



Einstein: A Biography

By Jürgen Neffe

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Separating man from genius, *Einstein* offers a startling new portrait of the iconic physicist. Wild-haired eccentric, revolutionary scientist, peace activist, Albert Einstein is well established in the popular imagination. He is celebrated for his contributions to our understanding of the cosmos, and his personal life?particularly his troubled relationship with his family and his numerous affairs with women?continues to generate controversy.

Jürgen Neffe takes a completely new approach to Einstein, giving readers an intimate look at Einstein's life and work. He debunks popular stereotypes and explains Einstein's scientific achievements in clear and accessible prose. Drawing on newly unearthed documents, including a series of letters from Einstein to his sons, Neffe presents a rich psychological portrait of a man whose character has too often been lost in the bright glow of celebrity.

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Einstein: A Biography By Jürgen Neffe Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Rarely has a single individual been so farsighted and myopic at the same time," Neffe observes, setting off to illuminate the truth behind the legend of Albert Einstein. This expanded version of Neffe's acclaimed biography first published in Germany in 2005 takes advantage of newly discovered documents, including the diaries of Einstein's Berlin physician, János Plesch, and letters from Einstein to his first wife, Mileva, and his sons, Hans Albert and Eduard. The biography is structured topically, with chapters devoted to Einstein's childhood and early schooling, his friendships, his physics research and how politics affected his work. Neffe repeatedly cites Einstein's dual nature: intelligent and serious, while simultaneously "childlike" and cheerful; a man whose theory of relativity changed the way we see the universe, yet who professed a decided "ambivalence" for the modern art and music influenced by his discoveries. Coupling insights into Einstein's character with clear descriptions of the physicist's groundbreaking research, Neffe creates a fascinating portrait of this "egocentric loner with a sense of responsibility for all mankind," one of the most intriguing figures of the 20th century. While Walter Isaacson's new biography is bound to be the big seller, Neffe is more straightforward on Einstein's less appealing traits: the misogynist, the curmudgeon, the passive-aggressive father. (*Apr.*)

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From [Booklist](#)

Provocative verging on sensationalistic, Neffe eschews chronology for a thematic approach, focusing, for instance, in one chapter on Einstein's troubled relationships with his sons. A best-seller in Germany, Neffe's portrait casts harsh light on Einstein and takes a skeptical view of his accomplishments. And what to make of a chapter titled "A Jew Named Albert"? Neffe atomizes Einstein's story and fails to discern wholeness.

Donna Seaman

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Review

"[Einstein's] are some of the most powerful ideas in all of science... Neffe does an especially thorough job tracing their origins in Einstein's early obsessions, and he shows how completely the latest cosmic theories are constructed atop the general theory of relativity."

(New York Times Book Review)

"You would never know you were reading a translation. Converted into evocative, idiomatic English by Shelley Frisch, the book abandons the traditional chronological framework to make oblique swipes across Einstein's timeline?like those bullets flying through a train."

(Los Angeles Times)

"Coupling insights into Einstein's character with clear descriptions of the physicist's groundbreaking research, Neffe creates a fascinating portrait of... one of the most intriguing figures of the 20th century."

(Publishers Weekly)

"Neffe's biography reads more like an American novel. The language is fresh and lively?a nod to Neffe's English translator, Shelley Frisch."

(San Diego Union-Tribune)

"A comprehensive, sympathetic, and very readable portrait of the man, the celebrity, the scientist, and the theories that transformed physics and the modern world... Stellar research and prose combine in a splendid biography of physics' most luminous supernova."

(Kirkus Reviews (starred review))

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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