

# Programming *West Side Story* for Orchestra

## WEST SIDE STORY™

September 26, 2007 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*, a work that has transcended the boundaries of its genre to become an iconic presence in American cultural life. Generations of theatergoers and film audiences have been captivated by its vibrant score; its story transcends time and place. Its tender ballads and pulsating dances are instantly recognizable to listeners around the world. In *West Side Story*, Leonard Bernstein and his collaborators – librettist Arthur Laurents, lyricist Stephen Sondheim, and director-choreographer Jerome Robbins, whose idea it was to update Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to a contemporary urban setting – merged the literary and the topical, the sophisticated and the vernacular, into a seamless and indelible whole. While *West Side Story* cannot be performed in its entirety as a concert work, there are excellent ways to incorporate its music into your programming.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: May I perform the entire *West Side Story* in concert?**

A: The answer is no. The authors of *West Side Story* decided as a matter of policy not to permit concert performances of the entire show. The only way to present the music in concert is to perform the works listed below. With two vocal suites, a set of symphonic dances, and songs that may be performed as stand-alone works (a maximum of two per program), the options are ideally suited to orchestral programming.

**Q: My orchestra is performing one of the concert suites from *WSS*. However, we would like to change the order of the movements to reflect their sequence in the show. We would also like to delete one of the numbers. Would that be possible?**

A: The individual movements from suites may not be rearranged or deleted. Either of the concert suites may be replaced by a single song from *West Side Story*.

**Q: Is it OK to perform the vocal suites from *West Side Story* with staging, having the singers enact the relevant scenes?**

A: Again, the answer is no. One may either present the entire theatrical work (licensing details below) or present the concert works, but hybrid performances are not permitted.

**Q: How can we obtain photographs from the *West Side Story* movie for our program book?**

A: They are available through [www.mgmstills.com](http://www.mgmstills.com).

**Q: I would like to arrange music from *West Side Story* for my ensemble. How do I obtain permission?**

A: Arrangements are approved on a case-by-case basis. Please contact [licensing@leonardbernstein.com](mailto:licensing@leonardbernstein.com).

---

## West Side Story: Orchestral Works

### Symphonic Dances from West Side Story (1960)

23'


2.picc.2.corA.Ebcl.asax.2.bcl.2.dbn—4.3.3.1—timp.perc(4)—harp—pft—strings

FP: 13 February 1961 New York Philharmonic conducted by Lukas Foss

This suite contains non-vocal arrangements of music from *West Side Story* as follows: Prologue; Somewhere; Scherzo; Mambo; Cha-Cha; Meeting Scene; Cool Fugue; Rumble; Finale. Also available in a version for two pianos, arranged by John Musto.

 Recommended recordings:

New York Philharmonic/Bernstein – Sony Classical: ML 5661; MS 6251; MG 32174

 M-060-10761-0 Study Score (in Bernstein Orchestral Anthology Volume 1)

### West Side Story – Concert Suite 1 (arr. 1992)

20'

For soprano and tenor soloists and orchestra

2.1(=corA).3(III=bcl).1—2.3.2.0-timp.perc(2)—elec.guitar—pft(=cel)—strings(vln:1-7, vlc:1-4,db)

*Concert Suite 1* emphasizes the love story between Maria and Tony. It contains arrangements for soprano, tenor, and orchestra of the following numbers: *Maria; One Hand, One Heart; Somewhere; Balcony Scene*.

### West Side Story – Concert Suite 2 (arr. 1992)

15'

For vocal soloists (S,3M,T,2Bar), chorus and orchestra

3(=picc).1.4(II=Ebcl,III=bcl,IV=asax).tsax.ssax(=bsax).1—2.3.2.0—timp.perc(4)—spanish guitar(=elec.guitar)—pft(=cel)—strings(vln:1-7, vlc:1-4,db)

*West Side Story's* ensemble numbers are spotlighted in this suite. It contains arrangements for soprano, three mezzo-sopranos, tenor, and two baritones and orchestra of *I Feel Pretty; Jet Song; America; Tonight Quintet*.

Orchestral works based on *Romeo and Juliet* form natural **pairings** with music from *WSS*. Here are a few suggestions:

II **Berlioz**: *Romeo and Juliet*, H 79 (1839) – 100'

II **Delius**: *A Village Romeo and Juliet* (1900-01)

*Suite* – 10' / *The Walk to the Paradise Garden* – 8' / *Waltz* – 8'

II **Diamond**: *Music to Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet*, H 79 (1947) – 18'

II **Hagen**: *Romeo and Juliet*, concerto for flute, cello, and orchestra (2005) – 28'

II **Kabalevsky**: *Romeo and Juliet*, suite from the incidental music (1956) – 35'

II **Prokofieff**: *Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 64 (1935-36) – 130'


*Suite No. 1*, Op. 64b – 24' / *Suite No. 2*, Op. 64c – 30' / *Suite No. 3*, Op. 101 – 20'

II **Tchaikovsky**: *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture* (1869) – 19'

## Official Website: [www.westsidestory.com](http://www.westsidestory.com)







A wealth of relevant information is available at [www.westsidestory.com](http://www.westsidestory.com). Here are some of the useful things you'll find.

### Licensing information for:

- The *West Side Story* trademark
  - Production photographs
  - Text reprint rights
  - Theatrical productions
  - TV/film/commercial uses
-  click on 'Licensing' on top, below logo

### Educational resources

With its youth-oriented scenario, *West Side Story* is a perfect focus for educational and outreach programming. At [www.westsidestory.com](http://www.westsidestory.com) you'll find:

- **An illustrated history** of the work  
 click on Timeline
  - **Bernstein's journal entries**. A sample:  
*New York, 14 Nov., 1955*: "A young lyricist named Stephen Sondheim came and sang us some of his songs today. What a talent! I think he's ideal for this project, as do we all. The collaboration grows."  
 Archives → Journal → Excerpts from Log
  - **A guide** to *West Side Story*, including information on its relationship to Shakespeare's play, its impact on its creators' careers, *West Side Story*, the movie  
 Archives → Fact Sheet → Guide
  - **Contemporary accounts** from *New York Herald Tribune* (1957): an original article by Arthur Laurents, author of the play for WSS; a review of opening night by Walter Kerr  
 Archives → Bibliography
  - **Answers to Frequently Asked Questions**, including a list of the *dramatis personae*; differences between the stage musical and the film; a (long!) list of awards; sample essay topics on *WSS*  
 Archives → Fact Sheet → FAQ
  - **Fun facts** about *WSS*  
 Archives → Fact Sheet → Did You Know?
-

## Further Educational Resources

### The Bernstein Beat: What Makes Music Dance? (arr. 2000) 50'

For narrator and orchestra

3(III=picc).3(III=corA).3(III=bcl).3(III=dbn)—4.3.3.1—timp.perc(5)—harp—pft(=cel)—strings

*The Bernstein Beat: What Makes Music Dance?* is a concert for families and young people developed by writer Jamie Bernstein Thomas and conductor Michael Barrett, inspired by Bernstein's own Young People's Concerts. The Bernstein Beat is an exploration of rhythm, with examples from the composer's liveliest works – music that is sure to get kids (and grownups) bouncing in their chairs. While a variety of Bernstein pieces are referenced, *West Side Story* plays an important role: among other delights, the concert give children a chance to shout "MAMBO!" at the top of their lungs right in the concert hall! *The Bernstein Beat* is available in a family concert version, with intermission, or in a shorter, 50 minute version played without break. The text is available in English, Dutch, Japanese, Mandarin, and Spanish.

To date, eleven orchestras in five countries have programmed *The Bernstein Beat*. Further details at <http://www.leonardbernstein.com/beat.html>.

### Inside West Side Story

Lecture/presentation by Jamie Bernstein Thomas

*Inside West Side Story* is the ideal preface to any performance of music from *West Side Story*. In vivid, accessible language, Jamie Bernstein Thomas tells how the work came into being; talks about the interval that serves as a motto for the piece (hint: sing "Ma-RII-a...") and the many guises in which it appears; describes how Bernstein evokes character and mood through his use of rhythm; and offers fascinating details on the show's evolution. (For example, Tony's song 'Something's Coming' was added only two weeks before the opening!) She speaks of the vital importance of Latin rhythms to *West Side Story*, and the ingenious ways in which Bernstein shaped them to serve his dramatic purposes. She quotes from the touching letters that her father and her mother, who was visiting her family in Chile, wrote each other in the weeks leading up the premiere. Aimed at general audiences, *Inside West Side Story* offers an intimate and entertaining look at the creative process of one of America's greatest composers.

Jamie Bernstein Thomas is represented by ICM. Contact: [classical@icmtalent.com](mailto:classical@icmtalent.com).

For more information, please contact:  
North America: Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.  
[composers.us@boosey.com](mailto:composers.us@boosey.com)

Tel: 212/358-5361 Fax: 212/358-5306

Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

[info@leonardbernstein.com](mailto:info@leonardbernstein.com)

Tel: 212/315-0640 Fax: 212/315-0643

Rest of world: Boosey & Hawkes, LLC

[composers.uk@boosey.com](mailto:composers.uk@boosey.com)

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7291 7270 Fax: +44 (0) 20 7637 3490

German-speaking countries:

Boosey & Hawkes/Bote & Bock

[composers.germany@boosey.com](mailto:composers.germany@boosey.com)

Tel: +49 (0) 30 2500 1300 Fax: +49 (0) 30 2500 1399