



Einstein Played Second Fiddle, The Life of William Hymanson a musician and scholar

Marsha Hymanson

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From a childhood of poverty in the tenements of the lower eastside of Manhattan to a life as a respected musician who associated with the most famous musicians of the 20th century, this biography paints a wonderful picture.

This is a book described by many of its readers as fascinating and well written.

William Hymanson, the son of Polish, Jewish immigrants, began his escape from his impoverished background through his talent on the violin. At age 14, in 1928, he was admitted to the Juilliard. Graduating from three of their programs (High School, Undergraduate, and Graduate), he became a violinist and an artist.

Hymanson was asked by his master teacher, Sascha Jacobsen, to join the Musical Art Quartet, then the most prestigious in the nation, as a violist. As a result, he was introduced to the world of the musical and cultural elite of this country, four of whom patronized the Quartet.

Because of his years in the Musical Art Quartet, Hymanson played string quartets on numerous occasions with Jascha Heifetz at his home, met Alma Gluck and Efrem Zimbalist and Mischa Elman, as well as other famous musicians of the day. At the concerts given by the patrons of the Quartet, he met such luminaries as Justice Felix Frankfurter, Grant Wood, and Thomas Mann.

He regularly played string quartets with Albert Einstein. Einstein played second fiddle (hence the title).

When the Quartet began to decline after Pearl Harbor, Hymanson became the principal violist to the Baltimore Symphony. The Quartet continued, on a limited basis, until the Army drafted him in 1944.

The Army recognized his talents and placed him in Special Services, where he entertained the troops and performed at war bond rallies. His young wife and daughter followed him when he was assigned to bases in the deep south. This leads to amusing and not so amusing stories from his war years.

After the war, the family moved to Los Angeles, where Hymanson established himself as one of the top recording and movie studio violinists in the area. He made hundreds of movies, many among the best known and beloved. He recorded with such stars as Frank Sinatra and Barbra Streisand

He also returned to his first love-chamber music-founding the Scripps Chamber Music Players and the Pacific String Quartet, both of which achieved critical acclaim.

Hymanson also joined the faculty of the Claremont Graduate School and the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara.

From the age of 14, Hymanson set out on the path to also make him a scholar. At that young age, he taught himself Hebrew from a library book and continued studying the Bible and its commentaries for the next 82

years, continuing to this day. He also taught himself ancient Greek, Latin, and modern Italian, reading in each language.

The reader will get a glimpse into a magical, but true, life that exemplifies the American Dream of pulling oneself up by his bootstraps.

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