





YOU'VE PROBABLY NEVER CONSIDERED whether your neighbour played guitar on a Marvin Gaye record or had two hit singles in France. But they could have. At the supermarket, you don't expect to bump into someone who travels to dangerous countries photographing injustice or a world-class illusionist. But you might. Here in Niagara, we have some highly talented people loving what they do. Though some might have heard of them, most people are unaware of just how successful they are. »

# LIVING THE DREAM

IN THIS LITTLE PART OF THE WORLD, LORI LITTLETON REVEALS  
THE DREAM TEAM OF BIG TALENT.  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY DAVID HASKELL

After signing autographs in France, Juliet Dunn, jazz singer, actor and aspiring dancer, found her way to Niagara and has made this her home.

## RIGHT TIME, RIGHT PLACE

Jazz singer, actor, aspiring dancer, Juliet Dunn has a lucky star watching over her. Everything's falling into place for the talented entertainer.

Juliet Dunn believes getting a break in the entertainment industry has more to do with timing and luck than talent and perseverance.

For instance, her decision to dine in a restaurant owned by a friend led to her appearance in a television movie that drew 7.5 million viewers. And then there was the Shaw audition she didn't have but showed up for anyway. "It's sometimes just being in the right place at the right time," the 38-year-old said. Born in England, but raised in Vancouver, Dunn left for France at 18, planning to work for one year as an au pair. She stayed for 13. At 22, she started her singing career by singing backup with an all-guy band called Grooveallegiance. She and the band's guitarist collaborated on a few songs, which he played for record executives. The pair were signed to a record deal and Dunn released two singles – *Flowing Downstream* and *The Louder* in 1994 and 1995, respectively. The first song did exceptionally well, selling more than 15,000 copies and ending up on numerous compilations. That success landed Dunn in the lineup, which also included Kylie Minogue and Jimmy Somerville, for *Dance Machine 5*, a multi-act concert with an audience of 17,000 people.

"The next thing I know kids are asking for autographs and I've got my name on the dressing room door," she said.

After the two singles were released, Dunn auditioned for a role as a young au pair and jazz singer in a television movie entitled *L'Amerloque (The Yankee)*. The casting director passed on her, but a few weeks later, Dunn met the film's director while he was dining at the same restaurant. Ten days later, he called her and invited her to his house. "He told me, 'Read the script and if you want the role, it's yours,'" she said. "If I hadn't been at that restaurant, I would never have gotten to do the movie."

After things died down in France, Dunn returned to Vancouver in 2001 and got involved in theatre. The following year, she got a break when then-Shaw Festival artistic director Christopher Newton allowed her to audition without a scheduled time and cast her in *Caesar and Cleopatra*. She moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake and the following season appeared in *Diana of Dobsons* and *On the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. In 2002, she also received the Tony Van Bridge Award for most promising newcomer.

In 2003, Dunn joined Carousel Players, a St. Catharines-based theatre troupe for young audiences, and has been involved in the company's various productions, workshops and camps ever since, and is currently developing a play, entitled *Planet Now*, for a young audience. After buying her St. Catharines home, Dunn wanted another reason to stay in Niagara and decided to follow her interest in jazz music. With the help of local pianist Randy Stirtzinger, Dunn put together a group of musicians and began performing in 2005, logging 45 gigs at well-known local hot spots, such as Casa Mia in Niagara Falls and the Double Olive (now On 81) in St. Catharines and wineries.

Aside from catching her at various clubs around Niagara, you might catch Dunn, a certified fitness instructor, at her other hobby. "I always wanted to be a dancer and now I'm doing fitness to music," she said.

## THE ILLUSIONIST

He's won gold at the magic world's Olympics and worn the Canadian title Magician of the Year. With sellout shows at his theatre in Niagara Falls, Greg Frewin is living his childhood dream. His success is no illusion.

Many Canadians dream about living somewhere it's hot year-round, particularly when they're waiting for a bus during a blizzard. But after being away from changing leaves, crisp, autumnal air and snowflakes, one begins to yearn for climatic transformations.

That's one reason Stoney Creek native and International Grand Champion of Magic illusionist Greg Frewin opened the Greg Frewin Theatre in Niagara Falls in 2005.

"Everywhere I (previously) performed was a tourist area – a casino, a hotel – and it was hot," he said. "I kind of missed the seasons – the fall, the winter. It's nice to be home and I don't miss the travelling at all."

Frewin's interest in magic began when, at the age of eight, he was wowed by a "cheesy dollar bill trick." His parents bought him a magic kit that Christmas and he began performing illusions for family members and neighbours. At 15, Frewin met someone who showed him the business and he soon thereafter began performing at birthday parties and other small events. He decided he wanted to