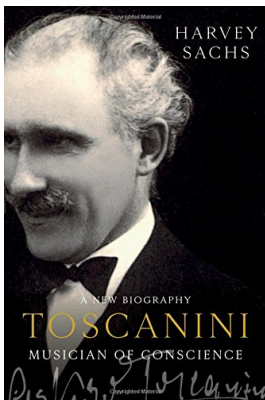


[PDF] Toscanini: Musician Of Conscience

Harvey Sachs - pdf download free book



Books Details:

Title: Toscanini: Musician of Consci
Author: Harvey Sachs
Released: 2017-06-27
Language:
Pages: 944
ISBN: 1631492713
ISBN13: 9781631492716
ASIN: 1631492713

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Description:

On the 150th anniversary of his birth comes this monumental biography of Arturo Toscanini, whose dramatic life is unparalleled among twentieth-century musicians.

It may be difficult to imagine today, but Arturo Toscanini—recognized widely as the most celebrated conductor of the twentieth century—was once one of the most famous people in the world. Like Einstein in science or Picasso in art, Toscanini (1867-1957) transcended his own field, becoming a figure of such renown that it was often impossible not to see some mention of the maestro in the daily headlines.

Acclaimed music historian Harvey Sachs has long been fascinated with Toscanini's extraordinary story. Drawn not only to his illustrious sixty-eight-year career but also to his countless expressions of political courage in an age of tyrants, and to a private existence torn between love of family and erotic restlessness, Sachs produced a biography of Toscanini in 1978. Yet as archives continued to open and Sachs was able to interview an ever-expanding list of relatives and associates, he came to realize that this remarkable life demanded a completely new work, and the result is *Toscanini*—an utterly absorbing story of a man who was incapable of separating his spectacular career from the call of his conscience.

Famed for his fierce dedication but also for his explosive temper, Toscanini conducted the world premieres of many Italian operas, including *Pagliacci*, *La Boheme*, and *Turandot*, as well as the Italian premieres of works by Wagner, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, and Debussy. In time, as Sachs chronicles, he would dominate not only La Scala in his native Italy but also the Metropolitan Opera, the New York Philharmonic, and the NBC Symphony Orchestra. He also collaborated with dozens of star singers, among them Enrico Caruso and Feodor Chaliapin, as well as the great sopranos Rosina Storchio, Geraldine Farrar, and Lotte Lehmann, with whom he had affairs.

While this consuming passion constantly blurred the distinction between professional and personal, it did forge within him a steadfast opposition to totalitarianism and a personal bravery that would make him a model for artists of conscience. As early as 1922, Toscanini refused to allow his La Scala orchestra to play the Fascist anthem, "Giovinezza," even when threatened by Mussolini's goons. And when tens of thousands of desperate Jewish refugees poured into Palestine in the late 1930s, he journeyed there at his own expense to establish an orchestra comprised of refugee musicians, and his travels were followed like that of a king.

Thanks to unprecedented access to family archives, *Toscanini* becomes not only the definitive biography of the conductor, but a work that soars in its exploration of musical genius and moral conscience, taking its place among the great musical biographies of our time.

80 photographs

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