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ONE
BOOK
ONE
COMMUNITY

The Violin Conspiracy

a novel

***Brendan
Slocumb***

"Such a page-turner . . . a musical bildungsroman cleverly contained within a literary thriller. . . . Slocumb isn't too different from his protagonist: a natural." —*The New York Times Book Review*

December 10, 2023 - February 25, 2024

“The Violin Conspiracy reminds all of us that dreams are worth pursuing, no matter the obstacles in front of us. The struggle to follow your heart is always the same—and this novel inspires us to take the chance, make the leap, and dare to be better. This was a wonderful read.”

—Misty Copeland, Author and principal dancer, American Ballet Theatre

“Finally, classical music gets the complex treatment it deserves. A wide-eyed look at the art form and its discontents.”

—Author Gary Shteyngart

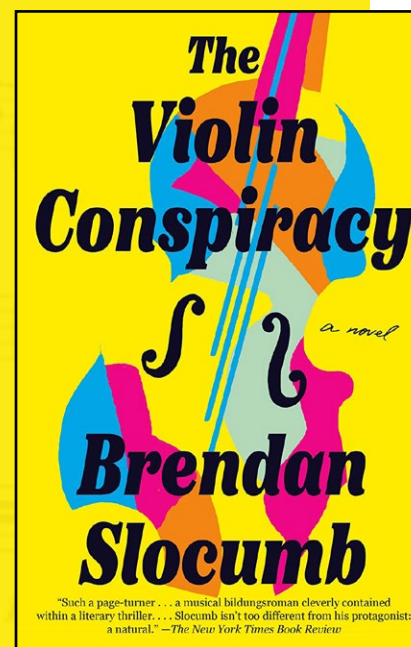


One Book, One Community

Now in its eighth year, One Book, One Community (OBOC) is a partnership among Cook Memorial, Indian Trails and Vernon Area public library districts to encourage dialogue and build community through a shared experience of literature.

Past selections included *The Bohemians* by Jasmin Darznik, *This Is How It Always Is* by Laurie Frankel, *Red at the Bone* by Jacqueline Woodson, *Circe* by Madeline Miller, *The Story Hour* by Thrity Umrigar, *Stolen Beauty* by Laurie Lico Albanese and *Love and Other Consolation Prizes* by Jamie Ford.

The series is the recipient of a 2019 award from the Illinois Library Association for interlibrary resource sharing that makes a lasting impact.



About the Book

Growing up Black in rural North Carolina, “world-class professional violinist” is not an obvious career choice for Ray McMillian. But Ray has a gift and a dream, and nothing will stand in his way. Not his mother, who wants him to stop making such a racket; not the fact that he can’t afford a violin suitable to his talents; not even the racism inherent in the world of classical music.

When he discovers that his beat-up family fiddle is actually a priceless Stradivarius, his dream suddenly seems within reach. But on the eve of the renowned Tchaikovsky Competition — the Olympics of classical music — the violin disappears, a ransom note left in its place. Without it, Ray feels like he’s lost a piece of himself.

As the competition approaches, Ray must not only reclaim his precious violin, but prove to himself and the world that no matter the outcome, there has always been a truly great musician within him.



Photo Credit: David Bickley

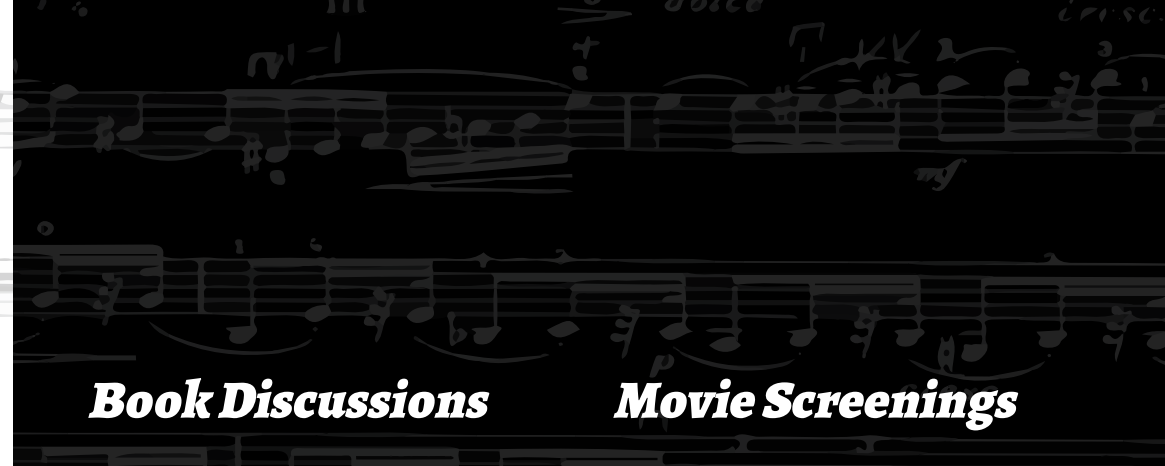
About the Author

Brendan Nicholaus Slocumb was raised in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and holds a degree in music education (with concentrations in violin and viola) from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. For the past two decades, he has been a public and private school music educator for elementary through high school students. He also serves as an educational consultant for the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. His second novel, *Symphony of Secrets*, was published in April 2023 to critical acclaim. He is currently working on a third novel, to be published in early 2025.





SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1-3 PM
Cook Park Library



Book Discussions

Movie Screenings

Join Us

Kick-Off Event

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

Stop by a library kick-off event in celebration of this year's One Book, One Community series and pick up a complimentary copy of *The Violin Conspiracy* while supplies last.

One copy per household. Additional copies will be available for checkout.

Registration is not required.



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1-3 PM
Aspen Drive Library



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 12-2 PM
Indian Trails Public Library



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1-2 PM
Vernon Area Public Library

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, OR

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 10:30-11:30 AM

Indian Trails Public Library

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 7-8 PM

Vernon Area Public Library

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 7-8 PM

Indian Trails Public Library

Judy Levin Book Discussion

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 10-11:30 PM

Vernon Area Public Library • Zoom

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2-3 PM

Vernon Area Public Library • Zoom

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2-3 PM

Cook Park Library • Hybrid

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 7-8 PM

Aspen Drive Library • Hybrid

The Red Violin (1998)

An epic adventure of mystery and obsession unfolds when an appraiser of rare music instruments discovers a one-of-a-kind red violin that changed hands from rich to poor, from 17th-century Italy to modern Montreal. Rated R for some sexuality.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 12, 1-3 PM

Vernon Area Public Library

TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 5:30-8:30 PM

Indian Trails Public Library

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1:30-4 PM

Libertyville Civic Center
135 W. Church St., Libertyville

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1:30 PM

Aspen Drive Library

Registration required at 1book.org or host library.

Events are in-person unless otherwise indicated. Hybrid: In-person and Zoom.



Programs

Racism and Generational Wealth

MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 6:30-8 PM

Indian Trails Public Library • Hybrid

Professor Omari H. Swinton of Howard University presents a lecture about racism's influence on generational wealth and the reverse. In-person or Zoom with a virtual speaker.

Mikhail Pletnev conducts Glazunov and Tchaikovsky with Janine Jansen

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19, 2-3 PM

Indian Trails Public Library

Join us to watch the Medici.tv recording of Mikhail Pletnev and the Verbier Festival Orchestra at the 2017 Verbier Festival with a concert dedicated to Russian composers. Musicians perform Glazunov's "From the Middle Ages" and Tchaikovsky's "Souvenir d'un lieu cher." Janine Jansen joins them for Tchaikovsky's glorious "Violin Concerto in D Major."

Reel Talk Movie Discussion: The Music of Strangers

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19, 3:30-4:30 PM

Vernon Area Public Library • Zoom

Over the past 16 years, an extraordinary group of musicians has come together to celebrate the universal power of music. This international music collective created by acclaimed cellist Yo-Yo Ma, exemplifies music's ability to blur geographical boundaries, blend disparate cultures and inspire hope for both artists and audiences. Blending performance clips, personal interviews and archival footage, this film focuses on the journeys of a small group of Silk Road Ensemble mainstays from across the globe to create an intensely personal chronicle of passion, talent and sacrifice. Prior to the discussion, watch the movie on DVD or Kanopy with your library card.

Blue Viola: A True Story

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 1-2 PM

Vernon Area Public Library

Learn the true story of a priceless viola that disappeared after a Chicago Symphony musician accidentally left it on the Chicago streets, with Matt Boresi, Director of Arts Integration at the Music Institute of Chicago. This story inspired the funny and thought-provoking modern opera, "Blue Viola", written by Mr. Boresi.

Violins, Music, and Lore

MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 7-8:30 PM

Cook Park Library • Hybrid

Luthier Spencer Hamann of Classic Violins presents a program filled with the history of violins including their construction and evolution through the ages. He also brings tools and violins for attendees to see and touch. Q&A to follow.

Instrument Petting Zoo

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 4:30-5:30 PM

Vernon Area Public Library

For families with children grades K-5. Meet instructors from the Music Institute of Chicago for an opportunity to see, hear, touch, and even play a variety of string, wind, and percussion instruments.

The World of Valuable String Instruments

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 7-8 PM

Indian Trails Public Library

Erin Cano of the Music Institute of Chicago presents the world of valuable string instruments and their uniqueness. The world has many odd nuances, especially regarding ownership of valuable instruments made by people like Stradivarius and Guarneri. MIC has ties to local instrument dealers and Chicago is one of the "hubs" of string making in the US. Bein & Fushi, located in downtown Chicago, is one of the world's most famous dealers of valuable string instruments.

Programs are free and open to all. Registration required at 1book.org or host library.

Events are in-person unless otherwise indicated. Hybrid: In-person and Zoom.

Programs

Classical Violin Performance

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2-3 PM

Indian Trails Public Library

Roosevelt University violin graduate student Hyacinth Percell performs a collection of pieces by composers including Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev, Schoenberg and Coleridge-Taylor.

Black Contributions to Classical Music

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 7-8 PM

Aspen Drive Library

LaRob K. Rafael developed a love for singing at an early age through the spirit of Gospel songs and nuance of classical music. A graduate of DePaul University with a degree in Vocal Performance, LaRob has studied with world-renowned teachers, directors, and coaches and has had musical opportunities that include traveling internationally to study language, culture and music. Join this classical vocalist and WFMT weekend host for a discussion of the contributions of Black artists to classical music.

The Art of Listening to Tchaikovsky

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1-2 PM

Vernon Area Public Library

Music educator and violinist Stephanie Ettelson explores the unique characteristics of the Stradivarius violin, and why it is considered the crown jewel of all violins. Then, listen to excerpts from Tchaikovsky's "Violin Concerto in D major" to learn what makes it a masterpiece and audience favorite.

Janine Jansen:

Falling for Stradivari (2021)

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2-4 PM

Indian Trails Public Library

Dutch virtuoso Janine Jansen and Royal Opera director Sir Antonio Pappano embark on a journey to record an album on 12 of the world's greatest Stradivari violins. This film is not rated, but suitable for all ages. There will be an informal, thirty-minute discussion following the movie.



Photo Credit David Bickley

Author Event: Brendan Slocumb

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1-2 PM • In-Person or Zoom

Stevenson High School, West Auditorium

1 Stevenson Dr., Lincolnshire

Brendan Slocumb shares the inspiration behind *The Violin Conspiracy*. To kick off the program, enjoy live string music performed by students from the Libertyville High School orchestra. Copies of Brendan's books will be available for purchase and signing at the event, courtesy of the Book Bin of Northbrook.

Programs are free and open to all. Registration required at 1book.org or host library.

The event is free. Registration is required at 1book.org.

Read More About the Themes in The Violin Conspiracy

Adult Fiction

Stealing the Countess by David Housewright

The Bridgetower Sonata by Emmanuel Dongala

The Ensemble by Aja Gabel

The Rainaldi Quartet by Paul Adam

The Weight by Jeff Boyd

Adult Nonfiction

Declassified: A Low-Key Guide to the High-Strung World of Classical Music
by Arianna Warsaw-Fan Rauch

*Stradivari's Genius: Five Violins, One Cello and Three Centuries
of Enduring Perfection* by Toby Faber

Tchaikovsky: His Life & Music by Jeremy Siepmann

*The Soloist: A Lost Dream, an Unlikely Friendship, and the Redemptive
Power of Music* by Steve Lopez

Films About Classical Music

Amadeus (1984)

*BBC Four: Black Classical Music:
The Forgotten History* (2022)

Bowfire: Live in Concert (2011)

Chevalier (2022)

The Bowmakers (2019)

Films on the Intersections of Music and Adversity

A Late Quartet (2012)

Playing for Time (1980)

Sound of Metal (2019)

The Soloist (2009)

Yellow Rose (2019)

OBOC Program Films

Janine Jansen: Falling for Stradivari (2021)

Red Violin (1998)

The Music of Strangers (2016)



Find Us

Cook Memorial Public Library District

Cook Park Library
413 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Libertyville, IL

Aspen Drive Library
701 Aspen Dr.
Vernon Hills, IL
847.362.2330
cooklib.org

Indian Trails Public Library District

355 Schoenbeck Rd.
Wheeling, IL
847.459.4100
itpld.org

Vernon Area Public Library District

300 Olde Half Day Rd.
Lincolnshire, IL
847.634.3650
vapld.info

About the Libraries

Cook Memorial Public Library District operates two full-service locations that serve 61,000 residents in and around Libertyville, Vernon Hills, and Mundelein, Illinois.

Indian Trails Public Library District operates two locations that serve 65,500 residents in Wheeling, Buffalo Grove, Prospect Heights and Arlington Heights, Illinois.

Vernon Area Public Library directly serves 44,000 residents and businesses in Lincolnshire, Long Grove, Buffalo Grove and Vernon Hills, Illinois.



Book Giveaway Sponsors

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Purchase a Book

Local Independent Book Store
Books can be purchased at:

The Book Bin

1151 Church Street
Northbrook, IL
847.498.4999
bookbinnorthbrook.indielite.org

Tell Us

Share your feedback and comments about your One Book, One Community experience by completing an online survey at 1book.org/survey



The background of the entire page is a solid yellow color. Overlaid on this background is a faint, repeating pattern of musical notation. The notation includes various notes (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes), rests, and musical symbols such as 'cresc.', 'dim.', 'p', 'f', 'dolce', and 'espr.'. The notation is arranged in horizontal staves, creating a sense of musical flow across the page.

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