

LONGWOOD OPERA

PRESS RELEASE



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“A Tribute To Leonard Bernstein” Opens Longwood Opera’s 18th Season

NEEDHAM, Mass., May 18, 2004— Longwood Opera begins its 18th consecutive season offering “Opera to All” by presenting, through special arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes, “A Tribute to Leonard Bernstein”, Friday, June 4th at 8:30 pm, and Sunday, June 6th at 2:30 pm at Christ Episcopal Church, 1132 Highland Avenue, Needham.

Born in Lawrence, Massachusetts and educated at Boston Latin and Harvard, Leonard Bernstein composed for orchestra, chamber ensembles, ballet, and solo voice. In addition to his notoriety as a pianist and conductor, his scores for the Broadway musical stage and film venues are legendary. But it is probably the “Young People’s Concerts” with the New York Philharmonic that introduced him to a nationwide audience, as these telecasts gave an entire generation new found interest in classical music.

Longwood Opera is proud to be presenting a variety of work featuring the music and lyrics of Leonard Bernstein. The first half of the program is devoted to the concert performance of his more sacred compositions and music composed for musical theater and film. These include

MASS—Commissioned by Jacqueline Kennedy for the opening of the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, in 1971. It combines Bernstein’s musical impressionism of jazz, Broadway, folk and rock and his deep sense of faith and reverence during a turbulent social period.

CANDIDE—A satirical masterpiece telling the story of a young man’s determination to follow his mentor’s creed of blind faith and optimism, first produced at New York’s Martin Beck Theatre in December 1956. It has since enjoyed numerous revisions—from single act theater to grand opera.

ON THE TOWN—“New York, New York, it’s a helluva town, the Bronx is up and the Battery’s down...” Three sailors on 24-hour shore leave in the world’s most vibrant city. Made famous in a lyrical, tuneful MGM movie starring Frank Sinatra and Gene Kelly.

PETER PAN—One of Bernstein’s lesser-known works starred Boris Karloff as Capt. Hook and was produced in New York in 1950. Bernstein’s music and lyrics were considered simple, yet effective and the show ran for nearly a year.

WONDERFUL TOWN—A musical tale based on the play, “My Sister Eileen.” Bernstein collaborated with Betty Comden and Adolph Greene in this Broadway triumph filled with memorable music and lyrics. Two Midwestern small town girls follow their aspirations to a wonderful town—New York!

WEST SIDE STORY—Classic theater and perhaps Bernstein’s most famous work. Mix in lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, the backdrop of New York tenements and the drama of star-crossed lovers, and you have one of the most popular of all American musicals.

TROUBLE IN TAHITI—This fully staged, costumed opera occupies the second half of Longwood’s “A Tribute to Leonard Bernstein.” It satirizes the “comfort of suburbia” in the 1950s. Inspired by jazz, and American musical comedy, the score and lyrics are a biting commentary on the emptiness of materialistic values and false promises of suburban life during the era.

Performers for “A Tribute to Leonard Bernstein” include Sarah Consentino, Christian Figueroa, David Lemsley, Mark Morgan, Jonah Nigh, Sven Olbash, and Nili Riemer. Musical direction is by Jeffrey Brody and J. Scott Brumit directs the production. Ticket prices are \$20 for general admission, \$15 for seniors, \$12 for students and \$10 for children 10 and under. Tickets are available at the door or in advance at home.earthlink.net/~brumit. For additional information, call 781-455-0960.

About Longwood Opera

Longwood Opera, Inc., was founded in 1986 to fill a void in New England’s performing arts network. After students graduate from the universities and conservatories in the Boston area, they have the skills necessary to make a career as opera singers, but they lack the opportunity and venue to use their talents. Longwood Opera gives talented, Boston-based singers a chance to polish their performing skills so that they become successful artists. So far over 500 singers have performed as members of the company. In 1995, we adopted the slogan “Opera For All!”™. This expresses our goal to make opera accessible to everyone, especially to those who might otherwise not have access to this wonderful art form.

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