Fugues for Organ or Pianoforte does much to deepen our understanding of the chronicle of the organ in the United States. The volume also broadens our insight into how European music was transmitted to the United States and how it laid the foundation for later nineteenth-century American keyboard composers.

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Leonard Bernstein: The Political Life of an American Musician. By Barry Seldes. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.
Leonard Bernstein: West Side Story. By Nigel Simeone. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2009.
Working with Bernstein. By Jack Gottlieb. New York: Amadeus Press, 2010.

Leonard Bernstein has been dead for two decades, an astonishing fact for those who remember his life well. The vital force that he brought to all aspects of his life made Bernstein's death seem almost surreal. He was mortal, of course, but his manic pursuit of multifarious activities and extraordinary joie de vivre made it seem that his spirit might always be among us. One could argue that Bernstein's essence remains in his music and perhaps with the many who studied with him and followed his inspiration, but Bernstein is now a historical figure, and his life and career are grist for the scholarly mill. The first decade or so after his death saw the publication of major biographies, including those by Humphrey Burton, Meryle Secrest, and Paul Myers.[1] Dissertations and studies of Bernstein's major works or aspects of his career also appeared in the 1990s, as may be appreciated in my *Leonard Bernstein: A Guide to Research*.[2] Another fine recent contribution to Bernstein scholarship was a special *JSAM* issue entirely devoted to his life and legacy.[3] The pace of Bernstein scholarship has not slackened. The three books under consideration here, published in 2009 and 2010, despite some problematic aspects explained below, are worthwhile contributions to the corpus of Bernstein scholarship.

Nigel Simeone has provided an informative and well-written, if slender, volume on *West Side Story*. He understands the show in terms of both music and dramaturgy, and he makes effective use of existing bibliography, but one wishes for additional attention in some areas. Simeone builds on notable scholarly work on the show.

[1] See Humphrey Burton, *Leonard Bernstein* (New York: Doubleday, 1994); Meryle Secrest, *Leonard Bernstein: A Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994); and Paul Myers, *Leonard Bernstein* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1998).

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

[3] The issue, "Leonard Bernstein in Boston," was edited by Carol Oja. *Journal of the Society for American Music* 3/1 (February 2009).

Joseph P. Swain and Geoffrey Block provided useful musical analyses,[4] and several authors have discussed the show's genesis.[5] Carol Oja commented notably on aspects of the show in a recent article in *Studies in Musical Theatre*.[6] Simone's book is much better than Keith Garebian's *The Making of "West Side Story,"* especially in terms of the musical commentary.[7] Other types of sources that have preceded Simeone's study have also been useful published interviews with the show's creators and members of the original cast.[8]

Simeone's reaction to all of this previous scholarly material seems timid. After establishing in the Introduction (1–6) that Bernstein was only the composer and his collaborators Jerome Robbins, Arthur Laurents, and Stephen Sondheim also played major roles in the show's creation, Simeone considers only Bernstein's work, and not that of his collaborators, before *West Side Story*. His earlier shows deserve more attention as antecedents to the topic, and some coverage of Bernstein's concert and film music would provide useful context. As Anthony Bushard has shown, for example, interesting musical comparisons are to be made between Bernstein's film score to *On the Waterfront* and *West Side Story*.[9]

Simeone spends about thirty-five pages on the show's creation. More information appears elsewhere, but the author kept this chapter in proportion to his volume. He opens with Bernstein's problematic "Log" on the writing of *West Side Story*, an apparent diary chronicling events between 1949 and 1957 that Simeone notes was written entirely on 18 September 1957 and published in *Playbill* (17). Simeone then returns to this problematic source more than once. Especially useful in this chapter are transcribed documents with early scene lists and song placements, correspondence between creators from 1955 concerning a scenario, a table detailing the differences between a drafted typescript and the completed libretto, lyrics from deleted songs, early drafts of music, and other materials.

[4] Joseph P. Swain, *The Broadway Musical: A Critical and Musical Survey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 205–46; Geoffrey Block, *Enchanted Evenings: The Broadway Musical from* Show Boat *to Sondheim* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 245–73.

[5] Swain and Block both cover the show's genesis, as does Stephen Banfield in *Sondheim's Broadway Musicals* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 31–38. Useful material also appears in Arthur Laurents, *Original Story By: A Memoir of Broadway and Hollywood* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 327–69.

[6] Carol J. Oja, "*West Side Story* and *The Music Man*: Whiteness, Immigration, and Race in the U.S. during the late 1950s," *Studies in Musical Theatre* 3/1 (2009): 13–30. Two new books that also provide varied perspectives on *West Side Story* are Elizabeth A. Wells, *West Side Story: Cultural Perspectives on an American Musical* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011), and Mischa Berson: *Something's Coming, Something Good: West Side Story and the American Imagination* (New York: Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 2011).

[7] Keith Garebian, *The Making of "West Side Story"* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1995).

[8] See, for example, the transcript of a 1985 Dramatists Guild symposium that included the participation of Bernstein, Laurents, Robbins, and Sondheim that appears in Otis L. Guernsey, Jr., ed., *Broadway Song & Story: Playwrights/Lyricists/Composers Discuss Their Hits* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1985), 40–54. A useful interview with Carol Lawrence, the original Maria, appears in William Westbrook Burton, ed., *Conversations about Bernstein* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 169–89.

[9] Anthony Bushard, "From *On the Waterfront* to *West Side Story*, or There's Nowhere like Somewhere," *Studies in Musical Theatre* 3/1 (2009): 61–75.

Simeone studied *West Side Story*'s manuscript legacy at the Library of Congress. He provides an inventory of sources in Appendix I and considers them effectively in Chapter 3 (53–74), including numbers cut from the show and how ideas moved around in the score, with useful examples of music and lyrics. Simeone also demonstrates how Bernstein reused deleted material from *West Side Story* in other works (53–60).[10] The next section, "Revision and Additions," shows the attention that Bernstein and lyricist Sondheim continued to pay to songs that remained in the show, and how Bernstein used previously composed material in *West Side Story*, such as his abandoned ballet *Conch Town* in "America" and where the Jets taunt Anita in Act 2. Simeone also recounts how music traveled from the *Candide* score to *West Side Story*.

Simeone's brief chapter on Bernstein's score begins with a useful discussion of the show's genre, in which he references the creators. Another issue is how intentionally Bernstein used the tritone to unify the score, and the author demonstrates that it was a happy coincidence discovered later by the composer and his orchestrators Sid Ramin and Irwin Kostal (80–81). Simeone includes a short section on the role of the orchestra, an excellent segment on how *West Side Story* was orchestrated, and then a pithy discussion of the music of each number, perhaps all that needs to be said about such well-known music.

Simeone's following chapter on "Reception" is excellent. He identifies the investors and illustrates that the show was fairly successful in its initial Broadway run, but it was the film that paid off most handsomely. The author's use of press reviews includes those from the try-out runs in Washington and Philadelphia, the New York premiere, initial performances in Manchester and London, and the show's return to New York in 1960. Simeone places all of this in a useful context. He pointedly ignores the 1961 film throughout his book, an area into which he might have easily expanded to make his volume more substantial.

We tend to hear little about Broadway original cast recordings, a gap in our knowledge of *West Side Story* that Simeone has ably filled. He provides useful details with letters written by producer Goddard Lieberson and Sondheim, and shows how tracks on the recording transmit a different version of the music than what was heard on stage. It is a fine chapter, but one still wonders why Simeone's text is so short. The film of *West Side Story* obviously offers Simeone another possible area of investigation, and there could certainly be additional material about the show's rich social context, not to mention more of an effort to place the show within the context of Bernstein's output and within the careers of the show's other creators. An appendix includes the stage numbers that appear on the original cast recording. The book also offers numerous musical examples and a compact disc with the original cast recording and Bernstein's rendition with the New York Philharmonic of the *Symphonic Dances from* West Side Story, but no photographs.

[10] For a discussion of Bernstein's reuse of material from *West Side Story* in *Chichester Psalms* (1965), see Paul R. Laird, *The Chichester Psalms of Leonard Bernstein* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2010), 52–54, 101–25.

Jack Gottlieb, who almost surely helped with some aspect of bringing the *Symphonic Dances* from Bernstein's famous musical to fruition, needed to write a book about the composer. He was the conductor's personal assistant for several years during Bernstein's New York Philharmonic tenure. In addition to more prosaic duties, Gottlieb, a musician and composer, previewed scores sent to Bernstein for consideration, wrote program notes, helped edit books, and performed other musical tasks. Gottlieb earned a doctoral degree in composition from the University of Illinois in 1964, writing his dissertation on Bernstein's music.[11] After several years as a synagogue musician, he rejoined Bernstein's staff as an editor in the 1970s and remains the senior member of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc. Author of articles on the composer and editor of his works catalog, Gottlieb is an important scholar on Bernstein's life and music.[12]

Gottlieb accomplishes much in *Working with Bernstein*. His book offers a frank, inside glimpse of the world of this globetrotting musician, including, for example, selected logs from New York Philharmonic tours. The author reflects on meeting the many celebrities drawn to Bernstein and provides a sensitive consideration of the man's multisided character, rich family life, and ambiguous sexuality. Useful commentary and analysis of Bernstein's compositions and recordings is also included. The book's varied nature is both worthwhile and at times dizzying. Gottlieb penned a volume that only he could have written—and one that every musician interested in Bernstein should read—but one wonders how to describe the book. It is neither a biography nor an exhaustive analysis of his music, but offers aspects of both. It is more of a detailed personal glimpse of the man by a member of his intimate circle, such as Schuyler Chapin's *Leonard Bernstein: Notes from a Friend*, but Gottlieb also comments effectively on Bernstein's music.[13] Most of the musical essays that Gottlieb included are reprints of previously published articles and program notes, but there is value in having them gathered together in one place.

Gottlieb states his angle baldly: "Is this book biased? You bet it is! However, I fervently hope it is not hagiographic" (15). Gottlieb basically succeeded at this task, presenting a fairly balanced picture of Bernstein, but his natural tendency is to defend the man when confronting controversy. There are places, however, where one questions what Gottlieb chose to include. The author had scores to settle, especially with Bernstein's longtime secretary Helen Coates. His broadsides at Joan Peyser, author of a sensationalistic biography of Bernstein, might have been deserved, but Gottlieb's fervor seems excessive.[14] His inclusion of some logs from

[11] Jack Gottlieb, "The Music of Leonard Bernstein: A Study of Melodic Manipulations," D.M.A. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1964.

[12] Gottlieb, for example, is the author of the article "Symbols of Faith in the Music of Leonard Bernstein," *Musical Quarterly* 66/2 (April 1980): 287–95; also see the first edition of his works catalog: *Leonard Bernstein: A Complete Catalogue of His Works* (n.p.: Amberson Enterprises, Publisher/Boosey & Hawkes, 1978). The catalog of Bernstein's compositions maintained by The Leonard Bernstein Office is now part of its Web site at www.leonardbernstein.com.

[13] Schuyler Chapin, *Leonard Bernstein: Notes from a Friend* (New York: Walker and Company, 1992).

[14] Joan Peyser, *Bernstein: A Biography*, rev. ed. (New York: Billboard Books, 1998; first published New York: Beech Tree Books, 1987).

Philharmonic tours is welcome and usually worthwhile, but in places judicious editing of mundane material would have been desirable. A section of the book entitled "In High Places" is Gottlieb's demonstration that Bernstein met many celebrities, and that the conductor sometimes felt emboldened to address them inappropriately or with embarrassing candor. These less desirable parts of the book, however, are balanced by several telling portrayals of Bernstein in the first section entitled "A Grab Bag of My Life with LB," and the opening essay "Introduction: A Jewish American or American Jew?" is excellent. Gottlieb eloquently demonstrates that a key to understanding Bernstein as a man and musician is found in his faith.

Gottlieb's musical commentary will not surprise those who know Bernstein's output well—indeed, Bernstein scholars have already read most of these writings—but there are highlights. His consideration of Bernstein's reuse of his own music ("The Art of Recycling," 99–104) is important, and his exposition on a motive in *Mass* (140–43) is revealing. (It is reprinted from the Bernstein newsletter *Prelude, Fugue and Riffs*, where few people would have seen it.) Gottlieb's musical commentary is based on intimate knowledge of the music and sources, but in places one wonders about his coverage. For example, a tiny section on Bernstein and Copland ("Lenny and Aaron," 104–107) seems a major underestimation of Copland's importance to Bernstein, but in sum this is book a major contribution to our understanding of Bernstein's life and music.

Barry Seldes's *Leonard Bernstein: The Political Life of an American Musician* presents a completely different look at Bernstein. The author relates Bernstein's extensive FBI file to the musician's biography—a necessary scholarly step—but there are unfortunately places where one wishes that Seldes, a political scientist, had displayed more musical acumen and greater command of the details of Bernstein's life. Seldes organized his study chronologically in seven chapters, six that cover Bernstein's life in periods and the seventh titled "Understanding Bernstein," followed by "Epilogue: A Man in Dark Times." The composer was committed to liberal causes, and much of what Seldes writes about Bernstein and politics is insightful, but at times he perhaps overestimates the importance of politics as an influence on Bernstein's personal choices. For example, he speculates that Bernstein might have taken a sabbatical from conducting during part of 1951 and 1952 because he was afraid of being blacklisted (54 ff.). This might be the case, but the truth is unknowable, and he also had a number of compositional projects on his plate during the early 1950s. Seldes at times provides lists of Bernstein's frequent political activities (for example, 33–36) with little interpretation of the data, and elsewhere he spends several pages providing background information on a topic related to Bernstein's life, but without showing why he needs to say so much about major events when far more information is available in any number of sources. This would include, for example, Seldes's treatment of Russia during World War II (26–28), Henry Wallace's 1948 presidential campaign (43–48), and material on the history of Israel (154–57).

The book is full of other problems as well. Seldes's statement that Bernstein first went to the Curtis Institute to study piano, only later seeking out Fritz Reiner to enter his conducting class (25), is at odds with considerations of his Curtis entrance

by other biographers, and Seldes provides no documentation for his account.[15] He has Helen Coates functioning as Bernstein's secretary already in 1940 when Bernstein was still in school (26), a position she did not take until 1943 after Bernstein's debut with the New York Philharmonic. Seldes evinces surprise that the famous cover story on Bernstein in *Time* in February 1957 did not cover his problems with renewing his passport in 1953 (81), surely the last thing that such a glowing portrayal would have mentioned at that point.[16] When Seldes considers Bernstein's Symphony No. 3, "Kaddish" (90–94), the work's controversial narration draws the majority of commentary, and little attempt is made to place the symphony in the context of Bernstein's political beliefs, certainly possible with this work. Seldes ignores a political interpretation of Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* (94–95), an oversight given the clear antiwar message of the second movement.[17] When dealing with *Mass* (117 ff.), Seldes never even mentions Stephen Schwartz, an important figure in the work's conception, and he dismisses the piece as "mawkish feel-good sentimentalism" (127), a characterization that ignores this work's extensive political commentary. In an essay entitled "Bernstein versus Adorno" (134–39), Seldes delves deeply for a philosophical explanation as to why Bernstein kept writing tonal music. He perhaps has a point, but Bernstein would not have needed such an artificially intellectual reason to write music that he clearly loved. In the next section, "Magus at the Podium" (139–44), Seldes builds an elaborate but strained argument in which he links Bernstein's exuberant conducting manner with his political beliefs and love for tonal music, again providing a complicated, unprovable assertion when the truth might have been that the showy conductor simply liked to work that way. Seldes soon thereafter (145) states that the long-playing record appeared in 1958, a decade after its actual appearance. In reference to Marc Blitzstein, Seldes notes that he died twenty-six years before 1985 (162), but the composer was murdered in Martinique in 1964. One could dismiss this, and other mistakes, as typographical errors, but there are too many problems with basic facts.

Given how profoundly Seldes wishes to comment on Bernstein the musician and composer in his last chapter, the issue of his competency with the basic facts of the musician's life is important. The raison d'être for his "Understanding Bernstein" (168–92) is to explain why the composer never wrote a major opera (or another work of similar size or scope) that was of sufficient importance to engage the larger society in serious discussion. At one point Seldes calls this "the social opera," a work that would have similar impact as a "social novel" by such authors as Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, and John Dos Passos (174–76). Seldes dismisses other arguments that have been made about the absence of such a work in Bernstein's output, such as the notion that he was too occupied with other things, that he was unable to write profound music outside of the theater, or that he did not wish to be "outed" as a

[15] Burton, *Leonard Bernstein*, 59–60.

[16] "Wunderkind," *Time* 69/5 (4 February 1957): 68–70, 72, 75.

[17] The second movement of *Chichester Psalms* pointedly juxtaposes Psalms 23 and 2:1–4, a dramatic opposition of peaceful and violent texts, offering a possible interpretation as an antiwar message (Laird, *The Chichester Psalms of Leonard Bernstein*, 101–25).

gay man (168–72), stating instead that Bernstein was frustrated with the political atmosphere in the United States during the last three decades of his life (a major theme throughout the book) and that he was never able to identify a text that would allow him to write such a work.

Bernstein expressed his frustration on numerous occasions that he never wrote a truly significant piece, perhaps one that would engage a larger public, but it is demeaning to the man's substantial accomplishments to wonder at length why he did not write an even greater work. How many composers actually write such a work, whether one sets out to do so or not? No American composer has ever written an opera that had the impact of Sinclair Lewis's novels *Main Street* or *Elmer Gantry*, and given the genre's peripheral position in American society, perhaps no composer ever will. Bernstein wrote a substantial amount of music—a fact that Seldes readily admits (169)—including serious works of lasting importance: *West Side Story*, *Serenade after Plato's* Symposium, *Mass*, not to mention the three symphonies. Seldes may be correct that Bernstein never thought the body politic in the United States would understand his attempt at a "social opera"; like some of his other assertions, this cannot be demonstrated with certainty. Seldes should have concentrated more on his compelling look at Bernstein's FBI file instead of trying to take on so many larger issues of his biography as well. Those interested in the musician's life must consult this book, but carefully, and in conjunction with other biographies and materials.

Certain composers have become magnets for scholarly work. Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, and Wagner, for example, have drawn countless studies and perspectives, and more appears on each every year. The rich pageant and varied activities that marked Bernstein's life, and his complex personality, offer scholars a rich variety of topics and perspectives, and one expects that he will be the subject of more studies in the future.

Paul R. Laird

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