

Trent Arterberry is *The Great Pretender*

Three continents. Four decades. Six thousand performances. How has he done it? Why has he done it?

Answering those questions in *The Great Pretender*, Trent Arterberry recounts the ups and downs of his life and career as a full-time, touring mime artist. “The story is a delightful and personal account of finding your calling and overcoming the obstacles that life throws up.” (Showbill.ca)

Originally from Southern California, when Arterberry told his folks he was dropping out of pre-med studies at UCLA to become a mime, they sent him to a psychiatrist.

Undeterred, Arterberry moved to Boston in 1973 to pursue his dream. Performing as a silent, white-faced mime in Harvard Square earned him hundreds of fans and hats full of change. Creating a children’s show called *Pantograms* gave him steady engagements at hundreds of schools across New England. When he readily agreed to pose with the sharks and eels in the giant ocean tank of the New England Aquarium, an overzealous sea-turtle bit him on the bottom.

After a chilling photo-shoot for a Capital Records’ album cover on a frozen Walden Pond, he began to open for music stars on college campuses. He played with BB King, Billy Preston, Charles Mingus, McCoy Tyner, and The Kinks, to name a few. He played a New Year’s eve bash for Aerosmith. He eventually



“If you think that mimes are just silent white-faced fellas in striped shirts stuck inside invisible boxes, prepare to have your ideas of the art-form challenged by the charming Trent Arterberry.” –Showbill.ca

toured with Julio Iglesias to New York’s Radio City Music Hall and Toronto’s Maple Leaf Gardens.

After developing and touring his own full-length show for colleges, the National Association of Campus Activities named him *Performing Artist of the Year* in 1983. That decade he also performed on cruise ships around the world and for major corporations such as AT&T and Sprint.

But everything has its season, and by 1990, mime had become very unpopular; his career was crumbling and his first marriage was falling apart. Searching farther afield for work, in 1994, he travelled to British

Columbia where he gave over 150 performances in his first year alone. After falling in love with a school-teacher there, he relocated to Vancouver Island, remarried and started a second family.

In *The Great Pretender*, Trent uses storytelling and mime to tell the tale of how his relentless touring led him to the love of his life. Debuted in September, 2017 at the Victoria (Canada) Fringe Festival, the play received rave reviews:

“Trent Arterberry is brilliant! ... He is genuine, authentic; he doesn’t gloss over the bad stuff, like the failure of his first marriage due to the stress of touring. But he celebrates the good stuff with heartwarming joy... Wonderful artist.” (Monday Magazine)