MUSIC DIRECTORS

Rafael Kubelík

*Born June 29, 1914, Býchory, near Kolín, Czechoslovakia.*
*Died August 11, 1996, Lucerne, Switzerland.*

**MUSIC DIRECTOR (1950-1953)**

The son of virtuoso violinist Jan Kubelík, Rafael Kubelík began violin studies at an early age with his father. At the age of fourteen, he began a six-year intensive program at the Prague Conservatory, studying composition, violin, piano, and conducting. Kubelík was appointed music director and conductor of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra in Prague in 1936, a position he held until 1948. From 1939 to 1941 he also was music director at the National Theatre in Brno. In 1948, following the Communist takeover of the Czechoslovakian government, Kubelík left his homeland for the West.

Kubelík made his American debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra on November 17, 1949. He conducted three weeks of subscription concerts, and the success of those appearances led to his appointment as the Orchestra’s fifth music director.

Kubelík introduced over seventy new works during his three-season tenure, and his interpretations of works from his native Czechoslovakia drew critical praise. He also led several recordings, including the Orchestra’s first recording of Mussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition*, which was the first high fidelity long-playing record commercially marketed in the United States.

Kubelík later served as music director at the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden in London (1955-1958), the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra (1961-1979), and briefly as the first music director of the Metropolitan Opera (1973). He also returned to guest conduct the Chicago Symphony Orchestra on several occasions. Kubelík’s final appearance with the Orchestra was on October 18, 1991, when he conducted Dvořák’s *Husitská* Overture concluding the Gala Centennial Finale concert (a re-creation of the Orchestra’s first concert on October 16, 1891).
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