

Letter From Gerard Arseneault about his Senior Performance

To understand this letter, view his performance at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZ23V8kxEPw>

I was selected for the 'Give Way to Seniors' show because of an announcement on TV asking for people 50 years old and over with a certain talent to phone up without hesitation. A few weeks later a woman phoned me and asked me "What do you do?" I said I play bones. "What is that." she said, and I explained to her what it was. She said, "Mr. Arseneault, I'll be very happy to meet you with your woods."

A few week later, I was called for the interview. I am sitting in front of the woman who phoned me and beside her is the music-master. After introductions, I put on the table my 4 woods. They couldn't resist to touch them. After a minute or two they put my music CD on, and I started to play. You should have seen their eyes all wide open followed with a large sigh of wonder .

As soon the music and I stopped at the same time and almost together they said officially "We want you. We like what we've seen and heard. We are not the only ones who make the selection, but were are among those on the board. You'll hear from us in a few weeks." He gave me a Charleston CD. "Good luck."

On my way home I was saying to myself, this is going to be my objective for this year in spite of a tearing ligament on my left shoulder. I must make it. I had lost my equilibrium while I was trying to install a plywood 4x8x1/4 on the ceiling of my cellar. I continued to work, but at the end of the day it was very painful . After a few days I decided to go for an xray. They said that with a tearing ligament in your shoulder, you are better to take it easy for a while. This happened two weeks before my interview. Knowing that I had to go for my interview, two days before I went to get a shot of Cortizone in my left shoulder as you don't feel the pain for a few days.

It was just the beginning of a new game I said to myself. I had to get the beat of that music which is new to me. It'll be a good challenge for me in spite of my handicap. I was thinking that way because I still was not feeling pain due to the Cortisone effect.

I had been sent to a clinic twice a week with a physical therapist to do exercises. Adding to that were my practices with my woods to try to get that new unknown beat, and it became harder and painful.

A phone call came for a get together for those who have been chosen like me, and I went to make acquaintance with the group. I waited until all the other persons were questioned by the two persons who had given us the interview, and I managed to be the last one to see them.

"How are you Gerard?" I said not too well. They asked what is going wrong and I told them all about my left shoulder (I never told them before) - that it is so painful. I'm here this evening to think about having to quit. I'm have some exercises to do and I'm followed by a physical therapist, but when I start to rattle

my woods it hurts me even more. So it is still early. You could easily replace me because I will not be able to reach my goal.

I said, "At the hospital, they told me I would be helping myself exercising with the nurse twice a week and nothing else for at least one month." A moment of silence. They discussed together and the music-master looked at me and told me "We are going to make a deal with you, Gerard. We'll give you a month and a half to not have to come to some meetings. I'll want you to attend to the music of the Charleston CD to get familiar with his rhythm, and the total numbers of music bars specially to memorize at which numbers you'll have a solo bar when I stop the music. All this without your woods which will give you a great rest for your left shoulder. I'll phone every 2 weeks to see how you progress. Our reason is you belong the group." I said thanks for their great confidence in me.

It helped me a lot these weeks by just doing the exercises prescribed by the doctor and remembering the beats of the music and the number of each solo-bar. I started to rattle very slowly and increasing every day up to a level I could endure.

After a while I had to join the group at the theater. They were showing us how to get on the stage all together in some occasions and when it was our turn to perform alone.

The time goes by very fast. In no time we are at 2 days before our performances. I went to get another shot of Cortisone into my left shoulder to minimize my pain.

I did my best to not disappoint my audience. When my turn came believe it or not, I had my answer - an ovation. Good thing there was no recall because after playing 2 days in row in my condition, it was my maximum. My personnel evaluation is about 50% as I surly did better when I was in a better shape. But I'm glad to be able to accomplish my objective to the end.

You will notice when I was playing, my eyes were closed because I did not want to be disturbed or distracted by anything, even the light, so that I could be able to count from the beginning of the music starting at bar #1. Numbers 7-9 10-10-13-15 were my solo-bars and luckily I didn't miss one.

You'll also notice while I'm playing my arms never went higher of my shoulder when I was playing. Before my arms were mostly above my shoulders

Since about my shoulder I went for what they call Resonance Magnetic. This test is the top test to compare with the xray. The results show many tearing of ligaments and muscles. They are discussing if they could operate me at my age of 87 year old in 6 months.

Please excuse my composition my faults and my writing. [Some editing done - English is Gerard's second language.]

Some friends of mine put me on YouTube. My regards to all of you.

Le Quebecois Gerard