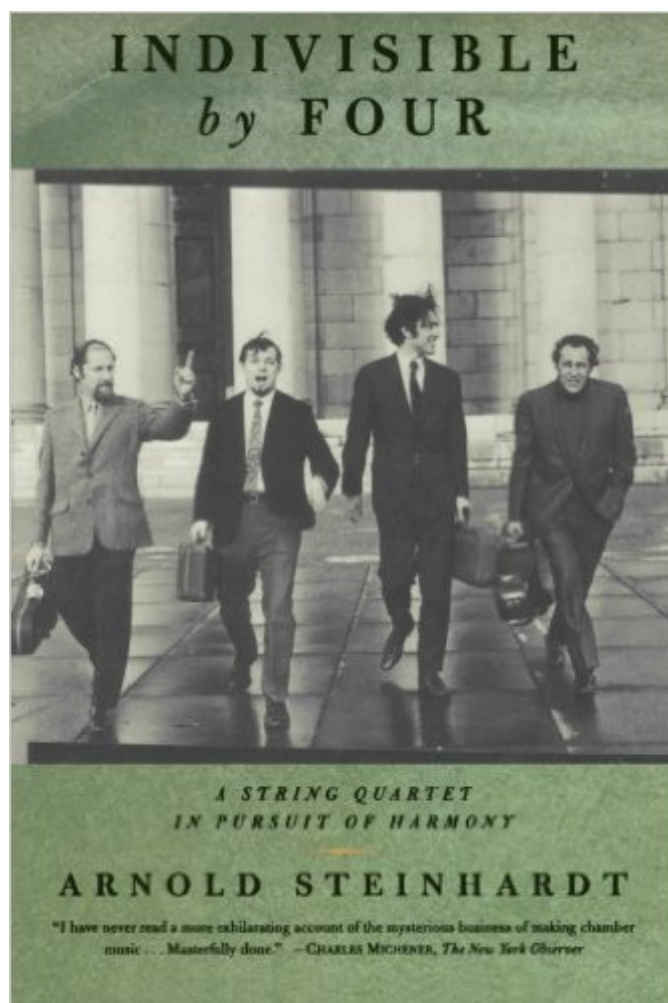


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Indivisible By Four: A String Quartet In Pursuit Of Harmony



Synopsis

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.

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Customer Reviews

I had the pleasure of working with the Guarneri Quartet for two years while a Graduate Fellow at the University of Maryland, where the Quartet has a residency. I had the rare chance of working with four distinct, wonderful musical and human personalities. When this book came to my attention, I jumped to purchase it right away. I was not disappointed. It really reflects Mr. Steinhardt's easygoing nature. The prose is relaxed, the stories are genuine, and usually humorous in some way.

Coachings with Mr. Steinhardt were always rewarding experiences, with flashes of brilliant insight into the work we were examining that week, and also with moments of humor and a sense of discovering the work together, as if for the first time -- though he'd played the piece hundreds of

times! This book made me most thankful for having had the opportunity to work with these four wonderful musicians and human beings, and most thankful of all that they ever got together in the first place, to bless the classical music world with their enduring spirit and with their unique qualities of music-making -- the best of the old and new schools of string playing. Cheers, Mr. Steinhardt -- a wonderful book, worthy of your musical journeys!

Arnold Steinhardt, first violinist in what is arguably the finest string quartet performing today, has given us an entertaining and illuminating account of life in the Guarneri Quartet. Writing with unabashed affection for his colleagues of over thirty years, Steinhardt describes their initial meeting, their formal coming together as a quartet, their experiences with their mentors, some of the outstanding luminaries of their generation: (Rudolph Serkin at Marlboro, Arthur Rubenstein, Sascha and Mischa Schneider, etc.) Steinhardt proves himself to be quite the raconteur as well as gentle psychologist as he describes the Guarneri's journey from hyper-testosterone young quartet to one of the most seasoned groups performing today. His personal and professional portrayal of his colleagues is intimate and respectful, and lends valuable insight for the lay person who has always wondered 1. what goes into string quartet playing 2. what the life of a touring musician is like 3. what it takes for four completely different and powerful personalities to forge a successful career. I believe this book offers humor, insight and inspiration for those who are professional musicians as well as aficionados of chamber music and even those who are peripherally interested in classical music. It compares with other memoirs offered by Arthur Rubenstein, Gary Graffman and Gregor Piatigorsky, although definitely with more verisimilitude, especially in terms of the latter book. Enjoy!

If you are intrigued by music and how it's made, by the hearts and minds of those who have devoted their lives to making instruments sing, then this will be one of the most interesting and satisfying books you've ever read. Arnold Steinhardt, the first violinist of the Guarneri String Quartet, has that rare ability to step outside his discipline and bring it alive for others. *Indivisible by Four* is the story not only of how the Guarneri String Quartet came to be, but of how four very different musicians have managed to forge a unique musical identity for themselves as well. Here you will hear how Steinhardt and his colleagues approach a piece - about their differences and how they are resolved, the things that worked and those that didn't, the inevitable surprises and how they got through them. Best of all, from the perspective of someone who is not a professional musician, is Steinhardt's ability to bring the technical as well as the human elements alive for the reader. I came away with a good solid introduction to chamber music in general, and to the music and composers

that have shaped it. Steinhardt even manages to toss in some music theory without allowing the pace to slow to a crawl. An action packed thriller with plenty of twists and turns in the plot this is not. Expect instead to be treated to a very personal and intimate glimpse into the hearts of four very gifted and dedicated musicians.

This insightful book by Arnold Steinhardt, the first violinist of the Guarneri String Quartet, is a must-read for anyone, whether musician or listener, with an interest in chamber music. Steinhardt traces his own evolution from aspiring soloist to quartet member, as well as detailing the inner workings of the Guarneri Quartet. Anecdotes abound here, with often humorous, intimate glimpses of well-known musicians such as Pinkas Zuckerman, Rudolf Serkin, and Arthur Rubinstein. Steinhardt's love of music is palpable as he discusses the strengths and pitfalls of specific pieces, the textures of orchestral and chamber music, the playing styles of various musicians. The most interesting aspect of this book, however, is the process by which four highly individual musicians learn to play as one. Although repetitious at times, this book is a delightful examination of one of the most celebrated quartets of our time.

Ah, leading the glamorous life! Many thanks to Arnold Steinhardt for sharing his fascinating experiences as a member of the Guarneri Quartet. His book is full of marvelous memories and thoughtful insights into a classical musician's art as practiced at the highest levels. Steinhardt is always interesting, often eloquent. This book has given me a renewed appreciation of the string quartet literature, and a deeper understanding of the collaborative art of chamber music.

This book is required reading in the chamber music literature class I teach at a university. Steinhardt's writing is charming and easy to read, and he gives a fascinating look into what it's like to work with the same 3 men in such close quarters for 30+ years. If you have ever enjoyed a chamber music concert, or played chamber music yourself it is a must read. My students who play in rock bands also have found it a very valuable book, since a band is a similar animal to the string quartet.

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