



Indivisible by Four: A String Quartet in Pursuit of Harmony

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The Guarneri Quartet is fabled for its unique longevity and high-spirited virtuosity. Here is its story from the inside--a story filled with drama, humor, danger, compassion, and, of course, glorious music.

A player who studies and performs the exalted string-quartet repertoire has opted for a very special life. Arnold Steinhardt, tracing his own development as a student, orchestra player, and budding young soloist, gives a touching account of how he and his intrepid colleagues were converted to chamber music despite the daunting odds against success. And he reveals, as no one has before, the intensely difficult process by which--on the battlefield of daily three-hour rehearsals--four individualists master and then overcome the confining demands of ensemble playing.

Indivisible by Four: A String Quartet in Pursuit of Harmony Details

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Author : Arnold Steinhardt

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From Reader Review Indivisible by Four: A String Quartet in Pursuit of Harmony for online ebook

Emily Prasad says

I picked this book up because I'm a string player who loves the string quartet literature. I thought I would enjoy it, but I did not expect to enjoy it so much! One of the best books I've read in quite some time. I was not expecting the writing to be so good. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Susan says

First violinist Arnold Steinhardt's amazing chronicle of the Guarneri String Quartet's first 35 years together. It is extraordinary that such a gifted musician can be equally fluent in his writing. He tells how this group of strong and opinionated individualists work together as equals to produce magic. He is a marvel at describing the tension between the need to work together intimately and at the same time maintain a private space. He includes lots of stories and anecdotes, many of them about famous mentors and guest such as Pablo Casals and Artur Rubinstein, never saying a derogatory or even gossipy word about anyone. He has such a gift for describing the pieces that they play and their emotional impact that you want to immediately go out and listen to them

Will says

If you're into music at all, this is a pretty interesting memoir by one of the violinists from the famous Guarneri string quartet. Embedded within many colorful stories is a lot of good advice for chamber musicians (and, I suppose, anybody who works in constant collaboration with others).

Paul Jellinek says

A wonderful book about a truly wonderful string quartet. And Steinhardt's self-deprecating humor is the icing on the cake.

Marta says

A nice music memoir.

E Sweetman says

I love this book. I heard an interview on the radio with Mr. Steinhardt talking about playing Bach's Chacon

and I was able to order both books on line as a package. He skillfully tells of growing up and becoming an accomplished musician. A very good book.

Christy says

A hilarious, super fun book about the life of a string quartet. Even non-musicians will love this book because it is so well- written.

R.K. Cowles says

2 3/4 stars

Lauretta says

This is a marvelous book about chamber music and the relationships within one of the premier (and longest lasting) quartets of our time. I knew Arnold as a young child when he was still in the Cleveland orchestra and was in awe of this talented and handsome man who would periodically come to our house for dinner. The part that he omitted from his story was that my father had been instrumental in getting him out of the army (or at least that's the story as it's been told in our family). I guess Arnold's anxiety and the larger-than-life presence of Szell may have clouded his memory a bit. But it was nice to learn about his life after Cleveland in a more intimate way.

Kristina says

Humorously written and extremely interesting on a variety of subjects: a career in classical music 1960s to the present, including encounters with such varied characters as Gingold, Rudolf Serkin and Szell; the vagaries of chamber music are explored with humor and joy; and the personality of the author infuses his insights into both the inner workings of people and music. WELL worth the time of any musician or appreciator of chamber music.

Barbara says

Totally fascinating. My friends will tell you that I am the least musical, most tone deaf person in the world. But I love reading a well written account of a field about which I know nothing. The same instinct that led me to read Richard Feynman. This book is entertaining, interesting, fast moving and not too technically musical.

Ellison says

Interesting if you like chamber music but Stienhardt is certainly not a great writer and there is not much drama or emotion here but there is humor and a great love of chamber music.

Andrea Spencer says

If you're looking for a how-to on being a successful string quartet, this isn't it. If you want a fairly interesting read about the life of one particular string quartet, you've found your book.

Kara says

SO VERY COOL! Makes me miss playing chamber music...

Tiffany Reisz says

Read for book research. Loved it.

Peter says

As a listener of the Guarneri Quartet for many years I was fascinated to read this inside account of the quartet's history. The book of course also includes details of the authors musical and personal history. While they were playing this was the most outstanding classical music quartet in my judgement. Of course other quartets had their strengths but these guys were true heirs to the European tradition embodied in the Budapest quartet. Unless you are a classical music nut and in particular a classical chamber music nut you will probably not be interested. But if you qualify you will find it amusing, well written and full of humor.

Stella Zawistowski says

This book is pure joy. Steinhardt has wit, humor, and a deep love for his craft that come through on every page. As an amateur musician in a much different context (200-voice choir), I loved getting to look into the thoroughly different world of being in a small group with no leader, in which everyone is good enough to be a soloist but collaborative enough to form one musical organism.

I'm sad that I didn't discover this book in time to hear the Guarneri play live.

Meghan says

I wanted to love this book, but even as a violinist I found the detail a bit monotonous. Some parts I sailed through though, so an interesting read overall.

Douglas Baskett says

The author makes music into a human enterprise with his various discussions of the music itself, the group's interpretations and how they change over decades, and the everyday matters of traveling with its minor setbacks and pleasures. Mr. Steinhardt's prose style is relaxed and it rolls along easily. It also inspired me to listen to many of the pieces I had been unfamiliar with before.
