

Arthur Fiedler, (born December 17, 1894, Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.—died July 10, 1979, Brookline, Massachusetts), American conductor who was maestro of the Boston Pops Orchestra for 50 seasons and the best-selling classical conductor of all time; his recordings with the Pops sold some 50,000,000 discs. (The Boston Pops Orchestra is the Boston Symphony minus its principal players.) Fiedler, whose principal aim was “to give audiences a good time,” led the Pops in performances of popular tunes, show music, and classics.

From 1911 to 1915 Fiedler studied violin, piano, and conducting at the Royal Academy of Music in Berlin before joining the Boston Symphony as a member of the second violin section. He played in the viola section from 1918 to 1930. He also was proficient on the celesta, piano, and organ. Fiedler organized the Arthur Fiedler Sinfonietta (1924), a chamber symphony, when he was refused the conductorship of the Pops. In 1929 he organized the Esplanade concerts, in which symphonic music was played outdoors in Boston for the first time. In 1930 he became conductor of the Pops, a post he held until his death in 1979.

As conductor of the Boston Pops, Fiedler developed a varied and light-hearted repertoire that struck a responsive chord with the public. He excelled at adapting popular dance music and other songs to performance by a symphonic orchestra. Fiedler was viewed by many critics as a highly able technician and a superb showman rather than as a first-rate interpreter of classical music, however.



Gershwin

Rhapsody In Blue / An American In Paris

Arthur Fiedler / Boston Pops Orchestra / Earl Wild, Piano



George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, arguably the most popular work for piano and orchestra written by an American, came about almost by accident. Toward the end of 1923, popular bandleader Paul Whiteman asked Gershwin if he'd consider writing a jazz concerto for his orchestra. Gershwin informally agreed to do so and returned to his regular beat of writing songs for Broadway shows. Imagine Gershwin's surprise on January 4, 1924, when his brother Ira brought along that day's edition of the *New York Evening Herald*, wherein Whiteman announced that George's jazz concerto was to be premiered at a program at New York's Aeolian Hall entitled "An Experiment in Modern Music" on February 12. This was barely more than a month away. The four-stave manuscript of *Rhapsody in Blue*, now in the Library of Congress, records that George began work on the piece on January 7, 1924. It was done by February 4, 1924, when arranger Ferde Grofé ordered the orchestral parts be made up in time for rehearsals. Then as now, it was standard procedure for a Broadway composer to use an orchestrator, and Grofé was then producing most of the Whiteman band's original arrangements and leading the rehearsals. George had other help, too: Ira suggested he use the slow second theme based on a melody already composed, and Victor Herbert advised George on some of the transitional material used to hold the movement together. Whiteman clarinetist Ross Gorman improvised the famous clarinet glissando that opens the work as a gag during rehearsals and George asked him to keep playing it that way. The title, *Rhapsody in Blue*, is not so much related to the final form of the piece as it was inspired by a painting of James McNeill Whistler entitled *Nocturne in Black and Gold*. The premiere of *Rhapsody in Blue* was a huge

success and it was clear at the outset that the work had enormous commercial potential. Grofé created three more orchestrations of it -- the first being a 21-part version for theater orchestra that became the standard text of the work for the next two decades. Grofé didn't create a version for full orchestra until 1942, and this is now the version that is most familiar and most frequently recorded. About this time, Grofé created yet another incarnation of *Rhapsody in Blue* for symphonic band in which the piano part is optional.

Premiered at Carnegie Hall, New York, on December 13, 1928. New York Philharmonic, Walter Damrosch (conductor).

After the mad rush of working on *Rosalie* for Florenz Ziegfeld, George and Ira were determined to take some time off, so in March 1928, the Gershwins traveled to Europe. During their three months abroad, George Gershwin hoped to complete an orchestral work he had pondered since returning from a 1926 visit to Paris, when he had composed a fragment of music labeled "Very Parisienne" and entitled *An American in Paris*. Inspired by the sounds of taxi horns along the Paris boulevards, Gershwin and his friend Mabel Schirmer went shopping for those horns in the automobile shops along the Avenue de la Grande Armee and he returned home to incorporate them into this "rhapsodic ballet," which had its debut at Carnegie Hall later that year. (Incidentally, Ira was content to spend much of the European trip "[seeing] the sights and [drinking] beer," though he did keep a lengthy diary of the Gershwins' activities.) In 1951, Gene Kelly turned *An American in Paris* into the climactic ballet of his Academy Award winning film of the same name.

Gershwin

Rhapsody In Blue / An American In Paris

Arthur Fiedler / Boston Pops Orchestra / Earl Wild, Piano

1 Rhapsody In Blue 16:11

2 An American In Paris 16:34

Released by RCA 1960

Engineer - Lewis Layton

Producer - Richard Mohr



For more info e-mail us:
admin@highdeftapetransfers.com
or visit our website:
www.highdeftapetransfers.com