

The Late Starters Orchestra

Ari L. Goldman

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In a cluttered room in an abandoned coat factory in lower Manhattan, a group of musicians comes together each week to make music. Some are old, some are young, all have come late to music or come back to it after a long absence. This is the Late Starters Orchestra--the bona fide amateur string orchestra where Ari Goldman pursues his lifelong dream of playing the cello.

Goldman hadn't seriously picked up his cello in twenty-five years, but the Late Starters (its motto, If you think you can play, you can) seemed just the right orchestra for this music lover whose busy life had always gotten in the way of its pursuit.

In *The Late Starters Orchestra*, Goldman takes us along to LSO rehearsals and lets us sit in on his son's Suzuki lessons, where we find out that children do indeed learn differently from adults. He explores history's greatest cellists and also attempts to understand what motivates his fellow late starters, amateurs all, whose quest is for joy, not greatness. And when Goldman commits to playing at his upcoming birthday party we wonder with him whether he'll be good enough to perform in public. To the rescue comes the ghost of Goldman's first cello teacher, the wise and eccentric Mr. J, who continues to inspire and guide him--about music and more--through this well-tuned journey.

With enchanting illustrations by Eric Hanson, *The Late Starters Orchestra* is about teachers and students, fathers and sons, courage and creativity, individual perseverance and the power of community. And Ari Goldman has a message for anyone who has ever had a dream deferred: it's never too late to find happiness on one's own terms.



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