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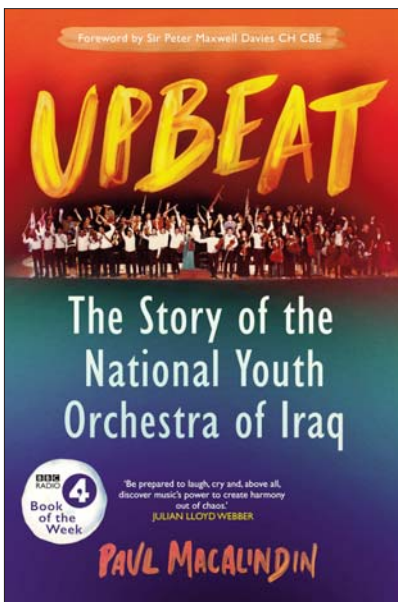
BOOK INFORMATION • BOOK INFORMATION

Upbeat

The Story of the National Youth Orchestra of Iraq

Paul MacAlindin

"Iraqi Teen Seeks Maestro For Youth Orchestra"



This unassuming headline compelled a successful Scottish conductor to set off on a life-altering odyssey to one of the most dangerous countries on earth. In his fascinating memoir, Paul MacAlindin recounts how he and an inspiring 17-year-old piano protégé built the first ever Youth Orchestra of Iraq from the ashes of the Iraq War.

Upbeat is the story of Paul and the orchestra he helped create. How do you pull together a diverse orchestra of both Arabs and Kurds (not natural colleagues), young musicians some who are self-taught; many without proper instruments; and all of whom have suffered immensely from tyranny and war? And perhaps most crucially of all, how can you make beautiful music when you are living through hell?

This is the fascinating story of how music brought purpose and hope to the amazingly talented, yet shamefully under-served youth of Iraq.

Paul MacAlindin discovered from an early age that he loved being an artist leading artists. As a musician, dancer, and all-round performer, he found his voice through conducting, a passionate journey that has led him to work with orchestras and ensembles all over the world, from the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra to the Armenian Philharmonic to the Düsseldorf Symphoniker.

Personal Memoir
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“The great adventure of the National Youth Orchestra of Iraq deserves not only to be recorded for posterity but also to serve as an example of how the essential can survive catastrophe.”

-Sir Peter Maxwell Davies

“Be prepared to laugh, cry and - above all – to discover music’s power to overcome seemingly irreconcilable differences and create harmony out of chaos.”

-Julian Lloyd Webber

“An amazing and deeply inspiring story.”

-Book of the Month (August), *The Bookseller*

“*Upbeat* is an eloquently-written, moving and sometimes funny book. Its title, taken from the gesture that conductors make to indicate the beat that leads into a new bar of music, is symbolic of change and progress. It also describes the mindset that was often required of MacAlindin and his team in testing circumstances.”

-*The National* (UAE)

“Fragile, precarious, quixotic and almost insanely heroic.”

-*BBC Music Magazine*

“One of the most unlikely, and genuinely heroic, stories you’re ever likely to read.”

-*The Spectator*

“The fact that any sort of orchestra could be brought together seems a miracle.”

-*The Daily Telegraph*

“Even if it doesn’t reform, the orchestra was a victory for art and light in the face of darkness. And in the year of Chilcot, Mr MacAlindin’s *Upbeat* seems a timely homage to this fragile but beautiful thing created by an inspirational Scot and the bravery and dedication of the musicians.”

-*The Herald*

“*Upbeat* serves as an inspiring and insightful guide towards understanding a land too long dominated by war and violence.”

-*The Express*