

FEATURED PAST PARTICIPANTS

Colleen Zander - Dance

Beginning in the studios of The Dance Gallery at age 3 and on the Sagebrush Theatre stage at age 5, dance has taken me so many places; competitions province wide, over a decade of choreographing, a contemporary dance degree, professional festivals and venues all over Canada, Vienna for my first international contract, film and music video sets, and back to Sagebrush with Western Canada Theatre.

For me, performing in my local festival, KFPA, was my gateway into the industry. Receiving feedback and guidance from professionals actively working in the dance industry was invaluable. The dancers I connected with locally, and provincially through PABC, are artists that I continue to work alongside professionally in dance, theatre, TV, and film.

I continue to audition, perform, and create and train as an actress, dancer, vocal artist, and theatre performer. Most recently, I was blessed to perform as Josie Pye in Anne of Green Gables with Western Canada Theatre in my first professional musical theatre contract, a true return to my roots on the Sagebrush stage.

Growing up as a dancer, I was always encouraged to have a parallel career, something that could fuel me and make me happy while I worked towards my performance dreams. Through dance, I acquired multiple injuries, and thus was born an interest in physical therapy. I completed my Master of Physical Therapy degree in 2023. I now work with children with developmental disabilities in Vancouver; a job in which I use my dance, singing, and acting skills constantly.

If I could tell young dancers and artists the most impactful things I have learned and realized so far on my journey, I would tell them this.

You don't have to be one thing in your life. You should do and be what you are passionate about. There is always a way. Pursuing education and performance dreams can coexist.

If you think you can't do it, you're right and you've already decided. You have to believe in yourself more than anyone else.

Your friends and competitors will be your colleagues. Make relationships and be a good human. You will hire them and they will hire you.

Being kind, hardworking, and consistent is way more important than raw ability. Artists don't get hired because they have amazing abilities alone. They get hired because they are talented and amazing people to work with. You can learn new skills and build a resume



and experience. No one can teach you to be a good person or a hard worker if you don't believe it is important.

Keep learning. Keep training. Find opportunities for growth, because there will never be a time that you know everything you could ever know.

What is special about your art is that it is uniquely yours. There is no one else who does it precisely like you.

Artists, I wish you the best experience as you perform and share the parts of yourself that you so diligently nurture. This chapter is where you will learn so much about yourself and what you are capable of. Enjoy it, be brave and know there are so many who wish they had the guts that you do.