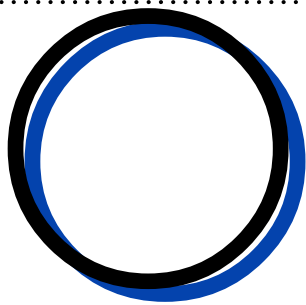




JAYDEE-LYNN MCDUGALL

IS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

BY RACQUEL FORAN



n a dreary winter day, I spent the afternoon watching videos of a young athlete. First I watched her power

down the ice and slam up against a player on the opposing hockey team. She showed excellent skating form, looking more stable on her blades than some NHL players. Next I watched her use that same power and energy in a hip hop routine. Then I watched her gracefully make her way across a stage. So seamlessly transitioning to lyrical dance that the hockey player and hip hop dancer were instantly forgotten. Back and forth I went, trying to reconcile the hockey player with the dancer. A dancer that plays hockey? Even in Canada this must be unusual, I thought. So I felt compelled to find out more about the young woman who was equally comfortable on ice as sprung floors.

Once you learn a little bit about 18-year-old Jaydee-Lynn McDougall, it is easy to understand how and why she started playing hockey; she grew up in Winnipeg and she has two older brothers that both played. "As for hockey, I don't think it was a matter of choice," Jaydee-Lynn said. "At the age of three, my brothers who were seven and ten and playing competitive hockey at the time, would get me all decked out in goalie gear so that they could fire pucks at me."

That might have been enough to discourage some little girls, but not Jaydee-Lynn, "I think it got me excited about hockey because when the time came for me to start in a regular hockey program, I was ready to go. I remember my brothers teaching me how to put on my hockey equipment prior to my actual first practice. I was so excited to be in hockey equipment. I felt like I was one of the boys."

She played like one of the boys too, strapping on skates for a boys' team from the beginning. By the age of 11, she was competing at the highest level of boy's hockey, pointing out that "it involved hitting." Competing at this level kept her busy. She was practicing five or six times a week on ice, in addition to dry-land training once or twice a week.

You would think that would have been enough to keep a pre-teen busy, but

again, not Jaydee-Lynn. She started dance at the same age as she did hockey, five. "My mom put me in dance because she wanted me to have confidence and develop creative movement skills. It wasn't meant to be a serious activity by all means. My mom... wanted to make sure I was well rounded..."

Although it wasn't meant to be a "serious activity," somewhere along the way it became one. Soon Jaydee-Lynn was spending as many hours every week dancing, if not more, as she was playing hockey. This meant an additional 12 to 20 hours a week training at the dance studio. It wasn't always easy to manage her schedule, "Typically I would have about six conflicts a month," Jaydee-Lynn said. "I would look at my schedule and make a decision as to which practice or dance classes I would go to." She couldn't have continued with both activities if not for the help of her coaches and her teachers she says. "[They] were all very understanding in helping me balance my schedule. My dance studio would allow me to pop into other classes for training if I had to miss my regular class."

Jaydee-Lynn didn't mind the busy schedule though, because she loved hockey and dance. For 12 years she pursued both with equal passion, achieving success at a high level in both, as well. At the age of 13, she moved to girls' hockey and two years later joined the first St. Mary's Academy Elite Girls Prep Team. When asked what she loved about hockey she first said "the comradery." Adding, "... and the competitive aspect of hockey. I loved that we were all working towards the same goal. I loved being 'one of the boys'. ...Being on a boys hockey team made me strong. At one point the boys I played against were 120-140 pounds and I was barely 100 pounds soaking wet. I played defence and I loved stopping those big guys coming down at me." (Proving she really wasn't aware how small she was, her hockey card from the time indicates Jaydee-Lynn was actually only 85 pounds.)

As she got older though, Jaydee-Lynn knew she was going to have to choose between her passions. She was playing hockey at a very high level and scouts often attended games. Scholarship opportunities for top US universities were offered to girls playing at this level. Brown University expressed interest in

Jaydee-Lynn when she was in grade 11, but she passed on the opportunity because she had already made the decision to pursue a dance career.

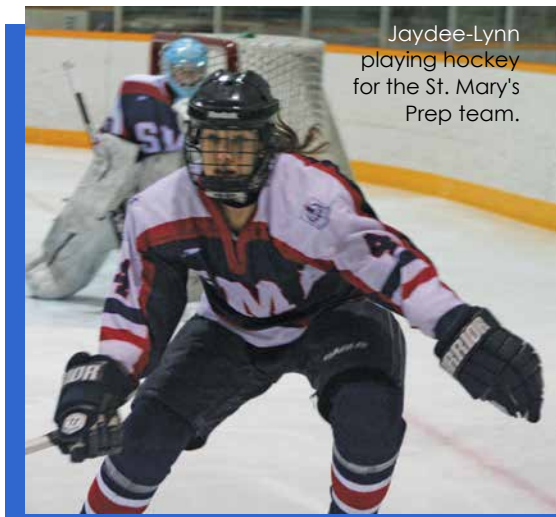
"Choosing dance over hockey was one of the hardest decisions I have ever had to make," Jaydee-Lynn said. "Eventually I realized that my passion was much stronger for dance. It wasn't an overnight decision. I had been thinking about it for months. I remember having



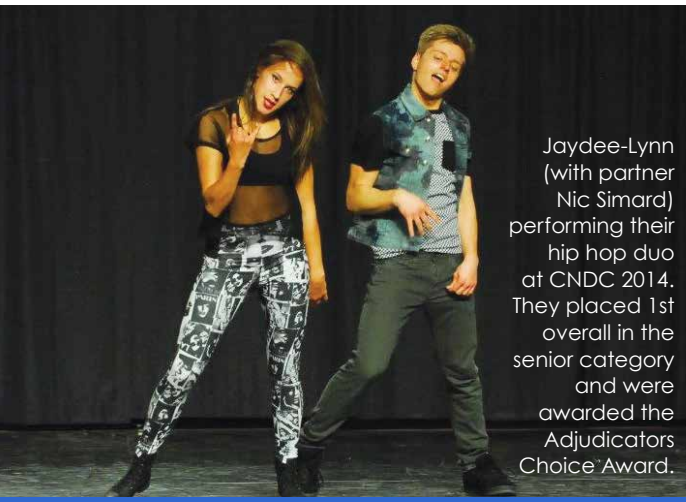
Jaydee-Lynn performing her 1st place Jazz Solo at CNDC 2014.



Jaydee-Lynn in goalie gear, ready to play with her older brothers.



Jaydee-Lynn playing hockey for the St. Mary's Prep team.



Jaydee-Lynn (with partner Nic Simard) performing their hip hop duo at CNDC 2014. They placed 1st overall in the senior category and were awarded the Adjudicators Choice Award.



Jaydee-Lynn performing her lyrical solo in the preliminary rounds at The Pulse on Tour in Chicago, November 2014.

a conversation with my mom when I was 12 years old about the fact that one day I would have to choose between my two passions. I asked her how I could ever choose when I loved them equally. ... She said that one day I will realize my passion for one over the other. One day, she said, I would not be happy about missing dance, or hockey ... and that day came midway through grade 10. Things changed and I found myself being disappointed when I had to miss a dance class for hockey.... The part that was the hardest about quitting hockey was telling my dad. I didn't want to disappoint him. ...My dad wanted me to play College hockey, but he knew that I needed to follow my dreams."

Jaydee-Lynn's mom confirmed that it was a tough choice. "Choosing between a full tuition college hockey

scholarship opportunity, and focusing on her dance training was a very tough decision for Jaydee-Lynn, but one that had to be made. In the end it really wasn't a choice at all, her passion for dance outweighed anything else in her life. ... She loved hockey and all the amazing friendships...but nothing made her feel the same as when she was dancing. Dance is when she truly comes alive. Dancing is her true love and in the end she owed it to herself to follow her dreams."

As soon as the decision was made, it was full-steam ahead for Jaydee-Lynn. "I made the decision to devote completely to dance so that I could get to the next level. I needed to put all my time and energy into dance. I was determined. In addition to dance, I took acting classes and voice lessons so that I would have more opportunities."

Her dedication appears to be paying off, too. She was the 2014 Dancer of the Year at 5678 Showtime's Winnipeg competition, and the Overall Senior Definite Threat at the Triple Threat Dance Convention. And she was overall winner in seven different categories at the Canadian National Dance Competition.

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- Sarah
Pulse Dance Centre,
Port Coquitlam

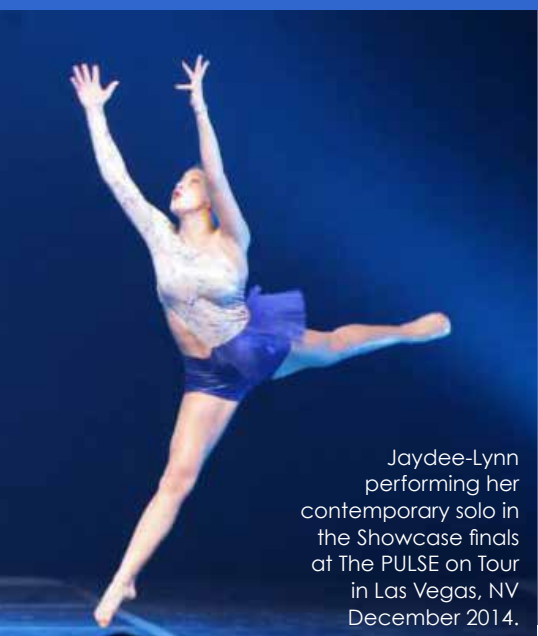


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Jaydee-Lynn performing her contemporary solo in the Showcase finals at The PULSE on Tour in Las Vegas, NV December 2014.

But the thing she is most proud of is earning a Protégé award at The PULSE on Tour in Boston in 2014.

Approximately 1200 dancers attended the Boston event. All dancers wear a scholarship number throughout the weekend. During each class the faculty keeps a notebook where they write their selections for scholarships. At the end of the weekend those votes are tallied and the scholarships are awarded accordingly. Selected Protégés get to train with the Tour's choreographers in every regional city for free for a full calendar year. PULSE registration director Kristen Plant said Jaydee-Lynn was selected because "she is a wonderful contemporary artist, but she also excels at Hip Hop and Jazz. The fact that she's well rounded and continues to perfect her artistry is something that definitely caught the Faculty's eye."

CONTACTS FROM THIS ARTICLE

5678 SHOWTIME
5678showtime.com

CANADIAN NATIONAL DANCE CHAMPIONSHIP
cdo-online.org

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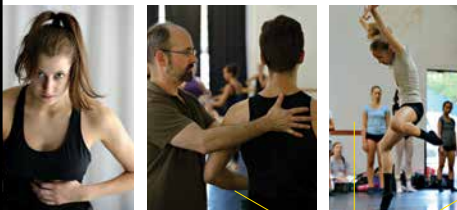
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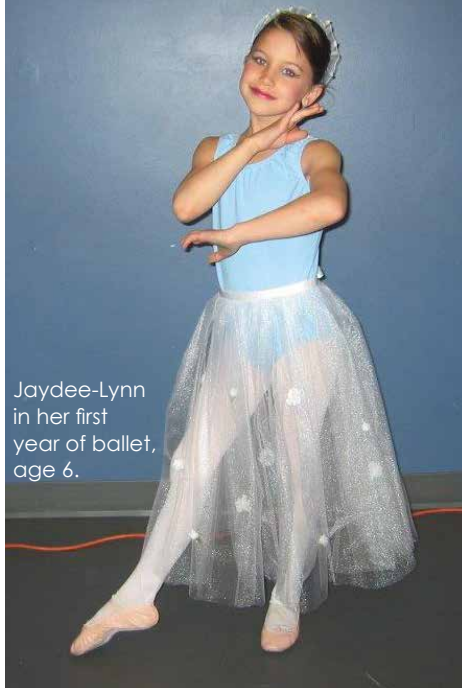
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Jaydee-Lynn
in her first
year of ballet,
age 6.

Jaydee-Lynn is headed for the big screen, too. Brian Friedman, creative director of The PULSE on Tour, and judge and choreographer on *So You Think You Can Dance* was conducting auditions in her home town. She was recommended by one of Brian's assistants but missed the initial audition. She forwarded a YouTube video of herself to Friedman instead. After seeing it, he set up an audition to see Jaydee-Lynn dance in person. The audition went well and she was cast in the film as part of the all-girls dance crew. The movie, *Bravetown*, stars Laura Dern and Josh Duhamel. Its release date has not been set yet, but being cast in the movie is one of Jaydee-Lynn's best memories to date. "To be noticed by a famous choreographer like Friedman was exciting and one of my best dance memories. It was truly an honour to work with Brian Friedman."

When asked how she thinks all her years of playing hockey helped her dance she said that she thinks it made her stronger and "gave her tons of endurance," things she considers personal strengths as a dancer. She also believes dance and hockey complement each other because as she explains, "both involve confidence and a good head space, knowing exactly where to move to, and when."

Jaydee-Lynn spent part of fall 2014 training in Los Angeles at the Edge Performing Arts Center, Movement Lifestyle, and Millennium Dance Complex. She is also working on obtaining everything she needs to get her O1 Visa to work in the United States; with a top LA talent agency already having agreed to sign her.

In the meantime she is enrolled in the Faculty of Education at the University of Winnipeg with a major in Kinesiology and a minor in Theatre and Film. Her plan is to obtain a teaching degree while at the same time pursuing her dance career. And her schedule is as busy as ever. She has university classes every week day, dances at Kickit Dance Studio 10 hours a week, and works three days a week. She also plans to take advantage of her PULSE Protégé status; she joined the Tour in Chicago in November, Las Vegas in December, Portland in January and Boston in February, and she will be in Atlanta in March. She will also attend the Pulse Summer Intensive in Las Vegas, and competing in New York in July 2015 for the Elite Protege Award.

Her motivation to do all this comes from within, she says, "My motivation is my own personal drive and determination to be the best I can be." She went on to explain, "I am motivated to be better. I don't settle. I want to be creative in my art of dance. Dance is an art form that is a part of my personality. The part that is motivating to me is finding a way to express myself at different levels of difficulty and intensity and to strive to better myself."

Jaydee-Lynn is focussed and determined. She has a clear vision of the path she is going to take and where it is going to lead. "I see myself continuing to train with famous choreographers with The PULSE on Tour. One of my goals is to be awarded the elite Protégé award at the finals in New York City this summer, so that I can work side by side with the choreographers that have been inspiring me to reach for my goals. I hope to be working in the commercial dance industry in the areas of film, music videos, and even performing one day as a back-up dancer with a famous artist like Beyoncé. Ten years from now, I can see myself continuing in the dance industry, as well as sharing my enthusiasm and love of dance with young children. My goal is to inspire and empower young dancers so that they may develop their skills with increased confidence in a challenging and creative atmosphere."

If determination, focus, strength, endurance, hard work, and of course talent, are the ingredients in the recipe to success, then Jaydee-Lynn has everything she needs to cook up an outstanding career. 🌟