

## MUSIC DIRECTORS

### **Désiré Defauw**

*Born September 5, 1885, Ghent, Belgium.*

*Died July 25, 1960, Gary, Indiana.*

#### **MUSIC DIRECTOR (1943-1947)**



Désiré Defauw began studying violin at the Ghent Conservatory at the age of seven and later attended the Royal Conservatory in Brussels. After touring Europe as a violin soloist, in 1906 he was selected to lead the New Symphony Orchestra of London, specializing primarily in contemporary repertoire. Defauw also appeared as guest conductor with the Berlin Philharmonic as well as with orchestras in Vienna, Rome, Madrid, Moscow, Leningrad, and Budapest.

Admired and praised by both Richard Strauss and Maurice Ravel, Defauw assumed the directorship of the Concerts du Conservatoire, Belgium's leading orchestra, and later of the Belgian National Radio. He was master professor of the conducting and orchestra classes at the Royal Conservatory, and, in 1937 established the Orchestra National de Belgique, a permanent national orchestra.

Defauw made his American debut in 1939, conducting four performances with Toscanini's NBC Orchestra. He was signed as permanent conductor of the Montreal Symphony after conducting only one concert and served in that capacity from 1941 until 1953.

Defauw led the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 1943 to 1947. He introduced Chicago audiences to the works of several contemporary composers, including Barber, Bloch, Carpenter, Chadwick, Copland, Elgar, Goldmark, Milhaud, Sibelius, Walton, and Warlock.

Following his tenure in Chicago, Defauw also served as music director of the Gary Symphony Orchestra in Indiana (1950-1958).

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