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RENOWNED SCIENTIST SHINES COMPASSIONATE SPOTLIGHT ON ALZHEIMER'S WITH MESMERIZING NOVEL

CHANDLER, AZ (August 2008) – Revealing his intimate knowledge of the mind and passion for New Orleans' rich, exotic culture, Dr. Nicolas Bazan's *Una Vida: A Fable of Music and the Mind* takes readers on a tantalizing journey to the secret recesses of the brain in his spellbinding debut novel about a hauntingly poignant jazz musician whose memory is slipping into the abyss of Alzheimer's, and a driven neuroscientist, Alvaro Cruz, who's desperately trying to reconstruct her fragmented memory, believing it to be key to his own life's mysteries.

Una Vida is filled with delightful twists and unexpected turns, all centered around one of the greatest gifts New Orleans has offered the world – jazz. But the story will also deeply touch anyone who has witnessed the heartbreaking deterioration of a loved one's memory as it is consumed by the unforgiving encroachment of Alzheimer's.

“This mystical, deeply provocative novel portrays the anguish of Alzheimer's by contrast with the brilliance of the human brain in creating reality from dreams,” – Leeza Gibbons, founder of Leeza's Place (for the families of Alzheimer victims).

“Nicolas Bazan is a born storyteller...His story unfolds with many surprises. It's told with great compassion and has the gentle qualities of a sort of fairytale,” – Edmond Fischer, Nobel Laureate in Medicine or Physiology, 1992.

However, it's more than Bazan's neurosciences know-how and adept storytelling that elevates *Una Vida*. Bazan's compassion drives his story straight to the heart. Having witnessed a beloved aunt suffer a seizure while walking him to a music lesson when he was a young boy, Bazan vowed to spend the rest of his life studying the causes behind seizures, stroke, blindness and other debilitating diseases of the brain in hopes of discovering therapies to slow down and/or cure those diseases. His empathy for those suffering from diseases of the mind is clearly manifested in *Una Vida*.

Una Vida: A Fable of Music and the Mind, (ISBN: 978-1-58985-112-2, hardcover) a Five Star Publications book, retails for \$25.95 and can soon be purchased through BarnesandNoble.com, Borders.com, Amazon.com, Walmart.com, Target.com, indiebound.org and www.FiveStarPublications.com. Visit www.UnaVidaNovel.com for more info.

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BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Nicolas Bazan

Author of:

UNA VIDA

A Fable of Music and the Mind

Publisher: Five Star Publications, Inc.
P.O. Box 6698, Chandler, AZ 85246-6698
Price: \$25.95 U.S. (\$26.95 Canada) / Hard Cover / Fiction
Size: 6" by 9" / 221 pages
ISBN: 978-1-58985-112-2
Pub Date: January 2009 (advance review copies October 2008)
Website: www.UnaVidaNovel.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nicolas Bazan is a man driven by his life's many passions including a thirst for knowledge about the human mind and eyes, and a hunger for great food and fine music.

Born in the tiny town of Los Sarmientos in Tucuman, Argentina, Nicolas Bazan's defining moment was witnessing an aunt suffer a seizure while walking him to a music lesson when he was a young boy, putting him on the path to becoming one of the world's premier neuroscientists. Applying himself eagerly to studying the causes behind seizures, stroke, blindness and other debilitating diseases of the brain and retina, he hopes his life's work leads to therapies that slow down and/or cure those diseases.

Training at some of the most prestigious medical institutions including Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York and Harvard Medical School, Bazan took his first faculty appointment at age 26 at the University of Toronto, Clarke Institute of Psychiatry, where he immersed himself in the study of neurochemistry.

In the 1970s, he established a research institute in Argentina during a time when his native land was awash in political turmoil. He and his wife eventually fled with their five children to the United States in 1981. Welcomed in New Orleans, Bazan was appointed faculty by the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, where he later established and now heads the Neuroscience Center of Excellence.

The knowledge sought at the center epitomizes the pursuit of understanding present in Bazan's own heart, mind and soul. He continues to apply his passion, not only to the cause of science, but to the joys and vigor found in the city he now calls home. His fondness for New Orleans life and jazz is surpassed only by his love for family and friends. Devoting as much time as he can to all of his passions, Bazan lives by the creed that "what we do in this one life resonates in the lives of those both present and yet to come."

FACT SHEET

Dr. Nicolas Bazan

Author of:

UNA VIDA

A Fable of Music and the Mind

“... a hero’s journey that leads a haunted neuroscientist through the mystery of jazz, the alleys of New Orleans ... and the labyrinth of the mind.”

– Leeza Gibbons, founder of Leeza’s Place
for the families of Alzheimer’s victims

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WHAT IS THIS BOOK ABOUT?

In Dr. Nicolas Bazan’s brilliant first novel, neuroscientist Alvaro Cruz finds himself haunted by a recurring dream of a banjo player in an elusive cornfield that leads him on a personal quest to uncover the mysterious past of a New Orleans street singer known as Una Vida. Stricken with Alzheimer’s, Una Vida can only offer tantalizing clues about her past through her mesmerizing vocals, incredible recollection of jazz lyrics, and the occasional verbal revisiting of a fascinating life that’s fading quickly and forever into the recess of her mind. As Cruz searches for Una Vida’s true identity, he learns profound lessons about the human psyche, the nature of memory – and himself.

WHAT MAKES THIS BOOK UNIQUE?

Una Vida is filled with delightful twists and unexpected turns, all centered around one of the greatest gifts New Orleans has offered the world – jazz. But the story will also deeply touch anyone who has had to witness the heartbreaking deterioration of a loved one’s memory as it is consumed by the unforgiving encroachment of Alzheimer’s.

In the end, *Una Vida* represents a triumph of the spirit and sends an intensely personal message of hope to the world even as scientists like Dr. Bazan continue the search for the answers to one of life’s most devastating diseases.

Dr. Nicolas Bazan
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SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

1. What personal life experiences inspired you to write *Una Vida*?
2. What message would you like readers to get from *Una Vida*?
3. *Una Vida* takes place in New Orleans. How is it that someone born in Argentina, who spent a good portion of his life there, came to know so much about the culture of New Orleans?
4. *Una Vida* is fiction, yet it is rooted in science. Was it difficult for a Neuroscientist such as your self to work in the scientific aspects of Alzheimer's and still maintain a moving, fast-paced story that the general public would enjoy?
5. Currently you are a renowned neuroscientist who has lived in New Orleans for a while, which gives you the experience and background to write about the city and diseases of the mind; but was there anything in your book that you included that you had to research? If so, what?
6. How long did it take you to write the book and what was the process like?
7. There is a love story of sorts in *Una Vida*, but the book is not a "romance." Tell us about the heart-felt emotional component of the story.
8. To what author would you compare your unique writing style and why?
9. Anything exciting on the horizon for you or your book?
10. Do you plan to write another book? If so, where do you think it would take place?

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SOUNDBITES

100 Words:

Neuroscientist Alvaro Cruz finds himself haunted by a recurring dream of a banjo player in an elusive cornfield, leading him on a personal quest to uncover the mysterious past of a New Orleans street singer known as Una Vida. Stricken with Alzheimer's, she can only offer tantalizing clues about her past through her mesmerizing vocals, incredible recollection of jazz lyrics and the occasional verbal revisiting of a fascinating life that's fading quickly into the recess of her mind. As Cruz searches for Una Vida's true identity, he learns profound lessons about the human psyche, the nature of memory – and himself.

50 Words:

A recurring dream leads neuroscientist Alvaro Cruz on a quest to uncover the eerie past of Una Vida, a New Orleans jazz performer stricken with Alzheimer's. Believing that unlocking her mind is key to his own life's mysteries, Cruz instinctively tries to reassemble her fragmented memories before they fade forever.

25 Words:

A recurring dream prompts a neuroscientist to explore the haunting past of a New Orleans jazz singer stricken with Alzheimer's, profoundly affecting his own life.

15 Words:

A dream leads a neuroscientist to the haunting past of an Alzheimer's-stricken Louisiana jazz singer.

10 Words:

A haunted neuroscientist explores an Alzheimer's-stricken jazz singer's mysterious past.

NEUROSCIENTIST WRITES NOVEL ABOUT MUSIC AND THE MIND

Why I wrote 'Una Vida'

By Nicolas Bazan, M.D.

Unless you happen to be a neuroscientist like myself, I doubt you'd get too excited about my recent article, "A role for docosahexaenoic acid-derived neuroprotectin D1 in neural cell survival and Alzheimer disease." Scientific articles, especially in my field, are aimed at specialists and are based on painstaking micro-precision. Each step we take toward understanding the human brain must be tested and re-tested, proved and reproved if we are to truly make a lasting impact on creating healthier lives for the human beings we serve. Is the work emotionless? That's a good question, to which my answer is that we must remove emotion from our research and retain full objectivity.

The battle to conquer these diseases and conditions of the brain - such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, macular degeneration and so many others - is not a story of continual everyday successes. It is a slow journey through a complicated maze that is often fraught with setbacks and unexpected twists and turns. Experiments do not always yield the results anticipated, and scientists like me and my colleagues often find that we do not have the means available to solve the riddles of the mind and sight we so desperately seek to unravel. But don't think for a moment that a neuroscientist's objectivity means he doesn't have personal thoughts and emotions about the lives that have been affected, and that have been lost by the diseases we study. The most poignant irony of all is that we can only study brain tissue when it is no longer part of a living, breathing human being with aspirations and dreams, failures and successes and hope and despair not unlike our own.

After years of those thoughts and emotions building up inside of me, I searched for a way to express what our work is really like in a way anyone could relate to. I decided to write a novel that gave me the greater liberty of expressing my own worries, motivations, doubts, aspirations, joys and reflections about the work we do on the always-expanding frontiers of neuroscience. My forthcoming novel, "Una Vida," mirrors many facets of my own personal and professional life, including why I strive to understand and combat the ravaging diseases and disorders that afflict the eyes and the brain.

Using jazz and the fascinating chaos of the city I love most, pre-Katrina New Orleans, as metaphors for the workings of the brain and the human mind, the novel reveals the joys and frustrations that seem to go hand in hand with neuroscience research. Yet, despite the many trials we face, despite the many uncertainties we encounter, each day that passes brings us closer to understanding, preventing and curing these debilitating diseases.

I realize how extraordinarily important this research is, not only to scientists, but to each and every individual in the global community. Every new bit of information we uncover adds one more piece to the puzzle, bringing the bigger picture into focus a little more and providing us not only with new knowledge, but also with renewed hope.

It is this hope that I wish to share with others through "Una Vida." It has allowed me to express my thoughts and emotions surrounding neuroscience research and the exploration of cellular elements and molecular switches that underlie the components of the mind and the eyes. To be able to impart these views to others and to provide them with the hope and optimism that the story of "Una Vida" ultimately presents, that task itself is equally as important and rewarding as the pursuit to understand, prevent and cure. Writing "Una Vida" created a channel, an outlet that, unlike technical journals, allows me to freely express my emotions and opinions to the people who have the greatest interest in our work.

One more thing the novel reveals is my ongoing belief that there is a greater force in the universe that is

leading us to the final frontiers of self-knowledge, a force which makes itself known in coincidences, serendipity, dreams and the miracles we encounter all around us every day.

If you're not a fan of novels but are still interested in the labyrinth of the mind, you can always read my "Cell survival matters: docosahexaenoic acid signaling, neuroprotection and photoreceptors."

Dr. Bazan is head of Louisiana State University's Neuroscience Center of Excellence in New Orleans, where he is professor and director. *Una Vida: A Fable of Music and the Mind* will be published and launched by Five Star Publications in November 2008.