



krannert center

YOUTH
SERIES

16-17



SHANGHAI ACROBATS OF THE
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

SHANGHAI
NIGHTS!

COLLEGE OF
FINE + APPLIED
ARTS



ABOUT THE SHANGHAI ACROBATS

Dazzling pageantry, gasp-inducing feats of athleticism, and spine-tingling contortions combine in a tumbling tour de force as this magnificent troupe takes to stages throughout the globe. First formed in 1959, but with a legacy dipping back thousands of years, the Shanghai Acrobats deftly impress with twirling carpets, hoop-diving, plate spinning, lasso tricks, and more in the debut tour of the thrilling new program *Shanghai Nights!* With over 65 years of performance history and a training program comprising over 50 teachers and over 500 students, the athletes of the Shanghai Acrobats of the People's Republic of China have perfected the art of entertainment through refined movement and powerful performances.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME AN ACROBAT?

Students selected by talent scouts begin their training when they are six years old. They work six days per week, and spend half their days on acrobatics and the other half in regular school. Acrobats begin by learning the handstand to improve their balance and strength. As students continue, they work on three core skills: tumbling, flexibility, and dance. After 10 years of training, only a few will be chosen to be in a professional touring company like the Shanghai Acrobats.

The art of acrobatics in China is thousands of years old. Some historians point to engravings that are more than 2,000 years old showing tricks like pole climbing and balancing on chairs. Other historians have found written records that suggest acrobats were performing 4,000 years ago! During the Tang Dynasty (618-907 C.E.) acrobatics flourished and became the subject of poetry by Yuan Zhen and Bai Juyi. In historical times acrobatic troupes were family companies. Today there are still family troupes, but the Chinese government also supports training programs and schools to make sure this art form endures.



A GREAT MOMENT

Use this space to draw a picture of your favorite moment from this performance!

TEACHER NOTE

Head to the Youth Series Shanghai Acrobats page for online resources and classroom activities with curricular connections. You can find that page in the Engage + Learn section of KrannertCenter.com.

BALANCE CHALLENGE

You can balance your weight on one foot, on your tiptoes, and even on your hands, but what else can you keep in balance? Everyday objects may be surprisingly simple or deviously difficult to keep upright when they're poised in the palm of your hand.

Start with a large object like a textbook, broom handle, or a peacock feather (you've got one of those in your backpack, right?). Place the narrow or smaller end in your hand and see what it takes to keep the object upright. Next move on to something smaller—a ruler, pencil, or an empty plastic bottle. Is it easier or harder?

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

You probably know that gravity is the force that pulls things down (toward the center of the Earth). When you balance an object in your hand, you keep it from falling down. How? The secret lies with something called the center of mass. For every object there's a special point where gravity pulls straight down without twisting or turning as the object falls. If you keep your support directly under the center of mass, and have enough strength to hold the object up, it won't fall.

TIP: keep your eye on the top end of the object. You'll be able to see right away which direction it's beginning to fall, and move quickly to keep your hand underneath.

Finding the center of mass can be a little tricky. An object with a regular, even shape like a ball has its center of mass in the very center of the object. An object with an irregular or lopsided shape—like a chair or a person—has its center of mass away from the middle of the object. Try balancing a pencil sideways on your finger. When the pencil is steady that means your finger is directly under the center of mass. Is your finger half way down the pencil? Why or why not? When your pencil is out of balance you'll see that the pencil turns as it falls. That turning force is known as torque. When the amount of clockwise torque equals the amount of counterclockwise torque, you have balance!

Want to learn more? Head to PBSLearningMedia.org for a great series of videos on Circus Physics that explain concepts like the center of mass, pendulum motion, and conservation of energy with the help of the Big Apple Circus.

ON THE MAP

上海

SHANGHAI, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

The two Chinese characters in the city's name are 上 (shàng, "above") and 海 (hǎi, "sea"), together meaning "upon-the-sea."



SHANGHAI ACROBATS OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

SHANGHAI NIGHTS!

A Columbia Artists Production
Andrew S. Grossman, producer
Mr. Liu Junke, director
Ms. Zhao Shuangwu, choreographer
Ms. Irene Kovalova, additional
choreography and staging

Youth Series Performance

Tuesday, October 25, 2016, at 10am
Foellinger Great Hall
Approximately 60 minutes

Recommended for grades K-8

Marquee Public Performance

Tuesday, October 25, 2016, at 7pm

Campaign for Young Audiences

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LIBRARY CONNECTIONS

Krannert Center has partnered with Champaign Public Library and The Urbana Free Library to help expand your students' Youth Series experience. Our local libraries have placed materials that relate to *Shanghai Nights!* on display, and librarians are prepared to help your students immerse themselves in the wide-ranging subject areas that are covered by the production. These resources will be available approximately two weeks before through two weeks following the performance.

www.champaign.org
www.urbanafreelibrary.org

We hope that you are able to take advantage of these exciting partnerships with our local libraries!