



GAÎTÉ PARISIENNE OFFENBACH

GAYNE BALLETS SUITE KHACHATURIAN

BOSTON POPS ORCHESTRA / ARTHUR FIEDLER



Fiedler was born in Boston, Massachusetts to Emanuel and Johanna Fiedler. His father was an Austrian violinist who played in the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and his mother was a pianist and musician. He grew up in Boston, and attended Boston Latin School until his father retired (in the early 1900s), and they moved to Vienna, Austria, in 1910. The family soon moved again, to Berlin, where from 1911 to 1915 young Fiedler studied violin at the Royal Academy of Music (Hochschule für Musik Berlin) under Willy Hess. Fiedler returned to Boston at the beginning of World War I. In 1915 he joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Karl Muck as a violinist. He also worked as a pianist, organist, and percussionist. In 1924, Fiedler formed the Boston Sinfonietta, a chamber music orchestra composed of Boston Symphony members, and started a series of free outdoor concerts. Fiedler was appointed the eighteenth conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra in 1930. While the position of conductor of the Boston Pops both prior to and after Fiedler tended to be a phase of a conductor's career, Fiedler made it his life's work, having the position for a half-century. With Fiedler's direction, the Boston Pops reportedly made more recordings than any other orchestra in the world, most of them for RCA Victor, with total sales of albums, singles, tapes, and cassettes exceeding \$50 million. His recordings began in July 1935 at Boston's Symphony Hall with RCA, including a world premiere recording of Jacob Gade's *Jalousie*, which eventually sold more than a million copies, and the first complete recording of *Rhapsody in Blue* by George Gershwin (with Jesus Maria Sanromá as soloist). In 1946, he conducted the Boston Pops in one of the first American recordings devoted to excerpts from a film score, Dmitri Tiomkin's music for the David O. Selznick Technicolor epic *Duel in the Sun*; RCA Victor released an album of ten-inch 78-rpm discs complete with photographs from the film. Fiedler's June 20, 1947, recording of *Gaîté Parisienne* by Jacques Offenbach was eventually released by RCA as their very first long-playing classical album (RCA Victor LM-1001), in 1950. He recorded the same music in 1954 in stereo and began making regular stereo recordings in 1956. A number of Fiedler's recordings were released as 45-rpm "extended play" discs, beginning in 1949, such as Tchaikovsky's *Marche Slave* and *Ketèlbey's In a Persian Market* (RCA Victor ERA-2). Besides recording light classics, Fiedler also recorded music from Broadway shows and Hollywood film scores, as well as arrangements of popular music, especially the Beatles. He and the Boston Pops occasionally recorded classical works that were favorites, but not considered as "light" as most of the pieces that he conducted. He made but a single recording with the Boston Symphony Orchestra: Dvorak's *New World Symphony*. There were also recordings of chamber music by his Sinfonietta. Fiedler and the Boston Pops recorded exclusively for RCA Victor until the late 1960s, when they switched to Deutsche Grammophon for classical releases with co-owned Polydor Records for his arrangements of pop music compositions and then London Records. His last album, devoted to disco, was titled *Saturday Night Fiedler*. Fiedler was also associated with the San Francisco Pops Orchestra for 26 summers (beginning during 1949), and conducted many other orchestras throughout the world. He was a featured conductor on several of NBC's *The Standard Hour* programs in 1950 and 1951, conducting the San Francisco Symphony in the War Memorial Opera House; the performances were preserved on transcription discs and later released on audio cassette. Fiedler had many different hobbies. He was fascinated by the work of firefighters and would travel in his own vehicle to large fires in and around Boston at any time of the day or night to watch the firefighters at work. He was even made an "Honorary Captain" in the Boston Fire Department. A number of other fire departments gave him honorary fire helmets and/or badges. The official biography of Fiedler reports that the conductor once helped in the rescue efforts at the tragic Coconut Grove fire in Boston in 1942. An avid sailor, he volunteered during the early days of World War II for the Temporary Reserve of the U.S. Coast Guard and was later a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. Fiedler conducted at the nationally-televised opening ceremonies of Walt Disney World in 1971. He also appeared on numerous telecasts on *Evening at Pops*, carried on PBS stations nationwide. In honor of Fiedler's influence on American music, on October 23, 1976 he was awarded the prestigious University of Pennsylvania Glee Club Award of Merit. Beginning in 1964, this award "established to bring a declaration of appreciation to an individual each year that has made a significant contribution to the world of music and helped to create a climate in which our talents may find valid expression." On January 10, 1977, Fiedler was presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Gerald Ford.

ON a gold and blue Mediterranean afternoon in the spring of 1938, the first dress rehearsal of *Gaité Parisienne* took place in the Théâtre de Monte Carlo. In the gloom of the half-empty house sat Henri Matisse with his sketch pad and Salvador Dali without—as yet—his spidery mustachios. The two artists had come to watch what is probably one of the most fortunate marriages of score and setting that the kingdom of ballet has ever arranged. The pre-war Riviera would of course be dazzled and delighted—and so it was. But how would this heady Offenbachian cocktail be received in sedate London, its next stop?

I waited for this verdict on a clammy June evening, before the blazing fireplace in the Eighteenth Century room atop the Drury Lane Theatre where Richard Brinsley Sheridan wrote "The School for Scandal." Below, the opening night audience streamed decorously into the huge auditorium. A few streets away, a rival ballet company was performing the solid protein-rich fare of the standard ballet menu. Comparisons were inevitable. But London capitulated, instantly and noisily, to *Gaité's* romping pleasure-gaited tunes that describes the era of Louis Napoléon when Paris life was at the apogee of naughtiness. In time New York and later the American audience fell for its intoxicating charms; Toulouse-Lautrec became the mode and high-kicking cancan girls the rage.

The skillful fusion of story, music and decor was made by three men who collaborated often

at the distance of an ocean or a continent: Léonide Massine created the choreographic ideas while touring this country; Count Étienne de Beaumont conceived the libretto in Paris and also the scenery and costumes; Manuel Rosenthal blended the musical ingredients from Offenbach's stock of sparkling operettas.

Gaité Parisienne unfolds on the brilliantly lit terrace of a sophisticated Paris café frequented by *cocodettes*—ladies no better than they should be; art students complete with berets and flowing ties; social celebrities and dashing military men. Waiters and girl attendants are tidying the premises for the evening's arrivals. The Flower Girl and the Glove Seller set out their wares. A mazurka is in the making; art students and *cocodettes* pair off with few preliminaries.

Wide-eyed, gauche and heavy with currency is the Peruvian tourist (created by Léonide Massine) who skitters on scene for a night of pleasure and spending. The flouncing, flirtatious Glove Seller (made famous by Alexandra Danilova) is his hope and despair; there is clumsy ardor in his wooing and she is as elusive as the bubbling music.

Enter, with imperial hauteur, the handsome Austrian Baron (originally danced by Frederic Franklin). Waiters and girls rush to his service but he has eyes only for the beautiful Glove Seller, and soon they are joined in a romantic waltz. The over-eager Peruvian orders champagne for all, but the girls find his awkward generosity less interesting than the marching en-

trance of a troop of dashing plumed soldiers.

Then the celebrity of the evening swishes regally upon the scene—La Lionne, historically the reigning beauty of Paris at the time, escorted by her favorite Duke. She waltzes with him and then with the officer of the troop. While the Peruvian tries to catch her eye with his antics, a romantic circle is being squared: officer kisses Glove Seller, Baron strikes officer, Duke strikes Peruvian. Mayhem proceeds geometrically as gentlemen's gloves slap gentlemen's faces, students assault waiters, tables upturn, trays crash. The waiters flush out the sad Peruvian cowering under a table. The Baron and the Glove Seller return and resume their waltz.

But not for long. The fanfare of cancan music interrupts their tender rapport. Led by the trim dancing master Tortoni (first danced by André Eglevsky) the cancan girls whirl and kick their black-stockinged, gartered legs. The Peruvian is caught up in the melee of cascading skirts. All join in a quadrille, then once more the frenzied cancan until one of the dancers, center stage, whips out a lightning succession of thirty-two *fouettés*.

The high gaiety subsides; a soothing barearolle begins, suggesting Venice, gondolas and love. The ladies don their boas, the gentlemen their hats. All coupled, they make their amorous departure into the night. The Baron has his Glove Seller. But the Peruvian has nothing to show for his pains but his empty bags; his first night in Paris has not found him lucky in love.

WHEN the ballet *Gayne* was first performed at the Kirov Theatre in Leningrad on December 9, 1942, Aram Khachaturian was already a distinguished Soviet composer, his forte being the skillful use of the folk elements of his native Armenia in music of classical forms. Born in Tiflis in 1903, the son of a bookbinder, Khachaturian acquired no technical knowledge of music until the age of nineteen when he entered the Moscow State Conservatory. After his First Symphony and his Piano Concerto he was awarded the Order of Lenin for cultural services to Armenia. His Violin Concerto later became an international concert item, and his first ballet, *Happiness*, was a distinct success.

Gayne, his second ballet, won him a Stalin Prize; the Sabre Dance by itself cut a worldwide swath of popularity. The action of the ballet is perhaps too ponderous for the Western taste. The heroine, Gayne, is an honest working girl married to Giko, a drunkard and hence a poor patriot. To charges that he is faithless to his fellow workers, Giko replies by setting fire to bales of collective cotton. He takes flight just as Kazakov, commander of a Red Army border patrol, comes to the rescue. Once Giko is exiled, there is not a fraction of a doubt who will marry the lovely Gayne. Nonetheless, Khachaturian's score is electrifying. In this vibrant recording we hear four sections from the *Gayne* suite: *Lesginka*; Dance of the Rose Maidens; Dance of the Kurds, and the Sabre Dance.

Gaîté Parisienne, ballet

(music by Offenbach arranged by Manuel Rosenthal)

Khachaturian, Gayane Ballet Suite

Arthur Fiedler conducts the
Boston Pops Orchestra

1-Gaîté Parisienne, ballet / Part I 18:32

2-Gaîté Parisienne, ballet / Part II 17:43

3-Khachaturian, Gayane Ballet Suite 9:08

Please Note: In the interest of preserving the superb sound quality of these historic recordings, they have been preserved in their original, pristine state for maximum fidelity. Transferred from commercially released, analog reel-to-reel tapes (some of which are more than 50 years old), the recordings themselves can be subject to certain "artifacts" which are an inseparable part of the original analog recording process, such as tape "hiss" or other defects, and these may be audible on certain music tracks. Because your CD or DVD-A was individually "burned" in order to realize superior sound quality to stamped, mass-produced versions, microscopic cosmetic blemishes may be visible. Please regard these tiny marks as evidence of the "human touch" in the care and individual attention that each and every HDTT disc receives during its very demanding manufacturing process.



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