second female legislator and was elected on a platform of supporting the arts.

thank you

This performance was made possible by the Wasatch Logan Arts Foundation, Cache County RAPZ Tax, George S. and Delores Doré Eccles Foundation, Marie Eccles Caine Foundation, Emma Eccles Jones Foundation, Logan City Cultural Arts Grant, L & L Enterprises, Cache Valley Bank, Cache Valley Media Group, Conservice, Measom Family Foundation, Bank of Utah.
Company Biography
For the last thirty two years, THE PEKING ACROBATS® have redefined audience perceptions of Chinese acrobatics. They perform daring maneuvers atop a precarious pagoda of chairs and display their technical prowess at such arts as trick-cycling, precision tumbling, juggling, somersaulting, and gymnastics. They push the limits of human ability, defying gravity with amazing displays of contortion, flexibility, and control. THE PEKING ACROBATS are often accompanied by live musicians who skillfully play traditional Chinese instruments; the time-honored Chinese music coalesces with high-tech special effects and awe-inspiring acrobatic feats, creating an exuberant entertainment event with the festive pageantry of a Chinese Carnival.

THE PEKING ACROBATS are directed by the Hai family, who are very famous acrobats in China and the US. Their clan boasts three generations of acrobatic tradition. This troupe will astound, amaze, and inspire you, while at the same time providing a taste of Chinese culture and bringing us a little closer to mutual understanding between all people!

In the Movies
THE PEKING ACROBATS have also made their way onto the silver screen – company members were featured in Steven Soderbergh’s hit film Ocean’s Eleven playing alongside Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt and George Clooney. PEKING ACROBATS’ alumnus Shaobo Qin also appeared in that film’s two sequels, Ocean’s Twelve and Ocean’s Thirteen.

World Record
THE PEKING ACROBATS set the world record for the Human Chair Stack on FOX Network’s Guinness Book Primetime television show in 1999: they balanced six people precariously atop six chairs twenty one feet up in the air without safety lines, astounding audiences with their bravery and dexterity.
Acrobatic Training

The Peking Acrobats Behind the Scenes—The Performers

Acrobatics as an art form displays the grace, beauty, strength, and agility of the human race.
THE PEKING ACROBATS make possible feats of the seemingly impossible, right before your very eyes!

School in China
School begins for children at age 6 when they start Kindergarten. After five years in elementary, students attend ordinary middle school for six years. Most Chinese students do not return to their studies after middle school and go to work instead, either in a factory, on a farm, in the military, or, in other forms of government service.

Most acrobats begin their life in art at around age 6, but most are not selected to become part of a professional performing troupe until they are around 16 years of age, which is the age of emancipation in China, whereas here in the West a young person becomes an adult at 18 years old. There are some acrobats who excel at their studies, and are selected to become professional performers when they are as young as 13 or 14 years of age. Imagine being chosen for a professional troupe and traveling the world at such a young age!

In China, Parents encourage their children to audition for acrobatic schools; however, this is also a great sacrifice for parents and students. If selected, the acrobatic school they attend will often be far away from family, friends, and the lives with which the students are familiar. Once selected to attend a special acrobatic school, students take general education classes in the morning hours. In the afternoon, they will practice gymnastics, juggling, martial arts, and the dynamics of balance, speed, and timing to perfect their craft - the students do this every day, six days a week!

Students work daily on core skills: the handstand, tumbling, flexibility, and dance. They are also expected to be skilled in juggling.

Daily Life for an Acrobat
A typical day in the life of THE PEKING ACROBATS while they are on tour consists of early mornings on the bus to drive to the city where they will perform that evening or the next day. Upon arrival, they go to their hotel and get settled into their rooms. Then, they go to the theatre where they prepare for their performance. After the performance, there may be a reception or brief party where the acrobats meet and greet audience members. After this, it’s back to the hotel, where everyone has a good night’s sleep before starting all over again the next day.

“Handstand training is to acrobats what studying the human body is to a medical student.”
Chinese Musical Instruments

Yang Qin (pronounced yung CHIN)
This instrument originates from Western Asia and was introduced into China during the Ming Dynasty (1368 to 1644 AD). Two bamboo sticks are used to hit strings strung in pairs thus, producing a high and tinkling timbre in its top registers, a soft and beautiful tone in the middle and a strong rich sound in the lower registers. The Yang Qin is most closely associated with the hammered dulcimer in western instrumentation.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxA2Qz0MsWQ

Pipa (pronounced PEE pah)
This instrument is one of the oldest and well-known instruments in the traditional Chinese orchestra with 2,000 years of history. It is rich in expression and has diverse performing techniques. The Pipa is one of the most symbolic Chinese musical instruments. As a stringed instrument, the Pipa is most similar to the lute in western instrumentation.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcGVwBoic38

Er Hu (pronounced AHR hoo)
This bowed instrument became popular in China during the Song Dynasty (960 to 1279 AD). The Er Hu is one of the most widely used bowed instruments in China, and its tone is mellow and bright. Played with a variety of techniques, it is now extremely popular for both solo and orchestral performances. The instrument has two strings and is played with the bow clasped between them. The sound box is covered by snakeskin which gives the instrument its distinctive tonal color.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJ2O7vQfeiE

Dizi (pronounced dee ZHEE)
This wind instrument is the Chinese version of a western flute traditionally made of bamboo (occasionally of wood). It is believed to have been brought in from Tibet during the Chinese Han Dynasty (206 BC to 220 AD) and since then it has been used over the past 2,000 years in China. The Dizi is perhaps the most popular Chinese wind instrument used in the orchestra. Often Dizi players use several flutes for different keys.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDi3jTYMp6g

THE PEKING ACROBATS are often accompanied by live musicians who skillfully play traditional Chinese instruments; the time-honored Chinese music coalesces with high-tech special effects and awe-inspiring acrobatic feats, creating an exuberant entertainment event with the festive pageantry of a Chinese Carnival.
Signature Chinese Acrobatic Acts

The Peking Acrobats Behind the Scenes—Setting the Stage

**Spinning Plates:** Acrobats spin plates on iron sticks while balancing, dancing or tumbling all the while.

**Hoop Diving:** With dynamic speed and rhythm, acrobats jump, dive and tumble through stacked hoops up to 7 feet high.

**Juggling:** A team of acrobats juggle, throw and catch objects with amazing speed, synchronization and dexterity. Performers can also lie on a special seat and juggle and catch objects with their feet.

**Chinese Diablo:** Performed in China for over 100 years, two sticks of bamboo are connected with string to spin an additional piece of wood (like a yo-yo) back and forth in a variety of timed movements.

**Contortion:** Performers squeeze their bodies into tiny spaces and twist into unbelievable knots while delicately balancing objects.

**Double Pole:** A group of acrobats climb up and down thin poles to execute a variety of dangerous movements. This act requires a considerable amount of agility, upper body and abdominal strength.

**Aerial Acrobatics:** Using leather straps or strips of silk, acrobats perform feats of strength and daring high in the air.

**Balancing:** Performers balance precariously perched items on various parts of their bodies and balance themselves on large and small objects.

**Hoop Diving:** This act is over 2,000 years old. It was once known as “Swallow Play” because the performers imitate the flying movements of swallows (birds) as they leap nimbly through narrow rings.

**Bicycle Pagoda:** Acrobats perform on moving bicycles creating a human pyramid, pagoda and other stunning shapes and images.
About China

The Peking Acrobats Behind the Scenes—On With The Show

Official name: People’s Republic of China

Continent: Asia
- The climate in China is extremely diverse, with a tropical climate in the south and a subarctic climate in the north.
- More species of birds live in China than any other place in the world.
- The national animal is the giant panda which are located near the Yangtze River

Capital: Beijing (formerly known as Peking)

Peking (pron. pee king or pay king), which means “Northern Capital” in Chinese, has been a center of civilization for thousands of years. In the early part of the 20th century, the city of Peking was renamed Beijing (pron. bay jing) because, as the story goes, foreigners who visited the city kept mispronouncing the word Peking!

Area: 3.7 million square miles (third largest country after Russia and Canada)
Mount Everest is the tallest point in the world (29,032 feet above sea level) and its peak marks the China-Nepal border.
The Great Wall of China is the largest man made structure in the world.

Population: 1.4 billion people (4x larger than the U.S. and largest in the world) In the world’s population, two out of every ten people are Chinese citizens.
The Chinese civilization dates back to 7,000 B.C.

Red decorations are everywhere because the color red is considered to be one of the luckiest colors of all.
The Lion Dance

Of all China’s cultural festivities, the Lion Dance is one of the most amazing to watch. It combines theatre, music, history, and Kung Fu to create a spectacle that dates back thousands of years. The Lion Dance is a part of many festivities, like the Chinese New Year, planting and harvest festivals, openings of businesses, and weddings. The Lion Dance is believed to chase away evil spirits, bring good luck, longevity, happiness, and prosperity. The Lion symbolizes strength, happiness, courage, and power.

Although lions are not native to China, their stories date back to the Han Dynasty (202 – 220 B.C.), when they were first sent across Asia as gifts from the Persian Empire to the Chinese Emperors in order to gain the right to trade with Silk Road merchants.

Dynasty means the period during which a certain family reigned. China was ruled by a series of emperors who held supreme power. Emperors from the same family are classified into historical periods known as dynasties that refer to the period of when they ruled.

Lion Dancing has become a vital part of Chinese folk culture. Usually the lion is enacted by two dancers. One handles the head, made out of strong but light materials like papier-mâché and bamboo, the other plays the body and the tail, under a cloth that is attached to the head. The “animal” is sometimes accompanied by three musicians, playing a large drum, cymbals, and a gong. A “Little Buddha” dancer teases the “Lion” with a fan or a giant ball. The head dancer can move the lion’s eyes, mouth, and ears for expression of moods. The music follows the moves of the lion: the drum follows the lion; the cymbals, and the gong follow the drum player.

The Story of The Lion and the Dragon

Nián /nyen/ - Chinese word for ‘year’
A long time ago, a strange creature appeared in China that horrified and ate men and animals. The fast and fierce creature was called ‘Nien’ (sounds the same as nián or ‘year’ in Chinese). Neither the fox nor the tiger could fight the ‘Nien’ effectively, and in despair, the people asked the lion for help.

So, the lion shook his mane, and with a loud ROAR, rushed towards the creature, and wounded it. The Nien hurried away with its tail between its legs! But, it announced it would return to take revenge and one year later, the Nien did return. This time the lion couldn't help the people because he was too busy guarding the Emperor's Gate. So, the villagers decided to do the job themselves. Out of bamboo and cloth, they created an image of the lion, and then two men crawled inside it, and approached the Nien. The “lion” pranced and roared and the monster fled away again. This is the reason why, on the eve of the Chinese Lunar New Year, the Lions always dance, and when they do, they are frightening away the evil spirits for yet another year!
Chinese New Year

When is Chinese New Year?
Tuesday, February 1, 2022

The date of Chinese New Year is determined by the Chinese lunar calendar. Chinese New Year is the second new moon after the winter solstice.

Winter Solstice is the shortest day of the year. It occurs when one of the Earth’s poles has its maximum tilt away from the Sun.

The only object in our solar system that shines with its own light is the Sun. Moonlight is reflected sunlight. Like the earth, the moon has a daylight side and a night side. A New Moon occurs when the illuminated, daylight side of the Moon faces away from earth—making the Moon invisible to us.

How is Chinese New Year Celebrated?
1) Decoration: Red lanterns and red banners. Before decorating, they clean their house which symbolizes sweeping away bad luck and making their homes ready to receive good luck. Red is used because it is the most lucky color.
2) Eating a reunion dinner with family on New Year’s Eve. This is an important time for families to enjoy the food and time together. Everyone stays up late on Chinese New Year’s Eve to welcome the new year’s arrival.
3) Firecrackers and fireworks. It is an old tradition in China to set off firecrackers from the first minute of the New Year.
4) Giving money in red envelopes and other gifts to children and seniors.
5) Watching lion and dragon dances. This dance is performed to bring prosperity and good luck for the upcoming year.

CONNECT
- Brainstorm other celebrations and their stories. How are those stories integrated into traditional celebrations?
- Does the Chinese New Year remind you of any holidays that you celebrate? In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different?
- What is your favorite holiday? What elements or activities of the celebration are your favorite?
- Make up your own holiday! What does the holiday celebrate? How will people celebrate it? Use the following categories to help you think of ideas: color, decoration, music, dance, clothing, stories, food, gatherings, or events. Draw a picture of it.
- Create works of art that reflect the Chinese New Year celebration.
Suggested Study Activities

Before Seeing the Performance
1. Ask the class to brainstorm all that they know about China and the Chinese people.
2. Ask students to locate China on a map of the world. How does China’s geographic location, size, and different climates affect the daily lives of the people there? How do they think China’s location and different climates may have affected Chinese history?
3. Have students read and discuss the attached information about the city of Beijing, Chinese education, and the background on Chinese acrobatics.
4. Based on the attached information, have the students compare their daily lives to the daily life of an acrobat-in-training. How does their routine differ? How is it the same?
5. Review the attached vocabulary list. Or, assign a portion of the list to different groups of students and have them provide definitions. Have the groups share their definitions with the class as they relate to the actual definitions from the list.

After Seeing the Performance
1. If art reflects life, which part of the performance illustrated struggle? Which part illustrated joy? How did they specifically show joy and struggle in the show?
2. If you were to create an acrobatic routine to depict one of your struggles, what would that struggle be, and how would you show that? Follow the same creative process to depict one of your joys.
3. What have you learned about China or the Chinese people through the acrobat’s performance that you found most interesting?
4. Consider all the training that goes into being an acrobat. What does acrobatics show you about the human race and our capabilities? Compare training to be an acrobat to striving for your individual goals in life, and how you “train” for your own future career.
5. Imagine you are a critic for a school newspaper. Write a review of Peking Acrobat’s performance to inform others about what they experienced. Describe with detail: what you saw; what you heard; how the performance made you feel; and what was your favorite part and why. Paint a picture of the experience with words so that others who did not see the performance can imagine it as vividly as possible. How did lighting add to the show? How did the costumes help to express the ideas or moods of each act? What did you notice about the musicians? How did the live music enhance or change the performance?

Chinese New Year Activities
Chalk Academy: Best 20 Chinese New Year Activities and Crafts For Home And School!
First Palette: Paper Lanterns
Pink Stripey Socks: Two Chinese New Year Dragon Crafts
Pink Stripey Socks: Chinese New Year Dragon

Astronomy Activities
NASA: Moon Observation Journal
NASA: Make a Moon Phases Calendar and Calculator
NASA: Moon Phases Activity
OBJECT BALANCING
Best for: Grades K-12

Explanation: Acrobats train for years to develop strength, flexibility and balance. In this activity, students will practice balancing a stick made from rolled up newspaper on their palm.
Goals: To explore balance
Materials: Open area, Newspaper, Tape
Activity:
1. Have students each take a large sheet of newspaper and roll it up as tight as they can.
2. Ask students to tape the newspaper roll in the middle and the ends. (Teachers can also prepare “newspaper sticks” in advance.)
3. In an open area, invite students to place their “newspaper stick” on the palm of their right or left hand and try to keep it balanced and upright.
4. Do this for a few minutes and then reflect with the following discussion questions.
Follow-up Questions:
1. What was challenging about this activity?
2. What is balance?
3. When do you use balance in your daily life?
4. What do you think acrobats’ training is like in order to develop their excellent balance skills?

HUMAN SCULPTURES
Best for: Grades 2-12

Explanation: Acrobats use strength, flexibility and balance to create an astonishing assortment of shapes with their bodies. In this activity, students will explore making sculptures with their bodies — both singly and in pairs.
Goals: To prepare to observe the acrobats create complex shapes with their bodies and to understand the flexibility and cooperation such feats require.
Materials: Open area
Activity:
1. Ask students to spread out in an open space. Each person should find their own personal space bubble.
2. Ask students to imagine that they are like clay and can mold their bodies into different shapes like triangles, circles, and squares or into objects like tables, flowers, ladders, etc.
3. Ask students to experiment with using high, medium and low levels as they make shapes with their bodies.
4. Encourage them to try to use their entire bodies when making their shapes. If students need direction, you may call out different shapes (geometric shapes, letters, numbers, objects, etc.) for them to try to make with their bodies.
5. Next, ask students to work in pairs to continue to try to make different shapes and object sculptures.
6. When students are done experimenting in pairs, provide time for reflection about the difference between making shapes by yourself or with others.
7. To conclude, encourage students to look for shapes that the acrobats make with their bodies during the performance.
Follow-up Questions:
1. What skills do you need to make different shapes or sculptures with your body?
2. What was challenging about this activity?
3. What was it like making shapes by yourself?
4. What was it like making shapes with a partner?
5. What sort of shapes do you think you will see the acrobats make with their bodies during the performance?
Vocabulary

Acrobat—one who is skilled in feats of balance, strength, and agility
Act—a part of a performance. In acrobatics, an act often refers to a specific trick or stunt.
Agility—the ability to move quickly and easily
Balance—steadiness or equal distribution of weight.
Choreographer—a person who creates movement compositions and patterns of movements.
Contortionist—a flexible performer able to move muscles, limbs and joints into unusual positions.
Dizi /dee ZHEE/ - Chinese version of the Western flute
Dynasty—a succession of rulers who belong to the same family
Er Hu /AHR hoo/ - two stringed bowed instrument. Small box propped on leg
Feat—an act or product of skill
Flexibility—ability to bend easily.
Hand Stand—the body is supported in a vertical position by balancing on the palms of one’s hands.
Myth—a traditional or legendary story, usually concerning some being, hero, or event
Pagoda—A tower shaped building with multiple eaves found throughout Asia
Pipa /PEE pah/ - plucked Chinese string instrument, similar to banjo or guitar
Props—items used on stage during performances
Symmetrical—describes when two sides of something are identical or balanced
Tumbling—gymnastic acts that consist of leaps, somersaults and other flips
Troupe—a company or group of touring performers
Yang Qin /yung CHIN/ - Chinese style dulcimer; 144 steel strings are struck with two bamboo hammers

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ATPROPSPCRNYHC
CAPAGODABFITAH
OACROBATOESSIO
NTINYNCTYLAAR
TCUAPANNAPNTE
OCAMODIZICYIO
RYABNLTIPDAG
TEANALNPNRCAYR
ICGICMICYTOTTAB
ONIQPMYNEOUTHDP
NALGELEDTGMAOPH
ILINUNNTHMEHRE
SATAUHREBYIPRR
TBYYIDNATSNDNAH
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Sources

CAL Performances School Time Study Guide: Golden Dragon Acrobats
https://calperformances.org/learn/k-12/pdf/2006/study_guide_peking.pdf

China Highlights: Chinese New Year 2022: Food, Legend, Traditions, FAQ by Cindy | Updated Dec. 3, 2021

Des Moines Performing Arts The Peking Acrobats Curriculum Guide


Kidskonnect: “Teach Kids About the Winter Solstice” https://kidskonnect.com/articles/winter-solstice-for-kids/


WorldoMeter https://www.worldometers.info/geography/largest-countries-in-the-world/