

Keeping the rockers tuned up

Massage therapy in demand on tour



Darcy Lynch of Stage Hands Massage was at the Orpheum Theater in Boston for the Hall and Oates appearance. (Globe Staff Photo / Wendy Maeda)

By [Ron Fletcher](#)

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Mid-afternoon preparations for the recent Hall and Oates show at the Orpheum seemed ordinary. Caterers stocked fridges and unpacked Sterno cans in the basement of the theater. On stage, a guitar roadie prepared for the band's 4 p.m. sound check by strumming the opening chords to David Bowie's "Ziggy Stardust." A beer distributor rolled dolly after dolly of kegs toward a concession stand. Perhaps more unusual was the sight of Darcy Lynch, who hauled her folding table up three flights of stairs to a small, private room and declared Stage Hands Massage open for business.

"It's just the table today," said Lynch, 45. "There's not enough room here for my Ashitsu Oriental bars." Those bars make it possible for Lynch to take a therapeutic stroll on the client's back.

With aging musicians and their crew looking for something restorative if not rehabilitative, and young stars welcoming an antidote to their indulgences, massage therapists now appear on the rock scene as commonly as ushers and security guards. Lynch, who divides her time between Boston and Providence, didn't quite anticipate the need for her services when she cofounded her business four years ago. After 15 years as a producer for the Discovery Channel, she wanted a new profession, one that would accommodate her desire to sail around the world.

"I figured that I could do massage anywhere," said Lynch, shortly after massaging Rick Rosabella, the tour manager for Hall and Oates.

Just prior to completing her certification as a therapist, Lynch heard from her friend, George Hawkins, a bassist about to tour with John Fogerty, that the former Creedence Clearwater Revival front man was looking for a massage therapist. Lynch jumped at the chance to blend her love of music and her new trade. The sailing trip was put on hold, as rock tours rolled through Providence and Boston, providing steady work. Word-of-mouth has led to a client list that includes Nine Inch Nails, Norah Jones, Megadeath, and Duran Duran.

The daughter of Ron Lynch, a member of the 1960s pop group The Cascades, Darcy Lynch said she feels at home among musicians. She sees past the performer's aura to the knotted back before her and goes to work. She promises confidentiality on par with that of a priest's confessional. Though her work has provided a surfeit of colorful anecdotes, she conceals them in deliberately broad terms: "Death metal musicians are some of the nicest people I've met." Or "Certain performers think they can take liberties, which isn't surprising after an evening of having women toss their underwear at them."

The work, she said, is not for the faint of heart, for there is always the musician who is going to attempt to blur the line between the salutary and the erotic.

"There is one client who is always inappropriate," said Lynch, who has no tolerance for those who hear masseuse as mere euphemism for escort. "I've developed a strategy for dealing with him . . . Other therapists have refused to work with him. I know how to handle him."

Rosabella, who is not the client in question, then glides through the room, asks if he may interrupt, and doesn't wait for a response. "Do I look like I'm floating through the room?" he asks. "I feel two inches off the ground. She is good. She is good."

Mark Bloomstein looks on with approval. He has partnered with Lynch to take Stage Hands Massage nationally and internationally. With no shortage of 60-somethings rocking out, Bloomstein, 49, sees a growth industry despite the dire economy.

"We've had drummers with sciatica and lead singers with whiplash from tossing their hair around," said Bloomstein. "They've been at it for decades and have no plans for stopping."

Bill Kenney , 52, a production manager for Live Nation, agreed. "Massage is big right now," he said. "So many of these guys have done the excess thing; it's all about proper health now."

With Daryl Hall and John Oates scheduled for massages, Lynch returned to her impromptu massage room. The duo whose 1984 hit "Out of Touch" began "shake it up is all that we know, using the bodies up as we go" sings a different tune a quarter century later.■