



Tuning the Human Instrument

Hot clinic in cool neighbourhood caters to musicians

Our bodies are very much like musical instruments – both need to stay in tune in order to perform at their very best. While this is true for the general public, for those who make their living through music, physical health and well-being can represent the difference between encores and unemployment.

Whether they are a violinist with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra or the lead singer of a local rock band, musicians have a knack for making what they do look easy. Appearances aside, however, the reality of a musician's life demands hours

and hours of rehearsal followed by gruelling live performances, all of which can result in tremendous physical strain.

Susceptible to repetitive strain injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome, De Quervain's tenosynovitis, cubital tunnel syndrome, and trigger finger, musicians tend to also suffer from neck and back pain that is triggered by faulty posture and repeated movements. Such aches and pains can compromise overall health, hinder efficient performances and restrict normal movement.

While these problems may be common among musicians, they can be prevented.

According to Dr. Larry Feldman, director of The Performance Health Centre (TPHC) and himself a Toronto-based musician, "those who play an instrument can greatly benefit from sustained chiropractic care."

"Chiropractic not only addresses injuries, but will help musicians avoid the risk of further injury," says Feldman. It

appears that musicians are finally recognizing the benefits of chiropractic that have long been appreciated by the sports community. "At TPHC, we design regimens specifically to meet the needs of musicians," he says. "We understand injury prevention and treatment." Under Feldman's direction, TPHC recently opened its Liberty Village location in the downtown core's thriving west end.

Liberty Village has recently become the epicentre of Toronto's creative community, containing arts- and entertainment-related enterprises within its sprawling, turn-of-the-last-century, revitalized industrial spaces. Home to such companies as Sony BMG, Corus Entertainment, Sirius Radio, Vision TV, House of Blues, and the Canadian Recording Industry Association (CRIA), the district also boasts a wide-ranging collection of independent artists and musicians.



Dr. Larry Feldman knows that the reality of a musician's life can have punishing effects on the body.



People who walk through the entrance appreciate that the services offered are designed to match their needs.



The waiting area is bathed in sunlight from the factory-sized windows.



The Performance Health Centre is in a building that is part of what is referred to as the Toronto Carpet Factory, located in Liberty Village, one of the city's hippest neighbourhoods. For further information about the clinic, visit www.tphc.ca.

"Liberty Village offers a dynamic, young, and hip vibe," says Feldman. "The sense of cool that exists throughout the neighbourhood is something we have tried to echo in our clinic." From the music videos playing on the plasma screen, the copies of Rolling Stone in the waiting area, to the collection of guitars and the Heinzman upright piano prominently displayed, they have created a smooth environment that is familiar and comfortable for their unique patient-base.

Other features include hardwood floors, high ceilings, oversized windows, exposed brick, three private treatment rooms and a large open facility for Pilates and yoga classes.

The clinic team's unique focus on the needs of artists and musicians necessitated a careful selection of health-care professionals.

Among the principals at TPHC is Dr. Glenn Engel, who is a professor of clinical sciences at the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College (CMCC) as well as an

acupuncturist. Few CMCC graduates might know that Dr. Engel is also a highly accomplished musician. Another member of the business is Feldman's partner and fellow musician Andy Cardoso, RMT, who contributes his massage therapy skills and marketing savvy.

Counselling and reflexology round out the services delivered at TPHC, which, says Feldman, is committed to helping people to achieve optimum health and perform at their personal best.

"While we have only recently opened the clinic, we have begun to build a patient list that reflects some of the Toronto music scene's brightest lights," says Feldman. "From those who play music, to those who are responsible for the industry's business side, people are responding to the clinic's uniqueness, focus, and dedication."

Regardless of whether one is or isn't a musician or music lover, the body is everyone's most important instrument, observes Feldman. "Keep it tuned," he advises. ●

To meet the physical and mental demands placed upon company members of the National Ballet of Canada, artistic director Karen Kain has instituted the Dancer Wellness Program that provides services from a range of health practitioners, including chiropractic sports specialist Dr. Cameron Borody (photo below, centre). The program, says Kain, "is designed to prevent injury and



health problems, improve performance and endurance and contribute to a longer more productive dance career."

For over a year, Dr. Borody has been working as a consultant with the company, treating patients referred to him by its full-time athletic therapist. Joining him in the photo are principal dancer Zdenek Konvalina (at left) and first soloist Richard Landry (at right). The ballet's inaugural 2006/2007 season at the new Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts in Toronto opened with Rudolf Nureyev's version of *The Sleeping Beauty*. In the accompanying photo from *The Nutcracker*, which runs until the end of December, principal dancer Sonia Rodriguez takes on the role of the Sugar Plum Fairy (photo by Bruce Zinger).