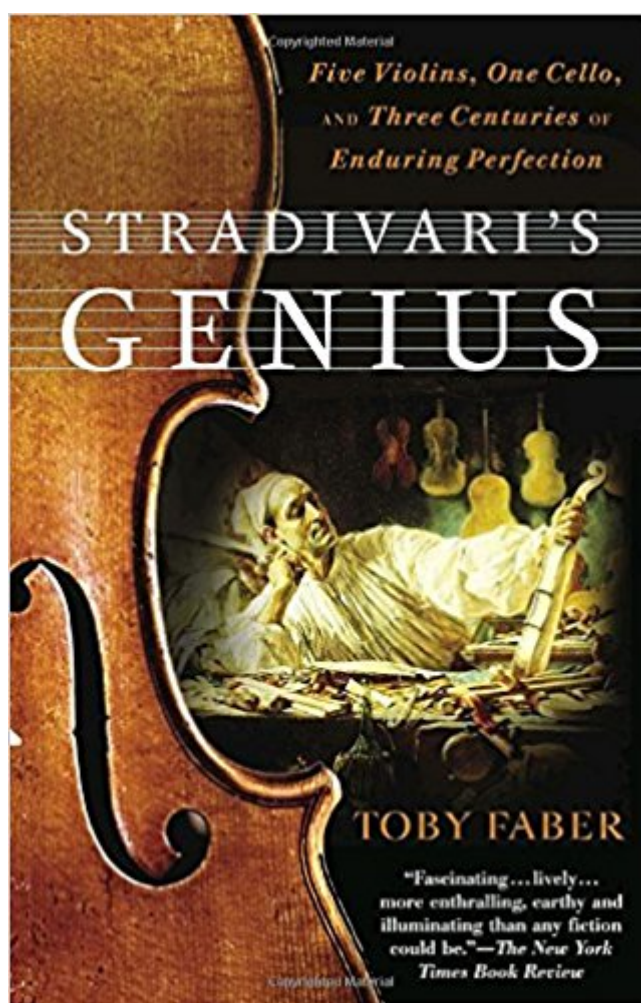


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Stradivari's Genius: Five Violins, One Cello, And Three Centuries Of Enduring Perfection



Synopsis

Antonio Stradivari (1644–1737) was a perfectionist whose single-minded pursuit of excellence changed the world of music. In the course of his long career in the northern Italian city of Cremona, he created more than a thousand stringed instruments; approximately six hundred survive, their quality unequalled by any subsequent violin-maker. In this fascinating book, Toby Faber traces the rich, multilayered stories of six of these peerless creations—“five violins and a cello”—and the one towering artist who brought them into being. Blending history, biography, meticulous detective work, and an abiding passion for music, Faber takes us from the salons of Vienna to the concert halls of New York, and from the breakthroughs of Beethoven’s last quartets to the first phonographic recordings. This magnificent narrative invites us to share the life, the intrigue, and the incomparable beauty of the world’s most marvelous stringed instruments.

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Customer Reviews

One of modern technology’s greatest embarrassments is its inability to produce violins with the awesome musical qualities of those made almost 400 years ago by Stradivarius. This engaging appreciation celebrates the maestro’s legacy by following the adventures of six of his instruments. Faber, the former managing director of British publishing house Faber and Faber, begins with a short account of Stradivari’s life (1644–1737) and methods in the Italian city of Cremona, where violin-making techniques achieved their zenith. As the Cremonese violins passed through the hands of musicians, the instruments’ rich tone and penetrating sonic power stimulated a new style of

virtuoso violin-playing that held Europe's concert halls enthralled. And as time passed and the violins' value soared, they spawned whole new industries in collecting, appraising, curating and faking them. Faber's stylish account savors Stradivari's marvelous acoustics and the individual personalities of his instruments while exploring the science behind them (X-rays, chemical tests and tree-ring analysis have all been deployed to unlock their secrets) and regaling readers with colorful tales of the musicians who built their careers around them. The result is an illuminating look at an enduring cultural monument. Photos. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Antonio Stradivari (1644-1737), Cremona's greatest luthier, pioneered the modern shape of the violin. Working from designs begun by Nicolo Amati 100 years earlier, Stradivari built sonically superb, exquisitely crafted instruments meant to last. Faber begins with a brief history of Cremona's luthiers, the biography of Stradivari and his sons, who continued his atelier, and a discussion of Stradivari's innovations. Faber then traces the journeys of five violins and one cello through the hands of famous players from Paganini and Joachim to Marie Hall and Yo Yo Ma, and also of famous dealers, such as W. E. Hill of London and Vuillaume of Paris, who often repaired and, more notoriously, copied many instruments, and continuing until their whereabouts today are accounted for. Perforce, Faber concisely covers three centuries of the performance and ownership of what are considered the finest-sounding stringed instruments ever made. Sadly, private collections and museums own many instruments and keep them unheard. Those whose stories Faber tells so are but five of more than 1,000 instruments from Stradivari's workshop. Alan Hirsch Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Interesting history of Stradivarius. Any one could build a concert quality violin after 30 years of experience and access to 50 year old wood.

Stradivarius violins are reknown for their beauty and powerful voices. This book traces Antonio Stradivari's life, that of his children, and more importantly, the journeys made by 5 violins and 1 cello made by him. The Lipinski, the Viotti, the Messiah (which almost never was played), the Paganini and the Khevenhuller are the violins and their owners are followed and described in this book, and the Davidov, the cello currently owned and played on by YoYo Ma. Having worked from violin designs from Nicolo Amati, another famous Cremona luthier, research provides descriptions of the

adjustments that Stradivari made in the structure of his violins over time, perfecting the sounds can be coaxed from the more than 1000 instruments that were made in his workshop. The secrets that Stradivari took to his grave continue to confound makers of violins, cellos and violas today. Despite all that technology allows today, there are no instruments that produce the beautiful depth of sound as beautifully as a Stradivari.

I really enjoyed this book. It contains a short but thorough (especially considering how little is known about the early life of Stradivari) biography and explanations of the violin making process before delving into the history of 6 particular instruments. I think I would have preferred that the history be divided into chapters that followed each individual instrument rather than an interweaving of all their stories together. If you are reading this book casually or among several other books it is easy to forget something that occurred two chapters ago that now has a direct correlation to the instrument which you are now following. That being said, I still very much enjoyed the book and would recommend it to anyone with a love of great craftsmanship, music, and/or history.

Excellent book that anyone interested in classical music should enjoy. Good detail of instrument construction and illustrates pride of old world craftsmanship. Highly recommended.

This book is an excellent starting point for all those who love classical music, violins and history. The research done by its author is really impressive.

I was amazed at the number of Strad. violins that have been altered, tampered with, faked. Are there any unspoiled Stradivari violins left in existence? Fascinating read but no closer to understanding the 'magic' of what made the Strad so special.

If you enjoy classical music and history this is the right book for you. This book follows the history of some of Stradivari's most famous instruments, full of anecdotes about the players and owners of the pieces. very interesting.

I can't say enough about this book, it is an easy read and is very detailed in the history and life of Stradivari. The amount of knowledge about the instruments and the history of the different instruments is superb. A must read especially if you are interested in violin history or Stradivari.

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