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PCAT Prep Program

The Sellam Circus School's year-round, full-time 2020-2021 Professional Circus Arts Training (PCAT) Prep program is designed for driven, dedicated students who are looking to accelerate their circus training.

Students who will benefit from our PCAT Prep program range from those who are just embarking on their path toward a circus career, to seasoned professionals who are looking to revisit their core skills, develop a new act, or enhance an existing creation. Each year, we select a small group of students, allowing for ample - and highly focused - instruction and guidance.

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Program

Our PCAT Prep Program stands out from other circus training courses for several reasons, including:

- Extensive training time with a master coach who was raised in the traveling circus world
- Daily, 3-hour group session classes, providing intense physical conditioning, opportunities for ensemble work, and consistent, sustained focus
- Unlimited access to free training time, Monday - Friday.
- Available, affordable housing options for full-time circus students
- Access to unique arts, tech, and food establishments within the Pepperell Mill campus (the location of The Sellam Circus School), many of whom offer exclusive discounts
- Amtrak rail travel to Portland, Boston, and New York within walking distance of the School
- Professional recommendation to agents within the European and U.S. circus community

Sellam

The Sellam Circus School was founded upon the reputation of Sellam El Ouahabi, who brings four decades of experience as a touring circus artist and coach to his practice. Sellam was born in Tangier, Morocco, and accepted his first performance contract when he was just 13 years old. Raised in the circus world, Sellam spent over 30 years performing with more than 20 different circuses around the globe, before transitioning to full-time coaching and establishing his own school. Today, Sellam combines the best in traditional and contemporary coaching styles to bring you technique that has been road-tested to perfection. He specializes in building profound strength and deep flexibility in his students, focusing on what he calls 'natural exercise' to rapidly tone the core and build coordination.



Location

The Sellam Circus School is rapidly becoming known as a top destination for advanced circus training in New England. Set inside the historic Pepperell Mill Campus, The Sellam Circus School enjoys connection to the vibrant arts and culinary scene that is central to the revitalization of Biddeford, Maine. This fascinating mill town is located in close proximity to Portland, providing another layer of access to local arts and educational organizations, and of course – more great food and night life. Students at The Sellam Circus School get the best of both worlds: Quiet, focused training space with expert coaching; affordable living possibilities within a lively downtown neighborhood; and easy access to the delights and advantages of adjacent ‘big cities’ - Portland and Boston.

Approach

The Sellam Circus School's Professional Circus Arts Training (PCAT) Prep program is designed for dedicated students 18 years old and over who are seeking to push their circus arts skills to a higher level. (*Exceptions to age requirement may be considered, based on skill level and training goals.)

Entry to the program during Fall of 2020 is based upon written application, physical evaluation, and formal acceptance. Entry into Winter and Spring Sessions may be possible, but is based upon available openings. Acceptance criteria is skills-based and competitive, as we have limited space in our program.

Once accepted into the program, each PCAT Prep student receives training in both group and individual formats. Personalized schedules are developed by coach Sellam, taking into consideration each student's individual needs and goals.



PCAT Prep students must commit to at least 15 class hours per week, Monday through Friday. Group session classes are offered from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm, Monday through Friday; group weekend classes may be scheduled as needed. (The daily schedule is subject to change, based upon the needs of the student group.) Students are also expected to train independently on a daily basis, and in accordance with their individualized training plan. Re-evaluation of skills and progress happens on a semester basis; re-application to the program is required each year.

Full-time PCAT Prep participants may perform in The Sellam Circus School's yearly student showcase, and may also enjoy regular opportunities to participate in outside performances and gigs.

Our PCAT Prep program is designed to build a foundation of core strength and agility, deep flexibility, and heightened stamina, while working closely with Sellam to further skills in a discipline - or more than one discipline - of choice.

Available areas of study may include, but are not limited to: Straps, Aerial Silks; Lyra; Trapeze (dance, static solo and static double); Corde Lisse/Rope; Juggling; Circus Acrobatics - including Tumbling, Adagio/Partner Acro, and Banquine; Handbalance and Contortion; and Wire Walking.

Students will work exclusively under the direction of Sellam El Ouahabi; visiting coaches may also offer private lessons and workshops.

Results

Many of Sellam's former students have gone on to perform in both domestic and international circus tours and companies, including Cirque du Soleil; Cirque Eloize; Ringling Bros. & Barnum Bailey; Les 7 Doigts de la Main; Gerry Cottle Circus; Girls on Trapeze; Acrobatic Conundrum; Cirque Us, Celebrity Cruise Lines - and others.

Apply

In this third year of our PCAT Prep program, we plan to accept no more than 15 total full-time students. Acceptance is based upon evaluation of potential, and completion of the attached application form. Skills evaluation can also be scheduled in person. We will accept video submissions via YouTube or Vimeo by March 15th, 2020, safely demonstrating the following skills to the best of your ability:

- **Tumbling:** Forward roll & dive roll; cartwheel (both sides); roundoff; back bend from standing; front handspring; back handspring; standing back tuck; any combinations of tumbling (roundoff-backhandspring, roundoff-back tuck, etc.)
- **Balance:** Handstand - against a wall or free standing, for as long as you are able
- **Flexibility:** Splits - left, to straddle (center), to right; back bridge pushing up from laying on ground
- **Strength/Stamina:** Hollow body (lying on the floor, in handstand, etc); plank; pull ups (as many as you are able to perform, starting and ending with your feet off the ground.)

Please also include any other additional skills that you possess - such as juggling, unicycle, trampoline, etc. And make sure to include footage of your current skills in your apparatus/discipline of choice, if possible. This doesn't have to be a long video - just a few minutes, to give us a sense of 'where you're at'.

Once we have a chance to review your video, we will schedule a call to discuss your goals, experience, and application. If you have any trouble uploading a video on these platforms, please do let us know and we'll be happy to advise you how to do so. You can send video links to: info@thesellamcircus.com. Snail mail applications may be addressed to:

The Sellam Circus School
40 Main Street, Bldg. 13, Suite 135
Biddeford, ME 04005



Our Fall session of PCAT Prep training is scheduled to start on September 7th, 2020. We may have limited circus housing available, which we anticipate will be filled by the start of the session - so if you think you'd like to join us, please do keep us informed of your housing needs!

Tuition

Our 2020 annual PCAT Prep program cost is \$6950, and is comprised of 35 weeks of training. Accepted students must submit a non-refundable deposit of \$1000 by June 1st, 2020; the remainder amount of tuition may be paid in monthly installment amounts of \$661.11 on the first of each month (September 1 - May 1). Limited Coach-In-Training (CIT) study opportunities may be available for qualified students. Unfortunately, there are no complete scholarships, total work-exchange, or sponsored Visas for foreign students available at this time.

Enrollment for the PCAT Prep program is ongoing, and based on availability — as long as there are spaces in the program, a student may enter anytime, year-round. We are happy to accept applications on a rolling basis, and should the program be full at the time of application, we will place applicants on a waiting list, for future consideration. Students must commit to at least 15 hours of training per week, with a maximum program of 35 training hours per week recommended. ****New this year:** We are unable to accept part-time PCAT students. Please reach to Amity at info@thesellamcircus.com to learn about short-term Intensive Training options.

Students must commit to the full 9-months (September through May) of training to be considered full-time. Our PCAT Prep Program breaks for the summer months of June, July and August, and resumes each September. (PCAT Prep students may have the option to arrange



training time during the summer months, as well as receive first priority for select coaching apprenticeships for our youth summer camps.) A monthly evaluation of student training plans and progress will be completed.

Housing

Limited housing may be available for an additional fee (price may vary according to apartment location and features; please reach to Amity at info@thesellamcircus.com to learn more.) This is a large, co-ed apartment with a communal kitchen and living space. Bedrooms are shared, dormitory-style. Utilities and heat are included in the monthly fee. Though rooms are provided "unfurnished", limited furniture may be supplied by The Sellam Circus School. Students who take advantage of the student housing will be required to read and accept the terms of The Sellam Circus School's Code of Conduct. Student tenants may also be required to submit to a criminal background check at the request of the landlord.

Dates

Our 2019 PCAT Prep program is scheduled to commence on Monday, September 7th, 2020 and conclude on Monday, May 31st, 2021.

The Sellam Circus School observes two major holidays, and will be closed for:

Nov. 23rd - 27th, 2020 (Thanksgiving)

Dec. 20th, 2020 - Jan. 3rd 2021 (Winter Break)

INFO@THESELLAMCIRCUS.COM

PHONE: 207.502.2589

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