

Like the city of Detroit itself, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra has had to deal with many difficulties, from disintegrating venues to financial crises. But through all its trials and tribulations, the DSO has maintained a consistently high level of musicianship and technical skill, directly representative of the many distinguished conductors who have directed the group. The DSO was founded in 1914 by ten young society women who each contributed \$100 to the enterprise and secured \$10 commitments from 100 other people. The ladies hired Weston Gales to conduct, and the DSO played its first concert on February 26, 1914. Gales' name is not much remembered in Detroit; the orchestra blossomed with the appointment of the Russian pianist Ossip Gabrilowitsch as the music director in 1918. Gabrilowitsch encouraged the construction of Orchestra Hall, which was immediately hailed for its fine acoustics. He also raised the DSO's profile nationally and internationally through concertizing and (especially) radio broadcasts. With Gabrilowitsch conducting and famed pianist Artur Schnabel playing, the DSO took part in the world's first radio broadcast of a symphonic concert in 1922; later, the DSO was featured on the nationally broadcast Ford Symphony Hour. Unfortunately, two years after Gabrilowitsch died in 1937, Orchestra Hall was closed due to lack of funds to maintain it. The orchestra went through a difficult stretch, during which it was disbanded twice, until the 1951 hiring of French conductor Paul Paray. Paray's mastery of French repertoire brought international attention to the DSO; during his tenure, some claimed the world's best French orchestra was actually in Detroit. He was succeeded by distinguished musician Sixten Ehrling, but then the orchestra went through another down period in the 1970s. Antal Dorati, the fine Czech conductor, was brought in to lead in 1977, but financial problems crippled the orchestra. These problems continued through 1987, when the orchestra's cumulative deficits reached \$8 million; its endowment was only \$14 million. The musicians stopped work for 12 weeks, claiming that both management and current music director Gunther Herbig were inept. Finally, both sides made concessions; Herbig was dismissed and replaced with esteemed Estonian conductor Neeme Järvi, while the orchestra's musicians accepted a substantial pay cut. Meanwhile, a group called Save Orchestra Hall had staved off numerous attempts by the city to demolish the now-decrepit structure and managed to raise enough funds to restore it to its former glory. In 1989, the DSO moved back in. With Järvi's creative, stimulating direction drawing in the ticket buyers, and the glorious old-new hall proving an eminently suitable recording venue, the DSO took steps toward financial rejuvenation. Thankfully, the DSO never lost its artistic distinction; those who expect Detroit to be incapable of producing a distinguished orchestra are always surprised by the DSO's precise playing, tonal beauty, and ability to convey emotion. The DSO recorded for Chandos with Järvi and is heard nationally on General Motors' nationally broadcast Mark of Excellence radio series.

In 2003, the DSO successfully opened the Max M. Fischer Music Center, which includes the modernized Orchestra Hall, a second performance hall, and an education center, even as Järvi announced his departure at the end of the 2004-2005 season.

# PARAY



## Chausson - Bizet - Debussy

**PAUL PARAY / DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**



The distinguished French conductor, organist and composer, Paul Paray, began his musical education with his father, Auguste, who was a sculptor and organist at St. Jacques church, and leader of an amateur musical society. He put young Paul in the society's orchestra as a drummer. Later, Paul Paray went to Rouen to study music with the abbots Bourgeois and Bourdon, and organ with Haelling. In 1904 he entered the Paris Conservatoire, as a composition student, studied there with Leroux, Caussade, Lenepveu, and Vidal. In 1911, he won the Premier Grand Prix de Rome for his cantata *Yanitzka*.

As World War I started, Paul Paray heeded the call to arms and joined the French Army. In 1914, he was a prisoner of war at the Darmstadt camp, where he composed a string quartet. After the war, in 1918, he was invited to conduct the orchestra of the Casino de Cautelets, substituting the ailing Caplet. The orchestra included players from the *Lamoureux Orchestra*. This was a springboard for him to make his Paris debut with this Orchestra on February 20, 1920. Soon he became assistant conductor of the *Lamoureux Orchestra*, succeeding Camille Chevillard as 1st conductor in 1923. In 1928, he was appointed Music Director of the *Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo*, and in 1932, succeeded Pierné as conductor of the *Concerts Colonne*, remaining until the orchestra was disbanded by the Nazi occupiers of Paris in 1940. He conducted briefly in Marseilles, and, following the liberation of Paris, resumed his duties with the *Concerts Colonne* (1944-1952).

In 1922, Paray composed music for the Ida Rubinstein ballet *Artémis troublée*. That year he and the Spanish violinist Manuel Quiroga premiered his *Violin Sonata*. In 1931, he wrote the *Mass* for the 500th Anniversary of the Death of Joan of Arc, which was premiered at the cathedral in Rouen to commemorate the quincentenary of Joan of Arc's martyr death. In 1935, he wrote his *Symphony No. 1* in C major, which was premiered at the *Concerts Colonne*. He composed his *Symphony No. 2* in A major in 1941.

Paul Paray made his American debut with the *New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra* on July 24, 1939, in a programme of French music.. In 1949-1950 he was Music

Director, *Israel Philharmonic Orchestra*. In 1952, he was appointed Music Director of the reorganised *Detroit Symphony Orchestra*, and on October 18, 1956, inaugurated the new *Ford Auditorium* in Detroit in a programme that included his own *Messe du cinquième centenaire de la mort de Jeanne d'Arc*, a work first heard in the Rouen Cathedral in France in 1931. He conducted conducting the *Detroit Symphony Orchestra* in numerous recordings for Mercury Records' "Living Presence" series. In 1963 he resigned and returned to France, although he continued to gust-conduct internationally, including the *Boston Symphony Orchestra*, *Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra*, *San Francisco Symphony Orchestra*, *Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana*, among many others. In 1977, at the age of 91, he conducted an orchestral concert in honour of Marc Chagall's 90th birthday celebration in Nice, and, at the age of 92, made his last conducting appearance in the USA, leading the *Orchestra of the Curtis Institute of Music* in Philadelphia.

Paul Paray could and did conduct the entire orchestral repertoire well, but he specialised in the French symphonic literature. One of Paray's most renowned recordings, made in October 1957, is that of Camille Saint-Saëns' *Symphony No. 3* in C minor. The circumstances surrounding the recording were fortuitous. Paray had built the *Detroit Symphony Orchestra* into one of the world's most distinguished. Marcel Dupré, a friend and fellow student from childhood, was organist for the session. Marcel Dupré, as a young student, had pulled the organ stops for the composer Camille Saint-Saëns in a performance of the *Symphony No. 3* in Paris, and the organ of *Ford Auditorium* in Detroit was well suited to the work. As well as being among the most authoritative readings of the work, the original analogue recording on the Mercury label remains an audiophile reference in vinyl, and the analogue-to-digital transfer produced by the original recording director Wilma Cozart for CD is also available from Mercury.

Paul Paray married Yolande Falck in Cassis, France, on August 25, 1942. He was a National Patron of *Delta Omicron*, an international professional music fraternity. The government of France awarded him its highest honour, the *Grand-Croix de la Légion d'honneur*, in 1975.

# PARAY

## Chausson - Bizet - Debussy

PAUL PARAY / DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Chausson Symphony in B-flat major

1. Lent; Allegro Vivo 11:24
  2. Très Lent 8:20
  3. Animé; Très Animé 11:11
  4. Bizet Carmen Suite 12:29
  5. Debussy Prelude to the  
Afternoon of a Faun 8:31
- Total Time: 51:55

Chausson recorded 3/1956 - Bizet recorded 11/1956 - Debussy recorded 11/1955

Engineer [Associate] - Robert Eberenz - Engineer [Chief] - C. Robert Fine

Recording Supervisor [Recording Director] - Wilma Cozart

Supervised By [Musical Director] - Harold Lawrence