

Performance for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Sons of Scotland Pipe Band and MacCulloch Dancers



The moment Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth walked from her summer residence into the beautiful back garden of Balmoral Castle we knew that a dream was about to come true. Five empty chairs sat on the Tarmac behind the castle. Friends and family waited anxiously across the way. Her Majesty graciously walked from the Castle greeting her guests with a simple "Good Afternoon". Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth was truly here.

The sounds of pipes and drums could be heard in the distance. Soon the Sons of Scotland Pipe Band emerged from a narrow road winding through the trees to the right of the castle. The sound was magical and the sight magnificent.

The MacCulloch Dancers watched from behind, hearts jumping with the excitement of what was about to happen. It was time. Proudly and with surreal happiness, the girls approached the tarmac.



George Muggleton of Navan, Ontario picked up his fiddle and the energy of the Glengarry Ceilidh began. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth tapped her foot. Princess Beatrice's face beamed with excitement and genuine interest. The Master of the House, the Lady in Waiting and the Queen's Equerry took photos. The dancers glowed. The step dancers expertly beat out intricate rhythms and the highland dancers entered and exited with striking energy. The tarmac was alive with the signature piece of the MacCulloch Dancers. Step Dancers, Highland Dancers and Sailors danced in unison with unmatched excitement. "Brilliant" declared Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

Performing with the MacCulloch Dancers were Sarah Carter, Sarah Chisholm, Jocelyn Egan, Gwynydd Cowley-Owen, Rhianon Cowley-Owen, Heather Godsoe, Kaitlyn Hamilton, Michelle Kaleta, Stephanie Kaleta, Ashley McDougall, Jessica McRae, Jessa Millar, Laura Mount, Emily Vallance and Sapphire Van Loon.

Pipe Major Bethany Bisailion led us through the program expertly. The Pipe Major choreographed a medley of tunes for this grand occasion. The "Royal Suite" medley included 'Mull of Kintyre', 'The Royal Scots Polka' and 'Balmoral'. The band performed many traditional marches and slow airs and an outstanding drum salute choreographed by lead drummer, Andy Main. At times the fiddle was played in combination with the bagpipes creating wonderful musical blends.



Upon closing, Pipe Major Bethany Bisailion greeted Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and members of the Royal audience. Miss Bisailion accompanied Her Majesty and Princess Beatrice through a walk about introducing Her Majesty to members of the pipe band. Her majesty showed particular interest in the young drummers and pipers, asking questions about their instruments and the interest in music.



Another dream was about to come true as Rae MacCulloch approached Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. Graciously Rae MacCulloch presented Her Majesty with a beautiful bouquet of red and white flowers, telling Queen Elizabeth how she had admired her from the time they were both little girls. Heather Forbes presented Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth with a painting done by a local Canadian Artist, Dorie Clarmont. The scene depicts the MacCulloch Dancers performing with the Canadian Parliament buildings in the background. Her Majesty commented on the fact that the sun was shining over the Parliament Buildings, stating that when she visited there was "always a downpour". Our Pipe Major, Bethany Bisailion, gave a special gift made by her mother, a stained glass angel holding a bouquet of red and white flowers.

Rae MacCulloch and her daughter, Heather Forbes, completed the walk about with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. Her Majesty thanked the step dancers for bringing their own dance floors. Princess Beatrice commented on the highland dancers dancing on tarmac. James MacCulloch, our photographer, had an opportunity to speak of the longevity of Rae's work with young dancers. Members of the Royal Family were very interested in the many family connections among the pipers, drummers and dancers. Members of Rae MacCulloch's family, included her daughter, Heather Forbes, Piper James Forbes, Photographer James MacCulloch and grandsons, Trevor and Mike Forbes.



This exhilarating day was completed with a walk about with family and friends of the day's "Royal Performers" ... more and more dreams coming true.

Other exciting venues for the Scotland tour included Blair Athol Castle, Stirling Castle, Edinburgh Castle and Palace of Holyrood House.

Heather Forbes

