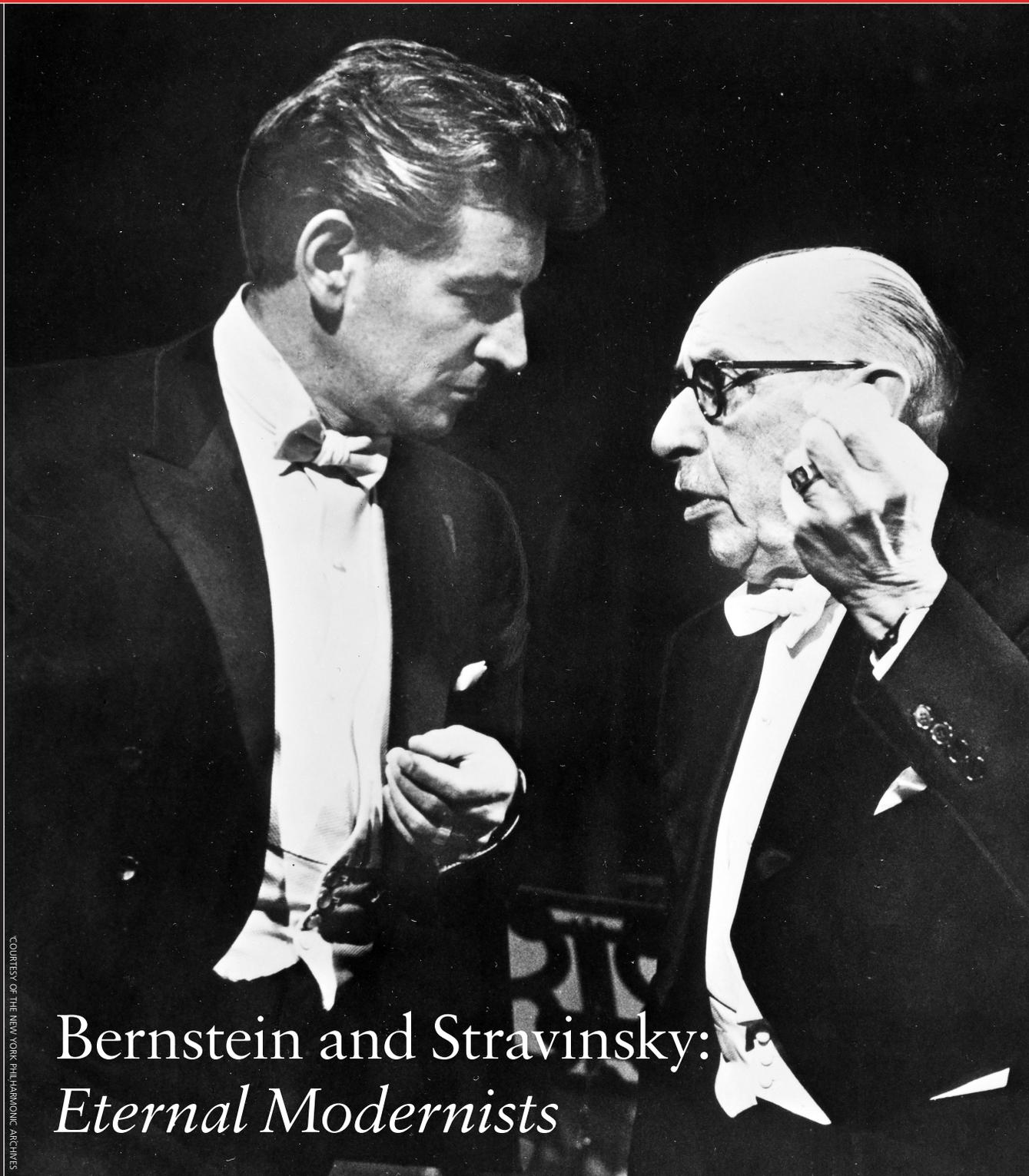


# PRELUDE, FUGUE RIFFS

News for Friends of  
Leonard Bernstein  
Spring/Summer 2021



COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC ARCHIVES

## Bernstein and Stravinsky: *Eternal Modernists*

Inside...

2 Bernstein & Stravinsky

4 New Sony Box Set

6 MTT & LB

8 *Artful Learning*

10 From the Archives

11 Mahler Remastered

12 In Memoriam

14 In the News

16 American Ballet Theatre

# To Our Readers

Since when did a virus ever slow Lenny down? Seems like he's all around us, and busier than ever. The new boxed set from Sony is a magnificent way to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Stravinsky's death, and to marvel at Bernstein's brilliant evocations of those seminal works. We're particularly happy to share a delightful reminiscence from Michael Tilson Thomas, describing the joy, and occasionally maddening hilarity, of sharing a piano keyboard with the older Maestro to play the four-hands version of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*.

In other recording news, *Bernstein Reimagined* is a fascinating, virtuosic exploration of Bernstein works through a jazz lens. And, as soon as we snag that new 8K technology, we can't wait to dive into the newly remastered Mahler videos.

How heartening, meanwhile, that the world of live musical performance is slowly but surely coming back to life. We keenly look forward to hearing and seeing our favorite musicians doing what they do best—particularly at Bernstein's beloved summer festivals: Tanglewood, Schleswig Holstein Music Festival, and the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo. Ravinia, too, has some Bernstein-related surprises in store.

Our 50th anniversary celebration of MASS continues; in this issue, we revisit composer Daron Hagen's brilliant, engaging analysis of "Simple Song," which reveals why the song is actually not so simple at all.

Two of Bernstein's most beloved colleagues have recently joined him in the great beyond: his indispensable television director of the *Young People's Concerts*, Roger Englander; and mezzo soprano Christa Ludwig, whom Bernstein revered as a consummate artist, and also treasured as a true friend. How fortunate we are that these rich collaborations are preserved on video and audio, to comfort and enliven us as we plunge forward into all our next iterations. J.B. ■

## Bernstein and Stravinsky: *Eternal Modernists*

by Hannah Edgar

A concert program is worth a thousand words—though Leonard Bernstein rarely prepared one without the other. Exactly a year after Igor Stravinsky's death on April 6, 1971, Bernstein led a televised memorial concert with the London Symphony Orchestra, delivering an eloquent eulogy to the late composer as part of the broadcast. Most telling, however, are the sounds that filled the Royal Albert Hall's high dome that day. Bernstein selected three pieces from Stravinsky's compendious output: *The Rite of Spring* (naturally), the *Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra*, and the *Symphony of Psalms*.

How do you sum up a life? More than that, how do you sum up a creative mind whose very aesthetic whirled in a career-long pirouette? One suspects mere summary was not Bernstein's M.O. when he assembled that 1972 program. (Besides, his seven-part Stravinsky salute ten years later—with the National Symphony Orchestra and co-led with Michael Tilson Thomas—comes closer to a true conspectus.) What is more probable, then, is that Bernstein saw himself reflected in those three pieces. A rhythmically driving, choreographed work that, for better or worse, overshadowed the rest of his output (*West Side Story*). A pseudo-narrative piano concerto (the *Symphony No. 2, The Age of Anxiety*). A psalm setting proudly reclaiming his oft-persecuted faith (*Chichester Psalms*). That's nothing to say of the myriad idiomatic influences Bernstein sopped up from the elder composer.

At first glance, Bernstein and Stravinsky are not aesthetic bedfellows. But spiritual ones? As the 1972 memorial concert made clear, almost certainly.

Like many listeners before and since, Bernstein was introduced to Stravinsky through a recording of the *Rite*. Then 15 years old, he was

captivated.<sup>1</sup> For the eternally young Bernstein, *The Rite of Spring* would forever represent youth—its superlative joys and sorrows, but also its supreme messiness. Working with the inaugural 1987 Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival Orchestra Academy, Bernstein's training ground for young musicians, he kicked off the orchestra's first rehearsal of the *Rite* with his usual directness. "*The Rite of Spring* is about sex," he declared, to titillated whispers. "Think of the times we all experience during adolescence, when you're lying face down on the ground in the spring, and you want to kiss [the earth]. You watch the grass grow. You want it to just enfold you."

Woodshedding the notoriously challenging *Rite* with a young orchestra was probably intended to raise the profile of the brand-new festival, but its selection also speaks to Stravinsky's towering place in the cultural zeitgeist. To Bernstein, Stravinsky practically represented modernity, the contemporary made manifest. He said as much verbatim during a 1957 *Omnibus* lecture on "modern music," during which he proffered Stravinsky as a musical Janus—someone who built upon the musical traditions of the past but flipped them in unexpected ways. In one example, Bernstein cued the orchestra in the final chord of the *Symphony of Psalms*: After an hour of harmonic meandering, it concludes with a sonorous C major chord in root position. "Hear that?" Bernstein asks, turning to the camera. "Basic musical material made new by genius."

Music appreciation campaigns aside, Bernstein was not a hugely vociferous Stravinsky advocate—certainly not compared to his championing of Mahler, or now-iconic American symphonists. That's because Stravinsky's music did not need advocating in the West.<sup>2</sup> The USSR, however, was a different story. When Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic programmed *The Rite of Spring* for their State Department-funded tour of the Soviet Union in 1959, Stravinsky's home country had

## Bernstein once called the Russian composer “the last great father-figure of Western music.” If that’s the case, Bernstein was his prodigal son.

not heard the work in its full orchestral version for thirty years. True to the tour’s diplomatic (and in no small part propagandistic) aspirations, Bernstein and the Philharmonic emphasized American and Russian composers; the *Rite* was an obvious choice, having just been recorded by Bernstein and the Philharmonic the year before for Columbia Records.

But, in echoes of its 1913 premiere, the *Rite* ended up causing a greater furor than intended. One Moscow critic, already rankled by Bernstein’s direct addresses to the crowd (“How dare Bernstein lecture on music to a Soviet audience?”), took particular umbrage with his passing equation of the *Rite*’s premiere to the 1917 October Revolution—a blithe comparison that was tantamount to political sacrilege. The pearl-clutching likely aimed to distract from an uncomfortable truth: An *American* had been the one to introduce a nearly half-century old Russian masterwork to Soviet audiences.

(The Philharmonic’s performances of Stravinsky’s *Concerto for Piano and Winds* on the same program—a piano-forward work Bernstein would have gravitated towards, as he did the *Capriccio*—were also believed to be Soviet premieres.) Whether he knew it or not, Bernstein had staged an unspeakably embarrassing scene by programming Stravinsky’s music.

Party line aside, something stuck with the attendees of those fateful concerts. According to American journalists in attendance, audiences greeted *The Rite of Spring* enthusiastically, and in the years to follow, the work slowly, cautiously crept back into some corners of the Soviet repertory.<sup>3</sup> Bernstein’s inclination to educate, to introduce, and to enthuse certainly charmed American concertgoers. Now, it seemed he had done



BEN GREENHAUS. COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS MUSIC DIVISION

the impossible and enraptured Soviet audiences, as well.

The successes of the Soviet tour—nay, of Bernstein and Stravinsky’s musicianship, writ large—make it tempting to trot out the “U word.” The dramatically differing reports of that 1959 Moscow concert, however, make it clear that musical “universality” is far too culturally ordained to exist in a literal sense. That said, Stravinsky—with his chameleonic sensibilities and multinational perspective—came pretty damn close. In his 1972 eulogy, Bernstein called him “probably the most universal composer who ever lived”—“most,” perhaps, in the Icarian sense of striving for the impossible. That alone was enough to exalt him to the philanthropic, all-encompassing, ever-dreaming Bernstein.

“The range of his musical embrace

was so vast that he not only borrowed from everyone but also composed for everyone,” Bernstein continued in his statement. “In this way, he captured the imagination of the whole world.” So it was for them both. ■

*Hannah Edgar writes about classical, jazz, and experimental music for the Chicago Tribune, among other publications.*

<sup>1</sup>“A Note on Stravinsky’s Variety,” typescript, Box 71, Folder 30, LBC at LOC.

<sup>2</sup>For more, see Phil Gentry’s “Leonard Bernstein’s *The Age of Anxiety: A Great American Symphony during McCarthyism* in American Music.” <sup>3</sup>Olga Manulkina expounds upon the 1959 tour’s influence on *Rite* programming in the Soviet Union in “Leonard Bernstein’s 1959 Triumph in the Soviet Union,” from *The Rite of Spring at 100* (Indiana University Press: 2017).

**Leonard Bernstein with composer Igor Stravinsky, 1946.**

# New Sony Box Set: *Bernstein Conducts Stravinsky*

*In remembrance of the great composer Igor Stravinsky (June 17, 1882–April 6, 1971)*

“The last great father-figure of Western music” was how Leonard Bernstein eulogized Igor Stravinsky in 1972 before conducting the homage concert in London a year after the composer’s death. Stravinsky’s works, he asserted, “sum up and embrace all of music itself—from primitive folk art to highly sophisticated serialism, from rarefied church music to outspoken jazz.”

In fact, Bernstein performed surprisingly few selections from Stravinsky’s vast output, recording most of those for Columbia Masterworks and RCA Victor, yet they include some of his most indelible interpretations. Sony Classical has now released these performances in a 6-CD box set.

One of Bernstein’s earliest passions was *Histoire du Soldat* (*The Soldier’s Tale*). He studied the piece at Tanglewood with his mentor, Serge Koussevitzky, first performing it in 1940 at a Koussevitzky family picnic.

Then in 1947, after conducting it again at Tanglewood with Boston Symphony players, Bernstein recorded it, along with the enchanting *Octet*, on 78s for RCA.

His most celebrated Stravinsky recording came a decade later, in 1958. *Le Sacre du printemps* with the New York Philharmonic elicited the composer’s famous reaction: “Wow!” When Bernstein conducted the *Sacre* in the USSR the following year—with nine Moscow Symphony Orchestra players augmenting the Philharmonic—the stunned Russian audience exploded in wild cheers. The New York studio recording, wrote *ClassicsToday* just a few years ago, still has “an excitement, spontaneity, and primal fury that no other version quite matches. It fully deserves its legendary status. The remastering has been excellently done... This has to be one of the most detailed and realistically engineered performances available.”

From around the same time comes Bernstein’s “compelling and viscerally exciting” (*ClassicsToday*) New York Philharmonic recording

of the *Firebird Suite* (1919 version): “a must-have” (*MusicWeb International*). In 1962 there followed recordings of the seldom-heard *Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments* (with soloist Seymour Lipkin), which Bernstein had performed in Moscow on that visit with the Philharmonic, and the suite from *Pulcinella* (“A very enjoyable rendition by any standard... It’s good to be reminded of how much sheer fun all of this music really is, and how much warmth of feeling it contains”—*ClassicsToday*).

After that, Bernstein didn’t return to the studio with Stravinsky’s music until 1970, but it was worth the wait. *ClassicsToday*’s reviewer wrote not long ago: “As time goes on, Leonard Bernstein’s New York recording of *Petrushka* only gains in stature... There are two ways to perform this music: as a brilliant but somewhat abstract orchestral showpiece, and as a vivid theatrical experience. The former predominates today, but as his typically enjoyable lecture-demonstration included with the recording makes clear, Bernstein opts for the latter, and projects it as few have. And so, the fair music explodes with earthy vitality, *Petrushka* himself comes across as touchingly pathetic, the Moor as truly angry and nasty, and the conclusion genuinely spooky. All of this is contained within an interpretation that catches the score’s rhythmic punch as few have before or since, thanks to the virtuoso response of the New York Philharmonic. Really, if you are going to do the work complete, then this is the way to go.”

Two years later, this time with the London Symphony Orchestra, Bernstein revisited *Le Sacre du printemps*. “This later version,” wrote *ClassicsToday* in comparing it with the New York recording, “has similar dynamism and energy”. And in the same London Symphony sessions, joined by the English Bach Festival Chorus, he recorded the *Symphony of Psalms*. Gramophone’s reviewer wrote: “He never softens the pungency or the rhythmic attack of the music. His chorus, bigger and more accomplished than Stravinsky’s, has the sort



of 'straightness' of tone that the composer was obviously aiming for, and the recording is excellent."

That autumn, Bernstein took up residence at his alma mater, Harvard University, as Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry for the academic year 1972–73. He regarded this appointment as the greatest academic honor ever bestowed upon him: "Everything I do is in one way or another teaching," he told an interviewer. His duties included delivering a prestigious series of lectures, which he crowned with a two-hour discussion of Stravinsky and his central position in modern music.

The heart of that memorable last Harvard appearance, entitled "The Poetry of Earth", was an "outstanding" (*ClassicsToday*) performance of the opera-oratorio *Oedipus Rex*, recorded earlier at Symphony Hall with Bernstein conducting the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Harvard Glee Club, and featuring René Kollo as Oedipus, Tatiana Troyanos as Jocasta, and Tom Krause as Creon. When it was first released on LP in 1976, *Gramophone's* Stravinsky specialist wrote: "It is amazing what dramatic truth emerges from the score if only the details of vocal writing, instrumentation, dynamics, are observed accurately and with feeling for their meaning. That happens, I think, almost throughout Bernstein's new recording, which has the strongest cast of soloists that I can remember hearing in the work." This shattering performance of Stravinsky's massive work, which conveys the same undiluted savage intensity as Bernstein's *Sacre*, is aptly presented in Sony's new edition. This edition also contains the conductor's spoken introduction to *Petrushka* from 1970, as well as an essay for *King Igor* by Wolfgang Stähr. Its title: "When Bernstein Became Stravinsky." ■

Courtesy Sony Classical

# Happy Birthday, Igor Stravinsky

## An Excerpt from the *Young People's Concerts*

Written by Leonard Bernstein

Original CBS Television Network Broadcast Date: 26 March 1962

We are paying tribute, with all our respect and admiration and devotion, to the greatest composer in the world today. Now that's a big statement, but I don't think anyone will argue about it. Whatever your tastes are—romantic or classical or very up-to-date—there are always works by Stravinsky that you will love. And all these works are in a personal style and language all his own: You can never mistake that Stravinsky sound...

It's an amazing thing, this original personality he has, especially when you think of how many times he has changed his style of composing in the last fifty or sixty years, just as he has changed his country from Russia—where he was born—to France to America, where he lives now in California. He started back in Russia writing for big orchestra: brilliant, luscious, colorful music—like the ballets *Firebird*, *Petrushka* and the world-shaking ballet *The Rite of Spring*. Now *that* was a revolutionary piece: It changed the history of music with its strange new rhythms, its barbaric grunting and howling, and its massive dissonant chords...

Everyone was shocked by that back in 1913, shocked into either wild excitement or into fury, but everyone was impressed by this new, thunderous genius. And just when they thought they had his number—a thunder—he switched on them, with the ease of a bullfighter reversing his cape. Whoosh—and Stravinsky had a new style: Small orchestras, sharp pointy, little music, precise tricky rhythms, plus a whole new idea called neoclassicism, which means a new look at old classic styles. That is, he was suddenly writing music that reminded one faintly of old Handel, or of Mozart, or of Bach...

But then came the biggest switch of all, only in these last ten years. You see, since the beginning of our century there has been a new kind of music developing in the world, sometimes called atonal music, sometimes twelve-tone music or serial music. Now Stravinsky had always written the exact opposite of this kind of music, but lo and behold in the last ten years he has fooled the bull again, with a swish of the cape again, and begun to write his own kind of serial music, or atonal music, or whatever you want to call it...

In fact, Stravinsky has now become the world leader of this kind of music. And so it is this King Igor that we salute today, the ever-changing, ever-new, ever-young Igor who at the age of eighty, imagine eighty, is still handing out the biggest surprises in the world of music. ■

### [ LEARN MORE ]

To read the complete script please visit us [online](#).

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# MTT & LB Share Keyboard Real Estate

Playing piano  
four-hands with  
Lenny.

by Michael Tilson Thomas

*Michael Tilson Thomas is Founder and Artistic Director of the New World Symphony; Music Director Laureate of the San Francisco Symphony; and Conductor Laureate of the London Symphony Orchestra. He is also an esteemed composer, as well as a producer of multimedia projects dedicated to music education and reimagining the concert experience. In addition to winning eleven Grammys, receiving the National Medal of Arts, and being a Kennedy Center Honoree, MTT was also a longtime colleague and close friend of Leonard Bernstein. In the piece below, he reminisces about the unique experience of sharing a piano keyboard with the older Maestro.*

One of the great semi-secret delights of piano playing is reading through and performing the vast literature of music written for piano four-hands. All the greatest composers have written enormous amounts of music for so-called piano duet. It's an inexhaustible amount of repertoire. There's no way that in a lifetime—maybe even in a lifetime and a half—you could play it all. But it's delightful always to have volumes of this music around, available for any spare moment where just for fun you might read through some amazing piece you've never heard of, in the company of a sympathetic partner.

There is a certain bravado associated with doing this, often caused by the circumstances of the reading. Very often, this experience might happen somewhat late in an evening after everyone involved has had a drink or two, and there's a certain go-for-it attitude that makes it all the more fun. If you can't quite play what's written on the page, you're free to leave out some of it, or improvise something of your own which you hope will fill the bill. You can always decide to go back a line, or a page or two, and revisit some moments you realize are really beautiful and that you want to understand more as they are actually writ-



PETER SCHAAF

ten, rather than the spontaneous, sub-, shall we say, way in which they have recently emerged.

This experience is an up-close-and-personal one. It became very well-known during the early tours of Mozart, when he often played his original piano duet compositions that he'd written for himself and his sister to play. It was also the kind of music that musically educated families frequently played together at home. Back in the 19th and early 20th century, it was considered very much a family-members-only experience. One of my venerable Viennese professors confided to me that her father had always forbidden her to play duets with any unknown bachelors. One has to be aware and very considerate of one's partner: noting where they are playing, and establishing respectful balances if you are at that moment accompanying. One of the players will be doing the pedaling. That could also be a controversial matter, especially if you are doing the pedaling for your partner's solo. Everyone has a different idea of just how "dry" or "wet" the sound at any particular moment should be.

Leonard Bernstein loved playing piano duets, and he was an enthusiastic and fearless partner. One had to be aware, however, of what the

rules of the road were in making music with him; as the referee in a prizefight might say, "protect yourself at all times." The music always began with positioning oneself at the piano. Lenny would say, "Now let's agree where we'll all be sitting." If he were playing Primo (the treble part), he'd continue: "My left knee will be just to the right of middle C, and your right knee will be just to the left of middle C. Then we can both be comfortable."

The only problem was that LB was pianistically a total road hog. He was always jockeying for position, using his elbows to push you slightly—and sometimes more than slightly—off to the very edges of the piano. If I were playing Secondo (the bass part), I would also be entrusted with doing the pedaling. However, the maestro could, in his musical passion, forget that he was not doing the pedaling, and come crashing down quite vigorously on my unsuspecting toes. There was a reckless, devil-may-care, and very amusing quality to these occasions. If some musical mishap occurred, one or another of us would always have some kind of gag line or snappy comeback that set us off into peals of laughter. It could

get so hilarious that one of us would finally insist to the other that we had to get serious and resolve whatever uncertainties were still remaining.

LB operated—at the piano anyway—from the basic methodology that if he were going to crash, everyone else would crash with him. Sometimes we were in the middle of some complex passage and suddenly I would find him playing right on top of where my hands were.

“What are you doing down here in this part of the piano?” I’d say. “I am playing Secondo you are playing Primo; what are you doing in my part of the piano?!”

“My part of the piano?” he’d jeeringly reply. “That’s so typical of you! This is exalted, selfless music making. You know, you have such an ego problem!”

“I’m the one with an ego problem?” I’d reply. “Well, I’m certainly not alone!”

We’d both humph and laugh, and then we’d be back in it.

I had played the piano duet version of *The Rite of Spring* some years earlier in Los Angeles with my classmate Ralph Grierson. That performance, the first officially sanctioned one, was approved and supervised by Stravinsky himself. I was very comfortable with the piece, and was thrilled when Lenny decided that we should play it. I had played the Primo part in that Los Angeles performance. Therefore, it was decided that Lenny would play the Secondo part at our concert at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

*The Rite of Spring* piano duet was originally written for the rehearsals necessary for the ballet’s first performance, back in 1913. It reflects Stravinsky’s original thoughts about the piece in many details, including the complex rhythmic structures. It offered a particular challenge for LB, particularly in the “Sacrificial Dance” section because, years before, the version of the piece he’d first learned as a young man was one that had been

specially crafted for LB’s conducting mentor, Serge Koussevitzky. Though a great champion of contemporary music, Koussevitzky had great difficulty in conducting the frequently complex rhythmic patterns. As I recall, Koussevitzky asked Nicolas Slonimsky to come up with a simplified version of the Sacrificial Dance section; Slonimsky obligingly reconfigured the section into four-four time, so that Koussevitzky could count and conduct it. And that’s the way LB had learned the piece—and although he knew it was nonsense, he’d never gotten around to dealing with the music in its original form.

It was always an amusing experience seeing him rehearse the piece with a new orchestra. Most of those great bands had played the piece countless times, and were thrilled with the idea of doing it with such a hyper-energetic person as Lenny. Everything would go swimmingly until that final dance. The orchestras knew the music so well in its polymetrical configuration that trying to figure out how that same music could be represented in the four-four metre that LB’s parts showed them was always a major existential crisis.

So, in our piano four-hands performance, LB had the experience that all those orchestra members had had—in reverse. Now he *had* to rethink this music he knew so well, in a different kind of code. It was really quite a head twist.

But rehearsing the piece with him was great fun. Along the way, naturally, he wanted to re-voice or re-score various parts. I imagine that in some library, there must be the copy of that *farkakte* version from which we played, with various emendations in his classic red or blue pencil markings. We both really got into it. A real performance began to develop, with all kinds of primal energy.

At the end of the dress rehearsal, we both felt quite confident. Then came the performance itself. One thing I hadn’t realized was just how much Lenny sweated in a performance, especially a piano performance. Actually playing the

instrument makes all of us conductors nervous—and as he was playing a number of keyboard pieces on that program, he had lots to contend with.

We came out onto the stage and sat down at the keyboard. We did our usual “me to one side of middle C, you on the other side of middle C” routine, and then it was the moment to begin. I reached out with my right hand to play that opening as naturally and beautifully as I could, remembering the kinds of sounds I had heard great bassoonists like Sherman Walt of the Boston Symphony play in that legendary passage. Imagine my surprise, and quite frankly terror, when my finger slipped right off the piano. So slippery were the keys from the last piece that Lenny had played, that it was literally like a skating rink.

I think I managed to use my handkerchief in some of the bars I was resting to wipe off “my part of the piano.” Anyhow, we hit our stride, and the performance went forward with great confidence, panache, and even elegance. The audience went crazy, and we both shared in the triumph with enormous satisfaction and relief. We felt like we had negotiated every twist of the Monte Carlo Grand Prix without flinching in a single turn.

The experience was such fun that a few years later, Lenny called me in London to ask if I would premiere a new piece he was writing for piano four-hands and voices. It was called *Arias and Barcarolles*, or “Arks and Barks,” as we came to affectionately call it. That was an equally hilarious and ultimately triumphant experience.

What I still treasure, along with all the memories of riotous antics that went on at those piano duet readings or rehearsals over the years, is the pleasure in sharing LB’s thoughts about music, whether old or recently written. He always made it all seem new. ■



## Unsung School Day Heroes

by Patrick Bolek

This past year has challenged students, families, and educators, as well as principals—especially those leading *Artful Learning* Schools. Principals, those stalwart pillars of reliability, rarely get asked: “How are YOU doing through all of this?”

Even without a pandemic, school principals efficiently address hundreds of questions regarding every aspect of everything, every day. They reassure parents and guardians over their concerns; they nurture teachers to create and maintain the caring environments that inspire academic excellence; and they balance administrative oversight of safety, operations, facilities, and district initiatives—all of which is only a sampling of the responsibilities principals dutifully maintain. Compound all of that with scheduling academic instruction; conducting evaluations for teachers and support staff; participating in or facilitating meetings of all kinds; and of course, raising funds—and we begin

to grasp what this job entails.

Leonard Bernstein said, “Teaching is probably the noblest profession... the most unselfish, difficult, and honorable profession, but also the most underappreciated, underrated, underpaid, and underpraised profession in the world.”

Bernstein’s statement is also applicable at the leadership level. The Maestro was no stranger to the responsibilities of being a leader: to inspire virtuosic performances, and demonstrate to orchestras worldwide the same high expectations to which he held himself. Adults with an early memory of witnessing a live performance of Leonard Bernstein—either as a child in the audience at a *Young People’s Concert*, or perhaps while playing in the second violin section at Tanglewood under his baton—all acknowledge that experience as a transformative event in their life or career. And certainly, any educator will attest that capable leadership and collaboration—combined with empathy—are their most coveted goals.

The calamity of the pandemic has exhausted even the most resilient of our academic leaders. In addition to the daunting new challenges, principals have had to continue dealing with all the rest: flooded and mold-ridden schools; lockdowns for drive-by shootings; school mergings and construction delays; even hunkering down during tornadoes. Community apathy, spartan resources, derelict facilities, continuous student testing, corrupt administrations, and incompetent education boards test even the most flexible of individuals. Yet—they show up. And they show up to empower educators to use the arts and creativity to engage students in all curricula.

So we would like to recognize our *Artful Learning* Principals across the country: not just for what you do or have done for years using the model, but for staying the course in a career where the only constant is change. Please take this collective moment to turn around on the podium to acknowledge your ensemble of educators, and take a bow to our thunderous applause.

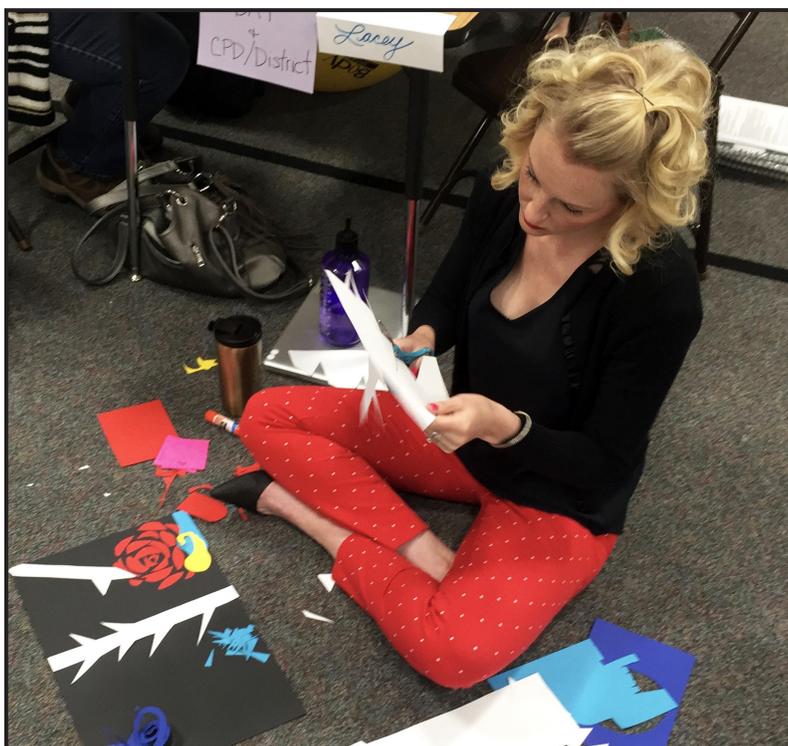
### [ LEARN MORE ]

Read more and view additional images of our legion of national principal leaders—both past and present—at our *Artful Learning* Blog ■

*Patrick Bolek is the Executive Director of Artful Learning, Inc. Email [patrick@artfullearning.org](mailto:patrick@artfullearning.org) to learn more about Leonard Bernstein’s arts and creativity learning model.*

### ARTIST. TEACHER. LEADER.

**First as an assistant principal at Meadow View Elementary School—a Legacy School in Colorado—and then principal—award-winning leader Lacey Dahl was the definition of an engaged leader—modeling her expectations of commitment to both teachers and students.**



“It’s only out of enthusiasm that curiosity comes, and you have to be curious about things in order to want to know about them. That’s where real knowledge comes from— from the desire to know.”

Leonard Bernstein, from his *Young People’s Concert*, “A Tribute to Teachers”



**LEADER OF LEADERS**

Distinguished Trainer Jo Ann Isken (below) led an *Artful Learning School* in California for a decade before joining the national trainer team. Her contributions to the *School Design Book* and countless sustaining schools are immeasurable.



**LEADING BY LEARNING**

Midway Elementary School of the Arts—a Legacy School in Florida found the perfect leader to sustain the model after three principals in under a decade before her. Cathy Lambert (above) works together with university students also learning the *Artful Learning* model.



**IF YOU DON'T DO IT, NEITHER WILL THEY**

Principal Heather Golly (left & above center) at Roosevelt Middle School in California demonstrated to her huge team of teachers the importance of genuine participation in professional development. Personalized learning is the bedrock of the school vision and solidifies progress when the leader does exactly what the teachers are asked to do.

## Bernstein's Seemingly Simple Song

by Daron Hagen

(as printed in the 2015 Spring/  
Summer issue of *Prelude Fugue & Riffs*)

When I was eleven years old, my brother, who two years earlier had turned me on to *Jesus Christ Superstar*, played me MASS. He was old enough to be worrying about the draft; we watched with horrified fascination as the numbers climbed under the little black soldier and the little white soldier just over Walter Cronkite's shoulder. I brought the big, floppy LP's of MASS with me to Linfield School, taught "God Said" to my classmates, and led them in a rousing rendition on the playground during recess, prompting a call home from the vice principal (who had not one ironic bone in his body) to my

**What critics at the time deemed self-indulgent lapses in taste are revealed, in hindsight, to be the unapologetic gestures of a master.**

mother, who, laughing, no doubt told him to get "with it."

My MASS, the one spinning away in 1972 on the turntable in my parent's den, began with a cacophonous prelude of delightfully colorful modernist blowouts overlapped like clever people talking over one another at a cocktail party. It was the furthest thing from the traditional classical music, show tunes and rock 'n' roll to which I, as a Lutheran kid from Wisconsin, related. It was exotic, but it didn't make me feel anything.

Then, the Celebrant cuts through this with his electric guitar, strumming the open strings with all the Rock God power chord authority of a young Jim Morrison, stilling the Babel of compositional complaints.

So begins Bernstein's "A Simple Song," with joyous open G's and D's on the guitar. Bernstein leaves the third out of his chord, thereby letting the Celebrant spell out "G-d" musically, with the middle left out, in the traditional fashion. It's an innocent, pre-musical place: a chord that anyone who can pick up the guitar can strum without knowing how to play. So begins a supposedly "simple" song that is a textbook example of what a composer can do when he has the craft to conceal his craft.

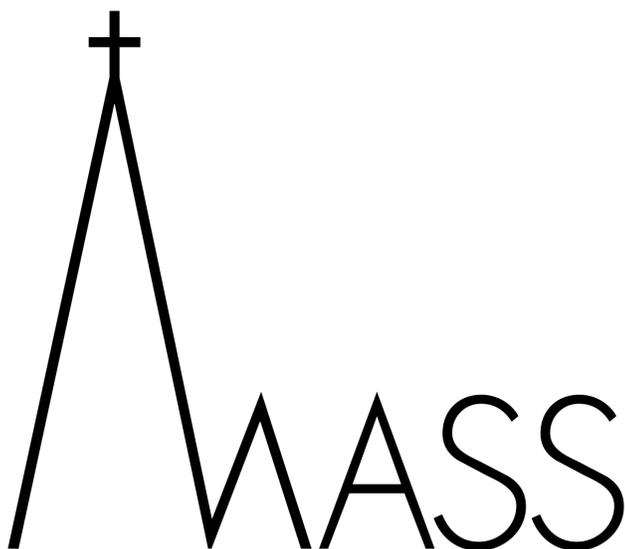
The Celebrant enters on the fifth in G major with the word "sing." The C-sharp that follows is the Bernstein signature interval, the one he used to poison the harmonies and organize the drama in *West Side Story*. And it is anything but simple: the word "God" has been placed on the "forbidden" tritone, rife with ambiguity and harmonic instability, ready to modulate into any key.

And so it continues, sounding like a pop song and functioning all the time in the way Bernstein himself did, on several levels at once, a semiotician's dream: entertaining and illuminating, clever and heartfelt, knowledgeable, but filled with disarming wonder, revealing the obvious without embarrassment or cynicism because the most important things bear repeating.

Composer Ned Rorem told me once, that "writing complicated music was a lot easier than not." I was too young when he said it to me; now I understand that it required a sort of courage for a man of Bernstein's sophistication and time to drop in that little soft-rock "boom-chick," in the B section; to gently touch on the jazzy major seventh with a grace note on the word "help;" to push the jazz gesture just a trifle harder on the "sting" beneath the final "laude." What critics at the time deemed self-indulgent lapses in taste are revealed, in hindsight, to be the unapologetic gestures of a master.

Even though you don't have to be able to read music to write a great tune, one of the lessons that Bernstein's "Simple Song" teaches is that you need more than just a true heart and a clever mind to compose music of a calibre equal to the finest visual and literary art. One needs the craft to conceal one's craft. ■

*Daron Hagen is a composer, stage director, essayist, pianist, and conductor living in Upstate New York with his wife and two sons.*



# Leonard Bernstein Mahler's Symphonies Remastered in 8K

by Masayuki Ikeno

In December 2018, NHK launched the 8K channel, the first one in the world. This state-of-the-art video system blows away viewers with its super high-definition: 33 million pixels, which is sixteen times more than the conventional high-def known as 2K, which is about 2 million pixels. In addition, the stereophony from 22.2 multi-channels creates amazingly realistic sound.

In that same year, I was in charge of filming and broadcasting orchestras such as the Vienna Philharmonic and NHK Symphony, live in the 8K format. I came up with the idea of remastering films of maestros in the past, using this latest technology.

There is a saying in Japan: "On Ko Chi Shin"—which means you learn something new by learning the old. Old films always let us discover new things. I wanted today's young music fans to feel the passion and energy in the performances of the legendary maestros.

Leonard Bernstein recorded all Mahler, Beethoven, and Brahms symphonies, among other outstanding performances, in 35mm films with UNITEL, the German video production company, from the 1970s through to his final years. The original 35mm negative films contain vast amounts of information that exceed the conventional 4K video system's ability to scan fully. It is the perfect content to transform into 8K videos.

In the fall of 2019, this unprecedentedly ambitious project began.

In cooperation with Unitel, the first undertaking was an incandescent live performance of *Beethoven's Symphony No.9*, with Bernstein conducting Vienna Philharmonic at Vienna State Opera in 1979.

The original film negatives owned by UNITEL were kept in frozen storage in Germany. Freezing is a costly method of conservation, though it is the best way to preserve film. Once defrosted, there is no way to freeze

those films again, but UNITEL put all their trust in my project, and permitted the thawing of the original film negatives.

The negatives, frozen at minus 8 degrees Celsius (17 degrees Fahrenheit), were carefully defrosted over three days in the defrost room at 14 degrees Celsius (57 degrees Fahrenheit) in order to prevent any chemical changes. After we washed the defrosted films thoroughly and checked the conditions, we found that the original negative films had been kept very fresh.

Then we scanned the 35mm films directly with the most advanced scanner available, that had been recently developed in Germany. It scans each frame with three-color light. It takes three seconds to scan one frame, so even if the staff worked twenty-four hours without any sleep, they would need four full days to complete one symphony.

All the data were transferred to the studio in Tokyo, and we repaired the damages in each frame. Four teams were dedicated to the task, and took turns. Restoring one symphony required two weeks.

The next step was color correction. Using the HDR (High Dynamic Range) technology, we pursued the light and dark contrast to the utmost limit, together with fully utilizing the strength of 8K, which is equipped with a vast gamut of color expressions. DVD tends to over-highlight red colors, so we adjusted the colors to be more natural, just as they appeared in the original films.

Then, we obtained multi-track audio tapes from UNITEL and thoroughly analyzed the placement of instruments and entire sounds through calculating the size and acoustic of the concert hall. As a result, the original two-channel stereo sound has been beautifully remixed with 24 speakers placed front, back, right, left, up, and down—thereby accomplishing unparalleled stereophony.

The 8K remastered video of *Beethoven's Symphony No.9* with Bernstein conducting the Vienna Philharmonic reached heights of perfection beyond my imagination. Each



strand of hair is stereoscopic; wrinkles on Bernstein's face are vivid; beads of sweat are visibly coming out of his pores. We can even see how high-quality his shirt was, and the fine texture of his white tie.

With 8K we can even perceive how much bow pressure the string players are applying. We can see fillings on Kurt Moll's back tooth. It is truly an amazing degree of resolution.

This ambitious project started off with a big success. It continued through the 2020 with the remastering into 8K video of all Bernstein's filmed performances of the Mahler symphonies, to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Maestro's passing. The remastered videos began being broadcast in Japan in June of 2020, and concluded this past February. If you watched the 8K video of Bernstein conducting Mahler, you might get confused and think that Mahler's evangelist had come back in the 21st century.

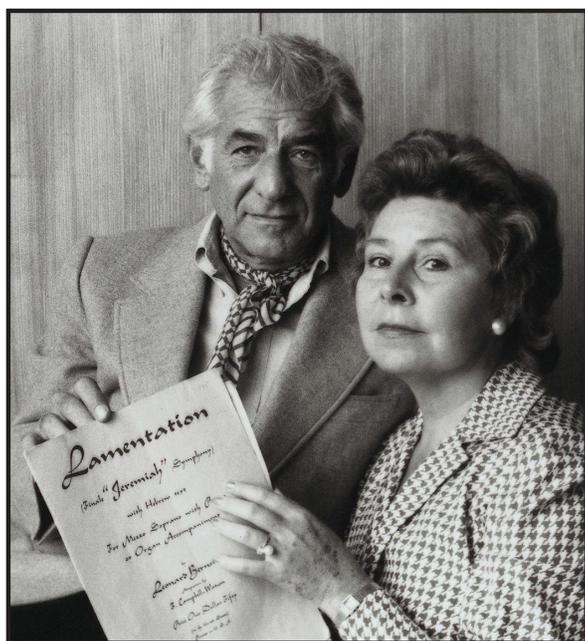
It is sometimes painful for artists to capture their performance with films instead of using the video recording system. When recording a long symphony, the performance has to be repeatedly interrupted to allow the reloading the cameras that can accommodate only 20 minutes of film at a time. If Bernstein had documented his late years' performances with the video recording system, as Herbert von Karajan did, it would not have been possible to transform them into the 8K format.

It is truly a miracle that Bernstein left us almost his entire visual catalog on 35mm film. The 21st century's cutting-edge technology has, in effect, brought a new chapter of life to Leonard Bernstein. ■

*Masayuki Ikeno is Senior Producer, Program Production Department at NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation).*

# Christa Ludwig

1928–2021



© SIEGFRED LAUTERWASSER/DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON

by Craig Urquhart

Above:  
Leonard Bernstein  
with Christa  
Ludwig, 1977.

Below:  
Christa Ludwig  
with Craig  
Urquhart, 2018.

I first encountered Christa Ludwig sonically: singing the Marschallin on Bernstein’s 1971 recording of *Der Rosenkavalier* with the Vienna State Opera. At that time, I was not much interested in opera—but that recording transfixed me, and still does to this day. There was something honest in her performance that drew me to her voice.

After that, I listened to her now legendary recordings—made with such greats as Otto Klemperer, Karl Böhm, and Herbert von Karajan, among others. Not until January of 1977 was I able to experience her live: in a recital of Schubert, Wolf, Mahler and Berg lieder with Geoffrey Parsons as her accompanist. Magical was the word for it. After that, I made a point to hear her whenever she was in New York.

The real fun began in 1986. I had recently started working as Leonard Bernstein’s assistant, and he was to conduct Mahler’s *Symphony No. 2* with vocal soloists Barbara Hendricks and Christa Ludwig! Naturally I was very nervous to meet this legend, but there was no need to be. She was sweet, kind, and funny; that’s when our friendship began.

The following year, Christa was part of the Vienna Philharmonic’s tour as the soloist for Bernstein’s

*Symphony No. 1, Jeremiah*; she would be singing the “Lamentation” movement, with LB conducting. This was a work already dear to her heart, as she had previously recorded it with Bernstein and the Israel Philharmonic. It was a long tour: starting in Salzburg, then traveling on to Lucerne (Switzerland), The Hollywood Bowl (Los Angeles), The Concord Music Festival near San Francisco, Chicago, Ann Arbor (Michigan), and ending up with concerts in both Carnegie Hall and Avery Fisher Hall in New York.

It was, needless to say, exhausting. But, Christa was always calm, relaxed and charming. One of my favorite moments happened in LA. We were staying at the Beverly Hills Hotel, which is famous for its swimming pool and cabanas—and that was where I found dear Christa, relaxed and sunning herself in her cabana, having a wonderful time. During this tour, we built a strong and lasting bond.

In 1988, for Bernstein’s 70th Birthday Gala at Tanglewood, Harry Kraut, Bernstein’s manager, asked Christa to perform “I Am Easily Assimilated” from *Candide*. She took to it with utter joy and fun; it was infectious.

The following year, Bernstein decided to put his final stamp on *Candide*, conducting a concert version with the London Symphony and an outstanding cast of singers. Christa sang the role of the Old Lady. It is still a joy to watch her on the video, exuberantly throwing herself into the role.

Unfortunately, the very next year, her beloved friend and fellow musician, Leonard Bernstein, died. There

was a memorial concert in Carnegie Hall just one month after his death. I knew she was grieving like everyone else, but she came on stage and sang Mahler’s “Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen (I am lost to the World).” The performance was solemn, deeply from her heart and transcendental. That moment is forever etched in my

memory.

On April 3, 1993, she gave her “Farewell Concert” at Carnegie Hall. After the concert I went backstage and had a moment with her and asked, so what now? She replied, “I can get a cold!” But it was not over for her just yet.

In August 1993, the Schleswig Holstein Music Festival presented a concert of Bernstein’s music, celebrating what would have been his 75th Birthday. Christa was performing the “Lamentation” with the Festival Orchestra. The concert was to take place in the same concert barn where the Maestro led his conducting classes. I was taken to my seat, which turned out to be directly in front of Christa. Our eyes met—and boy, did we have to hold back tears.

As the years passed, Christa and I remained in touch. I would attend her master classes in New York or in Berlin. I always tried to look her up when I was in Vienna. The last time I saw her was at an event at the Haus der Musik in Vienna (2018), where I had the pleasant task of interviewing her, Nina Bernstein Simmons, Clemens Hellsberg, Horant Hohlfeld, and Michael Bernstein during the Bernstein 100th Birthday Celebrations. Christa was the undisputed star of the evening, sharing stories both witty and deeply respectful about working with her dear Lenny.

If I could use only one word for her, it would be *generous*—and it would apply to everything about her: voice, tone, musicality, and above all, her humanity. How fortunate for us all to have been inspired by her. ■



BARBARA HAWES

# Remembering Roger Englander

1926–2021

by John Corigliano

I met Roger Englander in the early 1960's. I was fresh out of college, a budding composer who wanted to work in some way with classical music. Roger needed a musical assistant—someone who could read orchestral scores and help him with his duties as producer of major musical events. I got the job.

At the time, he was producing a summer series featuring the New York Philharmonic called “Promenade Concerts.” While this was not broadcast, it did need someone to provide a festive atmosphere and deal with programs, amplification, and presentation to a younger, non-traditional concert audience. Roger transformed the hall into a magical space, and made each evening delightfully unique.

They were wonderful, but I know that the highlight of Roger's long career was producing the Leonard Bernstein *Young People's Concerts*. I was useful to him during the live televised shows. Live! This meant that Roger had to select, from moment to moment, which of the eight camera angles would appear on the central monitor, and from there to the viewing public. Roger sat in the recording booth, his eyes glued on the bank of television monitors, snapping a finger the moment he decided to change a shot. I sat on his left, dutifully following the orchestral score which had red markings for the changes from “close up LB” to “full orch” to “wide shot of hall” to “close up solo oboe, pan to clarinets.”

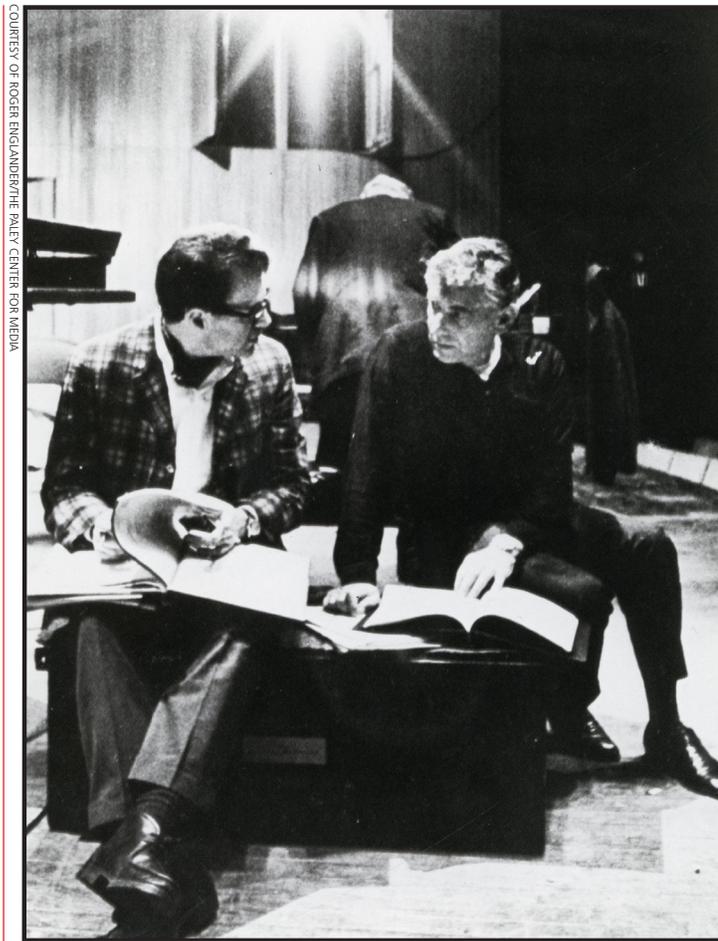
All of these shots had to be planned in advance, of course, and I went to Roger's home on St. Luke's Place in the Village the week before the shoot to talk about them. His block was lined with ginkgo trees, and he always had coffee ready for a chat before we got to work. I still have some of those scores in my home, and when I see the red markings in them, I remember those wonderful times. I worked with Roger on the Bernstein YPC's for 13 years.

We also met with Lenny in his home on Park Avenue before each show to discuss the scripts. With us were Mary Rodgers, Lenny's assistant Jack Gottlieb, and Elizabeth (“Candy”) Finkler, who worked with CBS. Lenny wrote the scripts, of course, but we all gathered to work on the timings (they had to be exact to fit the show into the TV slot), and to trouble-shoot them for inconsistencies. Lenny was the greatest teacher of all time, but sometimes he assumed that the young people in the audience had already learned something, because he taught it to them in a previous season. So, we had to remind him that it might be a totally different bunch of young people he was talking to. His final script was a model of economy and precision. Those shows still show what can happen when the world's greatest teacher is also one of the world's greatest musicians.

In 1967, Roger called me to ask if I would assist him in working on a recital by the elusive and monumental pianist, Vladimir Horowitz. This was an incredible adventure that started with our visits to the master's house on East 94th Street. Horowitz, who was well-known for cancelling concerts, was considering playing a TV recital with an audience in Carnegie Hall. He had never appeared on television, and one of our jobs was to get him to actually do it. Roger's patience was tested as Horowitz and his wife Wanda (daughter of the legendary conductor Arturo Toscanini) gave him all sorts of reasons why such a concert was impossible.

At last, Horowitz agreed to do the concert—but only if he had a trial concert, with cameras but *no* audience, in Carnegie Hall. This was an extraordinarily thing to ask: The rental of the hall, the eight-hour process of moving cables and monitors in and out of the hall, and personnel costs—but he got it. We were all in our places, with Roger calling the camera cues, and we recorded the entire concert—including camera shots from the stage through Horowitz's hands, to an empty hall.

Finally, Horowitz was satisfied, so the concert took place. All the pro-



COURTESY OF ROGER ENGLANDER/THE PALEY CENTER FOR MEDIA

grams were made of fabric—the master wanted no noise in page turning. He got cold feet waiting to go on, and was literally pushed on stage, but then of course he made history. Roger's capture of Horowitz's playing is with us forever.

Roger Englander, my friend, was the man behind the cameras. The greatness he filmed for so many years is a legacy for us all. None of it would have happened if it were not for him. I will miss him a lot. ■

*John Corigliano is an American composer of classical music. His scores, now numbering over one hundred, have won him the Pulitzer Prize, five Grammy Awards, Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition, and an Oscar.*

**Roger Englander and Leonard Bernstein.**

# IN THE news

## Bernstein Reimagined



**B**ernstein Reimagined, released in January 2021 via MCG Jazz, explores lesser-known Bernstein pieces through the transformative lens of five gifted jazz arrangers.

With this new album, the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks

Orchestra mines the composer's vast repertoire for a vibrantly diverse new set of music that delves into pieces rarely, if ever, performed in a jazz context. The project's five inventive arrangers—Jay Ashby, Darryl Brenzel, Scott Silbert, Mike Tomaro, and Steve Williams—find inspiration in the lesser-known corners of Bernstein's output. The results are, as the title promises, surprising acts of re-imagination. "Bernstein led at least six different lives as an artist," says Flavio Chamis, a Brazilian-born, Pittsburgh-based composer and conductor who brought the arrangers' attention to some of the less-explored pieces, hoping to shed light on Bernstein's staggering diversity, especially for jazz audiences.

The album includes "Times Square," "The Great Lover," and "Lonely Town Pas de Deux," from *On the Town*; "Dream With Me" from *Peter Pan*; and "Morning Sun," from *Trouble in Tahiti*. There is the orchestral "Postlude" from Bernstein's late opera *A Quiet Place*; the "Waltz" from *Divertimento*, "Meditation #1" from *MASS*; an arrangement of the first movement of *Chichester Psalms*, and selections from Bernstein's score for the film *On The Waterfront*.

"Bernstein is impossible to define," Chamis said, "but so is jazz. Both are incredibly vast, so it makes sense to combine them to form a new vision." ■

## Kennedy Center Announces 50th Anniversary Season



**T**he John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the nation's performing arts center as designated by Congress, announced plans for its

much-anticipated 50th Anniversary season, slated to begin in September 2021 with a grand reopening of its stages and campus, culminating in September 2022 with a fresh interpretation of the groundbreaking work that opened the Center in 1971, Leonard Bernstein's *MASS*. Directed by Francesca Zambello, Artistic

Director of Washington National Opera, this monumental piece will be re-staged in the Concert Hall and feature the National Symphony Orchestra along with 2020 Marian Anderson Award winner Will Liverman as the Celebrant.

For more information visit: [www.kennedy-center.org](http://www.kennedy-center.org) ■

## Summer Music Festivals

**W**e're delighted to report that several of the music festivals to which Leonard Bernstein had a close connection have announced 2021 summer seasons. The Tanglewood Festival in Massachusetts will run from June 18 – August 16. The Pacific Music Festival, founded by Leonard Bernstein in Sapporo, Japan, will begin on July 23 and end on August

1. Also founded by Bernstein, The Schleswig Holstein Music Festival in northern Germany will begin its season on July 3 and end on August 29. And Ravinia in Highland Park, will run from July 1 until September 26. While these seasons will be somewhat curtailed due to the pandemic, we are elated that they are going forward. ■

### [ LEARN MORE ]

Click below to learn more:

Tanglewood

Pacific Music Festival

Schleswig Holstein Musik Festival

Ravinia Music Festival

# Summer Reading

As the summer approaches, there are armfuls of books about Bernstein collaborators and friends to keep our beach days full.

Sir Humphrey Burton, BBC's former Head of Music and the Arts, and one of Britain's most influential post-war music and arts broadcasters, has penned *Humphrey Burton—In My Own Time: An Autobiography*.

Burton had a long association with Leonard Bernstein. He filmed many of the Maestro's educational programs, as well as scores of concerts with the Vienna Philharmonic. Burton is also the author of the celebrated Bernstein biography.

In his new book, Burton offers readers many encounters with the superstars of twentieth century classical music, as well as tales from former broadcasting colleagues. We witness a creative mind at work that never loses sight of how the presentation of music must go hand-in-hand with a deep understanding of music itself.

A new book, *Bernstein and Robbins: The Early Ballets* by Sophie Redfern, draws extensively on previously unpublished archival documents to provide a detailed and original account of the creation, premiere and reception of two early collaborations by the two great artists: *Fancy Free* and *Facsimile*.

Bernstein and choreographer Jerome Robbins saw both of their stage careers launched by their ballet, *Fancy Free* (1944). With set designer Oliver Smith, Bernstein and Robbins captured the antic spirit of wartime New York, creating the popular ballet that is still widely performed today. The hit musical *On The Town*, itself inspired by *Fancy Free*, and the now-forgotten ballet *Facsimile*, followed over the next few years. Redfern's book provides a new understanding of the Bernstein-Robbins relationship by investigating this formative early period in their careers.



The American lyricist John Latouche, who penned lyrics for the original production of *Candide* (1956), is celebrated in a recent biography by Howard Pollack: *The Ballad of John Latouche, An American Lyricist's Life and Work*. Besides Bernstein and Lillian Hellman, Latouche worked on many interesting projects including *The Beggar's Opera*, as *Beggar's Holiday* with Duke Ellington and the opera *The Ballad of Baby Doe* with Douglas Moore. Latouche also had a wide circle of noteworthy friends, including Paul and Jane Bowles, Yul Brenner, John Cage, Jack Kerouac, Frank O'Hara, Ned Rorem, Virgil Thomson, Gore Vidal, and Tennessee Williams, among others. This book draws widely on Latouche's diaries and on the archival collections of Bernstein, Ellington, and others.

George Chakiris, who played Bernardo in the 1961 film version of *West Side Story*, has written: *My West Side Story: A Memoir*. He writes about his acting/dancing career, and appearing in musicals such as *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953), *White Christmas* (1954), and *There's No Business Like Show Business* (1954) and his experience of working on the film with Jerome Robbins and Rita Moreno. Ms. Moreno said: "George Chakiris has been my dear and beloved friend since we met on the set of *West Side Story*. He is godfather to my daughter Fernanda, because I felt at the time there was no lovelier, funnier

and truer person. My feelings have only grown deeper, and oh, the Hollywood stories! You'll savor this story of a Greek boy in America who did well—very well, indeed."

Rounding off the summer book list is the biography *Mike Nichols: A Life* by Mark Harris. A longtime friend of Bernstein and his wife, Mike Nichols burst onto the scene while still in his twenties, as half of the wildly successful improv duo with Elaine May. From there, he moved on to direct four consecutive hit plays on Broadway; won back-to-back Tony Awards; and ushered in a new era of Hollywood moviemaking with *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*—soon followed by *The Graduate*, which won him an Oscar and became the third-highest-grossing movie ever. At thirty-five, Nichols lived in a three-story Central Park West penthouse; drove a Rolls-Royce; collected Arabian horses; and counted Jacqueline Kennedy, Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Avedon and the Bernstein family as friends. Mark Harris gives an intimate and absorbing portrait of success and failure alike—telling a rich story of one of the most interesting, complicated, and consequential cultural figures of the twentieth century. ■

# Leonard Bernstein

## American Ballet Theatre Premiere



CHRISTOPHER DUGGAN PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE

American Ballet Theatre Artistic Director, Alexie Ratmansky, recently presented a new choreography to Bernstein's *Divertimento*, entitled *Bernstein in a Bubble*. The performance was pre-recorded at NY City Center and subsequently streamed for 3 weeks.

"Bernstein in a Bubble is set to Leonard Bernstein's *Divertimento*, a piece full of swift shifts of mood and tone, from blowsy brass to melancholy strings. Ratmansky's choreography gloriously catches the same mercurial spirit. It's full of sumptuous, unexpected movements: an exit in silence for a woman lifted high, smiling; a throw where the ballerina is immobile, legs crossed in the air. There's a slow somersault full of more feeling than any somersault has a right to be, and a bluesy pas de deux for Catherine Hurlin and Aran Bell which begins with the dancers being dragged onto the stage.

*Original though it is, Bernstein in a Bubble is imbued with the choreographer's reverence for the history of ballet."*

—Sarah Crompton, *The Guardian*

"Ratmansky's latest, set to Leonard Bernstein's brisk '*Divertimento*,' has an air of American optimism and heroism along with the idea that drive and spirit are more than enough to save the day."

—Gia Kourlas, *The New York Times* ■

## [Note to Readers]

Dear Readers,

We are not out of the Covid woods yet, but there are heartening stirrings in the world of the performing arts. We will certainly keep you informed on developments in subsequent issues, as well as in our monthly e-blasts.

As Leonard Bernstein's father Sam used to say: "Cross your finger." ■

**Prelude, Fugue & Riffs** will be sent upon request.

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We appreciate notice of any performances or events featuring the music of Leonard Bernstein or honoring his creative life and we shall do our best to include such information in forthcoming calendars.

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