

Roger Voisin

Arguably one of the most influential trumpet performers and teachers of the twentieth century, Voisin joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra as assistant principal trumpet in 1935 at age seventeen, and became principal trumpet in 1952. He performed in the Boston Symphony for 38 years, until 1973. During this period, he was also principal trumpet with the Boston Pops Orchestra.

Voisin moved to the United States as a child when his father, René Voisin, was brought to the Boston Symphony as fourth trumpet by Sergei Koussevitzky in 1928. He was initially a student of his father, but he later studied with the Boston Symphony's second trumpet Marcel LaFosse (1895-1969) and principal trumpet Georges Mager (1885-1950). He also studied solfège with Boston Symphony contrabassist Gaston Dufresne.

He is credited with premiere performances of many major works for trumpet including Paul Hindemith's Sonata for Trumpet and Piano (with Hindemith at the piano), and Alan Hovhannes' Prayer of St. Gregory. He is also credited with the US premiere of Alexander Arutiunian's Trumpet Concerto, performing with the Boston Pops Orchestra in 1966. Leroy Anderson's A Trumpeters Lullaby was written for Roger Voisin in 1949, and first recorded with Arthur Fiedler conducting Voisin and the Boston Pops Orchestra in 1950. Leroy Anderson states that "(A Trumpeter's Lullaby) had its beginning backstage at Symphony Hall in Boston. In addition to composing and conducting, I was arranger for the Boston pops Orchestra for a number of years --- and after one of the concerts I was sitting talking with the conductor Arthur Fiedler and the first trumpet of the Boston pops, Roger Voisin. Suddenly Roger Voisin asked me why I didn't write a trumpet solo for him to play with the orchestra that would be different from traditional trumpet solos which are all loud, martial or triumphant. After thinking it over, it occurred to me that I had never heard a lullaby for trumpet so I set out to write one --- with a quiet melody based on bugle notes played by the trumpet and with the rest of the orchestra playing a lullaby background."

He has also been involved with many early recordings and performances of both solo and orchestral works including J. S. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto #2, Béla Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra, Aaron Copland's Quiet City, Franz Joseph Haydn's Concerto for Trumpet in Eb, Alexander Scriabin's The Poem of Ecstasy, Georg Philipp Telemann's Concerto for Trumpet in D, and Antonio Vivaldi's Concerto for Two Trumpets in C.

Roger Voisin was with the Boston Symphony at the inception of the Tanglewood Music Center in 1940, and continues to serve on the faculty there, coaching the orchestral winds and teaching solfège to the conducting class. He became chair of the New England Conservatory of Music (NEC) brass and percussion department in 1950 and was the primary trumpet teacher at NEC for nearly 30 years. In 1975 he became a full professor at Boston University, teaching trumpet and chairing the wind, percussion and harp department until his retirement in 1999. In 1989 Voisin donated much of his personal music library to Boston University, where it is housed in the Mugar Library's "Special Music Collections". He was awarded an honorary Doctorate from the New England Conservatory in 1991, along with legendary jazz trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie. He has served on the jury of the Maurice André trumpet competition since 1988.

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