

National Acrobats of Taiwan, R.O.C

Friday and Saturday, January 18–19, 2002
Zellerbach Hall

Lo Jih-Hung, artistic director

Chang Chin-Chang, artistic advisor

Lee Chung-Chen

Chen Lat-Te

Lin Szu-I

Wang Pei-Jung

Wang Hsi-Chung

Wang Tung-Yuan

Lu Shao-Shuai

Chiang Yao-Lung

Jen Te-Pei

Wang Hsiang-Wu

Hsiao Yi-Chung

Yang Yi-Chuan

Cheng Chao-Yuan

Wu Sheng-Fu

Liu Shih-Yi

Chang Ching-Lan

Liao Hao-Yin

Yang Ju-Cheiu

Ku Su-Ling

Sung Hui-Chin

Cheng Chia-Ling

Chen Chao-Ju

Chen Lan-Ling

Chen Yun-Mei

Wu Tsui-Fen

Chang Chiao-Yu

Tung Hsiu-Chen

Chao Pei-Chun

Tsai Dai-Hua

Chen Yi-Miao

Weng Shu-Hua

Shih Wan-Chi

Tsai Shyuan

Columbia Artists Management, Inc., New York City
Andrew S. Grossman, producer

Cal Performances' SchoolTime performance of National Acrobats of Taiwan is supported, in part,
by Bayer Foundation, Citicorp Foundation, and Chevron Corporation.

Cal Performances would like to thank The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
and the Zellerbach Family Fund for their generous support.

Cal Performances is supported, in part, by the National Endowment for the Arts,
a federal agency that supports the visual, literary, and performing arts to benefit all Americans,
and by the California Arts Council, a state agency.

Contorting in the Crystal ("Contortion")

In a crystal ball, there are two beauties dancing and contorting elegantly.
The contortionists break the tranquility just as Pan-ku opened the sky in ancient times.

Dance in the Sky (“Silk Wire”)

An acrobat elegantly flies in the sky, up and down, on two silk wires,
just like Goddess Nu-Wa mends the sky.

Hunt for Fire (“Fire and Knife Ring”)

With a ring of sacred fire and steel knives, which represent worship and fear,
a competitive barrier is set up to test the men. Bravely, they jump through the rings.

Rain . . . Heavy Rain (“Floral Plate”)

Under the banana trees, the raindrops play a romantic melody,
and fall into lovers’ hearts. The floral plates revolve just like white clouds.
What a sweet dream!

Wielding High Lantern Streamer
 (“High Lantern Streamer and Martial Arts”)

While a large piece of streamer flies in the air, the acrobats
somersault, jump, hop, and flip over it with ease.

INTERMISSION

Lion Dance

The king of beasts, the lion, has been on its throne since ancient China.
Lions bring prosperity, auspiciousness, abundance, and peace to everyone in the world.

Juggling Heroine (“Foot Juggling”)

With pretty pheasant tails on her head, our female juggler skillfully plays
with jars, desks, ladders, and bamboo.

Flower, Water, and Bamboo Yo-yo
 (“Diabolo Spinning”)

Under the azure sky, ripples of a broad river wave and reflect the silvery lights.
Girls spin diabolos and swing their hair. Soaring up into the air,
and falling to the ground, they look like flying birds.
Flower, water, and spinning diabolos create such a romantic picture.

Dance in the Cloud
 (“Balancing on Stacked Chairs”)

With chairs stacked into the sky, the acrobat displays his balancing skills
just like an eagle standing on the steep cliff. On the high chair, he shows
different heroic styles through various postures, just like dancing in the clouds.

Spirit of Acrobatics

In the mysterious East, there are many different kinds of entertainment handed down from generation to generation. Balls, jars, forks, and vats on the hands, feet, shoulders, and head demonstrate an array of vaudeville skills. Along with this, the magician will dazzle and amaze. These various traditional skills are called “Variety Acrobatics.”

Magic

The magician performs a variety of magic tricks. He demonstrates many special effects that will entertain one and all.

Ask God (“Dance and Human Pyramid”)

Breaking through the thick haze, and chasing the thunder light, the rhythm of life is pulsating. A human pyramid is erected against the gravity of the heavens and the earth, asking God: What is life?

The Fu Hsing Chinese Acrobatics Troupe was founded on July 1, 1980, as approved by the Executive Yuan of the Republic of China. With the merger of the National Fu Hsing Dramatic Arts Academy and the National Kuo Kuang Academy of Arts, the group’s name was changed to the National Chinese Acrobatic Troupe of the Republic of China on Taiwan.

Since the Han Dynasty (206 BC – 240 AD), dramatic folk arts and variety shows have blended with the deepest roots of Chinese civilization. The skillful performers often use objects from daily life—such as chairs, tables, poles, ladders, bowls, plates, bottles, and jars—as stage props. Their perfect movements and impressive showmanship have provided entertainment and relaxation to people from all walks of life for centuries. The masters of the Fu Hsing Academy have maintained the systematic teaching methods of ancient China in order to preserve this traditional art form, and to pass it on to the next generation of performers, who are now growing up in a rapidly changing society.

The graduates of the Academy, master performers themselves, have toured the world as the Republic of China’s national acrobatic troupe, and are generally considered the foremost company from all of the country. They have appeared throughout Europe, the United States, and Southeast Asia, and will continue to promote the Chinese acrobatic arts in the future around the world. Through endless creativity and reform, they have perpetuated and rejuvenated a centuries-old artform. The aim of the Acrobats is to make traditional folk acrobatic arts versatile, and to open a new era of art in addition to continuing their performances of traditional acrobatics.

The National Fu Hsing Dramatic Arts Academy was originally founded as a private school by Mr. Zhenzu Wang in Taipei in 1957. It became a “national” academy in 1968. Its purpose is to train actors and actresses for the traditional Chinese and Taiwanese performing arts.

Company members include graduates of the school’s acrobatics and dance department, as well as performers from the Republic of China Folk Art Training Center and Li Tang-Hwa Acrobatic Troupe. Currently, the troupe is made up of over 40 young performers, who have received, on average, eight years of strict training. The company’s current leader, Lo Jih-Hung (also known by his Western name, Dante Law), is well known internationally for his talents as a magician.

The National Acrobats’ performances are great fun to watch and will be enjoyed by people of all ages. Not only have these artists performed in various locales around Taiwan and the outlying islands, but the troupe has also been invited by the government to travel abroad. These performances have spread Chinese culture, promoted traditional folk arts, established cultural exchanges with other countries, and saluted Chinese living overseas.

In 1998, the National Acrobats completed a highly acclaimed three-month coast-to-coast tour of the United States and Canada. The company is currently on a major tour of North America.

Lo Jih-Hung (artistic director) was born in 1949 and was educated at the Peng-xiang County Acrobatic Institute in Jiang-xi Province, mainland China. After performing as a magician throughout Southeast Asia in the early 1970s, Mr. Lo was hired as a

magician/comedian for the Tonight television show in Hong Kong. He then went on to host numerous television programs in Asia, including the variety magic show Ha Ha and Little Sweet in 1976.

From 1984 to 1990, Mr. Lo served as co-director of the Golden Dragon Acrobats, which toured throughout the United States and Canada, most notably at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. From 1988 to 1991, he performed in the Diamond Stage Show on CTS-TV in Taipei, and he continues to organize television productions of acrobatics and magic.

In 1991, Lo Jih-Hung joined the staff of the Fu Hsing Dramatic Arts Academy, and in 1995, he managed the Clown Magic Show at the Fu Hsing Academy. He was named director of the Fu Hsing Acrobatic Troupe (now the National Acrobats of Taiwan, R.O.C.) in August 1998.

Mr. Lo again toured North America and Europe as part of the Han Kuang Goodwill Mission, and was featured as a guest artist of the Shanghai Magic Festival in 1997. He also toured Central and South America in that same year with the Acrobatic Troupe of the Republic of China in a tour sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Taipei. He was honored as a judge in the National Magic Contest in Guei-lin Province, mainland China. In 1998, he was the magician in the Han Kuang Goodwill Mission and in the Formosa World Magic Conference.

Lo Jih-Hung is a commission member of the Taipei Craft and Dancing Art Guild, and has received the Public Welfare Award in Taipei (1991), the Outstanding Performance Award from the Taiwan Provincial Government (1996), and the Mayor's Award (1998). He was also named outstanding performing celebrity in mainland China in 1995.

Chang Chin-Chang (artistic advisor) is one of the world's leading artistic producers of Chinese acrobatics, his reputation solidly based on his talents as both acrobat and artistic director. He began his training at the age of eight at his family's school, the Chang Family Acrobatic School of Taipei. By his tenth birthday, Mr. Chang was performing professionally with the school's touring wing, the Chinese Golden Dragon Acrobats. He has toured as director with this company in over 65 countries.

A graduate of the Fu Hsing Dramatic Arts Academy, he has been honored by the Taipei City Trade Union of Acrobatic Dance and has twice received Distinguished Skill in Performance awards from the Republic of China's Ministry of Education. He was also awarded the prestigious Medal for International Faith and Goodwill by the Republic of China's Coordination Council for North American Affairs.

CREDITS

Michele Schaller, company manager

Jason Carpenter, production stage manager

Columbia Artists Management, Inc.

165 West 57th Street

New York, NY 10019