



Behind the Baton: Conductor Stuart Chafetz

By Staff Reports

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A little about the program. The theme of this program is exactly what the title suggests. I have selected several of Fiedler's most popular selections. The variety of music from many countries demonstrates his great talent for bringing classical music to the masses.

Selected repertoire: Tchaikovsky's Waltz from "Swan Lake", selections from "My Fair Lady," Brahms's Hungarian Dance No. 5, "Pops Hoe Down" by Richard Hayman

So who's Arthur Fiedler? "Arthur Fiedler was a remarkable musician. He took over the Boston Pops Orchestra in 1930 and led it for 50 years. The legendary conductor combined light classical selections with Broadway and popular tunes, creating a new format for symphony orchestras.

His recordings on RCA and Polydor sold more than 50 million disks. Fiedler was a guest conductor with dozens of American orchestras, always selling out the house. He projected a happy image, down to earth and not at all snobbish. He may have set a record for audience attendance with the bicentennial concert in Boston on July 4, 1976. An estimated 400,000 cheering fans were in the area outside the Boston Esplanade for a free program of patriotic music. His favorite encore was always Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever" march, which never failed to bring an audience to its feet.

Why did I choose this program? I selected music that Arthur Fielder would have programmed and did feature on many of his Boston Pops concerts. The selections on my program are really several of his favorites.

I can't really single out one or two pieces that are more special to me than others. This music is all appealing to me and I am anxious to share with the Naples audience. I will say that some of these selections will probably bring back wonderful memories. Do you remember where you were when you first heard "The Impossible Dream" from the great show "Man of La Mancha"? Or when you saw the incomparable Audrey Hepburn on the screen in "My Fair Lady"? Even now I can visualize her beauty and gracefulness. I'll never forget the first time I heard "On the Street Where You Live" and the other fabulous songs from that show.

The challenges with this program? Arthur Fiedler is a hard act to follow. He was an idol of mine since I attended Boston Pops concerts as a child. We will strive to achieve the same spirit at the concerts as Fiedler did. The Naples Philharmonic Orchestra is a wonderful ensemble and will meet all the musical challenges with aplomb.

What should you listen for? Some things would include how all of the composers had a great gift of melody. Nearly all the selections are recognizable immediately. Some of you will say, "Oh, is that the name of this tune?" or "So that's where this comes from." This truly is music you know and love.

Recordings: There are dozens of recordings still available on CD of Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops. He changed the way several generations listen to classical music and we are pleased to bring some of his favorites to our patrons. By the way, I would be happy to meet you in the lobby after the concert if you have a moment to say hello.

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