



ARTHUR FIEDLER  
His "Pops" are tops

of people who were often musical tyros only a short while before, would not be so appreciative were it not for the schooling which they have received at the "Pops." Thus the two seasons walk hand in hand, both catering to sold-out houses. And the informality and almost cafe atmosphere of the "Pops," in its air-cooled hall, with its tables, wines, green trellis-work and floral decorations, proves during its all too brief span a delightful contrast to the serious Symphony season (the "Pops" concerts last only through May and June) even to the most serious musicians.

#### Al Fresco Concerts

When the "Pops" season ends, then the Esplanade concerts begin. Here Arthur Fiedler, conducting a 63-piece orchestra of Boston Symphony men, gives free concerts (supported only by the voluntary contributions placed in the boxes mounted on posts about the area) to nightly audiences averaging about 20,000. These concerts founded by Arthur Fiedler are given in an acoustically designed shell of red polished stone, well lit and equipped with all conceivable comforts. This shell, erected only a few years ago, replaced the wooden shell which was put up when Mr. Fiedler made his first, tentative essay at outdoor concerts about fifteen years ago. The sub-structure of the new Hatch Shell (named for its donor) contains a large semi-circular rehearsal room. Ringed about the curved part of this room is the musicians' dressing-room, complete with lockers, and with a complete shower-room at one end. At the other end is Mr. Fiedler's private dressing room. There is room as well for a commodious office and library.

The entire interior is air-conditioned against the heat which afflicts Boston when the East wind stops blowing during July and August. The front of the Shell is separated from the lawn when the audience either stands, reclines on blankets, or rents chairs from a private concession by a sort of moat and terrace, the terrace continuing in a semi-circle about the sides and rear of the structure, whose sole decoration is the frieze of composers' names in brass letters which encircles it.

The Shell is ideally located on the Embankment, beside the broad Charles River Basin, with the white granite structure of Massachusetts Institute of

Technology gleaming in flood-lit splendour directly across the river and the water between dotted with the broad-beamed sailing dinghies of the M.I.T. and Charles River boat clubs as well as the small power craft which throng the upper reaches of the river. A distance up-stream, the Colonial architecture of Harvard College, red brick, white wood, and gold, stretches along the banks of the river and raises its many spires to the sky, not unlike the famous Backs of Cambridge, England, from which the city in which it is located takes its name.

Strangely, the programmes which Arthur Fiedler presents on the Esplanade are often more ambitious and of a more serious nature than those which are presented during the "Pops" season in Symphony Hall.

In addition to the "Pops" and Esplanade Concerts, Arthur Fiedler's appearances with the Boston Symphony Orchestra players take another form. Even before he became conductor of the "Pops," Fiedler has organised his own Sinfonietta, drawn from some of the best men in the orchestra, and had toured New England with his group.

#### Fantastic Royalties

A man ought to be content to rest upon achievements such as these. Fiedler is the best represented and most recorded conductor in any American record catalogue. His royalties are fantastic—reputed in the vicinity of twenty-five thousand pounds sterling per annum (or at least they were while record stocks were plentiful). He is highly respected throughout the nation, his concerts with the Boston "Pops" and Esplanade Orchestras are broadcast every Saturday night from one end of the continent to the other. He can count an audience of millions. Yet the "Pops," the Esplanade, and the Sinfonietta, while they comprise all of Fiedler's regular activities with the Boston Symphony Orchestra (save for some occasional work at Tanglewood), do not call an end to his musical activities in and around Boston.

#### Works Well with Young People

He is, for one thing, the conductor of the St. Cecilia's Choral Society, a choral group which, along with the Radcliffe-Harvard Choral Society under G. Wallace Woodworth, is the finest choir in New England. Fiedler is also conductor of the Boston University Symphony Orchestra, and, in more peaceful days, he was also conductor of the amateur McDowell Symphony Orchestra, composed of men and women of all ages and professions (including one or two members of the Boston Symphony playing other instruments than their own), and later, until the hunger cry of the armed forces took his boys—and girls—away from him and called a halt, he was conductor of the Massachusetts National Youth Administration Symphony Orchestra, in which no member was more than twenty-five years old.

Fiedler's forte indeed is his amazing ability to work wonders with young people. I have often heard young orchestras play under his hand with more enthusiasm and sparkle than he will sometimes obtain even from the Boston "Pops" Orchestra itself. And it is this perennial youthfulness of outlook, belying his now greying hair, that has made him the vital force in music which he is. He is a quiet business-like man, and from him you may not look for the fireworks and brilliance of the stellar, virtuoso conductor, but only good music, sensibly and honestly played.



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