**Up Above My Head**

**INTRODUCTION**

[SONG: Up Above My Head by Sister Rosetta Tharpe]

**Speaker 1**: Welcome everyone to our celebration of music. You were just listening to Sister Rosetta Tharpe.

**Speaker 2**: She was an American singer, songwriter, guitarist and recording artist. Tharpe attained popularity in the 1930s and 1940s with her gospel recordings that were a unique mixture of spiritual lyrics and rhythmic/early rock accompaniment.

**Speaker 3**: She became gospel music's first crossover artist and its first great recording star, referred to later as "the original soul sister" and "the godmother of rock and roll”.

**Speaker 4**: Did you ever wonder what an artist like Rosetta Tharpe was thinking or doing when she was a child?

**Speaker 1**: Well, Rosetta’s mom and dad were musicians in Cotton Plant, Arkansas. She was born in 1915. Her parents encouraged Little Rosetta Nubin to start playing a guitar when she was four years old.

**Speaker 2**: By the age of six she was traveling with her mom all over the country singing her unique brand of gospel music.

**Speaker 3**: Well after we heard about talented Little Rosetta that got us to thinking about some other artists as children.

**Speaker 4**: I wish we knew what they were thinking when they were little kids. Did they know that they would grow up to be great musicians?

**Speaker 1:** I wish we knew about the dreams right above their heads.

[Then time machine and the six musicians come out and take their places.]

[Play the rest of Up Above My Head]

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**SCENE 1**

**Speaker 2**: What was that?

**Speaker 1**: I think we may have gone back in time.

**Speaker 2**: Who are all of these little kids?

**All**: Who are you calling little?

**Speaker 1**: Whoa! Take it easy!

**Speaker 2**: We just want to know who you are.

**Ella**: Your wish has been granted. You wanted to know what musicians were thinking when they were children.

**Count**: If you will have a seat over there, we tell you about ourselves as children, and you try to guess who we grew up to be.

**Speaker 1**: Okay this sounds like fun.

**Speaker 2:** Who is going first?

**Ella:** I will. Hi! My name is Ella. I was born on April 25, 1917. My dad’s name was William and my mama’s name was Temperance. They called her "Tempie”. My childhood started off pretty badly. My mom and dad didn’t get along so they separated shortly after my birth. Now I am six years old and have a new baby sister named Frances. I’m not too happy about that. We don’t have much money so I have to work as a messenger for my family “running numbers.” All I want to do is to perform…to sing and dance.

**Speaker 1:** I know. I know. You grew up to be Ella Fitzgerald.

**Ella**: You are correct.

[Ella Fitzgerald movie.]

[Everyone EXITS as the singers enter to sing A TISKET, A TASKET.]

[As the singers exit, the Speakers and the Count enter.]

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**SCENE 2**

**Speaker 3**: And who are you?

**Count**: Have a seat and I will tell you. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is William James and I was born August 21, 1904. My parents are hard workers. My father, Harvey Lee, is a coachman and a groundskeeper, and my mother, Lillian, is a laundress.  I hate to see my parents working so hard. One day I vow to help them get ahead. We have a piano in our house, and Mama pays 25¢ a lesson for my piano lessons.  I have an incredible ear, and I can repeat any tune I hear. I promise that one day my parents won’t have to work. I will use my music to help my family.

**Speaker 4**: Ummm….Duke Ellington?

**Count**: No way. I am Count Basie.

[Count Base movie.]

**Speaker 3**: Here are some cool cats moving to one of Count Basie’s most famous songs, “One O’Clock Jump”.

[Tumbling: **One O’Clock Jump**]

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**SCENE 3**

[Speakers enter with Aretha Franklin.]

**Speaker 2**: That was fun.

**Speaker 1**: I found this little girl waiting out back.

**Aretha:** Okay, we asked you before “who are you calling little”?

**Speaker 2:** Sorry! Do you have something to tell us?

**Aretha**: I sure do. Have a seat. Hey, y’all! I am Aretha Louise. I was born in Memphis, Tennessee on March 25, 1942. I was born to Barbra, a homemaker, and Clarence Franklin, a Baptist minister. Everyone called him C. L. By the time I was five, my dad moved me, my mom and by three siblings to Detroit where he became the minister of New Bethel Church. I started singing in my daddy’s church at an early age. I learned how to play piano by ear. My dad is so prominent, our house is full of celebrities like Mahalia Jackson, Sam Cooke, and another popular minister named Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He’s a very kind man.

**Speaker 1**: Oh that’s easy. You grow up to be Aretha Franklin.

**Aretha**: You bet I do and you better show me some…RESPECT!

[Aretha movie.]

[SONG: RESPECT]

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**SCENE 4**

[Speakers enter with Smokey.]

**Smokey**: Here I am. I am William Jr. I was born on February 19, 1940. I live in a very poor section of Detroit in the North End. My older sister and her husband take care of me because my mom passed away a few years ago. I am so sad about that. I love listening to music. My favorite music is called doo-wop. Have you heard of Nolan Strong & the Diablos or Billy Ward and the Dominos?

[SONG: “If I, Oh I”]

That’s doo-wop. They are so cool. My Uncle Claude thinks I’m cool too. He calls me “Smokey Joe.”

**Speaker 4:** Are you ummm… ]Michael Jackson!

**Smokey:** Really? I gave you a big hint! My uncle called me Smokey Joe.

**Speaker 3**: That doesn’t ring a bell.

**Smokey**: Duh! I am Smokey Robinson.

[Smokey Robinson movie.]

[SONG: Oo-oo, Baby, Baby]

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**SCENE 5**

[Speakers enter with Janet and DLow]

**Speaker 2**: We get two for the price of one?

**Janet**: Yep!

**Speaker 1:** Who’s going first?

**Janet**: That would be me. Hello, everybody! My name is Janet Damita Jo. I was born in Gary, Indiana in 1966. I have nine siblings and I am the baby of the family. My brother Michael, calls me “Dunk” because I was a chubby baby. Dunk is short for Donkey. I don’t like that name. Well, I don’t get to see my brothers much. You see they are in Los Angeles, California with our Dad. I am at home with my mom and my sisters. The only time I get to see the boys is when they appear on TV. I can do all the stuff they do. I can sing and dance better than all of them!

**DLow**: My turn. I like to dance too. A lot! What’s up, people? My name is Darrion. I am from the west side of Chicago. I was born on August 15, 1996. I live with my five siblings and my mom. For months at a time my mom goes away. I want to make it one day, so I can help her. I do my best to stay out of trouble, so I get good grades in school. I spend my time hanging with my friends. Even though we are young, we love to rap and we really love to dance.

**Speaker 2**: (Speaking to Janet, raising her hand) I know you are Janet Jackson!

**Speaker 1**: And I believe you are DLow!

**DLow & Janet**: You are both right.

[Janet & DLow movies.]

**Janet**: Check this out!

[SONG/DANCE: Rhythm Nation]

**DLow**:That was cool. Watch this.

[SONG/DANCE: DLow Shuffle.]

[All participants re-enter,]

**Speaker 3**: Well this has really been fun!

**Speaker 4:** Thank you, kids for sharing your stories with us!

**All kids**: You’re welcome.

**Ella**: Well we have to go back to the past.

**Speaker 1:** We are off to the future! Bye!

**All kids**: Bye! (They exit.)

**Speaker 2**: Okay everyone! We have to go!

**Speaker 3**: We hope you enjoyed our exploration of music and dance. Keep your ears open for all kind of music: gospel, pop, rock and roll, rap…well all of it.

**Speaker 4**: To find your talent just reach right…

**ALL**: Above your head!

[SONG: Up Above Your Head]