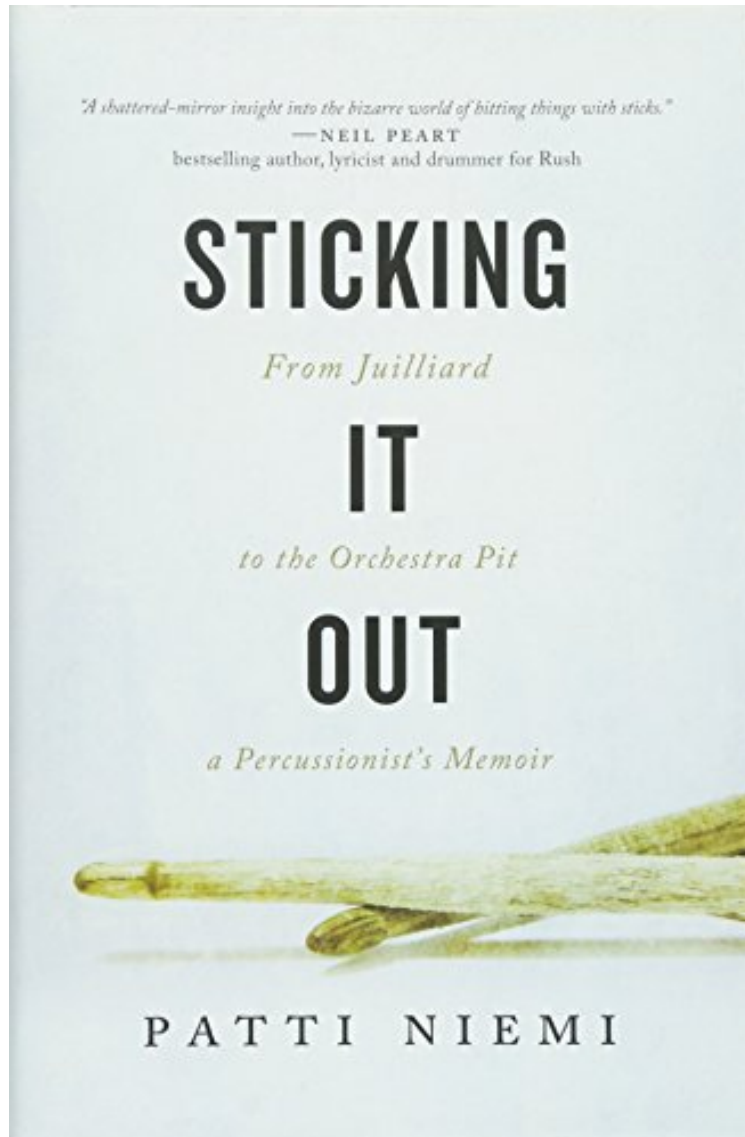


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## Sticking It Out: From Juilliard to the Orchestra Pit, A Percussionist's Memoir

Patti Niemi

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**Patti Niemi : Sticking It Out: From Juilliard to the Orchestra Pit, A Percussionist's Memoir** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sticking It Out: From Juilliard to the Orchestra Pit, A Percussionist's Memoir:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A double-barreled victoryBy hm101As a classical music enthusiast

for most of my life, I confess I never gave much thought to what a musician endures to earn a seat in a preeminent orchestra. After reading Patti Niemi's "confessional," I will be thinking about those precarious and rigorous steps every time I take my seat for a concert in Eastman Theatre! Niemi not only takes us behind the scenes in the life of an aspiring musician, she gets us to feel her struggles and doubts. *Sticking It Out* is insightful and entertaining, a double-barreled victory. I can't wait to read more from this author! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The author takes on some touchy subjects like dependence on anxiety-controlling medication and her uninformed response to ...By R. Gregory Capaldini This is necessary reading for anyone interested in how classical musicians get themselves established professionally, in this case, as an orchestral percussionist. The author takes on some touchy subjects like dependence on anxiety-controlling medication and her uninformed response to inappropriate romantic attention from a teacher. At times it reads like a whiny criticism of her conservatory's shortcomings, with the obligatory side dish of why-I-hate-and-love NYC. The writing is clear and admirably free of musician-speak, impeccably edited. A friend described this as a minus-the-sluttiness alternative to "Mozart in the Jungle," the basis for the TV show of the same name and a book with equal numbers of laudatory and scathing reviews. Niemi's approach is partly confessional but admirably un-lurid, and it benefits from the wisdom of hindsight, notably in her attitude towards competition for jobs that seem more prestigious. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. This is a reality based book all students should read. By Tony Steve Ms. Niemi wins this job as well. An accurate description of the business. Orchestra jobs are hard to win and hard to keep. I read this book in one sitting, it is good idea to swallow this pill whole, and take seriously her tale. Great book.

A vivid look inside the elite and cutthroat classical music world When Patti Niemi was 10 years old, all the children in her school music class lined up to choose their instruments. Boy after boy chose drums, and girl after girl chose flute that is, until it was Patti's turn. From that point onward, Niemi devoted her life to mastering the percussive arts. Cymbals, snare drum, marimba, timpani, chimes: she practised them all, and in 1983, she entered Juilliard, the most prestigious music conservatory in the world. Set against the backdrop of a rapidly changing New York City in the 1980s, *Sticking It Out* recounts Niemi's years mastering her craft and struggling to make it in a cutthroat race to a coveted job in an orchestra. Along the way, she has to compete with friends, and face her own crippling anxiety and reliance on prescription medication, while confronting the delicate, and sometimes perilous, balance of power between teachers and their students. Niemi's memoir brings us inside a world that most of us never get to see: gruelling practise schedules, intimate musical relationships, and long moments at the back of an orchestra spent sweating and counting before a big cymbal crash.

It's an eye-opening tale of demanding teachers, gruelling practice schedules, severe performance anxiety and bias against girl drummers a funny, poignant first-person account of the fierce commitment it takes to succeed in classical music. San Jose Mercury One of the funniest-ever classical-music books . . . and certainly among the best written. Philadelphia Inquirer A shattered-mirror insight into the bizarre world of hitting things with sticks. Neil Peart, bestselling author, lyricist and drummer for Rush By turns reflective and dramatic, poignant and hilarious, *Sticking It Out* offers an irresistible portrait of the artist as a young percussionist. In deft and swiftly drawn narrative strokes, Patti Niemi charts the formation of a career in music the endless hours in the practice room, the stomach-churning anxiety of auditions, the blend of competitiveness and camaraderie that shapes relations among up-and-coming musicians and she does it with wit and personality to burn. She's as adept at writing as she is at standing in a corner and banging on things. Joshua Kosman, San Francisco Chronicle Sharp like a flam, resonant like the end of a roll, *Sticking It Out* is everything you want a music memoir to be . . . funny, honest, and memorable. Kevin Smokler, author of *Practical Classics: 50 Reasons to Reread 50 Books You Haven't Touched Since High School* Patti Niemi's oft-hilarious memoir shatters images of percussionists as fearless aggressors who drive and pound their way through life. Instead, it presents the image of an emerging artist pounded by fear and insecurity. As she tells her tale with disarming candor, Niemi opens the door on the mental and artistic challenges facing all aspiring classical musicians in an era of shrinking avenues for professional practice. After she takes us through the wringer, as it were, she enables us to breathe a huge sigh of relief, if not make a joyful racket, as she lands her gig with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra. Brava! Jason Victor Serinus, journalist, Opera News, San Francisco Classical Voice