

## **New clinic for performing artists is drawing rave reviews**

By Jody Grenert

When an injured Bobcat football player sprawls to the turf, there are health specialists on the sidelines with the knowhow to evaluate his condition and, if necessary, help with rehabilitation. But what about a Marching 110 musician who gets hurt?

A unique new Ohio University clinic for performing artists has the answer, whether the patient is a tuba player battling back spasms, a ballet dancer with a sprained knee or pianist having tendon pain.

Tucked into a third-floor corner of Putnam Hall, the SHAPe Clinic, short for Science and Health in Artistic Performance, is a place where injured performers can be evaluated, treated and receive health and wellness advice from licensed athletic trainers who have the specialized equipment and knowledge to treat such injuries. Best of all, the care is provided with no out-of-pocket costs to the performing arts student.

The facility is a collaboration between the College of Fine Arts and the College of Health Sciences and Professions. Its director is Jeff Russell, an assistant professor of athletic training who launched the clinic in August with the help of faculty and administrators in both colleges, along with \$81,083 from Ohio University's 1804 Fund.

"Virtually every performing artist sustains several injuries in the course of his or her career," said Russell, who joined OHIO in 2012 and has a Ph.D. in dance medicine and science. "And they have at least one – and usually several – horror stories about being underserved and marginalized by the medical profession."

The clinic contains the kinds of equipment found in most athletic training facilities, including an ultrasound machine, moist heat packs and a whirlpool tub. But there's also a digital keyboard, helpful for working with a pianist on a pain-reducing playing technique. And a ballet barre and mirror, useful for an athletic trainer trying to help a dancer stretch a tender hamstring.

While the clinic will provide research and education opportunities for athletic training students, the facility's main role is providing clinical care for performing artists in the School of Music and the School of Dance, Film and Theater, along with members of the Bobcat Marching 110.

Patient reviews of the facility been decidedly positive so far, Russell says.

“They waver between amazement and gratitude, because they cannot believe that they have a healthcare program that is comparable to what is available for intercollegiate athletics,” he said.

Russell noted that while some universities have athletic trainers working with dancers, and others make arrangements for performers to be treated by local healthcare providers, OHIO is the only major university he knows of that has made such a broad commitment to performing arts medicine.

“One aspect of this project that is unique, and that makes it fun, is the level of collaboration we enjoy between the health sciences and the arts here,” Russell said. “Much of my work is simply building bridges between the two.”

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