Forced to provide for his family from the age of 8 and thrown out of his home into a bitter Moscow winter at age 12, cellist Gregor Piatigorsky began his career as an archetypal struggling artist, using secondhand and borrowed instruments. When the October Revolution forced his escape to Warsaw, he enjoyed initial success with the Warsaw Philharmonic. Relocating to Berlin a few months later, he again struggled in poverty before eventually emerging as solo cellist with the Berlin Philharmonic. Settling in the United States during World II, Piatigorsky continued a brilliant career that cemented his place as one of the twentieth century's greatest musicians. This all-embracing chronicle of Piatigorsky's tempestuous life and career finally reveals the full life story of a musical legend.
This handsome, admirably researched biography of one of the two greatest cellists in the 20th century, is also a joy to read. Terry King, the author, was a pupil, teaching assistant and protege of Piatigorsky. He had the full cooperation of the Piatigorsky family as well as input from friends and colleagues. Pages and pages of wonderful vignettes, playbills, photos and letters, many never in print before. Fascinating tales of Piatigorsky's association with the big names in 20th century classical music: Bartok, Stravinski, Rachmaninov, Horowitz, Schnabel, Heifitz, Milstein, Szigeti, Casals, Furtwangler, Klempner, Koussevitzky and hordes of others. What a life and what a wonderful human being! A real Horatio Alger story too. Or, maybe a Dickens novel, especially Piatigorsky's early days in pre-revolutionary Russia and the early USSR. The book is beautifully organized and is in tight sections which make it easy to put it down (though you don't want to) and pick it up easily where you stopped. A model of what a biography of classical musicians should be.

mIni-Like

Excellent chronicle of the life of Piatigorsky as seen through the filter of one of his students.

Galanjov

Terry King has done a marvelous job in this biography. The Kindle edition has flaws. The illustrations and photos do not show well. It is impossible to look up footnotes. It is not possible to browse from one chapter to another. The only option is to go forward or backward by one page at a time. I do not recommend the Kindle edition.

Pumpit

My husband is a cellist and he loves it.

Kadar

Terry King's new, exhaustively researched and intricately detailed biography demonstrates why Piatigorsky was one of the giants of classical music from the early part of the twentieth century until his death in 1976. This book contains extensive first-person accounts by legendary figures in the music world and a great many heretofore-unpublished photographs, as well as reproductions of documents, including concert programs, letters from colleagues, publicity materials and other rarities. The narrative contains vivid descriptions and accounts of many other great artists with whom Piatigorsky collaborated, including Heifetz, Milstein, Horowitz, Rubinstein, Furtwangler, Rachmaninov, Hindemith, Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Richard Strauss, Celibidache and many, many others. The authenticity of the historical accounts in the book, based almost exclusively on primary source material, is beyond dispute. That alone would make this one of the most authoritative works on any musician available today. But King has also included sections containing the recollections of the man by colleagues and students (many of whom are today well-known artists in their own right today) that give dimension and to the vivid character of an extraordinary artist and human being. This book is a must for any serious lover of classical music.

Kulalbine

Terry King's biography of Gregor Piatigorsky is extremely well-researched. King chronicles Piatigorsky's life from a struggling artist to a musical legend. The combination of twentieth-century European history, the struggles of Piatigorsky, and the accounts of other artists of his time is woven into a fascinating story. This compelling book probes into the charismatic, inspirational personality of Piatigorsky, set against a background of one of the most tumultuous times in our history.

Ingeborg Hartwig

Naril

A book every cellist and music lover should read. The author has brought such a depth of research together with entertaining personal anecdotes to make it a book which becomes hard to put down. I really enjoyed the photos right through the book which provide a story in themselves, and the
comments from students and friends.
A book that is a must read for all music lovers! Piatigorsky’s interaction with composers, conductors and fellow musicians is especially interesting and often magical. The completeness of the research by Dr. Terry King is astounding. The book contains many photographs and other noteworthy documents.

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