



Noisy at the Wrong Times

Michael Volpe

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Against a backdrop of nuns, hit men, gangsters, rugby and ice-cream, Noisy at the wrong times is an inspiring memoir by Michael Volpe, General Manager and founder of Opera Holland Park, one of the UK's most popular opera festivals. Volpe's upbringing in a fatherless Italian family in London is hardly recognised as being one from which champions of the high, classical arts emerge, but at the heart of this story is his time at Woolverstone Hall, a prestigious state boarding school that took bright, inner city boys and gave them an Eton-style education - with culture at the heart of the curriculum. Volpe's sudden immersion in a world of rules, traditions and high expectation produced some surprising - and not so surprising - results. With brutal honesty, Noisy at the wrong times charts Volpe's torrid path through this extraordinary school; his countless misdemeanours, the tragedies he experienced, his often shameful behaviour and his endless conflicts - both emotional and physical - with authority. Noisy at the wrong times is a lesson for modern educationalists at a time when inner city children from poor backgrounds are often written off even before they begin, when cultural education is diminishing and aspirational leadership of young people is little more than a platitude. It is also a book, as Michael states, for: "all those who were ever told not to bother." The book was featured in the Sunday Times Culture section.

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