



## MUSIC FOR THE SOUL

**RISHAB | Dreamt of meeting his inspiration and icon, A.R. Rahman.**

Oscar winning composer, A.R. Rahman, is an idol for most music lovers and meeting him is beyond an ardent fan's imagination. Our wish child, Rishab, a resident of Chennai, dreamt of such a meeting and Make-A-Wish India made it come true.

Rishab, a 17-year-old boy studying in the 11<sup>th</sup> standard, was being treated at Apollo Speciality Hospital in Chennai for a life-threatening medical condition. His family consists of his father who owns a textile shop, his mother and two elder sisters with whom he shares a close bond. One

sister is studying medicine and the other is finishing her biotechnology degree. The youngest of the lot, Rishab is also the naughtiest.

Rishab has always had a passion for music which translated into composing melodies, singing and playing the keyboard. Rishab's greatest inspiration was none other than A.R. Rahman and he hoped to learn under the great maestro's tutelage.

Our Chennai division team led by Francis, first met Rishab at Apollo Hospital where he was being treated. After an engaging

conversation, Francis asked Rishab about his most fervent wish. Without any hesitation he replied, "To meet my idol, A.R. Rahman!" Pleased with Rishab's devotion, Make-A-Wish India's Chennai division set out to make this unique wish come true.

After substantial efforts and a long wait, they got an appointment with the great musician. Mani Ratnam, the renowned film director, helped considerably in the endeavour. Rishab's wish was now to turn into reality.

When Rishab heard that his wish was about to be fulfilled, he couldn't believe it. The young boy was so astounded at the fact that he was going to meet his icon on his birthday that he kept reaffirming the truth of what he had heard. He was besieged by doubts regarding what to wear, what questions to ask, etc. His inquisitiveness imbued him with life and energy.

On the day of the meeting, Rishab's excitement was rewarded by Rahman who greeted him with a serene smile. The maestro discussed his aspirations and let the enthusiastic boy play music on his personal piano. He also signed autographs and posed for pictures with Rishab, his parents and the Make-A-Wish India team.

Rishab's curiosity soon got the better of him and questions flew from his mouth. Rahman answered all the queries patiently and confessed that he had loved music since he was Rishab's age. When asked if he could train under him,

Rahman gave him his music school's address where Rishab could enrol. The celebrated musician also regaled everyone with a song and gave Rishab some handy tips on singing. He also showcased the generosity of his spirit when he gifted Rishab with a Samsung Galaxy S3 smartphone uploaded with some exclusive previews of his unreleased videos.

When Rishab related his experience, he told us that he didn't have to think twice before he decided upon his wish in spite of having no hopes of it coming true. He said he was speechless after meeting Rahman, and in spite of preparing questions, he was left awestruck. Rishab and his family expressed their gratitude towards the Make-A-Wish India team and couldn't stop thanking us for making his dream come true.

Dr. Revathi Raj, Rishab's doctor, had a few words to say after his wish was fulfilled. "Rishab has had a long journey with his disease. His battle to overcome it was met with great courage and when the same

illness struck again, he was completely devastated. His special meeting with A.R. Rahman has transformed him and has given him fresh enthusiasm to face life. Now, he shows up for his treatments with increased courage and hope. Thanks Make-A-Wish India!"

On the 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary of Make-A-Wish India's Chennai Division, Rishab played the keyboard and also shared his experience with the audience. He sang his favourite A.R. Rahman songs which left the crowd mesmerised. He evocatively portrayed his gratitude to Make-A-Wish India for making the 6<sup>th</sup> of October an unforgettable day. He also shared his photos and autographs of A.R. Rahman with the crowd.

Rishab is now in 12<sup>th</sup> standard and can't wait to complete his education and join Rahman's music school. The new Rishab is confident and vivacious. The image of a jubilant Rishab, atop the stage recollecting his most ardent wish that was fulfilled six months before, have shown us the lasting power of a simple dream come true.



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