



Memories and Commentaries

Robert Craft

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The conversations between Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft are unique in musical history.' Sunday Times
The contents of the celebrated series of Conversations, dating from the last fifteen years of Stravinsky's life, were taken down by Robert Craft in informal talks with the composer. Craft lived for twenty-one years with the Stravinskys in their Hollywood home, or nearby, and for two more years in a next-door hotel room in New York. In the early 1950s he accompanied the composer on his concert tours, and from the mid-1950s to the end of Stravinsky's life co-conducted his concerts. Memories and Commentaries, the second of the series, is a brilliant portrait gallery in which Stravinsky, prompted by Craft, sets down with characteristic wit and insight his memories of such famous writers and musicians as Romain Rolland, Reynaldo Hahn, Lord Berners and Manuel de Falla. There are long sections devoted to Diaghilev, to Russian composers, to Stravinsky's childhood and youth in Russia, and detailed accounts of his collaboration with Benois (The Nightingale), Gide (Persephone) and Auden (The Rake's Progress). The Conversations books are the only published writings attributed to Stravinsky that are actually by him, in the sense of fidelity to the substance of his thoughts, making them required reading for all students and lovers of Stravinsky.

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