

Frank Crisafulli

Biography

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Frank Crisafulli had an amazing tenure of fifty-one seasons (1938-1989) in the Chicago Symphony! During this period, he has performed under the direction of every Music Director of the CSO except founder Theodore Thomas.

Crisafulli came from a musical family. A native Chicagoan, his father was a trombonist with the Chicago Civic Opera and the staff orchestra at WGN. His sister is a very fine pianist. Crisafulli entered Northwestern University as a liberal arts major although he played in the band, directed by Glenn Cliffe Bainum. He was then chosen as a member of the Civic Orchestra (1934-1937).

In 1938, he auditioned for the assistant principal position in the Chicago Symphony, his first professional audition. According to Crisafulli, "I came in as an assistant to a man named Edward Geffert, a very wonderful gentleman. Shortly thereafter the bass trombonist became very ill and I was moved to second chair and the second trombonist, David Anderson, moved to bass trombone. This was the section for the remainder of the year. The following year Geffert, who was ailing, did not want the responsibility of being first chair and actually asked that I play first and he would become the assistant."

Crisafulli was the CSO's principal trombone for sixteen years and then second trombone from 1955 until his retirement in 1989. He was the only trombonist in the Chicago Symphony Brass Quintet.

Those who Crisafulli credits as his teachers included his father, Frank F. Crisafulli, Sr., Einor Passoja, Frank Rizzo, Donald Reinhart, and Arnold Jacobs. He taught at the Chicago State College and Northwestern University

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