



Dear Readers,

Thank you so much for downloading this copy of *Uncommon Measure: A Journey Through Music, Performance, and the Science of Time*. I am honored that this book has been selected as one of Big Library Read's book club titles, and I am grateful to you for reading.

When I began working on this book, I found myself paused at the threshold between two times: the near-twenty years I had spent preparing for a career as a concert violinist, and a blank, uncertain future without the violin, after new-onset performance anxiety left me unable to feel the flow of musical temporality during performances. I started writing to figure out why my brain caused time to stop each time I approached a tricky run or treacherous chord progression. I wanted, too, to come to terms with the passage of time itself: to find a way of articulating what it means to shape the narrative of one's lifetime around a singular devotion, and what it means to let go.

As I researched *Uncommon Measure*, however, I began noticing connections and patterns that pointed far beyond my own experience as a musician and the realms of music theory and performance psychology. It felt increasingly necessary to reach outward to see what neuroscience, physics, even poetry had to say about time—how we move through it and how it moves through us. In attempting to bring these disparate fields together, I realized that a deeper yearning beat at the heart of the book: to find my subjective experience of time's malleability reflected in the scientific literature and in the stories of other people, performers and non-performers alike.

To me, libraries embody a similar promise: that each of us can seek our own humanity in others' stories and find again and again that we are not alone, whatever our experience on this Earth. Even more importantly, libraries facilitate that promise's fulfillment. By participating in the Big Library Read program, you are affirming the value and necessity of libraries and shared stories in your community and the world over. Thank you so much for your support, and thank you again for reading *Uncommon Measure*. I wish you the very best always.

Sincerely yours,

Natalie Hodges

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