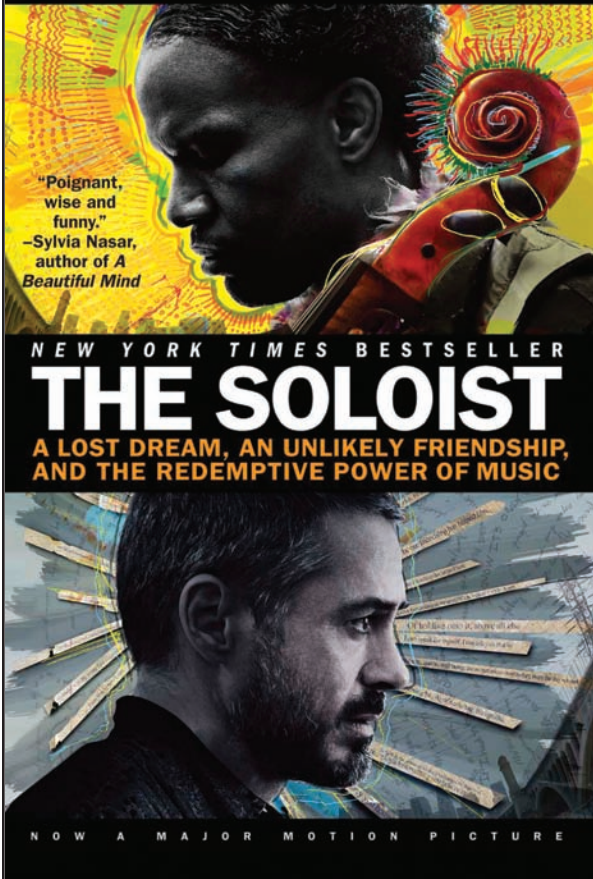
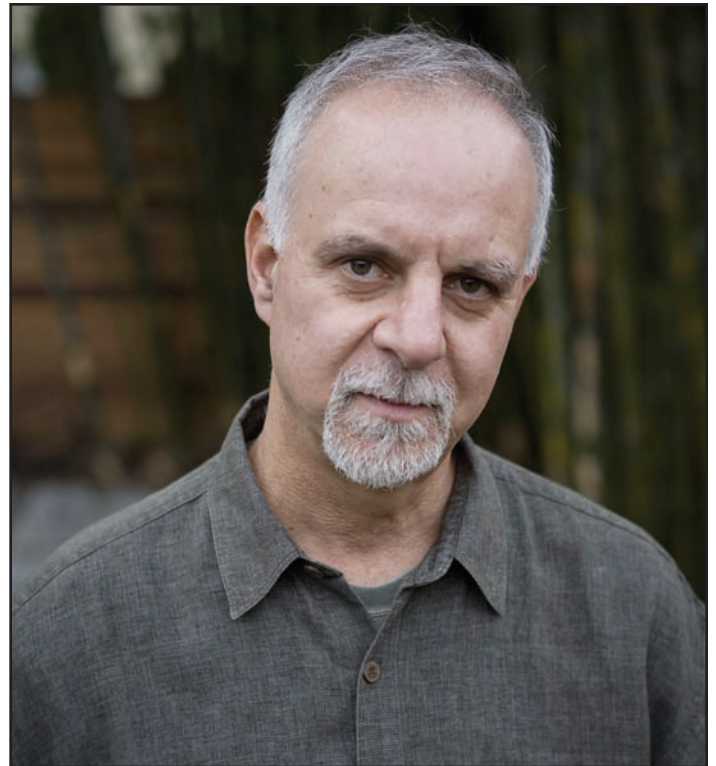


STEVE LOPEZ



Scholar in residence

Author of 'The Soloist' to speak



Steve Lopez

Steve Lopez, author of *The Soloist*, will speak at 9:30 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 5, in Polsky Theatre as part of the JCCC scholar in residence program. The presentation is free and open to the public.

Lopez, a columnist for the Los Angeles Times, chronicled the life of Nathaniel Anthony Ayers, a homeless Juilliard-trained musician with schizophrenia who sleeps each night on one of skid row's most dangerous streets, in a series of newspaper columns. The columns subsequently became a nonfiction book and later a movie released this summer starring Jamie Foxx and Robert Downey Jr.

Lopez joined the staff of the Los Angeles Times in May 2001 after four years at Time Inc., where he wrote for Time, Sports Illustrated, Life and Entertainment Weekly.

Prior to Time Inc., Lopez was a columnist at the Philadelphia Inquirer, San Jose Mercury News and Oakland Tribune. His work has won numerous national journalism awards for column writing and magazine reporting. In addition to his nonfiction book, Lopez is the author of three novels.

The Soloist is the selection for the 2009 community-wide initiative United We Read, sponsored by the Kansas City Library and Information Network. In addition, approximately 20-25 faculty in the JCCC English and Journalism division have assigned the book in composition and other classes during fall 2009.

The book touches on themes of homelessness, mental illness, racism and music. Ayers was trained on the double bass but taught himself to play the violin and has an obsession with the cello.

"In many ways, the most striking thing Mr. Lopez has to offer is his naiveté about 'the system' he found himself suddenly involved with; confronting stereotypes and assumptions regarding mental illness and the homeless and all the human complications that entails are central to his work," said Maureen Fitzpatrick, English professor, one of the sponsors for Lopez's visit.

In conjunction with Lopez's presentation, Student Activities will be showing *The Soloist* (PG-13) at noon and 7:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 6, in Craig Community Auditorium, and the fall 2009 Ruel Joyce and Jazz series include three recitals featuring bass and cello players (complete schedule at www.jccc.edu/home/site.php/welcome/news/recitals).

JCCC's scholar-in-residence program is designed to bring visiting scholars to students, faculty and the public. Lopez's residency is sponsored by the English and Journalism division, Honors Program, Billington Library and Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. For more information about Lopez's residency, contact Pat Decker, director, Honors Program, at 913-469-8500, ext. 2512, or pdecker5@jccc.edu. 