“CIRQUE SHANGHAI EXTREME” COMES TO THE NAVY PIER® PEPSI® SKYLINE STAGE THIS SUMMER
JUNE 29 – SEPTEMBER 5

World Premiere Production Features Jaw-Dropping Motorcycle on a Wire Act,
Aerial Feats and Thrilling New Twists on Family Favorites

All Kids’ Tickets $15!

CHICAGO (July 7, 2011) – Cirque Shanghai comes to Chicago’s Navy Pier this summer with an awe-inspiring show “Cirque Shanghai Extreme.” This world premiere production will run through September 5, 2011 (Labor Day), rain or shine, at the Navy Pier® Pepsi® Skyline Stage, the 1,500-seat, canopied, open-air theater on Navy Pier, 600 E. Grand Ave. New this year, tickets for kids ages 3 – 12 are only $15 for any seat in the house.

“Cirque Shanghai Extreme” is a thrilling spectacle for audiences of all ages, featuring performers direct from China who are leaders in their craft of tumbling, juggling, balancing and more. This year’s production features an incredible line up of new death-defying acts and aerial stunts that are certain to shock and astound, including two motorcycles on high wires zooming out over the audience, a beautiful lyra performance and spine-bending contortionist acts. China’s finest daredevil motorcycle troupe, “Imperial Thunder,” returns to the stage with bigger feats than ever before, now with four motorcyclists performing in Cirque Shanghai’s largest steel globe to date.

Directed by Miao Miao Chen and with choreography by Chicago’s Brenda Didier, “Cirque Shanghai Extreme” is presented in this exclusive U.S. engagement by Navy Pier in conjunction with International Special Attractions, Ltd. (ISA) production headquarters in Shanghai, China.

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“We have taken the production to a new level of ‘wow’ this year, and are thrilled to share the world premiere of ‘Cirque Shanghai Extreme’ with Chicago,” said Gary Fjelstad, vice president of ISA. “Featuring the finest performers, who were cast directly from China, the show is jam-packed with amazing, gravity-defying feats that the entire family will enjoy. ISA continues to raise the bar every year to bring a higher level of excitement with the new extreme acts that really helps demonstrate the commitment of this dedicated group of performers.”

Audiences and critics alike rave about “Cirque Shanghai.” The Chicago Tribune hails the production to be a “beguiling, sophisticated and contemporary 75-minute show, replete with some bravura acrobatics and infused with fabric-strewn visuals,” and the Chicago Sun-Times raves “‘Cirque Shanghai’ has been an especially bright spot on Navy Pier...bringing young, talented acrobatic troupes and first-rate production values to the canopied, open-air Skyline Stage.” Time Out Chicago says, “Jaw-dropping, aerobic stunts...adults will enjoy this show every bit as much as kids.”

MEET THE CREATIVE TEAM
ISA is the first company dedicated to two-way entertainment trade between China and the U.S. The company began working with Chinese acrobatic troupes in 1996 and is now the largest presenter of foreign entertainment in China as well as Chinese entertainment and attractions into North America. In addition to their work in the field of Chinese acrobatics, ISA also produces ICE! at the Gaylord Resort and Convention Centers in Nashville, Orlando, Dallas and Washington D.C. At each Gaylord location, ICE! is a spectacular indoor walk-thru attraction consisting of nearly two-million pounds of ice carved into the icons of Christmas. ISA’s global headquarters is located in Beverly Hills, California and the company’s China office is in Shanghai, China.

Haiping Ge, President and CEO of ISA, is a graduate of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. After six years with the Shanghai Opera Institute, he joined the Shanghai Cultural Exchange Agency and hosted many of the first Western entertainers to perform in China. Haiping has been producing shows with ISA in the US for the last two decades, including Cirque Shanghai productions that have toured extensively throughout the US as well as worldwide. Haiping also brought ISA’s ICE! kingdom attraction to the US ten years ago and it is currently a featured attraction at all four of the Gaylord Resorts.

Gary Fjelstad, Vice President of ISA, has worked with ISA since 2005 producing musical, theatrical and ICE! attractions, and has been working with the Cirque Shanghai Extreme troupe since January 2010. With more than 20 years of fair and festival entertainment production experience, Gary has worked closely with director Miao Miao Chen to prepare and rehearse for Cirque Shanghai Extreme.

Miao Miao Chen is a second-generation performer as well as the show’s director. She studied with the internationally famous Shenyang Performing Arts Academy beginning at age five, and joined the acclaimed Shenyang Acrobatic Troupe, one of the top ten troupes in all of China, at age 13. Chen is the recipient of a Gold Lion Award from the International Acrobatics Competition in France, and received the top award for Best Innovative Performance in Uruguay.

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Chen has performed throughout the USA, Canada, Europe and Asia. In 2006 and 2007, Chen worked as a choreographer for “Le Grand Cirque” which has toured in cities across Australia, the United Kingdom and United States. Chen previously directed hit productions of “Cirque Shanghai” in 2009 and 2010.

Brenda Didier, a well known and multi award winning figure in Chicago theater, is a freelance choreographer based in Chicago and Owner/Artistic Director of the Lincolnshire Academy of Dance, now celebrating its 11th anniversary. Her choreography credits include “The Kenny Rogers Christmas Tour,” four previous seasons of Cirque Shanghai including “Bai Xi,” “Gold,” “Bright Spirit” and “Cloud 9,” Mayor Richard Daley’s Millennium Campaign for the City of Chicago, Miss Illinois Pageant, Dennis DeYoung's Jeff Award-winning production of “The Hunchback of Notre Dame” and productions at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, the House of Blues, the Goodman, the Apollo, the Mercury, Theatre Building Chicago, Teatro Vista, Emerald City, the Bailiwick, Theo Ubique, Bohemian Theatre Ensemble, Porchlight Music Theatre, the International Thespian Festival, Six Flags Great America and Busch Gardens’ theme parks. She has served as guest choreographer/instructor at Carthage College, the University of Wisconsin, the University of Illinois, Columbia College Chicago and Northwestern University. Didier is the recipient of 7 Jeff nominations, 2 Jeff Awards, 2 After Dark Awards, 2 Choreography Awards from the Academy of Theatre Artists and Friends and the National Youth Theatre Award (High School level). Her most advanced students have completed summer programs with the Joffrey Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Ballet Chicago, Ballet Met and The Milwaukee Ballet.

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE AND TICKET INFORMATION
“Cirque Shanghai Extreme” performance schedule is as follows:
Wednesday at 2, 4 and 7:30 p.m.
Thursday at 2 and 7:30 p.m.
Friday at 2, 4 and 8 p.m.
Saturday at 2, 6 and 8 p.m.
Sunday at 12, 2 and 5 p.m.

Ticket prices range from $15 - $32.50. Tickets are only $15 for children ages 3 – 12 for any seat in the house. Children two and under are welcome and admitted free of charge.

Tickets are available by calling 800-745-3000 or visiting www.ticketmaster.com/shanghai. Discounted tickets for groups of 10 or more are available by calling GroupTix at 773.327.3778 or visiting www.grouptix.net. For more information on “Cirque Shanghai Extreme” visit www.cirqueshanghai.com.

Located on Lake Michigan, just east of Chicago’s downtown, Navy Pier is the most-visited tourist and leisure destination in the Midwest, welcoming more than 8 million visitors annually. Originally opened in 1916 as a shipping and recreation facility, it is now one of the country’s preeminent recreation and exposition facilities, showcasing 50 acres of parks, gardens, restaurants, shops, attractions, sightseeing and dining cruise boats, exhibition facilities and more.

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