
Performing Arts Medicine Under the Arch

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An all-day pre-conference workshop on performing arts medicine was well-received at the 2012 Annual Meeting in St. Louis. The goal of the session on this emerging practice setting was to connect ATs with the performing arts by providing facts, education, ideas, and the tools to find jobs or start your own performing arts medicine program. Each of the five talented speakers, experienced care-givers for performing artists, brought a different viewpoint.

Kathleen Nachazel, ATC, athletic trainer for the Pittsburgh Ballet, presented “Nutritional Considerations for the Performing Artist”, which sparked lively discussion on dancers’ weight and use of supplements. Nachazel remarked on the opportunity to educate the artistic staff, who often need nutritional advice themselves. The lecture touched on performance eating and highlighted the need for ATs to educate performing artists about immune system boosters, energy boosters and bone building substrates.

Katie Lemmon, MS, ATC, from Athletico in Chicago, spoke about her outreach and treatment program in “From the Clinic to the Stage.” She works with numerous dance companies in the Chicago area. Lemmon’s information was pertinent for those looking to start their own program or for ATs who might want new ideas for their programs.

Steve McCauley, ATC, LAT, CSCS, presented “The Hanging Athlete”, insights from his seven years at the acrobatic show *Le Reve* in Las Vegas. McCauley is responsible for assessment, treatment, prevention and management of all performance-related injuries. He showed perform-

ance videos and offered interesting details about caring for the shoulders of the trapeze artists with a high incidence of shoulder labral tears. All the athletes hang in a passive and active dominant state at various times during the show. This calls for creative treatment strategies.

Kelly Jo Trimble, MS, ATC, head AT for the Cincinnati Ballet, presented “Identifying Cause and Effects of Complaints.” She reminded the audience that athletic training also encompasses listening to complaints. In a typical day she hears more than 50 different concerns from the dancers of the Cincinnati Ballet, as well as the students from dance studios and academies. She discussed symptoms from three dancers that didn’t mesh with the medical diagnosis, reminding everyone to stay on top of all patients’ feedback and continue to watch and listen.

Jeffrey Russell, PhD, ATC, of Ohio University, talked about his recent findings, “Research and Clinical Insights about Dancers’ Feet and Ankles.” He showed detailed MRI images of various bony and soft tissue impingements throughout the foot and ankle. He offered advice regarding posterior convergences and articular tibia over non-articular talus from his work on weight-bearing MRI en pointe.

Other performing arts medicine sessions included “The Prevention Model”, by Elaine Winslow-Redmond, MS, ATC, EMT-B; “From the Gym to the Stage”, by McCauley; and “Addressing the Functional Needs of the Performing Artist”, by Jacqui Haas, ATC.

Another feature talk, “Spine Stabilization on Trampolines, Airbags, Nets” by Kerry Gordon, MS, ATC, CSCS, provided a unique

perspective on caring for the performing artists within Cirque du Soleil. (To watch a video of the athletic trainers who work for Cirque du Soleil, visit NATA’s Vimeo channel at <https://vimeo.com/47253002>.)

The Student Career Roundtable offered an opportunity for athletic trainers to sit down with Gordon, Wendy Levanway, MS, ATC, PES, of the Radio City Rockettes, and Haas to ask questions about performing arts medicine. Student athletic trainer Scott Christian of Wright State University attended the event. Christian, a flair bartender himself, is interested in caring for other flair bartender’s injuries. (Read more about Christian on p. 46).

The performing arts setting had a successful week in St. Louis. We look forward to educating and networking with more athletic trainers in Las Vegas next year.

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