



Meet the molar musician

Anthony Denucce, a Boston Branch 34 member, has an interesting talent, one that led him to perform in April for “America’s Got Talent” judges Howie Mandel, Heidi Klum, Simon Cowell and Sofia Vergara, plus a live audience, for a chance to move on to the semifinals. The talent? He plays music with his teeth.

Managing Editor Philip Dine wrote about Denucce and his “America’s Got Talent” experience in his column in the June issue of *The Postal Record*, leaving many curious about what happened next. As it turned out, “Anthony the Molar Man” didn’t make it further in the NBC TV reality show competition, but that is fine with Denucce, who was amazed to have been among the final 200 contestants of the 200,000 who

entered the contest—meaning that for every 1,000 contestants, only one was invited out to California to perform live for the judges.

In fact, Denucce, a letter carrier since 1997, got a bit beyond that; 140 of the 200 were selected to have their taped performances shown on television over the summer—with about 15 different contestants featured every Tuesday evening throughout June, July and August.

Of those, 44 advanced to the semifinals in September. Denucce didn’t make it to that select group. He was “buzzed off” by the four judges. Off camera, he persuaded one—Simon Cowell, who ironically is probably the toughest of the four—to change his vote, but approval by all four was needed for a contestant to move on.

Not only has it been an interesting journey for Denucce, it also has provided positive publicity for letter carriers and for the Postal Service, he says. People let him know that they held “watching parties at their home” for his televised segment the last week in June, he says, and in addition to the TV audience, his clip on the “America’s Got Talent” page already had about 60,000 views as this magazine was going to print.

In his original live audition in the spring, he got a standing ovation from the audience when he recounted how he (and letter carriers in general) seek to brighten the days for residents during the difficult period of the pandemic.

Denucce has been honing his musical craft for decades, ever since elementary school. “I picked up this quirky type of talent while taking tests,” he says. While thinking of answers, he’d tap his teeth, which made specific sounds. “I was getting different pitches,” Denucce said. “I would drive my teachers crazy. My classmates would attempt to do it, and I’d get in trouble for starting it.”

He continued to develop that ability to create music over the years.

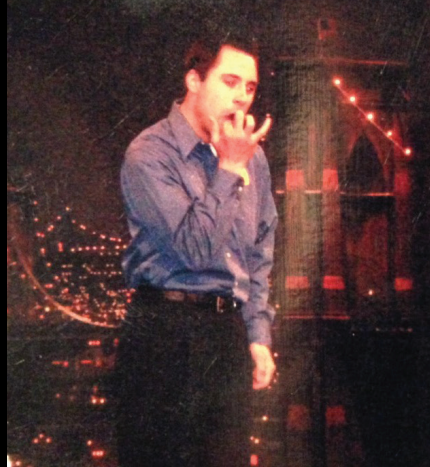
Since he already had a postal career, he didn’t really pursue show business, but “people keep asking me to do it, so I just go with the flow,” he says.

He soon came up with his stage name, “Anthony the Molar Man,” to highlight his musical teeth.

Luckily, his pastime doesn’t require a whole lot of practice. “I’m pretty good with hearing music and playing it,” Denucce says.



Denucce auditioned for “America’s Got Talent” in April.



Denucce has performed for minor league baseball teams (l), on “The Late Show with David Letterman” (c) and on “America’s Got Talent” (r, pictured with host Terry Crews).

And though his musical repertoire is “all over the place,” ranging from the William Tell Overture, “The Adams Family” theme song and Camila Cabello hits, he says that “Disney music is my fave.”

His hobby has taken him places.

In 2004, Denucce’s sister noticed that “The Late Show with David Letterman” was holding tryouts in Boston for its popular “Stupid Human Tricks” segment, which featured interesting talents. “I auditioned in front of five people—they called me the next day,” he said.

Later that week, he went to New York City and was on TV. Though he didn’t get to meet Letterman until airtime, which was a little nerve-wracking, “it was all a great experience,” he says.

The carrier received a little notoriety from that appearance and was offered a regular gig performing “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” twice a year for the Lowell Spinners, a minor league baseball team in Massachusetts.

He also did stints on other TV shows, including “Let’s Ask America,” a multiple-choice game show in 2014, as well as a reboot in 2017 of “The Gong Show,” the popular amateur talent content that originally aired in the 1970s. “You only get 30 seconds,” he said. “The judges are the audience.” Denucce proudly recalled that he lasted for 28 seconds before he was booted off.

But his latest big break thus far has been the “America’s Got Talent” show. He began in February with a virtual audition, because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. “I did it from my living room,” the carrier said.

After two and a half hours in a Zoom holding room watching others perform, it was his turn. “After I performed, the producer said, ‘Hold on, let me send you to someone else,’” he said.

Two weeks later, Denucce was called back for another online audition in front of an executive producer, and in April, the carrier was invited to Pasadena, CA, to perform on the show. The 200 contestants all stayed in the same hotel for the six days they were there. “We all became friends and keep in touch,” he says.

While at the studios, they were filmed for social media campaigns and took part in photoshoots and other interviews with “AGT” host Terry Crews, whom Denucce calls the “coolest guy ever.”

The carrier was given a standing ovation for about 30 seconds by the audience, after telling them he was a mailman and explaining that during the pandemic letter carriers had seen many of their customers losing their job or having to quarantine, and that the best letter carriers can do is try to deliver a smile for them every day.

Denucce was immensely proud to represent the Postal Service in such a public arena. “I felt proud for the company,” he said. “I got emotional. ... I’ve always been proud of what I do.”

Because of copyright issues, “they picked my songs for me, so it wasn’t my best stuff,” the carrier said, adding that “there was tons of talent,” so he wasn’t surprised he didn’t make it through.

Though he enjoyed performing for people nationwide, Denucce especially loves bringing joy to those on his route and in his community daily: “I do it for customers all the time. I see young kids on the street and play for them.

“The kids love it,” he said. “I’m a happy guy and I want to make people smile. I’m always performing at family functions and parties.”

And now that Denucce’s star has risen, he’s been able to parlay his re-

cent TV appearance into other opportunities. He’s under contract with NBC until the end of the year, so he does have a few restrictions on what he can accept. Talks are underway about an invitation extended to him to perform at a game next season for the New Hampshire Fisher Cats, another minor league baseball team. Fittingly, given the nature of his music, the venue would be the Delta Dental Stadium.

The carrier is grateful for the continued support of his wife and 14-year-old daughter. The media attention has been surprising but nice, and he says a lot of his customers didn’t know about his talent until newspapers wrote about him. The mayor of his town even wrote him a letter.

His co-workers began to call him “Hollywood” around the office after his performance in California. “Everyone found out about it,” he said. “They comment on it a lot.”

He loves to share his music and what he’s up to on social media—Instagram at @anthony_molarman and his YouTube channel, which can be found by searching “Anthony the Molar Man.” His followers include many Disney fans and a lot of dental associations.

“We’re hoping it will lead to bigger and better things. I’m patiently waiting for gigs to come my way,” he said. “My goal is to be in a commercial for a dentist, but I will always be a mailman. This is my career.”

Above all, though, Denucce just wants to have fun with his hobby, especially as people emerge from being stuck in their houses during the pandemic. His philosophy, he said, is simple: “I try to make people smile.” **PR**