

Careers

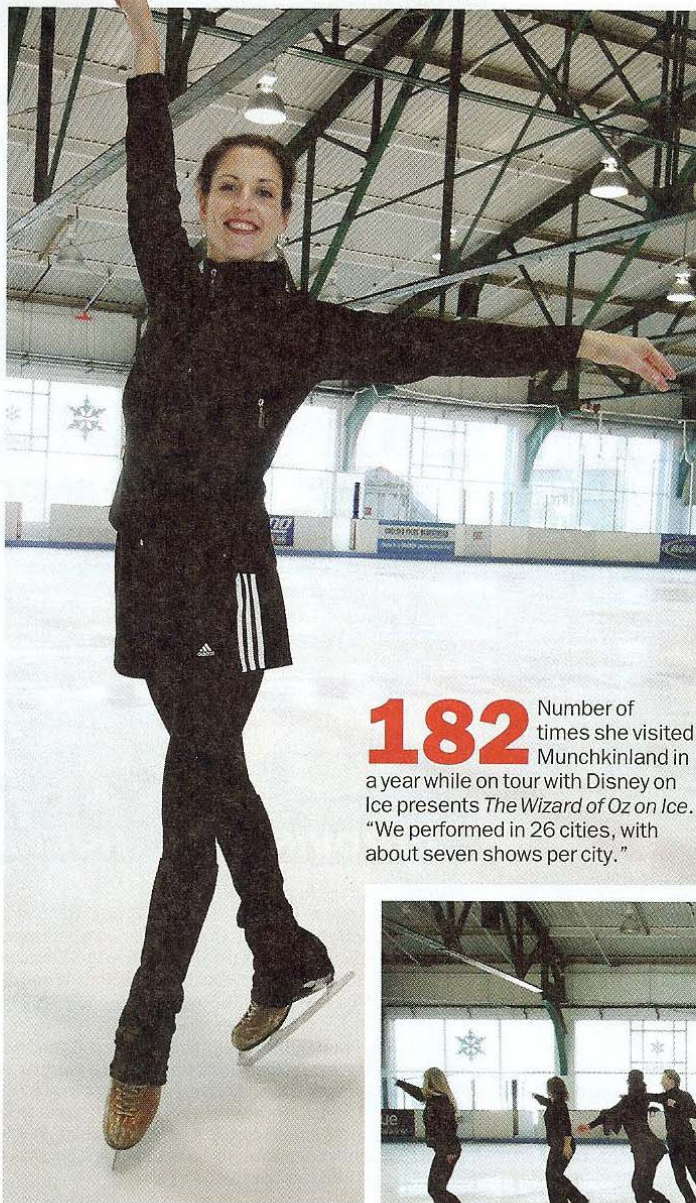
Inside job Professional ice dancer

How a sunny Florida native makes a living tearing it up on the ice. By **Jessica Strul**
Photographs by **Imogen Brown**

Who she is: Rehearsal director and company member of Ice Theatre of New York, a not-for-profit ice-dancing company that performs at Rockefeller Center, Riverbank State Park, Chelsea Piers, across the country and (phew!) abroad, Jamie Coffey Reynolds is a trained actor, yoga instructor, dancer and figure skater who has been skating competitively and professionally on and off since she was eight years old. She has toured with Disney on Ice, and she's a three-time national ice-dancing competitor.

First attempt: Reynolds started taking ice-skating lessons when the first rink opened in her hometown of Orlando when she was 8 years old. "Skating was a natural fit for me right away," she explains. So when she was 15, she left her friends and family and moved to Indianapolis to train and eventually start competing in ice dancing. But first she needed a partner. She auditioned for and was turned down by three potential partners before she finally found her match. "That's a lot of rejection when you're young, and you feel like your future depends on this."

Breakthrough moment: After competing for about four years, Reynolds decided to turn pro. "I was growing up, and I realized that I wanted to try new things and travel," she remembers. Some of her skating friends were touring with Disney on Ice, so she auditioned and was cast as Glinda the Good Witch in *The Wizard of Oz on Ice*. When the tour performed at Madison Square Garden, it was Reynolds's first time in New York City. "There's no place



like it; there is just an electric energy and endless possibility here—I loved it, and I knew I had to come back." She spent the rest of the tour figuring out how to do just that.

And then: The artistic director of Ice Theatre of New York spotted Reynolds skating recreationally at the Chelsea Piers ice rink. She introduced herself and asked if the skater wanted to come to an ITNY rehearsal. Reynolds accepted the invitation, and performed so well that she was invited to join the company on the spot. Despite taking some time off to obtain her bachelor's and master's degrees, she has been skating with ITNY for three years now.

Her advice: "Remember what you loved about it when you started, it helps keep the fun alive." She also recommends taking dance lessons (for classes, see page 78) in addition to skating training. "Skating is a blend of artistry and sport, so it's important to develop both sides."

Her biggest mistake: "I always try to go back and fix the things I regret, and until I finished my undergraduate degree, that was a big regret of mine. I took a break from college when I was competing in Indianapolis. But now I'm fixing my mistake and I have a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, and I plan on getting a Ph.D., too."

182 Number of times she visited Munchkinland in a year while on tour with Disney on Ice presents *The Wizard of Oz on Ice*. "We performed in 26 cities, with about seven shows per city."

