

GEORGE GERSHWIN

By Carole L. Cooney

George Gershwin was a famous American pianist and composer. He was born in Brooklyn, New York. He was a tough little boy who could out-run any of his buddies. He didn't like school very much and had no interest in music until one day as he was playing "hooky," he heard the most wonderful sounds coming from the school auditorium. It was classical violin music and MUSIC changed his life forever.

Setting: Elementary School, inside and outside; Mrs. Rosen's house

Characters:

Narrator

Mrs. McDair, a teacher

George

Joey, a friend

Mrs. Rosen, mother

Max Rosen

Narrator: It was a typical end of the school day except for one thing. Today, the students were going to a concert given by one of their classmates, Max Rosen.

Mrs. McDair: All right, class. It's time for the assembly. Line up in ORDER, please.

George: (Looking out the classroom window) Oh! Golly! It's raining "cats and dogs!" But when you gotta go, ya gotta go!

Narrator: As the students got in line, George moved to the back of the room.

George: Okay, guys. Let me in at the end of the line.

Joey: George, you know you're supposed to be in the front of the line.

George: Come on...just this one.

Narrator: The whole class giggled, and then quieted as Mrs. McDair turned and glared. As the class passed the front school door, George sneaked out into the rain. Once inside the auditorium, the class sat.

Mrs. McDair: Students, today we have a surprise. Your classmate, the young musical genius, Max Rosen, will play Antonin Dvorak's beautiful music called "Humoresque" on his violin.

Narrator: Meanwhile, George waited for the rain to stop – but it didn't. So, he began to slink home. After only a few steps, he stopped. He heard exciting violin music coming from the auditorium. He stood still as if hypnotized. He was startled by the loud applause. Then the school bell rang and the students exited school.

George: Hey! Joey!

Joey: Hey, Cheesecake. You are going to get in trouble when your Ma sees you ringin' wet.

George: Forget about that! Joey, who was making that music?

Joey: You know... Max Rosen – you know—the musical geee-nius.

George: Do you know where he lives?

Joey: Yeah! Down on 23rd Street. Why?

George: Oh, I just gotta meet him.

Joey: Why?

George: I'll tell you later. I gotta go!

Narrator: George walked and walked many blocks to Max's house. Finally, he knocked on the Rosen's front door. Mrs. Rosen answered.

Mrs. Rosen: Oh! (surprised to see the rain-soaked George) May I help you?

George: Are you Mrs. Rosen? I've just gotta see Max!

Mrs. Rosen: I'm sorry but Max isn't home right now. Why don't you come by tomorrow after school. I'll tell him you came by. What is your name?

George: George...George Gershwin

Narrator: The next day George and Max walked to the Rosen house after school.

George: Max, I sure liked that music you played yesterday.

Max: Thanks, George, but it was nothing. Pretty easy, I'd say.

George: Could you maybe show me your stuff? I mean, about music...I mean...how could I get started?

Max: Sure, George. I could show you a thing or two – but George, you're just a beginner. I've been at this for a long time. Eight years to be exact. Are your sure you want to work hard and practice?

George: Yes! Max. More than anything else in the world.

Max: Well, okay. But remember, I already know I'm going to make it big in the world of music. Who knows what you will become?

Narrator: Yes, Max Rosen did become a world famous violinist but little did he realize that George Gershwin would become a world famous American musician and composer.