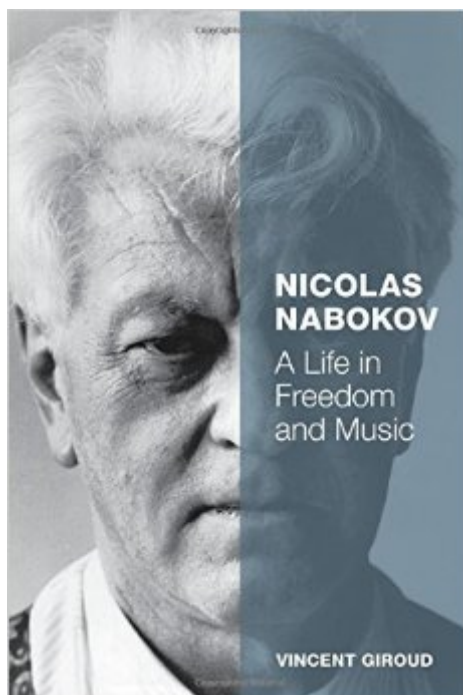


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# Nicolas Nabokov: A Life In Freedom And Music



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 584 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (March 3, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0199399891

ISBN-13: 978-0199399895

Product Dimensions: 9.3 x 2 x 6.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Lubcza, the house where Nabokov was born and spent a

large part of his early childhood (Dominique Nabokov archives). The Nabokov siblings's

string quartet: from Left to Right, Onya, Mitya, Mitya's violin teacher, and Nicolas (Dominique

Nabokov archives). From Left to Right: Natalie Nabokov, Nabokov, Lina Prokofiev, and Serge

Prokofiev, during their June 1930 gastronomic tour (photograph Felix von Bethmann-Hollweg).

Nabokov in 1946 with Charles Thayer (Right) and the head of programming at Voice of America

(Dominique Nabokov archives).

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Nabokov and Balanchine with

Stravinsky and his wife, Hollywood, December 1947 (Dominique Nabokov archives). Nabokov

signing copies of *Old Friends and New Music*, New York, 1951. Behind him are Virgil Thomson

(Left), Patricia Blake, and the painter Eugene Berman (Dominique Nabokov archives). Nabokov

with W. H. Auden, Ischia, 1950s, possibly with the poet Jules Supervielle (Dominique Nabokov

archives).

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Nabokov with Artur Rubinstein and

Vladimir Golschmann, Royaumont, mid-1950s (Ivan and Claude Nabokov archives). Nabokov

and Virgil Thomson in Thomson's Chelsea Hotel apartment, New York, 1970 (photograph by

Dominique Nabokov). Nabokov with his cousin Vladimir, Montreux, 1975 (photograph by

Dominique Nabokov).

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