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Sticking It Out

Patti Niemi

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Sticking It Out Patti Niemi

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 practiced them all, and in 1983, she entered Juilliard, the most prestigious music conservatory in 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, face her own crippling anxiety, and confront the delicate, and sometimes perilous, balance of power between teachers and their students.

Niemi's vivid memoir brings us inside a world that most of us never get to see: grueling practice schedules, intimate musical relationships, and long moments at the back of an orchestra spent sweating and counting before a big cymbal crash. *Sticking It Out* is a humbling account of the work that leads to a dazzling moment of perfection, and of the dogged persistence it takes to follow a dream.

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