

Angel Voices:

A Reflection of
Whole Note Music Therapy's
Annual Winter Recital

by:

Adina Haas

Proud Aunt to one of our "Whole Note" performers!

Between running here and there in preparation for Christmas dinner, cooking and baking, caring for children, going to visit family and outings with friends, I kept a promise to attend my niece's piano recital. I had no idea what I was going to experience that afternoon. I was going to be hearing and seeing a world of special love, encouragement, and pride in achievement.

The stage was set. Deep red velvet curtains hung as a rich backdrop to the large black grand piano. A small Christmas tree, showing signs of hasty, yet festive decorating, stood off to the right side, its treetop star shyly leaning left. Two chairs sat in front of the tree, just revealing a large pine cone and two wrapped gifts on the floor.

The performers, one by one, joined their teacher to play or sing a holiday tune or two or three. Their teacher, I will call her, a miracle-worker, was calm and smiling, encouraging with her eyes, with her voice, with her instrument, piano or guitar, making her student shine as the performer he or she can be.

Tears welled up in my eyes, as a mother walked her son up the stage steps, helped him sit in one of the chairs, facing his kind teacher, guitar in her hands. They sang, fittingly, "Do You Hear What I Hear?" his voice echoing hers, in pitch, in expression, in rhythm. It was beautiful, it was angelic!! His face shone with joy, his raised in demonstration of the lyrics and the melody. It made me think of heaven, when he would have no physical handicaps, though I couldn't think of any improvement to the wonder of his voice!

Can you imagine, the thrill of hearing your autistic child say a word, in song, as the teacher leaves out a word, here and there? Twin boys went on stage, separately, and strummed the strings of their teacher's guitar, as she formed the chords and sang "Jingle Bells". They uttered words, and made expressions, joining in the making of music.

I would not have traded my seat with one at Broadway, when the dear elderly man went up to perform. He stood, by the grand piano, waiting for his cue to begin. His teacher gently played and sang, "Silver and Gold". As he joined her, his voice blending with hers, in a lilting duet, I again, had tears run down my cheeks. He was singing about silver and gold, in his silver years. He was bringing joy, innocent pleasure to his listeners. I was lost in the performance. I believe he felt the meaning of the words and shared the emotions with the audience.

I think of my rush to complete chores, to drive to the recital, and walk in a bit late. I see that it was worth my while to join this very special group of students and parents, and their teacher, in that recital hall that afternoon. I observed so much patience, encouragement, admiration, acceptance, appreciation, and love. What an honour to be able to applaud the melody and harmony of their lives!

