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| **DIRECTIONS**: Highlight **or** underline relevant details that the author uses to best help develop the central idea that music can unite the world. *(This includes the model & we do. You need to find at least 3 more details.)* |
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| **Can Music Unite the World?**  image  **BAGHDAD, Iraq** (Achieve3000, July 20, 2010). Thirteen-year-old piano prodigy Llewellyn Kingman Sanchez Werner brought a Baghdad audience to its feet when he made a guest appearance with the Iraqi National Symphony Orchestra. It's an effort the California teen said he hoped would begin to bridge the gap between his country's citizens and the citizens of Iraq.  After performing George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," Llewellyn, who studies piano and composition at New York's renowned Juilliard School, received a standing ovation from an enthusiastic crowd of about 250 people, most of whom were Iraqi.  "We connected well with this orchestra," said Llewellyn. "I like the spontaneity of it. Honestly, we had a ball up there."  Photo credit: AP/Karim Kadim  *American teen Llewellyn Kingman Sanchez Werner performed with the Iraqi National Symphony Orchestra.*  After the performance, Llewellyn warmly embraced the orchestra's chief conductor and director Karim Wasfi, who praised his young guest. "He is very talented," Wasfi said, adding, "He is a genius, actually."  There's little to dispute that Llewellyn is exceptional. He began learning piano at age 2. By age 5, he had composed his first musical score and enrolled in college. By the time Llewellyn turned 6, he was a full-time college student, taking advanced music theory courses. At 13, he had already earned his first college degree in music and was nearing completion of another.  So how did Llewellyn end up thousands of miles from home, playing piano in the middle of a war zone?  Llewellyn's father and his California-based private investment firm had been working in Baghdad alongside the U.S. Department of Defense for three years. While in Iraq on business, Llewellyn's father met Wasfi and proposed that his son travel to Baghdad to play with the national orchestra.  "My son leaped at the opportunity enthusiastically," Llewellyn's father said. "He came here...because he believes the music brings down barriers."  Despite his enthusiasm about performing in Baghdad, Llewellyn admitted he was disconcerted and a little scared when he first arrived in the capital city. Llewellyn had been following the news and knew that it was a war zone.  "I've never seen anything like this before," Llewellyn said. He described his heavily guarded trip past blast walls, barbed wire, and checkpoints on the way from the airport to the hotel. "I've never had a bulletproof vest on before and a helmet and all this protection."  The trip to Baghdad wasn't any easier for members of the orchestra, said Wasfi. The conductor reflected on the difficulties of transporting musicians and their instruments through multiple checkpoints in the dangerous city.  "I am amazed how easy it is for bombs to move around Baghdad and how difficult it is to transport musical instruments," Wasfi quipped.  The last decade has been rife with challenges for Wasfi and the national orchestra, which collapsed after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq induced many musicians to flee to neighboring countries. In 2005, Wasfi gathered 50 musicians and reconstructed the group, which soon grew to 90.  "Even at the height of the sectarian violence, I convinced members of the orchestra to play and practice," Wasfi said. "We'll perform no matter what happens so people have a sense of normalcy."  In 2010, the national orchestra was performing twice monthly in Baghdad, an indication that the cultural scene in the city was experiencing a slow but visible revival, thanks in part to the Iraqi government providing $120,000 for the orchestra's operational budget and approval for the construction of an opera house.  "Iraq is recovering and so is the cultural scene," said Salem al-Moussawi, a 52-year-old businessman who attended the concert. "I applaud the courage of the young American artist to come here and play for us."  Thoughtful and articulate, Llewellyn said that he hoped he would "break ground" with his performance.  "I know there are strong feelings out there," Llewellyn said of the difficulties of the Iraq War. "But me being here today is one way to show the U.S. has a lot of wonderful things to offer. Music is a way to connect, and I'd like to bring Americans and Iraqis closer together."  Llewellyn's mother, who also attended the performance, was proud of her son's effort. "I believe my son has a very strong sense of social commitment," she said.  *The Associated Press contributed to this story.*  **Double check your context clues – Vocabulary reference below.**   |  | | --- | | **disconcerted** *(adjective)*    uneasy; not comfortable | | **prodigy** *(noun)*    a person, especially a child or young person, having extraordinary talent or ability | | **quip** *(verb)*    to make short or witty remarks | | **rife** *(adjective)*    abounding | | **sectarian** *(adjective)*    having to do with religious or ethnic groups  **spontaneity** (noun) unplanned behavior that occurs on impulse  **bulwark** (noun) a defensive wall  **collaboration** (noun) the act of working together  **disconcerted** (adjective) uneasy; not comfortable | | **gaffe** (noun) a mistake that goes against what is generally considered to be acceptable behavior; a social blunder  **linchpin** (noun) a person or thing that is crucial to holding things together  **prodigy** (noun) a person, especially a child or young person, having extraordinary talent or ability  **quip** (verb) to make short or witty remarks  **rapprochement** (noun) the state of friendly relations between different groups or parties  **rife** (adjective) abounding  **sectarian** (adjective) having to do with religious or ethnic groups  **spontaneity** (noun) unplanned behavior that occurs on impulse | |
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