**CHINESE ACROBATS TUMBLING THROUGH HISTORY**

The Chinese acrobatic tradition dates back to 700 B.C.; that’s over 2,000 years of tumbling, balancing and juggling. Ancient stone carvings, earthen pottery and early written work trace the ancestry of today’s spectacular acts. Relics tell the tales of famous acrobats like Confucius’ father, who is believed to have lifted a pair of 1,000-pound city gates to let an army storm through.

The art of Chinese acrobatics developed out of the Lunar New Year harvest celebrations, where the village’s peasants and craftsmen would hold a kind of Chinese Thanksgiving. Acrobats would use household tools and common items found around the farm and workshop as part of their exciting feats. Performers passed their skills down from generation to generation and great acrobatic families of China entertained everyone from city rulers to village people, performing at ceremonial carnivals and public theaters across the country.

Over the years, as China plunged into economic and social upheaval, many fine arts were lost and acrobats found themselves on the verge of extinction. Since the Revolution in 1949, the government has made great efforts to foster and develop traditional arts and culture in China, and acrobatics has enjoyed a new life.

Today only a few descendants of the old and famous acrobatics families remain. These individuals have organized China’s traditional entertainers into professional acrobatic troupes with formal academies for training young, promising entertainers and internationally renowned companies. Modern-day Chinese acrobatics reflect the industry, resourcefulness and courage of the Chinese people. At present, there are over 120 professional acrobatic troupes across China, and more than 12,000 performers.

**THE NEW SHANGHAI CIRCUS AND TRADITIONAL CHINESE ACTS**

Founded in 1951 as the Shanghai Acrobatic Theatre, The New Shanghai Circus has won more Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals in domestic and international circus competitions to date than any other Chinese acrobatic company. Breathtaking and polished to perfection, the singular skills performed by The New Shanghai Circus have their roots in everyday lives of the village peasants, farmers and craftsman of the Han Dynasty.

“Feats of circus art that reach literally breathtaking heights of skill…the New Shanghai Circus is      providing entertainment in abundance.”

                                                                                                                                    -The New York Times

“Show-stopping rarities of daunting difficulty”

- Los Angeles Times

One Evening...

2000 years in the making

"In acts that often trace their

origins to the harvest festivals

of more than 2,000 years ago,

this youthful, handsome and graceful

company spends a swift two hours in a

range of demanding performances,

most of them typifying Chinese

circus and constituting a refreshing

alternative to the Western tradition.

Under direction of Zhao Lizhi, the artistry,

individually and collectively, attains levels that

make it seem almost unfair to single

out any act."

-The New York Times