

Ross Travis

Artistic Director
Antic in a Drain

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To Whom It May Concern

When I first arrived at Circus Center to partake in the Acrobatics program there, one of my favorite classes was Jim Donak's Extreme Stretching class. His innovative and well informed methodologies and techniques for gaining strength and flexibility through both active and passive exercises brought a well spring of increased body awareness to me as an athlete. Also, to this day, I still do the warm up I learned in that class and believe it has staved off injuries. One time, Jim made my feet touch the back of my head. And it didn't hurt! I was very impressed by this even if I've never pursued that kind of activity since. It has been a gift to glean the knowledge of Jim as a coach.

Since my time in school Jim has been my go to guy when I have an injury. I tell people he has magic hands. And I swear he does, because, often times, after one or two times seeing him, my issue is resolved. He has committed his life to an in depth study and understanding of the human body, how it works, how to make it maximally effective for performing and how to fix it when it's injured. He has knowledge of the human body and the ability to express it that none of my other coaches have been able to articulate to me. I feel lucky that I've been able to have him in my corner as a healer.

Over the years I've watched Jim continuously strive for further knowledge never resting on his laurels. Extreme Stretching has become PLE and his Rube Goldberg-esque array of contraptions that he uses to help people get more flexible, stronger and aware of their bodies has continued to evolve and expand. He's kind of like a mad scientist of stretching and body awareness (not a bad one a good one!) Whenever I walk through one of Jim's classes they are full of happy campers having fun stretching, a quite unusual site to behold. Many of us teachers at Circus Center have adopted some of Jim's methodologies (such as using sliders for core work and warm ups). He's been a great influence on the staff by having somewhat of an outsiders point of view on things. Very valuable in a Circus institution. He looks at things differently from someone who has been training since they were four. He is an experimenter and innovator who is a valuable asset in a world that can be restricted by traditional approaches.

Thanks for your time!

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