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One Book, One Community announces '09 book selection

EAST LANSING - The City of East Lansing and Michigan State University announce the 2009 One Book, One Community (OBOC) selection, "The Soloist," by author Steve Lopez.

The New York Times and Los Angeles Times best seller and soon-to-be-released major motion picture, starring Robert Downey Jr. and Jamie Foxx, tells the true story of the friendship between two gifted men, one a homeless mentally ill musician, and the other, an award-winning journalist and columnist for the Los Angeles Times.

Meet the author as he kicks off the month-long OBOC program on Sunday, Aug. 30 at the East Lansing High School auditorium.

A series of community and campus events are planned around the themes in "The Soloist," including what happens to a book when it is translated into film.

The annual One Book, One Community program, sponsored by the City of East Lansing and Michigan State University, encourages the city-university community to read the same book and come together to discuss it in a variety of settings.

The book is an assigned reading for all incoming MSU freshmen.

Lopez's curiosity is peaked when he first sees a homeless man, dressed in rags, intently playing a violin on a busy downtown Los Angeles street corner.

Oblivious to the noise and confusion around him, the man plays with the concentration and elegance of a trained musician.

From their first encounter, Lopez is fascinated by Nathaniel Anthony Ayers, a Juilliard trained musician who lives on Skid Row and plays Beethoven on a two-stringed violin in a noisy traffic tunnel.

In fluid prose and with a reporter's persistence, Lopez tells of his determination to understand Ayers' illness, to convince him to come in off the street to safety and to reconnect him to his music.

It's not an easy journey for either man, with bitter disappointments punctuated by hard fought triumphs.

It is a test of wills and friendship as Lopez refuses to lose Ayers to the street, and Ayers struggles to overcome his fears and demons.

Additional Facts

For more info...

For additional information about the OBOC program, please visit www.onebook.msu.edu.
