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Bernstein's Beethoven

Ode to Freedom

Exhibition at the Beethoven-Haus Bonn
3 May to 19 August 2024

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Ludwig van Beethoven is one of the leading figures who had a formative influence on Leonard Bernstein in many different ways. The complex and multi-dimensional relationship that Bernstein as performer, as music educator, and even as composer had with Beethoven will be illustrated in this exhibition. Bernstein, a political man, repeatedly used Beethoven to transmit humanistic messages. For him, Beethoven's music was closely linked to the ideal of freedom. And so, in 1989, at the widely impactful Christmas Day concert following the fall of the Berlin Wall, it was thus only logical to perform Beethoven's "Ode to Freedom".

We would like to thank everyone who made this exhibition possible. In 2009, Bernstein's children – Jamie Bernstein, Alexander Bernstein and Nina Bernstein Simmons – donated all of the papers from his composition studio in the family home in Fairfield to the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music in Bloomington, with which Bernstein was closely associated. In addition to his correspondence and unpublished recordings from his time as musical director and honorary conductor of the New York Philharmonic, all of his performance scores and his personal music library have been held at the New York Philharmonic Archive since 1992. At the end of the 1970s, Bernstein exchanged the conducting scores with his inscriptions for his own use. The heirs wisely decided to return them to the archive. As Bernstein took part in the Tanglewood Music Festival in various roles over the decades, there are also many interesting documents in the Boston Symphony Orchestra Archives. His close

relationship with the Vienna Philharmonic is documented in the Vienna Philharmonic's Historical Archives. Bernstein himself had already donated several manuscripts to the Music Division of the Library of Congress in Washington. His close confidante and long-time secretary Helen Coates bequeathed further documents. Finally, in 1993, his heirs enlarged the collection with many music manuscripts, letters, photographs, recordings and realia.

The extensive website of the Leonard Bernstein Office in New York invites users to immerse themselves in Bernstein's life and work; we are especially grateful to Craig Urquhart for his exchange and support. We also would like to extend our gratitude to the Kranke family, Andreas Meyer-Schwickerath, Torsten Haferlach, Malte Boecker, Arnd Richter and Julia Kluxen-Ayissi for generously offering loans to enhance the exhibition.

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LB (unfortunately not van)

This telling photo (I), showing the maestro placing his right hand on the Beethoven sculpture by Christian Robert Welter at the Vienna Musikverein dates from the last year of Leonard Bernstein's (1918–1990) life – the statue now stands in the vicarage in Heiligenstadt. The composer's assistant at the time, Craig Urquhart, describes this “handshake with Beethoven” as one of Bernstein's rituals in Vienna. It is a gesture of intimate closeness that says a lot about the relationship between the American composer, pianist, conductor, writer, producer, and music educator and Beethoven.

“I'm all for him. [...] I adore him.” Although this statement is fictitious, it was Leonard Bernstein himself who put these words into his own mouth. The sentence is part of a fictitious conversation between him, the “Younger Brother” and a “Lyric Poet” entitled “On a roadtrip through the Rocky Mountains” (1 and 2). Bernstein wrote this text in the summer of 1948 after a car journey with the socio-political poet Stephen Spender and his brother Burton Bernstein and placed it at the beginning of his first book publication from 1959, which was also published in German two years later under the title “Freude an der Musik” and quickly found its way into various paperback editions (3). The dialogue in question is divided into two scenes, the first of which bears the telling title “Why Beethoven?”. After a lengthy discussion about what is special about

Beethoven's music compared to the works of other composers, the author concludes that Beethoven has something magical: “the inexplicable ability to know what the next note has to be.” He calls it “this gift of inevitability.” “Beethoven broke all the rules, and turned out pieces of breathtaking rightness. Rightness – that's the word! When you get the feeling that whatever note succeeds the last is the only possible note that can rightly happen at that instant, in that context, then chances are you're listening to Beethoven. [...] Our boy has the real goods, the stuff from Heaven, the power to make you feel at the finish: Something is right in the world: There is something that checks throughout, that follows its own law consistently: something we can trust, that will never let us down.” The basic idea formulated in writing here for the first time never left Bernstein's mind for the rest of his life; as we shall see, it became the central theme of his view of Beethoven.

Bernstein, who is usually remembered first and foremost as an interpreter of Mahler, certainly had many role models and Beethoven was one of the most important. In his private home in Fairfield, Bernstein always kept his great colleagues in view: He placed a portrait of himself alongside those of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Wagner and Mendelssohn (II). His identification with Beethoven went so far that during a visit to the Beethoven-Haus at the end of September 1989 Bernstein wrote a wonderfully humorous declaration of love on an envelope of Romain Rolland, in which he kept one of Beethoven's letters: “LB (unfortunately not van)” (4).

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Leonard Bernstein
Why Beethoven – On a
roadtrip through
the Rocky Mountains
Manuscript, 1948
(facsimile)
<i>Library of Congress,
Music Division</i> 2 Leonard Bernstein
On a roadtrip through the
Rocky Mountains
Typescript, 1948 (facsimile)
<i>Library of Congress,
Music Division</i> 3 Leonard Bernstein,
Freude an der Musik
Deutscher Taschenbuch
Verlag, München, 1963
<i>Arnd Richter</i> 4 Envelope with music
incipit and signature of
Leonard Bernstein,
September 1989
<i>Beethoven-Haus Bonn</i> 5 First day cover for the
200th birthday of Ludwig
van Beethoven (Hungary
1970), signed by Leonard
Bernstein
<i>Torsten Haferlach</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I Leonard Bernstein at the
Vienna Musikverein,
September 1989
<i>Archiv der Gesellschaft der
Musikfreunde in Wien,
Photo: Peter Schramek</i> II Picture frame with six
portraits of composers
from Leonard Bernstein's
composition studio
<i>Leonard Bernstein
Collection, Indiana
University Jacobs School of
Music</i> |
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Composer

What Bernstein and Beethoven have in common is that as composers they wrote what is largely considered to be the defining music of their respective eras. Just as Beethoven was one of the first composers to write for a newly-emerging European civil society, Bernstein's symphonies, theatre and film music provided the soundtrack of the 20th century, which was an American century: the most diverse influences of immigrant society, high and popular culture combined to create a specific new American musical language that wrote music history from Broadway to Hollywood. In Bernstein's own compositions, Beethoven is easily recognisable as a constant source of inspiration, as three exhibition objects exemplify. He worked with Beethoven quotations in several well-known compositions: the majestic choral entry sequence of the last verse of the ode "Seid umschlungen Millionen! Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt!" (Be embraced, millions! This kiss to all the world!) from the 9th Symphony can be heard in the second "Meditation" from "Mass" (6), and the famous song "Somewhere" from "West Side Story" unmistakably borrows from the theme of the slow movement from the 5th Piano Concerto (7). He even signed a largely unknown song entitled "There had to be a Revolution" with the pseudonym "Lenny Beethoven" (8).

Something similar happened during his visit to the 33rd International Beethoven Festival in Bonn, which

honoured him as Artist in Residence. When he visited the exhibition of Andy Warhol's now legendary Beethoven series in the Beethovenhalle, which had been printed by the Bonn gallery owner Wünsche as one of Warhol's last works (IV), he once again made a play on his name when adding his signature to the exhibition poster (V), this time signing it "Leonard van Bernstein".

- 6 Leonard Bernstein
Mass: Meditation No. 2
Manuscript, c. 1969
(facsimile)
*Library of Congress,
Music Division*
- 7 Leonard Bernstein
West Side Story:
Somewhere
Sketch, c. 1955
(facsimile)
*Library of Congress,
Music Division*
- 8 Leonard Bernstein
There had to be a
Revolution
Manuscript, 1942
(facsimile)
*Library of Congress,
Music Division*

- III Leonard Bernstein
working on a score at his
piano (1956)
*Library of Congress,
Music Division*
- IV Leonard Bernstein at the
exhibition "Andy Warhol –
Ludwig van Beethoven"
as part of the
Beethovenfest 1989
*Stadtarchiv und
Stadthistorische Bibliothek
Bonn, photo: Michael
Sondermann*
- V Poster for the exhibition
"Andy Warhol – Ludwig
van Beethoven" in Bonn,
signed by Leonard
Bernstein, 1989
Andreas Meyer-Schwickerath

Homo politicus

Bernstein associates Beethoven with his use of music to react to the social changes of his time and understood Beethoven's music in particular as an expression of the deepest humanity and freedom. Throughout his life, Bernstein repeatedly gave concerts of great political significance and symbolic power. And often enough, the music of Ludwig van Beethoven took centre stage, as selected examples in the exhibition show. This had a lot to do with how Bernstein perceived Beethoven's artistic mission. The political activist Leonard Bernstein saw Beethoven as a kindred spirit and therefore consciously brought him into play when it came to sending a humanist message.

Leonard Bernstein was also a constant and active supporter of the emerging state of Israel from the very beginning and had a particularly strong relationship with Israeli musicians. He began working with the then Palestinian Symphony Orchestra as early as 1947 and returned to the country almost every year. Beethoven also played a major role in this collaboration. When Bernstein and his assistant Helen Coates returned to the now proclaimed state of Israel in September 1948, the so-called 1948 Arab-Israeli War was already in full swing following the assassination of the Swedish UN mediator Count Folke Bernadotte. Many of his concerts were disrupted by artillery fire. "At his first Jerusalem concert, on October 14, artillery explosions

punctuated the trumpet solo in Beethoven's Leonore Overture No. 3", writes Bernstein biographer Humphrey Burton. "During a concert at Rehovot attended by the future President and Mrs. Chaim Weizmann, Bernstein was called to the wings at the end of the first movement of the Beethoven First Piano Concerto and told there were air raid warnings. The Palestine Post reported that he 'returned to the piano as if nothing had happened'. 'I never played an Adagio like that before', he said afterwards; 'I thought it was my swan song.'" One particularly outstanding event was the concert on 20 November 1948 in the middle of the city of Be'er Sheva in the Negev desert, which had been captured by Israeli troops. The day before, the UN, according to whose partition plan for Palestine the city was to be part of the Arab state, had called on Israel to withdraw its troops from Be'er Sheva. However, the troops did not comply and received a special visit the following day: 35 musicians from the now-renamed Israel Philharmonic Orchestra appeared in an armoured bus, led by Leonard Bernstein, whose determination is abundantly clear here. An excavation site served as the venue for a concert in which Bernstein, for the first time in his career, performed three piano concertos in succession as conductor and soloist. Following Mozart's Concerto in B flat major KV 450, the centrepiece was Beethoven's First Piano Concerto, with Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" played as an encore. According to estimates, several thousand soldiers, including numerous wounded soldiers from a nearby hospital (VI and VII), were enthralled by the music and Bernstein's charisma. Dr. Chaim Weizmann

later confirmed that the gathering of these masses in the desert was interpreted by the Egyptian side as a troop movement and triggered their further retreat. Bernstein spent over two months travelling the country during the war. At the end of October, he reported to his mentor and friend Serge Koussevitzky not only about performances of Beethoven's symphonies in Jerusalem, but also of the war situation as he experienced it: "And Jerusalem – what shall I say of my beloved Jerusalem, tragic, under constant Arab fire, without water (only a pail a day) – with machine-guns outside accompanying our performances of Beethoven Symphonies! I have visited the fronts, entered Notre Dame, where we hold out a few paces only from Arab-British guns, inspected the strategic heights around the city, and the Palmach bases. I played piano in hospitals for the new wounded of the Negev, and in camps for soldiers and 'Kibbutzim' people. I have been decorated with the Jerusalem defence medal and the Palmach insignia. I have almost grown to be part of all these wonderful people and history-making days. Believe me, it will end well: There is too much faith, spirit, and will to be otherwise." (9)

Just one month after the Six-Day War (5–10 July 1967), Bernstein visited the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem (VIII). On 10 July 1967, he noted: "Thank you, thank you all for making my stay so pleasant – Bless you all / Shalom U'Bracha" (10). In 1970, he gave a benefit concert in Tel Aviv for the Musicians' Pension Fund (11).

On 24 October 1955, Leonard Bernstein conducted the New York Philharmonic at the United Nations' celebratory concert to mark the 10th anniversary of the entry into force

of the UN Charter (12): Kyrie and Gloria from Beethoven's "Missa solemnis" (13) were played in the second part of the celebratory programme. In 1979, UNO City was opened in Vienna (Vienna is one of the four official seats of the United Nations alongside New York, Geneva and Nairobi). The event was celebrated at the State Opera with a performance of Beethoven's 9th Symphony with the Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Leonard Bernstein (IX). Three days later, he expressed his gratitude to his "colleagues": "Brothers! I can't remember a more brilliant moment than the one we played together with Beethoven's Ninth." (14)

Leonard Bernstein cultivated close relationships with the Kennedy family. Ted Kennedy personally dedicated the colourful poster designed by German-Jewish pop artist Peter Max for the 1980 Democratic Party Convention "To the master of maestros and loyal and true friend". The artist added a drawing and signed it "for Lenny, Love Peter Max, 1981" (X).

The Bernsteins campaigned tirelessly for human rights. Leonard's wife, the actress Felicia Montealegre, came from Chile, where torture and violence against members of the opposition were commonplace under Pinochet's military dictatorship in the 1970s. After her early death, Bernstein founded the Felicia Montealegre Bernstein Fund of Amnesty International USA (XI) in her honour. He repeatedly played benefit concerts, for example at his first concert with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra in Munich in 1976, performing the 3rd Leonore Overture, the 4th Piano Concerto (with soloist Claudio Arrau) and the 5th Symphony (XII), making a note before the concert:

“#5 Beethoven, Munich, Leonard Bernstein, 14 Oct. '76” (15). The accompanying material to the resulting record contains statements by Bernstein and Arrau in favour of the work of Amnesty International. A year later, at a concert at the Vienna Konzerthaus with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, the 5th Symphony was again on the programme, following a string orchestra version of one of Beethoven's last string quartets (16). From 1945 onwards, Bernstein repeatedly included op. 131 – in this version with several players to each part – in his programmes. In doing so, he followed his mentor and role model Dimitri Mitropoulos, whom he asked in autumn 1945 to lend him his orchestral material for the C minor quartet. Mitropoulos replied unequivocally on 12 October: “You are the only person to whom I could entrust this material, which is impossible to find, and which represents hours of minutious annotations in the score, as well as in the parts. I didn't change anything, except to add underwritten a double bass part. But in case you don't like any of my annotations, please tell the musicians not to scratch them out or to add anything. It is under that condition that I will lend you this music.” (17)

For the American conductor, Beethoven's music was very closely linked to the ideal of freedom. This aspect in particular becomes abundantly clear in the programme that he conducted twice in Berlin at Christmas 1989 on the occasion of the fall of the Berlin Wall at the suggestion of Andreas Meyer-Schwickerath and with the support of Justus Frantz. The first concert took place late in the evening on 23 December at the Philharmonie in West Berlin and was broadcast live on Breitscheidplatz,

and the second was on Christmas Day morning at the Schauspielhaus in East Berlin (now the Konzerthaus) with a live broadcast to Gendarmenmarkt and via television transmission to countless living rooms worldwide. The now-legendary concert reached the gigantic quota of over 100 million viewers in 21 countries worldwide from Japan to the USA – as many as the Super Bowl does today. The 9th Symphony, the premiere of which is currently celebrating its 200th anniversary, was played with a slightly modified text in the finale: “Freiheit, schöner Götterfunken” (Freedom, beautiful spark of the gods); Bernstein replaced the word “joy” with “freedom”, in keeping with the occasion. His thoughts on this can be found in his handwritten note on the “Berlin program”, although the claim made here has since proved to be unfounded: “There seems to be musicological evidence, that Schiller's first draft for the Ode an die Freude was originally intended as the Ode an die FREIHEIT. [...] but legend or not, I feel this is the heaven-sent moment to sing ‘Freiheit’ wherever the phrase occurs as ‘Freude’. (After all, Freude doesn't lead in anyway so close to ‘Brüder’ as Freiheit does.) If ever there was a historic time to take an academic risk in the name of humanity, this is it! Es lebe die Freiheit!” (18) He clearly noted the alteration of the text in the score and it was transcribed into the parts in advance (19). As a political signal, the conductor reinforced the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra with members of the Staatskapelle Dresden, the orchestra of the Kirov Theatre in Leningrad, the London Symphony Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic and the Orchestre de Paris,

i.e. with musicians from countries of the Allied powers against Hitler's Germany. The Bavarian Radio Choir was joined by members of the East Berlin Radio Choir and the Children's Choir of the Dresden Philharmonic – Germany met Germany and the new Germany met the world. After the concert, Bernstein, his assistant Craig Urquhart, and some friends drove unobserved to the Berlin Wall, where he himself became a “Wall woodpecker” (XIV photos and XV Wall piece) – he spontaneously borrowed a hammer and chisel (XVI) from a then-11-year-old boy in a red jacket and ski goggles that protected his eyes from splinters. Three fragments of the Berlin Wall have been preserved in Bernstein's estate. Franz Kranke travelled to the Wall with his parents and sister after watching the concert on television. He remembers: “After a while a woman next to us, who was also chopping, said ‘Look – that guy looks just like Leonard Bernstein.’ He answered: ‘I am Leonard Bernstein!’ Lenny and his companions started chatting with us. He asked my father to chop a piece out of the wall for him. My father said to Lenny, ‘Selbst ist der Mann’, which means there is nothing like doing things yourself! My father handed over the hammer and the chisel, and Lenny started to chop. After a while he gave the tools back to me [...] What a surreal moment! I was just watching Bernstein on TV a few hours before, and now he stood next to me!”

From then on, this event linked the name Leonard Bernstein with German history. The historical significance of the date and the place, in which the “end of history” succinctly formulated by Francis Fukuyama was tangible for a moment, was expressed by Bernstein in a previously

little-known poem, which he entitled “Christmas in Berlin, 1989” (XVII).

The weather here is far too warm; Kris Kringle
Sweats and frets in his wooly cap and beard;
No hit of snow or zero temperature
Disturbs the gray, wet gravity of air.

And yet the nose and toes are all a-tingle:
The atmosphere of faith is new and weird.
Fresh gestures of embraces are young and pure,
Fumbling with their freedom here, and there.

What was the here-and-there now safety mingle:
One is allowed to kiss what once one feared.
The kiss may still be lightly insecure –
A brush of lip to cheek, to brow or hair.

–
But suddenly the weather's cold and fair!
The Christianbells, for once, seem to endure,
As if to say: At last, He has appeared!
And what was walled apart is whole and single.

Leonard Bernstein, Berlin, 24 Dec '89

Before the first concert on the evening of 23 December, in accordance with his Jewish faith, Bernstein lit the first two Hanukkah candles at the memorial of the New Synagogue (XVIII). Alongside the concert, Bernstein was endowed with various honours. For instance, the conductor's estate

includes the “Star of Friendship with the Nations in Gold”, probably the last state honour to be awarded by the GDR, together with the accompanying certificate (21) and a certificate of the composer’s honorary professorship at the Hanns-Eisler Academy of Music (XIX).

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| <p>9 Leonard Bernstein
Letter to Serge
Koussevitzky, Tel Aviv,
29 October 1948
(facsimile)
<i>Library of Congress,
Music Division</i></p> | <p>16 Concert programme,
Vienna, 9 September 1977
(facsimile)
<i>Historisches Archiv der
Wiener Philharmoniker</i></p> |
| <p>10 Leonard Bernstein
Greeting after a concert
in Israel, 10 July 1967
<i>Torsten Haferlach</i></p> | <p>17 Dimitri Mitropoulos
Letter to Leonard
Bernstein, 12 October
1945 (facsimile)
<i>Library of Congress,
Music Division</i></p> |
| <p>11 Concert programme
Mann Auditorium, Tel Aviv,
22 March 1970
<i>Torsten Haferlach</i></p> | <p>18 Leonard Bernstein
Note on the text change
of the “Ode to Joy” on
23 and 25 December 1989
(facsimile)
<i>Library of Congress,
Music Division</i></p> |
| <p>12 Gala concert of the
United Nations, New York,
24 October 1955
<i>New York Philharmonic
Archives, photo: United
Nations</i></p> | <p>19 Score of the 9th Symphony
with annotations by
Leonard Bernstein
<i>New York Philharmonic
Archives</i></p> |
| <p>13 Concert programme, New
York, 24 October 1955
<i>New York Philharmonic
Archives</i></p> | <p>20 Programme and tickets
for the “Berlin Celebration
Concerts” on 23 and
25 December 1989
<i>Malte Boecker</i></p> |
| <p>14 Leonard Bernstein
Letter to the Vienna
Philharmonic,
5 September 1979
<i>Historisches Archiv der
Wiener Philharmoniker</i></p> | <p>21 Certificate and medal of
the GDR
<i>Leonard Bernstein Collection,
Indiana University
Jacobs School of Music</i></p> |
| <p>15 Leonard Bernstein
Note on the Amnesty
International concert in
Munich on 14 October
1976
<i>Torsten Haferlach</i></p> | |

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| <p>VI Leonard Bernstein playing Beethoven's 1st Piano Concerto with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Be'er Sheva, November 1948
<i>Library of Congress, Music Division</i></p> <p>VII Drawing by a soldier, Be'er Sheva, November 1948
<i>Leonard Bernstein Collection, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music</i></p> <p>VIII Leonard Bernstein at the Wailing Wall, Jerusalem 1967
<i>Library of Congress, Music Division</i></p> <p>IX Concert announcement for the opening of the UNO-City in Vienna, 2 September 1979 (facsimile)
<i>Leonard Bernstein Collection, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music</i></p> <p>X Poster for the Democratic National Convention, New York, 1980
<i>Leonard Bernstein Collection, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music</i></p> <p>XI Amnesty International poster (Felicia Bernstein Fund), signed by Leonard Bernstein
<i>Leonard Bernstein Collection, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music</i></p> | <p>XII Announcement of the benefit concert for Amnesty International, Munich, 1976 (facsimile)
<i>Leonard Bernstein Collection, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music</i></p> <p>XIII Advertising poster for the recording of the Berlin concert on 25 December 1989
<i>Malte Boecker</i></p> <p>XIV Leonard Bernstein with Craig Urquhart and Franz Kranke at the Berlin Wall, 25 December 1989
<i>Photos: Andreas Meyer-Schwickerath</i></p> <p>XV Fragment of the Berlin Wall from Bernstein's possession
<i>Leonard Bernstein Collection, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music</i></p> <p>XVI Hammer and chisel
<i>Rolf Kranke</i></p> <p>XVII Leonard Bernstein Christmas in Berlin, 1989
Manuscript, 1989 (facsimile)
<i>Library of Congress, Music Division</i></p> |
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| <p>XXIII Leonard Bernstein at the memorial of the New Synagogue in Berlin, 23 December 1989
<i>Photo: Samuel J. Paul</i></p> <p>XIX Certificate of honorary professorship at the Hanns-Eisler Academy of Music, Berlin, 22 December 1989 (facsimile)
<i>Leonard Bernstein Collection, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music</i></p> |
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Performer

Leonard Bernstein conducted a great deal of Beethoven's music throughout his life, at his two main centres of activity in New York and Vienna, as well as in countless guest appearances. Jacob Slattery's statistical analysis in the magazine "Prelude, Fugue & Riffs – News for Friends of Leonard Bernstein" Fall/Winter 2020/2021 lists 341 public concerts, recordings and television recordings of Beethoven's symphonies. As a pianist, he was primarily known for Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1 and the Triple Concerto. On 16 December 1943 – barely a month after his spectacular last-minute stand-in for Bruno Walter, who had to cancel due to illness, at Carnegie Hall – the 25-year-old assistant conductor conducted the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and soloist Albert Spalding in Beethoven's Violin Concerto (22), again as a substitute, this time for Howard Barlow, who was suffering from influenza. He appeared as conductor and soloist in 1949 on tour in Chattanooga (Tennessee), where he performed an all-Beethoven programme with the 3rd Leonore Overture, the 1st Piano Concerto, and the 7th Symphony (23). For Bernstein's friends and admirers, his Beethoven interpretations were of particular significance. His long-time colleague and friend, the Russian-born singer Jennie Tourel, wrote on a Sunday from the Hotel Lafayette in Lexington (Kentucky): "Leonioushka, you were absolutely great! I have just arrived here, and put on the radio, and

heard the Beethoven concerto. You never played it more wonderful, and I am happy, that I did not miss it." (24)

Leonard Bernstein was chief conductor of the New York Philharmonic from 1958 to 1969, and a number of discs were recorded under his direction during this time, including Bernstein's first cycle of all nine Beethoven symphonies (26) in the early 1960s. Beethoven was on the programme whenever it was important to attract as many people as possible to a concert, for example at the benefit concert for the New York Philharmonic's pension fund on 15 May 1960, when Bernstein performed a combined programme of the Choral Fantasy op. 80 and the 9th Symphony (27), a work that meant a great deal to him. After his very first performance of the Ninth, he wrote to his parents on 1 September 1952, completely euphoric: "My first performance of Beethoven's Ninth was a triumph! I have been very worried about this event – the big test in every conductor's life." (28) For the 500th concert with the New York Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic Society presented its chief conductor Leonard Bernstein with a valuable authorised edition of this very work on 27 October 1962: the score of the 9th Symphony, published by Schott in Mainz in 1826 (29). Bernstein repeatedly confronted his audiences with Beethoven's late works. Over the Easter holidays of the 1959/60 season, the "Missa solemnis" was performed four times (30). Bernstein hung the framed title page of an authorised edition of the "Missa solemnis", published in 1827 by Schott in Mainz, in his composition studio (XX). The aforementioned Easter production also resulted in a record that was nominated for a Grammy in 1961 (XXI).

This was followed almost 20 years later by another Grammy nomination for Beethoven recordings: Bernstein's second complete recording of all nine Beethoven symphonies (XXII), this time with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (31), with whom he had worked as a welcome guest conductor since the late 1960s. The first collaboration with the well-known TV presenter and producer Humphrey Burton, who would later also become Bernstein's biographer, produced the documentary on the Viennese festivities for Beethoven's 200th birthday. The programme was nominated for an Emmy (XXIII). Bernstein realised three major Beethoven productions in Vienna in 1971: a performance of the 9th Symphony, a production of "Fidelio" (32 and XXIV) and a concert with the 1st Piano Concerto. Seven years later, another "Fidelio" production was made, which is available on DVD (33). A series of so-called special TV concerts with Beethoven symphonies also followed in 1978 (XXV). Unlike Herbert von Karajan, who often endeavoured to perfect his recordings and video recordings with the Berliner Philharmoniker in endless studio sessions, Leonard Bernstein had his Vienna performances recorded live. The chronicle of the Berliner Philharmoniker's 125th anniversary wonderfully encapsulates the contrasts between the two maestri: "There is no doubt that Karajan and Bernstein were antipodes: We have Karajan on the one hand, a perfectionist obsessed with detail, who left nothing to chance and guaranteed a polished, sometimes somewhat cool sound; and on the other hand, Bernstein, an ingeniously instinctive musician who understood

conducting as a process of re-creation and lived it out ecstatically, sometimes without restraint."

Bernstein worked in Vienna until shortly before his death in October 1990. He gave 197 concerts with the Philharmoniker over a period of 24 years, many of them with music by Ludwig van Beethoven, including many guest appearances such as at the 1979 Salzburg Festival (XXVI). Time and again, however, guest conducting engagements took him all over the world; from 1983 he was Honorary President of the Orchestra dell' Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome (XXVII). Just how close the relationship between the conductor and the Viennese musicians was, can be seen in the letters and telegrams that Bernstein regularly received from Vienna on various occasions such as birthdays, Christmas or the start of a new year (35 and 36).

Beethoven's music also provided the artistic framework for the career of concert conductor Leonard Bernstein. The 7th Symphony he particularly appreciated was on the programme of the last concert that Bernstein conducted at the Tanglewood Festival on 19 August 1990 (37), a memorable event that can be experienced in a touching recording (38). Despite all the wishes for recovery expressed by the performers on a festival poster, Bernstein died a few weeks after this concert (XXVIII).

Leonard Bernstein was not only in Bonn in 1989 for the Beethoven Festival, which honoured him in particular as a composer (39), but had already given concerts in the capital more than 20 years earlier (40). In 1989, he left his signature not only on the envelope of the Beethoven

letter, but also on his handkerchief (41). He had left it in the hall during a concert in which he was listening to a performance of one of his own works. A young student took it home with her, where her mother immediately washed and ironed it so that it could be returned fresh the next evening. Instead, the conductor signed it with the words, “Keep it, darling”.

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| <p>22 Concert programme Carnegie Hall, New York, 16/17 December 1943
<i>New York Philharmonic Archives</i></p> | <p>28 Leonard Bernstein Letter to his parents Sam and Jennie Bernstein, 1 September 1952 (facsimile)
<i>Library of Congress, Music Division</i></p> |
| <p>23 Tour programme New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Chattanooga, 25 April 1949
<i>New York Philharmonic Archives</i></p> | <p>29 Original edition of the 9th Symphony, Schott, Mainz, 1827 Present from Philharmonic Hall to Leonard Bernstein for the 500th concert, New York, 27 October 1962
<i>New York Philharmonic Archives</i></p> |
| <p>24 Jennie Tourel Letter to Leonard Bernstein, Lexington 1949 (facsimile)
<i>Library of Congress, Music Division</i></p> | <p>30 Concert programme Carnegie Hall, New York, 14-23 April 1960
<i>New York Philharmonic Archives</i></p> |
| <p>25 Leonard Bernstein and Jennie Tourel at a recording session, November 1960
<i>Library of Congress, Music Division</i></p> | <p>31 Beethoven – Bernstein 9 Symphonies, live recording of the Vienna Philharmonic LP Box, Polydor/Deutsche Grammophon, 1980
<i>Arnd Richter</i></p> |
| <p>26 Leonard Bernstein conducts Beethoven, recordings with the New York Philharmonic 1961–1964 CD Box, Sony Music, 2010
<i>Arnd Richter</i></p> | <p>32 Programme “Fidelio”, Vienna State Opera, 9 June 1970, and invitation for guest appearance with supporting programme, Washington, 27 October 1979
<i>Torsten Haferlach</i></p> |
| <p>27 Concert programme Carnegie Hall (benefit for the pension fund), New York, 15 May 1960
<i>New York Philharmonic Archives</i></p> | |

- 33 Fidelio. Leonard Bernstein with Choir and Orchestra of Vienna State Opera, 1978
DVD, Deutsche Grammophon, 2006
DVD
Arnd Richter
- 34 Guest appearance of the Vienna Philharmonic, Washington, 5 November 1979
Torsten Haferlach
- 35 Telegram from the Vienna Philharmonic to Leonard Bernstein on his birthday (facsimile)
Library of Congress, Music Division
- 36 Letter from the Vienna Philharmonic to Leonard Bernstein at the turn of the year, Vienna, 15 December 1978 (facsimile)
Library of Congress, Music Division
- 37 Concert programme, Tanglewood, 19 August 1990
Boston Symphony Orchestra Archives
- 38 Bernstein – The Final Concert
Boston Symphony Orchestra, live recording, 19 August 1990
CD, Deutsche Grammophon, 1992
Beethoven-Haus Bonn
- 39 Programmes for the Beethovenfest Bonn 1989
Beethoven-Haus Bonn
Malte Boecker
- 40 Programme for the Beethovenfest Bonn 1977, signed by Leonard Bernstein
Torsten Haferlach
- 41 Handkerchief, signed by the owner Leonard Bernstein
Julia Kluxen-Ayissi

- XX Title page of an original edition of the Missa solemn, framed by Leonard Bernstein
Leonard Bernstein Collection,
Indiana University Jacobs School of Music
- XXI Grammy Nomination (Best Classical Performance – Choral) 1961
Leonard Bernstein Collection,
Indiana University Jacobs School of Music
- XXII Grammy Nomination (Best Classical Orchestral Recording) 1980
Leonard Bernstein Collection,
Indiana University Jacobs School of Music
- XXIII Emmy Nomination (Outstanding Single Program – Classical Music) 1972
Leonard Bernstein Collection,
Indiana University Jacobs School of Music
- XXIV Leonard Bernstein rehearsing Beethoven's Fidelio with the Vienna State Opera Chorus and the Vienna Philharmonic, 3 December 1971
Library of Congress, Music Division
- XXV Poster of the TV concerts of the Vienna Philharmonic, November 1978 (facsimile)
Leonard Bernstein Collection,
Indiana University Jacobs School of Music
- XXVI Salzburg Festival 1979, signed by Leonard Bernstein
Malte Boecker
- XXVII Concert announcement of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Rome, 1983 (facsimile)
Leonard Bernstein Collection,
Indiana University Jacobs School of Music
- XXVIII Poster "50 Years of Tanglewood" with signatures and get-well wishes, 1990
Leonard Bernstein Collection,
Indiana University Jacobs School of Music

Music educator

Leonard Bernstein explained music in a variety of ways and for different occasions and target groups. In doing so, he played a pioneering role in an area that is now an integral part of the classical music industry: music education. In the 1950s, he created seven programmes for the cultural television programme “Omnibus”. All of his manuscripts for this appearance can be found in his book “Joy of Music”. While “Omnibus” was aimed at adult viewers, Bernstein also created content for children: In 1958, he took over the New York Philharmonic’s children’s and family concert series, the “Young People’s Concerts”. Bernstein returned to his alma mater in the early 1970s with the “Harvard Lectures”, which he gave in 1973 as part of the renowned Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard University and were aimed at an expert audience.

Whether in introductions to works or in his television series “Omnibus” and “Young People’s Concerts”, Beethoven always played an important role in illustrating what can be said with music. The “Omnibus” programmes were launched in 1952, with the support of the Ford Foundation, to raise the educational level of the American public. The music programme was broadcast live on Sunday afternoons. In his first “Omnibus” broadcast with the Symphony of the Air Orchestra on 14 November 1954, Bernstein analysed the first movement of Beethoven’s 5th Symphony. The setting for the programme, devised with

the author Arnold Sundgaard, was discussed in advance with the Ford Foundation, which provided the funding (42). As he had done many years earlier in his fictional text, in this programme Bernstein also addressed the idea of rightness as a central aspect of Beethoven’s composing. He argues that extra-musical attributions are not the right way to understand music. Rather, the meaning of a composition is determined solely by the form in which the notes follow one another. Finding this single correct form constitutes hard and lifelong work: “Imagine a whole lifetime of this struggle, movement after movement, symphony after symphony, sonata after quartet after concerto. Always probing and rejecting in his dedication to perfection, to the principle of inevitability. This somehow is the key to the mystery of a great artist: that for reasons unknown to him or to anyone else, he will give away his life and his energies just to make sure that one note follows another inevitably. But in doing so, he makes us feel at the finish that something checks throughout; something that follows its own laws consistently; something we can trust, that will never let us down.” (43)

As an illustration of the idea of “rightness”, Bernstein presents Beethoven’s sketch material of the 5th Symphony. He first plays the sketches on the piano and then builds them in as alternative bars to the otherwise unchanged symphonic phrase. With this he intends to demonstrate how the work might have otherwise sounded, and that in his understanding, the sketches constitute mere precursors to the increasingly perfected work. Sometimes, Bernstein himself extrapolated on the

sketches compositionally. In the case of a sketch that was not completely known, his extension of the theme (44) even comes astonishingly close to Beethoven's original sketch (45), which is now known to scholars. Even though Bernstein's examples are, at the end of the day, purely speculative and don't reflect real precursors to the symphony, he manages to vividly portray the fact that the prominent work is ultimately the product of arduous compositional work. Years later, Bernstein returned to the manuscript of the "Omnibus" programme and recorded introductions to the works in English, German, French and Italian (47). Of course, the visual element could not be transferred to the soundtrack. "Omnibus" shows the instrumentation of the striking head motif of the 5th Symphony very vividly: Bernstein has the musicians stand on a blown up version of the first page of the score, which transforms the floor of the television studio (XXIX). The instruments that Beethoven ultimately used in his final orchestration remain on their respective staves, while Bernstein moves the others to one side.

The regular concert series "Young People's Concerts" is celebrating its 100th birthday this year. Countless children and families have been inspired by classical music via the series. From the time Bernstein took office, the concerts were broadcast on television and thus had an impact far beyond the concert hall (XXX). The first concerts were broadcast live, from the 10th concert onwards they were pre-recorded. Bernstein not only accompanied his young audience on their way to becoming knowledgeable listeners, but also supported talented

young artists, whom he regularly brought to the podium. He wrote the presentation texts himself. He wrote down his ideas by hand and then discussed them with a team of advisors led by producer Roger Englander. The typed manuscripts show that extensive revisions often followed. The programme received several awards – in 1961 the Edison Foundation Award for "The Best Children's Television Program" (XXXI) and in 1965/66 an Emmy nomination for "Outstanding Musical Program" (XXXII) – for the quality of its educational work. Two of the concerts referred specifically to Beethoven: "Forever Beethoven!" (1968) and "Fidelio. A Celebration of Life" (1970) in the anniversary year of Beethoven's birth. In "Forever Beethoven!" (49), Bernstein raises similar questions to those in his first book publication and his first television production. He again uses the 5th Symphony with its concise head motif as an example (50). The entries in red and blue pencil are typical of Bernstein's performance scores: in red he marked performance markings, time indications and notes to be added, i.e. everything that was to be transferred to the orchestral parts before the first rehearsal, and in blue he entered his own interpretations. He then turns to the theme of freedom, which becomes central to the rest of the concert. As an example, he cites the opening motif of the Eroica Symphony with its unexpected turn from the E flat major triad to the note D-flat (52). Every single artistic decision in favour of one possibility inevitably represents a decision against many other possibilities. Bernstein understands this ability to decide in favour of a single possibility over a plethora of others as freedom. "That is

the whole meaning of democracy, the kind of freedom on which we base our hopes for a peaceful world – just as it is the meaning of freedom in great musical composition. In Beethoven, as in democracy, freedom is a discipline, combining the right to choose freely and the gift of choosing wisely.” After the last two movements of the 4th Piano Concerto, interpreted and conducted by young artists, he returns to the theme of “freedom” with the 3rd Leonore Overture. The somewhat affecting reference in the manuscript from late December 1967 (53) (“And when you ask: why is it forever Beethoven? – remember: it’s because Beethoven is forever.”) was deleted from the script. In the programme itself, Bernstein even honed the script to emphasise “freedom”: “As you listen now to this essay on liberty [Leonore], you can understand why Beethoven has always meant so much to us, and will continue to as long as the human race struggles for freedom.”

As early as 1967, the Vienna Philharmonic honoured Leonard Bernstein with the Nicolai Gold Medal for his “services to the musical education of the younger generation” (XXXV). The statement from Cleveland State University on the award of an honorary doctorate in 1982 (XXXVI) – one of many the composer received – precisely summarises Bernstein’s merits as an outstanding educator of the content and meaning of music: “You have helped guide all of us to a deeper appreciation of the meaning and language of sound and the joy of music.”

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| <p>42 Letter from Ford Foundation about technical possibilities for Omnibus programme (facsimile)
<i>Arnold Sundgaard papers, Special Collections & Archives, George Mason University Libraries</i></p> <p>43 Leonard Bernstein Beethoven’s 5th Symphony TV script, Omnibus, 1954 (facsimile)
<i>Library of Congress, Music Division</i></p> <p>44 Leonard Bernstein Sketch to the TV script (facsimile)
<i>Library of Congress, Music Division</i></p> <p>45 Ludwig van Beethoven Sketch for the 5th Symphony (printout) and transcription by Jens Dufner
<i>Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung</i></p> <p>46 Leonard Bernstein Omnibus, 1954–1958 DVD Set, Entertainment One Film USA LLC, 2009
<i>Arnd Richter</i></p> <p>47 Beethoven 5th Symphony. Bernstein conducts the New York Philharmonic, with introductory talk on accompanying record LP, CBS, 1961
<i>Beethoven-Haus Bonn</i></p> | <p>48 Concert programme, Young People’s Concerts: Forever Beethoven!, New York, 6 January 1968
<i>New York Philharmonic Archives</i></p> <p>49 Leonard Bernstein Young People’s Concerts: Forever Beethoven! Typescript, 1968 (facsimile)
<i>Library of Congress, Music Division</i></p> <p>50 Bernstein’s score of the 5th Symphony with his annotations
<i>New York Philharmonic Archives</i></p> <p>51 Dedication signed by Leonard Bernstein on printed sheet music of 5th Symphony
<i>Torsten Haferlach</i></p> <p>52 Leonard Bernstein Young People’s Concerts: Forever Beethoven! Notes, 1967 (facsimile)
<i>Library of Congress, Music Division</i></p> <p>53 Leonard Bernstein Young People’s Concerts: Forever Beethoven! Manuscript, 1967 (facsimile)
<i>Library of Congress, Music Division</i></p> <p>54 Leonard Bernstein’s Young People’s Concerts, 1958–1962 Blue-Ray Box, Unitel, 2018
<i>Arnd Richter</i></p> |
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- XXIX Omnibus: Bernstein and Beethoven's 5th Symphony, CBS broadcast from 14 November 1954
Photo: Gordon Parks / The LIFE Picture Collection / Shutterstock
- XXX Announcement of the New York Philharmonic Young People's Concerts (facsimile)
Leonard Bernstein Collection, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music
- XXXI Edison Foundation Award (The Best Children's Television Program) 1961
Leonard Bernstein Collection, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music
- XXXII Emmy Nomination (Outstanding Musical Program) 1965/66
Leonard Bernstein Collection, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music
- XXXIII Leonard Bernstein backstage with visitors during a Young People's Concert intermission, 1960
Library of Congress, Music Division
- XXXIV Young People's Concert, 1964
Library of Congress, Music Division
- XXXV Nicolai Medal Award of the Vienna Philharmonic, 28 March 1967
Leonard Bernstein Collection, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music
- XXXVI Statement from Cleveland State University on the award of an honorary doctorate, 1982
Leonard Bernstein Collection, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music

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Graphics: 2x Goldstein

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Ludwig van Beethoven is one of the leading figures who had a formative influence on Leonard Bernstein in many different ways. The complex and multi-dimensional relationship that Bernstein as performer, as music educator, and even as composer had with Beethoven will be illustrated in this exhibition.

Bernstein, a political man, repeatedly used Beethoven to transmit humanistic messages. For him, Beethoven's music was closely linked to the ideal of freedom. And so, in 1989, at the widely impactful Christmas Day concert following the fall of the Berlin Wall, it was thus only logical to perform Beethoven's "Ode to Freedom".

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