

The Cambridge Companion to *West Side Story*

Over sixty years after its opening night, *West Side Story* is perhaps the most famous and beloved of twentieth-century musicals and stands as a colossus of musical and dramatic achievement. It not only helped define a generation of musical theatre lovers but is among the handful of shows that have contributed to our understanding of American musical identity at mid century. Bringing together contemporary scholars in music, theatre, dance, literature, and performance, this *Companion* takes a multi-disciplinary deep dive into every aspect of *West Side Story* and offers fresh perspectives on this well-loved musical that also provide a springboard for broader discussion of the genre. Organised thematically, chapters range from Broadway's history and precursors to *West Side Story*; the early careers of its creators; the show's score with emphasis on writing, production, and orchestrations; issues of class, colourism, and racism; New York's gang culture; and how the show's legacy can be found in popular culture throughout the world.

PAUL R. LAIRD is Professor Emeritus of Musicology at the University of Kansas. As a scholar of musical theatre, he specializes in the careers of Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Schwartz. With William A. Everett, he co-edited three editions of *The Cambridge Companion to the Musical*.

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