

# Talentspotting

Portfolio  
... because everyone's different...



The following story was published by the Washington Post:



Musician playing violin in a Washington DC Metro Station on a cold January morning in 2007.

He played six Bach pieces for about 60 minutes.

During that time approximately 2,000 people went through the station, most of them on their way to work.

After:

**3 minutes:** A middle aged man noticed there was a musician playing. He slowed his pace and stopped for a few seconds and then hurried to meet his schedule.

**4 minutes:** The violinist received his first dollar: a woman threw the money in the till and without stopping, continued to walk.

**6 minutes:** A young man leaned against the wall to listen to him, then looked at his watch and started to walk again.

**10 minutes:** A three year old boy stopped but his mother tugged him along hurriedly, as the kid stopped to look at the violinist. Finally the mother pushed hard and the child continued to walk, turning his head all the time. This action was repeated by several other children. Every parent, without exception, forced them to move on.

**45 minutes:** The musician played. Only 6 people stopped and stayed for a while. About 20 gave him money but continued to walk their normal pace. He collected \$32.

**1 hour:** He finished playing and silence took over. No one noticed. No one applauded, nor was there any recognition of him or his music.

This is a real story.

The Washington Post, as part of a social experiment about perception, taste and people's priorities, arranged the entire scenario. Playing incognito, no one knew the violinist was Joshua Bell, one of the best musicians in the world.

He played one of the most intricate pieces ever written, with a violin worth \$3.5 million dollars. Two days prior to this, Joshua Bell sold out a theater in Boston where the tickets averaged \$100 per seat.

**The question that this experiment raised was this:**

Do we always recognize talent when it presents itself in an unusual or unexpected situation or environment? To what extent are we closed to the possibilities around us? (Notice that the children – whose minds were open to possibilities and not yet conditioned by stereotyping or expectations – stopped to listen.)

**One possible conclusion reached from this experiment could be:**

If we don't have a moment to stop and listen to one of the best musicians in the world, playing some of the finest music ever written, with one of the most beautiful instruments ... How many other things could we be missing?

