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Corresponding with Carlos: A Biography of Carlos Kleiber

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Carlos Kleiber (1930-2004) was the greatest conductor of his generation. His reputation is legendary, and yet astonishingly, in his five decades on the podium, he conducted only 89 concerts, some 600 opera performances, and produced 12 recordings. How did someone who worked so little compared to his peers achieve so much?

Between his relatively small output and well-known aversion to publicity, many came to regard Kleiber as reclusive and remote, bordering on unapproachable. But in 1989 a conducting student at Stanford University wrote him a letter, and an unusual thing occurred: the world-renowned conductor replied. And so began a 15-year correspondence, study, and friendship by mail.

Drawing heavily on this decade-and-a-half exchange, *Corresponding with Carlos* is the first English-language biography of Kleiber ever written. Charles Barber offers unique insights into how Kleiber worked based on their long and detailed correspondence. This biography by one friend of another considers, among other matters, Kleiber's singular aesthetic, his playful and often erudite sense of humor, his reputation for perfectionism, his much-studied baton technique, and the famous concert and opera performances he conducted.

Comic and compelling, *Corresponding with Carlos* explores the great conductor's musical lineage and the contemporary contexts in which he worked. It repudiates myths that inevitably crop up around genius and reflects on Kleiber's contribution to modern musical performance. This biography is ideal for musicians, scholars, and anyone with a special love of the great classical music tradition.

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