

# LEROY ANDERSON

## Study Guide



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The following study guide is presented by the Rome Concert Band.

It is intended for educators' use in the music classroom, and is reproducible without charge.

The guide contains content information about the life and music of Leroy Anderson, and suggestions for learning activities.

It is written with elementary students in mind and can be adjusted to fit the needs of almost any class.

We hope this information may be useful to teachers and students.

Anyone wishing to provide feedback about any of our study guides is welcome to email the Rome Concert Band at [cconeil@verizon.net](mailto:cconeil@verizon.net).

This study guide was prepared in July, 2009 for the Rome Concert Band using the website [www.leroyanderson.com](http://www.leroyanderson.com) as its source for content information.



## LEROY ANDERSON (1908-1975)



Leroy Anderson was born on June 29, 1908 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His parents were Swedish immigrants who had come to the United States as children. His father worked as a postal clerk and played the mandolin. His mother was an organist at the Swedish Church in Cambridge. They moved to Boston when Leroy was one year old. At age 11, he began piano and music studies at the New England Conservatory of Music. In 1925 he composed, orchestrated and conducted the Cambridge High and Latin School orchestra in the class song for his graduation. He was in high school when his father bought him a trombone so that he could play in the front row of the Harvard University Band where he had been accepted to attend college.

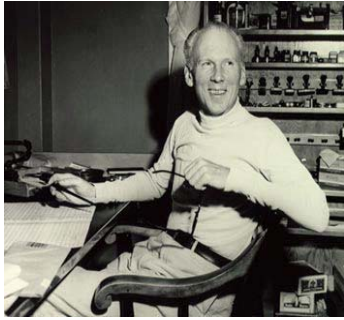
Leroy attended Harvard University from 1926 through the early 1930's. Although he earned degrees in music, he also was excellent at languages! He could speak Danish, Norwegian, Icelandic, German, French, Italian, and Portuguese in addition to English and Swedish. He almost became a teacher of language, because he felt that a career in music might not lead him to success. At the last minute, he decided to give music as a career one last try.



*Leroy with the Harvard Univ. Band*

As a graduate student Leroy became Director of the Harvard University Band and wrote many clever arrangements for the band that brought him to the attention of Arthur Fiedler, Director of the Boston Pops Orchestra. In 1936, Leroy moved to New York City, but he often returned to 12 Chatham Street in Boston where his parents continued to live. It was at this house that he arranged many Broadway show tunes for Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops Orchestra. In 1938 the Boston Pops performed his first composition, *Jazz Pizzicato*. It was an immediate hit. Arthur Fiedler encouraged him to write more original compositions for the orchestra. Leroy wrote *Jazz Legato* in 1939. During these years Leroy also performed along with his brother Russell in various popular dance orchestras. They also played on cruise ships of the Norwegian Line crossing between New York and Scandinavia.

At the start of World War II Leroy was drafted into the U.S. Army. He married his wife Eleanor before shipping off to Iceland where he served as a translator and interpreter, making use of his fluency in languages. Leroy and Eleanor would eventually have four children: Jane, Eric, Rolf and Kurt. While working at the US Pentagon, he wrote *The Syncopated Clock*. He was still in the service when Leroy conducted the Boston Pops Orchestra in premieres of *The Syncopated Clock* and *Promenade*. Leroy was offered the position of U.S. Military Attaché to Sweden but declined, deciding that composing was now to be his sole occupation. He was released from active duty in the Army in 1945 and moved to New York City. Leroy composed his very famous piece "Sleigh Ride" during a summer heat wave in Woodbury, Connecticut in 1946. During the following years, Anderson wrote many of his well-loved compositions, among them *Blue Tango*, *The Typewriter*, *Serenata*, *Belle of the Ball*, *Bugler's Holiday* and *Forgotten Dreams*.



*Pictured at home during the 1950's.*



*Leroy with Arthur Fiedler & the Boston Pops.*

Arthur Fiedler continued to premier Leroy's works including *Sleigh Ride*, *Fiddle-Fiddle* and *Trumpeter's Lullaby*, until 1950. After that Leroy conducted the premieres of his works when he recorded them for Decca Records. It was his own recording of *Blue Tango* that made #1 on the Hit Parade of 1952. The popularity of Leroy Anderson's music was rapidly spreading around the world. By 1952 Leroy had established himself as the pre-eminent American composer of light concert music. In 1972 the Boston Pops Orchestra paid tribute to Leroy in a televised concert that was broadcast nationwide. Leroy appeared on the program and guest-conducted one piece. It was, as he said to his wife Eleanor, "the most important evening of my life." Leroy returned to Cambridge the following year to conduct the orchestra at Cambridge Ridge and Latin School in 1973. Anderson continued to compose and to conduct his music throughout North America until he died, in 1975.

Among many other significant tributes, Leroy Anderson received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1976 for his contribution to the recording industry. During the Leroy Anderson's Centennial, orchestras throughout the world performed tribute concerts during the 2007-2009 concert seasons which celebrated the composer's musical legacy. Leroy Anderson sensed during his later years that the music he wrote had achieved an identity and a popularity that surpassed his own fame as the composer. At the time he was probably right. In recent years however, the awareness of Leroy Anderson has increased dramatically. This is due in part to new recordings of his music, re-releases of Anderson's original recordings on compact disc, numerous concerts of his works, a PBS video about him, a book about the composer, and to his official website, [LeroyAnderson.com](http://LeroyAnderson.com).



Leroy Anderson at home in Connecticut, around 1968.

## Test Your Knowledge

(Grades 4-6)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Read the content pages about Leroy Anderson individually or as a group. Answer the questions below using your memory, or the content pages, as a guide.

1. Leroy Anderson was born in the location of \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. His parents came from the country of \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. Leroy began learning to play piano at age \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. His father bought him a \_\_\_\_\_ to play in the band at Harvard University.
5. In college, Leroy excelled in music as well as \_\_\_\_\_ .
6. \_\_\_\_\_ was the director of the Boston Pops Orchestra. He noticed Leroy's talent for composing and encouraged him to write pieces for the orchestra to play.
7. In 1938, the Boston Pops performed Leroy's first composition \_\_\_\_\_ .
8. In 1939, the Boston Pops performed Leroy's second composition \_\_\_\_\_ .
9. During the late 1930's, Leroy performed with his brother Russell in dance bands and on \_\_\_\_\_ .
10. At the start of \_\_\_\_\_, Leroy was drafted into the US Army.
11. In the Army, he worked as an \_\_\_\_\_ .
12. Leroy and his wife, \_\_\_\_\_ had four children.
13. In 1946, Leroy composed his very famous piece, \_\_\_\_\_, during a heat wave.
14. Leroy received many awards during his career, including a star on the \_\_\_\_\_ .

## COMPARING TWO PIECES

*Grades 3-6*

Directions:

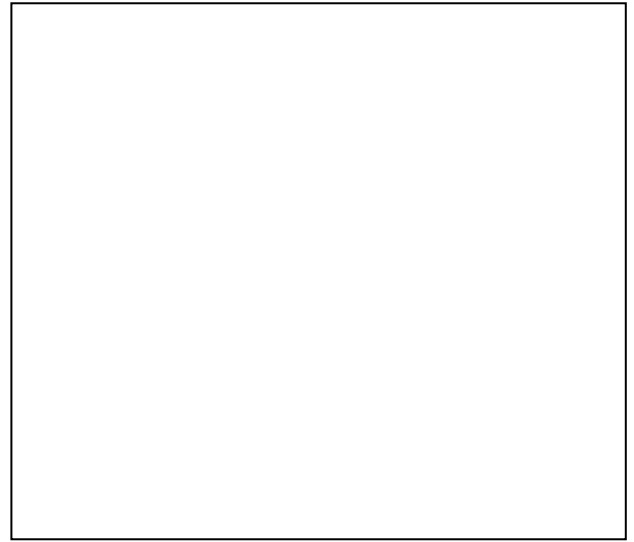
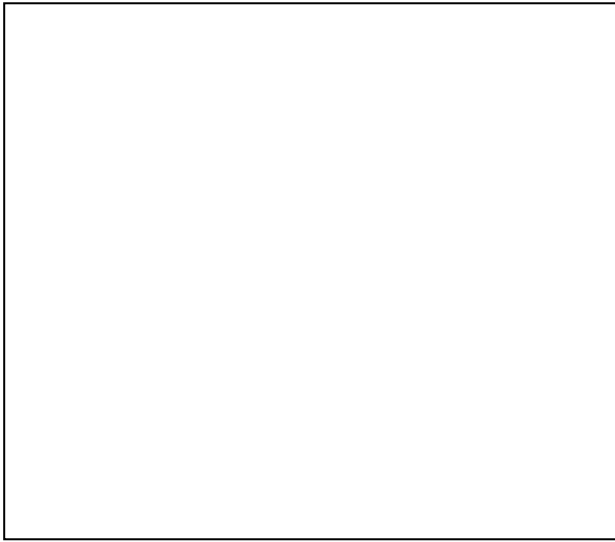
Go to [www.romeconcertband.com](http://www.romeconcertband.com) and listen to the podcasts of two of Leroy Anderson's most famous pieces: "Bugler's Holiday" and "A Trumpeter's Lullaby".

In the two squares below, list the differences between these pieces. Some things you should listen for are tempo, style, mood, instrument(s) heard, etc...

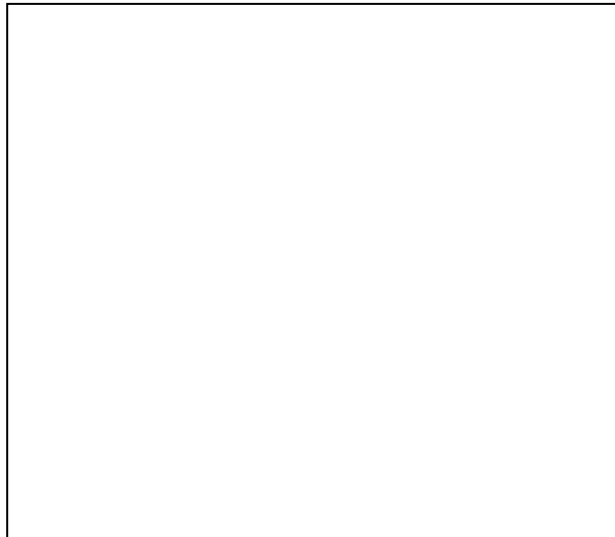
**"Bugler's Holiday"**

**vs.**

**"A Trumpeter's Lullaby"**



In the box below, list any similarities you hear in these pieces.



You may want to listen to these two short pieces a couple of times, in order to notice everything!

## Activities for Younger Listeners

### Grades PreK-2

Teachers: Use the recorded podcasts from [www.romeconcertband.com](http://www.romeconcertband.com) for these suggested activities.

#### INTRODUCTON

For younger students through grade 2 or 3, condense the Leroy Anderson content material into a shorter version of five or six sentences that summarize his life, then say “we are going to listen to two of Leroy’s short pieces that feature the trumpet.” Show a picture of a trumpet or a real one, if available, and describe its construction and means of producing sound. (See the Rome Concert Band’s study guide “What is a Concert Band?” for additional instrument info.)

#### BEAT-KEEPING/MOVEMENT

Listen to a short portion of “Bugler’s Holiday.” March in time to the beat when you hear the trumpets, keep feet still when trumpets rest. Start the recording over and ask students to join you in this activity.

#### LISTENING TO AND DESCRIBING MUSIC

Supply some descriptive words to the students about “Bugler’s Holiday”, such as fast, lively, happy. Ask the students to tell you some other single-word descriptions they think of regarding this music. Then say, “Now we will listen to another Leroy Anderson piece that also features the trumpet.” Play a short portion of “A Trumpeter’s Lullaby.” Ask students for descriptive words about this music, and to name some obvious differences between the two works (ie, “Bugler’s” features a trumpet trio as soloists; “Lullaby” features a single trumpet soloist, etc...).

#### EXPLORING A RHYTHMIC FIGURE

“A Trumpeter’s Lullaby” has an eighth note/sixteenth note rhythm that is sequenced many times throughout the A sections. Listen for it, then teach the rhythm by rote or with whatever counting system you use. Display the rhythm with icons or actual notes, depending on the age of your class. Tap/pat the rhythm many times over in demonstration and together as a class. Listen to “Lullaby” and tap along with the rhythm whenever it is heard.

#### ADD MOVEMENTS THAT DEPICT MUSICAL FORM

Both “Bugler’s Holiday” and “A Trumpeter’s Lullaby” are in ABA form. Listen to each piece one last time and add stylistically appropriate movements or motions to denote the form. For example, during “Lullaby”: slow swaying for the A sections, light bouncing in place for the B section; and during “Bugler’s”: fast stepping to the beat at students move about the room for the A sections, stop in place and pat knees to the beat for the B section.

