

## **ANDRE RIEU**

Ted Constant Convocation Center

April 17, 2007

Hello, I'm Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large.

Andre Rieu's extraordinary , ultra high tech musical creation is called the Johann Strauss Orchestra. Everything about the way Rieu does music is larger than life, and more magical than life.

Musically there is much more than Strauss even though the three most cherished waltzes, "The Blue Danube", "The Emperor's", and "Vienna Woods" are gloriously presented with champagne sparkle and lightness.

The program is cosmopolitan. Rieu makes the world and its music, and the huge Ted Constant Center with an audience of thousands, warm and intimate with love, peace, and most of all, sheer joy.

To open the show the orchestra makes a grand entrance down the aisles to "76 Trombones" from THE MUSIC MAN. It's a most appropriate choice because Andre Rieu is indeed a music man with flare and a unique kind of showmanship. He's very personable. He has that old show business touch that makes you feel everything in this highly planned extravaganza is happening for the first time. And, that it's being done just for you.

The musicians play with skill and are delightful to watch because they relish every note. There are fine singers as well: three tenors, one from Australia, one from Germany and one from Hungary and three women from various countries. Giant screens on each side of the stage help the audience see the performers up close, face to face.

I thought I'd heard Ravel's "Bolero" enough for one life time. Not so. Rieu does a rendition with more than a few ornamentations that make the old war horse as explosive as a fire cracker. It's thrilling. That's the way I would describe the whole evening. It's unsurpassed socko boffo musical show business. This event raises the curtain on the eleventh season of the Virginia Arts Festival with joyous splendor.

This is Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large and I'll see you at the next opening.