



A CONCERT IN THE SAND

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Walking along the beach in Tel Aviv, what does this grandmother and her grandson come across? A world-class orchestra performance, that's what. Based on the true story of the birth of the Israeli Philharmonic, this story is also a metaphor for the grit and vision that brought the State of Israel into being.

JEWISH CONCEPTS

At the time the musicians in this story played their first concert, they were called the Palestine Symphony Orchestra. The land where Uri and his family lived was governed by the British from 1920-1948, and was called "Mandatory" Palestine because it was ruled by the British Mandate. When Israel declared independence in May of 1948, the orchestra changed its name from "Palestine" to "Israel" to show its pride in the new Jewish state.

The future Israel Philharmonic Orchestra was established by Bronislaw Huberman ("Famous Mr. Huberman") as an effort to save Jewish musicians from persecution taking place in Europe. A world-renowned violinist, Huberman wrote that he had searched deep in his soul and discovered that "the true artist does not create art as an edit in itself. He creates art for human beings. Humanity is the goal."

Orchestra of Exiles, a 2012 documentary by Josh Aronson, tells many dramatic tales of this fascinating musical rescue mission. For example, in 1936, Mr. Huberman didn't have enough money to start the orchestra, and he asked an amateur violinist for help. The violin player he asked was the Nobel Prize-winning physicist, Albert Einstein. Together, they organized a benefit dinner that raised enough money to put on the first performance—which was happily attended in this story by Uri and his proud grandma!

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Uri and his grandmother do not speak the same language, but they are able to understand each other very well. Parents can use this story to emphasize the value of Uri's patient and careful observation. Consider asking your children to share their insights and opinions about such details as:

- Are Uri and his grandmother actually pretending to be spies?
- Does Uri ever figure out who the men with the funny-shaped cases are?
Why do Uri and his grandmother enjoy spending time together?
- Can Uri see anything important when he is hanging on the monkey bars?
- Who is the man in the dark coat?

You can help your child develop strong observational skills. Point out that we can learn a lot of important things without asking direct questions, and encourage children to learn by watching and thinking about others. You might go to a park or a café with your family. Practice looking and listening extra carefully, and then talk about what everyone saw. You might even tell some made-up stories about the people you observed!