

Music And Coexistence: Using Music To Bridge The Gap Between Nations In A Troubled World

Houston, TX - The power of music is legendary. Not too long ago, one musician decided to ask the question - and then set out to find the answer by traveling the globe: can music help bridge gaps between people? The answer proved a resounding “yes,” and for proof author Osseily Hanna offers his fascinating book, *Music and Coexistence: A Journey across the World in Search of Musicians Making a Difference* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishing).

What at first seemed a simple question soon proved not so simple. “Musicians from across the world helped me get closer to answering this question,” says Osseily Hanna, the author. “I wanted to find musicians who break boundaries and traditional modes of thinking to create a ray of hope.”

He found them building bridges through music in a world where animosities are all too visible. “On everyone’s mind presently are conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and between Russia and Ukraine, but we know these will keep shifting. This past summer it was Gaza; before then it was Darfur. What I’m tapping is something bigger, looking at the ways music breaks down the walls nations and sometimes even communities work so hard to erect.”

Music and Coexistence explores the courageous work of musicians who compose and perform with their ostensible enemies or in extraordinary social situations. Hanna documents the political and economic constraints faced by musicians, from the wall that encloses a refugee camp in Jerusalem, to the tensions among KFOR and Carabinieri peacekeepers who keep Serbs and Kosovar Albanians apart, to the cultural and linguistic suppression that afflicts minority communities in Turkey.

Hanna talks to the individuals and groups at the forefront of the effort to bridge ethnic, cultural, and religious divisions. Featuring musicians from thirteen different countries and territories across five continents, Hanna’s story includes a remarkable cadre of performers. These include the musicians who comprise Heartbeat, a group of Israeli and Palestinian youth, who compose, record, and perform music together; the Albino musicians of Tanzania, who regularly combat persecution by local shamans; the multiracial and thriving samba musicians in Sao Paulo, and a former child soldier from Cambodia who seeks to revive traditional music following the genocide in the 1970s.

With photos taken by the author during his travels, this work is a remarkable intersection of world music and peace studies. It will open the eyes and the hearts of every musician and music lover who recognizes music as a universal language. The companion film was recently screened at the Amnesty International Film Festival in Vancouver.

Osseily Hanna was born in London, where he began violin lessons at the age of eight and played with the North London Symphony Orchestra in 2005. He gave up a successful career in global financial markets in 2011 to develop *Music and Coexistence* as a film and book project. Fluent in English and Spanish, he has also studied Arabic, French, Italian, and Turkish.

For more information, please visit: www.musicandcoexistence.com

Music and Coexistence: A Journey across the World in Search of Musicians Making a Difference

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