



My Nine Lives: A Memoir of Many Careers in Music

Leon Fleisher, Anne Midgette

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The stirring memoir of one of the greatest pianists of the postwar era—an inspiring tale of triumph over crippling incapacity that rivals *Shine*.

The pianist Leon Fleisher—whose student–teacher lineage linked him to Beethoven by way of his instructor, Artur Schnabel—displayed an exceptional gift from his earliest years. And then, like the hero of a Greek tragedy, he was struck down in his prime: at thirty-six years old, he suddenly and mysteriously became unable to use two fingers of his right hand.

It is not just Fleisher’s thirty-year search for a cure that drives this remarkable memoir. With his coauthor, celebrated music critic Anne Midgette, the pianist explores the depression that engulfed him as his condition worsened and, perhaps most powerfully of all, the sheer love of music that rescued him from complete self-destruction.

Miraculously, at the age of sixty-six, Fleisher was diagnosed with focal dystonia, and cured by experimental Botox injections. In 2003, he returned to Carnegie Hall to give his first two-handed recital in over three decades, bringing down the house.

Sad, reflective, but ultimately triumphant, *My Nine Lives* combines the glamour, pathos, and courage of Fleisher’s life with real musical and intellectual substance. Fleisher embodies the resilience of the human spirit, and his memoir proves that true passion always finds a way.

From the Hardcover edition.

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