



Nicolas Nabokov: A Life in Freedom and Music

Vincent Giroud

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Composer, cultural diplomat, and man about town, Nicolas Nabokov (1903-78) counted among his intimate friends everyone from Igor Stravinsky to George Kennan. While today he is overshadowed by his more famous cousin Vladimir, Nicolas Nabokov was during his lifetime an outstanding and far-sighted player in international cultural exchanges during the Cold War and admired by some of the most distinguished minds of his century for his political acumen and his talents as a composer.

This first-ever biography of Nabokov follows the fascinating stages of his life: a privileged childhood before the Revolution; the beginnings of a promising musical career launched under the aegis of Diaghilev; his involvement in anti-Stalinist causes in the first years of the Cold War; his participation in the Congress for Cultural Freedom; his role as cultural advisor to the Mayor of Berlin and director of the Berlin Festival in the early 1960s; his American academic and musical career in the late 1960s and 1970s. Nabokov is unique not only in that he was involved on a high level in international cultural politics, but also in that his life intersected at all times with a vast array of people within - and also well beyond - the confines of classical music.

Drawing on a vast array of primary sources, Vincent Giroud's biography opens a window into history for readers interested in twentieth-century music, Russian emigration, and the Cold War, particularly in its cultural aspects. Musicians and musicologists interested in Nabokov as a composer, or in twentieth century Russian composers in general, will find in this book information not available anywhere else.

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