

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

Luther Vandross, *Dance with my Father*, J Records, New York 2003

Reviewed by Mupa M'Mbetsa

Dance with my father is a tribute to Luther Vandross Sr, who suffered a stroke and eventually died two years later. Luther Vandross remembers his childhood and how his father would dance with both him and his mom. In the song, he sings:

*Back when I was a child
Before life removed all the innocence
My father would lift me high
And dance with my mother and me
Then spin me round till I fell asleep
Then up the stairs he would carry me
And I knew for sure I was loved.*

The lyrics to this song are impactful because they not only show how the relationship of parents in how they treat each other reflects on a child, and how they love others but goes ahead to prove that the small things in life, such as dancing as a couple at home or being carried to bed by a parent, really matter.

While Luther Vandross is singing about his personal experience as a child, his song is so powerful because he is really singing it for all of us. He is reminding us what it is like to be loved unconditionally.

Unfortunately, all good things come to an end, usually before we're ready for them to draw to a close. Numbness comes to define our lives and we go out of our way to make sure we never feel a loss like that again.

As sang in the song:

*If I could steal one final glance, one final step
One final dance with him
I'd play a song that would never ever end
Cause I'd love, love, love to dance with my father again
Sometimes I'd listen outside her door
And I'd hear how my mother cried for him
I pray for her even more than me
I pray for her even more than me
I know I'm praying for much too much
But could you send back the only man she loved?
I know you don't do it usually
But dear Lord she's dying to dance with my father again
Every night I fall asleep and this is all I ever dream...*

The main take-away from this song is that children remember a lot of what they see and hear and this has a great impact in their future lives especially when it comes to familial relations.

Luther Vandross is an excellent song-writer and by him using his personal experience to relate to the rest of the world is very heartfelt.