

Living A Dream

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by Shelby C. Berry

Since picking up an instrument at age four, Little Jerry Ankney has played on stage at The Station Inn in Nashville, Tennessee more than ten times, which included playing with Danny Paisley, the 2020 International Bluegrass Music Association's Male Vocalist of the Year.

"Playing on stage with Danny Paisley was one of my earliest and best memories since I started playing music," said Little Jerry.

But Little Jerry caught his first bluegrass itch from his dad, the "big" Jerry in the family. "I decided to start playing music because my dad was playing. He let me play some notes with him, and I started to learn," said Little Jerry. "When I first started playing music, I started on the bass, and now I play the guitar and the mandolin. My favorite is the guitar."

He also credits Jimmy Martin and the Stanley Brothers for his sound and the way he plays. "I love Jimmy Martin because I really like the G run he does at the end of every song he plays," said Little Jerry, "I also like Ralph Stanley because of his high voice. My sound and style are traditional bluegrass, so I play a lot of Jimmy Martin and the Stanley Brothers old stuff."



Little Jerry, now age 8, has played music, specifically Jimmy Martin and Stanley Brothers tunes, for half of his life. His first time playing the upright bass was at a picking party three years earlier and has since progressed to multiple instruments.

“My favorite part of playing bluegrass is singing and playing the guitar. I love to jam and play festivals. I like to play with my family. My dad and my uncle play too,” said Little Jerry.

Jerry grew into his music and the guitar, specifically his dad’s Blueridge guitar and his grandfather’s Martin, and hopes one day to receive an endorsement from one of these brands.

In the meantime, Little Jerry enjoys being a member of Tomorrow’s Bluegrass Stars and participated in this year’s virtual bluegrass festival, playing 14 songs for those tuning

in.

“My dad told me about Tomorrow’s Bluegrass Stars, and I thought it was cool!” said Little Jerry.



“With TBS, I’ve gotten to hang out with some of the kids at Remington Ryde Bluegrass Festival. I got to meet them and jam with them. I also got to do the kids’ show. The TBS leaders have really helped me with the online bluegrass festival and by being encouraging and supportive to me after each time I sing.”

A few of Little Jerry’s musician friends have joined him in the TBS family. “My dream is to become the Vice President of Tomorrow’s Bluegrass Stars like my dad. I want to keep playing music too. It’s fun! And I plan on recording my own CD one day.”

