

# Kincardine's former 'drummer boy' building acting career



A six-year-old Kolton Stewart plays the tenor drum with Kincardine's Penetangore Pipe Band. Stewart, now 13, has since secured leading roles in two major films in the last two years. (LORI STEWART/SUBMITTED)

**Tracey Hinchberger**  
Kincardine News Freelance  
As the pipers and drummers marched their way down Queen Street during the recent Kincardine Scottish's Gathering of The Bands, residents may have noticed a young familiar face amongst the snare drums.

With his mop of curly hair and infectious smile 13-year-old Kolton Stewart is remembered by many as Kincardine's "little drummer boy."

While it's been a number of years since playing with the band on a regular basis, Stewart tries to don his kilt at least once every summer.

Although never officially a member of the band, Stewart started marching with the Kincardine Scottish at the age of four. When he was six he joined Penetangore Pipe Band, the competition band also based in Kincardine.

Stewart and his mother Lori moved away from town shortly after, but made the drive back every week so he could keep drumming with Penetangore. Eventually Stewart

left to join the Hamilton Police Pipe Band.

While he continues to play occasionally, Stewart's hobby has led him to turn his attention in a new direction, with an exciting new career as a young actor.

"It started in 2008," said Stewart. "I auditioned for the Stratford Festival's production of *The Music Man* as a drummer. I got the part and learned about acting and dancing during the show. I went in as a drummer and came out an actor."

The next summer Stewart returned to Stratford with a small role in *Macbeth* and as a soloist in *West Side Story*.

After his work in Stratford, Stewart decided to pursue acting further. His mother found him an agent and he began auditioning for jobs.

Stewart's big break came in 2010 when he won the principal role of young Simba in the touring production of the Disney musical *The Lion King*. He was the first Canadian ever cast in the role.

Shortly after, Stew-

art headed to California with his mother to begin rehearsals and life on the road.

For the next eight months *The Lion King* took the 11-year-old across North America through Portland, Vancouver, Salt Lake City, Chicago, Norfolk, Virginia and Durham, North Carolina.

The gruelling schedule had the young actor playing eight shows per week, alternating with another young Simba, and trying to keep up with school by working with a tutor.

Despite the hard work, Stewart's time with *The Lion King* clearly had a big impact on him. His face lights up when talking about the experience.

His mother also speaks very fondly of it.

"You really become a big family," she said. "Everyone becomes so close. It was so hard to leave, although we still have great friendships."

Unfortunately Stewart's contract with *The Lion King* was only for eight months. The character of young Simba has strict size requirements and he

quickly outgrew the role. When his run with *The Lion King* ended Stewart returned to his home in Delhi, Ontario, to his regular school and a normal routine. Normal for him that is. While he went back to playing sports with his friends, Stewart also headed back to dance class and continued to audition for new roles.

In April of 2011 Stewart landed a small part in the upcoming movie *Cobu 3D*, starring Derek Hough of *Dancing With The Stars* fame.

Stewart worked as an extra on the production appearing as a "tapper" and a dancer.

The film is scheduled to be released sometime in 2013.

Upon wrapping *Cobu 3D* Stewart began working on a second motion picture, *I Declare War*, in the role of Caleb, one of the main characters.

The Canadian independent production is an action movie in which a group of children take a game of war to a dangerous new level.

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## Kolton Stewart to have leading role in 'I Declare War' film

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Frequently seeing comparisons to *Stand By Me* and *Lord of the Rings* the movie has been receiving much critical acclaim.

In April the film was featured during the Indie Spirit Film Festival and received a special jury award.

More recently, *I Declare War* was honoured as a selection for the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

Stewart is excited about the film's inclusion in TIFF.

"It's a chance for someone to maybe see it and for it to be picked up for distribution."

He is also excited about attending the movie's red carpet premier at TIFF on September 9. However, while Hollywood heavy hitters such as Tom Hanks and Robert De Niro are expected to be amongst this year's attendees Stewart does not mention them when asked if there is someone he hopes to see during the festival.

"The warden from

*The Longest Yard* (James Cromwell), that's who I'd really like to see," said Stewart.

The answer isn't surprising coming from the down to earth young man.

When questioned about who has inspired him in life, again, it's not a big name celebrity or sports figure. "Norm Dunsmoor, Craig Colquhoun, Tyler Fry, the people I played with in Penetangore," Stewart said, without missing a beat. "They're the ones who got me started in drumming and drumming got me started in acting. Oh, and for sure my mom."

He then goes on to talk about Kincardine and how it is still like home to him. Stewart still has family in town and he and his mother try to visit five or six times a year when his schedule permits.

Stewart said he would like to keep on acting, but even at the age of 13 he realizes that roles as a child actor are fleeting.

"I know in a few years it will be harder for me

to get work. I'll be too old for kid parts, but not old enough for adult roles. Hopefully I can get a part in something that is going to go on for a long time. Then I will be a better known actor."

Stewart hopes he may have found that role. He has been filming a new television series about young dancers called

*The Next Step* slated to air on Family Channel in the spring.

While most of his work lately has been on the screen, Stewart longs to return to the stage. Does he see a return someday to *The Lion King*?

"Ya, to go back to *The Lion King* as big Simba, that would be my dream role!" and his face lit up with that infectious smile.



Former Kincardine resident 13-year-old Kolton Stewart poses with his mother Lori on a recent visit home. Stewart began his entertainment career drumming with the Kincardine Scottish and Penetangore Pipe Bands and has now established himself as an up and coming actor performing both on stage and in film. (TRACEY HINCHBERGER/KINCARDINE NEWS FREELANCE)