

Caledon resident writes Canadian Paralympic theme song

Written By JULIA LLOYD

The Canadian Paralympic team has never had an official song dedicated to them ? until now.

The Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC) and CBC/Radio and Canada's Paralympic Network announced on June 18 the new theme song for Tokyo 2020.

Paul DeRosa is the songwriter behind the new Canadian Paralympic theme song, ?Shine.?

A Caledon resident, DeRosa first wrote the song about 15 years ago for his cousin Pat Ferrari. Ferrari is paralyzed from the waste down. When Ferrari was only two, his family was involved in a head-on collision that put him in a wheelchair for the rest of his life.

?I always had the Paralympics in mind when I wrote the song,? DeRosa said.

Ferrari inspired DeRosa, as well as his good friend from high school, Canadian Paralympian Jeff Adams, a six-time world champion in wheelchair sports.

Adams was paralyzed at age nine from a spinal injury resulting from cancer treatment, and so DeRosa grew up surrounded by the inspiration from his friend and cousin.

?The song was original an acoustic vocal,? said DeRosa, who went on to explain the process of getting his song recorded and played at the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo.

DeRosa recorded his song at CBC Studios in April of this year. Prior to that, he reached out to the CPC in Ottawa and was put in touch with executive director of communications, Martin Richards.

From that point on Richards brought the song to CPC and then brought the idea to CBC Sports and CBC Music who then got the song produced by award-winning Murray Daigle, with an accompanying video.

?There was something about the melody and lyrics that stuck with me for days,? said Richards in an interview with the CBC.

Once CPC made the final decision to use ?Shine? as the official song, all departments collaborated and re-wrote some lyrics to fit a wider appeal. CBC music brought in season four winner of Canadian Idol, Eva Avila, and some of Canada's best session musicians.

DeRosa's dream came finally came true when the final product of ?Shine? was finished and it became the official song of the Canadian Paralympic team.

?This is an opportunity I will never forget,? said DeRosa. However, when he was first discussing the song with Richards, he found out a theme song had never before been done for a Canadian Paralympic team.

?It kind of took me back a bit when I found out they never had a theme song before. But then I realized how special this opportunity was,? he said.

DeRosa says he is happy the Canadian Paralympics team have an official song and believes they Paralympic games should actually come before the Olympics.

?I have always felt that the Olympics outshined the Paralympics,? said DeRosa.

But what made DeRosa the happiest is being able to tell his cousin, whom he still keeps in contact with, and tell him all about the song dedicated to him.

The theme song will be showcased during the games on the official broadcast and digital coverage. Both songs have been sung in both English and French; the French version is called "C'est Toi."

The song "Shine" has also been submitted as one of the options for the CBC Music's 2019 Canadian Music Class challenge. This challenge encourages students to record their own versions of pre-selected songs and get the opportunity to win money and prizes for their school music program.

If students choose to sing their own version of "Shine," they will be entered in a CPC contest to receive a visit from a Paralympian.

The Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games will take place next summer from August 25 to September 6.