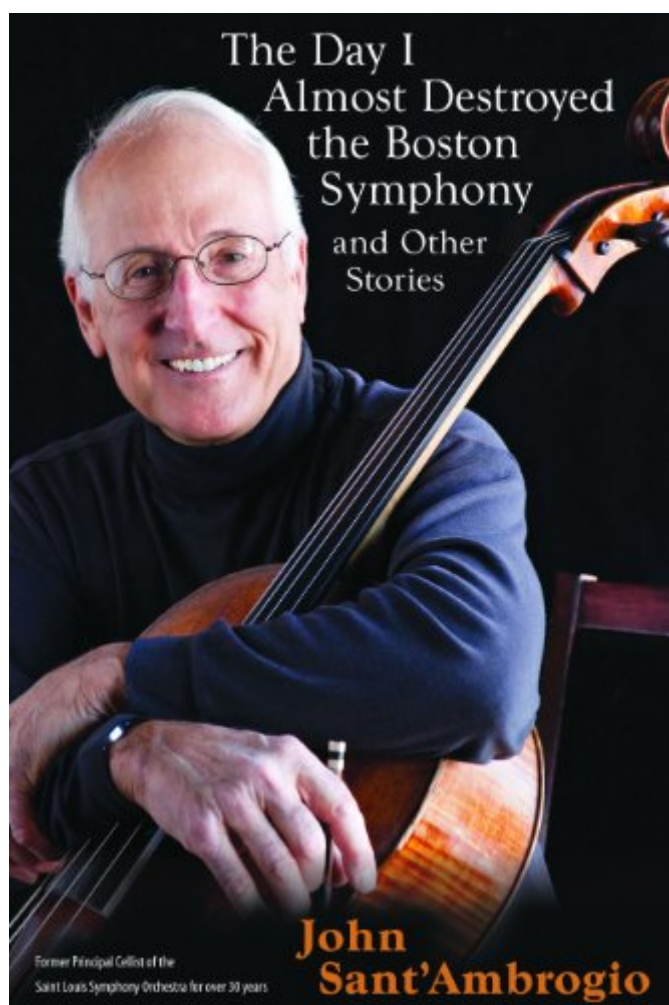


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# The Day I Almost Destroyed The Boston Symphony Orchestra And Other Stories



## Synopsis

John Sant'Ambrogio played with the Boston Symphony for 9 years, was Principal Cellist with the Casals Festival Orchestra for 2 years, and Principal cellist with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra for 37 years. A natural storyteller, he relates the life and sometime hilarious times he's experienced behind the scenes spanning over 50 years and 10,000 concerts. Included are dozens of stories that are dramatic, poignant, funny, and serious: his fateful day with BSO when it almost ground to a halt; the nights he slept with rattlesnakes in the Army; the day his career started while painting a barn. We duck as he is attacked with a bow during a rehearsal on stage; we watch intently as the conductor's toupee takes flight on a high note. We are privy to the tyrant conductors and the caring conductors, the inspiring times in a symphony orchestra and the bittersweet times, the professional injuries and the healings. And finally, we glimpse the possible future of live symphonic music in the concert halls of the United States. "The Day I Almost Destroyed the Boston Symphony and Other Stories" is a veritable who's who of the music world. The stories tell about the times the author spent with Charles Münch, Pablo Casals, Yo Yo Ma, Leonard Slatkin, Itzhak Perlman, Erich Leinsdorf, David Robertson, and dozens of other musicians and conductors. Through all this, the music that we "hear" is divine and inspiring-in spite of the rain, sleet, snow, strikes, and emergencies we encounter along the way.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As the grandmother of a violinist who is receiving her performance degree at a wonderful school of music, and who performs in a college symphony orchestra, I was totally delighted to read this book. It was pure fun and there were several times when I was just laughing hysterically!! I loved this "behind the scenes" glimpse at the experiences of John Sant'Ambrogio! The book ended too soon! I read it in a single sitting!!

It saddens me to say that although the author's heart is in the right place, his constant use of hyperbole [e.g..every person is "brilliant or great," etc.], his folksy commentaries to the reader "wow" or "wait for it", etc., attached to the most uninteresting and unfunny tales you can imagine, seem appropriate for only child readers in Sunday school! He seems more interested in his problems of bar counting (rests for his instrument) and resuming to play than anything else. Basic stuff indeed for a first cellist, one would have thought. And don't look for tales of European or world tours or famous first class conductors. Apparently there weren't any. Making a rare appearance in Carnegie Hall is the best he can offer. To be brief, this book is boring to anyone seriously interested in making a career in classical music or reading about working with any of the truly great conductors. Although the orchestral scene has moved on since the days of Toscanini, Reiner, or Szell and their orchestras, they might try reading. Anshell Brusilow's marvelous memoir of his career with Szell and Ormandy, and there are quite a few other well-written "bark-off" accounts to read dealing with players ambition and first-class orchestras without the mid-western boosterism attitude of Sant'Ambrogio in his second-tier orchestra (after he leaves the BSO), who seems to have never met a person he didn't like. - Believe me, it's dull stuff.

fun read

i highly recommend this book ! i feel like i am "inside " the world of john- some funny stories. others are very heart warming, inspirational. gives me an idea of struggles, hardships of musicians but their

love of music make them soar !!has john written a cello learning instruction book ?

This anecdotal and light-hearted book was a quick and pleasant read that all ensemble musicians will appreciate. When I was done, I sent it to our granddaughter, also a cellist in a college orchestra.

A written history of one man's life in music playing for several Symphonies, and the humor and fun.

As a retired symphony player, this really took me back. A fun read, with lots of insights into the life of a symphony orchestra musician.

Great collection of stories from a professional musician. What a career spanning almost 50 years. I wish he had included more about his life after he left the Saint Louis Symphony.

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