

The New U.S. Immigration Act  
and its Impact on  
Canadian Professional Performers and Athletes

- The new, more restrictive qualifications for visa categories threaten to limit access to the U.S. entertainment and sports market for Canadian and other foreign professional artists and athletes.
- Performers who qualify as having "extraordinary abilities" will be allowed to enter the U.S. However,
- An annual quota of 25,000 has been set for all other foreign professionals. Members of an orchestra or a hockey team will be counted individually. It is feared that since this is a worldwide total, the quota will be filled quickly.
- The stipulation that members of a company or team must have a "sustained and substantial relationship with that group" for at least a year would exclude new members, and is unrealistic given the tendency for organizations to contract artists or athletes only for the season.
- The requirement that visa applications be made no more than 90 days prior to entry makes planning difficult for Canadian managers and U.S. presenters, who risk having years of preparations undone by last-minute visa difficulties.
- Regulations to implement the legislation have been published in the Federal Register; for a period of 30 days, up to August 12, 1991, public comment may be sent to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. The Department can incorporate suggested changes in modifications of the regulations. The U.S. Immigration Act is scheduled to come into effect on Oct. 1, 1991.