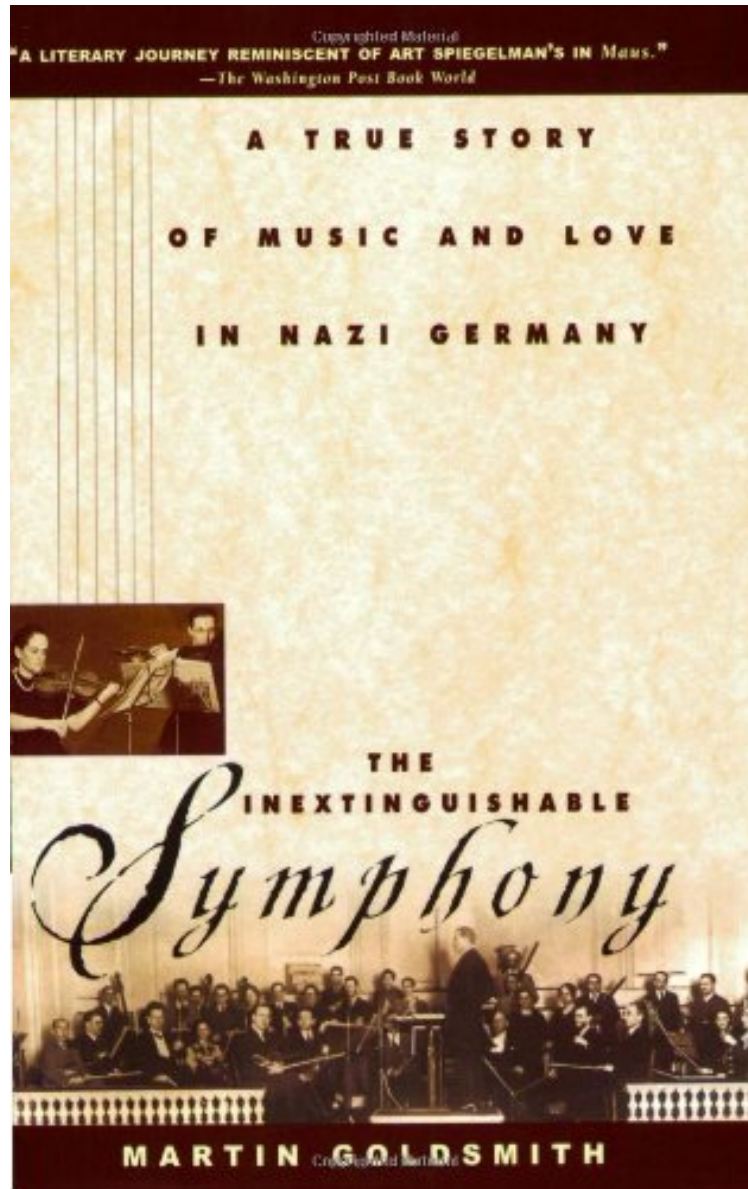


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# The Inextinguishable Symphony: A True Story of Music and Love in Nazi Germany

*Martin Goldsmith*

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**Martin Goldsmith : The Inextinguishable Symphony: A True Story of Music and Love in Nazi Germany** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Inextinguishable Symphony: A True Story of Music and Love in Nazi Germany:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Beautiful love in a time of horror, but.....By jdThis excellent book tells the love story of a Jewish couple at the onset and during The Holocaust. In it, however, deeper questions of how this couple and those musicians and associates around them would continue to try to establish "normality" in such hell. The result of their well-intended efforts could reasonably be argued that many who might have otherwise fled to potential safety remained and thus were ultimately slaughtered because they attempted to put blinders on. It can also be reasonably argued that they unintentionally contributed to legitimizing Hitler's Reich. Thus, while there is great beauty in the love, there is great sadness in seeing humans blind themselves to ugly truth. 5 stars out of 5.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A beautiful story on wings of proseBy Michelle B. BravermanThis is a moving and personal account of the Holocaust written by a son whose desire to understand many mysteries in his upbringing set him on a course of amazing research and discovery. Although his parents were able to emigrate, and among the last to do so, the other relatives were not. All their stories have been meticulously researched and brought to vivid life in this book. I've also learned for the first time about the Kulturbund, the "official" Nazi organization of the performing arts for German Jews (after they were evicted from all others). Martin Goldsmith is very good at putting forth arguments and "what ifs?". The Kulturbund may have both prolonged Jewish life and inhibited emigrating to safety. In particular the author's chapters on the ship Saint Louis and Kristallnacht are illuminating. My only quibble with The Inextinguishable Symphony is not the musical detail, but the details describing situations and conversations of which the author had no real source. I cut him some slack describing his parents' first date, first kiss, etc. in the interest of breathing life into the narrative. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Nice!By John PoppAm truly enjoying this little novel. Its often poignant content, especially with regard to music, revives precious memories collected since childhood. The author seems like an old friend - which, I'd guess, we could be. As a Gentile, any parts of any reportage regarding The Holocaust make my blood boil - this is no exception. We must NEVER allow memory of its horrors to fade, lest we again countenance such barbarity. The book contributes to that resolve.

"The Holocaust has hovered on the periphery of the American imagination for so many decades now, its hard to believe a book could come along at this point to burn a whole new perspective into our consciousness. But thats just what Martin Goldsmith has done with this astonishing work. . . . Goldsmith [writes] with modesty, restraint, and skill. . . masterly."SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE "A fascinating insight into a virtually unknown chapter of nazi rule in Germany, made all the more engaging through a sons discovery of his own remarkable parents."TED KOPPEL, ABC News "An immensely moving and powerful description of those evil times. I couldnt put the book down."JAMES GALWAY, Grammy Awardwinning Flutist"Martin Goldsmith has written a moving and personal account of a search for identity. His is a story that will touch all readers with its integrity. . . . This is a journey everyone should take."LEONARD SLATKIN, Music Director, National Symphony Orchestra "For years Ive been familiar with Martin Goldsmiths musical expertise. This book explains the source of his knowledge and his passion for the subject. In tracking the extraordinary story of his parents and the Jewish Kulturbund, Martin unfolds a little-known piece of Holocaust history, and finds depths in his own heart that warm the hearts of readers."SUSAN STAMBERG, Special Correspondent, National Public Radio "As much a tribute to the power of music as it is a Holocaust memoir, this book tells the deeply affecting story of a love that survived the terrors of WWII."PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

.com Writing this book must have required enormous courage; reading it is overwhelming, especially for anyone personally connected to the events it describes. Martin Goldsmith, best known as the host of NPR's Performance Today, is the American-born son of two German-Jewish musicians who escaped the Holocaust. He anchors the Holocaust to the story of his own family, whom he never knew because most of them perished in Hitler's death camps. Goldsmith accompanies them through their lives in Nazi Germany, with its ever-tightening persecution and repression of the Jews, and on their nightmarish journey to the gas chambers. He follows his parents through their early musical training, their blossoming love, courtship, and marriage--making them seem like a normal, happy young couple--to their miraculous rescue and escape to America. The book's linchpin is the Jewish Culture Association ("Jdische Kulturbund"), in whose Berlin orchestra his parents met. Established by prominent Jewish leaders in 1933, after a "purge" of all Jewish Civil Servants, the Kulturbund flourished for eight years, with the permission and under the constant, increasingly repressive surveillance of the Nazis, who exploited it as a propaganda tool. Spreading from Berlin to other cities, its musical and theatrical presentations, lectures, and films offered employment to thousands of Jewish artists and the only cultural oasis to its Jewish audiences. In 1941, Germany's preoccupation with the war and the "Final Solution" rendered it superfluous, and it was dissolved. But Goldsmith also furnishes the proper historical context for his uniquely individual, human account of the 20th century's most inhuman period. After a chillingly detailed description of the grass-roots rise of Nazism, he focuses on particularly horrifying events: the infamous 1935 Nuremberg Laws and the devastating 1938 pogrom, "Kristallnacht." The tragedy of the 937 refugees, including Goldsmith's grandfather and uncle, who were refused disembarkation first in Cuba, then in Miami, illustrates the world's customary indifference to "other" people's misfortunes. Nobody paid attention when, as early as 1922, Hitler declared that his first priority on coming to power would be the extermination of the Jews. Goldsmith's factual,

reportorial style increases the sickening horror, and he reminds us frequently that he is writing about his own family. Though his story's outcome is never in doubt, he generates real suspense--a measure of his skill, despite his unfortunate habit of hinting at the future. The Kulturbund has been accused of encouraging the Jews to ignore the desperate circumstances outside the theater, and therefore the imminence of their danger. Goldsmith refutes this. For most of them, emigration was impossible because, apart from the natural fear of pulling up roots, leaving everything behind, and starting a new life, they had nowhere to go. Moreover, how could anyone foresee the depth of the impending horror? It was, and still is, beyond the human imagination. Goldsmith writes with insight and aching honesty about the survivors' guilt and its numbing effect even upon the next generation. But his parents also taught him to love music and appreciate its meaning in people's lives, and he talks about it with real knowledge and understanding. (However, someone should have corrected his opening reference to Siegmund's sword in *Die Walkre*, which is made of steel, not gold.) This is a brilliantly written, important, unforgettable book. --Edith Eisler

From Publishers Weekly  
As much a tribute to the power of music as it is a Holocaust memoir, this book  
Written by Goldsmith, the former host of NPR's *Performance Today*  
Atells a deeply affecting story of a love that survived the terrors of WWII. The lovers in question are Goldsmith's parents: Gunther, a flutist, and Rosalie, a violist, were German Jews who met in 1936 when they were both playing in the Kulturbund's orchestra in Frankfurt. An organization that performed at the pleasure of Joseph Goebbels's Ministry of Information and Propaganda, the Kulturbund hired Jewish artists (forbidden to play in German orchestras) to present concerts, plays and lectures for solely Jewish audiences from 1933 to 1941. Drawing creatively from historical documents and family memories, Goldsmith's story suggests that the Kulturbund was both a lifesaver and a cultural refuge for Jews  
But it was also a Nazi smokescreen that gave German Jews a false sense of security. In engagingly reflective prose, Goldsmith tells the story of this institution and recounts how his father jeopardized his life by returning from Sweden, where he had fled, to be with Rosalie in Germany. The two married and finally migrated together to the U.S. in 1941. But other family members did not fare as well. Goldsmith's paternal grandfather and uncle were passengers on the *St. Louis*, the ship that sailed from Germany to Cuba only to be turned away; both died in concentration camps. Dealing perceptively with the complex emotions aroused in him by his parents' lifelong refusal to discuss their past and with their passion for each other and for the music that may have saved their lives, Goldsmith's account offers an excellent contribution to Holocaust studies. *Bw* photos. (Sept.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Booklist  
Gunther Goldschmidt from Oldenburg played the flute, Rosemarie Gumpert from Dusseldorf, the violin, in an orchestra set up under the Kulturbund established by the Nazis to show how well they treated the Jews. They married, endured the rigors of Nazi oppression, especially November 9, 1938, Kristallnacht, and in 1941 escaped to America, where Gunther, renamed George B Goldsmith, became a salesman, and Rosemary played in the St. Louis and Cleveland orchestras. Their son tells their story and that of the Kulturbund, which protected them from much harassment. Their survival story contains that of their love, which the love of music strengthened, and the sad stories of their parents and siblings, most of whom died in the camps. Martin, a longtime NPR producer and commentator on classical music, wonders why Jews didn't flee Germany earlier and suggests that the Kulturbund gave them a false sense of security. His weaving together of cultural and personal history constitutes a gripping tale of persecution, intrigue, and love and an insider's--or two insiders'--view of a dark time. Alan Hirsch  
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