



**Iain Sutherland  
Concert Orchestra**

# **Blue Tango - Very Best of Leroy Anderson Light Classics**

**Blue Tango • Sleigh Ride  
Belle of the Ball  
Trumpeter's Lullaby  
The Waltzing Cat  
Serenata • Fiddle Faddle  
Sandpaper Ballet  
The Typewriter  
The Syncopated Clock  
Horse and Buggy  
Forgotten Dreams  
Buglers' Holiday  
... and 10 more !**

***alto***



# Blue Tango

## Very Best of

### Leroy Anderson Light Classics

[1]	Sleigh Ride	3:12
[2]	Blue Tango	3:00
[3]	Belle of the Ball	2:44
[4]	Trumpeter's Lullaby	2:53
[5]	Plink Plank Plunk	2:58
[6]	Sarabande	3:41
[7]	The Waltzing Cat	2:35
[8]	Serenata	4:18
[9]	Promenade	2:36
[10]	Sandpaper Ballet	3:41
[11]	The Typewriter	1:57
[12]	The Syncopated Clock	2:27
[13]	Chicken Reel	3:05
[14]	Horse and Buggy	3:49
[15]	Song of the Bells	3:32
[16]	Jazz Pizzicato	1:58
[17]	Jazz Legato	1:42
[18]	Girl in Satin	2:19
[19]	Forgotten Dreams	2:40
[20]	Fiddle Faddle	3:50
[21]	Penny Whistle Song	2:38
[22]	Buglers' Holiday	2:39
[23]	Christmas Festival Overture	7:07

Iain Sutherland Concert Orchestra

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#### NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

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**Leroy Anderson** (1908/1975) was born in Cambridge, Mass. to Swedish parents. He was a gifted child and started piano lessons with his Mother at an early age. Being bilingual he entered Harvard University to study languages and took a PhD in German and the Scandinavian languages, eventually becoming proficient in at least twelve European languages. He also took a Master of Arts in Music degree, studying composition with Georges Enescu and Walter Piston. During WW2 he was assigned to the Pentagon as Chief of the Scandinavian Desk of Military Intelligence. However, he decided to make music his career, composing, conducting and creating a genre of concert music with a pop quality leading to a string of hits with Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops Orchestra and his own Pops Concert Orchestra. He won many awards and was given a star on the *Hollywood Walk of Fame* and inducted into the *American Songwriters Hall of Fame*. Throughout the 1940s, 50s and 60s his music was as popular in the UK and Europe as in his native America and even the deafening onslaught of the juggernaut of Rock n' Roll could not quite silence the witty and sophisticated kind of 'Pop' music he gave to the world. We offer here a selection of the compositions which prompted John Williams to say that Leroy Anderson was 'one of the greatest American masters of light orchestral music'.

1. **SLEIGH RIDE** (3.10). Originally written during a summer heat-wave, "Sleigh Ride" has become a Christmas standard. First recorded by the Boston Pops Orchestra in 1949 there have been very many more recordings over the years; in fact, it has been quoted as "the most performed and recorded composition by a wider range of artists than any other piece in the history of western music". Leroy Anderson and his Pops Concert Orchestra recorded it in 1952, reaching No.1 in the Billboard Pop Music Chart.

2. **BLUE TANGO** (2.58). Although having been a great hit for Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops Orchestra, Leroy Anderson's own recording in 1952 became his second No.1 of the year in the Billboard Chart, remaining there for a record-breaking 22 weeks, and the first purely orchestral piece to sell over a million copies.

3. **BELLE OF THE BALL** (2.42). Composed in 1952, it was the 'flip-side' of Billboard Chart hit *Blue Tango*. A dazzling waltz, it captures all the glitz and glamour of the picture in our imagination conjured up by the title.



4. **TRUMPETER'S LULLABY** (2.51). Premiered in 1950 it was composed at the request of the principal trumpet of the Boston Pops Orchestra. He asked Leroy Anderson to write something for him different from the typical trumpet repertoire of fanfares and calls to battle. He surprised his soloist by choosing to write a lullaby, as the trumpet would appear to be the wrong instrument to lull a baby to sleep. Based upon the notes of the bugle call, and imbued with a certain sense of melancholy, I felt that perhaps this lullaby was not for children after all, but for fallen comrades who slept a longer sleep.

5. **PLINK, PLANK, PLUNK** (2.56). From 1952, when the Boston Pops Orchestra recording was released, until 1962, this witty, sparkling piece was used as the theme for the CBS panel show 'I've Got a Secret'. It features the strings playing pizzicato, where they put down their bows and pluck the strings with their fingers. I guess when thinking of a name for his new composition, Leroy Anderson, with mischievous wit, thought of those sounds the players made.

6. **SARABAND** (3.39). Unlike the stately 18th-century dance, the Sarabande, Leroy Anderson not only leaves off the 'e' but updates it with a flavour of the modern ballroom foxtrot in this unique combination of past and present. Listen out for the part where the foxtrot elements break out for a few bars before settling down again to a decorous close, but not before the pianist tries to have the final say!

7. **THE WALTZING CAT** (2.33). In this wittily sophisticated composition recorded in 1950, the composer presents his version of how *Puss in Boots* would woo his partners at a fancy dress ball. Using a technique called 'glissando' the violins can emulate the 'come-hither meow', which, coupled with a delightful waltz melody, paints the perfect picture, until, that is, an uninvited guest interrupts the scene right at the end.

8. **SERENATA** (4.16). Written in a glossy Spanish idiom, this is Leroy Anderson at his most sumptuous, with an orchestration reminiscent of the great MGM musicals of the '40s and '50s. Opening with a corrida-like fanfare there follows a zapateado-style dance in a minor key; a brief repeat of the fanfare ushers in the big tune in the major key, the 'Serenade' of the title, one of the composer's most expansive romantic melodies. It should come as no surprise that, when Mitchell Parrish added the lyrics, it was taken up and recorded by so many famous vocalists ranging in style from Sarah Vaughan to Kenneth McKellar.

9. **PROMENADE** (2.34). Leroy Anderson was still serving as a captain in the US army in 1945 when he wrote *Promenade*, which he had sent to

Arthur Fiedler along with *The Syncopated Clock*. He was invited to premiere them both with the Boston Pops Orchestra and was granted a three day pass for the concert. It has been suggested that the music describes a brisk walk through New York's Central Park.

10. **SANDPAPER BALLET** (3.39). This delightfully amusing novelty was never actually intended to be ballet music, but rather an orchestral work designed as a tribute to the days when a 'soft-shoe' dancer would sprinkle sand on the stage for his routine. As one might expect considering the popularity of the piece, it has been choreographed and performed by many ballet companies and is regularly given as an encore by the San Francisco Ballet. There are three types of sandpaper used and the duty falls to the three members of the percussion section.

11. **THE TYPEWRITER** (1.55). Leroy Anderson's most famous novelty piece has been described as one of the 'wittiest and most clever pieces in the orchestral repertoire'. It requires a specially modified typewriter and is usually performed by a member of the percussion section, but there have been many celebrity performers including the conductor of the Boston Pops, Arthur Fiedler himself. The composer would mount the podium to conduct and Fiedler would appear without his evening dress jacket wearing a green eye-shield and with his sleeves rolled up and 'play' the typewriter. In one of his most hilarious sketches, Jerry Lewis featured *The Typewriter* in his 1963 film *Who's Minding the Store*.

12. **THE SYNCOPATED CLOCK** (2.25). Anderson conducted the premiere of both *The Syncopated Clock* and *Promenade* with the Boston Pops Orchestra in 1945 while still serving as a captain in the US army. In 1951 he recorded it himself with his own orchestra and it spent 14 weeks in the Billboard Chart, reaching No.12. It was then picked up by WCBS-TV as the signature tune of the 'Late, Late Show' where it remained for the next 25 years. Whimsical is the word I would use to describe it, with many comic effects and the 'clock' indulging in many unexpected moments of syncopation.

13. **CHICKEN REEL** (3.03). This old American dance tune gets a complete 'make-over' in this rollicking arrangement by Leroy Anderson. It is full of many harmonic and rhythmic surprises including the oboe mimicking the clucking of the chicken and a wonderful 'cock-a-doodle-do' from the clarinet at the end.

14. **HORSE AND BUGGY** (3.47). Leroy Anderson composed this musical scenario in 1951. We set off at pace through the wide open spaces of the American countryside, but soon slow down to a quiet trot as night

approaches and a harvest moonrise appears, then it's back to a brisk canter again to be home before night falls (at least, that's what I think it's all about!)

15. **SONG OF THE BELLS** (3.30). This is a piece which I like to include in my Christmas concerts. It is an example of how Leroy Anderson can turn the spotlight on unusual instruments. Written in 1953 it features what we in the UK call the 'Tubular Bells' and 'Glockenspiel', and in the USA, the 'Chimes' and 'Bells', in a sparkling tintinnabulation. Using basic notes on the bells he weaves a flowing waltz theme around them. In the middle section he mixes both Bells and Glock together, along with pizzicato strings to create a quite different effect. Eventually the 'Bell-waltz' reappears before the whole orchestra rushes to a 'ringing' conclusion.

16. **JAZZ PIZZICATO** (1.56). This was an early composition written in 1938 at the very beginning of Leroy Anderson's career. He had sent the manuscript to Arthur Fiedler in the hope that he might use it in one of his Boston Pops Orchestra concerts. Fiedler was duly impressed and had obliged; however, he also wanted to record it, and at just under two minutes it was going to be too short for a 78 rpm single, so he suggested that Leroy Anderson should write a companion piece...

17. **JAZZ LEGATO** (1.40). This is the companion piece which Anderson composed. The popularity of the recording and the reaction of the audiences were to signal Anderson's break-through into long association with Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops Orchestra.

18. **GIRL IN SATIN** (2.17). This romantic piece from 1952 was described as 'a lovely languorous melody in tango rhythm' on the first recording. Although it did not reach the popular heights of *Blue Tango*, it has all the hallmarks of Anderson's gift for melody and should guarantee that all tango lovers should take to the floor, even if it's only in their dreams.

19. **FORGOTTEN DREAMS** (2.38). Composed in 1954 the Boston Pops Orchestra's recording was taken up by Los Angeles station KABC-TV as their sign-off theme each evening, then by WABC-TV for 'Eyewitness News' throughout the 1970s. The deceptively simple melody is first introduced by the solo piano and is full of nostalgia and rather reminiscent of gazing into the dying embers of the fire, perhaps hoping to remember, perhaps trying to forget.

20. **FIDDLE FADDLE** (3.48). This one of the most popular pieces to be commissioned by Arthur Fiedler. He programmed it so many times that the Pops audiences referred to it as 'Fiedler Fiddle'. As the title makes

clear, it features the violins with fast repeated notes contrasting with a pizzicato middle. The main theme is loosely based on *Three Blind Mice*.

21. **PENNY WHISTLE SONG** (2.36). In this 1951 composition Leroy Anderson featured three flutes to emulate the penny whistle, but for my recording I feature a genuinely brilliant virtuoso of the real penny whistle. It is a merry little song indeed, full of delightful surprises which, once heard, will probably stick in your head for the rest of the day.

22. **BUGLER'S HOLIDAY** (2.32). Three trumpeters have a great time in what is probably the most performed trumpet trio ever written. It was first released by Leroy Anderson and his Pops Concert Orchestra in 1954, but also became a great favourite of brass and military bands. The composer cleverly wrote the trumpet parts around standard bugle calls and, with his usual brilliant orchestration, gave us this delightful piece which is always a highlight of any concert.

23. **CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL OVERTURE** (7.07). Another of Anderson's Christmas classics, along with *Sleigh Ride* composed for the Boston Pops Orchestra in 1950. It contains eight favourite Christmas carols beginning with *Joy to the World* and ending with a clever juxtaposition of *Jingle Bells* and *O Come All Ye Faithful*. I would suggest that no music-lover's Christmas would be complete without it.

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#### NOTES ON THE ARTIST

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**IAIN SUTHERLAND** was Conductor of the BBC Radio Orchestra; the BBC Scottish Radio Orchestra; the BBC Radio 2 award-winning "Friday Night is Music Night" with the BBC Concert Orchestra; the City of Glasgow Philharmonic Orchestra; The English Haydn Festival Orchestra; and guest conductor of many orchestras worldwide. Graduating from the Royal Scottish Conservatoire he became a successful orchestral violinist in London before deciding on full-time conducting and being offered his first BBC post. International soloists with whom he has worked include James Galway, Nigel Kennedy, Nicola Benedetti and Julian Lloyd-Webber. His four recent CDs of international light music (including 3 on ALTO: ALC 1192, 1206, 1250) all became featured albums on Classic FM. In 2015 he was awarded the Gold Badge of Merit by the *British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors*.

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