

CONVERGENCES BETWEEN LEONARD BERNSTEIN'S *ON THE TOWN* (1944) AND
WONDERFUL TOWN (1953) AND HIS CONTEMPORARY CONCERT MUSIC

By

©2013

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ABSTRACT

“Convergences Between Leonard Bernstein’s *On the Town* (1944) and *Wonderful Town* (1953) and His Contemporary Concert Music”

On the Town and *Wonderful Town* are the two musicals that Leonard Bernstein wrote before *Candide* and *West Side Story*. These two shows won success in their original runs and *On the Town* was adapted by MGM into a film in 1949 while *Wonderful Town* was presented live as a television special on CBS in 1958. As an American composer, Bernstein sought out the “American voice” in all of his works, and merging traits from concert hall music and the popular idioms from the Broadway musical theater became a personal signature of his compositions.

Chapter 1 deals with the background of the creation of *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*, including how the creators conceived their ideas, the receptions of the original runs, and the historical circumstances they faced. Chapter 2 examines the application of popular idioms, which Bernstein used in his Broadway scores, in his large-scale concert works in the 1940s and 1950s, including *Symphony No. 1, Jeremiah*, *Symphony No. 2, The Age of Anxiety*, and *Serenade after Plato’s Symposium*. Chapters 3 and 4 concentrate on the music of *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*. In *On the Town*, the composer showed his ambition to apply techniques that he learned from his academic training: contrapuntal structure, fugal-like sections, highly dissonant sonorities, and developing motives to unify the work. In *Wonderful Town*, Bernstein continued the direction of his work *On the Town* and blended 1930s swing music and operatic moments, together with other music styles. Meanwhile, Bernstein reused materials from other works, which is a technique that is common to concert music composers, such as J. S. Bach, Handel,

and Beethoven, and, instead of simply reprising songs, he applied small motives to help unify the entire work, a technique that one finds in opera more often.

As an active musician, Bernstein was aware of new trends in the concert field and merged them into his musicals but did not abandon the conventions of writing memorable melodies. Through the examination of *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*, we can see that Bernstein, as an ambitious musician from the concert hall, devoting himself to musical theater.

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Soli Deo Gloria.

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Introduction

Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990) was one of the most prominent conductors of his generation and one of the most active American composers in the twentieth century. His multiple talents for music were obvious: he is remembered as a pianist, a music educator—especially for the younger generations, a television-program host, a composer, and a conductor. He composed both concert music, such as three symphonies, and popular musical theater, for example, *On the Town* (1944), *Wonderful Town* (1953), and *West Side Story* (1957). In his works he fused the traits of European and American classical music and the characters of American vernacular idioms. He seldom followed the traditional limitations of genres, instead following a process of redefining genres that had started in the nineteenth century. For instance, his Symphony No. 1, *Jeremiah* (1942), uses a slow, fast, slow pattern instead of the tradition of fast outer movements, and includes a mezzo-soprano in the third movement; his *Mass* (1971) is “A Theater Piece for Singers, Players, and Dancers,” which is difficult to put it into any existing category; he wrote different, specific music for dances in *West Side Story* (instead of just arranging other tunes from the score); used motives to unify the piece; and applied complicated contrapuntal texture in the “Tonight” quintet, which are all uncommon for the musical theater at that time.

Musical theater played an important role in Bernstein’s adolescence. He sang and played some selections from operas such as *Aida*, *La traviata* and *Carmen* with his sister, Shirley. According to Burton, “these impromptu opera sessions at home

eventually inspired Leonard to put on an opera with his friends at the lakeside community of Sharon, where the Bernstein family began spending their summers.”¹ There, Bernstein played an abbreviated version of *Carmen* with a Boston Latin schoolmate, Dana Schnittken, in 1934; he played Carmen and Dana played Don José. The next year he put on a simplified version of *The Mikado* and in 1936 again produced another Gilbert and Sullivan work, *H. M. S. Pinafore*.

The experiences he had through these Sharon productions were invaluable, and he maintained his involvement in musical theater at Harvard. In 1937, after spending his first year of college, he took a summer job, working as the music counselor at Camp Onota in Pittsfield, PA, and was involved as a music director of *The Pirates of Penzance* at the summer camp. That is where he met Adolph Green, who played the role of the Pirate King and later became one of the librettists of *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*.² During his Harvard days, Bernstein wrote incidental music for a production of Aristophanes’s *The Birds*, requested by the Harvard Greek Society, and conducted the score in his last semester at Harvard in 1939. He also produced Marc Blitzstein’s *The Cradle Will Rock*, which helped him become a friend of Blitzstein.

These experiences in musical theater served as fertile ground for his compositions. As he admitted in the prefatory note to his Symphony No. 2, *The Age of Anxiety*, “I have a suspicion that every work I write, for whatever medium, is

¹ Humphrey Burton, *Leonard Bernstein* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 21.

² Burton, 38-39.

really theater music in some way.”³ Theater strongly impacted the music that he wrote for the concert hall, and *vice versa*. This dissertation examines how Bernstein freely merged concert music techniques into *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*, how techniques from concert music influenced his popular musical theater works, and in reverse, how the idioms of Broadway, or popular music, inspired his language for concert music, especially in the 1940s and 1950s.

Chapter 1 introduces the background for the creation of *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*, including some new information on the shows. Shows are influenced by social circumstances. The original production of *On the Town* ran during World War II while Americans felt patriotic and proud of their soldiers. However, the unsuccessful revival in the 1971 occurred when the Vietnam War was going badly and the government of the United States planned to withdraw. *Wonderful Town* was produced during the McCarthy Era and accidentally ran into a political issue. Later, when theaters from Eastern Europe requested productions of *Wonderful Town* in their countries, the discussion of whether or not to approve the possibility involved some of the United States government. After *Wonderful Town* won success at the Brussels World’s Fair in 1961, it became an icon of American culture and was produced overseas more often.

Chapter 2 examines how Bernstein used the musical idioms that he applied fairly often in his Broadway works, such as melodies based on large intervals, use of jazz elements, irregular accents, and use of the blues scale. One also finds traits from concert music in *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*, which will be discussed in

³ Leonard Bernstein, “Prefatory Note,” from Symphony No. 2, *The Age of Anxiety* (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1993).

Chapter 3, including a touch of Neo-Classicism, operatic applications, use of dissonance and counterpoint, and remote modulations. Chapter 4 shows how Bernstein reused materials from other works, both for concert hall and musical theater, in *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*, and how he unified the shows as a whole through developing small motives, which is a technique borrowed from opera, instead of simply reprising numbers.

From *On the Town* to *Wonderful Town*, Bernstein fused sophisticated musical ideas with popular musical theater. He used different melodic motives to unify the show, highly dissonant harmonies when needed, and blended contemporary concert music with jazz and other popular elements. He used AABA form in a non-traditional way: he might have added or cut several measures or conflated two sections into a larger one. He also included operatic moments in these two musicals, such as “Carried Away” in *On the Town* and “Conversation Piece” in *Wonderful Town*. Bernstein boldly applied contemporary compositional elements from concert music but still made the scores accessible for ordinary theatergoers.

Research Aids

The Library of Congress, Music Division

The Bernstein Collection helps one trace Bernstein’s professional career, personal life, and relationships with other public figures. Bernstein began to donate his papers to the Library of Congress as early as 1953. He kept giving his manuscripts and scrapbooks to the library, and so did his family and friends after his death.

This collection can be divided into a number of categories: correspondence, writings, photographs, datebooks, schedules, address books and message books, iconography, programs, scrapbooks, magazines, personal business papers, fan mail, press materials, awards/regalia, posters, gift albums/books/scripts/music by others, music, Amberson business papers,⁴ his wife Felicia Bernstein's papers, his mother Jennie Bernstein's papers, and his former assistant Jack Gottlieb's papers. Among them, the most useful materials for the purposes of this document are probably the writings, datebooks, scrapbooks, personal business papers, and music.⁵

The library also put some materials online that one may access through Internet. There is a special online exhibition of *West Side Story: Birth of a Classic*,⁶ where one may find the letters, music sketches, set designs, and choreographic notes that are related to the show. There is also an online collection, *The Leonard Bernstein Collection, ca. 1920-1989*,⁷ which contains photos, scripts for *Young People's Concerts*, scripts from the *Thursday Evening Previews* for New York Philharmonic concerts, and over 1,100 pieces of correspondence.

⁴ Amberson Inc. is the Bernstein's family company and Amberson Enterprise is Bernstein's video production company.

⁵ Paul R. Laird, *Leonard Bernstein: A Guide to Research* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 230-246. One may download the finding aid through <http://rs5.loc.gov/service/music/eadxmlmusic/eadpdfmusic/1998/mu998001.pdf> (accessed 9 April 2013).

⁶ <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/westsidestory/index.html> (accessed 16 May 2013).

⁷ <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/bernstein/> (accessed 16 May 2013).

New York Public Library

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, located in Lincoln Center, collects various types of documents, including those related to musical theater. It not only includes printed books, scores and periodicals, but also clippings and programs, iconography, archival collections, autograph music manuscripts, and sheet music. In the music division we find Betty Comden's Scores, 1938-1975 (8 boxes),⁸ which provided valuable primary sources.

Encompassing dramatic performances in all its diversity, the Billy Rose Theatre Division contains many important primary sources of theater. It has the collection of Comden and Green Papers, 1930-1986 (29 boxes),⁹ the Collection of Adolph Green Papers, 1944-2002 (14 boxes),¹⁰ and Betty Comden Papers, 1929-2004 (8 boxes).¹¹ Another part of the library that is helpful is the Jerome Robbins Dance Division, which has videotapes of dances from Broadway musicals, clipping and program files, iconography, and manuscripts. They have the Collection of Jerome Robbins personal papers, 1923-2000, which has 171 boxes.¹² This is an

⁸ One may download the finding aid through <http://www.nypl.org/sites/default/files/archivalcollections/pdf/muscomde.pdf> (accessed 9 April 2013).

⁹ One may download the finding aid through http://www.nypl.org/sites/default/files/archivalcollections/pdf/the_comden_green.pdf (accessed 9 April 2013).

¹⁰ One may download the finding aid through <http://www.nypl.org/sites/default/files/archivalcollections/pdf/theagree.pdf> (accessed 9 April 2013).

¹¹ One may download the finding aid through <http://www.nypl.org/sites/default/files/archivalcollections/pdf/the18396.pdf> (accessed 9 April 2013).

¹² One may download the finding aid through http://www.nypl.org/sites/default/files/archivalcollections/pdf/danrobby_0.pdf (accessed 9 April 2013).

important resource to study Robbins, one of the most important friends and collaborators of Bernstein.¹³

The Theatre on Film and Tape Archive of the New York Public Library is an abundant resource for live theatre productions and interviews. One may find the production of *On the Town* in New York in 1999 and in Washington D.C. in 1989, and also the production of *Wonderful Town* in New York 2000 and in East Haddam, Connecticut in 1988.

The Paley Center for Media

Formerly The Museum of Television & Radio, The Paley Center for Media is located in New York City and dedicated to the cultural, creative, and social significance of television, radio, and emerging platforms for the professional community and media-interested public. One may find the 1958 CBS television production of *Wonderful Town* in black and white. This version is especially precious because we may see the original Ruth, Rosalind Russell.

Literature Survey

Paul Laird's *Leonard Bernstein: A Guide to Research*¹⁴ provides an overall survey of the Bernstein bibliography as it existed in 2001. Humphrey Burton's *Leonard Bernstein*¹⁵ offers a complete review of his life and works. As a book

¹³ Nonetheless, when I visited New York Public Library in 2012, the Jerome Robbins's boxes were not in the library but stored somewhere else. One who wants access to these materials needs to request them two or three work days beforehand.

¹⁴ Paul R. Laird, *Leonard Bernstein: A Guide to Research* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁵ Humphrey Burton, *Leonard Bernstein* (New York: Doubleday, 1994).

commissioned by the composer's estate, Burton gained access to many of Bernstein's family and, with their help, also interviewed Bernstein's friends. Paul Myers, Joan Peyser, and Meryle Secrest all wrote biographies on Bernstein. Without the support or limitations from the estate, they also provide useful materials. Myers takes a serious look at Bernstein's major compositions with the depth of a good music critic.¹⁶ Peyser's book provides a subjective view of Bernstein's personal life yet has some useful materials about the historical context and productions of his musicals.¹⁷ Secrest's book provides an overall study of Bernstein's life and career based on her extensive research and interviews with family and friends.¹⁸ Books and biographies about Bernstein's friends and colleagues, such as Betty Comden¹⁹ and George Abbott,²⁰ provide other perspectives of Bernstein's life and the production of his musicals.

Bernstein's own writings are helpful in understanding his thoughts. In *Findings* one may consult his "Harvard Bachelor's Thesis" and "Excerpts from a *West Side Story* Log."²¹ There are five television scripts in *The Infinite Variety of Music*²² and seven *Omnibus* television transcripts in *The Joy of Music*.²³ Jack Gottlieb's

¹⁶ Paul Myers, *Leonard Bernstein* (London: Phaidon, 1998).

¹⁷ Joan Peyser, *Bernstein: A Biography* (New York: Beech Tree Books, 1998).

¹⁸ Meryle Secrest, *Leonard Bernstein* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

¹⁹ Betty Comden, *Off Stage* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995).

²⁰ George Abbott, *Mister Abbott* (New York: Random House, 1963).

²¹ Leonard Bernstein, *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

²² Leonard Bernstein, *The Infinite Variety of Music* (New York: Amadeus, 1993).

²³ Leonard Bernstein, *The Joy of Music* (New York: Anchor Books, 1994).

dissertation, “The Music of Leonard Bernstein: A Study of Melodic Manipulations,”²⁴ provides analysis of the melodic characteristics of several of Bernstein’s pieces, including *Wonderful Town*, *Jeremiah Symphony*, *The Age of Anxiety*, and *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs*. When talking about his compositional styles, James Walter Moore’s dissertation, “A Study of Tonality in Selected Works by Leonard Bernstein,”²⁵ and Lars Erik Helgert’s “Jazz Elements in Selected Concert Works of Leonard Bernstein: Sources, Reception, and Analysis”²⁶ provide some examples.

Ethan Mordden’s *Beautiful Mornin’: The Broadway Musical in the 1940s*²⁷ and *Coming Up Roses: The Broadway Musical in the 1950s*²⁸ provide the general background of the American musical theater 1940s and 1950s. Joseph Swain’s *The Broadway Musical: A Critical and Musical Survey*²⁹ and Geoffrey Block’s *Enchanted Evenings: The Broadway Musical from Show Boat to Sondheim*³⁰ give a general model for analysis of musical numbers. Philip Max Gentry’s dissertation, “The Age of Anxiety: Music, Politics, and McCarthyism, 1948-1954,”³¹ John Bush Jones’s *Our*

²⁴ Jack Gottlieb, “The Music of Leonard Bernstein: A Study of Melodic Manipulations” (D.M.A. document, University of Illinois, 1964).

²⁵ James Walter Moore, “A Study of Tonality in Selected Works by Leonard Bernstein” (Ph.D. dissertation, The Florida State University, 1984).

²⁶ Lars Erik Helgert, “Jazz Elements in Selected Concert Works of Leonard Bernstein: Sources, Reception, and Analysis” (Ph.D. dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 2008).

²⁷ Ethan Mordden, *Beautiful Mornin’: The Broadway Musical in the 1940s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

²⁸ Ethan Mordden, *Coming Up Roses: The Broadway Musical in the 1950s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

²⁹ Joseph P. Swain, *The Broadway Musical: A Critical and Musical Survey*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

³⁰ Geoffrey Block, *Enchanted Evenings: The Broadway Musical from Show Boat to Sondheim* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

³¹ Philip Max Gentry, “The Age of Anxiety: Music, Politics, and McCarthyism, 1948-1954” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2008).

Musical, Ourselves,³² and Raymond Knapp's *The American Musical and the Formation of National Identity*³³ demonstrate how the musical theater can be studied from the standpoint of social issues. Helen Smith published *There's a Place for Us: The Musical Theatre Works of Leonard Bernstein* in 2011, which surveys every theatrical work by Bernstein from *On the Town* to *A Quiet Place*.³⁴ When dealing with the political issues related to Bernstein's career, especially during the original run of *Wonderful Town*, Barry Seldes's *Leonard Bernstein: The Political Life of an American Musician*³⁵ and Philip Max Gentry's dissertation, "The Age of Anxiety: Music, Politics, and McCarthyism, 1948-1954," provide interesting facts and perspectives.

From these studies, we can appreciate the process of how Bernstein became an American composer. My intention is to describe Bernstein's concert musical style and then show how elements of that style appear in *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town* along with vernacular elements, in the process providing a detailed description of the music of these two Broadway shows and one of the most complete statements available about Bernstein's musical style.

³² John Bush Jones, *Our Musical, Ourselves: A Social History of the American Musical Theatre* (Lebanon: Brandeis University Press, 2003).

³³ Raymond Knapp, *The American Musical and the Formation of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

³⁴ Helen Smith, *There's a Place for Us: The Musical Theatre Works of Leonard Bernstein* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011).

³⁵ Barry Seldes, *Leonard Bernstein: The Political Life of an American Musician* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009).

Chapter 1

The Background of *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*

Background of *On the Town*

During World War II, there were two main categories of themes of musicals. One dealt with American culture, folklore, and spirit and included nostalgic feelings, represented by *Oklahoma!* (1943), as an escape from the wartime atmosphere. The other faced the reality of the war and attempted to depict how Americans felt at the time, the category that applies to *On the Town* (1944).

On the Town was Bernstein's first musical. It tells a story about three sailors' 24-hour on shore leave in New York. They are eager to explore the city, whether for girls or for sight-seeing, and they find what they are after. Bernstein wrote various types of music for the show: a blues-influenced melodic combined with barbershop quartet harmonies for "I Feel Like I'm Not Out of Bed Yet"; rhythmically driving, Stravinsky-like "New York, New York"; "Come Up to My Place" includes the boogie-woogie style; there is operatic recitative for "Carried Away"; "So Long, Baby" shows the influence of the Andrews Sisters; "Lonely Town" is a traditional Broadway ballad; and "Ya Got Me" has the flavor of Latin-American dance. The material from an instrumental change of scene, "Conga Cabana," turns out to be "Conga" in his second musical, *Wonderful Town*.

Between the years 1942 and 1944, Bernstein composed his first symphony, *Jeremiah*, Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, the piano set *Seven Anniversaries*, the ballet

Fancy Free, and also this popular piece of musical theater, *On the Town*. Through these works, Bernstein showed fluency with various styles and established his reputation as a composer. These years witnessed the blooming of his career as a conductor as well as a composer. He became assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic under Artur Rodzinski (1892-1958) in August 1943. His selection was an unusual choice for the time because an American conductor was almost unheard of among the leading orchestras and Bernstein was very young. When Mitropoulos made his U. S. debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, he was forty-one, “yet the press persisted in referring to his ‘extreme youth’.”¹ Also, Bernstein was a Jew at a time when anti-Semitism remained pervasive in the United States. His mentor Serge Koussevitzky (1874-1951) once advised Bernstein to change his name to Leonard S. Burns, which would make him sound less Jewish, but Bernstein rejected the idea.² At the time, however, these issues played differently for Bernstein. Rodzinski insisted on an American as his associate conductor,³ and the only other candidate was not an American; most other American potential candidates had joined the armed forces during the war. Also, the anti-Nazi sentiment was at its height and Jews won the sympathy of some Americans. Bernstein’s duties include sitting in on all the rehearsals, learning each score thoroughly to be able to substitute for Rodzinski or any other conductor at the last minute, and going through new scores that had been submitted to find those worthy of further

¹ Joan Peyser, *Bernstein: A Biography* (New York: Billboard Books, 1998), 113.

² Humphrey Burton, *Leonard Bernstein* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 85.

³ Peyser, 111.

consideration.⁴ His reward would be a Carnegie Hall concert with the New York Philharmonic toward the end of the season. A 25-year-old, fresh graduate probably could hardly find a better starting point for his conducting career.

Bernstein soon got his chance. His big break came on 14 November when he got a phone call from Philharmonic general manager Bruno Zirato who said, “Well this is it. You have to conduct at three o’clock this afternoon.”⁵ Bruno Walter was sick and Rodzinski was on vacation. Although Rodzinski was only a four-hour drive away in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, he was immobilized by a snowstorm. The music director gave this opportunity to Bernstein: “Call Bernstein, that’s why we hired him.”⁶ The night before Bernstein had just accompanied mezzo-soprano Jennie Tourel making her recital debut in New York, including his song cycle *I Hate Music* (1943), which was a success. However, the following day was a tremendous triumph for Bernstein as he substituted for Walter without rehearsal on a successful concert broadcast live on CBS Radio from Carnegie Hall. The program was very challenging, consisting of Schumann’s *Manfred Overture*, Miklós Rózsa’s *Theme, Variations and Finale*, Strauss’s *Don Quixote*. Wagner’s *Meistersinger* Prelude was performed in Carnegie Hall but did not go on air.⁷ The next morning the news of Bernstein’s debut appeared on the front pages of the *New York Times*,⁸ *Daily News*, and *Herald Tribune*. This was only the beginning of his multi-faceted career. He premiered his *Jeremiah*

⁴ Burton, 111.

⁵ Burton, 115.

⁶ Burton, 114.

⁷ Burton, 115.

⁸ “Young Aide Leads Philharmonic, Steps In When Bruno Walter Is Ill,” *New York Times* (15 November 1943), 1; Olin Downes, “Bernstein Shows Mastery of Score: Youthful Conductor Carries Out and Exacting Program in Sudden Emergency,” *New York Times* (15 November 1943), 40.

Symphony in Pittsburgh in January, with the Boston premiere following in February 1944. In March and April he conducted *Jeremiah* four times with the New York Philharmonic and in May the New York Music Critics Circle selected it as the outstanding new classical work of the season.⁹

Just when people still felt excited about his conducting career and symphony, Bernstein gave them another outstanding work with Jerome Robbins (1918-1998), the one-act ballet *Fancy Free*, which opened at the old Metropolitan Opera House on 18 April 1944. It was programmed directly after *Swan Lake*, Act II, and won a huge success. The attendance broke box office records at the Metropolitan Opera and a national tour followed.¹⁰ It became a staple work for the Ballet Theatre (now the American Ballet Theatre) until the New York City Ballet gave it an “official company premiere” in 1980.¹¹

It was not surprising that an American concert music composer would write for the theater at the time, either a ballet, a film, or other theatrical music. Marc Blitzstein (1905-1964), another important American composer in the field of musical theater and a close friend of Bernstein’s, said, “There’s no future for the American composer in writing music for Carnegie Hall. His hope lies in writing music that is intimate, entertaining, accessible—that reaches an audience directly, like a ballet or a theatrical score.”¹² Blitzstein contributed significantly to theater music throughout his career. His output is mainly for the combination of music and

⁹ Burton, 125.

¹⁰ Burton, 128.

¹¹ Anna Kisselgoff, “The Dance: City Ballet Presents ‘Fancy Free’ by Robbins,” *New York Times* (2 February 1980), 12.

¹² Meryle Secrest, *Leonard Bernstein* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 128.

drama, including opera (such as *Regina*), musical theatre (for example, *The Cradle Will Rock*), ballet (*The Guests*, for which Jerome Robbins danced), film score (*The Spanish Earth*), and so on. His first famous work, *The Cradle Will Rock* (1937), stunned the public. It was set to open at the Maxine Elliott Theatre in New York in June 1937, but the production was shut down because of political pressure on the Federal Theatre Project, the sponsoring organization. Director Orson Welles insisted that it be put on stage:

As on Wednesday night, when an emergency performance was hastily put on, Mr. Blitzstein with a piano substituted for a twenty-three piece orchestra and the actors, minus make-up or costumes which belonged to the WPA, sang their parts from seats in the audience.¹³

The Cradle Will Rock is almost entirely sung-through, but the musical style is closer to the popular than classical. It is called a “play in music” in *Grove Music Online*,¹⁴ but “opera” in Blitzstein’s biography.¹⁵ Eric Gordon describes it as a “type of modern *Singspiel*” and provides a long list of influences, from Mozart to Weill and Brecht.¹⁶ Nevertheless, *The Cradle Will Rock* is an American work, not only because it is written by an American composer who composed for the American audience but also because it reflects its time and place. Bernstein saw a performance on Broadway in 1938 and, according to Burton, he “was attracted by the responsive way Blitzstein set the American language, sometimes as simple and direct song,

¹³ “WPA Opera Put On As Private Show,” *New York Times* (19 June 1937), 20. See also Howard Pollack, *Marc Blitzstein: His Life, His Work, His World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 150-170.

¹⁴ David Z. Kushner, “Blitzstein, Marc.” In *Grove Music Online* (accessed 6 February 2012).

¹⁵ Eric A. Gordon, *Mark The Music: The Life and Work of Marc Blitzstein* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989), xvi.

¹⁶ Gordon, 132.

sometimes as metrically noted speech.”¹⁷ Blitzstein influenced Bernstein’s composition for both Broadway and the opera house, which one can observe in Blitzstein’s impact on *Trouble in Tahiti* and also on *A Quiet Place*.

Bernstein produced *The Cradle Will Rock* with his colleagues in the Harvard Dramatic Club during his Harvard days in 1939. The production team invited Blitzstein to come to the premiere and the two composers began their close friendship. Later in November 1947 Bernstein directed a concert revival and also the world premiere of the orchestral version of *The Cradle Will Rock* with the New York City Symphony Orchestra.

Aaron Copland, another close friend and mentor of Bernstein’s, also wrote for stage and screen. He composed two operas, eight film scores, six ballets, and also some incidental music. Bernstein had admired Copland’s music since his days at Harvard and became a friend of the elder composer. Later on, he “derived enormous support from his friendship with Copland and learned much from him about the practicalities of professional musical life.”¹⁸ One of Bernstein’s early jobs was preparing piano reductions of orchestral pieces (the transcription fee was 25 dollars, equivalent to one month’s rent for him¹⁹), and in fact, the first time that Bernstein’s name appeared in a musical publication was the piano transcription of Copland’s *El Salón México*. Bernstein was aware of Copland’s success in the areas of ballet and film music (Copland won the Pulitzer Prize in 1945 for *Appalachian Spring*), and this probably encouraged the young composer to explore opportunities beyond the

¹⁷ Burton, 52.

¹⁸ Burton, 43.

¹⁹ Burton, 84.

concert hall. More than that, Bernstein was also involved in the Boston production of Copland's *The Second Hurricane* for high-school audience on 21 May 1942. Burton characterized this event as "a chance for Bernstein to demonstrate his devotion to Copland in the most practical way."²⁰

Ultimately, the chance to write a ballet score came to Bernstein in 1943. Before doing the choreography of *Fancy Free*, Robbins already had written several dance scenarios for the Ballet Theatre. His friend Charles Payne, the executive manager of the Ballet Theatre, advised him to write a short, concise scenario for his first piece of choreography. Payne knew his young choreographer wanted the first work to be different, unique, and distinctly Robbins, but he also warned, "no matter how intrinsically worthwhile your first ballet is, unless it appeals to the public generally, you will never get a chance to do another."²¹ Furthermore, according to Payne's observation, Robbins's idea of introducing each character with a solo ran counter to the convention of using a spirited opening chorus number.²²

After reconsidering his ideas, Robbins came up with a new thought to produce a ballet about sailors in New York during the war. He recalled:

I was dancing at the old Met Opera, which was down on 41st street, and when you left the stage door, you walked out and there were thousands of sailors all over the place—that was 1944—all around New York. And they were all looking for a good time. And all the girls were out on the town. And I thought, gee, that would be a wonderful subject.²³

²⁰ Burton, 98.

²¹ Deborah Jowitt, *Jerome Robbins: His Life, His Theater, His Dance* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 73.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Laurence Maslon and Michael Kantor, *Broadway: The American Musical* (New York: Bulfinch, 2004), 210.

During World War II, every available single man left on the home front had 2.5 women competing for him.²⁴ The scenario of *Fancy Free* is simple: three sailors on shore leave boisterously arrive at a bar, have a drink, and head outside looking for female companionship. However, there are only two girls on stage. The three buddies decide to hold a competition and the loser will go dateless. The contest soon becomes a fight and the girls flee in terror. After realizing that their fight is in vain, the three sailors have another drink, head outside, and wait for another chance to get a date. Robbins made this competition an important part of his ballet. Each sailor performs a solo variation: a galop, a waltz, and a danzón. Having sailors or soldiers on stage was not a new thing and the plot of three sailors and two girls had been used in Léonide Massine's (1896-1979) choreography for *Les Matelots* (1925), for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.²⁵ Nonetheless, *Fancy Free*, a vivid and energetic ballet, soon won the hearts of the audience. Americans appreciated their soldiers and embraced them heartily, which helped the ballet's acceptance.

When looking for a composer to write the music, there were several people who recommended Bernstein to Robbins. Early in June 1943, Robbins approached Morton Gould (1913-1996) with his proposal of *Fancy Free* and Gould gave him a list of three names: Alex North (1910-1991), Henry Brant (1913-2008), and Leonard Bernstein.²⁶ Robbins also went see Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987) in Philadelphia later in the month, who thought this ballet needed jazz and again, recommended

²⁴ Maslon and Kantor, 210.

²⁵ Jowitt, 75.

²⁶ Peyser, 136.

Bernstein and gave him Bernstein's old address, which was an empty lot already.²⁷ Two months later, on 3 August, Robbins still could not find Bernstein and wrote to Persichetti to ask if he knew anyone else who might know how to approach Bernstein. Fortunately, Robbins ran into his friend Oliver Smith (1918-1994), the set designer of *Fancy Free*, who brought him to Bernstein's Carnegie Hall apartment later in the month.

Fancy Free was the first collaboration between these two talented young artists, who already had begun to establish reputations in their own fields. Their first meeting was dramatic. Robbins showed Bernstein his scenario, and in return, Bernstein played him something he had written on a napkin at the Russian Tea Room at lunch that day. When Bernstein sang the melody, he recalled, "Jerry went through the ceiling. He said, 'That's it, that's what I had in mind!' We went crazy. I began developing the theme right there in his presence."²⁸ The Ballet Theatre had not commissioned a score since 1940,²⁹ and the commissioning fee from the Ballet Theatre to Bernstein was \$300 for a 30-minute score.³⁰ The music shows his mentor Copland's influence. For example, in the "Scene at the Bar," we can clearly hear the expansion of the second inversion of an E major triad, first in the winds and then passed to strings (*Bernstein conducts Bernstein*,³¹ *Fancy Free*, disc 1, track 6, 0'37"-

²⁷ Secrest, 127.

²⁸ Burton, 126.

²⁹ Jowitt, 82.

³⁰ Burton, 127.

³¹ *Bernstein Conducts Bernstein*, collectors edition, Deutsche Grammophon, 469 829-2, 2003.

0'50"), a common practice in Aaron Copland's music.³² The simplicity of the opening clarinet duet also reminds one of *Billy the Kid* or *Appalachian Spring*.

After accepting the commission from Robbins, Bernstein maintained a tight conducting schedule while the choreographer went on tour with the Ballet Theatre. Smith promised to design the scenery, but he was in Mexico. The three kept in touch by mail and telegram. When Bernstein finished a section, he not only sent Robbins the scores, but also 78-rpm disks that contained a two-piano version of the first sections of music that he recorded with Aaron Copland.³³ Robbins would wire back with comments, and then Bernstein would make changes. The composer wrote music amazingly quickly. Halina Rodzinski, the conductor's wife, recalled taking the same train with Bernstein:

I noticed Lenny take a pad of staved paper from his briefcase, then draw notes. I pretended not to watch, but was amazed at the speed with which he covered sheet after sheet, rarely pausing or making an erasure. He looked up for a moment, smiled handsomely as he caught my peeping eye, and said, "You have no idea how exciting it is to hear in one's head the music that comes out in these black dots."³⁴

The opening evening, with the help of Betty Comden's Victrola to play the opening song "Big Stuff," *Fancy Free* was a big success. "Big Stuff" was recorded by Bernstein's sister, Shirley, but he composed it with Billie Holiday in mind.³⁵ This is a

³² Arthur Berger described Copland's style as involving "a rehabilitation of the triad." Arthur Berger, *Aaron Copland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 65. We can also find some discussions of how Copland used triads in *Appalachian Spring* in Elizabeth B. Crist, *Music for the Common Man: Aaron Copland and During the Depression and War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 171-172.

³³ Jowitt, 82.

³⁴ Burton, 131.

³⁵ Jowitt, 84.

number that shows Bernstein's interest in the blues. Although they could not afford to hire Billie Holiday to record this number for the premiere, the composer did get a chance to record it with her in 1945 and released this as the introduction to his Decca recording of *Fancy Free*.³⁶ The composer also recorded a version with him singing and playing on the recording that he made with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra in 1979.³⁷ In the 1944 premiere, Bernstein conducted the orchestra and Robbins danced as one of the sailors, and it became "one of the most exciting evenings in the history of Ballet in America."³⁸ It was an instant "smash hit" and John Martin wrote "the only thing he [Robbins] has to worry about in that direction is how in the world he is going to make his second one any better."³⁹ He not only praised Robbins's choreography in the review but also the "gay and admirable design" by Oliver Smith and that the music by Bernstein "utilizes jazz in about the same portion that Robbins's choreography does," adding that it "is a fine score, humorous, inventive and musically interesting."⁴⁰ Four days later, he wrote another review entitled, "The Dance: 'Fancy Free' Does It," which stated: "the whole thing hangs together; it is all very young, very contemporary, and very authoritative," and suggested that the audience "better buy your tickets in advance. It is going to be one

³⁶ Burton, 143.

³⁷ *Fancy Free*, disc 1 tracks 4 and 14, *Bernstein Conducts Bernstein*, collectors edition, Deutsche Grammophon, 469 829-2, 2003.

³⁸ American Ballet Theatre, <http://www.abt.org/education/archive/index.html> (accessed 19 March 2013).

³⁹ John Martin, "Ballet By Robbins Called Smash Hit: 'Fancy Free' About Troubles of Sailors and Their Girls, in Metropolitan Premiere," *New York Times* (19 April 1944), 27.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

of those things.”⁴¹ Twenty-five days after the premiere, when the other dance selections changed from *Nutcracker* and *Swan Lake* to *Giselle*, and later to *Petrushka*, *Fancy Free* was still on the program. Responding to box office demands, the impresario Sol Hurok extended the Ballet Theatre’s engagement by two weeks, followed by a national tour.⁴²

Fancy Free entered its second season and Martin hailed it “a rare little genre masterpiece—young, human, tender and funny, and impeccably formal withal under its frolicsome exterior.”⁴³ It celebrated its 162nd performance and also its first anniversary on the same date, 18 April, at the same place, the Metropolitan Opera House, in 1945, which established an all-time record for the number of performances of a ballet in a single year to that time.⁴⁴ *Fancy Free* was the perfect ballet for this moment during the war. It was a light-hearted piece that helped people temporarily forget the shadow of the war, and yet reminded the audience of the reality of war while showing their respect to their men in uniform. Besides its success in the ballet field, *Fancy Free* also caught Hollywood’s interest. Irving Rapper once talked to Bernstein about a film version of it, but the project did not reach fruition.⁴⁵

It was Oliver Smith’s idea to transform *Fancy Free* into a musical, but Robbins and Bernstein resisted it in the beginning; they wanted to do something more

⁴¹ John Martin, “The Dance: ‘Fancy Free’ Does It,” *New York Times* (23 April 1944), X8.

⁴² Paul Myers, *Leonard Bernstein* (London: Phaidon, 1998), 42.

⁴³ John Martin, “‘Fancy Free’ Still Sparkling Dance: Robbins’ Hit of Last Season, Tudor’s ‘Lilac Garden’ on Ballet Theatre Program,” *New York Times* (10 October 1944), 27.

⁴⁴ “Ballet Sets a Record,” *New York Times* (19 April 1945), 22.

⁴⁵ Burton, 142.

serious.⁴⁶ Bernstein was ambitious to establish his reputation as a composer of symphonic music and a conductor while Robbins intended to develop his career as a ballet choreographer. Smith called on all of his powers of persuasion and they finally agreed to do it. Originally Smith planned to bring lyricist John La Touche (1914-1956) to join this project,⁴⁷ and Robbins favored Arthur Laurents (1917-2011) for the book.⁴⁸ But Bernstein insisted on working with his friends Betty Comden and Adolph Green, who wrote both the book and lyrics, and he successfully persuaded Robbins and Oliver. Bernstein believed that his friends were the most suitable for the show: they were good satirists, good performers and were “the most musical, sensitive, the wittiest, sharpest, dearest people”⁴⁹ to work with.

As noted, Bernstein got to know Green at Camp Onota in Massachusetts in the summer of 1937. The composer, still in his teens, took a job as a music counselor and was responsible for organizing and supervising various musical activities, including a production of *The Pirates of Penzance*, in which Green played the role of the Pirate King.⁵⁰ They became lifelong friends and in 1939, the composer’s first year in New York, he shared an apartment in Greenwich Village with Green. That was when and where he met Green’s writing partner, Comden. Together with Judy Holliday, Green and Comden formed a group called The Revuers and performed satirical songs and sketches at the Village Vanguard club in Greenwich Village.

⁴⁶ “*On the Town*: Projects Committee Introduces Its Landmark Series of Symposia,” *The Dramatists Guild Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 2 (1981), 13.

⁴⁷ Ethan Mordden, *Beautiful Mornin’: The Broadway Musical in the 1940s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 121.

⁴⁸ Jowitt, 90.

⁴⁹ “*On the Town*,” *The Dramatists Guild Quarterly*, 16.

⁵⁰ Myers, 23-24.

Bernstein saw some of their performances and sometimes played the piano for them.⁵¹ They even made a recording with the composer playing the piano.⁵² After gaining his own fame and success, he also tried to help his talented friends to be known by the world. When the chance came, the composer introduced them to Robbins and Smith and the creative group formed. The scheme of the story of *On the Town* was derived from *Fancy Free*, but except for the twenty-four-hour New York City tour of three sailors, there were hardly any similarities between these two works, in either the music or the book.⁵³

These four young friends—all in their mid-twenties—were naïve and unaware of how difficult getting a musical onto the stage might be. The creation of *On the Town* took six months, from June to December 1944. Everyone contributed to the plot and the collaborators worked diligently. Initially there was resistance to the original story line of *Fancy Free*; they felt that it was too light. Green recalled that they once were afraid that they would come up with a B-grade movie.⁵⁴ He was probably talking about making their first musical too close to the cliché about boys chasing girls. Ultimately they agreed that the spirit of the piece was lighthearted, but the show should be more serious than an ordinary musical comedy. Deborah Jowitt pointed out how the sentiment works for *On the Town*:

For one thing, its pressured pace and bittersweet edge derived from the fact that these sailors have only twenty-four hours to see New York and possibly

⁵¹ Burton, 58.

⁵² *Leonard Bernstein: Wunderkind*, Pearl GEMS 0005, 1998.

⁵³ One may find similar research about the process of reconstructing the idea of *Fancy Free* to *On the Town* in Helen Smith, *There's A Place For Us: The Musical Theatre Works of Leonard Bernstein* (Burlington, VT: 2011), 7-15.

⁵⁴ Peyser, 144.

find love before they ship out. When the three couples said their good-bye at the dock and sang “Some Other Time,” a line about time being “precious stuff” for folks in love would have struck 1944 spectators as especially poignant; the three, like so many other sons, lovers, fathers, and husbands, might never return home.⁵⁵

After settling on the main spirit of the musical, the collaborators tried to meet as frequently as they could between Bernstein’s conducting commitments and Robbins’s national tour performances with the Ballet Theatre. In June, Bernstein needed minor surgery for a deviated septum and Green decided to have his enlarged tonsils removed. In order not to lose too much collaboration time, they booked the same time and shared Room 669 in the hospital while Comden visited them to work together during their recovery. In August when the Ballet Theatre went to California and Bernstein rejoined the company to conduct *Fancy Free*, Smith sent Comden and Green to Los Angeles to work with them during their free time between the performances. Bernstein decided to throw away all the music of *Fancy Free* and quickly began to write new music. He composed again on the train and, according to his memory, one of the pivotal songs of the show, “New York, New York,” was written while passing through the plains of Nebraska.⁵⁶

Although *Fancy Free* was a big success, the producers Oliver Smith and Paul Feigay (1918-1983) still faced serious fund-raising problems for the production of the musical. This project was considered as a high-risk investment at the beginning and they only raised a small amount, \$25,000.⁵⁷ Comparatively, the producers of Alfred Bloomingdale’s (1916-1982) musical *Allah, Be Praised!*, which only ran 20

⁵⁵ Jowitt, 91.

⁵⁶ Burton, 131.

⁵⁷ Peyser, 143.

performances, already had raised \$100,000 a couple months before its opening,⁵⁸ while another musical produced by Richard Kollmar (1910-1971), *Dream with Music*, which only had a run of 28 performances, raised \$82,000, for which lawyer Carl E. Ring contributed \$55,000.⁵⁹ Both production and running costs for a musical were high. For example, *Carmen Jones*'s weekly costs in 1944, including rent, were about \$22,000,⁶⁰ while the average wages were \$1,850 to \$2,400.⁶¹ All of the creators of *On the Town* were newcomers to the field of musical theater and no one wanted to risk a major investment until the moment that George Abbott (1887-1995), a veteran director of musical comedy, agreed to direct the show. Then, quickly, two film companies showed interest in investing.⁶² One was MGM. Lillie Messinger, a friend of Louis B. Mayer (the head of the film studio), convinced him to buy the movie rights to *On the Town* before the show opened on Broadway. When talking about the creators she told him that these people "you've never heard of, but you will in the future."⁶³ Ultimately MGM had a stake of \$62,500 in the show and had paid a deposit of \$100,000 for the screen rights. Another was RKO, whose investment amounted to \$31,500.⁶⁴ In the end, *On the Town* premiered with high

⁵⁸ Sam Zolotow, "19 of 31 Matinees Play to Standees," *New York Times* (23 February 1944), 16.

⁵⁹ Sam Zolotow, "Kollmar Musical to Open Next Week," *New York Times* (11 May 1944), 25.

⁶⁰ John Desmond, "Broadway's Barnum Looks at the Opera," *New York Times* (26 March 1944), SM 15.

⁶¹ <http://www.thepeoplehistory.com/1944.html> and <http://thecostofliving.com/index.php?id=126&a=1> (accessed 14 February 2012).

⁶² Myers, 44.

⁶³ Hugh Fordin, *MGM's Greatest Musicals: the Arthur Freed Unit* (New York: Da Capo, 1996), 257-8.

⁶⁴ Sam Zolotow, "'On The Town' Set for Rebut Tonight," *New York Times* (28 December 1944), 25.

expectations. The opening night tickets ranged from \$1.20 to \$12. During the weekdays the top price was \$5.40, and on Saturday nights, \$6.⁶⁵ The Wednesday and Saturday matinees were \$3.60.⁶⁶ In the *New York Times* of 21 December 1944, seven days before the opening, there were only some \$7.20 and \$4.80 tickets left.⁶⁷

Abbott was a legend in the history of American musical theatre. As a distinguish director, writer and producer, he made his Broadway debut playing in *The Misleading Lady* in 1913 and began his career as a director with *Love 'Em and Leave 'Em* in 1926. He spent more than seven decades on Broadway and won himself the title of "Mr. Broadway."⁶⁸ Before joining *On the Town*, he successfully directed *Jumbo* (1935), *On Your Toes* (1936), *Pal Joey* (1940), and other shows. When Smith approached Abbott, a great ballet enthusiast who had seen *Fancy Free*, he only considered the proposal for about five minutes and said, "I'd like to do it—let's do it tomorrow."⁶⁹ Later, when he was asked why he had signed on, he answered, "I like the kids connected with the show."⁷⁰ Abbott enjoyed working with

⁶⁵ Compared to *Oklahoma!* whose tickets were scaled from \$5.50 to \$1.10, and *Mexican Hayride* (1944) was \$3.30-8.80 for opening night. "Premiere Tonight for 'Oklahoma!': Musical Play Based on Riggs's 'Green Grow the Lilacs' Will Open at the St. James," *New York Times* (31 March 1943), 22, "Mexican Hayride' Premiere Tonight: Bobby Clark, June Havoc Lead Cast in Musical Opening at the Winter Garden," *New York Times* (28 January 1944), 15.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ "2 Shows Sold Out for New Year Eve," *New York Times* (21 December 1944), 17.

⁶⁸ Sylvia Stoner-Hawkins, "Abbott, George." *Grove Music Online* (accessed 19 March 2013) <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.www2.lib.ku.edu:2048/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2223796>.

⁶⁹ "On the Town," *The Dramatists Guild Quarterly*, 13.

⁷⁰ Jowitt, 91.

these Broadway newcomers, whom he described as “eager, emotional, enthusiastic.”⁷¹

Abbott helped these young creators to wrap up the show. According to Bernstein’s memory, there were eleven numbers that did not appear in the final show, some of which had been cut even before the rehearsal began, and others during the rehearsals.⁷² Abbott quickly found there were too many interruptions of the main plot by a judge and an old lady that he found unnecessary and at the initial stage of their collaboration, he made it clear to his young collaborators. The creators tried to argue with Abbott and save these scenes, and he said, “You’ll have to take your choice between me and the old lady.”⁷³ Another change that was made to the book was the deletion of the prologue. Green and Comden originally planned the show as a flashback:

The show opened in a night court where all the characters were gathered, and the judge rapped his gavel and said, “Now tell your stories one at a time,” and then you told the story and did *On the Town*, and then you came back to night court where everybody was sitting around and the judge was making his final decisions...⁷⁴

But Abbott did not agree with their idea and told them: “Cut that prologue, that flashback. You don’t need them.”⁷⁵ Just when Comden, Green, and Bernstein talked and decided to go back and tell Abbott the reason why they needed this flashback, Abbott replied: “You can have either me or the prologue.”⁷⁶ Another fifteen minutes

⁷¹ George Abbott, *Mister Abbott* (New York: Random House, 1963), 199.

⁷² “*On the Town*,” *The Dramatists Guild Quarterly*, 16.

⁷³ Abbott, 200.

⁷⁴ “*On the Town*,” *The Dramatists Guild Quarterly*, 17.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

cut from the book was the intermission scene. Comden and Green originally planned for Gabey to ask Ivy Smith to go out with him. They would leave Carnegie Hall and run into a theater where an intermission break took place with a number called “The Intermission’s Great.”⁷⁷ This was a number for three choirs: the first contained four sopranos, two tenors and two basses; the second had four altos and two tenors; the third with two basses. The lyrics were witty while the musical style was closer to a choral piece that one might expect to hear in the concert hall rather than in the theater, although there was a swing-like ending section. Again, Abbott said, “This has got to go – the intermission scene, everything.”⁷⁸ He simplified the scene and made the show more focused and concentrated.

The production team only had two weeks for the tryout in Boston, but worse than that was the snowstorm that delayed the scenery’s arrival. In the end, they only had ten days to get the show ready and at the opening performance in Boston, Abbott had to come before the audience to explain the difficulties and ask their patience.⁷⁹ Besides those changes of the book, he also cut Robbins’s second act ballet, a segment that displayed a dream image of “what Coney Island was going to be like, and then the reality of it.”⁸⁰ Robbins felt thankful for Abbott’s decision but also felt regret about the cut even nearly thirty years later.⁸¹ Not only had the book

⁷⁷ “*On the Town*,” *The Dramatists Guild Quarterly*, 18. Also see in *Betty Comden Collection*, New York Public Library Archive, call number JPB 03-22, box 5, folder 14. One can find recordings in track 25 of *On the Town*, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas with London Symphony Orchestra (Deutsche Grammophon 437 516-2, 1993).

⁷⁸ “*On the Town*,” *The Dramatists Guild Quarterly*, 18.

⁷⁹ Abbott, 200.

⁸⁰ “*On the Town*,” *The Dramatists Guild Quarterly*, 17.

⁸¹ “*On the Town*,” *The Dramatists Guild Quarterly*, 19.

and ballet been deleted, but also the music and scenic designs that Abbott considered unnecessary. He threw away one of the best-looking sets and cut “Gabey’s Coming.” Robbins recalled that he saw Bernstein “holding his head and saying ‘Everything is based on that.’”⁸² The composer reused musical materials from “Gabey’s Coming” in “High School Girls,” “Lonely Town: Pas de Deux,” and “The Great Lover Displays Himself,” and he worried that the cut might affect the unity of the score. However, what Bernstein feared most was cutting the symphonic dance music, which Abbott used to make fun by calling it “that Prokofieff stuff.”⁸³ It was long and complicated, and entailed extra rehearsal time and a larger orchestra, which would be more expensive. Apparently, Abbott appreciated the quality of the music and retained those segments.

As a show that came a bit less than two years after *Oklahoma!* and also relied on dance to help tell the story, *On the Town* is inevitably compared with it. In the review in the *New York Times* the day after its opening, Lewis Nichols said, “‘On the Town’ is the freshest and most engaging musical show to come this way since the golden day of ‘Oklahoma!’”⁸⁴ Indeed, both *Oklahoma!* and *On the Town* rely heavily on dance to strengthen the story. However, the dance in *On the Town* is more important than it is in *Oklahoma!*; there is only a fifteen-minute dream ballet at the end of the first act that is crucial to the plot in *Oklahoma!* In *On the Town*, dance constitutes perhaps one-third of the show and at more than one point helps advance the plot, such as “Lonely Town Pas de Deux,” “Subway Ride and Imaginary Coney

⁸² “*On the Town*,” *The Dramatists Guild Quarterly*, 18.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Lewis Nichols, “The Play,” *New York Times* (29 December 1944), 11.

Island,” “The Great Lover Displays Himself,” and “Pas de Deux.” It also provides the audience with insights that go beyond what reality could make possible during a twenty-four-hour period, such as the love *pas de deux* between Gabey and Ivy Smith in the “Imaginary Coney Island.” As Nichols noted in the same review, *On the Town* is a “perfect example of what a well-knit fusion of the respectable arts can provide for the theatre,”⁸⁵ including music, dance, and drama. Denny Martin Flinn pointed out its importance: “*On the Town* created and established the greatest of all American contributions to the stage arts: American theatre dance.”⁸⁶ Each character is charming and distinctive, but one must consider the whole rather than the parts. Furthermore, it was the first American musical composed by an acknowledged symphonist and it was the first to have white and black dancers side by side holding hands on the New York stage (in *Show Boat*, although they had white and black actors on the stage at the same time, they were separated into groups by their races).⁸⁷

An unusual type of female character was another novel trait in *On the Town*. The three women—cabdriver Hildy, anthropologist Claire de Loon, and Miss Turnstiles Ivy Smith—were independent in the way that American women had become during wartime. During World War II, three million women entered the workforce and one of the most representative cultural icons in the United States during that period was “Rosie the Riveter,” depicted in the song of the same name written by Redd Evans and John Jacob Loeb in 1942 and performed by Kay Kyser on

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Denny Martin Flinn, *Musical!: A Grand Tour* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997), 247.

⁸⁷ Burton, 135.

national radio networks.⁸⁸ The image that “Rosie the Riveter” depicts is a patriotic, diligent, independent woman who works on the assembly line in a factory to help win the war. J. Howard Miller's poster *We Can Do It!* (1942) was usually considered a representative image of Rosie: strong-willed, courageous, independent, and able to work like a man. Although the original “we” on the poster “only referred to the women already working at Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company — and to their male coworkers,”⁸⁹ the poster has been treated as a cultural icon for World War II and “Rosie came to represent women in the workforce in general, not just women specifically building airplanes or weapons.”⁹⁰ As independent women who lived in the time of World War II, Hildy Esterhazy and Claire de Loon belonged in this category: they worked, exhibited independence, and were brave enough to pursue the man they wanted. They did not rely on men and had their own jobs.

Meanwhile, the casting of Miss Turnstiles showed originality. The role was given to Sono Osato (b. 1919), whom Robbins knew from Ballet Theatre. She had just won the Donaldson Award for best female dancer for playing the Première Danseuse in *One Touch of Venus* (1943). Wolcott Gibbs reviewed her as “a marvelously limber girl of cryptic nationality who led the dancers and alarmed and fascinated me almost unbearably,”⁹¹ and Lewis Nichols praised her as “graceful and alive as well as being beautiful and as well as giving the impression that she, herself,

⁸⁸ James J. Kimble and Lester C. Olson, “Visual Rhetoric Representing Rosie the Riveter: Myth and Misconception in J. Howard Miller’s ‘We Can Do It!’ Poster,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, vol. 9, no. 4 (Winter 2006), 535.

⁸⁹ Kimble and Olson, 549-550.

⁹⁰ Gwen Sharp and Lisa Wade, “Secrets of a Feminist Icon,” *Contexts*, vol. 10, no. 2 (Spring, 2011), 82-83.

⁹¹ Jowitt, 92.

is having a wonderful time.”⁹² Osato was half-Japanese and half-Caucasian. During the war, it was quite unusual to have a half-Japanese dancer on stage, especially in a musical that was related to the World War II and when Japan was one of the hostile powers fighting the United States. The team wanted a cast that reflected the diversity of New York, and they found not only Sono Osato but also African American dancers. The original cast, besides Sono Osato as Ivy Smith, also included Cris Alexander as Chip, John Battles as Gabey, Nancy Walker as the “quarrelsome, feisty”⁹³ cabdriver Hildy Esterhazy, Betty Comden as an “unlikely sex-mad”⁹⁴ anthropologist Claire DeLoone, and Adolph Green as Chip. Although Comden and Green wrote the book and lyrics, they still needed to audition for these roles.⁹⁵

Bernstein’s music was a big success, as was the whole show. Lewis Nichols praised Bernstein for composing “all manner of songs.” He noticed that Bernstein composed some numbers in Tin Pan Alley’s popular style while others were “a bit removed.” As for the whole musical, Nichols said: “Everything about it is right. It is fast and it is gay, it takes neither itself nor the world too seriously, it has wit,” and at the end of the paragraph he concluded: “The Adelphi Theatre on West Fifty-fourth Street is the new Utopia.”⁹⁶ Nine days later, Nichols affirmed that *On the Town* was

⁹² Lewis Nichols, “The Play: ‘One Touch of Venus,’ Which Makes the Whole World Kin, Opens at the Imperial,” *New York Times* (8 October 1943), 14.

⁹³ Burton, 130.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Alice M. Robinson, *Betty Comden and Adolph Green: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1993), 11.

⁹⁶ Lewis Nichols, “The Play,” *New York Times* (29 December 1944), 11.

“one of the freshest musicals to come to town in a long while.”⁹⁷ Richard Cooke reviewed the show for the *Wall Street Journal*: “If there is ever a vote on the high point of 1944 fall season musical shows, this department will mark its ballot for *On the Town*.”⁹⁸ Louis Kronenberger wrote in *PM*, saying: “*On the Town* is not only much the best musical of the year, it is one of the freshest, gayest, liveliest musicals I have ever seen.”⁹⁹

Although *On the Town* was a success in New York, the national tour did not go well. Producer Paul Feigay wrote to Comden on 17 April 1946 and said, “As you know the business of *On the Town* on the road has been very disappointing everywhere...”¹⁰⁰ and asked that royalties be waived until they earned a profit. In 1959 there was an off-Broadway production produced by Nancy Nugent Crawford and Douglas Crawford but the result was disappointing. It opened on 3 February 1959¹⁰¹ at the Carnegie Hall Playhouse but on 25 February the newspaper said that “The current revival of ‘On the Town’ . . . will call it a career after Sunday night’s performance, the fifty-fourth.”¹⁰² According to the letter from Benjamin Aslan, Comden and Green’s attorney from Fitelson and Mayers, only the first and the

⁹⁷ Lewis Nichols, “Two Musicals: ‘On the Town’ and ‘Sing Out, Sweet Land!’ Start Their Careers on Broadway,” *New York Times* (7 January 1945), X1.

⁹⁸ Richard Cooke, “The Theatre,” *Wall Street Journal* (30 December 1944), 4.

⁹⁹ “*On the Town*,” *The Dramatists Guild Quarterly*, 12.

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Paul Feigay to Betty Comden, box 16, folder 11, Betty Comden and Adolph Green Papers *T-Mss 1986-004, New York Public Library.

¹⁰¹ “2D ‘On the Town’ Due: Another Revival of Musical is Listed for Tomorrow,” *New York Times* (2 February 1959), 20.

¹⁰² Louis Calta, “Merrick May Do Another Musical,” *New York Times* (25 February 1959), 36.

seventh of the eight weeks earned a profit.¹⁰³ In Calta's report he said: "But, although weekend business has been very good, trade for the week days has been poor and not enough to warrant continuing."¹⁰⁴

MGM, who bought the motion-picture rights for *On the Town* in a pre-production agreement, started working on this project in 1948. *On the Town* was "reportedly the first time film rights to a musical were sold before the stage production got off the ground,"¹⁰⁵ and Comden and Green signed their contract with MGM at the time. At first they, as close friends of Bernstein, refused to do the book and lyrics of *On the Town* because the producer Arthur Freed (1894-1973) did not like Bernstein's music and wanted to hire someone else to compose new songs.¹⁰⁶ However, since they were under contract to MGM, Comden and Green agreed and signed a contract that would pay them \$85,000 for the rewrite and \$25,000 for the new lyrics.¹⁰⁷ MGM bought Bernstein's approval to change the score with a \$5,000 consultation fee¹⁰⁸ and brought in Roger Edens (1905-1970) to compose the new music. Although Bernstein was upset with the result, it has been reported that he joined Comden and Green to write some lyrics¹⁰⁹ and also spent a week working on

¹⁰³ Letter from Benjamin Aslan to Comden and Green (9 March 1959), box 16, folder 11, Betty Comden and Adolph Green Papers *T-Mss 1986-004, New York Public Library.

¹⁰⁴ Calta, 36.

¹⁰⁵ Peyser, 146. See also Fordin, 258.

¹⁰⁶ Fordin, 258. See also Burton 192-193.

¹⁰⁷ Fordin, 258-259

¹⁰⁸ Burton, 193.

¹⁰⁹ Edwin Schallert, "'On the Town' Sprightly, Amusing Film Musical," *Los Angeles Times* (30 December 1949), 14.

the second-act ballet with Gene Kelly.¹¹⁰ The numbers retained from the show were “I Feel Like I’m Not Out of Bed Yet,” “New York, New York,” “Miss Turnstiles Ballet,” and “Come Up to My Place.” “A Day in New York Ballet” is dream ballet scene that Bernstein reworked from previous dance music in the musical. The film premiered at Radio City Musical Hall on 8 December 1949 and was a sensation, said to have earned \$2,900,000 in the domestic box office.¹¹¹ Besides the financial profit, it also won Best Score at the Academy Awards and Best Written American Musical from the Writers Guild of America in 1950.

In 1971, director-choreographer Ron Field approached Comden and Green about doing a show about the 1940s, “a period in distant history.”¹¹² Accidentally, a bound collection of theatrical reviews fell down and these materials were from *On the Town*. Field felt that this was the show he wanted to do and successfully persuaded Comden and Green. Although they felt that it was too soon to revive it, “once we got over the shock that our first show was born in an era that is now ‘days of old’ to kiddies reading their history books, our own excitement [*sic*] for this project began mounting.”¹¹³ They soon got Bernstein’s approval in a telegram from

¹¹⁰ Burton, 193.

¹¹¹ *The Numbers: Box Office Data, Movie Stars, Idle Speculation*, <http://www.the-numbers.com/movies/1949/0NTTW.php> (accessed 20 May 2013).

¹¹² “A New ‘On the Town,’” p. 1, box 16, folder 10, Betty Comden and Adolph Green Papers *T-Mss 1986-004, New York Public Library.

¹¹³ Draft for “A New ‘On the Town,’” box 16, folder 10, Betty Comden and Adolph Green Papers *T-Mss 1986-004, New York Public Library.

him to Comden said, “Yes yes yes yes yes more power to Ron Field and all OTT folk.”¹¹⁴ Robbins also agreed soon thereafter.

However, the revival was not as successful as they had hoped. The review from the *New York Times*, which was written by Clive Barnes, was not positive. Barnes criticized the story as loose, although the book and lyrics by Comden and Green “have ease and a decent few laughs.” He was not satisfied with Bernstein’s music even in “the updated orchestrations by Bernstein himself and Hershy Kay.” He noted that “New York, New York” was still “a helluva’ number, but too many of the nostalgic ballads sound like sub-Puccini filtered through Glenn Miller, and there is a terrifyingly explosive busyness to much of the music.”¹¹⁵ Barnes was also not pleased by Ron Field’s choreography and stated “Mr. Field is no Jerome Robbins. His ideas would have been old-fashioned in 1905, let alone 1944.” “Perhaps—could it be?—New York has changed. Certainly music has,” said Barnes in the beginning of the review and he concluded, “There is a confidence to ‘On the Town’ that few musicals can muster nowadays. Unfortunately, for too much of the time the confidence seems misplaced.”¹¹⁶ Nearly two weeks later, in his review of “Over in Brooklyn and ‘On the Town,’” Barnes again complained that Ron Field was a “terribly ungifted choreographer.”¹¹⁷ Compared to Jerome Robbins, who both choreographed and directed *West Side Story* and *Fiddler on the Roof*, “where the

¹¹⁴ Telegram from Bernstein to Comden, box 16, folder 15, Betty Comden and Adolph Green Papers *T-Mss 1986-004, New York Public Library.

¹¹⁵ Clive Barnes, “Theater: ‘On the Town,’ Bernstein’s 1944 Musical,” *New York Times* (1 November 1971), 54

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Clive Barnes, “Over in Brooklyn and ‘On the Town,’” *New York Times* (14 November 1971), D26.

dancing and action are completely at one,” said Barnes, “it is there that Ron Fields made his major mistake”¹¹⁸ in the revival of *On the Town*. Richard L. Coe wrote a review for *The Washington Post* and said: “If I sound dissatisfied with the efforts to find broader dimensions for our musicals, you won't find me mooning for any ‘good old days’ as reflected in ‘On the Town’.”¹¹⁹ He stated that the revival “has the level of competent summer stock, which isn't enough for 1971 Broadway.”¹²⁰ Ron Field wrote Comden a letter and confessed, “It's very sad indeed after all the enthusiasm but perhaps, among other reasons, the timing was wrong.”¹²¹ Maybe Field was right. In 1944, the United States had been involved in World War II for three years. It was when the country and all it stood for was fatally threatened and the Allied armed forces had started to win some victories. People were encouraged by the news and highly patriotic, which helped them to welcome a show that dealt with three sailors on shore leave. However, 1971 was during the unpopular Vietnam War.

Although *On the Town* did not go well on Broadway in later years, it appeared on stages abroad. British producer Maurice J. Stewart first inquired the possibility of producing *On the Town* in Great Britain in 1959,¹²² but it was Oliver Smith who helped make it possible in West End in 1963.¹²³ There was also a letter from Aslan to Comden and Green talking about German rights in 1961. However, Aslan

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Richard L. Coe, “Making Good Musicals,” *The Washington Post* (12 December 1971), 107.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Letter from Ron Field to Comden, box 16, folder 10, Betty Comden and Adolph Green Papers *T-Mss 1986-004, New York Public Library.

¹²² Letter from Benjamin Aslan to Comden and Green (March 1959), box 16, folder 11, Betty Comden and Adolph Green Papers *T-Mss 1986-004, New York Public Library.

¹²³ Letter from Oliver Smith to Comden and Green (24 April 1961), box 16, folder 14, Betty Comden and Adolph Green Papers *T-Mss 1986-004, New York Public Library.

suggested “...there is an opinion that European rights should be restricted after presentation of the play in Great Britain...”¹²⁴ Since *On the Town* did not get to London until 1963, according to the custom, there seemed no hope of releasing the German rights in 1961. *On the Town* opened on 30 May 1963 at the Prince of Wales Theatre. American choreographer and director Joe Layton (1931-1994), who began his career as a dancer in *Wonderful Town* and also the understudy of Wreck—an unemployed, out-of-season American football player— directed and choreographed the show, and it was produced by the H. M. Tennent, Ltd. The production had 53 performances.¹²⁵ The same year there was another request from Theater der Freien Hansestadt Bremen and this time the “production rights of the play in German are presently available.”¹²⁶ Finland showed their interest and requested a TV production in Finnish in 1966,¹²⁷ while Australia inquired about the Australian amateur rights in 1969.¹²⁸

In 1977 there was a protest about using “New York, New York” as the title of the movie *New York, New York* (1977), starring Liza Minnelli (b. 1946) and Robert De Niro (b. 1943). In a letter written by Paul H. Epstein, an attorney for Bernstein, Comden, and Green, to film producers Irwin Winkler and Robert Chartoff, shows

¹²⁴ Letter from Benjamin Aslan to Comden and Green (12 May 1961), box 16, folder 14, Betty Comden and Adolph Green Papers *T-Mss 1986-004, New York Public Library.

¹²⁵ Vivyan Ellacott ed., *A Year-by-Year Encyclopaedia of West End Musicals: From 1950 Onwards* (<http://www.overthefootlights.co.uk/1962-1963.pdf>, accessed 13 February 2012), 22.

¹²⁶ Letter from Clifford Foster to Jürgen Fischer (20 March 1963), box 16, folder 14, Betty Comden and Adolph Green Papers *T-Mss 1986-004, New York Public Library.

¹²⁷ Letter from Clifford Foster to Comden, Green, Robbins and Bernstein (19 September 1966), box 16, folder 14, Betty Comden and Adolph Green Papers *T-Mss 1986-004, New York Public Library.

¹²⁸ Letter from Benjamin Aslan to the Modern Theatre Guild (26 November 1969), box 16, folder 14, Betty Comden and Adolph Green Papers *T-Mss 1986-004, New York Public Library.

that the authors protested that the film company “have taken a property that is associated with them by the public, and used it for your own gain, suggesting their involvement in your project, directly or by license,” and they believed “by further release of your film without license, you may violate in 50 states and abroad.”¹²⁹

However, the reply from the film’s producers was rather short:

Our client, Chartoff-Winkler Productions, Inc., has referred your letter of June 22, 1977 addressed to Irwin Winkler and Robert Chartoff to us.

Our behalf of our client we deny all of the allegations contained in your letter since our client is not exploiting in any way any music and lyrics written by your client.¹³⁰

Nearly ten years later, the Dramatists Guild’s Projects Committee put on a series of symposia on “landmark shows,”¹³¹ for which *On the Town* is on the list of “some of the most important musical and dramatic productions in the American Theater.”¹³² In Arthur Laurents’s opening to the sessions of *On the Town* he said:

With a musical sometimes the elements that are considered important when it opens are not regarded as important elements a long time later. In the case of *On the Town*, probably the most important contribution is that it introduced to the theater Leonard Bernstein, Betty Comden, Adolph Green and Jerome Robbins.¹³³

Ultimately, almost five decades after the original run, we have a production of the complete score, which brought back every song that was originally prepared for the show but deleted during the tryout: a project of a concert version of *On the*

¹²⁹ Letter from Paul H. Epstein to Irwin Winkler and Robert Chartoff (22 June 1977), box 16, folder 15, Betty Comden and Adolph Green Papers *T-Mss 1986-004, New York Public Library.

¹³⁰ Letter from Clifford Foster to Jurgen Fischer (20 March 1963), box 16, folder 14, Betty Comden and Adolph Green Papers *T-Mss 1986-004, New York Public Library.

¹³¹ “*On the Town*,” *The Dramatists Guild Quarterly*, 11.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ “*On the Town*,” *The Dramatists Guild Quarterly*, 12.

Town directed by Michael Tilson Thomas (b. 1944) in 1992. This production emphasized some interesting aspects, for which we need to go back to the original run in 1944. Comden and Green offered some worthwhile memories from the original production. They recalled:

Some time early in 1945, Mrs. Harold Prince (then Judy Chaplin), wife of the noted producer-director, was heard to make an unusual comment about "The Star-Spangled Banner." Upon hearing the strains of our national anthem at a large gathering, she turned up and said in a loud voice, "I know that. That's the overture to 'On the Town.'" . . . At the beginning of each performance Judy would stand up with the rest of the audience while the national anthem was played, and then sit again . . . as the music segued into the opening strains of "New York, New York," which began the overture. . . . That is one of the differences between the theater then and the theater now; every performance everywhere, all over the country, began with the playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner." It was wartime.¹³⁴

This memory of playing the national anthem before every performance in July 1944 turned into the opening of the production of the concert version in 1992. The new narration, especially written for the concert version starts with the last four lines of the "Star-Spangled Banner:"

ALL: O SAY DOES THAT STAR-SPANGLED BANNER YET WAVE
O'ER THE LAND OF THE FREE
AND THE HOME OF THE BRAVE?
COMDEN: No, Leonard Bernstein did not write that music...and we did not write those lyrics...and that is not the overture to ON THE TOWN...
GREEN: But the year was 1944, and it was wartime...and the national anthem was played every night before the overture of every show.
COMDEN: New York was bursting with servicemen tasting a brief respite from fear and danger, cramming a lifetime into just one moment.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Betty Comden and Adolph Green, "When N. Y. Was a Helluva Town," *New York Times* (31 October 1971), D1.

¹³⁵ Betty Comden and Adolph Green's Narration of London Concert Version, box 6, folder 3, Adolph Green Papers *T-Mss 2004-023, New York Public Library.

In the concert version, Michael Tilson Thomas retrieved several cut numbers: “Gabey’s Comin’,” “The Intermission’s Great,” and “Ain’t Got No Tears Left.” As noted above, “Gabey’s Comin’” is especially important because many of the musical ideas in the show came from this number. The melodic material of “Ain’t Got No Tears Left” was reused in the “Masque” of Bernstein’s second symphony, *The Age of Anxiety*. “The Intermission’s Great” is the most complicated number among these three. The irregular rhythm and dissonant, novel sonorities, close to some sophisticated concert music in the twentieth century, requires a professional choir rather than an ordinary show choir to perform it. It is hard to imagine that the audience would have accepted this advanced style and it is not surprising that George Abbott decided to delete it from the musical.

It is possible that if there were no *On the Town*, we would not have *Wonderful Town*, not to mention *West Side Story*. If *On the Town* had not been a success, Bernstein perhaps would have stayed in the world of the classical music, mainly as a conductor, as his mentor Koussevitzky wished, and Broadway would have suffered a huge loss. However, Bernstein had taken his first triumphant step and flourished in the world of American theater, which he did irregularly for the remainder of his busy and varied life.

The Background of *Wonderful Town*

“If Leonard Bernstein had not deprived himself of a spectacular career by becoming conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, the musical stage would have been richer,” said Brooks Atkinson, one of the most important critics of *The New York Times* from the 1930s to 1950s.¹³⁶ Bernstein also commented on his composing for the theater: “That is what I feel I write best, what I ought to do and what I most enjoy.”¹³⁷

However, Bernstein’s mentor was Serge Koussevitzky rather than Irving Berlin or Cole Porter. Koussevitzky went to the opening night of *On the Town* in Boston, and the next day, Bernstein recalled, “he was furious with me. He gave me a three-hour lecture the next day on the way I was going.”¹³⁸ Koussevitzky’s attitude was that a potentially great conductor must not waste his talents. Morton Gould recalled that a trustee of the Boston Symphony told him that she hoped *On the Town* would fail because then Bernstein might give up Broadway and become eligible for the Boston Symphony post.¹³⁹ Although *On the Town* was very successful, Bernstein ceased writing for the musical theater for the time being. In 1945 when Comden and Green wrote their next show, *Billion Dollar Baby*, with partners from *On the Town*,¹⁴⁰ it was Morton Gould rather than Bernstein who composed the score.

¹³⁶ Brooks Atkinson, *Broadway* (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 459.

¹³⁷ Burton, 227.

¹³⁸ Burton, 136.

¹³⁹ Peyser, 152.

¹⁴⁰ *Billion Dollar Baby* (1945) was directed by Abbott and choreographed by Robbins.

In 1949 Bernstein had another chance to write a musical. Abbott wrote Bernstein a letter to inquire if he would like to compose the score for a new musical play, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (1951). Abbott's plan was to bring the team for *On the Town* back together. It was Robert Fryer who first talked to Abbott about doing a musical version of *A Tree Grows In Brooklyn* (1943), a novel written by Betty Smith (1896-1972) that was also made into a film in 1945. The story concerns an Irish-American family in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, which was an immense success. Abbott planned to have Betty Smith write the book with him and wanted Jerome Robbins to do the choreography and Comden and Green to write the lyrics.¹⁴¹ However, in the end, Abbott got none of them. The choreographer was Herbert Ross (1927-2001), the lyrics were by Dorothy Fields (1905-1974), and Arthur Schwartz (1900-1984) composed the score. The show opened in the Alvin Theater (now called the Neil Simon Theatre) on 19 April 1951 and the reviews were positive. Brooks Atkinson wrote, "Everything being exactly in order, 'A Tree Grows in Brooklyn' turns out to be one of those happy inspirations that the theatre dotes on," and he concluded: "In short, it is a darlin' show in a hospitable mood with a liking for its people and locale. People in Brooklyn ought to be proud of this pastoral to music on the sidewalks and in the rookeries."¹⁴² John Chapman also praised it as "a splendid musical"¹⁴³ in *Chicago Daily Tribune*, while Richard P. Cooke had a more restrained comment that

¹⁴¹ Bernstein Collection of the Library of Congress, box 1, folder 3.

¹⁴² Brooks Atkinson, "First Night At the Theatre," *New York Times* (20 April 1951), 24.

¹⁴³ John Chapman, "Betty Smith's Novel Makes Fine Musical," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (21 April 1951), A3.

“it is not a great production, but it is a good one.”¹⁴⁴ Although the reviews were positive, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* had to make way for another play in the Alvin Theatre, *Point of No Return*, which was scheduled to open on 13 December 1951. Abbott felt that transferring to another theatre was unlikely¹⁴⁵ and the show closed on 8 December 1951 after 267 performances.

Although he did not work on any big musicals between *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*, it seems that Bernstein did not give up on the idea of writing for the musical theater. From the “*West Side Story* Log” (1949-1957), although Bernstein appears to have written it entirely in 1957,¹⁴⁶ we can see that Robbins, Bernstein and Arthur Laurents (1917-2011) started constructing the idea for *West Side Story* early in 1949, but they worked through correspondence and could hardly begin their collaboration:

Columbus, Ohio, April 15. Just received draft of first four scenes. Much good stuff. But this is no way to work. Me on this long conducting tour, Arthur between New York and Hollywood. . . . it will have to live or die by the success of its collaborations; and this remote-control collaboration isn't right. Maybe they can find the right composer who isn't always skipping off to conduct somewhere. It's not fair to them or to the work.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Richard P. Cooke, “The Theatre,” *Wall Street Journal* (23 April 1951), 10.

¹⁴⁵ Sam Zolotow, “‘Tree in Brooklyn’ Faces End of Run,” *New York Times* (5 November 1951), 27.

¹⁴⁶ This was a log that recreated in 1957 and some materials were embroidered. One may find more information in Paul R. Laird, *Leonard Bernstein: A Guide to Research* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 85, and Nigel Simeone, *Leonard Bernstein: West Side Story* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 17.

¹⁴⁷ Leonard Bernstein, *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 144.

There is also a news released in 1949 that talked about a “modern musical drama, as yet untitled, based on ‘Romeo and Juliet.’”¹⁴⁸ In this article it was reported that Bernstein would write the music, Laurents the book, and Robbins the choreography, and the news continued: “the producing auspices have not been determined yet, but the matter is expected to be settled with a week.”¹⁴⁹ It was also in 1950 that Bernstein’s songs for a production of *Peter Pan* played on Broadway.

Following Koussevitzky’s conception of a serious, concert music conductor, Bernstein tried to build his reputation and earned international fame in a short time. He perhaps realized that conducting was a profession that needed his absolute concentration. During the creation of *On the Town* and the beginning stage of his conducting career in November 1944, he described how one activity interfered with the other: “I was guest conductor of the Boston Symphony for a week in November. It requires everything for you to do the job right. And all through the week I was getting calls from New York—the show needed two more measures for this song, or another verse for that.”¹⁵⁰

These were how the years went in Bernstein’s life between *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*. He was appointed conductor of the City Symphony of the New York City Center of Music and Drama on 25 August 1945. In 1946, he went to Europe to conduct concerts of American music at the First International Music Festival in Prague and in the same year he conducted the London Philharmonic,

¹⁴⁸ Louis Calta, “‘Romeo’ to Receive Musical Styling: Bard’s Play to Undergo Local Renovation by Bernstein, Robbins and Laurents,” *New York Times* (27 Jan 1949), 19.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Peyser, 152.

Fancy Free at Covent Garden, and was invited to be a guest conductor in major cities in the United States. Bernstein perhaps tried to pique the interest of the trustees of Boston Symphony Orchestra, an orchestra it is believed he hoped to inherit from his mentor. According to Burton, a rumor appeared in *Variety* in January 1947 that Bernstein would replace Koussevitzky after he retired, and in February Bernstein conducted concerts for three weeks with the Boston Symphony.¹⁵¹ During the concerts, Olin Downes wrote a review in the *New York Times* and noted that Bernstein “is a born conductor, a musician of his period, and one of its voices in his art.”¹⁵² In March *Newsweek* listed three possible successors to Koussevitzky: Fritz Reiner, Dimitri Mitropoulos, and Bernstein.¹⁵³ Just when everything seemed to be going well for Bernstein, Charles Munch, a French conductor, arrived about the same time and “conducted programs exclusively French.”¹⁵⁴ Boston was proud of its association with French directors.¹⁵⁵ There had been two French conductors before the renowned Koussevitzky: Henri Rabaud, who directed the BSO for one season and then returned to Paris, and Pierre Monteux, who led the orchestra from 1919 to 1924. As the history on the BSO website says, “These appointments marked the beginning of a French-oriented tradition that would be maintained, even during the Russian-born Serge Koussevitzky's time, with the employment of many French-

¹⁵¹ Burton, 158.

¹⁵² Olin Downes, “Bernstein Leads Boston Symphony,” *New York Times* (13 February 1947), 34.

¹⁵³ Burton, 160.

¹⁵⁴ Peyser, 161.

¹⁵⁵ Burton, 160.

trained musicians.”¹⁵⁶ Under these circumstances, Munch was seemed to be the right person: from Alsace in eastern France, in his mid-fifties, mature, and elegant. Although Koussevitzky tried to save his disciple, and, according to Halina Rodzinski, sent a final demand: “If you don’t want Bernstein, I shall retire right now.” The Boston Symphony trustees accepted his resignation.¹⁵⁷ In the end, in the spring of 1949, Charles Munch became the conductor of the Boston Symphony. This was perhaps the end of Bernstein’s Boston dream.

During these years of focusing on his conducting career, Bernstein did not give up his identity as a composer. He presented another ballet, *Facsimile*, together with Jerome Robbins in November 1946, their second ballet together, but it was not nearly as popular as *Fancy Free*. He dedicated the song cycle *La Bonne Cuisine: Four Recipes for Voice and Piano* to Jennie Tourel in 1947 and Symphony No. 2, *The Age of Anxiety*, which was inspired by W. H. Auden’s poem of the same name, to Koussevitzky in 1949. The composer later returned to the theatrical world and composed incidental music for *Peter Pan* in 1950, which ran for 321 performances, and the one-act opera *Trouble in Tahiti* during his honeymoon and premiered at Brandeis University in June 1952.¹⁵⁸ Bernstein wrote both the lyrics and the music for these two shows.

¹⁵⁶ “The History of the BSO,” <http://www.bso.org/brands/bs0/about-us/historyarchives/the-history-of-the-bs0.aspx> (accessed 21 February 2012).

¹⁵⁷ Peyser, 162.

¹⁵⁸ Bernstein served on the Brandeis University Department of Music faculty as a visiting music professor from 1951-56 and founded the Festival of the Creative Arts there in 1952. <http://www.leonardbernstein.com/lb.htm> and <http://www.brandeis.edu/arts/festival/bernsteinbio.html> (accessed 22 January 2013).

Wonderful Town was an adaptation of *My Sister Eileen* by Ruth McKenney (1911-1972), a series of stories about two Midwestern sisters looking for a new life in New York City: Ruth and Eileen Sherwood, fresh off the train from Columbus, Ohio. Ruth, the older one, wants to be a writer while Eileen, a “blonde knockout,”¹⁵⁹ is keen for a chance to be on stage. They move to Greenwich Village, where they start to explore their new lives. They meet Wreck, a former college athletic star; Baker, an editor who falls in love with Ruth later in the show; Frank, a Walgreens manager; and also Chick Clark, who invents a newspaper interview project for Ruth and accidentally helps Ruth realize her dream of becoming a writer come true. During the interview of Brazilian cadets, Ruth unintentionally brings them home and creates a disturbance for the community, which causes a joyous number, “Conga!” The story closes happily: Eileen remains alone but gets a chance to sing at the Village Vortex and Ruth finds her love with editor Baker. For these two sisters, New York has certainly become a wonderful town.

The stories originally appeared in *The New Yorker* and were published as a book in 1938.¹⁶⁰ It had been adapted into a play by Jerome Chodorov (1911-2004) and Joseph Fields (1895-1966) in 1940. The play opened on 26 December 1940 and closed on 16 January 1943 after 864 performances. There was a film produced in 1942,¹⁶¹ and a radio play in 1946, which both starred Rosalind Russell. *My Sister Eileen*, the 1942 movie, led to her first nomination for the Academy Award for Best

¹⁵⁹ Notes from *Bernstein: Wonderful Town* (EMI 7243 5 56753 2 3, 1999), 6.

¹⁶⁰ *My Sister Eileen* was published by the New York publisher, Harcourt, Brace & Company in 1938.

¹⁶¹ There was a film musical version in 1955 by Jule Styne and Leo Robin, which will be discussed later.

Actress. Before the opening of *Wonderful Town*, she had been nominated three times. Her artistic range was not limited to one type. For example, the films for which she was nominated for include a comedy (*My Sister Eileen*), a biographical drama (*Sister Kenny*), and a Eugene O'Neill tragedy (*Mourning Becomes Electra*).

Bernstein composed music in various styles for the show: the Latin-American dance "Conga"; the lyrical, sentimental "My Darlin' Eileen" sounds like the performance style of Irish tenors; "A Quiet Girl" is a traditional AABA ballad; and "What a Waste" and "Conversation Piece" include some operatic coloratura. "Christopher Street" is in the big band style, which Bernstein indicated should be performed "Molto 'Duchino'," while the start of "Ohio" he labeled "A la Hal Kemp." "Molto 'Duchino'" refers to Eddy Duchin (c. 1909/10-1951), an American big band leader and pianist who was active in 1930s and 40s. His playing represented "sweet" music: big band music with beautiful, soft-voiced singers, muted brass, and woodwinds. His band was very popular and even played at President Franklin D. Roosevelt's inaugural ball in 1933.¹⁶² Hal Kemp (1904-1940) was a jazz alto saxophone player, clarinetist, bandleader, composer, and arranger. He organized his first band under his name in 1925 and he and his band reached New York City in the 1930s. Although Kemp died at a young age, the unique sound of his band, with its muted, staccato trumpets and elaborate clarinet and saxophone ensemble passages

¹⁶² <http://www.bigbandlibrary.com/eddyduchin.html> (accessed 21 January 2013).

was remembered for decades.¹⁶³ By referencing both Eddy Duchin's and Hal Kemp's styles in his score, Bernstein evoked the audience's memories of the 1930s.¹⁶⁴

To Comden and Green, the story that *Wonderful Town* tells is their lives in their twenties. Unlike Ruth and Eileen who came from places outside of New York, they were New Yorkers. Green was from Bronx and Comden was a Brooklyn girl. However, when they struggled to initiate their career in theater, they faced many challenges. Greenwich Village was once where they lived, while they performed at a nightclub like "Village Vortex" in the show. Walgreens was where they had a quick and affordable lunch while trying to establish themselves. Comden recalled: "You'd go to producers' and agents' offices in those days. I'd sit for hours, be rejected and then have lunch at Walgreens, or one of the other drugstores you lunched at in those days."¹⁶⁵

Several producers tried to adapt this long-running play, *My Sister Eileen*, into a musical. In 1948 Max Gordon (1892-1978) approached Herbert (1897-1958) and Dorothy Fields (1905-1974) to do the book and the lyrics and Burton Lane (1912-1997) to write the score. Two years later, Leland Hayward hatched another plan to have Joseph, Herbert, and Dorothy Fields write the book and Irving Berlin (1888-1989) or Cole Porter (1891-1964) compose the score. None of these projects left the planning stages.¹⁶⁶ Robert Fryer (1920-2000) started working on an adaptation of

¹⁶³ <http://www.bigbandlibrary.com/halkemp.html> (accessed 21 January 2013).

¹⁶⁴ One may find similar research about the creation of *Wonderful Town* in Helen Smith, *There's A Place For Us: The Musical Theatre Works of Leonard Bernstein* (Burlington, VT: 2011), 73-79.

¹⁶⁵ Wendy Wasserstein, "Betty Comden's Wonderful Hometown" *New York Times* (23 November 2003), AR6.

¹⁶⁶ Peyser, 217.

My Sister Eileen in June 1952. He signed Joseph Fields and Jerome Chodorov to write the book, George Abbott to direct the show, and planned to have Frank Loesser or Irving Berlin compose the music and lyrics, but both were unavailable and he turned to Leroy Anderson (1908-1975) to write the music and Arnold Horwitt (1918-1977) the lyrics. However, they still needed a star to make the show possible.

Fryer tried to get Rosalind Russell, who played Ruth both in the movie and on radio,¹⁶⁷ to play the role of Ruth again in the musical, but she was reluctant because “singing and dancing would scare me out of my skull.”¹⁶⁸ At the beginning of her career, Russell planned to become a Broadway star first and then consider the possibility of moving onto Hollywood.¹⁶⁹ However, her Broadway debut—and also the only musical experience she had at that time—had been twenty-two years before.¹⁷⁰ It was *Garrick Gaieties* (1930), a revue that had been produced three times in 1925, 1926, and 1930 by the Theatre Guild, and Rosalind Russell was in the third production, which ran only twelve performances.¹⁷¹ She then left Broadway for Hollywood and became a national sensation. As one could read in the *Wonderful Town* program, her “beauty, personality and abundant gifts as an actress have made

¹⁶⁷ Sam Zolotow, “Rosalind Russell on Stage Tonight,” *New York Times* (25 February 1953), 23.

¹⁶⁸ Rosalind Russell and Chris Chase, *Life is a Banquet* (New York: Random House, 1977), 152.

¹⁶⁹ Rosalind Russell, “The Kind of Gal I Am, Part II” *Saturday Evening Post*, vol. 235, issue 35 (6 October 1962), 41.

¹⁷⁰ *Wonderful Town* was her last musical.

¹⁷¹ Stanley Green, *The World of Musical Comedy* (New York: Barnes, 1960), 143.

her a favorite star with film-goers all over the world.”¹⁷² As her former colleague William Frye, a producer, recalled: “Roz Russell wasn’t the life of the party—she *was* the party.”¹⁷³

In 1952 she met Joseph Fields at a party at Bill Powell’s house, and Fields told her about *Wonderful Town*. Fields tried to convince her to do the musical but Russell thought that he was joking. Only when he told her that “If George Abbott directs the show, would you consider it?”¹⁷⁴ did Russell know that Fields was serious. When she came to New York from California to meet with Fryer, her plan was to reject his invitation, although she was impressed when she heard that Abbott was going to direct it. At the same time, when Fryer asked Abbott to direct the show, Abbott doubted that Russell could sing and would be available for the show and Fryer said to him: “She will if you will.”¹⁷⁵ When Fryer finally got the two together, he needed to fix yet another problem: although Anderson and Horwitt had written the score, neither the producer, book writers, nor Rosalind Russell liked it.¹⁷⁶ The composer and lyricist quit five weeks before rehearsals started on 15 December 1952.¹⁷⁷ That was when Abbott gave Comden and Green an emergency call.

When Abbott inquired with Comden and Green about finding a composer and working on the lyrics for *Wonderful Town*, which he needed in four to six weeks

¹⁷² “Rosalind Russell in the New Musical Comedy ‘Wonderful Town,’” Program of *Wonderful Town*, *Adolph Green Papers*, New York Public Library Archive, call number *T-Mss 2004-023, box 13, folder 17.

¹⁷³ William Frye, “The Wizard of Roz,” *Vanity Fair* 50 (April 2002), 285.

¹⁷⁴ Rosalind Russell, “The Kind of Gal I Am, Part I” *Saturday Evening Post*, vol. 235, issue 34 (29 September 1962), 27.

¹⁷⁵ George Abbott, *Mister Abbott* (New York: Random, 1963), 232.

¹⁷⁶ Russell and Chase, 153.

¹⁷⁷ Abe Lafe, *Broadway’s Greatest Musicals* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1977), 168.

(depending upon which source one believes¹⁷⁸), they thought of Bernstein. It had been almost a decade since the creation of *On the Town* and they were not sure if Bernstein would be interested. As they later noted, "Among other things he had promised his mentor Serge Koussevitzky that after *On The Town* he would get down to serious business and never, never write another show."¹⁷⁹ However, Abbott had no time to waste because their option on Russell's services was about to expire, and after listening to Anderson and Horwitt's music, Russell almost gave up and planned to go back to California.¹⁸⁰ They had to find a new team to make her stay. Green recalled:

We had no sooner entered Lenny's apartment and were blurting out the facts about the show when the phone rang. It was George, never one to waste time, barking at us impatiently, "Well, is it yes or no?!!" To our surprise, with no hesitation Lenny said "Yes." He always liked deadlines, and four weeks to write a score was an irresistible challenge.¹⁸¹

Howard Taubman reported that Bernstein was "invited to write the score for 'Wonderful Town' a little less than a year ago, and refused at that time." But why did Bernstein finally agree to do the music? "Very simple. It was a challenge."¹⁸²

Ultimately, the production team persuaded Rosalind Russell to do the show. This was the beginning of another struggle. As she freely admitted, she could neither sing nor dance. According to the news journal *Time* from 30 March 1953 (she

¹⁷⁸ Howard Taubman, "Tunesmith of 'Wonderful Town'," *New York Times* (5 April 1953), X1. (They claimed that they had only four weeks, which is also appeared on Wendy Wasserstein, "Betty Comden's Wonderful Hometown," *New York Times* (23 November 2003), AR6, while Grant said that there were six weeks in *The Rise and Fall of the Broadway Musical*.)

¹⁷⁹ Betty Comden and Adolph Green, *The New York Musicals of Comden & Green* (New York: Applause, 1997), 86.

¹⁸⁰ Russell and Chase, 153.

¹⁸¹ Comden and Green, 86.

¹⁸² Taubman, X1.

appeared on the cover), when she sang for Carl Brisson (1893-1958), her father-in-law, he held his temples and cried: “Are you going to bring that voice to Broadway?”¹⁸³ When Abbott asked her to sing a ballad with the leading man, she put her foot down, “This is going to be the first show ever done where there’ll be no singing with the leading man. I promise I’ll do the ballad for you one matinée, and you’ll see, it’ll empty the theatre.”¹⁸⁴

Although she had no confidence at the beginning, Bernstein helped her to build it. Bernstein, Comden, and Green tried to write songs with many words so that people would not pay attention to her singing, such as “One Hundred Easy Way to Lose a Man.”¹⁸⁵ She also learned to sing the harmony of “Ohio” and an octave lower unison in “Wrong Note Rag” with Edith Adams (1927-2008). During the tryouts, she made a suggestion to Abbott of singing a shortened reprise of “A Quiet Girl” to show the audience that Ruth loves Baker.¹⁸⁶ This became one of the most sentimental moments in *Wonderful Town*.

After solving the problem of singing, there was still Russell’s lack of dancing ability: this was when Robbins came to help, working without credit. Robbins was busy at that time with another musical, *Two’s Company*, and recommended Donald Saddler (b. 1918) to do it. This was Saddler’s first Broadway show as a choreographer and his only official credit to that point on Broadway as a

¹⁸³ *Times* (30 March 1953), 1.
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,818054,00.html> (accessed 29 July 2011).

¹⁸⁴ Russell and Chase, 155.

¹⁸⁵ Instead of following a standard musical pattern, Bernstein stopped the music after the third line, and Comden and Green filled the pause with humorous lines that were perfect for Russell to display her charms as a comedienne.

¹⁸⁶ Russell and Chase, 156.

choreographer was as Robbins's assistant in *Call Me Madam* (1950). Saddler was so nervous that he had lost his voice during the tryout.¹⁸⁷ But a greater difficulty was when the show was previewed in Boston: it did not yet have a strong opening number. This was when Robbins went to "doctor" the show. He suggested "to introduce the denizens of the arty Greenwich Village neighborhood" to Ruth and Eileen, which helped Comden, Green, and Bernstein come up with a song, "Christopher Street."¹⁸⁸ Robbins also solved Russell's limitations as a dancer and asked Russell: "Well, what would you do with this song if you heard it ("Wrong-Note Rag")?"¹⁸⁹ After she did a few steps, he taught those to the whole company.

Besides dealing with Russell's difficulty with singing and dancing, the creators also faced other problems. According to Green, neither he nor Comden was optimistic about the show.¹⁹⁰ Fields and Chodorov tried to update the book to the 1950s, but Comden and Green felt that the original 1930s flavor was better. It was a period that was an inspirational trigger for Bernstein. When he "exuberantly banged out on the piano the Eddie Duchin vamp, a characteristic musical sound of the 1930s,"¹⁹¹ Comden and Green knew they were right. The charm of *My Sister Eileen* "depended entirely on its ability to fashion a portrait of the Greenwich Village everyone wanted to remember, even if it had never existed."¹⁹² The creators

¹⁸⁷ Deborah Jowitt, *Jerome Robbins: His Life, His Theater, His Dance* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 219.

¹⁸⁸ Jowitt, 220.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Stanley Green, 266.

¹⁹¹ Comden and Green, 86.

¹⁹² Secrest, 196

reached an accommodation to keep the story in the thirties and Bernstein, Comden, and Green immediately started their five-week journey of creation to make the deadline for rehearsals, as Green recalled, “I don’t think we left that studio all month.”¹⁹³

With several difficulties during tryouts (Russell got the flu in New Haven, and a chorus boy dropped her on her back during “Conga” in Boston), *Wonderful Town* was a big success. During the previews and the opening week, the creators received many warm, encouraging telegrams from their friends. Arnold Weissberger (1907-1981) wrote, “WHO WRITES LYRICS AS CHARMING AND KEEN AS THAT BRIGHT AND WITTY COMDEN AND GREEN”¹⁹⁴ while Yul Brynner, Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein II, and Joshua Logan also sent them congratulatory telegrams. The show opened on 25 February 1953 at the Winter Garden Theater, and a week later the box office was “taking ticket orders for the following New Year’s Eve.”¹⁹⁵ Atkinson regretted that “according to the Constitution, Rosalind Russell cannot run for President until 1956,” but “it would be wise to start preparing for her campaign at once. For she can dance and sing better than any President we have had.”¹⁹⁶ In the last paragraph of the review he said, “In ‘Wonderful Town’ she makes the whole city wonderful; and she will make the whole country wonderful when she is elected

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Telegram from Arnold Weissberger to Betty Comden and Adolph Green, January 19, 1953, *Comden & Green Papers*, New York Public Library Archive, call number *T-Mss 1986-004, box 20, folder 15 (the other telegrams referred here are from the same collection).

¹⁹⁵ Russell and Chase, 158.

¹⁹⁶ Brooks Atkinson, “At the Theatre,” *New York Times* (26 February 1953), 22.

President in 1956.”¹⁹⁷ John Chapman said “‘Wonderful Town’—wonderful score—wonderful book—wonderful Rosalind Russell—wonderful production—and wonderful Winter Garden theater, where I had a wonderful time last night.”¹⁹⁸

Both Atkinson and Chapman compared *Wonderful Town* to *Guys and Dolls* (1950). Atkinson said it “is the most uproarious and original musical carnival we have had since ‘Guys and Dolls,’”¹⁹⁹ and “like ‘Guys and Dolls’ and ‘Pal Joey,’ ‘Wonderful Town’ is a coordinated piece of work.”²⁰⁰ Chapman also liked the integration of book and score: “their principal aim has been to make songs and music fit the show. This fitness is what gives ‘Wonderful Town’ a superior score,”²⁰¹ and enthused, “‘Wonderful Town’ is as good as ‘Guys and Dolls.’ There can be no higher praise from this department for ‘Guys and Dolls’ is the best musical comedy to reach Broadway since ‘Of Thee I Sing,’ which opened more than 20 years ago.”²⁰²

Bernstein’s music also won the attention of the critics, although the overwhelming majority of the reviews talking about Russell’s brilliant performance (“Whatever success it may have will be about 85% due to her [Russell’s] efforts.”²⁰³). Chapman said, “There hasn’t been much music in our musicals lately, and Bernstein has come to the rescue. . . . Many times I felt there hadn’t been anybody around like

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ John Chapman, “New Musical on Broadway is Admirable,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* (27 February 1953), A10.

¹⁹⁹ Atkinson, 22.

²⁰⁰ Brooks Atkinson, “‘Wonderful Town,’” *New York Times* (8 March 1953), X1.

²⁰¹ Chapman, A10.

²⁰² John Chapman, “Miss Russell and Her Show Delight Critics,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* (8 March 1953), E4.

²⁰³ “Roz Russell Hit on Stage,” *Los Angeles Times* (26 February 1953), B9

him since George Gershwin for jauntiness, tricky and intriguing modulations, and graceful swoops into simple and pleasant melody.”²⁰⁴ Both Atkinson and Richard Cooke (*The Wall Street Journal*) praised the variety that Bernstein brought to the musical. Cooke said: “As for music, Mr. Bernstein has run the gamut from barbershop harmony to rather nice love songs, interspersed with very lively jive. Mr. Bernstein is no slouch at any of these modes, as his musical admirers well know.”²⁰⁵ Howard Taubman was the first critic who hailed *Wonderful Town* as a “truly American opera to which any American of any background could listen without embarrassment.”²⁰⁶ Although compared to opera, the style of the songs in the show was too close to the popular side and the requirement for the singers was unlike most operas. However, the reason that Taubman called it an “opera” was perhaps because it contained many operatic traits: not only the recurring motives but also the dramatic scene, instead of a number, of “Conversation Piece” that included coloratura passages in Eileen’s part. The show was also exalted by Olin Downes (1886-1955), the music critic of *New York Times*, as “an opera of which dance is warp and woof, an opera made of dance, prattle and song, and speed,” and he predicted that:

When the American opera created by a composer of the stature of the Wagners and Verdis of yore does materialize, it will owe much more to the robust spirit and the raciness of accent of our popular theatre than to the

²⁰⁴ Chapman, A10.

²⁰⁵ Richard P. Cooke, “The Theatre,” *Wall Street Journal* (27 February 1953), 4.

²⁰⁶ Taubman, X1.

efforts of our prideful emulators, in the upper esthetic brackets, of the tonal art of Bartok, Hindemith and Stravinsky.”²⁰⁷

And this was what Bernstein looked for. When he talked about the influence of theatrical music in his compositions in 1948, he stated, “if I can write one real, moving American opera that any American can understand (and one that is, notwithstanding, a serious musical work), I shall be a happy man.”²⁰⁸ Bernstein surely intended his opera to be a more serious work, but it is interesting to note that *Wonderful Town* caused serious discussion of its genre.

Wonderful Town received many awards. It earned five Tonys, including Best Musical, Best Actress in a Musical (Rosalind Russell), Best Scenic Design (Raoul Pène Du Bois), Choreographer (Donald Saddler), and Conductor and Music Director (Lehman Engel). According to reports, it swept twenty votes for Best Musical²⁰⁹—the last vote went to *Hazel Flagg* (1953 by Jule Styne). Edith Adams also won a 1953 Theatre World Award for her portrayal of Eileen.

Wonderful Town ran 559 performances. An unusual event happened a month after the opening: on 25 March 1953 Robert Fryer announced the cancellation of the performance of 8 April 1953. Although he refused to say why, New York journalists quickly discovered the reason: because the performance “was partly sold to an alleged left-wing group.”²¹⁰ Ed Sullivan (1901-1974) disclosed in *New York Daily*

²⁰⁷ Olin Downes, “Wonderful Time: Bernstein’s Musical is Brilliant Achievement,” *New York Times* (10 May 1953), X7.

²⁰⁸ Leonard Bernstein, “Me Composer—You Jane,” *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 129.

²⁰⁹ “‘Picnic’ is Chosen Best Native Play,” *New York Times* (15 April 1953), 40.

²¹⁰ “‘Wonderful Town’ Drops April 8 Show,” *New York Times* (26 March 1953), 37.

News that the left-wing newspaper *The National Guardian*²¹¹ had purchased a block of tickets for resale, and the profits would be used to “disseminate ideas hostile to the interests of America.”²¹² The announcement of the cancellation created controversy. The spokesman for *The National Guardian* stated that “the closing of the show for that performance was demanded by a Broadway columnist because of his stated disagreement with the news policy of The National Guardian” and “Things have come to a pretty pass in this Wonderful Town of ours when a tabloid tattler, with a few blows on his typewriter, can close a Broadway theatre to an audience of 1,500 people because of political pique against a handful of theatre-goers.”²¹³

The chairman of the National Council on Freedom from Censorship, Elmer Rice, protested Fryer’s decision: “the theatre will suffer, ideas will no longer be freely expressed, dramatists and producers will operate not with the conscience of intellectual freedom. But only with a view of obtaining the approval of self-appointed censors,” and he added, “theatergoers must now pass political tests set up by producers.”²¹⁴ He suggested that the cancellation would violate the New York Civil Rights Law, Section 40 B, which guaranteed to ticket purchasers the right to admission except for reasons of disorderly conduct. Fryer defended himself and said: “Our object is to prevent an organization from reselling tickets to our

²¹¹ *The National Guardian* was a leftist independent weekly newspaper published between 1948 and 1992 in New York City. The name was changed in 1968 to *Guardian*. Two of their writers, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, were the first American civilians who were executed by the United States government in the name of national security and the Cold War fight against communism on 19 June 1953. See Cedric Belfrage and James Aronson, *Something to Guard: The Stormy Life of the National Guardian 1948-1967* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 175.

²¹² Secrest, 197.

²¹³ “‘Wonderful Town’ Drops April 8 Show,” *New York Times* (26 March 1953), 37.

²¹⁴ “Producer Defends Cancelling of Show,” *New York Times* (1 April 1953), 33.

production at a profit that it will then use to disseminate ideas thoroughly hostile to the interests of America.” Furthermore, “There is no violation of the Civil Rights Law. No ticket holder is being refused admittance because of political belief or for any other reasons . . . a producer has the right to refuse to allow his play to be indirectly an instrument for promoting anti-American propaganda.”²¹⁵

As this incident shows, *Wonderful Town* was produced at the height of McCarthyism. Robbins was subpoenaed to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) on 5 May 1953, during the creation of the show, and the list of names that he gave to the committee including Madeleine Lee, who had been a friend and taught him the latest social dances he needed to know for *Fancy Free*, and Jerome Chodorov, who wrote the book of *Wonderful Town*.²¹⁶ Bernstein’s compositional mentor Aaron Copland was also called to testify before McCarthy’s committee but “gave his questioners nothing to whet their appetites on 26 May.”²¹⁷ Unlike his friends, Bernstein was not subpoenaed to appear before HUAC or Senate committees but instead the US State Department refused to renew his passport in July 1953. In order to solve this problem, he was “forced to undergo a humiliating confession of political sin and to sign an affidavit stating that he was not a communist and had never followed the communist line.”²¹⁸ The result was that he received his passport for travel to Italy to conduct at La Scala on 12 August 1953.²¹⁹

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Jowitt, 228-230.

²¹⁷ Seldes, 69.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Seldes, 71.

Under all these circumstances, it was not too difficult to understand the reason why Fryer tried to stay away from any issue related to Communism when making his debut as solo producer.

After Rosalind Russell's one-year-contract, Carol Channing (b. 1921) stepped in as the replacement for Ruth. The news was released on 12 February 1954 in *The New York Times*, which said that she had not yet decided whether she might take the role. Three days later they announced that Channing would play Ruth starting on 5 April. To find a proper actress to replace Russell seemed a tough task. In a letter that Robert Fryer wrote to Comden on 9 February 1954, he mentioned that they have spent enough time trying to find stars to replace Russell and also for the national tour, which said,

Your attorney also doesn't seem to think that we have spent enough time on finding stars to replace Miss Russell, or stars for the road company. You yourselves ought to be aware of how very much time we have spent on this. You know that we have gone over the entire field in our search. You know how many people have turned us down and you know all the objections that have been raised to those that wanted to do it.²²⁰

In the letter, he did not mention the name of Carol Channing. Apparently, Fryer's defense was not only received by Comden but also known by other authors. In a letter written by Jerome Chodorov to Fryer, he expressed the writers' unhappiness about the replacement and the management of New York production: "All of us were unhappy about the loose arrangements with Rosalind," and continued "we got a lucky break getting Carol Channing, for if we didn't we might very well have closed this Spring in spite of having one of the biggest shows in

²²⁰ Letter from Robert Fryer to Betty Comden, 9 February 1954, Comden & Green Papers, New York Public Library Archive, call number *T-Mss 1986-004, box 20, folder 10.

years.”²²¹ Not only did the whole progress of finding a replacement of Russell cause their dissatisfaction, but they also did not think “there was a big enough concentrated effort made on the business of a road company.”²²²

It was truly difficult to step into a part that has been identified with a star like Russell and Channing struggled to create her own persona for the role. However, Channing’s image of a typical “blonde” role in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1949) was so strong that at the very beginning critics wondered if she was suitable for Ruth. “Miss Channing is okay. . . . In her characterization of Lorelei Lee in ‘Gentlemen Prefer Blondes,’ her big staring eyes were much to the point. But their doll-like vacancy does not suit the lively part Miss Channing is now playing,”²²³ said Atkinson in *The New York Times*. After about three months, the producers closed the show on 3 July 1954. A national tour commenced, for which the first stop was in Chicago on 7 July 1954, and *Wonderful Town* did not return to Broadway until 2003.

Although the New York response to the replacement was perhaps responsible for the closing of the show in three months, from the reviews during the national tour, it appeared that Channing successfully interpreted the role of Ruth. Claudia Cassidy reviewed the show in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* and especially noted Channing’s excellent acting as Ruth: “She gave one of those high gear performances absurd and disarming, shrewd and fantastic, droll, hilarious and, sometimes when you least expected it endearingly, vulnerably honest.” Cassidy

²²¹ Letter from J(erome) C(hodorov) to Robert Fryer, 3 March 1954, Comden & Green Papers, box 20, folder 10.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Brooks Atkinson, “Still at the Top,” *New York Times* (9 May 1954), X1.

concluded: "She was Eileen's sister Ruth, and 'Wonderful Town' had a star."²²⁴ Roger Dettmer in the *Chicago American* praised the production, "The people in it are first-class; the ingredients are first-class, and the production is first-class," and he celebrated Channing's performance, noting her ability "... lest anyone lament Rosalind Russell's recent withdrawal from the cast as sister Ruth to sister Eileen, whose adventures set the show in motion."²²⁵ Overall, the critics were satisfied with Channing's interpretation of Ruth. The company stayed in Chicago for twenty weeks and received four curtain calls in Washington on the opening night.²²⁶ In a letter written from Tams-Witmark Music Library Inc., Louis Aborn inquired when they might release *Wonderful Town* for stock and amateur productions and said, "We understand that the producer may want to tour the show again next season, but there would be a great deal of territory that would not conflict."²²⁷ This demonstrates the interest of theater groups in the show, as well as the potential profit that it could earn for the producers.

Wonderful Town was soon in demand for oversea stages. British producer Jack Hylton acquired the rights for British production in 1954 and looked forward to opening the show in Britain in November that year. In the letters at the New York Public Library, it seems that *Wonderful Town* successfully reached Oxford and

²²⁴ Claudia Cassidy, "On the Aisle: To Coin a Phrase, This 'Wonderful Town' is a Wonderful Show," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (8 July 1954), C1.

²²⁵ Roger Dettmer, "'Wonderful Town' Best Book-Musical in Season," *Chicago American* (8 July 1954), Newspapers came with Fryer's letter to Comden on July 16, 1954, Comden & Green Papers, box 20, folder 11.

²²⁶ Richard L. Coe, "Wonderful Carol, Wonderful Town!" *The Washington Post and Times Herald* (15 December 1954): 62.

²²⁷ Letter from Tams-Witmark Music Library to Ben Aslan of Fitelson and Mayers, 11 November 1954, Comden & Green Papers, box 20, folder 11.

Manchester, and was scheduled for the Princess's Theatre in the West End on 23 February 1955.²²⁸ Bernstein went to London to see the show and wrote to Helen Coates, "London was fun! The show was a hit! The audience was wild for it, and the press marvelous!"²²⁹ The show reached the West End again in 1986.

This show, although once involved in McCarthy-Communism issues, was invited to Eastern Europe in the 1950s to 1960s. However, the production in Eastern Europe was politically sensitive and the United States Government needed to consider it carefully. The Estrada Theatre in Warsaw, Poland requested to peruse the piano-vocal score of *Wonderful Town* in 1958 to consider the possibility of producing it. This request raised the attention of the United States Information Agency. The discussion between the Agency and Comden and Green's attorney lasted from February to December 1958 to decide whether *Wonderful Town* would be a useful exchange in "cultural, scientific, and other fields between the United States and countries of Eastern Europe."²³⁰ There was no resolution. In 1960, when Yugoslavia requested the rights to produce the show, Floria Lasky of Fitelson and Mayers wrote to Comden, Green, and Bernstein and said, "Please advise me how you feel about it before we apply for the State Department 'blessing'."²³¹ *Wonderful Town* got a chance in Portugal and at the Brussels Fair in 1961, and because of its

²²⁸ Letter from Jack Hylton Limited to Floria V. Lasky of Fitelson and Mayers, 5 February 1955, Comden & Green Papers, box 20, folder 12.

²²⁹ Letter from Bernstein to Helen Coates, 1 March 1955, Bernstein Collection of the Library of Congress, box 14, folder 5. © Amberson Holdings. Used by permission of the Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

²³⁰ Letter from United States Information Agency to Benjamin Aslan of Fitelson and Mayers, enclosed in the letter from Aslan to Comden and Green on 5 December 1958, Comden & Green Papers, box 20, folder 12.

²³¹ Letter from Floria V. Lasky of Fitelson and Mayers to Comden, Green and Bernstein on 20 September 1960, Comden & Green Papers, box 20, folder 13.

success at the latter venue, the State Department was interested in sponsoring a tour to be presented for three months in Europe and three months in South America commencing in the spring of 1962, which was produced by the City Center.²³²

Through those letters between Comden, Green, and their attorney that have been archived with the Betty Comden and Adolph Green Papers (call number *T-Mss 1986-004) in the New York Public Library, we can determine that *Wonderful Town* has continued to be produced in different cities in the United States after the first national tour and also in other European cities. This show finally reached Asia and had a short run opened in Japan in 2010.²³³

Fryer also looked for other venues to promote *Wonderful Town*. He started thinking of televising the show in 1954, which would make it the first Broadway show that “was to be televised to theaters,” and he believed that “the entire exploitation would have provided an enormous boost for our show at Winter Garden.”²³⁴ But in the same letter in which Fryer wrote to Comden he also mentioned her refusal to televise the show.²³⁵ The reason that the authors refused to accept a televised opportunity was also explained in a letter of complaint from Chodorov to Fryer: “I think if we had done it we might have killed the whole thing for Carol Channing,” and aside from that, “it is a toss-up as to whether theatre

²³² Letter from Aborn to Comden, Green, Bernstein, Fields, and Chodorov, 16 June 1961, Comden & Green Papers, box 20, folder 13.

²³³ It has been produced TV Ashai at the Aoyama Theatre in Tokyo and the Umeda Art Theatre in Osaka in 2010, which received 31 performances. This production featured Kei Aran as Ruth and Miho Owada as Eileen. “Remembering Leonard Bernstein,” special edition, *Prelude, Fugue & Riffs: News for Friends of Leonard Bernstein* (Fall/ Winter 2010/2011), 9.

²³⁴ Letter from Fryer to Comden, 9 February 1954, Comden & Green Papers, box 20, folder 10.

²³⁵ Ibid.

television would do us good or harm. Most of the smart people that I have talked to think it would hurt us,” for which “the only ones that are interested seem to be the shows on their last legs.”²³⁶

Indeed, at that point, a television production might have damaged the show’s profits, especially when it had received good reviews and was about to have its national tour. Yet, it seems that Fryer did not give up the idea of televising *Wonderful Town*. After the show closed in New York, Rosalind Russell sang the song “One Hundred Easy Ways to Lose a Man” on the Ed Sullivan Television Show on 21 August 1955.²³⁷

Ultimately, the show was presented as a live television special on CBS on 30 November 1958, starring Russell. It was a nearly two-hour long version, including several commercials. “Pass the Football” and “Conquering the City” were cut, the male trio in “What a Waste” was sung by Baker alone, with the usual four stories of wasted talents found in the song were shortened to those of Baker and the fisherman (However, in the 1958 original CBS cast album Baker and Ruth sang three stories). The televised version was especially valuable because it retained Russell’s reprise of “A Quiet Girl.” If she was really as bad of a singer as described in her biography and *Time Magazine*, Russell’s performance in the CBS production was enormously improved. Her performance was dramatic but also came out naturally, which made people believe that “she was Ruth” instead of “she was Russell playing

²³⁶ Draft from Chodorov to Robert Fryer, 17 February 1954, Comden & Green Papers, box 20, folder 10.

²³⁷ The Classic TV Archive, [http://ctva.biz/US/MusicVariety/EdSullivan_07_\(1954-55\).htm](http://ctva.biz/US/MusicVariety/EdSullivan_07_(1954-55).htm) (accessed 1 March 2012).

Ruth.” Although her voice was not beautiful or smooth, she conveyed sincere affection to the audience. She had a very low voice, which can be heard in “Ohio,” and her singing style was closer to speech, such as her performance in “One Hundred Easy Ways to Lose a Man.” However, she could sing effectively, not just talk. In the reprise of “A Quiet Girl,” Russell sang sentimentally and clearly portrayed Ruth’s affection. She also knew how to make fun of herself by saying “another glorious voice” before getting on stage to sing “Wrong Note Rag.” Russell also showed her talent as an acrobat in the TV production. In “Conga” she was thrown up and down by Brazilian sailors and still acted well. Apparently she enjoyed doing this. In the article “The Kind of Gal I Am” that she wrote for *Saturday Evening Post*, she said that “In one of the scenes that make dancers hoisted me over their heads and tossed me around like a beanbag. I particularly loved that part of the show.”²³⁸ Indeed, in the movie she was thrown up and down as if she was an object rather than a person. And later when Russell went back in Beverly Hills, a friend played the record of *Wonderful Town* after dinner in a party for her and when the record got to “Conga,” she “jumped up, gave a little shake, and said, ‘Come on, everybody! Conga!’”²³⁹ Her talent as an actress especially showed in “Ruth’s Stories.” Ruth needs to play different characters while Baker reads her stories. She also had a good sense of humor and it came out naturally. In the scene of their first night in New York, the two sisters try to sleep. The blanket for Russell was too short and no matter how hard she tried, she could not make it completely cover her, which amused the

²³⁸ Rosalind Russell, “The Kind of Gal I Am, Part I” *Saturday Evening Post*, vol. 235, issue 34 (29 September 1962), 26.

²³⁹ William Frye, “The Wizard of Roz,” *Vanity Fair* 50 (April 2002), 279.

audience. In “One Hundred Easy Ways to Lose a Man” she exaggeratingly described how she would lose a man and acted as if there were a man accompanying her and she drove him away. In the last reprise of “It’s Love,” Ruth even shushed Baker after he kissed her. Overall, Russell perfectly fit in the role of Ruth, very charming in a different way than her sister Eileen, who is a blonde, charming, and naïve.

The Hollywood studios hoped to transform a joyful, successful musical like *Wonderful Town* into a motion picture. They approached the authors at the beginning, “It is still my hope that Columbia Pictures may make a deal on WONDERFUL TOWN,” said William Fitelson,²⁴⁰ However, the negotiation did not go well. In the draft of Chodorov’s letter to Fryer, one of the reasons that the authors were against the proposal of televising *Wonderful Town* was because they worried that “if we have rights to WONDERFUL TOWN will be out, and we will hasten a release deal of the musical of MY SISTER EILEEN by Columbia when they produce it,” and “as long as we always have the rights to do a theatre television broadcast, we may be able to use this right to hold up the release of the Columbia Pictures. That’s a lot more than the vague possibility of getting some good publicity that will mean dollars at the box office.”²⁴¹ There was even a murmur that Comden and Green would write the screenplay for Columbia,²⁴² which would be similar to the plot of *On the Town*. Nonetheless, Columbia Pictures did not in the end purchase the rights of

²⁴⁰ Letter from William Fitelson to Comden and Green, 10 June 1954, Comden & Green Papers, box 20, folder 10.

²⁴¹ Draft from Chodorov to Robert Fryer, 17 February 1954, Comden & Green Papers, box 20, folder 10.

²⁴² Letter from William Fitelson to Comden and Green, 10 June 1954, Comden & Green Papers, box 20, folder 10.

Wonderful Town and produced their own musical movie, *My Sister Eileen* (1955), with Betty Garrett as Ruth, Janet Leigh as Eileen, lyrics by Leo Robin and music by Jule Styne.

When reviving *Wonderful Town*, impresario Edwin Lester²⁴³ (1895-1990), the founder and longtime director of the Los Angeles Civic Light Opera, wanted to include a couple of numbers from *On the Town*. He proposed this idea to Comden, Green, and Bernstein through Louis Aborn, the president of Tam-Witmark Music Library Inc., early in February 1970. Lester wanted to revive *Wonderful Town* in the summer of the same year in Los Angeles and he felt “the necessity of including musical numbers from *On the Town*.”²⁴⁴ This marriage of two shows was turned down and the proposal was suspended. Four years later, Lester tried again to convince Comden of approving this union for the season of 1975. This time he was more specific about how he intended to include three or four numbers from *On the Town*. The same idea was also proposed to Bernstein and although the composer did not want a “cannibalized work,” he felt that it was possible to take “New York, New York” and “Lonely Town” out of *On the Town* and interpolate them carefully into *Wonderful Town* to give the show “more opportunity for dancing.”²⁴⁵ However, this time it was Jerome Robbins who was “absolutely against incorporating any part of

²⁴³ Edwin Lester was an important impresario who worked mainly in the West Coast. He founded the Los Angeles Civic Light Opera (LACLO) in 1938 and under his direction, LACLO produced some original shows that went on to a wider success. For example, the original production *Song of Norway*, which was commissioned by LACLO, ran 860 performances on Broadway. *Kismet*, another original musical produced by LACLO, also enjoyed a good run on Broadway. Both shows went on to the West End and were produced into films later.

²⁴⁴ Letter from Louis Aborn to Comden, 5 February 1970, Comden & Green Papers, box 20, folder 14.

²⁴⁵ Letter from Robert Lantz to Edwin Lester, 16 April 1974, Comden & Green Papers, box 20, folder 14.

On the Town into *Wonderful Town*.”²⁴⁶ Although the combination failed, Lester still produced the revival of *Wonderful Town* in the summer of 1975, for which they had Nanette Fabray (b. 1920) for Ruth.²⁴⁷

In 1999 Sir Simon Rattle made a studio cast recording of *Wonderful Town* with the Berlin Philharmonic starring Kim Criswell as Ruth, Audra McDonald as Eileen, and Thomas Hampson as Baker. The same cast appeared in a concert version of the show live in Berlin on 30-31 December 2002, a version available on DVD.²⁴⁸ Although this was a concert version, singers danced while singing “Conga!” and turned the concert hall into a theater.

Wonderful Town finally went back to Broadway in 2003 with Donna Murphy (b. 1959) as Ruth and Jennifer Westfeldt (b. 1971) as Eileen. At that time, Bernstein had been dead over a decade and Green passed away a year before. Betty Comden attended the opening night. This show opened with high expectations and reviews for the opening night were positive. Although some critics and audience complained about Murphy “missing too much ‘Town’”²⁴⁹ (she often failed to appear), she was Ruth until Brooke Shield’s stepped in one year later. Kathleen Marshall won Best Choreography in both the 2004 Tony and 2004 Drama Desk Awards while Donna Murphy won the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Actress in a Musical. A national

²⁴⁶ Letter from Floria V. Lasky to Louis Aborn, 15 October 1974, Comden & Green Papers, box 20, folder 14.

²⁴⁷ “History of Los Angeles Civic Light,” *Broadway LA*, http://www.broadwayla.org/info/civic_light_print.asp (accessed 1 March 2012).

²⁴⁸ *Leonard Bernstein: Wonderful Town*, conducted by Simon Rattle with the Berliner Philharmoniker (EuroArts, 2002).

²⁴⁹ Michael Riedel, “Prima Donna—Murphy Missing too Much ‘Town’,” *New York Post* (19 December 2003), 47.

tour followed in 2006 starring Deborah Lynn as Ruth and Allison Berry as Eileen. None of the creators had the chance to see *Wonderful Town* produced in Japan in 2010. But the town stays wonderful and the spirit of young and courageous lives forever through their *Wonderful Town*.

Chapter 2

Bernstein's Broadway Idiom and Large-Scale Concert Works Before and Between *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*: Symphony No. 1, *Jeremiah*; *Serenade after Plato's Symposium*; and Symphony No. 2, *The Age of Anxiety*

"I have a suspicion that every work I write, for whatever medium, is really theater music in some way."¹ This is what Bernstein admitted in the prefatory note to his Symphony No. 2, *The Age of Anxiety*. His interest in theater music began early in his life, as described above. His theory teacher at Harvard, Walter Piston (1894-1976), had doubts about whether Bernstein would ever be a composer of serious importance, because "he was always putting on a show or something."² Most of Bernstein's music for the concert hall is programmatic, and more than that, his programmatic works have either a clear story line or distinctive dramatic scenes, and sometimes both.

Not every programmatic work has the same essence. For example, Liszt's *Les Préludes* was inspired by a poem, but it tends to be a general reflection of the poem rather than representing specific aspects of its content in a symphonic work.³ Nevertheless, when Bernstein applied a programmatic title to his works, he had something specific to say. He adapted the general contents of the Book of Jeremiah

¹ Leonard Bernstein, "Prefatory Note," from Symphony No. 2, *The Age of Anxiety* (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1993).

² William Westwood Burton, *Conversations about Bernstein* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), xxi.

³ More discussions may be found in Alexander Main, "Liszt After Lamartine: 'Les Préludes,'" *Music & Letters*, vol. 60, no. 2 (April, 1979), 133-148, and Andrew Bonner, "Liszt's 'Les Préludes' and 'Les Quatre Éléments': A Reinvestigation," *19th-Century Music*, vol. 10, no. 2 (Autumn, 1986), 95-107.

and quoted verses from the Lamentations of Jeremiah in his first symphony, *Jeremiah*. The first movement, "Prophecy," aims "to parallel in feeling the intensity of the prophet's pleas with his people"; the scherzo, "Profanation," gives "the general sense of the destruction and chaos brought on by the pagan corruption within the priesthood and the people" in Jerusalem; and the last movement, "Lamentation," is "the cry of Jeremiah, as he mourns his beloved Jerusalem, ruined, pillaged, and dishonored after his desperate efforts to save it."⁴

In the second symphony, *The Age of Anxiety*, Bernstein tried to adapt W. H. Auden's poem, *The Age of Anxiety: A Baroque Eclogue*, into a symphony. The composer insisted that he did not rely on "details of programmatic implication"⁵ but only followed the general form of the poem. And "yet, when each section was finished I discovered, upon re-reading, detail after detail of programmatic relation to the poem – details that had 'written themselves'."⁶ Bernstein followed the structure of Auden's poem and divided the symphony into two parts and six sections. Besides Auden's poem, he put himself in the symphony. The piano solo is the "personal identification of myself with the poem" and "the pianist provides an autobiographical protagonist, set against an orchestral mirror in which he sees himself, analytically, in the modern ambience."⁷ The first part consists of three sections: "The Prologue," "The Seven Ages," and "The Seven Stages," while the

⁴ Leonard Bernstein, "Program Note" from Symphony No. 1, *Jeremiah* (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1992), iii.

⁵ Leonard Bernstein, "Prefatory Note," from Symphony No. 2, *The Age of Anxiety* (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1993), ii-iii.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

second part includes “The Dirge,” “The Masque,” and “The Epilogue.” The composer wrote scenic outlines for each section in his program notes, just like a summary of Auden’s poem, which describes what is going on in the movement, what happens to these four lonely characters, a woman and three men, to help people understand what he tried to convey in the work.

Serenade was inspired by Plato’s *Symposium* and Bernstein named each movement after the person who joined Plato’s famous dialogue about love. Although Bernstein said “there is no literal program for this *Serenade*,”⁸ he still wrote descriptions and gave the audience some details about what happened in each movement. It is not surprising. Early in 1948 Bernstein stated that he had a “basic interest in theater music,” and “most of my scores have been, in one way or another, for theatrical performance, and the others—most of them—have an obvious dramatic basis.”⁹ In his imaginary conversation with a Broadway producer, the composer wrote, “It (music) is always about something. Then, as it develops, music becomes more sophisticated, more complicated; but it is still attached to concepts, as it is in the theater.”¹⁰ In this concept, “music first arises attached to words and ideas.”¹¹ Therefore, it seems natural for Bernstein to write a literary description to go with each movement to depict musically a character’s statement of love and personality in *Serenade*.

⁸ Leonard Bernstein, “Prefatory Note,” from *Serenade* (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1988), i.

⁹ Leonard Bernstein, *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 129.

¹⁰ Leonard Bernstein, “Whatever Happened to That Great American Symphony?” *The Joy of Music* (Pompton Plains: Amadeus Press, 2004), 44.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Bernstein's music is eclectic, referring to his use of different styles and techniques. The composer thought that "every composer is to some extent eclectic"¹² and did not feel embarrassed to admit it. Some people criticized his eclecticism while some embraced it. William Westwood Burton said that Stravinsky referred to Bernstein as a "musical 'department store'."¹³ Helen Smith called him "an American eclectic"¹⁴ while Paul Laird discussed Bernstein's eclecticism and his use of vernacular elements in *Chichester Psalms*.¹⁵ One of his most eclectic works, *Mass*, remains controversial today, partly for that reason. In *Mass*, we are presented with a variety of music styles. For example, the "Second Introit: Prayer for the Congregation" shows Bernstein's knowledge of writing an a cappella choral setting while "Easy" displays his awareness of the blues. He used canon in "First Introit: Dominus vobiscum" and symphonic variations for "Meditation No. 2." Combining the traditional Roman Catholic liturgy with dramatic content made this work hard to categorize. Nonetheless, the eclecticism in *Mass* was considered as an abundant source for music educators to expose students to varied styles of music.¹⁶

Eclecticism and his embrace of a multiplicity of styles becomes Bernstein's trademark. Composer Ned Rorem (b. 1923), after reviewing the many dramatic

¹² Paul R. Laird, "Leonard Bernstein and Eclecticism: A Preliminary Consideration," *Res Musicae: Essays in Honor of James W. Pruett*, edited by Paul R. Laird and Craig H. Russell (Warren: Harmonie Park Press, 2001), 187.

¹³ William Westbrook Burton, xii.

¹⁴ Helen Smith, "'Peter Grimes' and Leonard Bernstein: An English Fisherman and His Influence on an American Eclectic," *Tempo*, vol. 60, no. 235 (January 2006), 22.

¹⁵ Paul R. Laird, "Leonard Bernstein: Eclecticism and Vernacular Elements in *Chichester Psalms*," *Bulletin of the Sonneck Society for American Music*, vol. 25, no. 1 (Spring 1999), 1.

¹⁶ Alan Pearlmutt, "Bernstein's *Mass* Revisited," *Music Educators Journal*, vol. 61, no. 1 (September 1974), 35-39.

stances that Bernstein took in his works, said, “Any artist is like anyone else, only more so, so Bernstein is like every other artist. Only no other artist is like him.”¹⁷ Bernstein chose to embrace his audience rather than to delight critics. In the opening of the documentary film, *Leonard Bernstein: The Gift of Music*, he said, “I love two things: music and people. I don’t know which I like better, but, I make music because I love people, and I love to work with them, and I love to play for them, and communicate with them on this deepest level, which is the musical level.”¹⁸ This statement perhaps explains why Bernstein adopted abundant vernacular, or popular, elements: he tried to communicate with the audience through music. One of the most distinctive characteristics of his music is the “extensive use of vernacular elements, especially jazz and what could be called the Broadway idiom.”¹⁹ When Bernstein applied more vernacular elements, his music tended to be closer to the Broadway idiom. Bernstein’s Broadway music, however, was recognizably different than the Broadway scores of Richard Rodgers and Irving Berlin, as will be shown in this analysis, which identifies elements in Bernstein’s music common to both his concert works and his Broadway scores.

¹⁷ Ned Rorem, “Leonard Bernstein (An Appreciation),” *Tempo*, New Series, no. 175 (December, 1990), 8.

¹⁸ *Leonard Bernstein: The Gift of Music*, Deutsche Grammophon 00440 073 4336, 2007.

¹⁹ Laird, 189.

Melodies Based on Large Intervals

Melody is “the sovereign ingredient in music, the one which makes a composer a composer.”²⁰ Bernstein’s emphasis on lyrical melody is significant in all of his music and cannot be considered only an aspect of his Broadway style, but one finds more consistent lyricism in his Broadway works than in his concert music. His melodic style includes more large intervals than one might expect in a lyrical line. These unanticipated intervals demand the audience’s attention. Rorem said Bernstein’s melody is “infectious, because once heard it is never forgotten.”²¹ Examples of melodies that emphasize large intervals (larger than a perfect fourth) are numerous. The beginning of “Maria” in *West Side Story* opens with a tritone while “Somewhere” starts with a minor seventh; the pivotal motive of “New York New York” in *On the Town* consists of two ascending fourths separated by a major second; the opening phrase of the third movement of *I Hate Music* (1943) begins with an ascending major ninth, which follows a descending perfect fourth and fifth; the “Plum Pudding” and “Queues de Boeuf” of *La Bonne Cuisine* (1948) consist of many intervals that are larger than a fourth; the first phrase of the refrain of “A Simple Song” in *Mass* contains a minor seventh, and so on. In the following section, we will see how Bernstein used these large intervals without losing a sense of lyricism in *Jeremiah*, *The Age of Anxiety*, and *Serenade*. We can then see how this musical trait also appears in *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*.

²⁰ Rorem, 6.

²¹ Ibid.

The most important musical element in the first movement of Symphony No. 1 is melody, whereas in the second movement it is the irregular rhythm that first calls the listener's attention. In the opening of the movement, after the chordal introduction of strings, Bernstein used two French horns to play the melody that made it stand out (Ex. 2-1). Based on the opening material, he applied orchestral unisons to highlight the melody (Ex. 2-2), first in the strings, and later in the woodwinds and brass. In this short opening section, we can observe the extensive structural use of fourths and fifths, which are pervasively used in his works both for concert hall and musical theater.

Example 2-1. *Jeremiah*, first movement, mm. 1-6.

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Example 2-2. *Jeremiah*, first movement, mm. 7-12.

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Bernstein also tended to write melodies with long phrases that cannot easily be subdivided into several small phrases, and contains many large intervals. In the middle section of the first movement of Symphony No. 1, we find that not only fourths and fifths but also sixths are often used in the melody that is introduced by the piccolo and flutes starting in m. 47 (Ex. 2-3). Apparently, the use of large intervals play a prominent role in this passage and the sixth provides a structural frame for it.

Example 2-3. *Jeremiah*, first movement, mm. 47-60.

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The image shows a musical score for measures 47-60 of the first movement of *Jeremiah*. It features three systems of staves for Piccolo (Picc.) and Flutes 1 and 2 (Fl. 1, 2).
 - Measure 47: Picc. and Fl. 1 & 2 play a melody starting with a *mp* dynamic.
 - Measure 48: Picc. and Fl. 1 & 2 continue the melody. Large intervals are circled in the original image. A *cresc.* marking is present.
 - Measure 53: Picc. and Fl. 1 & 2 continue. Dynamics include *mf*, *2. mf marc.*, and *cresc.*. Large intervals are circled.
 - Measure 58: Picc. and Fl. 1 & 2 continue. Dynamics include *cresc.* and *ff*. Large intervals are circled.
 The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

As noted above, the first thing that attracts the audience’s attention in the second movement of *Jeremiah* Symphony is the restless rhythm and irregular accents. Bernstein used this agitated rhythm to depict the fall of Jerusalem as told in the story of the prophet Jeremiah. However, even in such chaos, the composer still inserted a *cantabile* melody, which seems that it comes out of nowhere and sounds

not unlike a melodic line that the composer might apply to any of his vocal works, even his musicals (Ex. 2-4). As before, this melody consists of many large intervals. It begins with a perfect fifth in m. 130, and fifth and sixth are two of the most important intervals in this section. Bernstein added to the effect of this melody through imaginative orchestration. It is introduced by first violin in m. 130. Then the flutes join in m. 134. Piccolo and second violin enter in m. 138, and oboes, English horn, E-flat clarinet, and piano come in m. 145. This melody follows an energetic section with dotted, martial rhythms that returns in m. 176. The contrast between the sweetness of the melody and the strong rhythmic drive makes the melody sound more distinct. Maybe we should not be surprised that Bernstein included so many *cantabile* melodies in his Symphony No. 1. According to Gottlieb, the melodic material of *Jeremiah* is largely related to synagogue chants. The liturgical content, especially the cantillation of the Bible and liturgical chant of the synagogue, is critical to this symphony. For instance, Gottlieb found that the opening French horn melody is derived from the final phrase of the liturgical *Amidah* for festival mornings and the *K'rovoh* mode. He also discovered that some of the cantillation and liturgical modes are used in both the second and the third movements.²²

²² Jack Gottlieb, "The Music of Leonard Bernstein: A Study of Melodic Manipulations," (D.M.A. document, University of Illinois, 1964), 218-221. See also Jack Gottlieb, "Symbols of Faith in the Music of Leonard Bernstein," *The Musical Quarterly*, vol. 66, no. 2 (April 1980), 287-295.

Example 2-4. *Jeremiah*, second movement, mm. 130-143.

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The image displays a musical score for Example 2-4, which is the second movement of *Jeremiah*, measures 130-143. The score is arranged in a system with five staves: Piccolo (Picc.), Flute 1 and 2 (Fl. 1/2), Violin I and II (Vln. I/II), and Viola (Vln. II). Measure 130 shows the Violin I part with a melodic line marked *mf cantabile* and a *V* above it. Measure 131 shows the Flute 1 part with a melodic line marked *mf cant.* and a *V* above it. Measure 138 shows the Violin I and II parts with a melodic line marked *p sub. espr.* and a *V* above it. The score also includes dynamics like *cresc.* and *p dolce*.

Bernstein includes similar melodic gestures in his *Symphony No. 2*. Like the opening of *Jeremiah*, which included two different French horn parts to introduce the melody, this time Bernstein let two clarinets play the initial long melody. Launching an expansive melody with a few instruments in a large-scale work is not only found in Bernstein's symphonies. He used this technique in the second scene of *Fancy Free*, "Scene at the Bar," which includes two clarinets in B-flat, and the opening number of *On the Town*, "I Feel Like I'm Not Out of Bed Yet," albeit in a vocal work, also bears a similar effect with a male soloist singing softly. In *Serenade*, we also at first hear the solo violinist playing a long, soliloquy-like melody while in

Facsimile we have clarinet leading the opening of the ballet. The Symphonic Suite from *On the Waterfront* also begins with a solo French horn passage, with blue notes added to it, and the one-act opera *Trouble in Tahiti* opens with a clarinet solo, although the mood is much more upbeat than the previous examples that we had here. This effect not only exists in Bernstein's output but also in the works of those pioneers before him, such as the opening of Roy Harris's Symphony No. 3, where the long melody is mainly introduced by violoncellos.²³

It seems that Bernstein had a special affection for Harris's Symphony No. 3, a work premiered by his mentor Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1939, and Bernstein conducted it fairly often in his long career as a professional conductor. During the preparation of his senior thesis, in a letter to Copland, Bernstein tried to show that "there is something American in the newer music, which relies not on folk material but on a native spirit, (like your music, and maybe Harris' and Sessions' ...), or which relies on a new American form..."²⁴ Obviously, Bernstein considered Roy Harris as a composer who stood for the American sound. When Bernstein set out on his debut in Europe at the Prague Spring Festival in Czechoslovakia, he conducted Harris's Third Symphony together with William Schuman's *American Festival Overture*, Samuel Barber's *Second Essay* and George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in a concert with Czech Philharmonic.²⁵

²³ One can find Bernstein's conductor score of Harris's Third Symphony in the Digital Archives of the website of New York Philharmonic, <http://archives.nyphil.org/index.php/artifact/9628e514-0a72-4985-a2f3-d22a979b1997/fullview#page/10/mode/2up> (accessed 27 February 2013).

²⁴ Humphrey Burton, *Leonard Bernstein* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 50.

²⁵ Burton, 148.

Harris's Symphony No. 3 appeared in the program of the early collaborations between Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic in 1945.²⁶ After he became the music director, Bernstein kept performing this symphony, starting from his first season of 1956-57 to the last season, 1968-69. Even two years before his death, Bernstein recorded an album of Harris's Third Symphony together with William Schuman's Third Symphony with the New York Philharmonic, which was released by Deutsche Grammophon.²⁷

Bernstein's Symphony No. 2, *The Age of Anxiety*, uses a duet texture for the opening. The composer described the opening of Symphony No. 2 as "the loneliest music I know."²⁸ The beginning main melody, which is played by the first clarinet in A, consists of many fourths and fifths. At the same time, the countermelody also moves through large intervals, such as the ascending octave in mm. 12 to 13, an ascending minor ninth from mm. 13 to 14, and a descending diminished octave in m. 15, though it is mainly stepwise to form a contrast to the main melody (Ex. 2-5). Bernstein's description of this as "the loneliest music" and his orchestration reminds one of the opening of "II. Lonely Town: Pas de Deux" in his *Three Dance Episodes*

²⁶ One can find the program in the Digital Archives of the website of New York Philharmonic, <http://archives.nyphil.org/index.php/search?search-type=singleFilter&search-text=Bernstein+and+Harris&doctype=program&x=0&y=0&search-dates-from=&search-dates-to=> (accessed 27 February 2013).

²⁷ Tom di Nardo, "Bernstein Conducts Roy Harris," http://articles.philly.com/1988-02-27/entertainment/26241006_1_riccardo-muti-william-schuman-third-symphony (accessed 27 February 2013).

²⁸ Burton, 189.

from *On the Town*, which also begins with clarinets (with the help of bass clarinet) and the solo melody of muted trumpet.²⁹

Example 2-5. *The Age of Anxiety*, “The Prologue,” mm. 1-20.

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In the most jazz-influenced section, “The Masque” in Part II of *The Age of Anxiety*, the piano introduces a syncopated melody in mm. 69 to 80. It is in three-measure phrases and the main ingredient that makes the melody memorable is the ascending minor sixth in the m. 69. The direction of the melodic line clearly ascends from a to g’;³⁰ however, with the inserted minor sixth between c’ and a-flat’ (an upper neighbor to the g’), Bernstein perhaps tried to draw the audience’s attention

²⁹ One can find an online score of Bernstein’s *Three Dance Episodes* from *On the Town* through the website of Boosey & Hawkes, <http://www.boosey.com/pages/cr/perusals/score.asp?id=10446> (accessed 1 March 2013).

³⁰ C below the bass staff is C, C on the bass staff is c, and middle C is c’.

(Ex. 2-6). Within this long phrase, Bernstein inserted a subtle change in m. 78: he moved c' one half-step higher to c-sharp', which adds some variety to the phrase and keeps its freshness.

Example 2-6. *The Age of Anxiety*, "The Masque," mm. 69-80.

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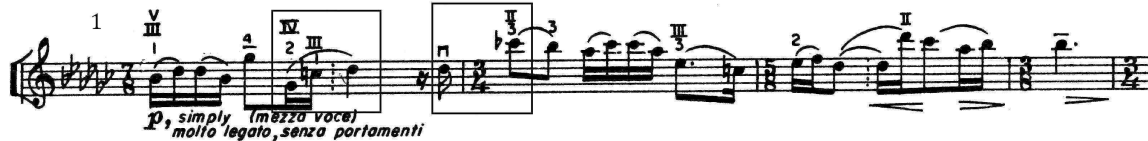
The image displays a musical score for Piano Solo, consisting of three systems of music. The first system, starting at measure 69, features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment. The melody is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and the instruction "with warmth". The second system, starting at measure 71, continues the melodic and accompanimental lines. A circled number "15" is placed above the melody in measure 78, with the instruction "lightly" written next to it. The dynamic marking changes to *pp* (pianissimo) in this system. The third system, starting at measure 76, shows further development of the musical material, maintaining the piano solo texture.

The most important compositional element in *Serenade* is its melodies. At the opening the solo violin carries a broad melody that includes many disjunct intervals (Ex. 2-7). This melody bears many of Bernstein's trademarks, such as the ascending tritone (m. 1) followed by another ascending minor second, similar to "Maria" from *West Side Story*, and also the ascending minor seventh (mm. 2-3), which also appears frequently in Bernstein's music, such as the opening of "Somewhere" from *West Side Story* and in "My House" from *Peter Pan*, after the opening question of "Will you build me a house?" "A house that really will be mine" also begins with an

ascending minor seventh, as does the beginning of the refrain of “A Simple Song” from *Mass*.

Example 2-7. *Serenade*, “Phaedrus: Pausanias,” solo violin, mm. 1-4.

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Bernstein often makes a large interval a structural part of a melody, even adding two smaller intervals to produce the larger interval in important places. For instance, right before the violinist plays the cadenza section in the fourth movement, “Agathon,” the first violin plays two ascending fourths separated by a major second, which is the same construction as “New York, New York” in *On the Town* (Ex. 2-8). This is clearly not a quotation of “New York, New York;” however, this kind of combination is not hard to find in Bernstein’s music.

Example 2-8. *Serenade*, “Agathon,” first violin, mm. 35-36.

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Another example is in the “Opening Trio” of *Trouble in Tahiti*, when the trio sings “suburbia,” it consists of C—F—G—C. This example obviously includes the similar texture and musical style as “New York, New York” in *Trouble in Tahiti*, making it an obvious quotation by the composer. We can also find similar descending leaps in Bernstein’s music. For example, in “The Epilogue” of *The Age of Anxiety*, starting from rehearsal number B, trumpet 1 plays a descending A-flat—E-flat—D-flat—A-flat several times and this gesture keeps returning in the movement, such as the flute part at rehearsal number D or French horns at rehearsal number I. At the end of the Clarinet Sonata, in the fourth measure after rehearsal number V, we note an ascending E—A—D—E—A—E, which is still based on the ascending fourth idea but modified.

Use of Jazz Elements

Starting with Bernstein's senior thesis to his later lectures, such as those in the *Omnibus*, Bernstein kept describing his search for the American sound. In his writings and speeches, Bernstein described jazz as the key ingredient that makes music sound "American,"³¹ especially "the African-American rhythm, which, Bernstein argued, provided the central clue to the problem of American musical identity."³² In Geoffrey Block's research, African-American rhythms in jazz are "the indispensable starting point on the road to an authentic, modern, and assimilated American style"³³ to Bernstein and at the end of the section on African-American rhythms in Bernstein's senior thesis, he summarized his argument:

To sum up, then: American music owes one of its greatest debts to the Negroes, not only for the popularly acknowledged gift of jazz, but for the impetus which jazz has given to America's art music. This incentive has come in two ways—melodically and rhythmically—with further support from tone color and contrapuntal feeling. Both the scale patterns and the rhythm pattern, as first manifested in jazz itself, were used freely in symphonic composition by men like Gershwin. With more advanced composers or with composers in a more advanced state, this initial use—especially of the rhythms—has grown into a new style, which might be called the first tangible indigenous style that can be identified in American music.³⁴

Bernstein's thesis is remarkable on how well it predicts this aspect of his mature music. He tried to find the national elements in American music, not only in this thesis but also for his whole career as a composer and a conductor. He, as an ambassador of American music, brought works by American composers to Europe

³¹ Leonard Bernstein, *The Infinite Variety of Music* (New York: Amadeus, 1993), 49-64.

³² Geoffrey Block, "Bernstein's Senior Thesis At Harvard: The Roots of a Lifelong Search to Discover an American Identity," *College Music Symposium*, 48 (2008), 53.

³³ Block, 57.

³⁴ Leonard Bernstein, *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 87.

and also composed with awareness of finding American voice. He argued “the cultivation of a single racial root can never satisfy Americans as a people”³⁵ and believed that a universally representative basis for American music had been achieved by the combination of two prominent musical styles: the European concert music brought by the New England colonists and the jazz music.³⁶ As he said in the thesis, “a composer’s music is the sum of all his experience,”³⁷ and Bernstein’s output reflects the influences of the academic training based on the European music as well as the deliberate use of jazz elements.

In Bernstein’s television talk about “Jazz in Serious Music” on 25 January 1959, he cited Copland’s Third Symphony to exemplify how concert music might include elements of jazz.³⁸ He considered jazz elements as possible inclusions in concert music but put a line between jazz and ragtime, which he said in “Jazz in Serious Music”: “Ragtime, they called it then, a half-breed music, bred in New Orleans out of African drumming and French military marches and Polish polkas,”³⁹ but jazz “showed more Negro influence” than ragtime, “like those blue notes we did not find in ragtime, and much more variety of tone color, being essentially a music for orchestra rather than solo piano; it was more involved, more sophisticated, less ‘square,’ less ricky-ticky.”⁴⁰

In February 1947 the popular journal *Esquire* invited Bernstein and jazz

³⁵ Bernstein, *Findings*, 39.

³⁶ Bernstein, 40.

³⁷ Bernstein, 55.

³⁸ Bernstein, *The Infinite Variety of Music*, 50.

³⁹ Bernstein, 51.

⁴⁰ Bernstein, 55.

drummer Gene Krupa to have a debate on the issue of “Has Jazz Influenced the Symphony?”⁴¹ The editors expected that Krupa’s answer was “no” while Bernstein said “yes.” Instead of simply saying “yes,” Bernstein stated:

There is nothing more provocative and challenging than participating in a debate when one is convinced that both sides are wrong. ... When I say that both sides are wrong, I am maintaining that those who separate serious music from the influence of jazz are either ignoring profound musical trends, or else have an ax to grind, and should take the matter up with Aldous Huxley; and that those, on the other hand, who point with pride to the “jazzy” works of Stravinsky, Milhaud and Walter Piston have mistaken “influence” for “fad,” and should talk it over carefully with Humphrey Bogart.⁴²

When defining what the American sounds are, Bernstein advocated, “a national music is national in direct proportion to how close to its home audiences feel.”⁴³ He believed that “the really remarkable thing about jazz for the serious composer was that it solved simultaneously the two problems of being original and of being American.”⁴⁴ He hailed George Gershwin (1898-1937) as the one who made the material of jazz “a sort of symphonization in the tradition of the European masters,”⁴⁵ which is different than what Stravinsky and Ravel did in their music. In Bernstein’s observation, Gershwin made a conscious effort to fuse jazz with concert music: the effort was to “borrow the techniques of European symphonic tradition, in

⁴¹ “Jazz Forum: Has Jazz Influenced the Symphony?” (Article in the form of a debate with Gene Krupa, published in *Esquire* 27 [February 1947], 46ff), Bernstein’s typescript dated 18-19 August, 1946, box 71, folder 17, Leonard Bernstein Collection in the Library of Congress. © Amberson Holdings. Used by permission of the Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

⁴² “Jazz Forum,” 47.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ “Jazz Forum,” 152.

order to have a soil in which to plant his natural busting seeds of jazz."⁴⁶ He also tried to define "what we mean by 'jazz',"⁴⁷ and attempted to make a distinction between the commercial song and the "freely improvised jazz of Negro origin."⁴⁸ In his point of view, a popular song like Gershwin's "Fascinatin' Rhythm" has had "no influence whatsoever on serious music," but the improvised jazz that influenced Gershwin's song has also influenced symphonic music.⁴⁹

What Bernstein called the "jazzy part"⁵⁰ in *Jeremiah* is the second movement, which applies to his use of irregular accents and 7/8 meter. These characteristics are not close to what we define as jazz rhythm today and will be discussed below. Nonetheless, "Part II" of *The Age of Anxiety* is jazzier than "Part I." The opening of "The Dirge," which is the first movement of "Part II" and the fourth movement of the whole symphony, includes syncopation, with emphases on the second beat and the second halves of the third beat and fourth beat. This is what Bernstein considered jazz rhythm. Meanwhile, the accents also help to stress the *pesante* character and create a feeling of dragging (Ex. 2-9).

⁴⁶ Bernstein, 60.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ "Jazz Forum," 153.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Example 2-9. *The Age of Anxiety*, “The Dirge,” mm. 1-8.

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The image displays a musical score for the first eight measures of "The Dirge" from Leonard Bernstein's *The Age of Anxiety*. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system (measures 1-4) includes staves for Ob. 1.2, E. H., B. Cl., Bsn. 1.2, Hn. 1.2 in F, and Harp. The second system (measures 5-8) includes staves for Ob. 1.2, E. H., B. Cl., Bsn. 1.2, Hn. 1.2 in F, and Harp. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor), and the time signature is 3/4. The music is characterized by a somber, dirge-like quality, with a prominent triplet rhythm in the piano part. Dynamics include *f pesante* for the woodwinds and *mf pesante* for the horns and harp.

“The Masque,” the fifth movement, applies a typical swing rhythm (paired long-short notes in a triplet) in the piano part, which is another common jazz rhythm, and Bernstein’s orchestration also strengthens our ear’s association with jazz in this work. In this movement, the piano, an instrument that often appears in the rhythm section in a jazz band, leads the orchestra, and Bernstein adds a drum set that includes cymbal, bass drum, snare drum, tenor drum, triangle, and temple

blocks (Ex. 2-10). Piano, drum set, and double bass are essential instruments in the rhythm section in a big band, such as those of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and Benny Goodman. In the symphony, Bernstein used only piano, double bass, and drum set thoroughly from rehearsal number 9 to 12, and this is the same rhythm section that Duke Ellington had in the 1950s. Besides the similar instrumentation, with the appearance of written-out long-short rhythms, which resembles the shuffle rhythm, the composer added more of the flavor of big band music to the symphony. Interestingly, usually it is the rhythm section that constantly leads the shuffle rhythm; however, in this movement, it is the piano that plays the triplets all the time when the percussion stays straight. In a recording that Bernstein conducted, we can find that the composer wanted the orchestra play exactly as what he wrote in the score (*Bernstein Conducts Bernstein*,⁵¹ *The Age of Anxiety*, disc 3 track 8, 0'00" – 0'20").

⁵¹ *Bernstein Conducts Bernstein*, collectors edition, Deutsche Grammophon, 469 829-2, 2003.

Example 2-10. *The Age of Anxiety*, “The Masque,” mm. 1-9.

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Extremely fast ♩ = 120

Piano Solo

1

mf *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

Percussion

Susp. Cym. # 1. *with brush* *mp*

Bass Dr. (Small) *pp with brush*

Snare Dr. 2. *p*

Tenor Dr. 3.

Triangle 3.

2 Temple Blocks

Timpani with pedals

Bernstein effectively used jazz characteristics in the second half of “Socrates: Alcibiades,” the fifth movement of *Serenade*. It first appears in m. 121, which is only a short, four-bar statement (Ex. 2-11). The long-short rhythm recalls swing rhythms, and the accents help establish the swing feeling with the help of the tempo of *Allegro molto vivace*. This figure first appears in the string section, and when it recurs in m. 156, it expands to the entire orchestra (Ex. 2-12).

Example 2-11. *Serenade*, "Socrates: Alcibiades," mm. 121-125.

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Musical score for Example 2-11, measures 121-125. The score is for five instruments: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The music is in a minor key and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The number 121 is written above the first measure of the Violin 1 staff.

Example 2-12. *Serenade*, "Socrates: Alcibiades," mm. 156-160.

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Musical score for Example 2-12, measures 156-160. The score is for a full orchestra including Solo Violin, Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass, Harp, Glass Harmonica, Timpani, Snare Drum, and Cymbal. The tempo is "Molto giocoso". The score includes various dynamics such as "div.", "sempre ff", and "con corde". The number 156 is written above the first measure of the Solo Violin staff.

These jazzy rhythms appear often in *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*. In the instrumental introduction of “New York, New York” Bernstein used extensive syncopation, as well as in the chorus, which will be discussed in more detail below. In “Gabey’s Comin’,” a number dropped in the original production but used in the 1998 revival, the first section is marked “hot and dirty” by the composer, which applies to the dotted rhythm and syncopation. Moreover, in “Carnegie Hall Pavane,” Bernstein used “swing” and close harmonies like those heard from the Andrews Sisters to contrast with the “Tempo di Pavane” section.

The same stylistic features also occur in *Wonderful Town*. The most obvious number with jazz influence is “Swing.” When Ruth tries to work as a human billboard and feels embarrassed, she starts singing the number “squarely” and after the villagers’ help, she learns the requisite style of swing. Bernstein uses a clarinet as the solo instrument and adds blue notes and the trumpets play with Harmon mutes. The instrumentation here is similar to a big band: piano, drum set and double bass for the rhythm section together with trumpets, trombones, clarinets, saxophones, and strings. The rhythm of dotted eighth with a sixteenth keeps returning and in such a fast pace it sounds no different than the shuffle rhythm in jazz. Ruth gradually gets the idea of “swing” in this number and the triplets and syncopations deepen this jazz atmosphere. “The Wrong Note Rag” is another apparent number that borrows from jazz while “One Hundred Easy Ways to Lose a Man” also includes a “moderate swing” tempo marking, and the dotted rhythms are performed as long-short triplets.

Using jazz elements is a natural part of Bernstein's style and to be expected in his Broadway musicals as well as his concert music. Besides these large-scale works, Lars Erik Helgert also found such material in the chamber music. For example, at the rehearsal number C in the first movement of the Clarinet Sonata, the piano has the perpetual eighth-notes, which is similar to the gesture of boogie-woogie piano and starting from rehearsal number D, the left hand for the piano is similar to the melody of Meade "Lux" Lewis's "Honky Tonk Train Blues," but with a different rhythmic pattern.⁵² Bernstein used jazz elements more obviously in the second movement of this sonata. Starting at rehearsal number A, which is in 5/8 (the type of irregular meter described in the next section), the simultaneous use of C and C-sharp on the downbeat in the piano creates what Bernstein called a "quarter-tone," and it is also how pianists create blue notes, of which we will see more examples later. The use of jazz elements consistently appears in Bernstein's output. *West Side Story* opens with a jazzy "Prologue" and later in the show, more and more materials are borrowed from Latin-American music, which have also influenced jazz throughout its history. *Touches*, a work for piano in 1981, opens with a "Chorale" that has "a blues feel." As what he emphasized in his thesis in 1939, "the jazz influence is common to *all* Americans; the New England influence only to those from whom it is a heritage."⁵³

⁵² Lars Erik Helgert, "Jazz Elements in Selected Concert Works of Leonard Bernstein: Sources, Reception, and Analysis" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 2008), 209-211.

⁵³ The emphasis is Bernstein's. Bernstein, *Findings*, 40.

Irregular Accents and Shifting Meters

Bernstein classified the irregular accents in the category of jazz in his statement in “Jazz Forum: Has Jazz Influenced the Symphony? Leonard Bernstein Says Yes!”⁵⁴ He argued: “One invariably associates the word ‘syncopation’ with jazz,”⁵⁵ and in Bernstein’s definition, the syncopation includes irregular accents. Bernstein cited various rhythmic examples that he believes came from jazz: 3+3+2 in a quadruple meter measure, but also something as complex as 2+3+2+2+3+3+2, which clearly sounds more like Stravinsky than typical jazz.⁵⁶ He further complicated the issue by citing several dances—Charleston (3+3+2), rumba (3+3+2), and conga (with a prominently displaced beat)—to serve as examples. Although Bernstein believed he was identifying one of the most important characteristics of jazz music, he unfortunately brought together examples from practices in modern concert music, Latin dances, and jazz. Bernstein quoted the scherzo of his *Jeremiah* in the debate and insisted “the scherzo movement of my symphony *Jeremiah* would certainly not bring any connotation of jazz to mind”; however, he contradictorily continued, “and yet it could never have been written if jazz were not an integral part of my life.”⁵⁷

The “jazz” he cites here is the use of irregular accents and shifting meters (Ex. 2-13). A famous example of irregular accents in jazz-influenced music is “In the

⁵⁴ “Jazz Forum: Has Jazz Influenced the Symphony?” (article in the form of a debate with Gene Krupa, published in *Esquire* 27 [February 1947], 46ff), Bernstein’s typescript dated 18-19 August, 1946, box 71, folder 17, Leonard Bernstein Collection in the Library of Congress. © Amberson Holdings. Used by permission of the Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

⁵⁵ “Jazz Forum,” 153.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Mood” by Glenn Miller, released in 1939. This piece is in cut time and every two-measure segment is one phrase. Nonetheless, the groupings of the notes do not follow the accents of regular duple meter. It includes many off-beats and syncopations in the initial four measures and the grouping of eighth notes is 6+7+3 (or 6+6+4, depending on which side one puts the rest) for mm. 5 to 6. After the introduction, the music of the A section goes to 2+3+3+3+5 with the help of accent marks. The accents are on beats 2 and 3½ in the first measure and beats 1, 2½, and 3½ in the second measure, which creates a rhythm of quarter—dotted-quarter—dotted-quarter—dotted-quarter—quarter—dotted-quarter. By retaining this pattern, though it has irregular accents, “In the Mood” still maintains its rhythmic stability. Bernstein’s insistence that he was influenced by jazz remains an important consideration, but one also must note that this passage in the *Jeremiah* also looks and sounds like many works by Stravinsky and other concert music composers.

Example 2-13. *Jeremiah*, second movement, mm. 1-7.

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The musical score for Example 2-13, "Jeremiah", second movement, measures 1-7, is presented in a standard orchestral format. The tempo is marked "Vivace con brio" with a metronome marking of quarter note = 84. The time signature is 8/8 in 3. The score includes parts for Piccolo, Flute 1 and 2, Oboe 1 and 2, English Horn, Eb Clarinet, and Bb Clarinet 1 and 2. The music features complex rhythmic patterns with accents and dynamic markings such as "p" (piano) and "mp" (mezzo-piano). The score is divided into two sections: the first section (measures 1-4) is marked with a tempo of quarter note = 84 and a time signature of 8/8 in 3, and the second section (measures 5-7) is marked with a tempo of quarter note = 84 and a time signature of 7/8 in 3.

In the first seven measures of *Jeremiah's* second movement (Ex. 2-13), however, Bernstein used the eighth note as the basic unit, and the meter changes from 6/8 to 8/8, 6/8, 8/8, 7/8, and 6/8, which creates an atmosphere of restlessness. These eighth notes sometimes are grouped in two, sometimes in three, creating the feeling of irregular accents. The composer even wrote down clear conducting directions ("Beat 8/8 in 3" in the second measure and "Beat 7/8 in 3" in the sixth measure). Despite Bernstein's comparison of these rhythms with jazz, and even insisting that jazz is a major influence on this movement, this rhythmic pattern, or the shifting meter, is again more reminiscent of Stravinsky than a jazz piece. For example, in "Ritual of Abduction" of *The Rite of Spring*, Stravinsky began with 9/8, and interspersed the section with bars 4/8, 5/8, 12/8, 6/8, 3/4, 2/4, 3/8, 2/8, and so on. We do find the use of irregular meter in jazz music, such as in "5/4 Samba;" or some of Dave Brubeck Quartet's works from the end of 1950s to the beginning of 1960s: "Take Five" is in 5, "Unsquare Dance" is in 7, and "Blue Rondo à la Turk" is in 9/8 but the notes are grouped as both 2+2+2+3 and 3+3+3; or Claude Bolling's "Javanaise" from his Suite for Flute and Jazz Piano Trio (1973). However, usually the meter in jazz does not change frequently and drastically as it does in the second movement of the *Jeremiah*. Dave Brubeck's "Blue Rondo à la Turk" has a meter change from 9/8 to 4/4 in the middle section, but the 4/4 stays for the whole section, rather than lasting only a few measures. For the purposes of this document, we will distinguish between jazz-like syncopation (described above) and the use of shifting meters and irregular accents.

It seems that to Bernstein, meter is a means of grouping small units. He did not feel that he necessarily needed to follow regular metric schemes, and staying in the same meter for a whole section was not his wont. Instead, for Bernstein the meter serves as a tool to phrase these musical ideas. Meter changes are frequent in the second movement of *Jeremiah*. For example, two measures before rehearsal number 23, Bernstein changed the meter each measure: 3/4, 3/8, 4/4, 3/8, 2/4, 3/8, 4/4, 3/8 (from mm. 174 to 181). One of the most noticeable things in this section is that the 3/8 measure is like a returning idea. The rhythm is a dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note and an eighth (Ex. 2-14), and starting in m. 157, whether the melody descends or ascends, it is always stepwise (Ex. 2-14).

Example 2-14. *Jeremiah*, second movement, mm. 174-181.

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The musical score for Example 2-14, *Jeremiah*, second movement, mm. 174-181, is presented for a full orchestra. The score includes parts for Piccolo, Flute 1 and 2, Oboe 1 and 2, English Horn, E-flat Clarinet, B-flat Clarinet 1 and 2, Bass Clarinet, Bassoon 1 and 2, Contrabassoon, Horn 1, 2, 3, and 4, Trumpet 1, 2, and 3, Trombone 1, 2, and 3, and Tuba. The score shows a complex rhythmic structure with frequent meter changes. A rehearsal mark '23' is circled at the beginning of the section. Dynamics include 'f molto cantando', 'mf', and 'f espr.'. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature changes between 5/4, 4/4, and 6/4.

In the first movement of *Jeremiah* we can also find similar segments of constant meter changes. Right before the end of the movement, starting from one measure before rehearsal number 14, the meter changes four times in five measures: from 5/4 to 4/4, 5/4, and 6/4 (Ex. 2-15). A difference between these two movements is that in the first the music tends to be more declamatory and the changes of meter are less important and not so obvious. The shift of accents is more

apparent in the dance-like second movement, which has clear and constant pulses. Comparatively, the slower tempo and longer melodic line in the first movement reduce the instability of irregular meter (5/4) or consistent change of time signatures, such as what we see below in example 2-15, or starting from rehearsal number 7 where it begins with 5/4, 6/4, 7/4, 4/4, and then goes back to 5/4, which can be another good example.

Example 2-15. *Jeremiah*, first movement, mm. 78-82.

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The musical score for Example 2-15, *Jeremiah*, first movement, mm. 78-82, is presented in five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The score begins with a rehearsal mark (14) circled above the first measure. The music features complex meter changes and dynamic markings. A '3+2' marking is present above the second measure of the second system. The lower three parts (Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass) have a note: '* Lower three parts change bows freely'.

In the third movement, “Lamentation,” there are fewer meter changes than in the previous two movements; meter changes mostly occur when the vocal line is prominent—perhaps because Bernstein tried to depict the prophet’s grief and composed a speech-like line, which is more active than a common recitative and includes chromaticism, grace notes, and rhythms that require more changes of the meter. Compared to his other vocal works, the melodic line of “Lamentation” is more conjunct and only in the climax (starting at rehearsal number 13) does Bernstein use more large intervals to emphasize the agitated emotion.

“The Seven Ages,” the second movement of *The Age of Anxiety* is a series of variations, which naturally applies a change of meter to each variation. In the second variation, Bernstein used beams across barlines to shift the anticipated accent and changed the grouping of eighth notes from two to three in mm. 55 to 56 and again in mm. 58 to 59 (Ex. 2-16).

Example 2-16. *The Age of Anxiety*, the second variation of “The Seven Stages,” mm. 48-60.

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The image displays a musical score for Example 2-16, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system, starting at measure 48, is titled "Largamente, ma mosso" with a tempo marking of a quarter note equal to 63. It includes staves for Violin I (VI. I.), Violin II (VI. II.), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabasso (Cb.). The first violin part features a melody with large intervals, including two continuous ascending perfect fourths in measures 49 and 50. Dynamic markings include "f sempre" and "(pizz.)". The second system, starting at measure 56, continues the piece with dynamic markings such as "mp", "p", "cresc.", "dim.", "arco", and "P espr.".

In this fragment we can observe not only the irregular accents but also the melody that is constructed of large intervals, such as the two continuous ascending perfect fourths in mm. 49 to 50 and also a series of descending fourths and fifths in mm. 58 to 60 in the first violin line. In the fourth variation, the composer applied

5/8 meter, which would be divided into two uneven groups and causes irregular accents (Ex. 2-17).

Example 2-17. *The Age of Anxiety*, the fourth variation of “The Seven Ages,” mm. 83-87.

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The image shows a musical score for the fourth variation of "The Seven Ages" from "The Age of Anxiety". The score is in 5/8 time and is marked "Più mosso" with a tempo of 66. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes parts for Tr. in C (1. 2.), Tr. in Bb (3.), Tr. in Bb (1. 2.), Perc. (Glock.), Piano Solo, VI. I., VI. II., VI. a., and Vc. The Piano Solo part is marked "mp" and "grazioso". The string parts (VI. I., VI. II., VI. a., Vc.) are marked "pizz." and "p". The woodwind parts (Tr. in C, Tr. in Bb) are marked "con sord." and "p". The Percussion part (Glock.) is marked "pp". The score is divided into two systems, each with four staves. The first system includes Tr. in C, Tr. in Bb, Perc., and Piano Solo. The second system includes VI. I., VI. II., VI. a., and Vc.

In “The Dirge,” the first movement of Part II in *The Age of Anxiety*, Bernstein used a more common meter (3/2) and created the unexpected accents through heavy, density chords on the second quarter note and second half of the third and fourth quarter notes, which easily draw the audience’s attention. Meanwhile, Bernstein also changes note groupings in the oboe melody. In m. 6 the melody can be divided into three half-notes; however, in m. 7 it turns to two dotted-half-notes

and then come back to the previous grouping in m. 8, which is close to a hemiola (Ex. 2-18).

Example 2-18. *The Age of Anxiety*, “The Dirge,” mm. 6-8.

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The image shows a musical score for measures 6, 7, and 8 of "The Dirge" from "The Age of Anxiety". The score is arranged in a system with seven staves. From top to bottom, the staves are: Oboe 1 & 2 (Ob. 1.2), English Horn (E. H.), Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.), Bassoon 1 & 2 (Bsn. 1.2), Horn 1 & 2 in F (Hn. 1.2), Harp, and Piano Solo. The piano part begins with a rest in measure 6 and 7, then enters in measure 8 with a "brillante" section. The music is in 2/4 time and features complex rhythmic groupings and accents across all instruments.

In “The Masque,” we can find abundant examples of Bernstein’s constantly changing the grouping of notes and accents. The beginning of the movement Bernstein indicated three different meters: 2/4 (in all parts), 4/8 (in percussion), and 12/16 (in piano part). One might expect that the composer would group notes by two or four, and he did so in the percussion in the opening ten measures. However, the piano seems hardly to fit in this mold. It is constantly grouped as three eighth notes. Starting at m. 12, the left hand keeps playing a three-eighth-note figure while the right hand plays syncopations, which obscures the accent (Ex. 2-19).

Example 2- 19. *The Age of Anxiety*, “The Masque,” mm. 10-20.

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The image shows a piano solo score for measures 10 through 20. The music is written in a 3/4 time signature. The right hand features a melodic line with various dynamics and articulations, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment. Key markings include *semi-legato sempre*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, *molto*, *pp fantastico*, and *mf*. The score is divided into two systems, with rehearsal marks at measures 10 and 16.

At rehearsal number 10 (Ex. 2-20), the figure of three eighth-notes seems to pause momentarily and Bernstein skips the first beat of each measure. Meanwhile, with the use of syncopations, neither the first nor the second beat of the measure is clear. Later on, at rehearsal number 11, the music returns to the previous pattern of three eighth-notes in the left hand against syncopations in the right hand.

Example 2-20. *The Age of Anxiety*, “The Masque,” mm. 31-35.

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The image shows a piano solo score for measures 31 through 35. The music is written in a 3/4 time signature. The right hand features a melodic line with various dynamics and articulations, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment. Key markings include *f* and *tre corde*. The score is divided into two systems, with a rehearsal mark at measure 31.

Starting with rehearsal number 16, Bernstein began to use a 3+2 pattern with occasionally groupings of 2+3 (Ex. 2-21). When music goes to rehearsal

number 17, the composer indicated 2/4+3/8, which eventually created a 2+2+3 feeling (Ex. 2-22).

Example 2-21. *The Age of Anxiety*, “The Masque,” mm. 81-85.

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Example 2-22. *The Age of Anxiety*, “The Masque,” mm. 91-95.

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The beginning of *Serenade* also shows frequent change of meters, as may be seen in Ex. 2-7 (on page 88 above), which proceeds through 7/8, 3/4, 5/8, 3/8, and 3/4. The composer used a different meter for each measure. In a slow tempo, this shifting of meters creates a declamatory feeling, which is similar to the first movement of *Jeremiah*. We can find a similar example in Stravinsky’s “A Kiss of the Earth,” from the first part of the ballet *The Rite of Spring*, which is also in a slower tempo. The composer shifts between 4/4, 3/4, and 2/4. With the help of fermatas,

the feeling of uncertainty is more obvious. Rather than using regular phrasing and accents, the whole section works in a declamatory manner.

At the beginning of “Agathon,” the fourth movement of *Serenade*, we find the composer using three different meters in the first three measures (Ex. 2-23). With the repetitive five-note accompaniment pattern in the first violin and cello, Bernstein creates polyrhythms with rich use of cross-accents. Even in the accompaniment parts that share the same pattern, the composer deliberately separates the figures to avoid arousing unified strong accents. Meanwhile, Bernstein put a dotted line in between the two halves of the second measure. Apparently, this line has nothing to do with the accompaniment pattern in the first violin and cello but helps to subdivide the solo line and other parts in the orchestra.

Example 2-23. *Serenade*, “Agathon,” mm. 1-3.

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The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The score is for measures 1-3 of "Agathon" from the fourth movement of *Serenade*. The music is in 6/8 time. The first violin and cello parts feature a repetitive five-note accompaniment pattern. The score includes various performance instructions such as "con sord.", "div.", "pp", "murmurando", "pizz. vibrato", and "unis.". A dotted line is placed between the two halves of the second measure, indicating a subdivision of the solo line and other parts in the orchestra.

This feeling of shifting accents not only appears in “Agathon,” but also in other places of *Serenade*, even in passages at faster tempos. In addition to applying

different meters, Bernstein also used displaced accents and repetitive patterns that do not match regular metrical stresses.

Constant change of meters, like what we have in symphonic works, does not occur often in *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*. However, the feeling of displaced accents continuously happens in both musicals. In the instrumental introduction of “New York, New York,” Bernstein used different rhythmic groupings, each time following a dissonant chord (Ex. 2-24). The first group is in the second measure; the strong bass accent is on the downbeat. In the second group, we have two strong accents in the bass on the second beat and the second half of the third beat. In measure 5 and 6, with the change of meter from 3/4 to 4/4, we have accents on beats 1, 1½, 2½, 3, and 4. In addition, the three-eighth-note periodicity happening in every group is placed against a quarter-note periodicity.

Example 2-24. *On the Town*, “New York, New York,” mm. 1-8.

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Allegro feroce
W.W., Br.

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 4. The second system contains measures 5 through 8. The score is written for Piano (Piano) and Strings/Trombones (Strs., Tbns.). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo is marked 'Allegro feroce'. The score includes various dynamics such as *ff* (fortissimo), *sfz* (sforzando), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *molto*. The meter changes from 3/4 in measures 1-4 to 4/4 in measures 5-8. The piano part features complex rhythmic groupings, including three-eighth-note patterns against quarter-note periodicity, and displaced accents. The strings and trombones provide a rhythmic accompaniment with accents on specific beats.

In “Presentation of Miss Turnstiles” from *On the Town*, in order to illustrate the different fantasies suggested concerning Miss Turnstiles, Bernstein altered the meter for each section. The composer used 5/4 for the “Allegretto di ‘Ballet Class’”; therefore, the combination of beats for the melody is either 2+3 or the reverse. Moreover, we can also observe a subdivision of 2+2+3+3 in mm. 30 to 31 (Ex. 2-25). As for the accompaniment, it is 3+2 in the beginning and then turns to 2+3, which does not always match the phrasing of the melody.

Example 2-25. *On the Town*, “Presentation of Miss Turnstiles,” mm. 28-34.
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C **Allegretto di “Ballet Class”**

28 Fl., Cl., Pno.
 Bs. Cl., Hns. sust.
p dolce e legato

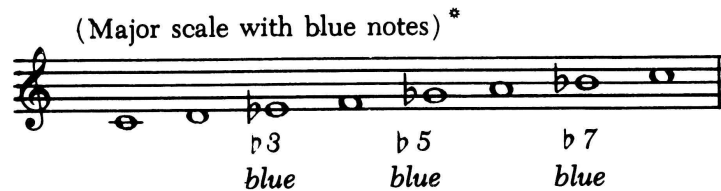
Cl. II, Vla. + Vc. pizz.

31

Use of the Blues Scale

In Bernstein's series of discussion of what jazz is, he considered that rhythm and the blues scale were the most distinguishable features in jazz. He stated in his Harvard honors thesis from 1939 that the blues scale "is entirely limited to diatonic music"⁵⁸ and consists of a flat third, flat fifth, and flat seventh (Ex. 2-26). After a discussion of how European composers, such as Ravel, Stravinsky, Milhaud, and so on, freely used jazz, Bernstein came to a conclusion: "This whole discussion, then, shows that the least universal and most restricted feature of Negro music, the (blue) scale, has had a considerable effect upon American music."⁵⁹ In referring to the blues as "diatonic," Bernstein clearly was thinking about the melodic aspect only, because a blue scale with its microtones does not fit within a diatonic collection. His description of the blue scale as "least universal" and "restricted" is probably a comparison to the general language of the tonal Western music and also refers to the fact that the blues comes from the African-American community, which is distinctive.

Example 2-26. Blues scale.⁶⁰



⁵⁸ This is probably not true. For we may consider the vocal effect of the blues as microtonal. Leonard Bernstein, *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 54.

⁵⁹ Bernstein, *Findings*, 56-57.

⁶⁰ Bernstein, "The World of Jazz," *The Joy of Music*, 111.

Bernstein believed that the reason that jazz pianists played the major and minor thirds (or fifths and seventh) at the same time, creating a strong dissonance, is because the pianists “are really searching for a note that isn’t there at all. . . . and the note is called a quarter-tone.” (Ex. 2-27) The quarter-tone can be produced on a wind or string instrument or with the voice, but “on the piano we have to approximate it by playing together the two notes on each side of it.”⁶¹ The solution that he offers here has been heard in the music of many composers. In his thesis, Bernstein explained how these blue notes can be used:

The flatted seventh, for instance, is never used melodically as a leading tone; that would occasion a modality far removed from this one. But this seventh is often found sounded melodically against the leading-tone seventh in the harmony, producing a cross-relation that is one of the platitudes of jazz. As to the flatted fifth, it is used mainly as a kind of *appoggiatura* to the fourth in descending figures. The flatted third gives a strong minor quality to the music; but a minor of a special nature, since it is used melodically against a major harmony. . . . It is this major-minor conflict in the cases of both the third and the seventh that imparts the special Negro flavor.⁶²

In the thesis, Bernstein used Copland’s Piano Concerto for examples to support his findings. Later in his career as a composer, Bernstein also followed his inclination to use these blue notes in his music.

Example 2-27. Simultaneously playing the original and the blue note.⁶³



⁶¹ Bernstein, *The Joy of Music*, 113.

⁶² Bernstein, *Findings*, 53.

⁶³ Bernstein, *The Joy of Music*, 113

In 1930s to 1940s, jazz played an important role in the urban life of New York City. In order to evoke such a feeling, Bernstein pervasively used blue notes in *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*, along with other jazz elements, which have been discussed in the previous section. We can also find the use of blue notes in his concert works. “The Masque” in *The Age of Anxiety* is the most jazz-influenced movement in the symphony. Although Bernstein constantly changed the tonal center, by observing where the center is at a particular moment we can still find the use of blue notes. For example, in m. 24 the tonal center for the piano part is C and therefore the B-flat and G-flat sound like blue notes in the next measure (Ex. 2-28). But we can also analyze it as using a G-flat major triad. However, because Bernstein was inserting jazz traits into concert music rather than a composed jazz work, the purpose of using these blue notes is to add flavor rather than to create “authentic” jazz.

Example 2-28. *The Age of Anxiety*, “The Masque,” mm. 24-25.

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The image shows a musical score for piano solo, measures 24-25. The score is written for the right and left hands of the piano. The right hand is in treble clef and the left hand is in bass clef. The tempo is marked *PPP* (pianissimo) and the performance instruction is *una corda*. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The right hand melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a B-flat and G-flat in the second measure. The left hand accompaniment consists of chords and single notes, with an F in the bass.

The cross-relation caused by playing a blue note and its counterpart that Bernstein described in his thesis also appears in this movement. Starting with m. 69, the composer played with A and A-flat in the right hand melody of piano, bringing into play the ambiguous third of the blues over the F in the bass (Ex. 2-29).

Example 2-29. *The Age of Anxiety*, “The Masque,” mm. 71-75.

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The image shows a musical score for a piano solo. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the right hand and a bass clef staff for the left hand. The music is in 3/4 time. The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes. A circled measure number '15' is placed above the final measure of the excerpt, with the word 'lightly' written next to it. The dynamic marking 'pp' (pianissimo) is also present in the final measure.

In addition to using blue notes frequently in his concert works, Bernstein also freely applied blue notes to his musicals. In the opening number of *On the Town*, “I Feel Like I’m Not Out of Bed Yet,” Bernstein used a flat seventh in the first phrase to help inform the audience that it is a morning in New York City (Ex. 2-30a). In the swing section of “Carnegie Hall Pavane,” the composer started with a flat third to change the mood and kept using flat thirds and sevenths to add a jazzy flavor (Ex. 2-30b). When composing *Wonderful Town*, Comden, Green, and Bernstein decided to set the background in the 1930s, an era of swing music. In the opening number, “Christopher Street,” Bernstein inserted a flat third at the end of every phrase sung by the guide or tourists (Ex. 2-30c). The composer added both flat third and seventh to the instrumental introduction of “One Hundred Easy Ways to Lose a Man” to create a distinctive atmosphere that contributes greatly to the song’s effect (Ex. 2-30d).

Example 2-30. The use of blue notes in *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*.

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a. *On the Town*, "I Feel Like I'm Not Out of Bed Yet," mm. 1-10.

Free and flowing

WORKMAN I ^(short)

I feel like I'm not out of bed yet.

7
Wkm. I
Oh, _____ Oh, the

Detailed description: This musical score is for the character Workman I. It is written in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The tempo/style is 'Free and flowing'. The lyrics are 'I feel like I'm not out of bed yet.' The first line shows a blue note (Bb) circled. The second line starts at measure 7 with the lyrics 'Oh, _____ Oh, the' and features a long melisma line. A blue note (Bb) is circled at the beginning of this line.

b. *On the Town*, "Carnegie Hall Pavane," mm. 27-30.

C **Swing**

27 **ff** SOPRANOS

On - wards! Do - do-re - do. On - wards! Up - wards!_ Sex has to go.

ff ALTOS

On - wards! Do - do-re - do. On - wards! Up - wards!_ Sex has to go.

Detailed description: This musical score is for the 'Carnegie Hall Pavane' section. It is written in treble clef with a swing feel. The tempo/style is 'Swing'. The dynamics are 'ff' (fortissimo). It features two vocal parts: Sopranos and Altos. The lyrics are 'On - wards! Do - do-re - do. On - wards! Up - wards!_ Sex has to go.' Blue notes (Bb) are circled in both parts.

c. *Wonderful Town*, "Christopher Street," mm. 9-16.

A

9 GUIDE

On your left, Wash-ing-ton Square, Right in the heart of Green-wich Vil-lage.

13 TOURISTS (SOPRANOS & ALTOS unis.)

My, what trees, Smell that air, Paint-ers and pig-eons in Wash-ing-ton Square.

TOURISTS (TENORS & BASSES unis.)

My, what trees, Smell that air, Paint-ers and pig-eons in Wash-ing-ton Square.

Detailed description: This musical score is for the 'Christopher Street' section. It is written in treble clef with a key signature of three flats. The tempo/style is 'Swing'. It features three vocal parts: a Guide and two groups of Tourists (Sopranos & Altos unis. and Tenors & Basses unis.). The lyrics are 'On your left, Wash-ing-ton Square, Right in the heart of Green-wich Vil-lage.' and 'My, what trees, Smell that air, Paint-ers and pig-eons in Wash-ing-ton Square.' Blue notes (Bb) are circled in the Guide and the Tenors & Basses parts.

d. *Wonderful Town*, “One Hundred Easy Ways to Lose a Man,” mm. 1-2.

Moderate swing

RUTH (*spoken*) (*sung*)

Chap - ter One. Now the

WW., Br., Pno + Strs.

Piano

The image shows a musical score for the first two measures of the piece. It features a vocal line for Ruth and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Moderate swing'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line starts with a spoken phrase 'Chap - ter One.' and then a sung phrase 'Now the'. The piano accompaniment includes parts for WW. (Waltz), Br. (Brass), Pno (Piano), and + Strs. (plus strings). Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The piano part has a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed notes and rests.

Bernstein did not hesitate to make use of jazz idioms in his concert works. He followed his conclusion in his Harvard thesis: jazz idioms made American music American. It is interesting to compare their careers as a composer between Bernstein and Gershwin. They are both American Jews and embrace the jazz idiom in their output. Gershwin is one of the composers that Bernstein respected and highly valued. When the news of Gershwin’s death came over the radio in 1937, Bernstein was working as the music counselor at Camp Onota and during the middle of the meal, he struck a loud chord to get people’s attention, announced that the greatest American Jewish composer had passed away, and then played one of Gershwin’s preludes.⁶⁴ When Bernstein launched his career of music director of New York Philharmonic in 1958, Gershwin’s music was one of his favorites during the season of 1958-59. He also used Gershwin in the series of Young People’s Concerts. They both composed for the Broadway as well as concert hall and both

⁶⁴ Burton, 38.

were aware of new music.⁶⁵ When applying jazz idioms, we would find that the employment of syncopations and blues notes are important to both of them.⁶⁶ Although Bernstein did not use jazz idioms as pervasively as did Gershwin in his concert music, Bernstein treated them as a distinctive style and applied them when needed. In *Jeremiah*, *The Age of Anxiety*, and *Serenade*, we can often find figures like those that he used in his musicals, such as the use of syncopation, blue notes, and lyrical, *cantabile* melodies that consisted of large intervals. Bernstein valued his American identity, which we can certainly see in his output for the concert hall as well as the American theater.

⁶⁵ Carol J. Oja, "Gershwin and American Modernists of the 1920s," *The Musical Quarterly*, vol. 78, no. 4 (Winter, 1994), 648.

⁶⁶ Larry Starr, "Ives, Gershwin, and Copland: Reflections on the Strange History of American Art Music," *American Music*, vol. 12, no. 2 (Summer, 1994), 167-187.

Chapter 3

Classical Traits in Bernstein's *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*

As a composer of both concert music and musical theater, Bernstein's music tends to show traits from both sides. He was not the first musician who composed for both fields, but not everyone who tried was as successful as Bernstein. For example, Victor Herbert (1859-1924) enjoyed a career as a cellist and conductor, but he is best remembered today for his works for the musical theater, although he also composed cello concertos and tone poems. John Philip Sousa (1854-1932) is remembered best for his marches today but he also composed operettas, in addition to other works.

We may also find some successful examples, such as George Gershwin. Gershwin desired a career in various areas of music and won success on Broadway as well as in the concert hall. His *Rhapsody in Blue* and Piano Concerto successfully demonstrate his ability to compose "serious" music with vernacular flavor, though his Broadway work constitutes a much larger part of his output. Many of the numbers from his shows are classics, such as "I Got Rhythm" from *Girl Crazy* (1930), and *Porgy and Bess* (1935) is now recognized as one of the finest and "most American"¹ operas.

¹ Ray Allen, "An American Folk Opera? Triangulating Folkness, Blackness, and Americanness in Gershwin and Hayward's *Porgy and Bess*," *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 117, no. 465 (Summer, 2004), 251.

William Schuman (1910-1992) began his career in popular music. He wrote songs with Frank Loesser, a neighbor who was also at the beginning of his career, and Loesser's first publication was a song with music by Schumann, "In Love with a Memory of You."² He then successfully went into the field of concert music. His Symphony No. 2 (1939) came to the attention of Aaron Copland, and his Symphony No.3 (1941) was awarded the first New York Music Critics' Circle Award, and *A Free Song* (1943) won the first Pulitzer Prize in music.

Aaron Copland, Bernstein's mentor and lifelong friend,³ did not work in popular music, but we may find some of its influences in his output, especially when he was trying to find his American sound. In his study with Nadia Boulanger, he was encouraged to discover his own voice and he found it in American vernacular idioms. His most remembered works, such as the ballets *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, and *Appalachian Spring*, and also orchestral works like his *Third Symphony*, *Clarinet Concerto*, and *El Salón México*, show his approach to an American sound. From the use of jazz idioms in the 1920s to American folk music in the 1930s, and later on absorbed Mexican and Latin-American styles, Copland continued his search for an American idiom. It can be said that his mature style incorporates elements derived from Jewish, African American, Anglo-American, and Latin American sources. His

² Thomas L. Riis, *Frank Loesser* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 3.

³ After their first meeting in the fall of 1937, they became friends and their friendship lasted until Bernstein passed away in 1990. Bernstein kept exchanging letters with Copland and sought his advice at the initial stage of his career. One may find more detailed descriptions in Humphrey Burton, *Leonard Bernstein* (New York: Doubleday, 1994).

music is like the American culture, which is full of diversity.⁴ His interests in composing music for Americans deeply influenced Bernstein.

In the previous chapter we described how Bernstein adapted jazz figures to concert music; here we will identify and discuss influences from classical music in *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*.

⁴ One may find more detailed research about Copland in Howard Pollack, *Aaron Copland: The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999).

A Touch of Neo-Classicism

Neo-Classical music shows reminiscence of the past, especially the Classical and Baroque periods, and is a reaction to late Romanticism or Expressionism, which often uses intense chromaticism and large performance forces. Neo-Classicism was especially popular between the two world wars; Igor Stravinsky is considered as one of the representative Neo-Classical composers. He gave himself credit for originating the movement.⁵ Stravinsky first used this style in a full work in the ballet *Pulcinella* (1920) and composed a long series of Neo-Classical works, including the *Octet* (1923), the opera-oratorio *Oedipus Rex* (1926-27), *Symphony of Psalms* (1930), *Symphony in C* (1938-40), *Symphony in Three Movements* (1942-45), and the opera *The Rake's Progress* (1947-51). The spirit of Neo-Classicism is not merely to return to purely older forms and languages of music; rather, it seeks to blend these features with new, novel sounds. This retrospective style existed before the outbreak of World War I. According to Albright's observations, works such as Liszt's *À la Chapelle Sixtine* (1862), Grieg's *Holberg Suite* (1884), Tchaikovsky's divertissement from *The Queen of Spades* (1890), Reger's *Concerto in the Old Style* (1912) showed that composers "dressed up their music in old clothes in order to create a smiling or pensive evocation of the past."⁶

On the Town was composed near the end of World War II while Neo-Classicism remained a popular style. As a conductor and a disciple of Koussevitzky,

⁵ As we know, there were many other composers who explored the field of Neo-Classicism, such as Prokofiev and his *Classical Symphony* (1917), Ravel's *Le tombeau de Couperin* (1914-1917), and Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* (1935). Daniel Albright ed., *Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 276.

⁶ Ibid.

who advocated modern music, Bernstein was strongly influenced by this trend. His mentor Copland also helped him explore new music. Copland had been aware of new trends throughout his career. Together with composer Roger Sessions (1896-1985), he launched a series of Copland-Sessions Concerts to sponsor two or three chamber music concerts annually over 1928 to 1931,⁷ programming works by contemporary composers such as Theodore Chanler, Walter Piston, Carlos Chávez, Virgil Thomson, Marc Blitzstein, Roy Harris, Paul Bowles, Darius Milhaud, as well as their own works.

With Copland's encouragement, Bernstein absorbed new ideas and cleverly fused them into his works. Although it is hard to say that he composed any work that was entirely Neo-Classical, we can still find its influences in his output. For example, Bernstein's second symphony, *The Age of Anxiety*, applied the content of Auden's poem under the same title, *The Age of Anxiety: A Baroque Eclogue*, which was a literary work that was influenced by the Neo-Classicism. Meanwhile, the use of theme and variations, a form that still exists but is not as popular as it was in the Baroque era, also reflects the influence of perhaps Hindemith's classicism.⁸

Bernstein was also fond in Classic literatures and tried to blend such sources into his output, as seen, for instance, in his *Serenade after Plato's Symposium*.

Outside of the concert hall, we also find that Bernstein applied Neo-Classicism to his works in the musical theater. He parodied the opening theme of the

⁷ Pollack, 165-166.

⁸ Paul R. Laird and David Schiff, "Bernstein, Leonard," *Grove Music Online* (accessed 14 May 2012), and Burton, 104. Another important mentor to Bernstein, Serge Koussevitzky, also performed these new music, including Hindemith's works, fairly often. Meryle Secret, *Leonard Bernstein: A Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 76.

first movement of Johann Sebastian Bach's (1685-1750) Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 (Ex. 3-1a) in the music for *Peter Pan*, a 1950 musical adaptation of Sir James Matthew Barrie's famous play by the same name. Invited by his friend Peter Lawrence, Bernstein quickly accepted this project. However, due to the limited vocal abilities of the leading cast members, the production team soon realized that this would not be a musical like *On the Town* and only five songs remained in the original production.⁹ This *Peter Pan* was considered as a play with music rather than a full-length musical.¹⁰ The idea of parodying the opening theme from the Brandenburg Concerto was probably derived from Stravinsky, for in Bernstein's television show "Homage to Stravinsky," he defined Stravinsky's Neo-Classicism as "borrowings from the past had become a conscious and deliberate element of his creative process."¹¹ Bernstein developed a contrapuntal instrumental bridge based on Bach's short phrase for the song "Plank Round" in Act 3 of *Peter Pan* (*Peter Pan*, complete score recording,¹² track 24, 0'35"-0'45"), which he also used as a postlude. The composer deliberately changed the mode from the original G major to G minor, added a D-flat as blue note, and let the rest stay the same. Although the rhythm seems augmented (as may be seen in Example 3-1a), the tempo for "Plank Round" is

⁹ http://www.marketwire.com/printer_friendly?id=660695 (accessed 10 February 2013).

¹⁰ There is a full-length musical version of *Peter Pan* in 1954, starring Mary Martin as Peter Pan. Lyrics are by Carolyn Leigh, music by Mark Charlap with additional music by Jule Styne and additional lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green..

¹¹ Leonard Bernstein, "Homage to Stravinsky: Written for the London Symphony Concert and Television Broadcast," 6 April 1972, http://www.leonardbernstein.com/cond_stravinsky.htm (accessed 2 May 2012).

¹² *Peter Pan*, complete score recording, KOCH International Classics, KIC-CD-7596, 2005.

“Allegro, molto marcato,” which makes it sound even faster than the original

Brandenburg Concerto.

Example 3-1. Johann Sebastian Bach’s Brandenburg Concerto No, 3, and Leonard Bernstein, *Peter Pan*.

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a. Brandenburg Concerto No, 3, first movement, violin 1, mm. 1-2.



b. *Peter Pan*, “Plank Round,” mm. 35-38.



Candide (1956), the show following *Wonderful Town*, has probably the strongest influence of Neo-Classicism among composer’s theatrical output, with references to European dances, such as the gavotte, mazurka, polka, and waltz, and operatic singing. For example, the structure of “Glitter and Be Gay” resembles a Rossini cavatina and cabaletta, not to mention the fanciful coloratura that is rarely found in musicals.¹³ The melodic phrases are basically clear and balanced, but there are some inserted short segments that interrupt this classical, periodical structure. Bernstein also applied the type of crescendo that typically appears in Rossini’s

¹³ One may find more such discussion in Paul R. Laird, *Leonard Bernstein: A Guide to Research* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 57, and Burton, 260.

operas in the overture to *Candide*: a short phrase is repeated several times and each time the orchestration gets thicker, which increase the volume (*Candide*: final revised version 1989,¹⁴ overture, track 1, 3:23-3:43). This perhaps does not fully fit the norms of the Neo-Classical; however, the use of Rossini's crescendo is reminiscent of Italian opera in the early nineteenth century. Comparing to other neo-classical composers, we can also find that Stravinsky quoted the style of nineteenth-century music. For example, the ballet that he composed for George Balanchine, *Le baiser de la fée* (*The Fairy's Kiss*, 1928), sounds more similar to Tchaikovsky's ballets rather than his own *Le Sacre du printemps* (*The Rite of Spring*, 1913).

The Gavotte, which was popular in the Renaissance and Baroque periods, and in either 4/4 or 2/2 meter, is used in the song "Life is Happiness Indeed" of *Candide*. One of the most distinctive characteristics in a gavotte is that the phrase begins on the third quarter note of the measure, creating a half-measure upbeat. Bernstein followed this characteristic rhythm, but also used frequent tempo changes. This number is reprised in the second act, but renamed "Venice Gavotte." "Westphalia Chorale" is another Neo-Classical number that perhaps reflects a touch of the Lutheran chorale with its homophonic texture. The tonality is clear most of the time, but includes some unexpected, borrowed chords.

The use of older European dances in *On the Town*, like what the composer did in *Candide*, clearly showed a touch of Neo-Classicism. When applying what might be

¹⁴ *Candide*: final revised version 1989, London Symphony Orchestra, Deutsche Grammophon, 429 734-2, 1991.

considered Neo-Classical features, Bernstein did not necessarily write music that strictly followed classical models. The first such number in the work is “Gabey’s Comin’,” a song that had been cut from the original but was included in 1998 revival. Bernstein designated this “Tempo di Gavotte,” perhaps to provide a contrast to the jazz section. However, unlike what the composer did later in *Candide*, in “Gabey’s Comin’” there is no half-measure upbeat. The song’s meter and basic pulse in *alla breve* does feel much like a Baroque gavotte. The melody of “Gabey’s Comin’” derives from the second movement of the composer’s Piano Trio (1937), where it is marked “Tempo di Marcia,”¹⁵ but the prevailing duple meter can easily be adapted to the dance. In the original melody from the piano trio, Bernstein already inserted blue notes (flat third and seventh marked by circles) to it, which adds novelty to the feeling of the square, stylized dance in duple meter (Ex. 3-2).

Example 3-2. *On the Town*, “Tempo di Gavotte” in “Gabey’s Comin’,” mm. 11-14.

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A
11 **Tempo di Gavotte (poco più presto)**
mp
Ozzie Hel - lo, ba - by, gosh, you're pret-ty; I'm so tall and strong and wit-ty;

15 *cresc.*
Ozzie God's great gift to New York Ci - ty. How's a - bout a date to - night?
mf *mp*

When seeing the tempo marking of “Allegretto di ‘Ballet Class’” in “Presentation of Miss Turnstiles,” one might expect a well-balanced section, either in

¹⁵ Jack Gottlieb, *Working with Bernstein* (New York: Amadeus Press, 2010), 102.

triple or duple meter; a regular periodic phrasing, such as two measures plus two measures plus four measures or something similar; and the use of a predictable, diatonic language with regular cadential points, which would be suitable for ballet exercise. The first two measures stay in F major and maintain an elegant, more anticipated style though with an unbalanced time signature; nonetheless, Bernstein added a c-sharp"¹⁶ in the third measure, which forms an augmented fifth to f. The c-sharp"¹⁶ not only generates a vertical dissonant interval (so as melodically to the previous f"); horizontally it creates a dissonance to the c-natural"¹⁶ before and after it. This c-sharp"¹⁶ abruptly appears without any preparation, nonetheless, if one considers that this measure tonicizes D minor, which accommodates the c-sharp"¹⁶ quite well, the immediately following C-natural is still surprising. On the other hand, this section is neither in triple nor in duple meter; it is 5/4, which grouped as 2+3 or its reverse, although Bernstein also applies more complicated rhythmic combinations (Ex. 3-3). The composer provides music for a ballet class, and this dissonance smacks of Neo-Classical harmonies that bring freshness and novelty to the class.

¹⁶ C below the bass staff is *C*, C on the bass staff is *c*, and middle C is *c'*.

Example 3-3. *On the Town*, “Allegretto di ‘Ballet Class’” in “Presentation of Miss Turnstiles,” mm. 28-30.

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The image shows a musical score for the piece "Allegretto di 'Ballet Class'" from the opera "On the Town". The score is in 5/4 time and covers measures 28 to 30. It is marked with a common time signature (C) and a tempo of "Allegretto". The instrumentation includes Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Piano (Pno.), Bass Clarinet (Bs. Cl.), Horns (Hns. sust.), and a string section (Cl. II, Vla. + Vc. pizz.). The music is characterized by a melodic line in the upper voice and a more rhythmic bass line. The tempo is marked "p dolce e legato".

Moreover, before the end of the “ballet class” section, Bernstein frequently changed the meter between 5/4 and 3/4 to prepare for the next 3/4 section, “Tempo di valse lent” section (Ex. 3-4). In the “Waltz for Mippy III” of *Brass Music* for tuba and piano (1948), dedicated to Bernstein’s brother Burton, the composer applied similar design. The first section is in 3/4, which is a typical waltz meter and uses more lyrical gestures. The second section, starting from m. 26, though the meter still stays in 3/4, the character of the music turns to *alla Marzuka*. Then the meter changes to 5/4, which lasts for seven measures before it turns back to 3/4. Although the waltz is not an old dance that has been discarded for centuries, the use of 5/4 in a waltz is still atypical (Ex. 3-5). However, we can still find some instances traced back to the music in the concert hall. For example, the second movement of Tchaikovsky’s Symphony no. 6 in B minor, Op. 74, “Pathétique,” also is a 5/4 waltz. Tchaikovsky mainly divided the five beats into a 2+3 pattern, with a triplet in the middle, and maintained the dance’s typical gracefulness. When entering the trio section, the Russian composer unified the whole movement with the steadily 2+3 pattern, changing only the melodic contour. Bernstein even composed a waltz in

rarely seen 7/8 in the second movement of his *Divertimento* (1980), which was dedicated to the Boston Symphony Orchestra in celebration of its first hundred years. He regularly split a measure into three plus four, and the phrasing of every two measures seems ordinary enough; however, the composer added a one-measure tail to the end of each section, in the same meter, and disturbed the regular phrasing of the movement.

Example 3-4. *On the Town*, “Allegretto di ‘Ballet Class’” in “Presentation of Miss Turnstiles,” mm. 35-40.

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The musical score consists of two systems of staves. The first system (measures 35-37) features an Oboe (Ob.) part in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower staff. The second system (measures 38-40) features a Clarinet (Cl.) part in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower staff. The piano accompaniment is shared between both systems. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor). The time signature changes from 5/4 in measure 35 to 3/4 in measure 36, and back to 5/4 in measure 37. The tempo marking "poco rall." is placed above measure 39.

Example 3-5. *Brass Music*, “Waltz for Mippy III,” mm. 44-50.

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In the “Carnegie Hall Pavane,” Bernstein adapted another Renaissance dance. The pavane originated in Italy and became a court dance in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It is usually in a slow duple meter and paired with a galliard, a faster dance in compound meter or triple meter, and is often in the form of AABBC. However, Bernstein’s “Tempo di Pavane” is a Moderato, faster than an ordinary pavane, and does not follow its general form. Like the “Tempo di Gavotte” in “Gabey’s Comin’,” the function of “Tempo di Pavane” is to form a contrast with a swing section: Bernstein’s pavane represents a classical training session for the dancers, while swing stands for the more popular side (Ex. 3-6). The quarter note triplet that the composer applied here is also uncharacteristic of the pavane. It is possible that again shows the touch of the influence of jazz music. Nonetheless,

Bernstein was not the first one who applied triplets to pavane. In the last century, Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) already used this eighth-note triplets in his *Pavane pour une infante défunte* (1899).

Example 3-6. *On the Town*, "Carnegie Hall Pavane," mm. 1-4.

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Tempo di Pavane (Moderato)

IVY *p*

Do - do - re - do.

MADAME DILLY *mf* 3

Do - re - mi - do.

Tempo di Pavane (Moderato)
Tutti (+Wdbl.)

Vlins., Vla. arco

Piano *pp* *p*

Operatic Applications

When composing the song “Carried Away” for *On the Town*, Bernstein faced some challenges. He had written “a little polka-like cowboy tune,”¹⁷ which did not sound like his style. He disliked it, but did not have anything else for the placement. Comden and Green suggested that he try it in a minor key, and then the number worked. The composer recalled, “Suddenly we had this operatic feeling, which dictated the form of the number, the quality of those two quasi-operatic voices that brought down the house.”¹⁸ These two performers in the original production, as stated above, were Comden and Green.

The opening of “Carried Away” is like an operatic recitative. Bernstein did not bother to write notes for each word and in sections just marked a fermata above a whole note and placed all the lyrics under it (Ex. 3-7). In operatic writing as well as musical theater, when these two characters sing together, they have been dramatically paired in some way. There is a refrain (Ex. 3-8a) that repeats at the end of every section of “Carried Away.” Claire and Ozzie sing the refrain separately at first, but there are two places that they sing together: one is from mm. 49 to 50, where their lyrics are different (Claire sings “he gets carried, just carried away” while Ozzie sings “I get carried, just carried away”); the other is at the end of the number, when they sing together “we get carried, just carried away!” in unison (Ex. 3-8b). Their coupling is confirmed by the fact that both scream a high C (m. 92) before reaching the end, a note clearly out of the registers of these characters.

¹⁷ Burton, 133.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Example 3-7. *On the Town*, "Carried Away," mm. 1-8.

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Moderato CLAIRES

p

Mod - ern man, what is it?

Fl., Cls.
Vlms.

W.W.
Strs.

sva *loco*

Tpts. (cup mutes)

Piano

sfp *f* *sfp*

4

p

Just a collection of complexes
and neurotic impulses that oc-ca - sion - al - ly break through.

OZZIE

W.W.
Strs.

Tbns.

You mean sometimes
you blow your top,
like me?

Example 3-8. *On the Town*, "Carried Away."

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a. mm. 16-22.

16
Claire
loof and cold, But I get car-ried a - way. Car-ried a-way,
OZZIE *ff*
Car-ried a - way, car-ried a -
20
Claire
car-ried a - way, I get car - ried a - way!
Ozzie
way, you get car-ried, just car-ried a - way!

b. mm. 88-94.

88
Claire
hop a freight and in a flash I'm off to Buf - fa - lo!
OZZIE *ff*
Car-ried a - way, car-ried a -
91
Claire
ff rit. *a tempo*
We get car-ried, just car-ried a - way!
Ozzie
way, We get car-ried, just car-ried a - way!

In "What a Waste" from *Wonderful Town*, Baker and his fellow editors describe a baritone who aimed at a career in the opera but instead ended up at the market yelling "Fish!" Although there is no coloratura marked in the score, the long

note on f-sharp' shows some taste of the type of singing that one hears in operas. In the 1999 recording, in which Thomas Hampson sang the role of Baker, he even added some ornamentation at the end of the long note, which made it sound more like someone who wished to be an opera singer (Ex. 3-9).

Example 3-9. *Wonderful Town*, "What a Waste," mm. 113-120.

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113

Baker wish. At the Ful-ton Mar-ket now_ he yells "Fish!"

Editors EDITORS What a waste, What a

117

Baker "Fish!" Go home! Go west!

Editors waste, What a waste of mon-ey and -

ad lib. *(in tempo)*

"Conversation Piece" is more of a dramatic scene than simply a musical number. Between awkward moments of conversation, Bernstein added instrumental inserts (marked "lugubriously") to strengthen the feeling of embarrassment found in poorly matched company, an unusual scene for a musical. The part for Eileen is difficult for a musical theater singer without classical operatic training. It not only reaches c³ but also has big leaps, turns, trills, several repetitions of a², scalar passages, and even ascends to d³ at the end of the song (Ex. 3-10).

Example 3-10. *Wonderful Town*, "Conversation Piece," soprano part for Eileen, mm. 56-88.

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56
Eileen peo - ple, nice talk, Ha ha ha ha ha ha

60
Eileen ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha

64
Eileen ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha

68
Eileen ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha

72
Eileen ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha

76
Eileen ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha

80
Eileen ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha

84
Eileen ha It's nice!

Detailed description: This is a musical score for the soprano part of Eileen in the "Conversation Piece" from the musical *Wonderful Town*. The score covers measures 56 through 88. It is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "peo - ple, nice talk, Ha ha ha ha ha ha", "ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha", "ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha", "ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha", "ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha", "ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha", "ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha", and "ha It's nice!". The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and trills. A circled note is present in measure 57, and another circled note is in measure 84. The piece ends with a double bar line in measure 88.

The operatic ending seems especially funny in a scene that is often as much spoken as sung. Eileen poorly hosts a dinner, with the result that the assembled company has nothing to eat. She seems naïve to have invited whomever to their apartment without proper consideration as to whether they would have anything in common. Ruth tries to make a good impression with the editor Baker and starts a conversation that is too deep for others. The Walgreens manager tries hard to impress Eileen and relates some allegedly funny events that happened to him earlier, but no one cares. The dramatic tension grows greater with the help of Bernstein's music.

Use of Dissonance

Bernstein applied dissonance as a tool for melodic or dramatic purposes. In *West Side Story*, for example, the tritone, traditionally considered a dissonance, “intensifies the play’s atmosphere of danger and restless expectation.”¹⁹ Jack Gottlieb labels it as a “hate” motive and says that it is “certainly an appropriate symbolism for this tragic musical drama.”²⁰ Geoffrey Block agrees with him and discussed in his *Enchanted Evenings* how Bernstein uses the “hate” motive for dramatic purposes.²¹ Besides the tritone, Wilfrid Mellers also found that the bitonality in *West Side Story* suggests the disconnectedness between Jet and Shark and the music for the rumble reaches “a climax of dissonance and metrical distortion at the knifings.”²² Scott Miller even thinks that one of the versions²³ of the end of the show that has an unresolved tritone, apparently a dissonance to the audience’s ears, symbolizes “the problem is not resolved, the violence is not over, and love cannot triumph.”²⁴

There are several ways that Bernstein used dissonances. The first is a tone-cluster-like effect where the vertical sonorities could in fact be analyzed as triads

¹⁹ Mary E. Williams, “*West Side Story* and Its Creators,” *Readings on West Side Story* (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2001), 22

²⁰ Jack Gottlieb, “The Music of Leonard Bernstein: A Study of Melodic Manipulations” (D.M.A. document, University of Illinois, 1964), 26.

²¹ Geoffrey Block, *Enchanted Evenings: The Broadway Musical from Show Boat to Sondheim* (New York: Oxford, 1997), 266-267.

²² Wilfrid Mellers, “The Narrative and Thematic Significance of Music in *West Side Story*,” *Readings on West Side Story* (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2001), 73.

²³ This is the version that Bernstein prepared for the recording in the 1980s, with the collaboration of operatic singers such as Kiri te Kanawa and José Carreras.

²⁴ Scott Miller, “An Examination of *West Side Story*’s Plot and Musical Motifs,” *Readings on West Side Story* (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2001), 92

with many added non-chord tones. This effect can also be found in *West Side Story*. One of the most common combinations is made up of a chord with both a major and minor third, such as what happens at the end of “Finale” where we may find C-sharp major and minor thirds come together in m. 20 or the first inversion of D dominant and major seventh chords on the downbeat of m. 21. In “Jet Song,” an added augmented second to a major triad (such as a C major chord with a D-sharp to it) is pervasive.

In *On the Town*, the opening of “New York, New York” exemplifies the method (Ex. 3-11) and it also appears at the beginning of “The Great Lover Displays Himself” (Ex. 3-12). When composing this kind of material, Bernstein probably was trying to grab the audience’s attention. The section before “New York, New York” is “I Feel Like I’m Not Out of Bed Yet,” a section marked “free and flowing” and includes blue notes and a recitative-like, declamatory metric feeling. The dissonant opening of “New York, New York” provides a break between this relaxed, flowing section and the energetic “New York, New York.”

Example 3-11. *On the Town*, “New York, New York,” mm. 1-4.

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Example 3-12. *On the Town*, “The Great Lover Displays Himself,” mm. 1-7.

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The image shows a musical score for the piece "The Great Lover Displays Himself" from the ballet "On the Town". The score is for piano and includes parts for Timp., Pno., Vc., and Cb. The tempo is marked "Allegro pesante" with a quarter note equal to 116 (♩ = 116). The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 1-3) is marked "Tutti" and "ff" (fortissimo). The second system (measures 4-7) is marked "Hns." (meno mosso) and "p" (piano). The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score features complex chordal textures with many accidentals and dynamic markings.

This relationship also applies to the dissonant section between “Subway Ride and Imaginary Coney Island” and “The Great Lover Displays Himself.” These two numbers are part of a dream ballet where Gabey imagines a date with Ivy Smith at Coney Island. Bernstein marked the “Imaginary Coney Island” section “Slowly subdued,” and the continuous triplets help maintain the cozy, relaxed atmosphere. This section has melodies that consist of large intervals, which might give the listener an expansive feeling. When “The Great Lover Displays Himself” begins, all of the sudden the ease disappears and the music becomes energetic. It seems that we are suddenly returned to busy New York City. Without any warning, a highly dissonant chord, a C-sharp minor triad with two added seconds, jumps in and a new section starts. This section comes back at the end of the number, which helps provide a sense of completeness (Ex. 3-13).

Example 3-13. *On the Town*, “The Great Lover Displays Himself,” mm. 97-100.

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Musical score for Example 3-13, measures 97-100. The score is in 4/4 time and features a piano accompaniment. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music is marked with a forte dynamic (*ff*) and includes a mezzo-forte (*mf*) section. A box labeled 'M' is positioned above measure 97. The word 'Hns.' is written above the staff in measure 100.

Another way that Bernstein made use of dissonance in his musicals is through the use of the chromatic scale, either in a sequence or in a melody, which does not necessitate the presence of harmonic dissonance. In “Presentation of Miss Turnstiles” the composer added a noisy instrumental phrase right before Ivy Smith’s series of dance fantasies (Ex. 3-14). The upper voice is a sequence of parallel thirds while the lower voice is a chromatic, ascending line.

Example 3-14. *On the Town*, “Presentation of Miss Turnstiles,” mm. 23-27.

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Musical score for Example 3-14, measures 23-27. The score is in 4/4 time and features a piano accompaniment. The key signature has two flats (Bb, Eb). The music is marked with a forte dynamic (*f*) and includes a fortissimo (*ff*) section. A box labeled 'B' is positioned above measure 25. The score includes vocal lines for a GIRL and an ANNOUNCER. The GIRL's line is: "Who, me?". The ANNOUNCER's line is: "Yes, you! Ivy Smith!". The piano accompaniment includes a chromatic ascending line in the lower voice and a sequence of parallel thirds in the upper voice. The score is marked with *Tutti* and *sfz*. The word "+Tpts." is written above the staff in measure 27. The instruments Vc., Cb., and Tbns. are listed below the staff in measure 23.

The chromatic scale is not only used as a method to create dissonance, but also to help bring out the meaning of the text or attract the audience's attention to the lyrics or dramatic moments. In the quasi-operatic number, "Carried Away," Bernstein applied chromatic touches in the melodic line to draw the audience's attention and make it sound more dramatic, more "carried away." (Ex. 3-15 a and b)

This usage of chromatic scale all occurs before the refrain "carried away, carried away, I (you) get carried away."

Example 3-15. *On the Town*, "Carried Away."

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a. mm. 12-19.

12
 Claire
 stay con-trolled But I get car-ried a - way. Try to act a -

Fl., Bs. Cl.

16
 Claire
 loof and cold, But I get car-ried a - way. Car-ried a - way,
 OZZIE *ff* Car-ried a - way, car-ried a -

Tbn., Bs. Cl. with Ozzie
 Fl., Ob., Cl. with Claire

b. mm. 31-33.

31
 Claire
 grab the maes-tro's stick and start in lead - ing the band! Car-ried a - way,
 OZZIE *ff* Car-ried a - way, car-ried a -
 +W.W. Bs. Cl., Tbn. with Ozzie Fl., Ob., Cl. with Claire
f *p*

Using the chromatic scale in a quasi-operatic number like “Carried Away” seems easier to understand. Nonetheless, Bernstein also employed it in the ballad, “Lucky to be Me.” Gabey’s ballad is in AABA form and the entire B section is built on the chromatic scale, which starts from E and ascends to C, then drops an octave lower and the whole chromatic scale keeps ascending until a break after A-flat to B-flat (Ex. 3-16). Traditionally the B section of an American popular song is supposed to be different than the A sections. In this number, the A section is built on large intervals and wide register, while the B section is mainly constructed from the chromatic scale, which provides an immense contrast between the two.

Example 3-16. *On the Town*, “Lucky to be Me,” mm. 30-37.

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The image shows a musical score for the song "Lucky to be Me" from the musical *On the Town*. It consists of two systems of music. The first system, starting at measure 30, features a vocal line for Gabey and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat minor). The lyrics are: "I am sim - ply thun - der - struck At the change in my luck:". The piano accompaniment includes strings (Strs.), flute (Fl.), and oboe (Ob.). The piano part starts with a dynamic marking of *mp* and the instruction *warmly*. The second system, starting at measure 34, continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Knew at once I want - ed you, Nev - er dreamed you'd want me too.". The piano part includes dynamic markings of *cresc.* and *mf*, and a tempo marking of *rit. cresc.* above the vocal line.

“Ya Got Me” also includes the chromatic scale before the end of the verse.

This use of chromatic scale is well prepared. When Hildy sings “I will fix you up on the spot” and “so forget the things you have not,” these two phrases use the same chromatic melody, which makes the following phrase “can’t you see, kid, what a very rare treasure you got?” sound like an extension of the previous phrase (Ex. 3-17).

The use of B-flat minor and chromatic scales in the verse helps provide the contrast with the bright, B-flat major chorus.

Example 3-17. *On the Town*, “Ya Got Me,” mm. 11-20.

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11
Hildy
throw you a sam - ple. I will fix you up on the spot, -

14
Hildy
So for - get the things you have not. Can't you

17
Hildy
see, kid, what a ver - y rare trea - sure you got? Ya got

In the verse of the sentimental number, “Some Other Time,” Bernstein also inserted brief portions of the chromatic scale (Ex. 3-18). With the triplet, the first appearance of these three notes—G, F-sharp, and F—serves perfectly for declaring “twenty-four” hours, which makes every syllable equally important. When this gesture reappears, the first three times are always three chromatic notes following a

descending fourth. Only the fourth time, right before returning into the chorus, does the descending fourth changes to a third.

Example 3-18. *On the Town*, “Some Other Time,” mm. 1-10.

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The image shows a musical score for the song "Some Other Time" from the musical *On the Town*. It consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line for Claire, starting with the tempo and mood instruction "Freely, with sentiment (♩ = 112) CLAIRE *p*". The lyrics are: "Twen-ty-four ho-urs can go so fast, _ You look a-round, _ the day has passed... When you're in love Time is pre-cious stuff;". The middle staff is the piano accompaniment, starting at measure 5, with lyrics: "look a-round, _ the day has passed... When you're in love Time is pre-cious stuff;". The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment, starting at measure 9, with lyrics: "E-ven a life-time is - n't e-nough." The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, dynamics (*p*, *mf*), and a ritardando (*rit.*) marking.

In *Wonderful Town* there are fewer highly dissonant sonorities than heard in *On the Town*, but we can find some use of the chromatic scale together along with the characteristics of swing in melodies, a signature of the sounds in 1930s. In the refrain of “Pass the Football,” for example, the composer used a prominent blue note (flat 7th) over a dominant seventh chord on A to call the audience’s attention to the word “pass.” Then a chromatic scale, which descends from D to D, follows (Ex. 3-19). Bernstein distributed the chromatic scale in different octaves, which made it sound very jazzy with dotted rhythms. It begins with Wreck’s melody and then extends to the accompaniment.

Example 3-19. *Wonderful Town*, “Pass the Football,” mm. 17-22.

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Lo stesso tempo (in 4)

The image shows a musical score for the song "Pass the Football" from the musical "Wonderful Town". It consists of two systems of music. The first system (measures 17-19) features a vocal line in bass clef with lyrics: "'Cause I could pass that foot - ball Like noth - in' you have ev - er seen!". The vocal line starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a dotted quarter note, then moves to piano (*p*) with a chromatic scale. The piano accompaniment includes parts for +Tpts., +WW., WW., Strs., Saxes, Tbn., Pno., Vcs., and Cb. Dynamics range from *sfz* to *sub.f*. The second system (measures 20-22) continues the piano accompaniment with a chromatic scale in the right hand, marked with arrows and *sfz* dynamics.

Another similar usage of a dotted rhythm combined with chromatic scale fragments happens in “Swing.” It also descends this time but the passage is shorter. The chromatic scale appears in the accompaniment while the singers speak rhythmic phrases. Bernstein applied dotted rhythms and syncopations to this phrase. Instead of changing octaves, the composer inserted notes to break the scale, which are marked by arrows (Ex. 3-20).

Example 3-20. *Wonderful Town*, “Swing,” mm. 162-165.

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The musical score for Example 3-20 consists of three staves. The top two staves are for Soprano (S) and Alto (A) voices, both in treble clef. The lyrics are: "Sol - id, groov - y, jiv - y, sound of swing! Tch,". Above the vocal staves, there are performance instructions: "clap" with downward arrows pointing to the off-beats, and "(Snap fingers on off-beats)" in parentheses. The bottom staff is for piano accompaniment, specifically Cello (Cb. pizz.), in bass clef. It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking and features a chromatic descending line in the right hand, with notes circled to highlight the chromatic movement.

Another place that Bernstein applies chromatic pitches is in “Conversation Piece,” when he tries to emphasize how uncomfortable everyone in the room is. The swing rhythms, sounding entirely too slowly, clarify this gesture. Bernstein placed two chromatic progressions together: A-sharp, B, C, and F-sharp, G, A-flat. With so many chromatic notes, it helps to obscure the tonal center. Initially we expect the tonal center is G from the key signature and also the bass note on the downbeat. But the avoidance of A-natural and using A-sharp and A-flat instead increase the uncertainty (Ex. 3-21). This phrase was not specifically composed for the show but borrowed from “Prelude” of *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs*, mm. 45 to 48, from which the composer did not change a note and also kept the slower tempo. Recollecting old materials in his new work is common in Bernstein’s output and we will have a more detailed discussion in the next chapter.

Example 3-21. *Wonderful Town*, "Conversation Piece," mm. 1-4.

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Lugubriously (Slowly)

Cls., Tbn.,
Pno., Vlas.

Piano

f pesante

Bs. Cl., Bs. Sax, Tbn., Pno., Vcs., Cb.

The image shows a musical score for piano, measures 1-4. The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo and mood are indicated as 'Lugubriously (Slowly)'. The piano part is marked 'f pesante'. The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a series of chords, each marked with a '3' and a slur, indicating a triplet. The bass staff contains a series of quarter notes, each marked with a '3' and a slur, indicating a triplet. The instruments listed are Clarinet, Trombone, Piano, and Viola for the top staff, and Bass Clarinet, Bass Saxophone, Trombone, Piano, Violoncello, and Contrabass for the bottom staff.

Remote Modulation²⁵

Modulation is a good way to keep a repeated motive or phrase having a fresh feeling. In concert music, modulating by fifths was long a norm, such as sequences that modulate according to the circle of fifths in the Baroque period, and frequently appears in sonata forms. Modulating by thirds (not referring to major-minor relationships here) becomes more and more common in the Romantic era when equal temperament became the normal tuning. In musical theater it is common to have verse and refrain in different keys with possible modulations in the refrains.

Bernstein's modulations might sound unprepared to a general theatergoer. In "New York, New York" of *On the Town*, the three sailors come in and sing the refrain "New York, New York, It's a helluva town!" in A major and all of a sudden the next section turns to F major (Ex. 3-22). Bernstein cleverly used two ascending fourths (E to A and B to E), avoiding any F-sharp, C-sharp, or G-sharp in A major, to build the refrain. In m. 48, the composer kept the E and added B-flat, meaning that he had already modulated into F major and used a C dominant-seventh chord without changing the key signature.

²⁵ As Walter Piston, Bernstein's teacher at Harvard, said, "all keys are related. It is only a question of the degree of relationship." Here the concept of "remote modulation" is not referring to major-minor relationships or related keys, but to those keys that have a more distant relationship to the key. Walter Piston, *Harmony*, 5th edition, revised and expanded by Mark DeVoto (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 230-236.

Example 3-22. *On the Town*, “New York, New York,” mm. 46-50.

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The musical score for measures 46-50 of "New York, New York" from "On the Town" is presented. It features three vocal parts (Gabey, Chip, and Ozzie) and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Meno mosso" and the dynamics are "ff". The key signature is D-flat major. The piano part includes a chromatic bass line and non-chord tones in the upper voices. The lyrics are "It's a hell-uv - a town!" and "York, New York, It's a hell-uv - a town!". The piano part also includes markings for "Br., Strs." and "Cls., Strs." and a "molto" dynamic marking.

“Gabey’s Comin’” is yet another example of modulating down a major third. However, unlike “New York, New York,” which modulates to F major and does not return to A major, this time the refrain stays in F major while the verse is in D-flat major. “Gabey’s Comin’” starts with the refrain. Bernstein used a blue note (flat third) at the end of it; the blue note functions as the fifth of D-flat major. The A-flat is a distinctive note in the phrase, but it is not held over into the refrain. Meanwhile, he used a chromatic scale in the bass progression and non-chord tones (D-sharp, G-sharp, and B natural) in the upper voices, which helps obscure the tonality (Ex. 3-23). When turning into D-flat major, there is only an E-flat to serve as a harmonic transition.

Example 3-23. *On the Town*, "Gabey's Comin'," mm. 7-10.

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7 GABEY *f* *rit.*
Ga - bey's com-in' to town!

Chip *cresc.* *f*
na turn New York Ci - ty_ up - side_ down!_ Ga - bey's com-in' to town!

Ozzie *cresc.* *f* (spoken)
na turn New York Ci - ty_ up - side_ down!_ Ga - bey's com-in' to town! Here's the way you do it!

Tpts. *cresc.* *f* *rit.*
Tutti Eb Cl. Strs.

Tbn. I *sf*

A
11 *mp* **Tempo di Gavotte (poco più presto)**

Ozzie *mp*
Hel - lo, ba - by, gosh, you're pret-ty; I'm so tall and strong and wit-ty;

Strs. pizz. +W.W., Hns. *p*

D-flat major

There are fewer uses of highly dissonant sonorities in *Wonderful Town* than *On the Town*, but the modulations generally are more interesting. The initial number, "Christopher Street," displays a series of modulations. It is in strophic form and the key changes in every stanza. The number first begins with A-flat major, and then travels through C, E, G, A, F, B, B-flat, D, E-flat, and ends on E. The length for

each section is usually either 8 measures or 16 measures. This helps add to the feeling of frenetic activity in the tour of Greenwich Village. There is little preparation for these modulations, only a short eighth-note rest, and the previous phrase is usually ends on the tonic without the fifth (Ex. 3-24). As in the last example in *On the Town*, the blue note becomes a common tone for two distant keys. In the example, the flat third in C major (which is E-flat) becomes the seventh for E major (which is D-sharp), and the original third (E) in C major becomes the tonic of E major. After an eight-measure statement in E major, Bernstein used the same method of modulation and goes to A-flat major: the lowered third in E major (which is G) turned into the leading tone of A-flat major. The ending chord does not contain the fifth and there is only an eight-note rest between the two sections.

Example 3-24. *Wonderful Town*, "Christopher Street," mm. 21-36.

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21 TOURISTS E-flat = D-sharp

S
A
T
B
My, what charm, My, what grace! Po - ets and peas - ants on Wav - er - ly Place.

TOURISTS
My, what charm, My, what grace! Po - ets and peas - ants on Wav - er - ly Place.

+WW.

C major

C GUIDE:
Ever since 1870, Greenwich Village has been the bohemian cradle of painters, writers, actors, etc., who've gone
25 WW. *8va*, Strs. *pizz.*

E major Bsn., Pno.

29 on to fame and fortune. Today in 1935, who knows what future greats live in these twisting alleys? Come along!

D **CURTAIN**
Cue: GUIDE: Come Along! (Repeat only if necessary for dialogue)

33 Tutti
p until cue then *ff*

A-flat major

One might expect that the use of common tones will become the normal process of modulation for "Christopher Street." However, this is not case when the villagers' dance sequences begin. There are dialogues between these pantomimes

and tourists' stanzas, and it seems unnecessary to stay in the original key or keep using common tones to modulate. Nonetheless, we can still observe some hints of using common tone modulation; this time (Ex. 3-25) the blues note becomes the fifth of the next key rather than the seventh. In example 3-25 we can discover Bernstein's bold modulation. The interval between A-flat and E is an augmented fifth. These two keys do not share many notes. In "Christopher Street," we can see how Bernstein took advantage of blue notes and turned them into common tones for the preparation of the new key.

Example 3-25. *Wonderful Town*, "Christopher Street," mm. 41-45.

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The image shows a musical score for the song "Christopher Street" from the musical "Wonderful Town". It consists of three staves: Soprano (S), Alto (A), and Tenor/Bass (T/B). The lyrics are: "Ain't it quaint, Ain't it sweet, Pleas-ant and peace-ful on Chris-to-pher Street?". The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). A circled note in the Soprano part is labeled "C-flat=B". The piano accompaniment includes a xylophone and piano, with a glissando effect indicated at the end. The score is numbered 41 and includes the instruction "TOURISTS".

Like "Christopher Street," "What a Waste" also modulates for each stanza, but this time he does not use common tone as the preparation for the modulation.

Instead, Bernstein goes into the new key with the help of a descending scale and before reaching the final tonic, the new key that is usually a semi-tone higher begins, which is not uncommon among his Broadway colleagues (Ex. 3-26, where Bernstein

moves to E-flat major from D during the descending scale). The refrain goes from D-flat major to D, E-flat, and ends on E.

Example 3-26. *Wonderful Town*, “What a Waste,” mm. 76-83.

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76

Baker waste, What a waste, What a waste of mon - ey and time!

Editors waste, What a waste, What a waste of mon - ey and time!

Strs. arco

Fl. gliss.

Br.

mf

80

SECOND EDITOR

Girl from Mo-bile, Ver-sa-tile ac - tress,

Fl. Cl.

dim.

p

Tbns.

Modulation upward is common in Broadway scores to increase the level of excitement. For example, in the “Honestly Sincere” from *Bye Bye Birdie* (1960), as the thrill of the teenaged girls increases, Conrad starts in A-flat major, and then follows a modulation via fifths to E-flat, B-flat, F, C and ends on D. This trick is never

out of date: “abrupt key changes are part and parcel of the Broadway repertoire,”²⁶ said Michael Buchler. In the *Seussical*, produced in 2000, the composer Stephen Flaherty (b. 1960) used a series of modulations, starting from B-flat and moving to C, D, and E, in the “Biggest Blame Fool” to depict the exhilaration of the animals in the Jungle of Nool when teasing Horton the Elephant.

The middle section of “A Little Bit in Love” also modulates by minor second away, this time downward. The form of “A Little Bit in Love” is ABA and the tonality of entire B section, which is in E, serves as a lower neighbor to the A section, which is in F (Ex. 3-27). This time the modulation is better prepared. Although there is no key signature change, the composer applies D-sharp, the leading tone of E major, and a B major triad, the dominant of E major, a measure before entering the B section to prepare audience’s ears. When returning to the A section, there is a similar progression. At the end of the B section, Bernstein mainly stayed in C (first on a C major seventh chord and then a dominant seventh chord), preparing F major.

²⁶ Michael Buchler, “Modulation as a Dramatic Agent in Frank Loesser’s Broadway Songs,” *Music Theory Spectrum*, vol. 30, no. 1 (Spring 2008), 35.

Example 3-27. *Wonderful Town*, "A Little Bit in Love," mm. 9-12.

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9

Eileen



haps a lit - - tle bit more.

Fl., Cls.

B

11 (rhythmically)

Eileen



When he — looks at me, — ev - 'ry-thing's ha - zy and all out of fo - cus.

Fl.
Vlns. *p sub.*

Use of Counterpoint

Counterpoint is a trait that has been used in classical music for centuries. Bernstein pervasively applied it in his concert music. For example, in the opening of “Phaedrus: Pausanias” of *Serenade after Plato’s “Symposium”* (1954), when introducing instruments following the violin soloist’s long soliloquy, Bernstein built a contrapuntal texture, starting from violin I, viola, and then the rest of the string section. We may also find it in chamber works, such as the opening of the first movement of the Trio for Violin, Violoncello, and Piano (1937) and also the section starting from m. 47 later in that movement. The opening section of the first movement of Sonata for Clarinet and Piano (1941-42) is also a good instance that the piano has its own independent counter-melodies instead of simply providing chordal accompaniment to the clarinet later in rehearsal number B. However, it is less common on Broadway because counterpoint can be too complicated for Broadway singers and listeners. One finds examples of counterpoint in musicals, such as the “Fugue for Tinhorns” from Frank Loesser’s *Guys and Dolls* (1950) and “Pick-a-Little, Talk-a-Little” from *The Music Man* (1957), but Broadway composers tend to write lyrical melodies with homophonic textures. As a composer of both in concert music and musical theater, Bernstein did not avoid using contrapuntal techniques and polyphonic texture in his musicals. The most famous examples of Bernstein’s use of counterpoint in musicals are probably the quintet of “Tonight” and the “Cool” fugue in *West Side Story*. However, *West Side Story* is not the first musical that Bernstein used counterpoint. In his early shows, we can also see some clever uses of it.

When the three sailors, Gabey, Chip, and Ozzie, first sing “New York, New York” in *On the Town*, Bernstein introduced them separately and later let them sing in unison, which shows that these three sailors have different personalities and characteristics on one hand, but also help each other out, which we will discuss later in the section of “Sense of Unity.”

After the refrain has been completely stated twice in unison, Bernstein used a two-part canon in the third refrain: Gabey sings one part and Chip and Ozzie sing another (Ex. 3-28). It is a strict canon and lasts until the final unison phrase, “It’s a helluva town!” Since the audience has already heard the refrain twice, the canonic texture will not confuse them but bring freshness and help point out who is the main character among three sailors.

Example 3-28. *On the Town*, “New York, New York,” mm. 133-138.

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The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system, starting at measure 133, features Gabey on the top staff and Chip & Ozzie (unison) on the bottom staff. Gabey's line begins with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a common time signature. The lyrics under Gabey's staff are: "York, New York, a hell-uv - a town. The Bronx is up but the". The lyrics under the unison staff are: "New York, New York, a hell-uv - a town. The Bronx is". A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is placed below the unison staff. The second system, starting at measure 136, features Gabey on the top staff and Chip & Ozzie on the bottom staff. Gabey's lyrics are: "Bat-ter - y's down, The peo - ple ride in a hole in the groun'. New". The lyrics under the bottom staff are: "up but the Bat-ter - y's down. The peo - ple ride in a hole in the groun'..".

But Bernstein does not appear to have been satisfied with just two-part counterpoint. Right after the last statement of the refrain, there follows a ballet

scene that segues to a New York City street. With the help of varied tone colors of different instruments, he kept using the melody of the refrain and wrote instrumental counterpoint with a heavier texture (Ex. 3-29).

Example 3-29. *On the Town*, "New York, New York," mm. 143-161

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K (unis.)
143

Gabey
Chip
Ozzie

Tutti#
ff
Br.
1
Ob.
p

L (Scene segues to a New York City street.)
147 Ob. solo

+Picc.
8va...

Strs. pizz.
2
mf

M
153

Clas.
mf
8va

158

Hns., Vla.
cresc.
8va
cresc.
4
6

Another effective use of counterpoint is in the ballet sequence of “Presentation of Miss Turnstiles.” In this scene, Bernstein used varied styles of music to portray different images of Miss Turnstiles. At the end of the number, before the announcement of a new monthly Miss Turnstiles, Bernstein brought previous melodies back and showed how Ivy Smith fulfills the different roles and expectations of the honor (Ex. 3-30). Here, the composer does something similar to the song “New York, New York” where he combined previous melodic ideas, such as the Soldier’s motive in example 3-30. Since each motive has been separately introduced, the audience probably could recall where this melody is from or what characteristic it stands for and therefore understand Bernstein’s musical sense of humor through his introduction of previous materials to depict a rushed and muddled Miss Turnstiles in a complicated musical context.

Example 3-30. *On the Town*, "Presentation of Miss Turnstiles," mm. 174-176.

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The musical score for measures 174-176 of "Presentation of Miss Turnstiles" from *On the Town* is shown. It features three systems of staves. The first system (measures 174-175) includes a piano part with dynamics *f* and *mf*, and a woodwind part with dynamics *f*. The second system (measure 176) includes a piano part with dynamics *f* and *ff*, and a woodwind part with dynamics *ff*. The score is marked with "Tutti + Picc.", "[Pas de Sept]", "W.W., Vlns.", and "Tpts. Soldier".

The melodic materials from mm. 11 to 18 of "Gabey's Comin'" have been turned into a contrapuntal texture in "High School Girls." Bernstein first presented the melody, which is from mm. 11 to 14 of "Gabey's Comin'," (Ex. 3-2) with four entrances in D-flat major. After a fermata, he modulated the whole section to E major, which is an augmented second away, and had another six entrances. The eight-bar phrase does not completely appear until the augmented entrance starting with m. 12. In the D-flat major section, it is only seven measures long and the first entrance ends on m. 6. In the E major section, the complete presentation waits until m. 12, which is played by the brass section and augmented (Ex. 3-31).

Example 3-31. *On the Town*, "High School Girls," mm. 1-17.

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Agitato

1 Picc. *sva*
Eb Cl. *stacc.*
Glsp.

Piano
Vlins. (Db chord in eighth notes), Celesta (tremolo)

Ob., Cl.

5 *sva*
Eb Cl., Bb Cl. *sva*

loco
Tpt. I

Ob. *sva*
Bs. Cl.

8 *sva*
Picc., Eb Cl., Glsp.

Tpt. *loco*

Vlins. (eighth notes), Celesta (tremolo)

Hn., Vla. *pizz.* (Vlins. & Celesta continue)

12 **B** **3**
Picc. (eighth), Glsp.

Ob. (quarters), Vln. *sva*, Celesta continues "E" tremolo to downbeat bar 15

Eb Cl., Tpt. I, Vla.

Picc., Eb Cl.

Cl., Hn., Vla.

Tbn. I, Vc.

ff

dim.

Bs. Cl., Tbn. II, Tuba, Cb.

15

Ob., Vlins.

Hn., Va.

dim.
Tbn. I, Vc.

Bs. Cl., Tbn. II, Cb.

As an academically trained composer, Bernstein did not allow the sophisticated complexity, which sometimes made people stay away from the concert music, to overwhelm theatergoers' ears. Instead, he used the traits of music from the concert hall to enliven his music on the Broadway stage. The bold use of the chromatic scale, unexpected modulations, the application of Neo-classism, and the counterpoint, all demonstrate his academic knowledge of music. The balance that Bernstein reached between the intricacy from the concert hall and the charm of the tuneful Broadway musical reminds one the music of Mozart, who also had beautiful and tuneful melodies and yet merged the complicated contrapuntal texture, so that the music provides the amateur a pleasant listening experiences, yet delights the connoisseurs as well.

Chapter 4

Art of Recycling and Sense of Unity in *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*

Art of Recycling

Reusing and recycling musical ideas is not Bernstein's invention; composers have applied this technique for more than a thousand years. Johann Sebastian Bach did much self-borrowing, such as revising some movements from an earlier cantata for the use in the B-minor Mass; Norman Carrell has published a detailed survey on this topic.¹ George Frideric Handel was said to have composed *Messiah* in only twenty-four days, but the truth is he recycled some music as well as composing new materials. Handel routinely reused materials, whether from his own music or that of others. We can find further discussions about his borrowings such as in John H. Roberts's *Handel Sources: Material for the Study of Handel's Borrowing* and in other research that has emerged in recent years.²

It is clear that such borrowing techniques appear in Bernstein's output. He took advantage of reusing his own previous musical ideas in his works, whether these materials have been used or not, and the original intention of the idea does not matter. Once the composer found a suitable place to apply this melody, he did not hesitate to use it. As Jack Gottlieb stated, "Bernstein was never one to let a good tune go to waste."³ One of the most obvious examples is between *Serenade* (1954)

¹ Norman Carrell, *Bach the Borrower* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1967).

² John H. Roberts ed., *Handel Sources: Materials for the Study of Handel's Borrowing*, 9 volumes (New York: Garland, 1986).

³ Jack Gottlieb, *Working with Bernstein* (Milwaukee: Amadeus, 2010), 99.

and *Five Anniversaries* (1949-51). The material from the first of *Five Anniversaries*, “For Elizabeth Rudolf,” reappeared in the beginning of the “Aristophanes,” the second movement of *Serenade*. Bernstein rearranged the left hand of the piano for violoncello and the solo violin plays the double stops in the original right hand part of *Five Anniversaries*. The second *Anniversary*, “For Lukas Foss,” also reemerged in the “Aristophanes” of *Serenade* while “For Elizabeth B. Ehrman” is modified, with the time signature changed from 6/16 to 6/8 but with the same the rhythmic patterns, and reused in “Socrates: Alcibiades” of *Serenade*, starting from the third measure of rehearsal number 14.

Bernstein also freely reused musical materials between the concert hall and musical theater, such as ideas that have been reappeared among *Fancy Free*, *On the Town*, *Age of Anxiety*, and *Wonderful Town*, which will be discussed below. A good place to examine at Bernstein’s tendency to reuse music is the creation of *Chichester Psalms* (1965). The melody of “Spring Will Come Again,” which is derived from *The Skin of Our Teeth*, a never-completed musical version of Thornton Wilder’s play by the same name,⁴ is reused in the second movement as the melody for Psalm 23 of *Chichester Psalms*.⁵ There are also materials from early sketches of *West Side Story*, such as “Mix,” a number that was initially supposed to appear in the “Prologue,”

⁴ Bernstein tried to use his sabbatical year, 1964-65, to compose and planned this new Broadway musical, *The Skin of Our Teeth*, collaborating with his old colleagues, Robbins, Comden and Green. But in the end this work was abandoned. Bernstein described it in a poem: “Six months we labored, June to bleak December./And bleak was our reward, when Christmas came,/ To find ourselves uneasy with our work./ We gave it up, and went our several ways,/ Still loving friends; but there was the pain/ Of seeing six months of work go down the drain.” Quoted in Humphrey Burton, Leonard Bernstein (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 344. One may find more detailed research in Paul R. Laird, *The Chichester Psalms of Leonard Bernstein*, from the series of Sourcebooks in American Music (Hillsdale, NY: College Music Society and Pendragon, 2010), 89-93.

⁵ Laird, 197-199.

reappears in the setting of Psalm 2 in the second movement *Chichester Psalms*.⁶ The borrowing from the musical theater to *Chichester Psalms* developed naturally under Walter Hussey's request that the composer "compose music reminiscent of *West Side Story*."⁷ Hussey was the dean of Chichester Cathedral and the commissioning agent of the work.

Meanwhile, Anthony Bushard has also found strong motivic connections between *On the Waterfront* and *West Side Story*.⁸ Moreover, in the previous analysis of "New York, New York" of *On the Town*, it was shown that the composer cleverly quoted the melody "New York, New York" in "Suburbia" in his one-act opera *Trouble in Tahiti*, which anticipates the era of the story and also fits the atmosphere of the opera. In order to have a more complete picture, we will now survey Bernstein's reuse of previously composed materials in *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*.

⁶ Laird, 199.

⁷ Laird, 16.

⁸ Anthony Bushard, "From *On the Waterfront* to *West Side Story*, or There's Nowhere Like Somewhere," *Studies in Musical Theatre*, vol. 3, no. 1 (August 2009), 61-63.

Piano Trio and *On the Town*

Trio for Violin, Violoncello, and Piano is one of Bernstein's pieces of juvenilia, composed in 1937, but he did not publish it until 1979. The three movements are: I. Adagio non troppo—Allegro vivace; II. Tempo di Marcia; III. Largo—Allegro vivo e molto ritmico. Bernstein pervasively used contrapuntal textures throughout this work. The first movement is generally more dissonant than the other movements. It is cello that opens the first movement and the violin immediately imitates the melody. The piano does not enter until almost one minute later (*Bernstein: Violin Sonata, Piano Trio—New Transcriptions*,⁹ thereafter Bernstein: Piano Trio, track 5, 0'00" – 0'53"). The motives are usually introduced first by cello, then stated separately by different instruments, and later played in unison (for example, in *Bernstein: Piano Trio*, track 5, 3'16" – 3'46").

The second movement of the Piano Trio is a fast, lively movement, which resembles most of the characteristics of a scherzo but the time signature is 4/4. This simple melody is stated several times in the movement. The composer recycled the opening eight measures (Ex. 4-1a), which consist of energetic short notes and rests, transposed the melody from G major to D-flat major, and used them in "Gabey's Comin'" and "High School Girls" (Ex. 4-1b) in *On the Town*. The melody is taken completely from the violin part and it is used for Gabey's two friends to teach him how to get a "date tonight" in "Gabey's Comin'," which can be heard on the complete recording of *On the Town* (hereafter "1992 OTT"¹⁰), recorded in 1992 and conducted

⁹ *Bernstein: Violin Sonata, Piano Trio—New Transcriptions* (Naxos 8.559643, 2010).

¹⁰ *On the Town*, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas with the London Symphony Orchestra (Deutsche Grammophon 437 516-2, 1993).

by Michael Tilson Thomas (1992 OTT, disc 1 track 4, 0'20"- 0'31"). The occurrence in the instrumental number, "High School Girls," is even closer to the original piano trio with its contrapuntal structure (1992 OTT, disc 1 track 8, 0'00"-0'10").

Example 4-1. *Piano Trio* and *On the Town*, "High School Girls."

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a. *Piano Trio*, second movement, mm. 1-8.

Tempo di marcia (♩=126)

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 6. The Violin I staff starts with a *pizz.* (pizzicato) marking and a *p* dynamic. The Violin II staff has a *piaz.* marking and a *p cresc.* dynamic. The Piano staff has a *p* dynamic and a *cresc.* dynamic. The second system contains measures 7 and 8. The Violin I and II staves have a *mp* dynamic and a *p sub.* (piano subito) marking. The Piano staff also has a *mp* dynamic and a *p sub.* marking.

b. *On the Town*, "High School Girls," mm. 1-8.

Agitato

Picc. *8va*
Eb Cl. *stacc.*
Gls. p.

Piano

Vlms. (Db chord in eighth notes), Celesta (tremolo)

Ob., Cl.

5

8va
Eb Cl., Bb Cl. *8ba*

loco

Tpt. I

Ob. *8va*
Bs. Cl.

Fancy Free, On the Town, The Age of Anxiety and Wonderful Town

When writing the music for *On the Town*, though the story was similar to *Fancy Free*, Bernstein insisted that “there was not a note of *Fancy Free* music in *On the Town*.”¹¹ However, since these two works are strongly related to each other in terms of story and were composed at about the same time, some fundamental musical ideas are also similar. For example, the piano plays an important role in both scores, especially when the influence of jazz is most significant.

Perhaps in order to make people aware that both these stories take place in a twenty-four-hour period, in both the ballet and musical Bernstein recapitulated the opening material at the end. In *Fancy Free*, the section beginning in m. 929 of the “VII. Finale” is similar to the end of “I. Enter Three Sailors”; both sections include chords played pizzicato. The clarinet duet in the opening of “II. Scene at the Bar” parallels the flute duet in m. 933 of the “Finale.” In *On the Town*, the melody of the opening number “I Feel Like I’m Not Out of Bed Yet” returns in m. 11 of the “Finale,” and “New York, New York” follows immediately in a slower tempo and the meter changes from 2/2 to 3/4. When the new sailors come on stage, the music returns to the initial high spirits and the full verse-refrain is restated by Gabey, his friends, and the new sailors.

Fancy Free and *On the Town* share similar sonorities, rhythms, and motivic structures. The opening rhythm of “I. Enter Three Sailors” of *Fancy Free* is similar to the opening of “New York, New York” of *On the Town* (Ex. 4-2): both use a quarter note following a quarter rest, another quarter note, an eighth rest and an eighth

¹¹ Peyser, 144.

note. The second half of this short phrase goes differently and the accents in *Fancy Free* follow the accent of the meter, while the phrase from *On The Town* does not and sounds more like syncopations.

Example 4-2. *Fancy Free*, “I. Enter Three Sailors,” and *On the Town*, “New York, New York.”

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a. *Fancy Free*, “I. Enter Three Sailors,” mm. 2-3.

b. *On the Town*, “New York, New York,” mm. 9-11.

The accompaniment patterns of the opening of two works are also similar. In “I. Enter Three Sailors” of *Fancy Free*, the basic bass accompaniment pattern includes four notes (Ex. 4-3), which can be subdivided into two rising fourths separated by an ascending fifth. Later, Bernstein reduced this pattern to three notes in m. 14, which is not unlike the accompaniment used in *On the Town* (1992 OTT, disc 1 track 2, bass accompaniment beginning with 0’17”-0’25”).

Example 4-3. *Fancy Free*, “I. Enter Three Sailors,” mm. 11-16.

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The image shows a musical score for two staves, Violin (Vc.) and Bass (B.). The music is in 3/4 time and consists of six measures. The notes are: Vc. (F, A, C, F, A, C), B. (F, A, C, F, A, C). The notes are marked with a 'p' for piano and a 'pizz.' for pizzicato. The background is marked 'tr.' for *trillo*.

The sonority of the ending of “I. Enter Three Sailors” and the opening of “II. Scene at the Bar” of *Fancy Free* are similar to the opening of “I Feel Like I’m Not Out of Bed Yet,” both using a string pizzicato chord against a *tranquillo* background (Ex. 4-4). Although in the piano/vocal score we can also see the indication of string pizzicato, the effect is much clearer in recordings (1992 OTT disc 1 track 1, 0’00”-0’04,” and *Bernstein conducts Bernstein*,¹² *Fancy Free*, disc 1 track 5, 2’50” – 3’00”).

¹² *Bernstein Conducts Bernstein*, collectors edition, Deutsche Grammophon, 469 829-2, 2003.

Example 4-4. *Fancy Free* and *On the Town*.

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a. *Fancy Free*, "I. Enter Three Sailors," mm. 151-156.

Musical score for "I. Enter Three Sailors" from *Fancy Free*, measures 151-156. The score is arranged for a full orchestra. The top system includes Clarinet 1 (Cl. 1), Clarinet 2 (Cl. 2), Bassoon (Bn.), and Trombone (Trgl.). The middle system includes Piano (Pno.). The bottom system includes Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Bass (B.). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor) and the time signature is 2/4. The score features various musical notations including slurs, accents, and dynamic markings such as *p* (piano) and *f* (forte). A circled measure number (151) is present at the beginning of the first system.

b. "I Feel Like I'm Not Out of Bed Yet," *On the Town*, mm. 1-2.

Musical score for "I Feel Like I'm Not Out of Bed Yet" from *On the Town*, measures 1-2. The score is for Piano and includes parts for other instruments. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo/mood is "Free and flowing". The score includes the instruction "WORKMAN I" above the piano part. The piano part features a forte (*f*) dynamic and a piano (*p*) dynamic. The other instruments listed are Clarinets, Trumpets, Trombone, Violins, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

The materials from “II. Scene at the Bar” of *Fancy Free*, “The Masque” of *The Age of Anxiety*, and “Conquering New York” of *Wonderful Town* sound very similar to each other (Ex. 4-5). They all use solo piano and dotted notes or triplets (in *The Age of Anxiety* it is a triplet of eighth and sixteenth notes). At the ends of phrases, Bernstein stopped using dotted rhythms and turned to equal values. In *Fancy Free* and *Wonderful Town* they are an eighth note followed by a longer note, while in *The Age of Anxiety* it is two sixteenth notes. The repetitious bass pattern increases the similarity between *Fancy Free* and *Wonderful Town*.

Example 4-5. *Fancy Free*, *The Age of Anxiety*, and *Wonderful Town*.

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a. *Fancy Free*, “II. Scene at the Bar,” mm. 183-185.



b. *The Age of Anxiety*, “The Masque,” mm. 58-60.



c. *Wonderful Town*, "Conquering New York," mm. 58-61.

G **Brightly (lo stesso tempo)**
Pno. Solo

58

p

Traps, Strs. pizz.

Touches and On the Town

Touches: Chorale, Eight Variations and Coda is a competition piece that Bernstein composed for the 1981 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. This piece dates from almost four decades after *On the Town* but we can see that Bernstein did not drastically change his style in intervening years and still find highly similar material, or intervals, in these two works.

The “Chorale” of *Touches* consists of long, wandering melodies that serve as the theme for the following variations. These phrases are separated by fermatas. In the beginning of the third phrase, the first four notes (Ex. 4-6a) are very similar to the opening of the “Lonely Town” chorus (Ex. 4-6b), only in *Touches*, the first note is semitone higher. However, in the “Lonely Town: Pas de Deux,” Bernstein moved the note a semitone higher for the muted trumpet solo with a mute and it results in the exact the same intervals as *Touches* (Ex. 4-6c). It ultimately reaches the same pitches as *Touches* after modulating for oboe solo in m. 10 (Ex. 4-6d). This perhaps is a coincidence rather than an intentionally borrowing, nonetheless, with the light texture, wandering feeling, and placing it at the beginning of the phrase, one could easily connect these two moments although they are separated by nearly four decades.

Example 4-6. *Touches* and *On the Town*.

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a. *Touches*, "Chorale," mm. 2-3.

Musical score for "Touches, Chorale," mm. 2-3. The score is written for piano in G major and 2/4 time. It features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The dynamic marking is *meno p*.

b. *On the Town*, "Lonely Town," mm. 47-48.

Musical score for "On the Town, Lonely Town," mm. 47-48. The score is written for voice and piano in G major and 2/4 time. The voice part is for Gabey, and the piano part is for Violin I with voice. The dynamic marking is *p*. The lyrics are "A town's a lone -".

c. *On the Town*, "Lonely Town: Pas de Deux," mm. 2-3.

Musical score for "On the Town, Lonely Town: Pas de Deux," mm. 2-3. The score is written for piano in G major and 2/4 time. It features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The dynamic marking is *p*. The tempo marking is *espr., poco rubato*. The score includes markings for Tpt. (mute) and Strs. con sord.

d. *On the Town*, "Lonely Town: Pas de Deux," mm. 10-11.

Musical score for "On the Town, Lonely Town: Pas de Deux," mm. 10-11. The score is written for piano in G major and 2/4 time. It features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The dynamic marking is *p dolce*. The score includes markings for Cls., Ob., and Tpt.

Prelude, Fugue and Riffs and Wonderful Town

Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs was commissioned by clarinetist, alto and soprano saxophonist, singer, and big band leader Woody Herman (1913-1987) four years before the creation of *Wonderful Town*.¹³ Although Bernstein finished this work, Herman had already dismissed his band and was not able to come up with the check. Bernstein shelved the work after its completion and then in *Wonderful Town* the composer tried to transform this work into a ballet. However, the choreography did not work out and this was cut during the show's New Haven try-out.¹⁴ Ultimately, *Prelude, Fugue and Riffs* premiered on Bernstein's 1955 *Omnibus* television series and dedicated to Benny Goodman, who played the clarinet solo on the show and later made the first recording of the piece with Bernstein for Columbia Records.¹⁵

Although the ballet number was dropped during the tryout, we can still find the musical materials and ideas from the *Prelude* that have been paraphrased in the show. The opening measures of the "Overture" in *Wonderful Town* shares some similarities to the "Prelude" in *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs* (Ex. 4-7). They both use chords in two distinct registers; the instrumentation includes mainly brass sections, which creates similar sonorities; and the rhythms are primarily two long notes in the first measure and syncopation follow immediately.

¹³ Burton, 225.

¹⁴ Peyser, 250.

¹⁵ Burton, 251.

Example 4-7. *Wonderful Town*, "Overture," and *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs*, "Prelude."
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a. *Wonderful Town*, "Overture," mm. 1-2.

Moderately bright

Tutti

Piano

b. *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs*, "Prelude," mm. 1-3.

Fast and exact ♩ = 160

1

2

Bb Trumpet

3

4

5

1

2

Trombone

3

4

Percussion

Bass Drum

f

pizz.

Bass

ff

ff

The clarinet solo starting with m. 159 in “Riffs” of *Prelude* reappears as the clarinet solo beginning from m. 96 in “Conquering New York” of *Wonderful Town* (Ex. 4-8). Bernstein shifted the entire melody a minor third higher, changed the note values from equal sixteenth notes to dotted eighth following a sixteenth, and added more instruments immediately after the first phrase of the clarinet solo. The downward glissando moves from the endings of the first and second phrases to the ending of third phrase. The composer also transported the continuous downward fourths starting with m. 170 in “Riffs” to “Conquering New York,” beginning from m. 108. He augmented the first interval into a fifth, which still followed a series of fourths with many repetitions (Ex. 4-9). Later in m. 134 of “Conquering New York,” Bernstein wrote a melody that was very similar to the “ma largamente!” section in “Riffs.” The ovals in the example circumscribe the common melodic constructions in these two tunes (Ex. 4-10) but the melody sounds one half-step lower in “Conquering New York.”

Example 4-8. *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs*, “Riffs,” and *Wonderful Town*, “Conquering New York.”

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a. *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs*, “Riffs,” mm. 159-162.

Bb Cl. Solo* *p* lightly

160

Bb Cl. Solo* poco

b. *Wonderful Town*, “Conquering New York,” mm. 96-103.

L

96 Cl. Solo +Tenor Sax 8ba

mf

(pp)

Traps, Pno., Strs. pizz.

100 +Cl. 2, Ten. Sax 2 fall-off

Example 4-9. *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs*, “Riffs,” and *Wonderful Town*, “Conquering New York.”

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a. *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs*, “Riffs,” m. 170.

Musical notation for Example 4-9a, showing a solo for Bb Clarinet (Cl.) in 4/4 time, starting at measure 170. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes with slurs and accents.

b. *Wonderful Town*, “Conquering New York,” mm. 108-109.

Musical notation for Example 4-9b, showing a section for Clarinets, Tenor Saxes, and 8ba in 4/4 time, starting at measure 108. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (Bb), and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes with slurs and accents.

Example 4-10. *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs*, “Riffs,” and *Wonderful Town*, “Conquering New York.”

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a. *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs*, “Riffs,” mm. 232-234.

Musical notation for Example 4-10a, showing a section for Bb Trumpet 1 in 4/4 time, starting at measure 232. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (Bb), and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes with slurs and accents.

b. *Wonderful Town*, “Conquering New York,” mm. 134-137.

The opening of “Conversation Piece” of *Wonderful Town* directly borrows materials from mm. 44 to 47 in “Prelude” of *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs*. Bernstein did not modify the key or a note; only the rhythm is slightly changed from a triplet and two equal eighth notes to two triplets (Ex. 4-11 a and b). In Bernstein’s jazz-influenced composition, these four measures serve as an ostinato, with other ideas added to it. In *Wonderful Town*, the composer used it as repeated material that serves as an introduction, bridge that connects two main sections, and also a fast introduction (Ex. 4-11c) to the second half of “Conversation Piece.”

Example 4-11. *Prelude, Fugue and Riffs*, “Prelude,” and *Wonderful Town*, “Conversation Piece.”

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a. *Prelude, Fugue and Riffs*, “Prelude,” mm. 44-47.

b. *Wonderful Town*, "Conversation Piece," mm. 1-4.

Lugubriously (Slowly)

Cls., Tbns.,
Pno., Vlas.

Piano

f pesante

Bs. Cl., Bs. Sax, Tbn., Pno., Vcs., Cb.

Detailed description: This musical score is for the piano part of measures 1-4 of 'Wonderful Town'. It is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo and mood are 'Lugubriously (Slowly)'. The score is written for a grand piano. The right hand part consists of a series of chords, many of which are marked with a '3' and a slur, indicating triplets. The left hand part consists of a steady, rhythmic accompaniment of quarter notes. The dynamic marking is 'f pesante'. The instrumentation list includes Clarinets, Trombones, Piano, and Violas for the right hand, and Bass Clarinet, Bass Saxophone, Trombone, Piano, Violoncello, and Contrabass for the left hand.

c. "Conversation Piece," *Wonderful Town*, mm. 52-54.

52 WW. *8va*, Br. *8ba*, Strs.

ff

Bsn., Tbn., Traps, Pno., Cb.

Detailed description: This musical score is for measures 52-54 of 'Wonderful Town', specifically for the Woodwind 8va, Brass 8ba, and Strings. It is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The dynamic marking is 'ff'. The score is written for a grand piano. The right hand part consists of a series of chords, many of which are marked with a 'v' and a slur, indicating vibrato. The left hand part consists of a steady, rhythmic accompaniment of quarter notes. The instrumentation list includes Bassoon, Trombone, Traps, Piano, and Contrabass.

Wonderful Town and West Side Story

There is no direct borrowing between *Wonderful Town* and *West Side Story* (1957), although we can surprisingly find a few similar musical ideas that have been applied to both musicals. Maybe we should not feel that surprised. Starting from *On the Town*, we can observe the composer's ambition to write a musical under a macroscopic perspective, as what composers usually do in symphonic writing and it is because of the ambition of combining the ideas of European opera with American vernacular styles, "Bernstein forged his own dramatic musical hybrid"¹⁶ in *West Side Story*, for which we can also find the similarities in *Wonderful Town*.

The first similarity between these two shows is the accompaniment pattern of "Something's Coming" in *West Side Story* and "What a Waste" in *Wonderful Town*. Although the harmonization and the phrasing are different, the meter is the same and the bass line for both the accompaniments is based upon three quarter notes: in "What a Waste" it is a descending fourth continuously following a descending fifth, which constructs an octave; in "Something's Coming" it consists of two continuous descending fourths, which produces a seventh. The treble parts of both accompaniments also share a rhythmic pattern: two eighth notes, an eighth rest, another eighth note, and then a quarter rest (Ex. 4-12 a and b). This rhythmic pattern creates a strong syncopation to the continuous bass line, which one can easily tell from the very beginning. Meanwhile, the melodies for both Tony and Baker are mainly syllabic with occasionally long notes at the end of phrase. The

¹⁶ Geoffrey Block, *Enchanted Evenings: The Broadway Musical from Show Boat to Sondheim* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 260.

initial rhythm of the vocal line primarily follows what it is in the treble part of the accompaniment. Nonetheless, “Something’s Coming” repeats the pattern a couple times while “What a Waste” soon abandons the complicated rhythm and turns to sequence-like development to end the verse.

Example 4-12. *Wonderful Town*, “What a Waste,” and *West Side Story*, “Something’s Coming.”

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a. *Wonderful Town*, “What a Waste,” mm. 4-6.

b. *West Side Story*, “Something’s Coming,” mm. 1-2.

Another similarity that these two works share is the use of an ascending tritone following an ascending minor second. The tritone can be said to be the hallmark of *West Side Story*, found pervasively all over the show. A number of musical theater scholars who study *West Side Story* have considered its importance,

such as Wilfrid Mellers,¹⁷ Scott Miller,¹⁸ Geoffrey Block, and Joseph Swain.¹⁹ Both Block's and Swain's books used one chapter to discuss the importance of *West Side Story*, which gave abundant examinations of the tritone "love-motif."²⁰ Bernstein also freely included the tritone in his other works, disconnected from the emotional symbolism found with the interval in *West Side Story*. In *Wonderful Town*, this happens in "Conversation Piece," when Eileen starts to sing "Nice people, nice talk." The melody is mainly centered on a perfect fifth and the note that forms the tritone can be considered as a lower neighbor note to the fifth (1953 OCR, disc 1 track 8, 0'48" – 0'52"). This lower-neighbor tone relationship between tritone and the fifth can also be found in *West Side Story* as well, such as in "Maria."

Although the tritone does not play as important a role in *Wonderful Town* as in *West Side Story*, the perfect fifth does as a structural interval. It appears in the beginning of "What a Waste" and also "A Little Bit in Love." The perfect fifth serves as the frame for the "love-motif" in *West Side Story* that functions as a resolution of the tension that the tritone causes, such as "Maria." In this way, we find more similarities of the melodic constructions between these two works.

It is not surprising that Bernstein reused previous materials in his latter works, just like most of his predecessors did. But it is interesting to see how he cleverly transposed materials from the concert hall to the theater and flawlessly fit

¹⁷ Wilfrid Mellers, "The Narrative and Thematic Significance of Music in *West Side Story*," *Readings on West Side Story* (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2001), 67-76.

¹⁸ Scott Miller's "An Examination of *West Side Story*'s Plot and Musical Motifs," *Readings on West Side Story* (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2001), 77-92.

¹⁹ Joseph Swain, *The Broadway Music: A Critical and Musical Survey* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2002).

²⁰ Mellers, 70.

the style, the lyrics, or the character that the music required. The composer freely borrowed materials or used similar compositional techniques, sonorities, rhythms, melodic designs, and orchestration between his output for the concert hall and the theater.

Bernstein's style, which is closer to the popular, vernacular side, became his signature that people might expect to hear in his music. In a letter that Walter Hussey wrote to Bernstein concerning the commission of *Chichester Psalms*, he said, "I think many of us would very delighted if there was a hint of 'West Side Story' about the music."²¹ As a composer who composed both for the concert hall and musical theater, Bernstein did not draw a fine line and separate them into two categories; instead, he has a style that resonated in both areas. He said that he "loved people as much as music, if not more,"²² and this perhaps may help explain why he merged Broadway idioms to his concert works—in order to communicate more directly with people. From his output we can see that although he can compose concert music just like what his contemporaries did: atonality, chromaticism, the irregular accents, etc, with the help of vernacular idioms, his music was more friendly to the audience. When recycling these musical ideas, he considered whether the materials fit the music or not, instead of if the quality is closer to the concert hall or the theater.

²¹ Laird, 23.

²² Leonard Bernstein – Reflections, film by Peter Rosen (Peter Rosen Productions, 1978; Medici Arts International, 2009), chapter 1.

Sense of Unity

One of the distinguishing characteristics that make Bernstein's musicals more sophisticated than those of his contemporaries is his use of small motivic elements to unify the entire work. A famous example is the importance of the tritone in *West Side Story*, which helps connect songs and becomes the musical trademark of the work. In his early musicals, Bernstein already demonstrated his ambition to unify his scores; merely using reprises in his musicals did not satisfy him. The use of reprise had been common in opera for centuries and was well known in musical theater by the time when Bernstein was writing. One finds it, for example, in *Show Boat* by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II, *Of Thee I Sing* by George and Ira Gershwin, and Rodgers and Hammerstein made significant use of reprise in *Oklahoma!* the year before *On the Town* (see, for example, their use of "People Will Say We're In Love" in the second act). However, Bernstein not only used major reprises at dramatically appropriate moments, he also intentionally brought back small components of the score to unify the show. This is a more complicated process than simply reprising entire songs. Although Bernstein was not the first to do so in a Broadway score, pioneers before him have already gave it a shot, for example, in *Show Boat* (1927), composer Jerome Kern tried to create a sense of unity through motivic fragments and make the music closer to that of the concert hall.²³

In *On the Town*, Bernstein accomplished this sense of unity through recapitulation of sections of numbers at dramatically appropriate places, for instance, as noted earlier, "New York, New York" in the "Finale" of Act II to reflect

²³ Block, 28-34. Also see Swain, 26-31.

the end of the one-day period for the stars of the show, and the beginning of another similar day for the next three sailors. Meanwhile, the motive of “New York, New York” becomes a pivotal theme in the whole musical. On the other hand, a number cut in the original production, “Gabey’s Comin’,” also serves as a main source for other musical ideas in the show. In *Wonderful Town*, the sense of musical unity is clear to the audience: we can hear the materials from previous numbers that have been reused as small motivic units later in the show; for example, ideas from “Ohio” reappear in “Conquering New York,” “What a Waste,” and “A Quiet Girl.”

On the Town

“New York, New York”

“New York, New York” is one of the most evocative numbers in *On the Town*. It portrays the image of New York City in the audience’s imagination—not only for those in the 1940s but also in the present—before another three new sailors run into the city once again singing a fast version “New York, New York.” Director George Abbott described it as one of the best “New York songs,”²⁴ and Bernstein used this live excerpt when he talked about the “American Musical Comedy” in the 1956 television program *Omnibus*.²⁵ He tried to demonstrate the variety of the world of musical theater and used several clips from different works, from variety show to Wagner’s music drama, *Die Walküre*, to show the wide possibilities of the musical theater, which included this number from his own work. “New York, New York” was also one of the few original songs that remained in the MGM movie *On the Town* in 1949, though they changed some of the lyrics.

The fundamental motive of “New York, New York” consists of two ascending perfect fourths separated by a major second. In initial sketches, Bernstein already included the idea of ascending intervals, but instead with two minor thirds and a perfect fourth (Figure 4-1a). Soon thereafter, however, we can see the idea of two conjunct ascending fourths appear on the same draft sheet and also that most of the

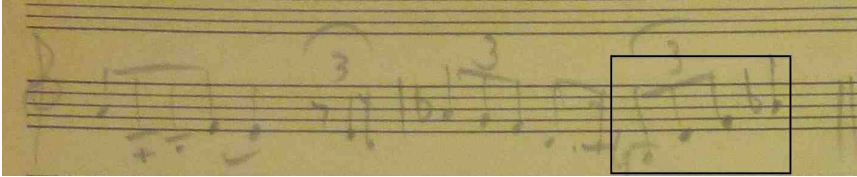
²⁴ Mark Steyn, *Broadway Babies Say Goodnight: Musicals Then and Now* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 308.

²⁵ The script for the TV program can be found in Leonard Bernstein, *The Joy of Music* (Pompton Plains: Amadeus, 2004), 164-191.

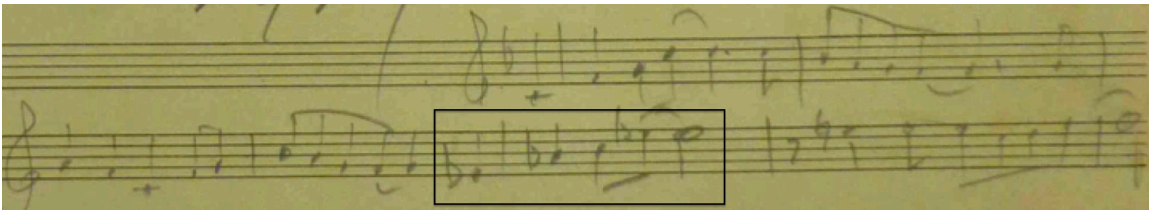
materials for the refrain of “New York, New York” were composed at this stage (Figure 4-1b).

Figure 4-1. The holograph sketches of “New York, New York” from *On the Town*.²⁶ © Amberson Holdings. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Music Publishing Company LLC.

a.



b.



In the musical, Bernstein perhaps tried to prepare the familiarity of this motive for the audience as early as possible. These two conjunct ascending fourths first appear in the bass part of the accompaniment, before the singers enter (Ex. 4-13). This bass figure serves as an ostinato, which is heard during most of the instrumental sections and also the verses.²⁷ Later, the composer changed the melodic and rhythmic patterns in the bass accompaniment but still included this motive as the basic unit (Ex. 4-14).

²⁶ Holograph sketches, including music and lyrics for “New York, New York” from Box 26, *On the Town*, from the Music Manuscripts of Leonard Bernstein Collection, Library of Congress.

²⁷ Helen Smith also discussed this four-note idea in her book, which followed Jack Gottlieb’s use of the term, *Urmotiv*, in his dissertation. Helen Smith, *There’s A Place For Us: The Musical Theatre Works of Leonard Bernstein* (Burlington, VT: 2011), 20-22.

Example 4-13. *On the Town*, “New York, New York,” mm. 9-13.

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Molto più mosso

9

ff

Tpts.

Bs. Cl., Tbns.,
Pno., Vla.
Vc., Cb.

The musical score for Example 4-13 shows measures 9 through 13. The tempo is marked 'Molto più mosso'. The music is in 4/4 time and the key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The dynamic is 'ff'. The score includes parts for Trumpets (Tpts.), Bass Clarinet, Trombones, Piano, Viola, Violin, and Cello/Double Bass. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes, with some notes beamed together. The trumpet part has a melodic line with some rests. Two rectangular boxes highlight specific rhythmic patterns in the piano part.

Example 4-14. *On the Town*, “New York, New York,” mm. 15-16.

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W.W., Vlms.

mf

The musical score for Example 4-14 shows measures 15 and 16. The tempo is 'Molto più mosso'. The music is in 4/4 time and the key signature has two sharps. The dynamic is 'mf'. The score includes parts for Woodwinds and Violins (W.W., Vlms.). The violin part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes, with some notes beamed together. The woodwind part has a melodic line with some rests.

Before the text is heard, this motive has been stated several times in the orchestra and the audience probably can quickly recognize it. On the other hand, Bernstein also knew that people might lose their interest after listening to the same idea several times. Perhaps as additional interest for both the singers and the audience, he slightly shifted the accent and turned the four equal quarter notes into a syncopated rhythm: the last two notes turns from four even quarter notes to two quarter notes plus two eighth notes, while the last eighth note is tied to a longer note (Ex. 4-15).

Example 4-15. *On the Town*, “New York, New York,” mm. 44-45.

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The image shows a musical score for the song "New York, New York" from the musical *On the Town*. It features three vocal lines and piano accompaniment. The vocal lines are for GABEY, CHIP, and OZZIE, all marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The lyrics "New York, New York," are written below the vocal lines. The piano accompaniment includes parts for W. W. (Woodwinds) and Cls. (Climps). The score is in 4/4 time and the key signature has two sharps (F# and C#).

This “New York” motive is also used as a fanfare to open “Presentation of Miss Turnstiles” (Ex. 4-16). In this case, Bernstein cleverly reused the material to create a sense of unity between this number and “New York, New York” and also successfully transformed its characteristic and function.

Example 4-16. *On the Town*, “Presentation of Miss Turnstiles,” mm. 1-4.

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The image shows a musical score for the "Presentation of Miss Turnstiles" from the musical *On the Town*. It features piano accompaniment and brass. The tempo is marked **Maestoso** and the instrumentation includes W. W., Strs., and Br. (Brass). The piano part is marked with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The score is in 8/8 time and the key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). A box highlights a specific section of the piano accompaniment.

In the “Times Square Ballet: Finale, Act I,” instead of only using the “New York” motive, Bernstein rearranged different materials from the entire number of “New York, New York” and kept going back and forth between jazz-like and straight sections. The verse from “New York, New York” opens the “Time Square Ballet” (Ex. 4-17a), and the bass accompaniment pattern in example 4-14 reappears at rehearsal letter B (Ex. 4-17b). Bernstein reused the melody of the chorus in the bass part from mm. 26 to 31 (Ex. 4-17c) and then shifted it to the treble part starting with m. 31. After an eight-measure bridge, the atmosphere turns from spirited to relaxed between mm. 54 to 70 in the alto saxophone solo (Ex. 4-17d). When the melody moves to the strings in m.71, it reverts to a more vivid, lively feeling (Ex. 4-17e). The next section again the composer turned the mood to a jazzier feeling with the use of a notated shuffle rhythm and added non-chord tones and blue notes. At the end of the number, the “New York” motive is pervasively applied to different voices, first introduced by trumpet and later heard in the trombones, cellos, and double basses (Ex. 4-17f).

Example 4-17. *On the Town*, “Times Square Ballet: Finale, Act I.”

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a. mm. 1-3.
Allegro (♩ = 88)

Eb Cl. solo
Piano
Perc., Pno., Cb.

b. mm. 14-16.

B
Tutti
ff
B.D.

c. mm. 26-31.

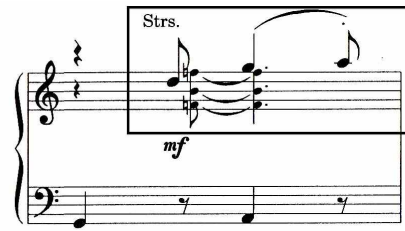
C W.W., Tpts., Strs.
Bs. Cl., Hns., Tbns.
Vc., Cb.

29

d. mm. 53-56.

53 +Traps
Alto Sax. solo
mp

e. mm. 71-75.



Strs.
mf



G W.W., Strs. +Tpt. I
72 *mf* *cresc.*

f. mm. 242-244.



X W.W., Tpt.
242 Strs. arco Tpts. II, III *cresc.*
Tbns., Vc., Cb.

Bernstein inserted the “New York” motive between “The Great Lover Displays Himself” and the “Pas de Deux.” This phrase is only three measures long and could be omitted, but one might posit that the composer chose to repeat the motive here to remind the audience that Gabey is one of the sailors.

The last time that the “New York” motive reappears is in “Finale, Act II.” Gabey starts singing “New York, New York” in a slow tempo with a sentimental feeling, for he knows that their 24-hour New York stay is ending and he thought he might never see Ivy Smith again (Ex. 4-18a). Probably in order to reflect sailors’ melancholy, Bernstein changed the meter from the original duple to triple and

characterized this section as “Broadly.” However, the sadness is soon resolved by “Gaily” when Hildy, Claire and Ivy enter and shout the sailors’ names. The orchestra plays the chorus of “New York” in a lively mood in 6/8 meter to reflect the excitement (Ex. 4-18b). The last complete statement of “New York, New York” starts from m. 66 when the three new sailors enter to enjoy their one day in New York and Claire, Hildy, Ivy, Gabey, Chip, and Ozzie join them by singing from m. 84 to the end.

Example 4-18. *On the Town*, “Finale, Act II.”

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a. mm. 15-17.

b. mm. 29-36

An interesting footnote to the performance history of this song is found in a version of “Lonely Town” that Mary Martin recorded on 6 February 1945, with an introduction based on “New York, New York,” apparently with new lyrics by Comden and Green.²⁸ The melody is modified but the two conjunct ascending fourths remain. The lyrics became: “New York, New York/Or a village in Ioway;/The only difference is the name. /If you’re alone/whether on Main Street or on Broadway,/If you’re alone/They are both the same.”²⁹ This recording was originally released as Decca single 23395, backed with “Lucky To Be Me.”³⁰

“Gabey’s Comin’”

“Gabey’s Comin’” is a number that had been cut in Boston during the tryout. From the narration of the London concert version of *On the Town* in 1992, Comden and Green explained the reason why they wrote this number:

COMDEN: At this point we had planned a number called “Gabey’s Comin’,” in which the shy sailor gets advice from his wordly [*sic*] pals on how to pick up girls.

GREEN: For this, Leonard Bernstein composed themes expressing Gabey’s loneliness and yearning – the music and the feeling which were meant to unifying the entire opus and give it its essential structure.

COMDEN: Of course, the number was cut out of the show in rehearsals in Boston.

²⁸ Although the lyrics for the verse are completely different than the original in the show, the title page of the lead sheet still says “Lyric by Betty Comden and Adolph Green.” It can be suggested that they wrote new lyrics especially for Mary Martin to use in this recording. Published vocal piano sheet music of “Lonely Town,” from Box 26, *On the Town*, from the Music Manuscripts of Leonard Bernstein Collection, Library of Congress.

²⁹ I received permission for use of these lyrics in my dissertation from Mark A. Merriman, on behalf of the Comden and Green interests, via email on 1 May 2012.

³⁰ This recording is released in CD format of *Wonderful Town: Original Cast Album* in 2001 in the series of Decca Broadway 440 014 602-2 by Universal Classics Groups.

GREEN: But now you'll hear it as we always meant it to be.³¹

Although cutting this number did not affect the overall dramatic arc of the show, Bernstein was worried that it might have damaged the work's unity when "Gabey's Comin'" was dropped because "everything [meaning the music] is based on that."³² Of course not "everything" is based on this number, but it is true that the musical ideas from it have been reused throughout the musical.

The composer divided the materials in this number into three different sections. The first unit that appears elsewhere is the introduction to "Gabey's Comin'" (Ex. 4-19a). It is a short phrase only two measures long that not only opens the number but also concludes it (Ex. 4-19b).³³

Example 4-19. *On the Town*, "Gabey's Comin'."

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a. mm. 1-2.

Hot and dirty
W.W., Strs. 8va, Tpt I

Piano

Br.

f

3

3

3

3

³¹ From Adolph Green Papers *T-Mss 2004-023, box 6, folder 3, p. 12-13, in the New York Public Library.

³² "On the Town," *The Dramatists Guild Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 2 (1971), 18.

³³ One may find similar material in Helen Smith, 23.

b. mm. 74-75

The image shows a musical score for measures 74-75. The score is written for strings, woodwinds, and trumpet III. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is not explicitly shown but is implied to be 4/4. The score features several triplet markings (indicated by a '3' below the notes) and a 'Tutti' marking above the staff. A dynamic marking of 'sfz' (sforzando) is present in the bass staff. The music includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

This phrase reappears in “Lonely Town: Pas de Deux.” It sounds first at rehearsal letter A (Ex. 4-20). After the complete statement, Bernstein used the technique of developing variation,³⁴ which is common in his concert music, to build a longer section on this basic idea. He retained the initial triplet (marked in example 4-20 by a rectangle), and then followed it with an ascending seventh, which is constructed with two fourths (marked by an oval).

³⁴ The concept of developing variation was developed in a series of Arnold Schoenberg’s writings. See more detailed discussion in Walter Frisch, *Brahms and the Principle of Developing Variation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 2.

Example 4-20. *On the Town*, “Lonely Town: Pas de Deux,” mm. 12-17.

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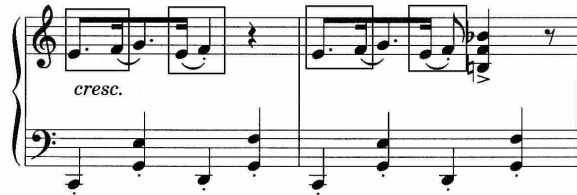
The musical score for Example 4-20, "Lonely Town: Pas de Deux," mm. 12-17, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 12-14) features a piano accompaniment with a right hand containing triplets and a left hand with a steady bass line. The second system (measures 15-17) continues the piano part with similar triplet patterns and introduces a timpani part in the lower register. The score includes various dynamic markings and performance instructions.

In the following number, “The Great Lover Displays Himself,” Bernstein changed the rhythm from triplets into a dotted rhythm (nonetheless, depending on how the dotted rhythm is played, it might still sound like a triplet feeling to a listener), which is played by clarinets and violins, and then two eighth-notes followed by two quarters (Ex. 4-21 a and b). For the dotted rhythm section, it is hard to recognize the original form because Bernstein inserted an extra note in the middle of the melody. However, the melodic construction is mainly made of two seconds followed by a leaping fourth, which is the original form in “Gabey’s Comin’.” Again the composer used developing variation here. But he chose a different spirit, which is more vivid and jumpy, to develop it.

Example 4-21. *On the Town*, “The Great Lover Displays Himself.”

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a. mm. 17-18.



b. mm. 33-35.



“Gabey’s Comin’” includes a refrain, which reappears in “Lonely Town” (Ex. 4-22a). The tempo marking is “Hot and dirty,” and the lyrics are “Gabey’s comin’,/Gabey’s comin’ to town!/He’s on the town!/With a day to burn, you’re gonna turn New York City upside down!/Gabey’s comin’ to town!”³⁵ In the original lyrics, Chip and Ozzie try to cheer up Gabey, encourage him to be brave and teach him how to be a great lover, which every girl adores, for which the composer used dotted rhythms in this spirited section. However, after trying hard to find Ivy Smith with no result, Gabey feels frustrated and the encouraging, high-spirited “Gabey’s Comin’” becomes ironic. He sings his ballad, “Lonely Town,” which begins with the opening of the refrain of “Gabey’s Comin’” in a slower tempo (Ex. 4-22b), and the

³⁵ I received permission for use of these lyrics in my dissertation from Mark A. Merriman, on behalf of the Comden and Green interests, via email on 1 May 2012.

lyrics say, “Gabey’s comin’/Gabey’s comin’ to town./So what?/Who cares?,” which shows Gabey’s disappointment and frustration. Bernstein changed the spirited dotted rhythm into two equal eighth notes. With using long chords supporting Gabey’s lonesome melody, the recurring melody serves as a soliloquy, which brings a big contrast to the previous, crowded feeling in “Gabey’s Comin’.”

Example 4-22. *On the Town*, “Gabey’s Comin’” and “Lonely Town.”

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a. “Gabey’s Comin’,” mm. 59-60.

D
59 **Tempo primo**

Girls
Ga - bey's com - in', Ga - bey's com - in' to town!

Pno., Perc. Cls., Br. Cls. Br.

mp

Detailed description: This musical score is for the vocal line and piano accompaniment of 'Gabey's Comin'' (measures 59-60). The vocal line is for 'Girls' and is in a soprano clef. The lyrics are 'Ga - bey's com - in', Ga - bey's com - in' to town!'. The piano accompaniment is in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The tempo is marked 'Tempo primo'. The piano part includes markings for 'Pno., Perc.', 'Cls., Br.', and 'Cls. Br.' with dynamic markings like 'mp'.

b. “Lonely Town,” mm. 27-28.

GABEY *f parlato* *sing*

Ga - bey's com-in', Ga-bey's com-in' to town...

Moderato
Pno. cue W.W., Pno., Strs. con sord.

p

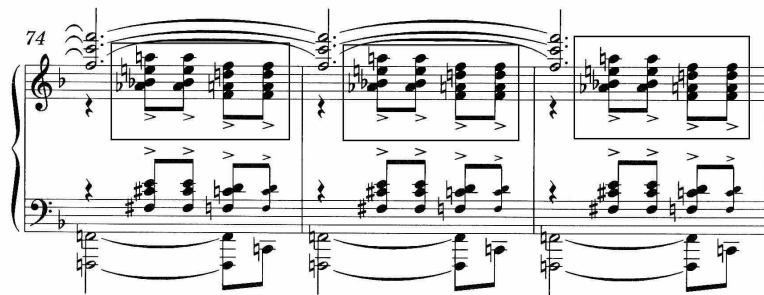
Detailed description: This musical score is for the vocal line and piano accompaniment of 'Lonely Town' (measures 27-28). The vocal line is for 'GABEY' and is in a bass clef. The lyrics are 'Ga - bey's com-in', Ga-bey's com-in' to town...'. The tempo is marked 'Moderato'. The piano accompaniment is in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The piano part includes markings for 'Pno. cue' and 'W.W., Pno., Strs. con sord.' with a dynamic marking of 'p'.

The material of the refrain is also inserted into the end of the dance number, “Pas de Deux,” which follows after “The Great Lover Displays Himself” (Ex. 4-23).

With the use of brass instruments, full chords and slower tempo, Bernstein made it sound grander and more splendid instead of “hot and dirty” for the initial appearance in “Gabey’s Comin’.” Although all three sections are using the same musical ideas, the composer cleverly transformed them to meet the dramatic needs.

Example 4-23. *On the Town*, “Pas de Deux,” mm. 74-76.

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The last section from “Gabey’s Comin’” that returns in the show is from the “Tempo di Gavotte (poco più presto)” (Ex. 4-24a). This section becomes the main material in “High School Girls,” a dance number, following “Lonely Town.” (Ex. 4-24b) Basically, Bernstein did not change much. He stayed in the same tonality, presented the complete melody (for which the last note is the beginning of the first note of “Lonely Town: Pas de Deux”), and kept the rhythm the same, only adding notes where there are rests in the original. He also applied a contrapuntal texture, which makes the melody sound more complex.

Example 4-24. *On the Town*, “Gabey’s Comin’” and “High School Girls.”

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a. “Gabey’s Comin’,” mm. 11-18.

11 **Tempo di Gavotte (poco più presto)**
mp

Ozzie Hel - lo, ba - by, gosh, you're pret-ty; I'm so tall and strong and wit-ty;

15 *cresc.* *mf* *mp*

Ozzie God's great gift to New York Ci - ty. How's a - bout a date to - night?

The musical score for 'Gabey's Comin'' is written for a bass voice (Ozzie) in a key of B-flat major. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff (measures 11-14) is marked 'Tempo di Gavotte (poco più presto)' and 'mp'. The lyrics are 'Hel - lo, ba - by, gosh, you're pret-ty; I'm so tall and strong and wit-ty;'. The second staff (measures 15-18) is marked 'cresc.', 'mf', and 'mp'. The lyrics are 'God's great gift to New York Ci - ty. How's a - bout a date to - night?'. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes with some accents.

b. “High School Girls,” mm 1-8.

Agitato
sva
Picc. *stacc.*
Eb Cl. *stacc.*
Gls. p.

Piano Vlns. (Db chord in eighth notes), Celesta (tremolo)

Ob., Cl.

5 *sva* *loco*
Eb Cl., Bb Cl. *sva*
Tpt. I
Ob. *sva*
Bs. Cl.

The musical score for 'High School Girls' is written for piano and various woodwinds. It is marked 'Agitato' and 'sva'. The piano part features a tremolo celesta and violin eighth notes. The woodwind parts include Piccolo, Eb Clarinet, Clarinet, Oboe, and Bass Clarinet. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 1-4) is marked 'Agitato' and 'sva'. The second system (measures 5-8) is marked 'loco' and 'sva'. The music is characterized by rapid sixteenth-note passages and staccato accents.

“Presentation of Miss Turnstiles”

“Presentation of Miss Turnstiles” is another number with materials that keeps reappearing in the show. It is a dance sequence especially for Miss Turnstiles, Ivy Smith, and the music is rewritten for the dream ballet in *On the Town*, “Pas de Deux,” for Gabey and Ivy Smith in the second act. Sono Osato, the original Miss

Turnstiles, was a dancer and instead of singing in her role, she had solo dances. “Presentation of Miss Turnstiles” is a number that shows her capability of dancing in different styles. With Robbins’s choreography, this number “cleverly pointed up the ephemerality of her [Miss Turnstiles] sudden celebrity.”³⁶ Being the Miss Turnstiles, she tries to fulfill various expectations and therefore, Bernstein wrote dance music in various styles for her. As noted above, this is also one of the numbers that remains in the 1949 MGM movie.³⁷

When rewriting these materials for other sections of the show, the composer not only quoted the original rhythmic patterns and the melody but also introduced variations into the music. The “Pas de Deux” can be considered as an enlargement of “Allegretto di ‘Ballet Class’” in “Presentation of Miss Turnstiles.” The original melody is marked by ovals in example 4-25a, and Bernstein added some ornaments to the original melody, which are marked by rectangles in example 4-25b. In the meantime, the tonal center modulates from F to A-flat, although he did not change the key signature. The accompaniment pattern changes to fit the new meter.

³⁶ Deborah Jowitt, *Jerome Robbins: His Life, His Theater, His Dance* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2004), 94.

³⁷ The other numbers from the original musical production besides “Miss Turnstiles” that have been reused in the movies though modified include “I Feel I’m Not Out of Bed Yet,” “New York, New York,” and “Come Up to My Place.”

Example 4-25. *On the Town*, “Presentation of Miss Turnstiles” and “Pas de Deux.”
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a. “Presentation of Miss Turnstiles,” mm. 28-30.

Allegretto di “Ballet Class”
 28 Fl., Cl., Pro.
 Bs. Cl., Hns. sust.
p dolce e legato
 Cl. II, Vla. + Vc. pizz.

The score shows a piano accompaniment for measures 28-30. The right hand features a melodic line with several notes circled, and the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto di' and the mood is 'p dolce e legato'.

b. “Pas de Deux,” mm. 4-9.

4 Fl. solo
 Cls.
 6
 3
 7 Fl+Ob
 6

The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 4-6) features a flute solo in the right hand and a clarinet accompaniment in the left hand. The second system (measures 7-9) features a flute and oboe melody in the right hand and the same clarinet accompaniment in the left hand. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto di'.

Starting with rehearsal letter B of “Pas de Deux” is the variation of mm. 37 to 40 in the “Allegretto di ‘Ballet Class’.” Instead of rewriting the melody with ornaments in the previous section, Bernstein retained the melodic line, which listeners can easily recognize, and used a contrapuntal texture for this section. The oboe plays the melody first and then the flute follows (Ex. 4-26). The accompaniment pattern remains the same from the previous section, and the tonal center shifts a perfect fifth higher than it originally appears in the “Allegretto di

‘Ballet Class’” though the key signature does not change. The accompanied pattern is recomposed from the previous section, but the grace notes are changed to dissonant non-chord tones.

Example 4-26. *On the Town*, “Presentation of Miss Turnstiles” and “Pas de Deux.”
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a. “Presentation of Miss Turnstiles,” mm. 37-40.

Musical score for the section 'Presentation of Miss Turnstiles' (mm. 37-40). The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. It features a Clarinet (Cl.) part in the upper right and a Flute (Fl.) part in the middle. The piano accompaniment is shown in the lower left. The tempo marking 'poco rall.' is present above the piano part. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

b. “Pas de Deux,” mm. 28-35.

Musical score for the section 'Pas de Deux' (mm. 28-35). The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. It features an Oboe solo part in the upper left, a Flute (Fl.) part in the middle, and a Piano part in the lower left. The piano part includes the instruction 'p sub.' and 'Strs. pizz.'. The score is marked with a 'B' in a box at the beginning. The tempo marking 'poco rall.' is present above the piano part. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

“Come Up to My Place”

“Come Up to My Place” is a comic number for Chip and Hildy, the cab driver. While looking for Miss Turnstiles, Chip decides to do some sightseeing at the same time and takes Hildy’s cab. With an out-of-date guidebook, all the sights that Chip is keen to see are either closed or have been surpassed. Through this number Comden and Green showed the audience the famous sights of New York City through their conversation in a high-speed, conversational pace. This number was also retained in the 1949 MGM movie *On the Town*.

“Come Up to My Place” can basically be divided into two sections. The first section is fast and energetic, marked as “Vivacissimo,” where Chip tells Hildy what he wants to see while Hildy cannot believe her ears and asks “Did I hear right? Did you say the ___?” Following the fast one, the other section suddenly turns to “Molto meno (in 4)” and the rhythms change from equal eighth notes to triplets. In this section Hildy tells Chip that the sight he wants to see either no longer exists or is not worth seeing anymore and when the music goes back to the fast material, Hildy tries to convince Chip to come up to her place. Chip refuses for the beginning and then talk about other famous sights, but in the end, Hildy wins and conversation and ends the number. Both sections are reused later in the musical. The melody in the fast section (Ex. 4-27a) is reused in “The Real Coney Island” in Act 2, right before the Rajah Bimmy’s show (Ex. 4-27b). The key is the same as in the song, and the music with the accompaniment of full orchestra provides a busy, crowded feeling.

Example 4-27. *On the Town*, “Come Up to My Place” and “The Real Coney Island.”
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a. “Come Up to My Place,” mm. 6-13.

A

6 CHIP

My fa - ther told me, “Chip, my boy, There’ll come a time when
 10 you leave home; If you should ev - er hit New York, Be sure to see the

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a vocal line in bass clef. It consists of two staves. The first staff starts at measure 6 and ends at measure 9. The second staff starts at measure 10 and ends at measure 13. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The melody is written in a simple, rhythmic style with eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the notes.

b. “The Real Coney Island,” mm. 114-111.

L (Three girls enter in cheap Turkish costumes.)

114 Tutti (Strs. arco) *ff*

118

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a piano accompaniment in G-flat major. It consists of two staves. The first staff starts at measure 114 and ends at measure 117. The second staff starts at measure 118 and ends at measure 121. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The music features a prominent triplet rhythm in the right hand, with eighth notes. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with quarter notes. The dynamic marking is *ff* (fortissimo). The tempo/style marking is *Tutti* (Strs. arco).

The “Molto meno” section (Ex. 4-28a) is reused in “Time Square Ballet: Finale, Act I” (Ex. 4-28b) and also “The Real Coney Island.” (Ex. 4-28c) This is a section that mainly consists of triplets. Although Bernstein did not write the triplets in the vocal line, singers usually add triplets by themselves in the style of swinging eighth notes in jazz, according to the existed recordings.³⁸ In the “Time Square

³⁸ Recordings include *Comden and Green Perform Their Own Songs* (DRG Records 5247, 1998), *On the Town* (Sony Music SK 60538, 1961), *On the Town*, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas with London Symphony Orchestra (Deutsche Grammophon 437 516-2, 1993), and *On the Town*, conducted by John Owen Edwards with National Symphony Orchestra (Jay Productions CD Jay 2 1231, 1996) all share the similar performance style in shuffle rhythm.

Ballet: Finale, Act I,” after reusing materials from “Come Up to My Place,” it is interestingly followed by “New York, New York,” marked with a circle in example 4-16b. Bernstein reversed the order of fast and slow sections in “The Real Coney Island.” The materials from “Molto meno” of “Come Up to My Place” reappears in mm. 103 to 113 of “The Real Coney Island.” The “Vivacissimo,” which goes first in “Come Up to My Place” now follows and is used in mm. 114 to 126.

Example 4-28. *On the Town*, “Come Up to My Place,” “Time Square Ballet: Finale, Act I,” and “The Real Coney Island.”

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a. “Molto meno” from “Come Up to My Place,” mm. 26-30.

C
26 **Molto meno (in 4)**
(She brakes suddenly. Chip is shaken up.)

Chip
Hip ... Hey, what did you stop for? ___

HILDY
It

28 (voice cue in Tbn.)
ain't there a - ny - more... A - i - da sang an "A" and blew the place a - way! _____

b. "Time Square Ballet: Finale, Act I," mm. 203-211.

R Poco meno (♩ = ♩ = 80)

203 *f* *sub., heavy*

Tpt. Solo

Tbns.

Tbn. III
Pno.,
Vc., Cb.

206

S

209

Alto sax. solo

c. "The Real Coney Island," mm. 104-109.

K RAJAH BIMMY: Hurry,

mf Ob., Cl.

Strs. pizz.

hurry, hurry! (*Dialogue continues*)

106

In his first musical, Bernstein already showed his ambition of unifying the score through recurring melodic phrases and small motivic units. With the change of rhythm, meter, tonality, style, accompaniment pattern, and other possibilities, he successfully kept the music fresh and yet conveyed the familiarity to the audience. *On the Town* foreshadowed the Bernstein's future direction in the musical theater.

Wonderful Town

“Overture”

An overture to a musical is an instrumental piece that usually includes several of the important melodies of the show. In the original production there was no overture. According to the conductor’s score of the original production of *On the Town*,³⁹ the 1992 Michael Tilson Thomas restoration of the complete music of the show, and the videos of revivals in 1971 and 1988, Bernstein probably did not initially compose an overture. However, in the 1961 Columbia recording, which included most of the original singers, there was a recording of the *On the Town* overture, conducted by Lehman Engel,⁴⁰ and the overture is also in the published piano/vocal score in 1977.

As for the case of *Wonderful Town*, is hard to know whether the overture for *Wonderful Town* was prepared by Bernstein or arranged by the orchestrator. We do find a collection of the melodies from the primary numbers, including “Swing,” “Ohio,” “My Darlin’ Eileen,” “It’s Love,” and “The Wrong Note Rag.” As discussed above, the opening of the overture is similar to “Prelude” of *Prelude, Fugue and Riffs*. Interestingly, we find the opening phrase also serves as the opening for “The Wrong Note Rag,” the show’s finale. This suggests that the composer, or the orchestrator, not only considered the overture as a collage work but also playing a unifying role in the whole musical; the music that opens the show returns at the end (Ex. 4-29), which reminds us the structure of *On the Town* that “New York, New York” functions

³⁹ Betty Comden Collection, New York Public Library Archive, call number JPB 03-22, box 5, folder 14.

⁴⁰ Track 14 of *On the Town*, Columbia, 1961, reissued in CD format by Sony Music in 1998.

as the opening and the closing number. Nonetheless, in the case of *Wonderful Town*, instead of reprising the whole number, it is this four-measure introduction that links everything; it not only works as opening but also as bridges for the whole number.

Example 4-29. *Wonderful Town*, “Overture” and “The Wrong Note Rag.”

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a. “Overture,” mm. 1-4

Moderately bright

Tutti

Piano

b. “The Wrong Note Rag,” mm. 1-4.

Bright (♩ = 90)

Piano

“Ohio”

“Ohio” is the theme song for Ruth and Eileen, two sisters who just arrived in New York from Columbus, Ohio, and they are spending their first night in an undesirable apartment and are frightened. This was one of the earliest numbers written for *Wonderful Town* and becomes an important source for unifying material in the entire show. During the preview of the show, Arthur Schwartz⁴¹ sent Adolph Green a telegram and expressed his admiration of this number: “WHYO WHYO WHYO DID YOU EVER WRITE THAT SONG OHIO ITS DRIVING ME CRAZY BUT GOOD LUCK ANYWAY.”⁴² In this number, Comden and Green showed the sisters’ homesickness in the lyrics and Bernstein wrote simple—with mostly conjunct intervals, narrow register range, and lullaby-like rhythms—yet emotionally satisfying music to go with the lyrics. It was one of the hits from the musical. The form is ABA and Bernstein subdivided the A section into several components that he applied later in other numbers.

The first is derived from Eileen’s part of their duo, from m. 10, when they sing: “Why did I ever leave Ohio?” (Ex. 4-30a) Excerpting these two measures, Bernstein inserts them into the opening recitative-like section of “What a Waste” (Ex. 4-30b). The lyrics here are “Oh, why did you ever leave Ohio?” In order to fit the lyrics, which included one additional syllable, the composer inserts one note at the beginning of the sentence and changes the rhythms, which help link it to the next

⁴¹ Arthur Schwartz (1900-1984) was an American composer and film producer. In the summer of 1953 MGM released a film version of the Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz musical *The Band Wagon*, starring Fred Astaire.

⁴² Telegram from Arthur Schwartz to Adolph Green, January 19, 1953, Comden & Green Papers, New York Public Library Archive, call number *T-Mss 1986-004, box 20, folder 15.

fast 3/4 section. The third appearance of these two measures can be considered as an expansion building on the use of the second time. It happens in the verse of “A Quiet Girl,” after Baker tries to give Ruth some suggestions to her stories. Ruth feels offended after hearing Baker’s opinions, and provokes him with “When did you learn yours [means lessons of humility],” which deeply hurts Baker. With the change of Baker’s emotion from appreciation of Ruth’s talent to really upset and angry, the melody slightly changes with another extra note and different rhythms (Ex. 4-30c).

Example 4-30. *Wonderful Town*, “Ohio,” “What a Waste,” and “A Quiet Girl.”
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a. “Ohio,” mm. 10-11.

Musical notation for the vocal line of “Ohio,” measures 10-11. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major/D-flat minor), and the time signature is 3/4. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B-flat4, C5, B-flat4, A4, G4. The lyrics are: “Why did I ev - er leave O - hi - o?”

b. “What a Waste,” mm. 3-4.

Musical notation for the vocal line of “What a Waste,” measures 3-4. The key signature is three sharps (F# major/C# minor), and the time signature is 3/4. The melody starts with a circled quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. A fermata is placed over the final G4. The lyrics are: “Oh, why did you e - ver leave O - hi - o?” Above the notation is a box containing the letter “A” and the instruction “Fast (♩ = 176)”. The word “ad lib.” is written above the first measure.

c. “A Quiet Girl,” mm. 3-4.

Musical notation for the vocal line of “A Quiet Girl,” measures 3-4. The key signature is one flat (F major/D minor), and the time signature is 3/4. The melody consists of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The lyrics are: “Get mixed up with a gen - ius from O - hi - o! It hap - pens”. Above the notation is a box containing the letter “A”. The dynamic marking “mp” is placed at the end of the line.

Another fragment from the A section that Bernstein had reused is from mm. 20 to 25, when they sing: “Oh, why oh, why oh, Did I leave Ohio? Maybe I’d better go home (OHIO)” (Ex. 4-31). This time, the composer combined the two parallel ideas

associated with Eileen and Ruth. He first selected Eileen’s melody, and then in m. 23, when the two melodic lines reach a unison, he switched to Ruth’s line. This fragment appears immediately at the end of the following number, “Conquering New York,” when these two sisters try in vain and the New Yorkers sing to them “Maybe you’d better go home.” It is first the brass section in “Conquering New York” first that plays the melody, which is originally derived from mm. 20 to 23 of “Ohio” (2004 The New Broadway Cast Recordings,⁴³ [hereafter “2004 NBC”] track 4, 3’34”-3’47”), and the chorus comes in m. 202 to finish this fragment (2004 NBC, track 4, 3’53”-4’02”).

Example 4-31. *Wonderful Town*, “Ohio,” mm. 20-26.

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20

Eileen
Oh, why oh, why oh, Did I leave O - hi - o? ___

Ruth
Oh, why oh, why oh, Did I leave O - hi - o? ___

22

Eileen
May - be I'd bet - ter go home. _____

Ruth
May - be I'd bet - ter go O - H - I - O; _____

24

Eileen
May - be I'd bet - ter go home. _____

Ruth
May - be I'd bet - ter go home. _____ (spoken)
Now

⁴³ *Wonderful Town: The New Broadway Cast Recordings*, DRG Records (2004), DRG 12999.

“Conquering New York”

Besides reusing materials from “Ohio,” “Conquering New York” is a self-contained piece. The whole number is connected by the fanfare-like opening phrase, which functions like a refrain (Ex. 4-32a). It appears seven times in this number and in each of them Bernstein introduced some slight variation, either the tonality, harmonization, or accompaniment, but they can still be recognized through the same melody even with different orchestration every time. Interestingly, the third use of it (Ex. 4-32b), with the melodic descending perfect fourth then ascending perfect fourth, reminds one of the melody at the opening of Stravinsky’s *Petrushka*(Ex. 4-20c).

Example 4-32. *Wonderful Town*, “Conquering New York,” and *Petrushka*, “First Tableau.”

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a. “Conquering New York,” mm. 2-5.

Allegro alla marcia
Tpt. Solo (like a bugle)

ff

SD roll

BD

b. “Conquering New York,” mm. 32-38.

D Tbn., Tom-tom

ff

E Fl., Cls., Strs. arco con sord.

35

mp

c. *Petrushka*, “First Tableau,” mm. 1-3.

Musical score for 3 Clarinets in Sib. and 4 Corni in Fa. from *Petrushka*, First Tableau, mm. 1-3. The score is in 3/4 time and G major. The clarinet parts are marked *mp* and *p*, while the horn parts are marked *mp*. The clarinet parts feature melodic lines with grace notes and slurs, while the horns provide harmonic support with sustained chords and rhythmic patterns.

Some of the materials from “Conquering New York” reappeared in “Ruth’s Stories.” One is the “snaky”⁴⁴ tenor saxophone solo from rehearsal letter P in “Conquering New York,” which becomes the “bluesy”⁴⁵ trumpet solo in rehearsal letter E in “Ruth’s Stories” (Ex. 4-33 a and b). Another one is extracted from rehearsal letter G in “Conquering New York” and applied to rehearsal letter G in “Ruth’s Stories” (Ex. 4-33 c and d).

Example 4-33. *Wonderful Town*, “Conquering New York” and “Ruth’s Stories.”
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a. “Conquering New York,” mm. 134-137.

Musical score for Tenor Sax Solo and Piano accompaniment from “Conquering New York,” mm. 134-137. The score is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. The Tenor Sax Solo is marked *mf* and “snaky,” featuring a melodic line with grace notes and slurs. The piano accompaniment is marked *mf* and “Drs.,” featuring a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and chords. The score is labeled with rehearsal letter P and measure 134. The Tenor Sax Solo is marked *mf* and “snaky,” and the piano accompaniment is marked *mf* and “Drs.”.

⁴⁴ This mark is from Bernstein’s score.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

b. "Ruth's Stories," mm. 23-24.

c. "Conquering New York," mm. 58-61.

d. "Ruth's Stories," mm. 28-31.

"What a Waste"

"What a Waste" is Baker's first song and several musical ideas that center on him throughout the show are derived from this number. Bernstein partially recapitulates the dramatic, recitative-like opening verse of "What a Waste" (Ex. 4-34a) in the beginning of "A Quiet Girl" (Ex. 4-34b), but slightly varied it to fit Baker's feelings at that specific moment. Later, this phrase reappears in the verse of "It's Love" from the second act, which is shared between Baker and Eileen (Ex. 4-34c).

Bernstein changed the melody to some extent every time. In “A Quiet Girl,” he added a note in the third measure; in “It’s Love,” the composer only used the first three measures and composed new materials starting from the fourth measure to finish this verse.⁴⁶

Example 4-34. *Wonderful Town*, “What a Waste,” “A Quiet Girl,” and “It’s Love.”
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a. “What a Waste,” mm. 1-4.

Allegro
BAKER *ad lib.* (in tempo) *ad lib.* (in tempo)

Go home! Go west! Go back where you came from!

Oh, why did you e - ver leave O - hi - o?

b. “A Quiet Girl,” mm. 1-4.

Moderato
BAKER *f* (with weary anger)

All right! Good - bye! You've taught me my les - son!

Get mixed up with a gen - ius from O - hi - o! It hap - pens

⁴⁶ Helen Smith also included a similar discussion in her book. Helen Smith, 95.

c. "It's Love," mm. 1-4.

With urgency ($\text{♩} = 63$)

EILEEN: You're in love with Ruth and you don't even know it! A *mf freely*

It's love! It's love!

BAKER *mf* 3
Come on now, let's drop it.

The chorus of "What a Waste" reappears in "Pass the Football" (Ex. 4-35 a and b). There was an interesting revision of the number "Pass the Football." Originally it was "I Can Love a Woman."⁴⁷ The music for the verse was completely new, neither using materials from "What a Waste" nor anything similar to the verse of "Pass the Football." The melody for the refrain stays the same as "Pass the Football" (Fig. 4-2), but the lyrics are different, only "Like nothing you have ever seen" stays (Chart 4-1).

Figure 4-2. Refrain of "I Can Love a Woman."

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Refrain:

I can't write a book: I can't sew or knit or cook: I can't make up poems: I don't take the New York Times

⁴⁷ Music sketches can be found in box 39, *Wonderful Town*, from the Music Manuscripts of Leonard Bernstein Collection, Library of Congress; lyrics can be found in box 71, folder 38, "I Can Love a Woman," from the Writings of Leonard Bernstein Collection, ML31.B49, Library of Congress.

Chart 4-1. The comparison of the lyrics of “I Can Love a Woman” and “Pass the Football.”⁴⁸

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“I Can Love a Woman” ⁴⁹	“Pass the Football”
<p><i>(Verse)</i> Ev’ryone I know has talent: They make a million on the stage, or on the screen, or selling soap: Ev’ry I know has talent—excepting me— I am a dope. But I can do one thing they can’t do And few guys can match me—very few! Oh, they would gladly trade their talent To be like me, and do the Thing that I can do!</p>	<p><i>(Verse, tune in “What a Waste”)</i> Look at me now, Four years of college, Famous professor Tutoring me; Scholarship kid, Everything paid for, Food and vacations, All of it free. Day that I left, Everyone gathered, Their cheering still rings in my ears— <i>(Shouting his name)</i></p>
<p><i>(Chorus)</i></p> <p>I can’t write a book, I can’t sew or knit or cook; I can’t make up rhymes, I don’t take the New York Times; BUT I CAN LOVE A WOMAN Like nothing you have ever seen!</p> <p>Can’t design a dress Be divine with watercress; Have no taste in hats, I don’t know from sharps and flats; BUT I CAN LOVE A WOMAN Like nothing you have ever seen!</p>	<p><i>(Chorus)</i> ‘Cause I could pass that football Like nothin’ you have ever seen!</p> <p>Couldn’t spell a lick, Couldn’t do arithmetic; One and one made three, Thought that dog was c-a-t, But I could pass that football Like nothin’ you have ever seen.</p> <p>Couldn’t write my name, Couldn’t translate “je vous aime,” Never learned to read Mother Goose or André Gide, But I could pass that football Like nothin’ you have ever seen.</p> <p>Couldn’t figure riddles, Puzzles made me pout: Where the hell was Moses when the lights went out I couldn’t even tell red from green, Get those verbs through my bean,</p>

⁴⁸ I received permission for use of these lyrics in my dissertation from Mark A. Merriman, on behalf of the Comden and Green interests, via email on 1 May 2012.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

<p>Women are my business, women are my art, Women on my brain and women on my heart; It doesn't matter if they're fat or lean, Seventy or seventeen, Large or small, slave or queen, IT'S NOTHING LIKE YOU'VE EVER SEEN!</p> <p><i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>But I was buddies with the Dean Like nothing' you have ever seen.</p> <p>Passed without a fuss English Lit and Calculus. Never had to cram, Even passed the bar exam, Because I passed that football Like nothin' you have ever seen.</p> <p><i>(continued)</i></p>
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Apparently, the final number “Pass the Football” better serves the dramatic purpose and also more appropriate for family entertainment. The reuse of the melody from “What a Waste” is suitable for Wreck, a former college football star. Considering his current status of unemployment, it is yet another case of “what a waste of money and time!”⁵⁰ After lamenting the end of his glorious college days, the music includes a refrain: “Cause I could pass the football like nothin’ you have ever seen,” which uses wide, disjunct intervals and dotted rhythms. Here Bernstein presented the “What a Waste” material one-step higher than in the previous song without changing the fundamental rhythm or adding extra notes, not even the accompaniment pattern.

⁵⁰ Lyrics of “What a Waste.”

Example 4-35. *Wonderful Town*, "What a Waste" and "Pass the Football."

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a. "What a Waste," mm. 39-45.

B
39 **Bouncy** (♩ = 84)

Br., Traps
f

Born in Du-luth, _
-Tpts., +Pno. *dim.*
+Strs. pizz. *p*

Tbn.
Cb.

43
Nat - u - ral writ - er, Pub - lished at sev - en - gen - i - us type. _

b. "Pass the Football," mm. 1-8.

Moderato pesante

Tutti
f

Look at me now, _ Four years of col - lege, Fa - mous pro - fes - sors Tu - tor - ing me, _

Traps, Pno., Strs. *mp* Br.

A
5 **WRECK**
mf

Bernstein did not waste any good musical ideas from the earlier song and he even reused the bridge that connects the verse and the chorus of “What a Waste” (Ex. 4-36a) as the bridge between stories in “Ruth’s Stories” (Ex. 4-36b). “Ruth’s Stories” is a melodrama that takes place after Ruth’s exit. She leaves her stories to Baker, and he starts to read them. In this number, Ruth plays in every leading female character in her stories while Baker reads them at the side of the stage, a good opportunity for Russell to show her talent as an actress.

Example 4-36. *Wonderful Town*, “What a Waste” and “Ruth’s Stories.”

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a. “What a Waste,” mm. 39-40.

Musical score for "What a Waste" (mm. 39-40). The score is in 3/8 time and B-flat major. It features a piano accompaniment with a brass and trap drum part. The piano part consists of a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and a melody in the right hand. The brass and trap part (Br., Traps) plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The dynamic marking is *f* (forte). The conductor's cue (Cb.) is indicated at the end of the second measure.

b. “Ruth’s Stories,” mm. 21-22.

Musical score for "Ruth's Stories" (mm. 21-22). The score is in 3/8 time and B-flat major. It features a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked **A Tempo**. The score includes dynamic markings of *ff* (fortissimo) and *pp* (pianissimo). The conductor's cue (Srs. trem.) is indicated at the end of the second measure. The piano part consists of a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and a melody in the right hand. The conductor's cue (Tutti) is indicated at the beginning of the first measure.

“A Little Bit in Love”

“A Little Bit in Love” is Eileen’s theme song. She is depicted as an adorable girl. During her and her sister’s job-hunting, Eileen apparently wins more suitors than job offers. Although she sings “Mm—/ I’m a little bit in Love,/ Never felt this way before,” she falls in love very easily. She sings the song after saying goodbye to Frank Lippencott, a local Walgreens manager, and soon afterwards the number is immediately reprised after she says goodbye to Robert Baker, who comes to see Ruth.

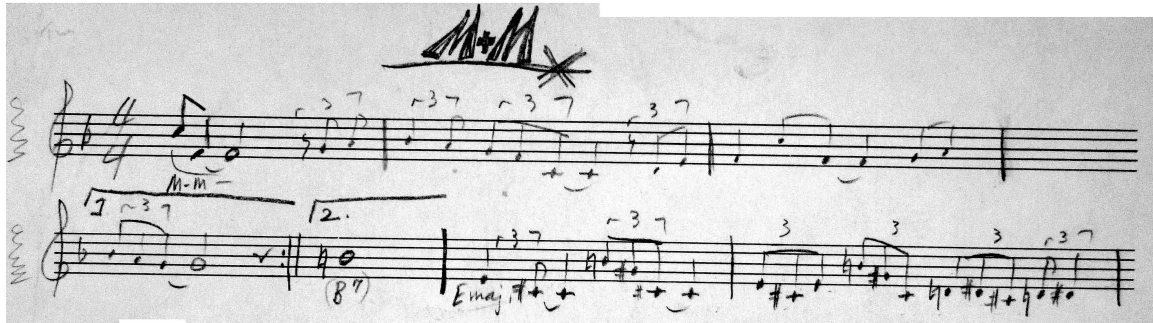
In Bernstein’s manuscripts, there is a verse prior to the refrain of “A Little Bit in Love” that did not appear in the original production. The melody mainly consists of chromatic scale and triplets and the lyrics say, “I’ve met a boy!/ My kind of boy!/ Wonderful boy; he’s so ap-pealing!/ Marvelous boy!/ Nice-looking boy!/ This time I’m sure, sure it’s the real thing!/ I feel I’m on a vacation,/ Now that I feel this sensation.”⁵¹ In the music sketches, this number is originally called “M-M,”⁵² the name perhaps derived from the first sighing of the number and the “M-M” is the only word included in the draft (Fig. 4-3 and Ex. 4-37).

⁵¹ Folder 17 of Box 39, *Wonderful Town*, from the Music Manuscripts of Leonard Bernstein Collection, Library of Congress. © Amberson Holdings. Used by permission of the Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

⁵² *Ibid.*

Figure 4-3. “M+M” from the Music Manuscripts of Leonard Bernstein Collection in the Library of Congress.

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Example 4-37. *Wonderful Town*, “A Little Bit in Love”, mm. 3-4.

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A **Leisurely** (♩. ♩. = ♩. ♩.)
 EILEEN
 3 *p* with charm

The musical notation shows a single melodic line in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. It features a triplet of eighth notes at the beginning, followed by a long note with a slur. The lyrics are: "Mm, I'm a lit - tle bit in love, Nev - er". There are additional triplet markings over some of the notes in the second half of the phrase.

Bernstein reused this opening in the song “Conversation Piece,”⁵³ when Eileen naïvely invited people to dinner who do not share a common background, including Ruth, her clever sister; Baker, a magazine editor; Frank, a manager at Walgreens drugstore; Chick, who works for newspaper; and Eileen herself. After starting several conversations in vain, Eileen sings “Mmmm—/It’s so nice to sit around/And chat” (1953 original Broadway cast recording,⁵⁴ [hereafter “1953 OCR”] track 7, 0’40”-0’47”) and initiates the next “bright and simple-minded” section.

⁵³ One may find similar material in Helen Smith, 95-96.

⁵⁴ *Wonderful Town: Original Cast Album*, Decca Broadway, Universal Classics Group, 440 014 602-2.

Ultimately, in the instrumental introduction of “It’s Love,” Bernstein deliberately abstracted Eileen’s sighing, descending fifth in her “A Little Bit in Love” and Baker’s ascending fifth in the very beginning of his “What a Waste” together. In the very beginning (0’00”-0’05”) of 1953 OCR, track 12, it is Eileen who starts the conversation and then Baker answers her with an objection. We can clearly hear the sighing, descending fifth comes first, followed Eileen’s saying, “Poor Bob—you’re in love with Ruth and you don’t even know it,” and then entering with Baker’s ascending fifth (Ex. 4-38a). Later, before entering the chorus, Baker finally admits his feelings to Ruth, borrows Eileen’s sighing, descending fifth and turns it to “Maybe” (Ex. 4-38b).

Example 4-38. *Wonderful Town*, “It’s Love.”

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a. “It’s Love,” m. 1.

EILEEN: You’re in love with
Ruth and you don’t
even know it!

(with cue)

Piano

Tpt 1, Vlns.

f

Cl.

b. “It’s Love,” m. 37.

Baker

p

May - be, It's

“A Quiet Girl”

“A Quiet Girl” is Baker’s ballad to express his dream to meet his “quiet, gentle girl.” This number is reprised twice and both fit the dramatic purpose very well. In the “The Background of *Wonderful Town*,” we noted how Rosalind Russell suggested that Abbott should have Ruth reprise this number right after Baker’s departure, to show her affection for him. One of the most disappointing things about the recordings of *Wonderful Town* is that one cannot find any version of this sentimental reprise. Fortunately, this number is retained in 1958 CBS TV musical production and there we can hear Russell’s interpretation of this song.

Another reprise happens in the second act, when Eileen says to Ruth that “Isn’t he [Baker] nice?” The orchestra comes in with the melody of “A Quiet Girl” right after Eileen’s question and the dialogue continues. Through the dialogue, Eileen discovers her sister’s affection for Baker and later helps Baker to discover his affection to Ruth. The instrumental reprise helps remind the audience who the quiet girl is.

In both *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*, we can see how Bernstein deliberately constructed his musicals. Of course he included reprises at proper, dramatic moments, as what his contemporaries did; he also divided materials in one number as several motivic units, reused in different numbers, and helped unify the whole work, which is a thought that is closer to the approach of an operatic or a concert music composer.

Using recapitulated materials gives the audience a feeling of wholeness. Meanwhile, the composer not only reused them, he also transformed them to serve

better either for the dramatic purpose or meet the musical requirements. For example, the two-ascending-fourths motive from “New York, New York” in *On the Town* is reused pervasively in the show: sometimes it functions as a fanfare, as in “Presentation of Miss Turnstiles”; sometimes it arouses a sentimental feeling and reminds the audience that the twenty-four-hour stay of the three sailors in New York is going to the end, as in “Finale: Act II.” We can also find the pivotal material that derived from “Ohio” in *Wonderful Town* that gives the show a sense of continuity, which reappears in “Conquering New York,” “What a Waste,” and elsewhere.

Besides recapitulating ideas and reusing motives, Bernstein also imported concert music techniques to give these motives freshness. One of the most frequently used characteristics is a contrapuntal texture. It might confuse the audience when using the contrapuntal texture too much; they could neither clearly hear the lyrics nor understand the complexity of the music. Hence Bernstein used most of the contrapuntal technique at instrumental sections and numbers. Take “New York, New York” for instance, when applying contrapuntal texture, he introduced the melody and the lyrics with thin and clear texture and then employed the more complicated texture. Therefore, the audience can get his point more easily and still enjoy this complexity.

Although Bernstein was not the first one, and would not be the last one, who tried to unify the Broadway score through small motivic elements, he was doing this in an advanced fashion ahead of his contemporaries and influenced musical composers after him; some of the younger generation composed music for the

musicals as a complete opus that links by small motives or melodic ideas, instead of numbers after numbers, such as Stephen Sondheim in *Sweeney Todd, Sunday in the Park with George*, or Stephan Schwartz in *Wicked*. Through his lecture about “American Musical Comedy” in the *Omnibus* series, telecasted on 7 October 1956, we can find that he viewed the American musical as belonging to the continuum of the musical theater in between the variety show and Wagnerian music drama.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Leonard Bernstein, *The Joy of Music* (Pompton Plains, NY: Amadeus, 2004), 164-165.

Conclusion

Research on Bernstein has grown exponentially in recent years. While most of the studies focus on his best-known works, such as *West Side Story*, it is worth examining those works from the earlier period of his career to see the development of his compositional style and how these compositions pave the way for his later efforts. In his own words, everyone is the sum of past experiences:

Who are you if you are not the sum of everything that's happened before? Everything that you've experienced at least, not everything that has happened, but everything that has been significant in your experience, unconscious mainly.⁴³²

The stories of *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town* reflected the composer's life. *On the Town* depicts youth, romance, enjoyment, and exploration of New York City. When composing this show, Bernstein had only lived in the city for two years and his career as a conductor had just launched. His lifelong friendship with Betty Comden and Adolph Green also brought an important spirit to the show. *Wonderful Town* told a story of job hunting and abundant life in the city, which was something that Bernstein experienced when he first arrived in New York.

The music of these two shows displayed the composer's training in academic music and his awareness of the conventions of composing for popular musical theater. When applying contrapuntal texture, dissonant sonorities, chromaticism, and operatic elements, the melody remains obvious, charming, and easy to

⁴³² Paul R. Laird, "Leonard Bernstein: Eclecticism and Vernacular Elements in *Chichester Psalms*," *The Sonneck Society for American Music Bulletin*, vol. 25, no. 1 (Spring, 1999), 5.

remember. Intermingling characteristics of traditional classical music and idioms from popular music became a signature of Bernstein's output and this anticipated the creation of *West Side Story*. One of the most evident examples is the ensemble of "Tonight," for which one perhaps would recall the types of quintets that appear in Mozart's operas. Such notions had antecedents in Bernstein's earlier shows. In *On the Town*, Bernstein already applied contrapuntal structure for "New York, New York" and "Some Other Time," while in *Wonderful Town*, we find a highly operatic moment for Eileen in "Conversation Piece." In both shows, the composer, like many Broadway composers, used recitative-like verse to introduce the chorus following it. On the other hand, we also see how the composer employed the styles that he used in his musicals in his concert works. Of course, there are still differences between music for the concert hall and the musical theater; however, the basic language is similar, only the proportion of the use of techniques from classical music or the idioms from the popular side is different.

Bernstein's importance as a composer for both concert hall and the Broadway musical theater is, at this point, abundantly clear. His pioneering work in the musical theater, along with such composers as Marc Blitzstein, Kurt Weill, was the application of sophisticated musical techniques in his Broadway scores. The same scores, however, remained fresh and pleasant for general theater-goers. In Bernstein's shows, the "town" remains "wonderful" and one can always go out "on the town" and enjoy it.

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Appendix I: Musical Numbers of *On the Town*

On the Town (1944)⁴³³

1. Overture

Act I

Scene 1: The Brooklyn Navy Yard

2. I Feel Like I'm Not Out of Bed Yet (*Three Workmen and Men's Quartet*)
- 2a. New York, New York (*Gabey, Chip and Ozzie*)

Scene 2: A Subway Train in Motion

- 2b. Chase Music (Instrumental)

Scene 3: A New York City Street

3. Gabey's Comin' (*Gabey, Chip, Ozzie and Women's Chorus*)

Scene 4: Presentation of Miss Turnstiles

4. Presentation of Miss Turnstiles (Underscore, Vocal and Instrumental)
(*Announcer and Ivy Smith*)
- 4a. Chase Music (Instrumental)

Scene 5: A Taxicab

5. Come Up to My Place (*Hildy and Chip*)
- 5a. Chase Music (Instrumental)

Scene 6: The Museum of Natural History

6. Carried Away (*Claire and Ozzie*)
- 6a. Carried Away Encore (*Claire and Ozzie*)
- 6b. Chase Music (Instrumental)

Scene 7: A Busy New York Street

7. Lonely Town (*Gabey*)
- 7a. High School Girls (Instrumental)
- 7b. Lonely Town Pas de Deux (Instrumental)
- 7c. Lonely Town Choral (*Gabey and Chorus*)

Scene 8: A Corridor and Studio in Carnegie Hall

8. Carnegie Hall Pavane (*Ivy Smith, Madame Dilly and Women's Chorus*)

Scene 9: Claire's Apartment

9. I Understand (one verse) (*Pitkin*)
- 9a. Carried Away Tag (*Claire and Ozzie*)

Scene 10: Hildy's Apartment

10. I Can Cook Too (*Hildy*)
- 10a. I Can Cook Too Encore (*Hildy*)

⁴³³ The song list is from Leonard Bernstein, *On the Town* (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1997).

Scene 11: Times Square

11. Lucky to be Me (*Gabey and Chorus*)
- 11a. Lucky to be Me Incidental (Underscore)
12. Times Square Ballet: Finale, Act I (Instrumental)

13. Entr'acte

Act II

Scene 1A: Diamond Eddie's Nightclub

14. So Long, Baby (*Diamond Eddie's Girls*)
15. I Wish I was Dead (*Diana Dream*)
- 15a. I Understand (recitative) (*Pitkin*)

Scene 1B: The Congacabana

16. Conga Cabana (Instrumental Change of Scene)
17. I Wish I was Dead (Spanish) (*Dolores Dolores*)
18. Ya Got Me (*Hildy, Claire, Chip and Ozzie*)
- 18a. Ya Got Me Encore (*Hildy, Claire, Chip and Ozzie*)
- 18b. I Understand (recitative) (*Pitkin*)

Scene 1C: The Slam Bang Club

19. Slam Bang Blues (Dixieland) (Instrumental Change of Scene)
20. I Understand (Pitkin's Song) (*Pitkin*)
- 20a. Chase Music (Instrumental)

Scene 2: The Subway Train to Coney Island

21. Subway Ride and Imaginary Coney Island (Instrumental)

Scene 3: The Dream Coney Island

- 21a. The Great Lover Displays Himself (Instrumental)
- 21b. Pas de Deux (Instrumental)

Scene 4: Another Subway Train to Coney Island

22. Some Other Time (*Claire, Hildy, Chip and Ozzie*)

Scene 5: The Real Coney Island

23. The Real Coney Island (Instrumental, Underscore and Vocal) (*Rajah Bimmy*)

Scene 6: The Brooklyn Navy Yard

24. Finale, Act II (*Gabey, Chip, Ozzie, Claire, Hildy, Ivy Smith, Three New Sailors and Entire Company*)

25. Bow Music
26. Exit Music

Appendix II: Musical Numbers of *Wonderful Town*

Wonderful Town (1953)⁴³⁴

1. Overture (Instrumental)

Act I

Scene 1: Christopher Street

2. Christopher Street (*Guide, Tourists, and Villagers*)
- 2a. Christopher Street Exit (*Guide*)
- 2b. Change to Scene 2 (*Villagers*)

Scene 2: The Studio Apartment

3. Ohio (*Ruth and Eileen*)

Scene 2A: New York City

4. Conquering New York (*Ruth, Eileen, and Chorus of New Yorkers*)

Scene 3: The Street Outside the Studio Apartment

5. One Hundred Easy Ways to Lose a Man (*Ruth*)
- 5a. One Hundred Easy Ways Change of Scene (Instrumental)

Scene 4: Robert Baker's Office

6. What a Waste (*Ruth, Baker, and Editors*)
- 6a. Waste Utility (Instrumental)
7. Ruth's Stories (*Bakers, Ruth [as Sandra Mallory, Essie, and Tracy Farraday], Ruth's Characters: Harry Mallory, Rexford, Danny, Trent Farraday, Woman Guest, Male Guest, and Chorus*)

Scene 5: The Street Outside the Studio Apartment

8. A Little Bit in Love (*Eileen*)
- 8a. A Little Bit in Love Reprise (*Eileen*)

Scene 6: The Backyard of the Studio Apartment

9. Pass the Football (*Wreck*)
- 9a. Football Exit (Instrumental)
10. Conversation Piece (*Frank, Eileen, Ruth, Chick, and Baker*)
11. A Quiet Girl (*Baker and Men's Chorus*)
- 11a. Quiet Ruth (*Ruth*)
- 11b. Change of Scene (Instrumental)

Scene 7: The Brooklyn Navy Yard

12. Conga (*Ruth and Brazilian Cadets*)
- 12a. Conga Change of Scene

Scene 8: The Backyard of the Studio Apartment

⁴³⁴ The song list is from Leonard Bernstein, *Wonderful Town* (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 2004).

12b. Conga Reprise (Finale, Act I) (Underscore and Instrumental)

13. Entr'acte (Instrumental)

Act II

Scene 1: The Village Station House

13a. Opening, Act II (Instrumental)

14. My Darlin' Eileen (*Policemen and Eileen*)

14a. Change of Scene (Instrumental)

Scene 2: The Street Outside the Studio Apartment

15. Swing (*Ruth and Village Hepcats*)

15a. Swing Change of Scene (Instrumental)

Scene 3: The Studio Apartment

16. Quiet Incidental (Underscore)

16a. Ohio Reprise (*Ruth and Eileen*)

16b. Change of Scene (Instrumental)

Scene 4: The Street Outside the Village Vortex

17. It's Love (*Eileen, Baker, and Villagers*)

Scene 5: The Village Vortex

18. Ballet at the Village Vortex (Instrumental)

19. The Wrong Note Rag (*Ruth, Eileen, and Vortex Patrons*)

19a. It's Love Reprise (Finale Act II) (*Eileen, Baker, Ruth, and Entire Company*)

20. Bow Music (Instrumental)

20a. Exit Music (Instrumental)