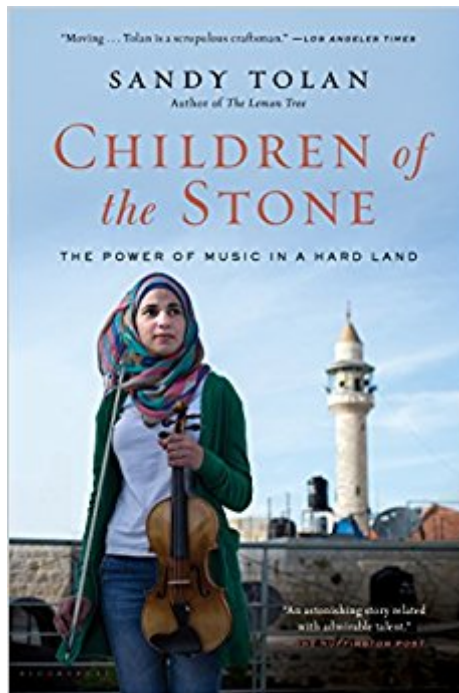




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Children Of The Stone: The Power Of Music In A Hard Land



Synopsis

It is an unlikely story. Ramzi Hussein Aburedwan, a child from a Palestinian refugee camp, confronts an occupying army, gets an education, masters an instrument, dreams of something much bigger than himself, and then, through his charisma and persistence, inspires others to work with him to make that dream real. The dream: a school to transform the lives of thousands of children--as Ramzi's life was transformed--through music. Musicians from all over the world came to help. A violist left the London Symphony Orchestra, in part to work with Ramzi at his new school. Daniel Barenboim, the eminent Israeli conductor, invited Ramzi to join his West Eastern Divan Orchestra, which he founded with the late Palestinian intellectual, Edward Said. Since then the two have played together frequently. *Children of the Stone* chronicles Ramzi's journey--from stone thrower to music student to school founder--and shows how through his love of music he created something lasting and beautiful in a land torn by violence and war. This is a story about the power of music, but also about freedom and conflict, determination and vision. It's a vivid portrait of life amid checkpoints and military occupation, a growing movement of nonviolent resistance, the prospects of musical collaboration across the Israeli-Palestinian divide, and the potential of music to help children everywhere see new possibilities for their lives.

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Customer Reviews

“An astonishing story related with admirable talent. Tolan offers a skillful mix of reportage with heart bursting inspiration; the kind of mix that informs while awakening compassion and hope . .

. In this way, *Children of the Stone* is a book to be studied as well as enjoyed. It should be savored, shared and argued about. Perfect material for a reading group. [Huffington Post](#) – “Eye-opening . . . Tolan’s exhaustive research and journalistic attention to detail shine through every page of this sweeping chronicle. [Publishers Weekly](#) – “[Tolan] portrays the multigenerational Israeli-Palestinian conflict by focusing on the life and musical abilities of one youngster, Ramzi Hussein Aburedwan, and his family and friends . . . This is an engrossing and powerful story, moving skillfully amid the failure of the never-ending battles and ‘peace’ talks between Israel and Palestine and the determination of one brave young man to change his world. [starred review, Booklist](#) – “A resolute, heart-rending story of real change and possibility in the Palestinian-Israeli impasse. [Kirkus Reviews](#)” Tolan has made his reputation writing in-depth, reconstructive journalism about the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Here he looks at a moderately successful effort by Israeli Danial Barenboim and the late Palestinian scholar Edward Said to create an orchestra comprising Israeli and Palestinian musicians. . . It could stand as a metaphor for the enduring conflict and efforts to resolve it.” [Best Books of 2015, St. Louis Dispatch](#) – “A non-fiction account that reflects one individual’s belief in the power of music and culture to transform lives. His story is proof of the famous words of Margaret Mead--‘Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.’ [Yo-Yo Ma](#) – “Somewhere amidst the separation barriers and the countless checkpoints, the refugee camps and the demolished homes, the fruitless negotiations and endless conflict, there is a people yearning for a life of dignity and normalcy. You won’t see them on TV or in many newspapers. But you will find them in *The Children of Stone*, Sandy Tolan’s moving account of the dispossessed children of Palestine, and the transformative power that music has had in giving them meaning and reason for hope. [Reza Aslan](#), author of *NO GOD BUT GOD* and #1 *NEW YORK TIMES* bestseller *ZEALOT: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JESUS OF NAZARETH* – “*Children of the Stone* is alive with compassion, hope, and great inspiration. It is not necessary to believe in music’s power to defeat evil in order to be enchanted by this wonderful story. [Tom Segev](#), Israeli historian and author of *ONE PALESTINE, COMPLETE* – “Sandy Tolan’s narrative artistry fuses the coming of age of a talented, ambitious, and fiercely dedicated musician with the story of Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian territories conquered in 1967. A major contribution to our understanding of who they are and essential to a political resolution of the conflict. [Joel Benin](#), Donald J. McLachlan Professor of History, Professor of Middle East History, Stanford University – “Sandy Tolan has produced another gem on what is

happening under the surface in Palestine. The book contains enthralling biographical trajectories of ordinary people fighting against the odds. Written in the style of investigative journalism, the book is riveting and uplifting, without skirting issues of contestation and controversy. •

• Salim Tamari, Professor of Sociology, Bir Zeit University (West Bank) and author of YEAR OF THE LOCUST • "[Children of the Stone is] a symphony of international locations, big ideas and human dramas . . . a deeply moving parable of struggle and mastery--over an instrument, over painful injustice and ultimately over self. • • Newsweek "Sandy Tolan sympathetically lays bare the stresses behind the monolithic WEDO façade, as musicians whose off-stage lives couldn't be more different--comfortable affluence for the Israelis, poverty and hardship for the Arabs--find themselves in entrenched opposition in their stances over the West Bank occupation." • The Independent "[A]mbitious . . . Tolan excels as a dogged reporter, and his musical descriptions amplify his core themes." • Truthdig

Sandy Tolan is the author of *Me & Hank* and *The Lemon Tree*. As cofounder of Homelands Productions, Tolan has produced dozens of radio documentaries for NPR and PRI. He has also written for more than forty magazines and newspapers. His work has won numerous awards, and he was a 1993 Nieman Fellow at Harvard University and an I. F. Stone Fellow at the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism. He is an associate professor at the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

This is my second round with this author whose work is allowing me to reflect on what i already know -- as citizens of the world, the massive unresolved destruction and bitterness caused by our collective inability to offer solutions at the very heart of our spiritual traditions is a global loss of unfathomable proportions and will continue to haunt us until we develop the social tools to resolve conflicts as thoughtful adults rather as pathologically injured and severely damaged children caught in a revolving door of human tragedy for millennia...i lost both of my parents to this devastating conflict and i am neither a Palestinian nor a Jew...i thoroughly honor the courage and vision of all those who make the human effort and sacrifice to forge a better way...

Most obvious is the power of music: to heal, to inspire, to bring joy, to build camaraderie among people otherwise enemies. Beyond that is the bravery required of very young musicians, facing soldiers armed with Ak47s, persistent check points. An amazing story, with 1/4 of the book being footnotes affirming the claims herein. Nolan's writing should activate Americans, who have really

known almost nothing about the real situation in the Holy Land, to support BDS. We can easily start by avoiding the purchase of Israeli products (cosmetics) and eliminating Caterpillar from our investments.

If these instances stand as fact, our media has most definitely been propagandized to the politics of our Ally, Israel. My support for Israel's struggle had be deeply undermined. It is hard for me to phantom how a people who survived the Nazi Holocaust are able to treat any human being the way the Palestinians are today. Being in such a cage, I doubt that I wouldn't respond the same. Definitely rethinking the ludicrous aspects of this current conflict, I don't believe God would approve of the senseless murdering on both sides. Louis Motty

Found this book to be a highly informative book and enjoyable read. Previously read The Lemon Tree by the same author - which looks at both the Israeli and Palestinian sides of the conflict. This book brings you into the conflict and the lives of those in the camps in a unique way. Particularly if you are a music lover, you will appreciate the vivid descriptions of the way music impacts our lives and emotions.

Excellent Book to learn about the Palestinian / Israeli conflict with such positive efforts by Ramzi to help Palestinian children through music at Al Kamanjati.

The story of the power of music was inspiring while also realistic in that it wasn't always a life changer. As in The Lemon Tree Sandy Tolan does not give his reader false hope. I gave it 4 stars because the last 40% is basically his research information & where to find it. It became very tedious & I found myself skimming most of it.

This book is very informative about the Palestinian plight as well as inspiring. Those who have begun to use music to save the children are amazing. The arts are fantastically healing and offer opportunities that otherwise may never be there for them. A must read.

One of those books that are hard to put down. We learn the history of Palestine effortlessly, while feeling a sense of hope. People with no power may have more power than many of us living in freedom, thanks to their determination to learn music and develop themselves. A must read! Loved it!

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