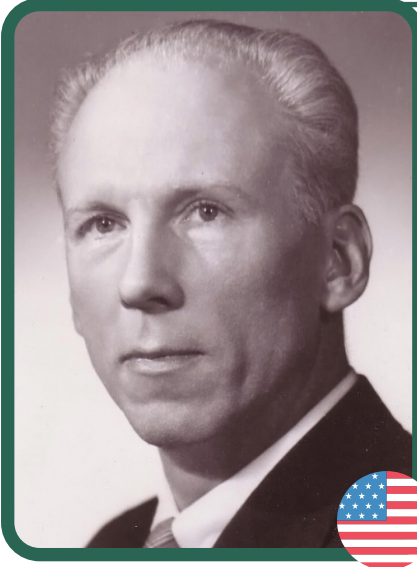




COMPOSER BIOGRAPHY

**LEROY ANDERSON**

BORN: June 29, 1908

ERA/STYLE: 20th Century/Classical Pops

DIED: May 18, 1975

HOMETOWN: Cambridge, Massachusetts

American composer and conductor Leroy Anderson is best known for his short, light orchestral works. Many of his pieces were made famous by the Boston Pops Orchestra under the direction of its famous conductor, Arthur Fiedler. His most well-known composition is the iconic holiday song, "Sleigh Ride."

Born in Cambridge, Massachusetts to Swedish parents, Anderson began piano lessons at a very young age with his mother, who was a church organist. He studied piano and composition at the New England Conservatory and Harvard University, and graduated from Harvard Graduate School in 1930 with a Master of Arts degree.

After graduating, Anderson stayed on at Harvard as a PhD student in Scandinavian and German languages; by the end of his life, he was fluent in 9 languages! In addition to his studies, he conducted the Harvard bands and conducted and arranged music for dance bands in the Boston area. His relationship with the Boston Pops Orchestra began in 1936, when its newly named conductor Arthur Fiedler heard some of these arrangements and encouraged Anderson to write some original compositions that his orchestra could perform.

In the 1940s, Anderson joined the Army as an interpreter with the U.S. Counterintelligence Corps. Shortly after, he was assigned to the Pentagon as Chief of the Scandinavian Desk of Military Intelligence, and served during the Korean War a few years later. He wrote several of his most famous works during this time, including "The Syncopated Clock" and "Sleigh Ride." Those and many other well-known works continue to be performed by ensembles ranging from school groups to professional orchestras.

Leroy Anderson was given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for his contribution to the recording industry, and was inducted to the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1988, following his death in 1975.