

Outlander star's fans start \$50,000 fund for Conservatoire students

By Brian McIver

HE IS the handsome Highland warrior who helped a generation of American women fall in love with Scotland. Now Outlander star Sam Heughan's army of female fans are teaming up to support his prestigious drama school, and help young performers follow in their hero's footsteps.

A group of women from across the US, most of whom have never been to Scotland, have teamed up to create a new scholarship at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and are hoping to donate \$50,000 (£36,000) for aspiring artists.

The Supernova Legacy Scholarship has already raised more than £5,000 in less than one week of its online campaign, and the organisers want to use their love for the epic Scots television drama to help as many students as possible at the Glasgow school where their hero trained.

Based all in different corners of the US, scholarship founders Lisa Shaw, Susie Reynolds, Sandra Gutierrez, Nicole Johnson, Bridget Dinehart and Megan Caughern, have been raising money via donations, raffles and merchandise sales, and are delighted with the reaction from the Outlander fan base.

Ms Shaw said: "We are all huge Outlander fans and fans of Sam as an actor. He wouldn't be where he is today without the RCS, so this seemed like a really great opportunity for us to pay it forward to a student."

"The RCS can determine which students receive the scholarship and we're committed to a minimum of three years."

"Our goal is to get the word out. Sam's representatives are aware of it and the RCS has been involved from the beginning. We want to leave the scholarship in their hands and they will treat this like their other scholarships."

The women were inspired by the actor's community fitness drive My Peak Challenge, which encourages people to get fit and raise money for good causes along the way.

The Supernova founders are all regular "peaker" participants and wanted to take their charity work further, where the idea for the scholarship emerged.

While most Scots have their fees for RCS paid by the Student Awards Agency Scotland, scholarships can be a crucial part of supporting students in their studies.

The Supernova founders are selling merchandise and taking donations via their website www.supernovalegacy.com.

Ms Shaw added: "I have met Sam twice and he's a phenomenal person. People who are alumni of the RCS care about it and care about the arts, which are really suffering just now."

Heughan, 40, who has also appeared in BBC soap River City, has become one of the world's best known TV stars and has won a massive army of fans since taking on the part in Outlander of 18th century Highland hero Jamie Fraser, who falls in love with a time-travelling nurse from 1940s England, played by Caitriona Balfe.

The series, which screens on Amazon Prime in the UK, is based on the best-selling books by Diana Gabaldon and is due to start filming its sixth season soon, after being delayed from last year by Covid-19 lockdowns.

Kirkcudbrightshire-born Heughan and his Outlander co-star Graham McTavish are back on US screens this



Lisa Shaw with Sam Heughan, right, while above are the six Supernova founders who teaming up to support his prestigious drama school after having seen him perform in hit television series Outlander, main picture



“ Sam is a wonderful ambassador

around the world to realise their potential, regardless of background or economic circumstances.

"We're so proud of Sam and grateful to his fans. Sam is a wonderful ambassador for the arts and for Scotland and it's fantastic to see so many people around the world inspired to support a new generation of performing artists following in his footsteps here at RCS."

month with new Scots road trip series Men In Kilts.

He is also set to star in new special forces action movie SAS: Red Notice this spring and plays screen legend Paul Newman in upcoming Hollywood film To Olivia.

The Supernova organisers said their dream would be to visit Scotland to meet some of their scholarship students. Ms Shaw said: "Everyone fell in love

with Scotland and Scottish culture because of the show, it's a series all about possibility and it shows you anything is possible. It would be great if the six of us could go to Scotland together."

A spokesman for the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland said: "Scholarship support is vital in enabling the most promising young artists from across Scotland and

Marines train in Arctic weather

ROYAL Marines have been deployed to brave Arctic temperatures as they learn the basics of survival in winter weather training.

The soldiers will undergo a series of intensive trials during the Cold Weather Warfare Course, including being plunged into freezing water during infamous ice-breaking drills.

All those taking part have undergone quarantine and UK troops are training in a bubble and in line with the Covid-19 guidelines of the host nation of Norway, the Royal Navy said.

The participants are mainly from Arbroath-based 45 Commando but also include marines of 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group, Commando Logistic Regiment and Commando Helicopter Force, and British Army troops from 24 Commando Royal Engineers and 29 Commando Royal Artillery.

Lieutenant Colonel Innes Catton, the Commanding Officer of 45 Commando, said: "As Cold Weather Warfare specialists held at very high readiness, this training is vital to retaining capability to deploy anywhere in the world."

"Stringent control measures and quarantine procedures are in place to protect the local population."

Tributes as mother of four dies

TRIBUTES have been made to a 29-year-old healthcare assistant who died with Covid-19 after giving birth to her fourth child.

Becky Regan, who worked at North Tyneside Hospital from January 2020, was remembered by family and colleagues yesterday with a one-minute silence.

In a statement, James Mackey, chief executive of Northumbria Hospitals NHS Trust said: "It's with deep sadness that we mourn the loss of one of our own team who has tragically died this week. "This will be remembered as a very sad day for Northumbria and we are all devastated at the loss of our friend and colleague.

"Our deepest condolences are with the family at this tragic time."

Manager's tribute as Sound Of Music star Plummer dies, 91

CHRISTOPHER Plummer, the award-winning actor who played Captain von Trapp in The Sound Of Music, has died aged 91.

The Canadian actor died early yesterday at his home in Connecticut with his wife of 53 years, Elaine Taylor, by his side. Plummer, an accomplished Shakespearean actor honoured for his varied stage, television and film work in a career that spanned more than six decades, became the oldest Academy Award acting winner in history at the age of 82 in 2012, for his role in Beginners.

"Chris was an extraordinary man who deeply loved and respected his profession with great old fashion manners, self deprecating humor and the music of words," his long-time friend and manager Lou Pitt said.

"He was a national treasure who deeply relished his Canadian roots. Through his art and humanity, he



Christopher Plummer with the Oscar he won in 2012

touched all of our hearts and his legendary life will endure for all generations to come. He will forever be with us."

He appeared in more than 100 films and also was nominated for an Oscar for his portrayal of Russian author Leo Tolstoy in 2009's The Last Station.

He won two Tony Awards for his Broadway work, two Emmy

Awards for TV work and performed for some of the world's top theatre companies.

But for many fans his career was defined by his performance alongside Julie Andrews as a stern widower in The Sound Of Music.

Andrews played the part of a nun named Maria who falls in love with Captain von Trapp.

Proof of Bond novel sells for over £50,000

IAN FLEMING'S proof of the James Bond novel You Only Live Twice, sent to Playboy magazine to be serialised, has fetched more than £50,000 at auction.

The novel, written at Fleming's Goldeneye estate in Jamaica in 1963, was the first to reveal Bond's Scottish roots, in an obituary written by intelligence service boss, M.

The book was serialised over three issues of Playboy from April to June 1964, three years before the film adaptation starring Edinburgh-born movie star Sir Sean Connery.

Fleming's proof for the magazine - showing how the book was cut by 16,000 words and the author's corrections in red ballpoint pen - was the leading lot in Sotheby's online sale The Golden Age of Detective Fiction, after it fetched £50,400.

A signed copy of Fleming's 1963 Bond novel On Her Majesty's Secret Service fetched

£6,300, while other highlights included rare first editions by Agatha Christie, Raymond Chandler and John Le Carre.

Dr Philip Errington, senior specialist in books and manuscripts at Sotheby's, said: "We are thrilled with the result of our Detective Fiction sale, not least the top price of £50,400 for an early proof copy of Ian Fleming's You Only Live Twice, with corrections by the author, which was then sent to Playboy."

"You Only Live Twice is one of Fleming's best-loved novels. Dr No, the first Bond film, had been released shortly before Fleming began work on it, bringing a new level of success to the series and developing Fleming's own conception of is hero. "The novel contains the famous obituary for Bond, who is given a Scottish ancestry as an acknowledgement, no doubt, of Sean Connery's performance."

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