



How to Work as an Athletic Trainer in the Performing Arts

Some of the world's greatest athletes perform every night – not just every Sunday – and receive standing ovations from throngs of delighted fans. These athletes excite and amaze audiences nowhere near a football field, baseball diamond or basketball court. These finely-tuned athletic bodies belong to those working in the performing arts. And just like with their professional sports counterparts, extreme stress and performance expectations can sometimes cause untimely injuries.

Treating those injuries – and avoiding others – takes the same care that's been provided to professional and collegiate sports teams for decades. Certified athletic trainers, the health care provider of choice in sports, can be the perfect match for performing arts companies as well.

In fact, world-renowned entertainment venues and performing arts groups such as Cirque du Soleil, Disney World and Disneyland, Radio City Music Hall Rockettes, Pittsburgh Ballet Theater, Cincinnati Ballet and Blue Man Group currently use some sort of athletic training program to keep their performers in peak condition.

Now we know ATCs work in performing arts. The question is, how do I get a job in that field?

Paths into the performing arts are clearer than in the past, thanks to the National Athletic Trainers' Association Council on Employment (COE). The COE is working to create new opportunities for certified athletic trainers in this field. Some of the current projects in performing arts include:

- Creating a resource list on NATA's Web-based Communication Resource Network that can be used as a guide for certified athletic trainers who are already working in this field or are looking to pursue employment in the performing arts.
- Getting the attention of decision makers on the production side of theatrical venues.
- Creating a seminar demonstrating the cost effectiveness of including an on-site certified athletic trainer as part of their production staff.
- Providing some tools to the membership on how to start an athletic training program in a non-traditional setting such as performing arts.

Once these initiatives penetrate the performing arts market, more jobs will be available. Self-networking within the performing arts community, however, is also a big step toward earning a career in this field.

The League of American Theater & Producers provides a full catalogue of links to Web sites for members of New York's Broadway community – as well as links for other theater organizations across the nation – at <http://www.livebroadway.com/community.html>.

But remember, part of finding work in performing arts involves thinking beyond just the big name Broadway shows.

Almost every major city's ballet and dance troupe has an athletic training position, or possibly the need for one. Many colleges and universities also employ or are seeking to employ an athletic trainer for their dance, theater and music programs. Some schools – such as the North Carolina School of the Arts – even offer a short program for athletic training students interested in working in the performing arts.

The International Association for Dance Medicine and Science promotes medical, scientific and educational activities aimed at enhancing the treatment and training of dancers with the ultimate goal of improving dancers' health, well being, and performance. Its resources and newsletter can be accessed at: www.iadms.org.

Athletic trainers interested in such work should not only inquire at these places, but also should regularly visit the NATA career center at: www.nata.org/careercenter. Job setting is just one of the many search tools available while perusing openings.

And remember, the show must go on.

External marketing/brochures/performingarts_may05

