

Tartan Press

Newsletter of The Manitoba Highland Dancers Association

January 2013

Colleen McGregor “Over the Moon” with her *Over the Rainbow* experience



MHDA’s own Colleen McGregor took time from her busy schedule this month to give us a behind the scenes glimpse on what it was like being on CBC’s *Over the Rainbow*, and how Highland dance helped her get there.

Did the experience live up to your expectations? What aspects of it were different than what you expected? I honestly had no idea what to expect when I first was sitting on the Winnipeg Fairmont Hotel floor waiting to audition for this “show”. I knew I liked to sing, dance and act and this was just another way I could get involved with pursuing my passions. I think the aspect that was the most different than what I had expected was the lack of input we had when it came to our performances. I thought maybe we might have a say in the song choice, wardrobe and choreography...but I was wrong! Not many people realized this during the show, so I had to keep reminding people that these weren’t my choices!

Can you tell us what it was like to actually meet, sing for and be coached by Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber? Absolutely mind-blowing. I still find it hard to believe that at 19 years old, I can say I have sung and been coached by the king of musical theatre himself. He is a very intelligent and pleasant man to have worked with. One would think he would be intimidating, but he was very approachable and did not come off as egotistical at all. It was an honour and pleasure to have worked with him and it will most likely stick out as one of the most incredible experiences of my life.

What was the most difficult challenge for you, being on the show? What did you miss the most? The hardest part of being on the show were the hours that went in to rehearsing for the Sunday and Monday shows. In the 2 and a half months I was there, I think I had maybe 1 or 2 days off. We spent all day each day of the week either, filming, rehearsing, interviewing or eating (when we had time!). Don’t forget to add on the emotional stress that came with being on a reality television show too! I missed being able to have some alone time to myself to just chill out for an hour or two. I loved being around people, but I think the only times we were alone were when we went to the bathroom!

What was the highlight for you? The biggest highlight of being involved with the show would definitely have to be all of the wonderful friends and connections I made. I have made many life long friends and feel so privileged to have been able to share this experience with them.

How did your highland dance experience fit into what was asked of you on the show? How did it help you? Highland dance definitely played a huge part in my success while being involved with the show. Not only has the training and techniques helped me with picking up choreography and being used to performing on stage, but the life lessons I have learned through Highland dance have been incredible. From a very young age I learned to experience, wins, losses, work ethics, injuries, friendships, competition, and judgment in just one activity...Highland Dance. By experiencing all of these different aspects I was pretty much prepared for almost anything that was thrown at me on the show. I can't imagine not having highland dance in my life.

Who was your favorite guest coach and why? My favourite guest coach would have to have been Kristin Chenoweth. She has been on my top three list of "people to meet" since I first began singing. To have been able not only to meet her, but actually sing for her was a dream come true. I still can't believe it. She was so inspiring and encouraged me to be myself by using my unique qualities as my strengths. I hope I'll be able to see her again one day!

One of the judges encouraged you to pursue singing in movies, what do you think of that? I had never really thought of pursuing something like that before, but hearing that option definitely got me thinking. I have become more interested in the field and hopefully will be able to try that out sometime during my career. Seeing the recent film musical *Les Miserables* definitely inspired me!

Do you plan to go see the show in Toronto? I actually just booked flights to go see the show in March, I am so excited!

Do you still stay in touch with some of the girls? Every day. We talk all the time. We've become sisters.

What impact did this experience have on your life? What was the biggest thing you took away from it? How has this changed you as a person? I have certainly become a changed person since being on *Over The Rainbow*. I always tell people that the show helped me realized roles I should be auditioning for rather than shows I know my voice/type wouldn't not be suited for. This has allowed me to build up my repertoire for future auditions and makes me feel more confident about myself! This is not the end to a dream I have, this is the very beginning. I have new goals and new hopes for the future and I can't wait to see what it has in store for me.

What advice do you have for another highland dancer who might have musical theatre performance goals after highschool? Never give up on yourself, if given a wonderful opportunity...go for it, don't pursue this career and expect a big paycheck, practice hard and practice often, remember those who have helped you along the way, make connections, stay humble, and know that when you are knocked down, there is just something better waiting for you around the corner. A wonderful and talented Manitoban once said to me "Talent never goes undiscovered." -- Nia Vardalos

Now that you're back at home, what will you be focusing on in the coming year? This coming year I am returning to the Faculty of music at the University of Manitoba. I will also be focusing on my singing, dancing and plan to audition for shows in Manitoba as well as the rest of the country.



Colleen, singing her heart out as one of Canada's top 4 Dorothys.
 "We talk all the time. We've become sisters." -*Colleen McGregor*

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MHDA Volunteer Hours

For anyone looking to complete their volunteer hours for the MHDA for the year, there are 4 Competition Dates remaining: March 16, May 5 and June 8th and 9th at the Forks. MHDA members to volunteer at the March Competition will soon be contacted.

If you are getting anxious about getting your shifts in before the year end, please contact the MHDA Volunteer Coordinator at MHDAVolunteers2013@shaw.ca.

Joan Holmstrom



Tartan Tea A Huge Success!

Thank you to all the dancers, teachers, volunteers and supporters of the 2012 Tartan Tea. Our event was a great success!

Thank you to the schools that contributed prizes, volunteers &/or performers: Ramesar School, Cram School, Highland Hoppers, Bunting School, Baird School, Kids in Kilts, French School, Impey School, McCallum School, Hamilton School Thank you to our MC Alison Schon. Great job to my set-up crew: Lorraine, The Oliphants, Deb, Darlene, Janet and Keith. Thanks for all the advice, assistance and ideas from Kathy R, Kelly, Janet, Kathy H, Ally & Lorraine. If I missed anyone, it is not from lack of appreciation. My apologies and thank you!

While the Tartan Tea is a decades old tradition, not everything remains exactly the same. We are always open to suggestions for ways to improve the Tea as well as suggestions for a venue with a larger capacity. If anyone has any suggestions, please forward them to tartantea@mbhighlanddance.com <mailto:tartantea@mbhighlanddance.com>

Lisa Omand
Tartan Tea Coordinator



For Sale

Red plaid socks for sale.
Anybody interested can call Darlene at
204-951-5204.

Tartan Press Submissions

Items to be published in the Tartan Press will be accepted up to two weeks prior to every M.H.D.A. competition. The deadline for submissions for the next Tartan Press is: March 2nd. Items may be sent by email to: Corinne Giesbrecht at corinne.giesbrecht@gmail.com