



# BOOK NEWS & NOTES

## Chronicling A Mother's Life

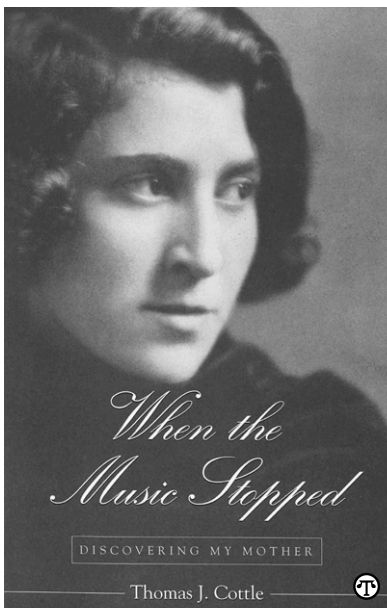
(NAPSA)—A new book tells the touching story of a mother's life and the decisions she made, through her son's words. The account is given by Thomas J. Cottle, a clinical psychologist and sociologist whose mother was once a child prodigy blessed with an extraordinary musical talent.

The book, called "When the Music Stopped: Discovering My Mother" (State University of New York Press \$18.95), chronicles the life of Gitta Gradova, who traveled the world as an internationally acclaimed concert pianist, performing recitals as well as appearing with the prominent orchestras of her era. In time, critics placed her among the world's greatest pianists.

Yet despite her dazzling accomplishments, personality and appearance, Gradova had a deeply problematic side—born perhaps of the pressures placed on her so early in life by her music career, then the pressures associated with being a wife and mother. The story ultimately focuses on the decision made by a woman to forfeit a brilliant career for the sake of motherhood—a mistake claims her son, that proved to be her downfall.

According to Cottle, it's likely that for Gradova, her family came to symbolize the silencing of her genius, the "unplugging of an entire chunk of her brain."

The book ends with Gradova, a widow of three years, announcing on her eightieth birthday that she would be returning to the concert platform after having been retired for more than 40 years. Performing would have fulfilled a promise



**A new book traces the extraordinary life of one woman, through her son's eyes.**

she had made decades earlier to her mentor, composer Sergei Rachmaninoff, to perform his first piano concerto. Sadly, Gradova died three months before the concert. Her son claimed in his eulogy it was a concert "only angels heard."

As much as the story describes the life of Gradova, the book is also about a son coming to terms with his mother and her death. Examining memorabilia, letters, articles and reviews, Thomas J. Cottle carefully constructs a life of the person who had the most profound effect on his own life.

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