

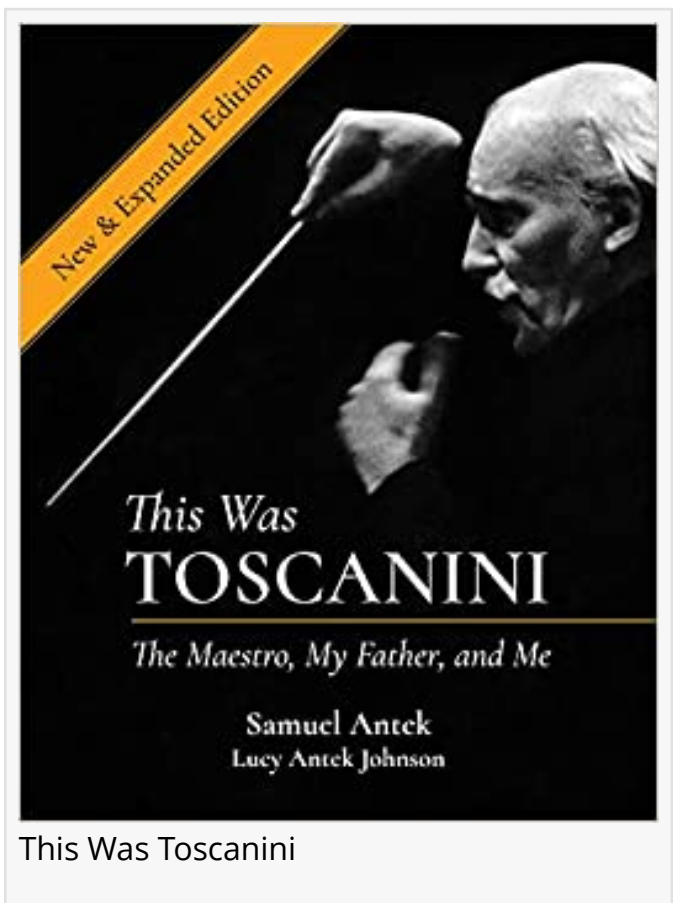
New Book Celebrates the 155th Anniversary of the Birth of Legendary Conductor Arturo Toscanini

THIS WAS TOSCANINI by Samuel Antek and Lucy Antek Johnson

UNITED STATES, March 21, 2022
/EINPresswire.com/ -- PRAISE FOR "[THIS WAS TOSCANINI](#)"

"We can almost hear the hoarse Toscanini voice in his fierce admonitions to the players, his wildly picturesque mixture of Italian and English in an idiom all his own. After the recordings, this book will probably remain the most enduring and endearing monument to the art of Arturo Toscanini." —Edward Downes, *The New York Times*

"This Was Toscanini is a magnificent achievement, a book that deserves a place in the libraries of all who care about the craft and mystery of great music making." – Ken Meltzer, *Fanfare Magazine*



This Was Toscanini

"Samuel Antek's classic account of playing in Toscanini's orchestra brought the Maestro back to life. In this new edition, [Lucy Antek Johnson](#) revivifies not only her father's text . . .but also her father's own remarkable story. This book will fascinate everyone interested in symphonic music and music making in general." --Harvey Sachs, Author and Music Historian

“

Toscanini was not only a genius as a conductor but also a revolutionary of musical interpretation.”

Maestro Riccardo Muti

“Toscanini was not only a genius as a conductor but also a revolutionary of musical interpretation.” --Maestro Riccardo Muti

Arturo Toscanini is still widely regarded as the greatest symphony conductor of the 20th century and, as the leader of the NBC Symphony Orchestra, was once the most recognizable figure in classical music. March 27 marks the 155th anniversary of his birth, and the reasons the man achieved legendary status in his lifetime become clear for a whole new generation in *THIS WAS TOSCANINI: The Maestro, My Father and Me* (Brown Books Pub Group; Second Edition) by Samuel Antek and Lucy Antek Johnson.

Former television producer Lucy Antek Johnson is the daughter of Samuel Antek, who was a first violinist with the acclaimed NBC Symphony Orchestra for 17 years. Johnson brings her father's stellar work back into print with this new and expanded edition in which her father captured for posterity what it was like to perform under the baton of the legendary Maestro Arturo Toscanini.



Lucy Antek Johnson

Samuel Antek, a virtuoso violinist and a conductor of the New Jersey Symphony, takes us behind the scenes during hundreds of rehearsals, concerts, tours and often grueling recording sessions as though we're actually sitting among the players. We feel the tension and exultation as Toscanini and his musicians strive to reach just the right tone and sonority as they rehearse over and over a particular musical phrase from Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, the horn solo that opens the Oberon overture, or the fiery Dies Irae of Verdi's Requiem. Illustrated by Robert Hupka's iconic candid photographs of Toscanini in action, the reader is witness to Toscanini's painstaking and often explosive process of making beautiful music. You can practically hear Toscanini taunting his orchestra. "Any asino can conduct – but to make music...eh? Is difficile!"

The unflinching honesty of Antek's recollections are on every page. As he wrote to his publisher: "I will describe what I have actually seen, felt, and heard Toscanini say. What he asked of us, those of us who made music with him."

Antek was only 49 when he died at the height of his own musical career, before he had a chance to complete his manuscript. His wife, Alice, and photographer Robert Hupka edited and designed the first edition of the book, which was published to great acclaim in 1963. Over the decades it has been often quoted, used as a reference for teaching and remains the most comprehensive full-length narrative about playing with the maestro.

Johnson's newly written essays introducing her father's original chapters highlight his own musical rise from first violinist to conductor and musical director of major American orchestras,

while sharing her own reflection of what it was like to grow up with such a gifted father and the impact that Toscanini had on their family and her father's career, creating a remarkable contemporary look into a unique era in classical music history.

Music critic Joan Baum of WSHU-FM said: "A total musician, an uncompromising enemy of Nazism and fascism, Toscanini could be imperious but never narcissistic. 'Playing with him,' Antek writes, 'was like a musical and spiritual regeneration. Making music became the noblest of professions and aspirations. This was the miracle of Toscanini.' Indeed. Would that the world might ever be so blessed again."

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