

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	7 th Grade E/LA Teachers: Bachman, Klein, Hamilton, Greenwell	School:	OLMS
Book Title:	The Soloist	Genre:	Nonfiction
Author:	Steve Lopez	Pages:	288
Publisher:	Transworld Digital	Copyright:	2008

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and summary citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

When Steve Lopez sees Nathaniel Ayers playing his heart out on a two-string violin on Los Angeles's skid row, he finds it impossible to walk away. More than thirty years ago, Ayers was a promising student at Julliard - ambitious, charming and hugely talented - until he gradually lost his ability to function, overcome by schizophrenia. When Lopez finds him, Ayers is homeless and paranoid, but glimmers of his earlier brilliance are still there. Over time, the two men form a bond, and Lopez imagines that he might be able to change Ayer's life. For each triumph, there is a crashing disappointment, yet neither man gives up. Their friendship will changes both of their lives in ways that neither could predict. Poignant and ultimately hopeful, *The Soloist* is a beautifully told story of devotion in the face of seemingly unbeatable challenges, and the inspiring power of music.

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s): (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.10

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.3

Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

Include two professional reviews of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

Kirkus Review:

Los Angeles Times columnist Lopez (In The Clear, 2001, etc.) brings empathy, intelligence and humor to his poignant portrait of a homeless man who once studied at Juilliard.

The author first encountered Nathaniel Ayers, a longtime resident of Los Angeles's Skid Row, while en route to work. A Cleveland native who was among a handful of blacks enrolled in Juilliard in the early 1970s, Ayers developed schizophrenia while at the school. After unsuccessful treatment in psychiatric facilities, he landed on the streets of L.A. where, drawn by a statue of Beethoven in a local park, he began to play classical music on a battered violin. Lopez wrote a series of newspaper articles about Ayers that highlighted the plight of the homeless and brought the mentally unstable man donations of numerous violins, a cello and a string bass. Bedraggled and often spewing invectives, Ayers stored the instruments in a shopping cart that he wheeled through town. At night, he fended off sewer rats that scurried across the litter-strewn sidewalk on which he'd slept for years. Outraged, Lopez helped Ayers secure housing in a facility for the homeless and arranged for him to attend concerts at Disney Hall. By the book's end, Ayers has met cellist Yo-Yo Ma, a former classmate at Juilliard. But this is not a feel-good memoir. Determined to understand the evolution of Ayers's illness, Lopez probes his family history, revisits his painful past at Juilliard and seeks advice from mental-health professionals. He also details the myriad complications of forging a bond with a gifted musician whose schizophrenia continues to rage. Energetic prose delivers powerful insights on homelessness and mental illness.

Review #2

Publisher's Weekly:

Salzman's (Iron and Silk) new novel is a quirky and enjoyable tale of finding Nirvana in the legal system. Renne Sundheimer is a 34-year-old failure. As a cello prodigy he toured Europe and was lavished with ardent praise. But something went horribly wrong with Renne's hearing, distorting every note he played. Driven from the stage by his handicap, Renne fell to teaching cello at UCLA. Sixteen years later, two events lift him out of his rut: he accepts a nine-year-old Korean prodigy as his student, and is selected for jury duty. The case he is assigned to is the murder of a Buddhist Zen master by a troubled acolyte. At a week-long retreat, the young monk had been assigned a koan (a spiritual riddle) that he ``solved" by murdering his teacher. Both the acolyte's trial and his new pupil recall aspects of Renne's own unfinished relationship with his childhood music teacher and with his own incomplete maturation. Just as you begin to suspect that the novel will end inconclusively, Salzman winds the story down subtly. Looking back on the trial and his life, Renne manages to solve the riddle that the young monk had so brutally misconstrued.

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

<u>Title:</u> Mountains Beyond Mountains	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u> Three Cups of Tea	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u> Long Walk to Water	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>

Document any potentially controversial content:

Intermittent strong language, features a character with mental illness (schizophrenia)

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading level of this title (if applicable): Grades 7-12

Date Submitted to Department Chair: 12/14/16

Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults