



# Violin Dreams

by Arnold Steinhardt

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"The Guarneri String Quartet's first violinist details his six-decade romance with the instrument . . . Steinhardt's passion is undeniably contagious; even the uninitiated will savor the technical sections for their revelations . . . By the final chapter, readers may find themselves searching for used violins . . . A backstage pass to the life of an accomplished solo and ensemble musician, held together by the sheer love of music." — *Kirkus Reviews*

"Steinhardt . . . turns this memoir about becoming a classical concert performer into an adventure . . . [He] shapes his story with a series of almost mythical odysseys and visions that parallel his technical and intellectual progress . . . The feeling of immediacy he creates . . . is an opus at once heroic and brilliant." — *Publishers Weekly*, starred review

**Includes a CD of Arnold Steinhardt playing Bach's Partita in D Minor — forty years ago, at the start of his career, and recently on his prized Storioni violin**

## About the Book

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Arnold Steinhardt's romance with the violin began when he was just six years old, the son of Polish immigrants who had settled in Los Angeles — an unlikely place and time for a child to fall head over heels in love with playing classical music. He would go on to become an international soloist, and for forty years the first violinist of the renowned Guarneri String Quartet.

With warmth, wit, and an insider's profound knowledge of the world surrounding this most seductive and stunningly beautiful instrument, Steinhardt recalls in vivid detail the atmosphere of terror perpetrated by his legendary early violin teachers; the frankly sensual pleasure involved in his pursuit of the perfect violin; the zany charged atmosphere of high-level violin competitions; Bach's Chaconne as the violinist's holy grail; the histories and mysteries of the great violin makers.

*Violin Dreams* is studded with musical pilgrimages, one of them to Cremona, Italy, home to the greatest violin makers of all time. Another to the all-but-vanished Polish shtetl where Steinhardt's mother was born, and where, he recounts movingly, his own love for the eerily evocative sound of the violin was born as well.

Included with *Violin Dreams* is a CD with two recordings. In the first, recorded forty years ago by a young Steinhardt, he plays Bach's Partita in D Minor. In the second, recorded especially for this book, Steinhardt again performs the Partita in D Minor, but this time on his priceless Storioni. Accompanying the CD is a lively conversation, in the form of liner notes, between Arnold Steinhardt and his friend the actor Alan Alda — on the differences between the two recordings, the two violins, and the greatest compositions for solo violin.

According to the composer and pianist William Bolcom, "Reading Arnold Steinhardt's *Violin Dreams* is a terrific way to find out what makes a violinist a violinist — especially a brilliant and great violinist. Anyone who would love to have been able to play the instrument (including present company) and who relishes violin lore will have a great time with this book, following Steinhardt's thread, woven of dreams of Bach's Chaconne, through the history of a remarkable life in music."

## About the Author

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**Arnold Steinhardt** is the author of *Indivisible by Four: A String Quartet in Pursuit of Harmony*. He is the first violinist of the acclaimed Guarneri String Quartet and performs all over the world as a soloist. He lives in New York City.

## Listen to a conversation between Arnold Steinhardt and Alan Alda

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A rare treat. A conversation between friends. Hear Alan Alda and Arnold Steinhardt discuss the book, the differences in the recordings on the CD, the author's lifelong fascination with a piece of music, and everything in between.

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