



Corresponding with Carlos: A Biography of Carlos Kleiber

By Charles Barber

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Drawing heavily on their 15-year correspondence, this book is the first English-language biography of Carlos Kleiber ever written. Charles Barber offers unique insights into how Kleiber worked. This biography considers 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. It explores the great conductor's musical lineage and the contemporary contexts in which he worked, and it repudiates myths that inevitably crop up around genius and reflects on Kleiber's contribution to modern musical performance.

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Editorial Review

Review

There's much, much more to Kleiber than the myth-making. At least there is now, thanks to Charles Barber's astonishing new book, *Corresponding with Carlos: A Biography of Carlos Kleiber*. Charles had a unique relationship with Kleiber. As a conducting student at Stanford University, with dazzling boldness and naivety, he wrote to Kleiber out of the blue and said he wanted to study with him. The key was Barber's use of humour and irony to attempt to elicit a response from Kleiber – it worked. Barber never formally became a student of Kleiber's (nobody ever did), but from 1989 until the maestro's death, he corresponded with the supposedly unknowable Carlos, and as well as vivid account of Kleiber's life, Barber's book publishes pretty well the complete letters he received. And they're a revelation. Kleiber proves as virtuosically funny and self-deprecating as he was incandescent on the podium....Barber's book does more than any other I know to simultaneously reveal the truth behind the Kleiber myths and to illuminate the deeper mystery of how his recordings and films continue to have such a talismanic power. This is a brilliant summary of Kleiber's way of making music. (*The Guardian*)

Barber is artistic director of City Opera Vancouver, with a longstanding, busy career in California music life, including contributions to *Classical Voice*. *Corresponding With Carlos: A Biography of Carlos Kleiber* offers unique insights into how Kleiber worked. This biography considers his 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. It explores the great conductor's musical lineage and the contemporary contexts in which he worked.

(*San Francisco Classical Voice*)

Once the book turns from biographical sketch to lively correspondence, we get the thrill of reading—hearing—the voice of Carlos Kleiber, and all is light. (*The Wall Street Journal*)

Charles Barber's book on Carlos Kleiber is fascinating, remarkable and unexpected....Rich in details....it contains unique jewels as one can appreciate Kleiber's encyclopedic knowledge....While Charles Barber's book is comprehensive, it is easy to read and the author's fascination and respect is palpable at every page....This is probably the musical book of the year. (*ConcertoNet: The Classical Music Network*)

Charles Barber's *Corresponding with Carlos: A Biography of Carlos Kleiber* represents an admiring younger conductor's efforts, begun during his graduate-student days, to draw out a brilliant but eccentric and reclusive maestro through multiple layers of correspondence. (*SymphonyNOW*)

'An artist par excellence', and 'creativity par excellence' - those are the definitions that come to mind when one thinks of Carlos Kleiber. Each time he conducted, it seemed that the music was being created anew that very moment in all its greatness, beauty and freshness. How wonderful that now we have a book about this genius. Bravo and many heartfelt thanks to Dr. Charles Barber for his work! (Evgeny Kissin, pianist)

Having heard most of the world's best conductors in the last 35 years, I can safely say that none brought so much passion, energy and exquisite musicality and beauty to their work as did Carlos Kleiber. *La Bohème* and *Der Rosenkavalier* under his baton at the Met will remain among my most treasured memories. In this fascinating work Charles Barber offers a rare glimpse into the enigma that was Carlos Kleiber. (Valéry Ryvkin, conductor)

This is mainly a book so fascinating that for once the 'impossible to put down' cliché is appropriate. Charles Barber was, in 1989, a young music teacher and conductor who sent a short letter to Kleiber, and to his amazement received a reply a few days later. He wanted to be Kleiber's student, but there could be no question of that. Instead, they became frequent correspondents, and all of Kleiber's letters concerning music are published here, with enough of Barber's to make the exchanges intelligible....What makes Kleiber's correspondence with Barber especially interesting is that Barber regularly sent Kleiber video cassettes of the great conductors, eliciting a deluge of comments on their style, greatness (or weaknesses), and their music. Kleiber's criticism alternates with his commentary on his own slender repertoire and his growing distaste for conducting....The first 180 pages are devoted to a biographical sketch, with many quotations from letters: illuminating, but I doubt whether many readers will be able to resist the temptation to leap ahead to the epistolary section. (*BBC Music Magazine*)

As a musician and old Kleiber fan, one cannot resist the temptation to whole-heartedly recommend this book. (*Teatro Colón Magazine*)

About the Author

Charles Barber is artistic director of City Opera Vancouver. He is the author of *Lost in the Stars: The Forgotten Musical Life of Alexander Siloti* (Scarecrow, 2002). More information can be seen on his website www.correspondingwithcarlos.com

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mark Sawyers:

Information is provisions for folks to get better life, information today can get by anyone on everywhere. The information can be a knowledge or any news even a problem. What people must be consider while those information which is from the former life are challenging to be find than now's taking seriously which one is suitable to believe or which one typically the resource are convinced. If you receive the unstable resource then you understand it as your main information there will be huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen with you if you take Corresponding with Carlos: A Biography of Carlos Kleiber as the daily resource information.

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Annie Fowler:

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