

JAZZ'UM AND A.J.'S MEMORIAL BAND

THE CONCERT

He heard the music that came from his father's favorite room. This was the one thing his daddy did every night after dinner, go down stairs and turn on his music machine. Adam wanted to go down too, and listen to the music with his father, so, when his mother turned her back for a split second, that was all the time he needed. He headed for the stairs. He could hear his mother's voice; "Don't go near the stairs Adam, I'll take you down in a minute." But he was well on his way, by the time she said this.

Jack knew it was just a matter of time, before his son would try to make it down to the basement, all by his self. That's the nature of a kid. He expected to hear him come tumbling down the stairs one day, and he knew he was helpless to do anything about it. He had warned his young son many times over, to call, and let someone help him down the stairs. But, after all, Adam was nearly three years old now, and part of being at the end of his "terrible two's" was to do some of the things that both his parents told him... not to do.

Three-year olds, like to explore and expand their surroundings in their own time. The fear of falling down the stairs was overridden by his desire to go down and listen to this strange music with his dad. He knew to hold on to the rail, and to be careful walking down the steep stair case. He made it to the last two steps before he stumbled, landing face down on the carpeted floor. His father heard him coming, but didn't make a move to help him. His son had won his battle for more freedom, and paid a small price for it.

Adam was drawn to the room because of the many sounds and the pictures on the walls, and the stacks of records his father had neatly placed in cabinets. He didn't dare touch the records, because his father handled them with so much care. And his dad told him over and over; No! So he knew not to touch them. At least this much had sunk in. But the stairs were another matter.

"Dad'um" seemed to play the same music all the time, and Adam had begun to recognize them by their sounds. He watched his father hum along and pat his foot, as the music came alive, through the large wooden boxes he called speakers. He began to hum and pat his foot too, last year. Just like his father.

Jack would speak words and point to the spinning records for Adam, when he first began to show an interest in the sounds last summer. Adam felt good now, because his dad included him in the music. Jack was putting a name to a sound, so that before long, his son could identify most of the sounds on the record.

Adam began to ask questions about the music he listened to. He would ask what the music was called, and did his father know the people who made it. His father had many pictures on his walls in his music room. He asked about the pictures on the walls. He asked who were the people on the covers of the many albums.

One evening when Adam was asking too many questions his father said; "I'm gonna take you to visit your grandfather, and let him explain to you the music that I play. I'll let him teach you, just as he taught me, when I was a boy about your age." His father pointed to a picture on the wall and said; "Here is your grandfather" He pointed to old sepia colored picture, that had faded with the passing of time. In the picture he saw his grandfather with an instrument in his hands. "Your grandfather was a Jazz musician, many years ago. A jazz musician plays jazz and that's the music you hear me play every day, Jazz. It's a special music.

The young boy smiled and asked another question; "When? Dad'um, when can we go?" His father touched the boy's head and said; on the weekend son, on the weekend"

Dad'um was Adam Michaels' name for his father. That was the first word he ever spoke, he was told, and that's been his fathers' name ever since.

Adam went to bed early that Friday evening, because he knew that he was going to see his grandfather the next morning. He was awake, when his mother came in his room, to get him ready for the trip. He took his bath without the usual playing around, and ate all his breakfast in a hurry. He was going to see his grandfather, a man he couldn't remember and he was excited, like he had never been before. On the way, his dad played jazz in his car and Adam liked this. He jumped up and down to the music, as they rode along. He was happy.

Hand in hand they walked to the huge building. It had lots of windows. There were many people walking in the halls, strange looking people. Some of them looked old, and lost and unsmiling. Adam had never seen these kinds of people before. Some were dressed in uniforms; some were old, old people sitting in the halls, and in wheelchairs. Some were talking to others. Some of them were talking to themselves.

His father stopped and turned into a room that had four beds in it. “Dad”, his father spoke to an old man, who sat in the rocking chair looking out towards the window. At the sound of Adam’s father’s voice, the old man turned around in his wheel chair very slowly. A smile lit up his face, as he raised his hand. The old man had recognized his son’s voice. Adam saw a wrinkled face that had the lines of time on it.

The old man reached out to touch the young boy’s hand, which Adams’ father guided. The old man “saw” with his hands. His eyes had long since lost their life. “Dad, I’ve brought Adam Michael to see you, he wants to know about Jazz”. He has been asking me about it, and listening with me for a long time now, and it’s time he learns more about it.”