

[PDF] The Soloist: A Lost Dream, An Unlikely Friendship, And The Redemptive Power Of Music

Steve Lopez - pdf download free book

Books Details:

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Author: Steve Lopez

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Starred Review. Scurrying back to his office one day, Lopez, a columnist for the *L.A. Times*, is stopped short by the ethereal strains of a violin. Searching for the sound, he spots a homeless man coaxing those beautiful sounds from a battered two-string violin. When the man finishes, Lopez compliments him briefly and rushes off to write about his newfound subject, Nathaniel Ayers, the homeless violinist. Over the next few days, Lopez discovers that Nathaniel was once a promising classical bass student at Juilliard, but that various pressures—including being one of a few African-American students and mounting schizophrenia—caused him to drop out. Enlisting

the help of doctors, mental health professionals and professional musicians, Lopez attempts to help Nathaniel move off Skid Row, regain his dignity, develop his musical talent and free himself of the demons induced by the schizophrenia (at one point, Lopez arranges to have Ayers take cello lessons with a cellist from the L.A. Symphony). Throughout, Lopez endures disappointments and setbacks with Nathaniel's case, questions his own motives for helping his friend and acknowledges that Nathaniel has taught him about courage and humanity. With self-effacing humor, fast-paced yet elegant prose and unsparing honesty, Lopez tells an inspiring story of heartbreak and hope. (*Apr.*) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From *Starred Review* On the streets of the inner city, Los Angeles Times columnist and novelist Lopez (*In the Clear*, 2003) stumbled upon the story that changed his life. Nathaniel Ayers, a homeless African American man, was standing on a corner coaxing memorable music from a two-stringed violin. Turns out, 30 years earlier, Ayers had been at Juilliard studying classical bass when he experienced the first in a series of schizophrenic episodes that turned his musical dreams into a nightmare. Now, worlds away from the concert halls he imagined gracing, Ayers spends his days on Los Angeles' Skid Row, fighting off rats and drug-frenzied fellow homeless—and serenading passersby. The spot where Ayers has chosen to play is no accident; it's near the city's statue of Beethoven and just down the hill from Walt Disney Concert Hall. Lopez quickly becomes an integral part of Ayers' life, bringing him new instruments and even facilitating arrangements at a homeless shelter. But as he navigates the complex world of mental illness, Lopez discovers that good intentions (and good connections) are often powerless in the face of schizophrenia, a potent, prickly, unpredictable disease. Award-winning actors Jamie Foxx and Robert Downey Jr. are set to star in a movie version of this compelling, emotionally charged tale of raw talent and renewed hope. --Allison Block

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