SYMPHONY HALL
301 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
BOSTON, MA 02115-4511
WWW.BSO.ORG
TEL: (617) 266-1492
FAX: (617) 638-9493

BOSTON POPS 125 ANNIVERSARY

Boston Pops Timeline

The Origins of the Pops: 1881 – 1899

- **1881 -** Civil War veteran Henry Lee Higginson founds the Boston Symphony Orchestra and writes of his intention to present "especially in the summer, concerts of a lighter kind of music," and the seed is planted for Boston Pops concerts, originally called "Promenade Concerts." The introduction of these concerts also provided year-round employment for the Boston Symphony musicians.
- **1885** - The first Promenade Concert, led by Adolf Neuendorff, takes place on July 11 at the old Boston Music Hall, the only locale in the city allowing food and beverages to be served in the performance space. Response from audience and critics is favorable.
- **1890** - By this time, the public customarily refers to these "popular" concerts in the shorthand "Pop" or "Pops."
- **1896 -** The tradition of annual "college nights" at the Pops begins when Harvard hosts Harvard Night at the Pops. Harvard was followed by MIT in 1897, Tufts in 1901, and a host of others.
- **1897** - A new march by John Philip Sousa, *The Stars and Stripes Forever*, is played in its orchestral version for the first time. Works by other American composers are played more frequently at the concerts, contributing to their increasing "American-ness."

The Move to Symphony Hall: 1900– 1929

- **1900 -** The BSO management officially changes the name of the concerts to the "Pops," and *The Stars and Stripes Forever* regularly serves as the grand finale.
- Symphony Hall, the new home of the Boston Symphony and Boston Pops, opens in October. Its floor, equipped with an elevator and storage beneath, is specifically designed to accommodate both the rows of seats for symphony concerts and the Pops' tables and chairs.
- **1915 -** Arthur Fiedler joins the Boston Symphony Orchestra's viola section.
- **1919 -** In deference to the growing Prohibition sentiment, alcohol is removed from the Boston Pops menu. Pops Punch and other bubbly non-alcoholic beverages are added to the menu and male waiters are replaced with waitresses. Alcohol returns to the Pops concerts at the end of Prohibition in 1934, but Pops Punch remains an audience favorite to this day.
- **1926 -** First radio broadcasts of the Boston Pops are heard on WEEI and are sponsored by Winfield S. Quinby.
- **1929 -** Arthur Fiedler organizes the first series of free outdoor orchestral concerts on the Charles River Esplanade. Concerts take place in a wooden "shell" that is dismantled at the end of the summer.

The Arthur Fiedler Era: 1930 – 1979

- **1930** - Arthur Fiedler is named Boston Pops Conductor, the first American-born musician to hold the post.
- **1935 -** Fiedler conducts the Pops in its first recordings for RCA Victor and insists that a short unknown piece by Jacob Gade called "Jalousie" be included. "Jalousie" goes on to become the first orchestral recording ever to win a gold record by selling over a million copies.
- **1936 -** Leroy Anderson is asked to make an arrangement of Harvard songs for performance at the annual Harvard Night at the Pops – signaling the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship between Anderson and the Pops.
- **1937 -** Pianist Doris Dandridge-Harris becomes the first African-American guest artist to perform with the Boston Pops.

- **1941 -** At an Esplanade concert, Arthur Fiedler turns over the baton to a young conductor, Harvard graduate Leonard Bernstein, who leads the prelude to Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*.
- **1945 -** Dean Dixon becomes the first African-American conductor to lead the Boston Pops.
- **1946 -** Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops record the motion picture score for *Duel in the Sun* by Dimitri Tiomkin – RCA Victor's first soundtrack recording.
- **1948 -** Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops give the first performance of Leroy Anderson's *Sleigh Ride* on May 4th. The work becomes one of the Pops' signature pieces.
- **1952 -** Regular local radio broadcasts bring the Pops into listeners' homes.
- **1953 -** Arthur Fiedler forms the Boston Pops Tour Orchestra, giving 65 concerts in 61 cities throughout the U.S. within a time span of ten weeks.
- In honor of the 25th season of Esplanade concerts, the Arthur Fiedler Footbridge (spanning Boston's Storrow Drive) is erected and dedicated.
- **1956 -** Fiedler leads the Boston Pops Tour Orchestra on a transcontinental tour of staggering proportions: 81 concerts in 83 days in 79 cities, covering 22 states and Canada.
- Harry Ellis Dickson is named Assistant Conductor of the Boston Pops and is later elevated to Associate Conductor in 1980.
- **1970 -** *Evening at Pops* debuts on public television. Its success makes Arthur Fiedler a national icon.
- **1971 -** Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops give their first concerts overseas during the BSO's European Tour – a concert at Royal Albert Hall in London and at Beethovenhalle in Bonn, Germany.
- **1972 -** Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops make their Carnegie Hall debut during Carnegie's 80th anniversary season. Pianist Earl Wild joined the Pops for Paderewski's Piano concerto in A minor, Op.17, a work the composer performed during the Hall's inaugural season.
- **1973 -** The first series of three Holiday Pops concerts is given. They resume in 1975, becoming an annual event and developing into one of Boston's most popular holiday traditions.
- **1974 -** The creation of "Boston's Fourth of July" ushers in the modern era of the Independence Day festivities on the Esplanade. The generosity of Boston businessman David Mugar provides for a spectacular fireworks finale to the concert.
- **1976 -** The Boston Pops Bicentennial Celebration on the Esplanade on July 4, 1976 draws a record crowd of more than 400,000. The event is listed in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the largest live audience ever to attend a concert of classical music.
- **1978 -** What turns out to be Arthur Fiedler's final Esplanade concert celebrates his 50th year of conducting these free outdoor performances.
- **1979 -** On May 1, Arthur Fiedler conducts a gala concert marking his 50th season as Boston Pops Conductor. Four days later, he leads his last concert.
- On July 10, the world mourns the death of the beloved maestro.

The John Williams Years: 1980 - 1993

- **1980 -** On January 10, John Williams accepts the conductorship of the Boston Pops, ushering in a new era in Pops history. His first concert takes place twelve days later at Carnegie Hall in New York.
- He opens his first Symphony Hall season with a performance featuring Isaac Stern and Burgess Meredith. *Star Wars*' C3PO joins John Williams to conduct the Pops in a suite from *Star Wars*.
- *Pops in Space*, the first John Williams Boston Pops Orchestra album, is released on Philips.
- **1981 -** On Opening Night, John Williams pays tribute to his illustrious predecessor with the first performance of his *Pops on the March (to Arthur Fiedler)*.
- Philips releases the first John Williams/BPO holiday album, *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*.
- **1984 -** The Symphony Hall audience is first to hear John Williams' *Olympic Fanfare and Theme*, commissioned for the Los Angeles Olympic Games.
- Dudley Moore narrates *Peter and the Wolf* for the BPO's latest recording.
- **1985 -** Happy 100th Birthday, Boston Pops! The season includes the world premieres of works by John Williams (Concerto for Tuba and Orchestra), Peter Maxwell Davies (*An Orkney Wedding, With Sunrise*), Henry Mancini (Overture to a Pops Concert), and P.D.Q. Bach (1712 Overture).

- The Pops Centennial Tour includes concerts at the Lincoln Memorial, the White House, New York's Central Park, and the Hollywood Bowl.
- **1986 -** John Williams and the Pops travel to New York to perform in the July 4th gala televised concert celebrating the rededication of the Statue of Liberty.
- **1987 -** John Williams leads the first Boston Pops tour to Japan.
- **1992 -** A second holiday collection, *Joy to the World*, is released on Sony featuring actor and comedian Robin Williams narrating "'Twas the Night Before Christmas."
- **1993 -** John Williams leads his farewell Opening Night Concert as Boston Pops Conductor, with guests Richard Dreyfuss, Christopher Reeve, Henry Mancini, Jessye Norman, Aretha Franklin, and, on videotape, Steven Spielberg.
- On June 11, the Boston Pops hosts its first Gospel Night at Pops, a tradition that still continues.
- At season's end, Williams assumes the title Laureate Conductor and the search is initiated for a new Pops conductor.
- **1994 -** The Boston Pops appear at the Hatch Shell on the Charles River Esplanade in the feature film thriller *Blown Away* starring Jeff Bridges and Tommy Lee Jones.

Keith Lockhart Leads the Pops: 1995 –

- **1995 -** In February, 35-year-old Keith Lockhart becomes the twentieth conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra. His first Opening Night concert features guests Mandy Patinkin, Sylvia McNair, and Doc Severinsen.
- For his first July 4th concert, he and the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra are joined by the Air Force Band of Liberty, the Pointer Sisters, and Mel Tormé.
- Lockhart inaugurates a new Pops tradition – the December holiday tour.
- **1996 -** Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops Orchestra sign an exclusive recording contract with RCA Victor, the orchestra's original recording label. They release Runnin' Wild, which becomes a critical and popular success, catapulting to No. 1 on Billboard's crossover chart in its first week of release.
- Keith Lockhart makes his Carnegie Hall debut leading the Pops with guest Jason Alexander.
- **1997 -** In June, RCA Victor releases the second Keith Lockhart/BPO album, American Visions, which features music evocative of great American landscapes.
- The Holiday Pops season includes a record-breaking thirty-three concerts at Symphony Hall.
- Keith Lockhart leads his first overseas tour as Pops conductor which includes the first Boston Pops concert in Korea.
- **1998 -** The Opening Night concert features the world premiere of Dan Welcher's Spumante, the first work commissioned for the Pops by Keith Lockhart.
- The 25th year of "Boston's Fourth of July" event is celebrated on the Esplanade, attracting a record crowd of a half-million people.
- Holiday Pops, the first Keith Lockhart/BPO Christmas album, is released on RCA Victor.
- **1999 - Pops history is made, as The Celtic Album earns the orchestra its first Grammy nomination (Best Classical Crossover).**
- **2000 -** Recording sessions are held for a new CD, The Latin Album, which is released in September and goes on to be nominated for a Latin Grammy for Best Pop Instrumental Album.
- The Boston Pops enters the new millennium firmly positioned as "America's Orchestra," and its popularity under the direction of Keith Lockhart soaring.
- Keith Lockhart closes his fifth season as Pops Conductor with a free concert in Franklin Park.
- **2001 -** Keith Lockhart and John Williams joined in conducting the Symphony Hall Centennial Concert with special guests The Chieftans and Mandy Patinkin.
- The Boston Pops Orchestra celebrates its 100th anniversary of Pops concerts at Hall with concerts featuring Harry Connick, Jr., Martin Short, Chick Corea; Terrance Blanchard Quintet, Jane Monheit, Paul Winter and The Earth Band, Béla Fleck, and Don McLean. Cyndi Lauper joined the Pops on the Esplanade, July 3 and 4.
- **2002 -** Keith Lockhart leads the Pops during the pre-game show of SuperBowl XXXVI.
- Spring season includes tributes to Richard Rodgers (100th anniversary of birth) and Harry Ellis Dickson (15th year as Associate Conductor Laureate).

- *My Favorite Things–A Richard Rodgers Celebration* CD released, featuring country superstars Martina McBride and Collin Raye.
- The *Evening at Pops* "Fiddlers Three" program receives ASCAP's Deems Taylor Award in the Television Broadcast Category. The award recognizes outstanding print, broadcast, and new media coverage of music.
- **2003 -**July 4th Esplanade Concert is broadcast for the first time on a major network, CBS. The show is hosted by the CBS *Early Show*'s Harry Smith with guest artist LeAnn Rimes.
- WBZ-TV airs "Boston Pops: Unplugged," a behind-the-scenes look at the Pops featuring archival footage, interviews, and a backstage tour of Symphony Hall led by Keith Lockhart.
- **2004 -** The Boston Pops celebrate Keith Lockhart's 10th season as conductor with concerts featuring Lou Rawls, Rockapella, Pink Martini, and Jennifer Holliday among others.
- Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops join ABC's "NFL Opening Kickoff," to celebrate the first game of the season, performing at Gillette Stadium during the one-hour pregame special.
- The Boston Pops national talent competition PopSearch is launched.
- John Williams conducts the Boston Pops, with special guests Bono and Yo-Yo Ma, in a tribute concert to Senator Ted Kennedy during the Democratic National Convention.
- The Boston Pops releases *Sleigh Ride*, its first self-produced album.
- **2005 -** The Pops releases the CD *America*, a collection of beloved patriotic favorites featuring Yolanda Adams, Arlo Guthrie, and the Tanglewood Festival Chorus. Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David McCullough narrates a musical rendition of *The Gettysburg Address*.
- The Pops launches EdgeFest, an innovative series that pairs the Pops in concerts with artists from the indie music world. The first Edge concert features special guest Guster.
- **2006 -** The Boston Pops joins with Fidelity Investments and Boston Mayor Thomas Menino to surprise Boston area students with $100,000 of musical instruments for their schools.
- The Boston Pops appear with EdgeFest artists Guster on *Late Night with Conan O'Brien* and My Morning Jacket on *The Late Show with David Letterman*.
- **2007 -** The Boston Pops launches the first internet TV program in tandem with the release of their CD *Oscar and Tony*.
- John Williams leads the Boston Pops at Fenway Park for the first game of the World Series.
- WGBH releases *Broadway's Best at Pops*, a compilation of memorable moments from 35 years of *Evening at Pops* featuring Arthur Fiedler, John Williams, and Keith Lockhart and guests including Carol Channing, Ethel Merman, Bernadette Peters, Ray Bolger, Kristin Chenoweth, Pearl Bailey, Tommy Tune, Gregory Hines, Bonnie and John Raitt, as well as many other Broadway luminaries.
- **2008 -** The Boston Pops holds its High School Sing-Off and winner Katie Mayhew joins the Pops on stage for the July 4th performance on the Charles River Esplanade.
- Trumpeter Chris Botti records *Live in Boston* at Symphony Hall with Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops joined by guests Sting, Steven Tyler, Josh Groban, John Mayer, Yo-Yo Ma, and Katharine McPhee. The concert airs on PBS stations nationally and the CD and DVD of the concert are released by Sony.
- **2009 -** *The Red Sox Album*, released on Opening Day at Fenway Park, reaches #5 on *Billboard*'s crossover chart.
- Fidelity FutureStage offers Boston-area high school students the chance to perform at Symphony Hall. The winners join the Boston Pops led by Keith Lockhart in performances during the spring Pops season.
- Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin joins the Pops to narrate a special rendition of Gustav Holst's *The Planets* in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the moon landing.
- The Boston Pops releases its innovative and infectious new arrangement of *The Twelve Days of Christmas* as a digital download.