



UITGEVERIJ  
VAN BRUG

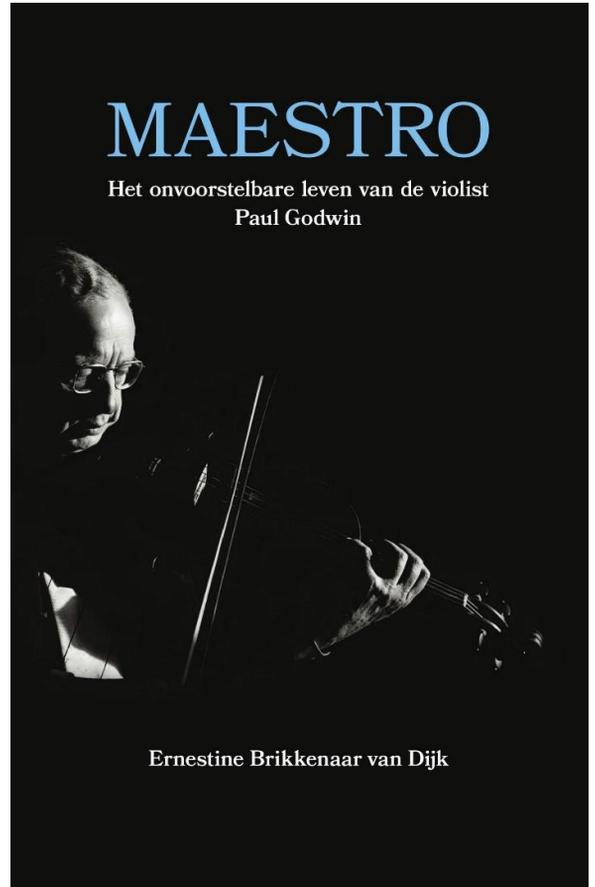
# Foreign Rights Submission: MAESTRO

*Biography of Paul Godwin paints a special life.*

## Talented, energetic and world famous 'Stehgeiger'

On the eve of the First World War, the ten-year-old Polish / Jewish child prodigy Pinkus Goldfajn leaves for Vienna to be apprenticed to a renowned violin educator.

Thirteen years later, during the Roaring Twenties, all of Berlin knows him as Paul Godwin, the most famous Stehgeiger in that bustling city. Millions of his records are sold all over the world and he becomes a millionaire. But when Hitler comes to power in 1933, his life turns into a nightmare.



**Title:** MAESTRO, the incredible life story of the violinist Paul Godwin.

**Author:** Ernestine Brikkenaar van Dijk

**ISBN:** 978-90-6523-453-7

**Price in NL:** € 20,00

**220 p. / paperback**

**Paul Godwin on Wiki:** [bit.ly/PG\\_Wiki](http://bit.ly/PG_Wiki)



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“Ernestine Brikkenaar van Dijk tells the moving and bewildering life story of the violinist Paul Godwin (1902-1982) on the basis of the facts she has found.

With this story, the memory of one of the most versatile musicians of the last century is taken from oblivion.”



## About Ernestine:



Ernestine Brikkenaar van Dijk (1958) studied Art History in Leiden (NL), lived and worked in New York for eight years and works as a (cultural) historical researcher and publicist.

In her youth she met Paul Godwin in her parents' musical home. They became lifelong friends.

**See next page for synopsis >>>**



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## PROLOGUE

It was cold and dark; I was lying in my bed in the small room in the attic. It must have been late at night because I had not heard any trains for a while. Right before entering the Sosnowiec train station, there was a bend in the tracks where train drivers used to blow the steam whistle before following the curve; that sound and the puffing of the steam locomotive are inextricably linked to the memories of my early childhood.

I heard my mother coming up the attic stairs, she sat down on the edge of my bed and gently shook my shoulder. She told me to wake up and come downstairs with her. An uncle from America had arrived,

he was told that I played the violin and he insisted on hearing me play before he had to catch the next train to Vienna early the following morning. I turned around in bed and mumbled that I was asleep, but my mother put her arm around me and said I really had to get up. The uncle promised to give me a silver ruble if I would play for him. A silver ruble was a fortune for a ten-year-old boy at the time, so I obeyed her, put on a sweater and pants over my pajamas and followed her downstairs.

I could not have imagined that what happened that night would determine the rest of my life...



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## Synopsis

Maestro tells the life story of a legendary violinist born into a Jewish family in a small town in Poland who, as a child prodigy, was subsequently educated in Vienna, Budapest and Berlin. At the age of 20 he changed career paths to become a millionaire in the field of the popular music of his time. He fled Germany when Hitler came to power and eventually moved to Amsterdam, where he survived WWII and started a new life in music.

**Part One** of the book consists of the fictional autobiography of Paul Godwin (Sosnowiec 1902-Driebergen 1982). He was born Pinkus Goldfajn in Sosnowiec, a small town on the Polish-Russian

border. As a ten-year old he left, without his parents, for Vienna to study the violin with **Hermann Kaplan**. In return for lessons, board and lodging, he served as a housekeeper for his teacher. After WWI he moved to Budapest to study with the famous violin pedagogue and composer Jenő Hubay. Almost two years later he had to flee the city, due to anti-Semitism and he went to Berlin. There he was admitted to the Hochschule für Musik as a student of Professor Willy Hess.

To earn a living and pay his tuition, he played in cinemas and dance halls.



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For that reason, he was expelled from the Hochschule. He started his own Tanz Orchester, got a recording contract with **His Masters Voice** (then a subsidiary of Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft) and sold an amazing nine million records as the best paid Stehgeiger in Berlin in the Roaring Twenties. He had his name in neon lettering, he was the proud owner of a chauffeur driven car and a town house on Kaiser Allee; in short, he enjoyed the status of a pop star of today.

When the Nazis came to power in 1933, Paul's Aryan wife divorced him and he fled to Luxembourg, taking with him only his Stradivarius and some Reichsmarks.

He assembled a new orchestra and

toured Europe. On the eve of WWII, he moved to Holland, together with his non-Jewish second wife, Friedel. Thanks to this being a mixed marriage, he was not deported and survived the war in Amsterdam. Later on, he found out that his entire family in Poland had been killed in Auschwitz by the Nazis.

During these five dark war years, he mastered the viola. After the war he built a new life in which he managed to combine the lighter musical genre with the purely classical repertoire; he was the violist of the world famous Netherlands String Quartet and the violinist of the Alma Musica Sextet.



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As a soloist he performed with every major Dutch orchestra. After Friedels death in 1970, Paul fell into a deep depression, but amazingly, he made a come back two years later in the Concertgebouw in a concert with **Yehudi Menuhin**.

In Part Two, the author tells her own story about the years she knew Paul from 1973 until his death in 1982. Godwin was a friend of the family and as such he played an important role in her life. He was influential in her decision not to become a professional violinist, but he also urged her to take up the viola.

Whenever she would ask him about his early years and the fate of his family in Poland, he was

overwhelmed by emotions and could not answer her questions. That fact inspired her decades later to start an in-depth research project which led to this book.

The last part of the book is an account of this project, which included numerous interviews, real life and virtual visits to archives in various European cities, the United States, Israel and of course the Netherlands.





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**Ernestine Brikkenaar van Dijk:**  
**Maestro. Het onvoorstelbare leven van de violist Paul Godwin.** Van Brug, 224 blz. € 20,-

## OOK VERSCHENEN

Fictieve autobiografie van de Pools-Joodse (alt)violist Paul Godwin (1902-1982) die volgens de Hochschule für Musik in Berlin één van de allergrootste violisten zou worden. Cultuurhistorisch onderzoeker **Ernestine Brikkenaar van Dijk** kende hem sinds 1973 als muzikale huisvriend van de familie. In *Maestro. Het onvoorstelbare leven van de violist Paul Godwin* reconstrueert zij liefdevol maar ook kritisch het leven van Godwin waar hij zelf, door emoties overmand, nauwelijks over sprak: zijn familie in Sosnowiec, zijn leermeesters in Wenen, Boedapest en Berlijn, zijn vlucht voor Hitler naar Luxemburg, België en uiteindelijk naar Nederland waar hij de oorlog overleefde en een nieuwe carrière opbouwde.

*Major Dutch newspaper NRC/Handelsblad wrote in a review: 'a loving masterpiece about the incredible life of a legendary violinist.'* (May 2020)

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