

OCTOBER 2023

NEIGHBOURS

of Saugeen Shores



POWERED BY
BVM
BEST VERSION MEDIA

STEVIE VALLANCE:
A LIFE IN SONG, STORY, & COMMUNITY

Photo by Vanessa Chassard, French Touch By V

Stevie Vallance:

A LIFE IN SONG, STORY, & COMMUNITY

Submitted by Meredith Marr | Photography by Vanessa Chassard, French Touch by V



When you meet Stevie Vallance, you immediately sense her energy. She has a blend of old-school showbiz sparkle, creative passion, and a deep appreciation for the community she now calls home. Though she has spent decades in the bright lights of Hollywood, Toronto, and stages across North America, it's here in Southampton where she has found what she calls her "Brigadoon": a place that feels timeless, rooted in kindness, and full of music.

Stevie lives with her beloved pets: Toulouse, her 14-year-old tabby cat, and Gino, her nine-year-old shepherd mix. She describes herself as being in a "solo relationship" with herself these days, embracing contentment and stability. And it's clear that this chapter of her life is just as rich as her remarkable past.

A CHILDHOOD SHAPED BY MUSIC AND CREATIVITY

Born in Montreal and raised in Toronto, Stevie's creative journey began early. She credits her childhood school, Deer Park Public School at Yonge and St. Clair, with setting her on the path to show business. "I loved every minute of it," she recalls. "I was on every sports team, and in Grade 3, I was cast as Jane Banks in the school production of Mary Poppins with a full orchestra. That changed my life forever."

Her mother recognized her daughter's gifts and enrolled Stevie in nearly every creative program imaginable, including ballet, figure skating, piano, puppetry, singing, tap, and jazz. By the time she was 11, Stevie was already performing with the Charlottetown Festival and starring in productions like Jane Eyre at Toronto's O'Keefe Centre.

"Never give up or give in."



*"Life is precious
& should be fought
for at every turn."*

By high school, she was balancing schoolwork with professional acting gigs, appearing on shows like *The Tommy Hunter Show* and *King of Kensington*. While her peers went off to university, Stevie followed her heart to New York City, where she studied at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, graduating with honours.

HOLLYWOOD AND BEYOND

Her training led her to Los Angeles, where she carved out a diverse and successful career. She landed recurring roles on primetime shows like *Knots Landing* and *The Ropers*, but it was her versatility and musical comedy background that opened doors to voice work in animation.

Instead of waiting tables, Stevie brought thousands of characters to life through her voice. Fans might recognize her as Proudheart Bear from *Care Bears*, Alice Mitchell in *Dennis the Menace*, Tigrerra in *Bakugan*, and Miss Clavel and Genevieve in *Madeline*. In fact, her work on *Madeline* earned her an Emmy Award in 2001 for voice directing 70 episodes of the beloved Disney series.

Her passion for the art form led her to create *Tooned In Voice-over Workshops*, where she taught thousands of voice actors and animators across Canada and the U.S., from Comic Con in New York to the Ottawa International Animation Festival.

But Stevie has always kept singing at the heart of her career. For ten years, she toured Western Canada as Patsy Cline, opened for the Calgary Stampede in 1998, and recorded albums along

the way. Today, she continues to produce jazz concerts and is working on her sixth CD, recorded live at the Southampton Inn in 2023. Locals might also catch her performing with her jazz duo every second Friday at RISTORANTE ROSINA in Port Elgin.

CREATING MUSICALS FROM HISTORY

Though she's officially "retired from hitting the pavement," Stevie is more creative than ever. Her current projects reflect a love of history and community, particularly the stories of World War 1 and World War 2. She writes, directs, and stars in musicals that weave together period music, storytelling, and archival images of local men and women who served.

Her latest production, *My Shining Hour* with Vivien Kershaw, opens this November at the Southampton Town Hall, presented by the Bruce County Playhouse. The show celebrates her late aunt Viv, an RCAF veteran and accomplished painter. "I promised her on her deathbed that I would get her magnificent paintings into people's homes," Stevie says. She inherited her aunt's artwork, built a gallery in her home, and is now blending Viv's story into a musical that honours both Art and Service.



"Even if you're hated, never hate back."

LIFE IN SOUTHAMPTON

For Stevie, Southampton has been a surprising but joyful destination. Though she never imagined herself retiring here, life led her back to the community where she spent summers as a child. "Never in a million years did I see myself moving here," she admits. "But now I am happier than I've ever been in my life and all because I live in this awesome community with wonderful people and beautiful nature all around."

She describes Southampton as her "Brigadoon", a place where time seems to stand still. Neighbours stop by to chat, bring vegetables from their gardens, or help shovel snow. "It's truly like living in another time, a time from my past when people were kind to each other and had integrity. Quite different from my show-biz life in L.A.," she laughs.

Stevie keeps active in the community, whether it's hiking the Bruce Trail with Gino (she's a quarter of the way to Niagara Falls), rollerblading along the shoreline paths, kayaking the Saugeen River, or singing the national anthem at Winterhawks games and Marine Heritage Festival weekend. She also performs with the Stardust Big Band and produces regular jazz concerts that bring people together through music.

A FAMILY OF CREATIVITY AND LOVE

Stevie speaks fondly of her father, who worked for BA and Gulf Canada in public relations. He was her biggest cheerleader, driving her to auditions and making her pancakes before ballet lessons. Later in life, Stevie cared for him, returning the love and support he had always given her. "Life sure is a circle," she reflects.

Her memories are filled with road trips in the family's VW van and music in the home. She still treasures the family's 1927 Heitzman piano, which she recently began playing again.

Family also connects her to Southampton. The heritage house she inherited has revealed surprising history, including ties to the Knowles family, who helped establish Southampton as a tourist destination in the early 20th century. Restoring the house has become one of her passions, alongside honouring Aunt Viv's artistic legacy.

LOOKING AHEAD

Though she has travelled the world (Italy, France, Australia, Greece to name a few), Stevie is content to explore closer to home these days. She dreams of road-tripping to Newfoundland, returning to her birthplace of Montreal, and maybe one day singing at jazz festivals in Portugal or Panama.

For now, she finds joy in creating art, music, and community connections right here in Saugeen Shores. Her message to her neighbours is one of resilience, kindness, and hope, echoing the spirit of the wartime era she so often draws inspiration from:

"Never give up or give in.

All for one and one for all.

Respect others.

Trust yourself first.

Life is precious and should be fought for at every turn.

Even if you're hated, never hate back.

We will get through this."



In many ways, Stevie's story is one of reinvention. She's an artist who has performed for thousands around the world but now finds her truest stage in the heart of her community. Whether through music, theatre, or simply stopping to chat at the fence, Stevie Vallance is leaving her mark on Saugeen Shores with the same warmth and brilliance she's always brought to the spotlight.

Portraits, Family, Websites, Real Estate, Food & Sport Photography

Vanessa Chassard
FRENCH TOUCH BY V
www.frenchtouchbyv.com

@frenchtouchbyv | @365photosdumonde

Book a
Free Nutrition
Consultation Today!

naturally well.
by hannah

naturallywellbyhannah.com