The Leonard Bernstein Collection Online

by Mark Eden Horowitz

When *West Side Story* debuted in Washington, D.C. before it opened in New York City, an effusive Leonard Bernstein wrote his wife, Felicia, on August 23, 1957, "... It sure looks like a smash and all our experiments seem to have worked. The book works, the tragedy works, the ballets shine, the music pulses and soars... It's all too good to be true."

This letter and hundreds more, which reveal the remarkable life and career of Leonard Bernstein are the latest additions to the Library's American Memory Web site at www.loc.gov.

The Leonard Bernstein Online Collection makes available 85 photographs, 1,100 pieces of correspondence, 177 scripts from the "Young People's Concerts," 74 scripts from the "Thursday Evening Previews," with the New York Philharmonic, a complete Finding Aid for the collection, and a special presentation of an in-depth article on Bernstein as music educator, "Professor Lenny" by Joseph Horowitz, originally published in "The New York Review of Books."

The online items were culled from the Library's Leonard Bernstein Collection, one of the largest and most varied of the many special collections held by the Library's Music Division. It contains more than 400,000 items, including music and literary manuscripts, correspondence, photographs, audio and video recordings, fan mail, two conducting suits worn by Bernstein, batons, and other types of materials.

The online collection focuses mostly on personal correspondence and writings. The music is not included because it is published and available at libraries and for purchase through music publishers.

The letters between Leonard Bernstein and Helen Coates, who was Bernstein's piano teacher when he was a teenager, comprise the largest portion of the online correspondence. When Bernstein went to college, he and Coates maintained a friendship and exchanged letters. After Bernstein achieved his virtual overnight success in 1943, Coates became his secretary, a position she held (continued on page 3)
Leonard Bernstein Center

Preserving the Past

Leonard Bernstein's Young People's Concerts are seminal events in television history. Less well-remembered are a series of televised programs delivered by Bernstein for adults. Thanks to the Grammy Foundation's Leonard Bernstein Center for Learning and the Music on Film Preservation Project, highlights from the acclaimed Omnibus television series have been restored and were screened last February at the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles.

The evening, which was dedicated to celebrating the achievements of pioneers in the world of music, also featured highlights of oral histories documented by the Grammy Living Histories project. Bernstein colleagues Isaac Stern and Midori participated in the evening's program along with Alexander Bernstein, who is now a member of the Grammy Foundation Board of Directors. Also present were composer Lamont Dozier whose videotaped oral history was viewed along with highlights of music industry pioneer Jerry Wexler.

The evening featured tributes to performers Jerry Butler, Art Neville, B.B. King, radio announcer Art Laboe, jazz musician Herbie Mann and country singer Waylon Jennings.

"By preserving our rich past we can ensure future generations will have a cultural legacy from which to learn," said Michael Greene, President of the Grammy Foundation. Portions of the restored "Omnibus" segments are earmarked for use by the Leonard Bernstein Center for Learning, which prepares K-12 teachers to use the arts and artistic process to strengthen teaching and learning in all subjects.

Midori's Remarks at The Grammy Foundation Event

My association with Leonard Bernstein was a vital and happy one, and what he gave me has carried through my life today, and will remain. I met him when I was 13, and those first impressions were very strong, even to a shy young girl. It was immediately clear that he was warm and nurturing, and the most dynamic person I had ever seen — I think perhaps that remains true today.

Yet this God-like figure was so very human. Over time I learned from him what vulnerability was, and I saw how that quality informed his work so that it touched many hearts and many lives in the deepest sense.

In the summer of 1985 he organized a group of many musicians, in which I was included, to tour through Europe and Japan. He cared about bringing messages of peace to the world through music. He felt it was his responsibility to do so. I was a youngster, absorbing everything and learning so much. The most important thing I learned from him on that tour was that when you believe in something, you take action.

That was a lesson that has stayed with me. Later on, when I learned about the state of arts education in this country, I realized that something had to be done, and I decided to take action. I believe strongly in the necessity and benefits of arts education, and of making music an important part of each child's life. Therefore, I began my foundation, Midori and Friends, in 1992, in order to bring music into the elementary schools and disadvantaged areas around New York. And each year since, we've enlarged the scope of the work.

Mr. Bernstein's commitment to music education has been a guiding light as we have continued our efforts. I am indebted to his vision, and to the lessons I learned from him, and I know that they are directly connected to my decision to organize this project for school children.

When Leonard Bernstein died in 1990, I remember writing down my thoughts that to me he represented a garden of flowers, where there were a number of blossoms waiting to bloom. Every time I am with school children, I feel that a new flower blossoms in that garden.

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The Leonard Bernstein Collection Online, continued

(continued from page 1) until her death, which was shortly before Bernstein’s in 1990.

The correspondence begins with Bernstein’s first letter to Coates in 1932, when he had just turned 14. The letter begins, “... Mr. [Heinrich] Gebbard ... referred me to you as a teacher,” and ends “Hoping to have the pleasure of studying with you soon.” As their correspondence continues, Bernstein discusses being taken under the wing of Serge Koussevitzky (his conducting mentor). He also mentions his teachers at the Curtis Institute of Music, particularly his new piano teacher, Isabelle Vengerova.

As Bernstein’s secretary, Coates served as the home base for all of his professional dealings. When he was on tour or vacation, it is through their correspondence that offers and deals are discussed and finalized, frustrations and gossip are shared.

In the summer of 1957, Bernstein’s wife, Felicia, was visiting her family in South America while Bernstein was preparing for the opening tryout of WEST SIDE STORY in Washington. Their letters turn out to chronicle the process of the show.

Bernstein’s comments range from despair to elation: “… people will be looking at WEST SIDE STORY in public and hearing my poor little mashed-up score. All the things I love most in it are slowly being dropped - too operatic, too this and that.”; “We ran through today for the first time, and the problems are many, varied, overwhelming; but we’ve got a show there and just possibly a great one.”; “... we wrote a new song for Tony that’s a killer “Something’s Coming” … It’s really going to save his character — a driving 2/4 in the great tradition … but it gives Tony balls so that he doesn’t emerge as just a euphoric dreamer.”

Bernstein continues, “We had our first run-thru for people yesterday and it was a smash.

Also among the correspondence are letters to Bernstein from Aaron Copland and Serge Koussevitzky, letters from Bernstein to Koussevitzky, and family letters between Bernstein and his parents and siblings.

A selection of Bernstein’s writings are online. They include handwritten first drafts and typewritten final scripts of the “Young People’s Concerts.” Between 1958 to 1972, Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic conducted concerts for children that were televised in the United States and Canada. A small selection of these scripts had been edited and published in book form, but never before have all the scripts been available — and in their original form.

Other Bernstein writings online include the handwritten drafts and typed final scripts of the “Thursday Evening Previews.” Beginning with the New York Philharmonic concert season of 1958-59, Bernstein offered his audience a departure from the normal concert experience. He included an informal talk in the first concert of a week’s series, which he called a “Thursday Evening Preview.” The brief talks covered a variety of topics, often centering on the techniques, styles and compositional school of a composer whose work was featured that evening. The talks continued until 1964.

As the “Young People’s Concerts” and the “Thursday Evening Previews” demonstrate, Bernstein was fond of using new media and technologies as tools to educate and enlighten. His vision, however, wasn’t limited to music. His estate foresaw the possibility of his archives being used for digital conversion and transmitted electronically to a broad, international public. These wishes were conceived before the explosion of the Internet, the Web and the existence of the National Digital Library. Bernstein, one might say, has another hit.

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Leonard Bernstein letter to wife Felicia.

But I’m worried: there is so much that doesn’t work — for me... But there’s a great show there.”; “… the orchestrations have turned out brilliant. I tell you, this show may yet be worth all the agony.”; and finally: “It’s all too exciting. I never dreamed it could be like this — reviews such as one would write for oneself — the whole town is up and doing about the show — those delicious long lines at the box office...”
Over the past 25 years, I have musically directed, supervised, and helped to put together many productions of WEST SIDE STORY, from national tours to "opera" house productions, including performances in Europe and Asia. In May, I will embark on an exciting project for the La Scala Opera Company, a new production of WEST SIDE STORY. It will be directed and choreographed by Joey McNeeley, and musically directed and supervised by myself.

Making this a success will not be easy. It will take a lot of luck in order to put all the pieces together. New sets are being planned, but the score, dances, and book will remain the same. Casting will become the all-important task: finding the right actors with the right voices and the right look to do the leads, and finding the right dancers who will be able to perform the original Jerome Robbins choreography. And since the La Scala Opera Orchestra will be playing the production, it will be particularly interesting to see if we can make that famous ensemble swing in the traditional "American" jazz style. Having conducted over 1000 WEST SIDE STORYs over the years has provided me with a number of interesting memories. Some of these were due to the casting of the production. Casting a Tony and Maria has always been very difficult. For one of my productions, I had a wonderful high baritone as Tony. He looked terrific, and sang quite well, but when it came to climb the fence for the "Rumble," he froze with fear. He also was afraid to handle the knife for the fight scene. He never overcame that fright and needless to say that was the end of a promising production. Another production had two wonderful performers in the roles of TONY and MARIA. They both sang and moved well, but one was six feet tall while the other was four feet eight inches. One of the funniest moments happened when I was conducting the Municipal Opera Orchestra at the outdoor venue in St. Louis. It was during the ballet in the second act when many of the violinists had stopped playing and were climbing onto their chairs. It seems that a possum had wandered into the pit. It scared the hell out of the players as the creature looked like a gigantic rat! So you see, anything could happen, but I look forward to the challenge because there is nothing like trying to put together this particular show with all its complexities and provide a production worthy of La Scala.

In December 1953, Leonard Bernstein became the first American to conduct at La Scala, Milan, Italy's historic opera house. He conducted Cherubini's Medea with Maria Callas as his prima donna. The Corriere della Sera spoke of "grandioso successo." For all it was a night to remember. On July 8, 2000, Bernstein will provide La Scala with another historic first when WEST SIDE STORY becomes the first musical to be produced by La Scala.

This production will be directed and choreographed by Jerome Robbins protege and Tony Award nominee, Joey McKneely. The La Scala Orchestra will be conducted by Donald Chan. Tony Award winner William Ivey Long will costume the young cast which includes Montserrat Marti as Maria, David Miller as Tony and Juan Betacur as Bernardo. Riff will be portrayed by Jim Ambler and Christina Marie Norrup will be Anita. Paul Gallo, another Tony Award nominee, will do the lighting design, Paul Gailis will design the sets, and Jimmy Lock and Andrea Taglia will do the sound design.
The GAP and WEST SIDE STORY

Gap's hot new global ad campaign was inspired by the energy and passion of the score and choreography from WEST SIDE STORY. The television spots, which debuted on March 26th during the 72nd Annual Academy Awards, featured three of WEST SIDE STORY'S most famous works: "America," "Cool," and "Mambo (Dance At The Gym)." In addition to the Academy Awards, the spots are scheduled to air for three months in Canada, U.K., France, Japan and in the U.S. on such popular shows as Ally McBeal, The Practice, ER, Buffy The Vampire Slayer and Dawson's Creek.

Gap utilize the songs in a way that turns on an entirely new generation while remaining true to the original works," said David Renzer, Worldwide President of Universal Music Publishing Group, which administers the Leonard Bernstein Music Publishing Company, LLC.

Using music and dance to usher in new colors, lengths, and styles of Gap jeans (the Sharks) and khakis (the Jets), the commercials, directed by Mike Mills, utilize Jerome Robbins' original choreography, which was realized by Alan Johnson, a member of the 1960 Broadway cast of "West Side Story."

Alexander Bernstein further commented, "I think the Gap ads are terrific. It's wonderful to experience that music with the original choreography (first rate dancing, too!) in such well-produced commercials."

Jamie Bernstein Thomas added, "If you're going to make the difficult decision at all to make these works available for commercial use, then these GAP ads are exactly what you'd wish for: they're reassuring in their respect for the music, and exhilarating in their high energy and production values."

MASS at the Vatican

For the first time, MASS will be performed at the Vatican, in the Sala Nervi, on Thursday, June 1, 2000. It is to be presented by the Festival di Pasqua, under the auspices of the Vatican's Central Committee for the Grand Jubilee Year 2000 and the President of the Italian Republic, and will be funded by the City of Rome. It is expected that Pope John Paul II will attend the performance, if his health permits. The performance will be part of the Vatican's World Jubilee for Migrants.

Enrico Castiglione will produce and direct the performance. Boris Brott will conduct the orchestra, bands, and choruses of the Santa Cecilia Conservatory. Douglas Webster will be the Celebrant and 24 young Americans will perform as the Street People. The performance will be in English (with Latin and Hebrew) with supertitles of the English translated into Italian. The set will be quite simple, under the hall's large sculpture of Christ triumphant, and with extensive lighting effects designed by Carlo Di Palma.

MASS: A Theatre Piece For Singers, Players and Dancers was composed for the opening of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. It received its first performance on September 8, 1971.
In the News

Pacific Music Festival

After celebrating its 10th anniversary last summer, the Pacific Music Festival promises to present an exciting series of programs in July-August 2000. Artistic Director Michael Tilson Thomas leads the faculty for PMF 2000, including Peter Schmidt, chairman of the faculty; Wen-Pin Chien, PMF resident conductor; Aaron Jay Kernis, composer-in-residence; Peter Grunberg, director of the vocal and keyboard programs; Principal Players of the Wiener Philharmoniker; and the International Principals, a group of orchestral musicians from leading orchestras throughout the world, including the Berlin Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, and San Francisco Symphony. In addition, Charles Dutoit, Music Director of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and NHK Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo, has just recently been named Artistic Director for PMF 2000. The NHK Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo, will join the festival in Sapporo in its first appearance with concerts led by Maestro Dutoit, as well as a debut performance with PMF Resident Conductor Wen-Pin Chien.

The PMF Academy, the primary focus of the festival, is comprised of nearly 130 promising young musicians from every corner of the globe. Artistic Director Michael Tilson Thomas will lead the orchestra in its first program this summer, Mahler's Symphony No. 3. World renowned mezzo-soprano Michelle DeYoung will join the orchestra in 3 performances. Charles Dutoit will conduct the second program, which features La Valse by Ravel and Petrouchka (1911 version) by Stravinsky. The final program for the festival, directed by PMF Resident Conductor Wen-Pin Chien, will include Holst's The Planets. In addition, PMF Orchestra members and Keyboard Program musicians will perform chamber music concerts and participate in the Pacific Soundings program, a concert featuring the music of Composer-in-Residence Aaron Jay Kernis. The Voice Program will perform Handel's Alexander's Feast and Bach's Magnificat.

A special event this summer will be a performance with the Sapporo Symphony Orchestra of "Concert Quiz: How Musical Are You?" a program from Leonard Bernstein's Young People's Concerts. Kunihiko Hashimoto, who translated the text, will be the narrator, and Seikyo Kim will conduct. Certainly an exciting summer for all in the first season of the Pacific Music Festival in the new millennium.

CANDIDE

The Royal National Theatre production of CANDIDE was awarded the prestigious Olivier Award for Outstanding Musical Production last February in London. Simon Russell Beale, the production's Pangloss, also was awarded the Olivier for Best Actor in a Musical. This highly acclaimed production, written and directed by John Caird and Trevor Nunn, played at London's Olivier Theater to enormous critical success. Richard Wilbur and Stephen Sondheim wrote new lyrics for this version, adding to their previous efforts and the existing lyrics by John Latouche, Lillian Hellman, Dorothy Parker and Leonard Bernstein. John Napier designed the production with musical direction by Mark W. Dorrell, choreography by Peter Darling, fight direction by Malcolm Ranson and sound design by Paul Griffiths. Daniel Evans played Candide, Alex Kelly was Cunegonde. Denis Quilley played Martin, Beverly Klein the Old Lady and Simon Day was Maximillian.

Herbert von Karajan Centrum

The Herbert von Karajan Centrum in Vienna, Austria will present an exhibit about Leonard Bernstein. The exhibit, which will run from June 14 through July 8, will feature many photographs of Bernstein in his later years as well as letters and facsimiles of music manuscripts, television scripts and conducting scores. The director of the Centrum, Ingrid Hainboeck said, "The exhibition is an attempt to posthumously provide a platform for both charismatic personalities." The Herbert von Karajan Centrum was founded to honor the life and work of Maestro Karajan. Eliette von Karajan, the wife of the late conductor, wrote, "This centre has been established to bring together young people, artists and all those who love art."
**Calendar of Events**

*Partial listing. Please note that all dates and programs are subject to change.*

**May**

4-7 New York, NY: WONDERFUL TOWN; Encores; Coffee Club Orchestra; Rob Fisher, conductor; City Center Theater.

5 London, UK: SERENADE; London Symphony Orchestra; Kurt Masur, conductor; Anne-Sophie Mutter, violin; Barbican Hall.

11 Eugene, OR: SYMPHONY NO. 3: KADDISH; Eugene Symphony Orchestra; Miguel Harth-Bedoya, conductor; Kelly Nussief, soprano; Hult Center.

17 Aachen, Germany: CHICHESTER PSALMS; Aachen Theatre Orchestra; Elio Boncompagni, conductor; Markus Dierßen, conductor; Adrian Lucas, director; Elio Boncompagni, conductor; Kelly Nussief, soprano; Hult Center.

25 Stuttgart, Germany: ON THE WATERFRONT SUITE; Orchester des Staatsoper Stuttgart; H.K. Gruber, conductor; Liederhalle Stuttgart, Beethovenhalle.

**June, continued**

4 Dresden, Germany: MASS; Dresden Music Festival (Concert and television); Cologne Rundfunkorchester and Choir; Helmuth Froschauer, conductor; Dresdner Kreuzkirche.

15-30 Vienna, Austria: Leonard Bernstein Exhibition; Herbert von Karajan Centrum.

26, 27 Bremerhaven, Germany: SYMPHONIC DANCES FROM WEST SIDE STORY; Städtisches Orchester; Bernd Ruf, conductor; Musik- und Konzertsaal der Carl Schurz Kaserne.

**June**

1 Vaticanz, Switzerland: MASS; Orchestra, Bands, and Choruses of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia; Douglas Webster, The Celebrant; Enrico Castiglione, director; Carlo Di Palma, designer; Boris Brott, conductor; Sala Nervi.

1, 2 Sydney, Australia: WEST SIDE STORY; Sydney Symphony Orchestra; Michael Christie, conductor; Sydney Opera House.

14 Peralada, Spain: MASS; Symphony Orchestra and Choir of Valencia; Douglas Webster, The Celebrant; Angel Gil-Ordonez, conductor; Peralada Music Festival.

15 Lennox, MA: OPENING PRAYER; Boston Symphony Orchestra; Seiji Ozawa, conductor; Tanglewood Music Festival.

16 Kiel, Germany: SYMPHONY NO. 1: JEREMIAH; Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival Orchestra; Florence Quivar, mezzo-soprano; Christoph Eschenbach, conductor; Ottseehalle.

23 Sapporo, Japan: FANCY FREE, NHK Symphony Orchestra; Wen-Pin Chien, conductor; Pacific Music Festival; Kitara Hall.

28, 30 Sapporo, Japan: QUIZ-CONCERT: HOW MUSICAL ARE YOU? (Young People’s Concert-in Japanese); Sapporo Symphony Orchestra; Juniihiko Hashimoto, narrator, Seikyo Kim, conductor; Pacific Music Festival; Kitara Hall.

29 Valencia, Spain: MASS; Symphony Orchestra and Choir of Valencia; Douglas Webster, The Celebrant; Angel Gil-Ordonez, conductor; Sagunto Festival.

**July, continued**

1-8 Vienna, Austria: Leonard Bernstein Exhibition; Herbert von Karajan Center.

2 Santiago de Compostela, Spain: MASS; Symphony Orchestra and Choir of Valencia; Douglas Webster, The Celebrant; Angel Gil-Ordonez, conductor; Santiago de Compostela Festival.

4 New York, NY: CANDIDE OVERTURE; New York Philharmonic; Mikko Franck, conductor; Central Park.

8 Sapporo, Japan: FANFARE FOR THE 25th ANNIVERSARY OF THE HIGH SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND ARTS; Pacific Music Festival Orchestra; Wen-Pin Chen, conductor; Pacific Music Festival; Art Park.

14 Peralada, Spain: MASS; Symphony Orchestra and Choir of Valencia; Douglas Webster, The Celebrant; Angel Gil-Ordonez, conductor; Peralada Music Festival.

15 Lennox, MA: OPENING PRAYER; Boston Symphony Orchestra; Seiji Ozawa, conductor; Tanglewood Music Festival.

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**August**

2 Santander, Spain: MASS; Symphony Orchestra and Choir of Valencia; Douglas Webster, The Celebrant; Angel Gil-Ordonez, conductor; Santander Music Festival.

11 Gijon, Spain: CANDIDE OVERTURE, SYMPHONIC DANCES FROM WEST SIDE STORY; Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra of Springfield; Adrian Sunshine, conductor.

11 Santander, Spain: CANDIDE OVERTURE, SYMPHONIC DANCES FROM WEST SIDE STORY; Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra of Springfield; Adrian Sunshine, conductor; Santander Music Festival.

12 Neumunster, Germany: CANDIDE OVERTURE, SYMPHONIC DANCES FROM WEST SIDE STORY; Philharmonie der Nationen; Justus Franz, conductor; Holstenhalle.

19 Neumunster, Germany: SYMPHONY NO. 3: KADDISH; Litauisches Staatsorchester; Kaunas Chor; Sylvia Greenberg, soprano; Christoph Bantzer, speaker; John Neal Axelrod, conductor; Holstenhalle.

30 Bend, OR: SYMPHONIC DANCES FROM WEST SIDE STORY; Cascades Festival of Music Orchestra; Murray Sidlin, conductor; Cascades Festival of Music.
Looking Ahead

The Bernstein Century

Sony Classical will release more compact discs of THE BERNSTEIN CENTURY series in June, beginning with Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra (NYPO) in an all Bartók disc which features the two piano concertos with Phillipe Entremont at the keyboard and the Concerto for Two Pianos, Percussion and Orchestra with Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale, pianists. Completing the release of Mendelssohn's symphonies are Symphony No. 3: Scottish and No. 5: Reformation also with the New York Philharmonic. Other scheduled releases are the Mahler Symphony No. 2 with the London Symphony Orchestra and for the first time on compact disc the last movement of Mahler's Symphony No. 2 from the historic July 1967 Mt. Scopus Concert with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (IPO), Jennie Tourel, soloist. An all Mozart disc features the New York Philharmonic in Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, Symphony No. 36, the Linz and Symphony No. 40. Completing the June releases are the NYPO and Bernstein performing Sibelius' Symphonies No. 4 and 5.

August will bring the first time release of two Haydn symphonies, No. 102 and the Symphony No. 104: London. Included on this disc is Symphony No. 88, with the NYPO performing. Bernstein is represented as pianist and conductor with the releases of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1 with the NYPO, and a performance with the IPO of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 25. An all Ravel disc includes the NYPO and Jennie Tourel in Rapsodie Espagnole, Alborada del gracioso, Shéhérazade, Mère L'Oye and the Pavane pour une infante défunte. An all Strauss disc includes Till Eulenspiegel and Don Juan. A "Favorite Overture" disc includes many first releases on compact disc including Weber’s Invitation to the Dance. Completing this release cycle is Wolf-Ferrari’s Intermezzo from Jewels of the Madonna and The Secret of Suzanne.