

Late Night Bernstein

Friday, March 9 – 9:30 pm

William Eddins, conductor

Andrew Wan, violin

All music by Leonard BERNSTEIN

- Candide: Suite for Orchestra** (arr. Harmon) (18')*
You Were Dead You Know / Paris Waltz / Bon Voyage / Drowning Music / The King's Barcarolle /
Ballad of Eldorado / I am Easily Assimilated / The Best of All Possible Worlds / Make Our Garden Grow
- Fancy Free: Three Dance Variations** (7')*
- Serenade for Violin (after Plato's Symposium)** (31')*
Phaedrus. Pausanias (Lento – Allegro)
Aristophanes (Allegretto)
Eryximachus (Presto)
Agathon (Adagio)
Socrates: Alcibiades (Molto tenuto – Allegro molto vivace)

program subject to change

*indicates approximate performance duration

Please note: There is NO intermission in tonight's performance. Please join us in the lobby following the concert.

Candide: Suite for Orchestra (arr. Harmon)

Leonard Bernstein

(b. Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1918 / d. New York, 1990)

The opera/musical opened December 1, 1956 in New York

The last time music from *Candide* was performed by the ESO was the aria "Glitter and Be Gay" at Symphony Under the Sky 2017. This is the ESO premiere of the suite arranged by Charlie Harmon

By the standards of what would describe a successful Broadway show, Leonard Bernstein's *Candide* might look like a disappointment. The original production ran for three months and a day beginning in

late 1956. Not much for a Broadway musical – but as an opera (and this show definitely straddles both worlds), it's pretty incredible. Based on the satiric novella by Voltaire in which a young man matures from the rose-coloured optimism in which he has been indoctrinated to a more pragmatic view of the world, Bernstein's operetta has had numerous contributions from many authors and musicians over the years.

Tonight, we present the ESO premiere of a suite from the show prepared in 1998/99 by Charlie Harmon, originally for the Minnesota Orchestra. It features nine sections from *Candide*: You Were Dead You Know, Paris Waltz, Bon Voyage, Drowning Music, The King's Barcarolle, Ballad of Eldorado, I Am Easily Assimilated, The Best of All Possible Worlds, and Make Our Garden Grow. Harmon was Bernstein's archivist and eventually his music editor, helping to prepare a version of *Candide* for a recording conducted by Bernstein, which proved to be the final recording Bernstein made. Noting that single excerpts of *Candide* are often performed, Mr. Harmon felt, "a serious gap exists in what's available for orchestral concerts. This Suite for Orchestra from *Candide* is an attempt to fill that gap."

***Fancy Free*: Three Dance Variations**

Bernstein (see above)

First performance of the ballet: April 18, 1944 in New York

The ESO performed the ballet suite, including the Three Dance Variations, in March 2012.

"Three sailors explode on stage. They are out on shore leave, looking for excitement, women, drink, and any kind of fun they can stir up. Right now they are fresh, full of animal exuberance." So began the sketchy outline an ambitious young dancer with New York's Ballet Theater dreamt up for a dance he wanted to create. But before Jerome Robbins could bring it to life, he needed a composer. Vincent Persichetti turned it down, but suggested Robbins try a young firebrand named Leonard Bernstein.

It was an auspicious time for Bernstein. In 1943, he had conducted the New York Philharmonic in an acclaimed concert broadcast throughout the United States. Just weeks before the ballet premiered, his "*Jeremiah*" *Symphony* had also won accolades. With the success Bernstein would enjoy with Robbins in the ballet that would become *Fancy Free*, "Lenny" was now one of America's hottest musical figures.

The Three Dance Variations from *Fancy Free* take place as a showcase toward the ballet's conclusion, at which each of the sailors dance their own number to impress two young ladies: a galop, a waltz, and a danzon. The high-spirited ballet was successful enough that it was later expanded upon, and became another hit stage show: *On the Town*.

Serenade, after Plato's Symposium

Bernstein (see above)

First performance of the work: September 9, 1954 in Venice

Last ESO performance: September 2008

Bernstein wrote his *Serenade for Solo Violin, String Orchestra, Harp and Percussion, after Plato's Symposium* for Isaac Stern. And while he avoided a literal casting of the work into musical forms, insisting the work was inspired by a re-reading of Plato's work Bernstein had done, the composer did leave the following detailed description of each movement:

I. Phaedrus; Pausanias (Lento; Allegro). Phaedrus opens the symposium with a lyrical oration in praise of Eros, the god of love. (Fugato, begun by the solo violin). Pausinias continues by describing the duality of lover and beloved. This is expressed in a classical sonata-allegro, based on the material of the opening fugato.

II. Aristophanes (Allegretto). Aristophanes does not play the role of clown in this dialogue, but instead that of the bedtime story-teller, invoking the fairytale mythology of love.

III. Erixymachus (Presto). The physician speaks of bodily harmony as a scientific model for the workings of love-patterns. This is an extremely short fugato scherzo, born of a blend of mystery and humor.

IV. Agathon (Adagio). Perhaps the most moving speech of the dialogue, Agathon's panegyric embraces all aspects of love's powers, charms and functions. This movement is a simple three-part song.

V. Socrates; Alcibiades (Molto tenuto; Allegro molto vivace). Socrates describes his visit to the seer Diotima, quoting her speech on the demonology of love. This is a slow introduction of greater weight than any of the preceding movements; and serves as a highly developed reprise of the middle section of the Agathon movement, thus suggesting a hidden sonata-form. The famous interruption by Alcibiades and his band of drunken revellers ushers in the Allegro, which is an extended Rondo ranging in spirit from agitation through jig-like dance music to joyful celebration. If there is a hint of jazz in the celebration, I hope it will not be taken as anachronistic Greek party-music, but rather the natural expression of a contemporary American composer imbued with the spirit of that timeless dinner-party.

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