

"This is an essential addition to all collections with a strong emphasis on world literature and Japanese history, and for English-reading students of 20th-century Japanese literature."—LIBRARY JOURNAL

"Not only a comprehensible account of the novelist's complex personal vicissitudes, but what is

in effect a trenchant commentary on the history of cultural and political life in postwar Japan." —J. THOMAS RIMER, PROFESSOR EMERITUS, UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

"This is a whale of a book—both unusually massive and extremely informative and stimulating."—PAUL MCCARTHY, *THE JAPAN TIMES*

Yukio Mishima, born in 1925, was a brilliant writer and intellectual whose relentless obsession with beauty, purity, and patriotism ended in his astonishing and spectacular self-disembowelment and decapitation in 1970. Nominated for the Nobel Prize, Mishima was the best-known novelist of his time (works like *Confessions of a Mask* and *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* are still in print in English), and his legacy—his persona—is still honored and puzzled over.

Who was Yukio Mishima really? This, the first full biography to appear in English in several decades, traces Mishima's trajectory from a sickly boy named Kimitake Hira-oka to a hard-bodied student of martial arts and intellectual provocateur. In detail it examines his family life, the wartime years, and his emergence then fame as a writer and advocate for traditional values. Revealed here are all the personalities and conflicts and sometimes petty backbiting that shaped the culture of postwar literary Japan, as well as Mishima's endless sparring and sparkling wit

in his written and oral encounters with politicians and student leaders of the day. Working tirelessly from primary sources, author Inose and translator Sato together have produced a monumental work that covers much new ground in unprecedented depth. Using interviews, social and psychological analysis, and close reading of novels, essays, letters, and commentaries, *Persona* removes the mask that Mishima so artfully crafted to construct his own personal narrative.



NAOKI INOSE has also authored biographies of writers Kikuchi Kan and Osamu Dazai.

HIROAKI SATO is a prize-winning translator of classical and modern Japanese poetry into English. He has also translated Mishima's novel *Silk and Insight* and his collection *My Friend Hitler and Other Plays*. He lives in New York City.



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A BIOGRAPHY OF YUKIO
MISHIMA



PERSONA

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MISHIMA

NAOKI INOSE WITH
HIROAKI SATO

