

MUSIC DIRECTORS

Frederick Stock

Born November 11, 1872, Jülich, Germany.

Died October 20, 1942, Chicago, Illinois.

MUSIC DIRECTOR (1905-1942)



Frederick Stock began studying the violin with his father, a bandmaster in the German army. At the age of fourteen, he won a scholarship to the Cologne Conservatory, where he studied theory and composition under Engelbert Humperdinck, Franz Wüllner, and Gustav Jensen. Upon his graduation in 1887, Stock joined the Cologne Orchestra and played under conductors such as Johannes Brahms, Peter Tchaikovsky, and Richard Strauss. During this time, he met Theodore Thomas and accepted his invitation to come to America to play with the Chicago Orchestra. Four years later, Stock became Thomas's assistant.

Upon Theodore Thomas's death in January 1905, Stock was appointed as acting conductor, while the Orchestral Association began a search for a permanent replacement. Under Stock's baton, the Orchestra premiered his symphonic poem *Eines Menschenlebens Morgen, Mittag und Abend* (A person's lifetime: morning, noon, and evening), on April 7 and 8, 1905; the score was dedicated to Thomas and the Orchestra. On April 11, 1905, the trustees of the Orchestral Association met: "Frederick Stock unanimously elected Conductor. Trustees voted that the Orchestra should now be known as 'The Theodore Thomas Orchestra.'" (In February 1913, the name of "The Theodore Thomas Orchestra" was changed simply to "Chicago Symphony Orchestra," in the belief that it would be easier to solicit funds for an institution that bore the name of the community.)



The Chicago Symphony Orchestra's first recording.

In 1905, the Orchestra began performing at Ravinia Park, appearing semiregularly through August 1931, after which the Park fell dark under the Great Depression. The Orchestra helped to inaugurate the first season of the Ravinia Festival in August 1936. On May 1, 1916, Stock and the Orchestra recorded Mendelssohn's Wedding March from the Incidental Music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The recording was released by the Columbia Graphophone Company.

During the 1919-20 season Frederick Stock inaugurated a regular subscription series of

youth concerts as well as the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, a training orchestra. He also further developed the Popular Concert series, which featured a wide range of music from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* to Wagner overtures and Strauss waltzes.

The Orchestra celebrated its fiftieth anniversary during the 1940-41 season; for the occasion, Stock commissioned Stravinsky's Symphony in C, Milhaud's Symphony no. 1, Miaskovsky's Symphony no. 21, Harris's *American Creed*, Kodály's Concerto for Orchestra, Glière's *Fête ferganaise* Overture, Casella's Symphony no. 3, and Walton's *Scapino* Overture.

Shortly after the beginning of the fifty-second season, Frederick Stock died unexpectedly, just three weeks short of his seventieth birthday. During his thirty-seven-year tenure as music director, Stock was an inspirational force, continuing in the tradition of Theodore Thomas and truly becoming the Orchestra's "second father."

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