

In 1936 I began my career in the Chicago Symphony and continued on through the 1940-41 season. After that season I was invited to the Cleveland Orchestra with Arthur Rodzinski, who became acquainted with me and my horn playing while at Ravinia, where he was guest conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He offered me the job as first horn of the Cleveland Orchestra.

When Arthur Rodzinski became the music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, he insisted that I come back with him. Chicago was still my home, and the Chicago Symphony -- the greatest orchestra in the world -- was still in my heart. So I came back and stayed with the Orchestra from that season up through the 1960-61 season, going through the seasons of Rodzinski, Kubelik, and Reiner until I left to take up residency at Indiana University as a full professor of music. I had one hectic year with Rodzinski. I think it is interesting here to recall some of the events.

Rodzinski was a great conductor-- even Claudia Cassidy admitted it -- and we gave some great concerts. Still, Rodzinski was a very controversial figure, to say the least. It was my duty to drive him home after concerts, since he lived on my way home near the Oak Street Beach and I lived in Evanston. He did not drive a car and asked me to drive him. Well, on one of these trips he said, "You know we are going to move from Orchestra Hall to the Auditorium, which has just been remodeled. I answered, "Mr. Rodzinski, if I were you I would think twice about that idea!" He replied, "No! I love to put on operas, and so every month or two we can put on an opera with the facilities which are available at the Auditorium." And he said we would have such a big house that we could eliminate some of the weekly concerts, preferably the Tuesday afternoon series, because we would have a larger audience. Well -- since I had been an usher I knew the attitude of the concert-going public, and I referred to the box seats -- I told him those box seats are "heirlooms" passed down in the families who own them from generation to generation. I don't think those people would ever want to leave Orchestra Hall. Secondly, I told him that I thought the acoustics in Orchestra Hall are much superior to those in the Auditorium for symphony concerts, and certainly for the smaller works such as Mozart. So I again told him I thought seriously that he was making a big mistake. Well, that didn't seem to influence him at all and he went ahead with those plans, which as I had predicted, caused a great deal of furor.

I think the straw that broke the camel's back with Rodzinski -- although there were many things about his tenure that I didn't understand -- was that he was getting a reputation for not showing up at out-of-town concerts. He would continually call in sick or have some other excuse. I recall one time we were to play a concert in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and the officials there insisted that the contract clearly state that Arthur Rodzinski would appear in Green Bay. Well, when we went there that night for the concert Rodzinski did not appear for the concert. Maestro Tauno Hannikainen took over. But first, the manager there came on stage and announced that Maestro Rodzinski could not appear for the concert because he had such a severe case of bursitis that he simply could not raise his arms above his shoulder. The audience booed and hissed, but nonetheless the concert did go on. However, the very next morning the Chicago Tribune -- which had a very interesting column entitled "They Were There," which dealt with society parties and all kinds of social events around Chicago and suburbs -- published this row of pictures in

the column and in one of them Rodzinski was holding a glass of champagne on high, way over his head. It told the date of this party, which was the exact time of the Green Bay concert, proving beyond doubt that he wasn't ill. When this bit of information got out I think it surely was the "straw that broke the camel's back." He did so many things of this sort that his tenure was shortened and he was given notice after about 15 weeks into the season.

However, we continued and everything improved. Rodzinski was out to show the world that he did have what it takes musically and we were out prove that we could make good music with him.

The public was divided. Some could see the necessity of getting rid of Rodzinski and some could not. Some could only see the fact that he made beautiful music. Towards the end of the season that he was to leave, fights broke out in the audience; someone in the balcony would shout "Don't fire Rodzinski, fire the Management!" -- and someone would retort "Shut up and sit down!" Then the fist fights broke out. Finally, we had to have police protection at the end of the last few weeks and policemen were stationed at each corridor, the ends of each aisle, and out in the halls during the concerts to prevent out-breaks of this sort. It was quite exciting and when Rodzinski left after his last concert, of course, the entire audience rose to its feet and cheered and yelled and he took several bows. When he finally came out for his last bow he brought his little son with him and took his last bow with this small child in his arms; there was quite a bit of weeping. It was simply amazing -- the sort of thing you might see at one of our present day rock concerts.