

## 2 | Bernstein on Broadway

HELEN SMITH

When the curtain rose in the Adelphi Theatre on 28 December 1944, and *On the Town* erupted onto the Broadway stage, it was the culmination of a journey for twenty-six-year-old Leonard Bernstein that had begun many years before, when a love of musical theatre had first been kindled in the young Lenny's heart. From an early age, Bernstein had absorbed every musical experience placed before him, and there was certainly an eclectic range on offer. In his piano lessons, started at the age of ten, he studied the standard repertoire of classical pieces, whilst at home he would play by ear popular melodies, ragtime and jazz music that he heard on the radio.<sup>1</sup> When attending the Temple Mishkan Tefila, Bernstein was captivated by the organ and choral music that was performed as part of the worship; from the age of thirteen he was taken by his father to concerts at Boston Symphony Hall.<sup>2</sup> One of Bernstein's first experiences of opera came when he played through four-hand piano arrangements with his younger sister, Shirley, and these explorations led to Lenny's initiation into the musical theatre on a very practical level: at the age of only sixteen, Bernstein began the tradition of mounting a musical production whilst the family were at their summer residence in Sharon, initially persuading other enthusiastic local young people to join in a rather satirical performance of Bizet's *Carmen*.<sup>3</sup> Bernstein himself, unsurprisingly, took charge of various aspects of the show: 'Leonard was in charge of staging and choreography as well as the music. That he could cope without help from an experienced guiding hand, such as a drama teacher or music teacher, illustrates an early ability to organise and lead a large group of performers. His innate sense of theatre was already beginning to assert itself.'<sup>4</sup>

Bernstein's involvement with the theatre continued during his university days at Harvard, with two very significant events occurring barely a month apart in 1939: creating and conducting incidental music for the Classical Club's performance of Aristophanes' *The Birds*, and mounting a student production of Marc Blitzstein's headline-grabbing show *The Cradle Will Rock*. The first of these events marked Bernstein's conducting debut, while the second introduced him both to Blitzstein, who attended

the premiere, and also to the concept that perhaps composing in general, and for the theatre more specifically, could be a worthy vocation. However, Bernstein's head was turned as he began studying at the Curtis Institute in the autumn of 1939, and although he returned to Harvard to contribute more incidental music for *The Peace* in 1941, increasingly Bernstein's time was taken up with conducting and highbrow composing. It was only following a move to New York in 1942, and his famous debut conducting the New York Philharmonic on 14 November 1943, standing in for an indisposed Bruno Walter, that the theatre literally came knocking on Bernstein's door once again.

### *Fancy Free*

Despite all the preceding events and experiences, it was to be through modern dance that Bernstein first reached the New York stage. The American choreographer Jerome Robbins was searching for a composer to collaborate with on his new American ballet, and the theatre designer Oliver Smith directed Robbins to Bernstein's studio in Carnegie Hall. Robbins described the meeting: 'We went up and saw him. I showed him my scenario, which was very well preceded [*sic*], it followed the story exactly as it is, and then he started composing.'<sup>5</sup> The resulting ballet, *Fancy Free*, opened at the Metropolitan Opera on 18 April 1944 and was an instant success: 'The music by Leonard Bernstein utilizes jazz in about the same proportion that Robbins's choreography does . . . It is a fine score, humorous, inventive and musically interesting. Indeed the whole ballet, performance included, is just exactly ten degrees north of terrific.'<sup>6</sup> *Fancy Free* follows three sailors on shore leave in New York City, hunting for female company for the twenty-four hours of freedom that they have. In Bernstein's words: 'From the moment the action begins, with the sound of a juke-box wailing behind the curtain, the ballet is strictly young wartime America, 1944.'<sup>7</sup> The servicemen compete for the attention of two girls, and attempt to impress them with their dancing prowess, individually demonstrating their skills in a galop, a waltz and a danzón. Robbins himself danced the role of the third sailor, his choreography perfectly matching the rhythmic complexity and dynamic energy of Bernstein's music, a moment that foreshadowed one of their later collaborations: 'the "Danzón" movement . . . stands out stylistically, providing a view of Bernstein's early tie to Latin musical traditions, a linkage that proved to have future implications for *West Side Story*'.<sup>8</sup> In *Fancy Free*, Bernstein and

Robbins, together with Oliver Smith, had produced an American masterpiece that spoke to the American people in a language that they understood and related to, a language of music and dance that they would witness again very soon in the trio's next work together: *On the Town*.

### *On the Town*

There was perhaps an element of inevitability about Bernstein writing music for Broadway, and following the success of their first collaboration, it was not long before it was suggested that Robbins, Smith and Bernstein expand the story of their three sailors on twenty-four-hour shore-leave into a full-scale musical. Not unexpectedly, ballet and dance would feature prominently in the narrative, as the trio of friends travel through New York searching for love and romance, but now with the addition of songs to help propel the fast-moving story forward. To create the libretto and lyrics, Bernstein recommended Adolph Green and Betty Comden; Bernstein had known Green since late adolescence when they met at summer camp in 1937, and had also played piano for the satirical nightclub group The Revuers, of which Comden and Green were members.<sup>9</sup> The team was completed by the producer George Abbott, who provided the experience and knowledge that the young and fresh colleagues needed to bring the musical to the stage (see Figure 2.1). Just over seven months after *Fancy Free* had opened, *On the Town* premiered to critical acclaim:

There can be no mistake about it: 'On the Town' is the freshest and most engaging musical show to come this way since the golden day of 'Oklahoma!' Everything about it is right . . . [Bernstein] has written ballet music and songs, background music and raucously tinny versions of the blues . . . Mr. Bernstein has quite understood the spirit of 'On the Town.'<sup>10</sup>

*On the Town* retains the trio of servicemen that had featured in *Fancy Free*, but every other aspect of the tale is original, and on their trip through the city the young men are waylaid by amorous women. The innocent country boy of the three, Chip, is seduced by a rather insistent taxi-driver called Hildy, and the clown of the group, Ozzie (played by Green), falls for the anthropologist Claire (Comden). Gabey, the dreamer among the boys, decides that he has to find Ivy Smith, who has been featured as 'Miss Turnstiles for June' on posters in the subway. He finds her in Carnegie Hall, loses her again and, with the help of his friends and their



**Figure 2.1** Writing *On the Town*: from left, Leonard Bernstein, Adolph Green; centre foreground, Betty Comden; right, Jerome Robbins. (Credit: Used with permission of Photofest, Inc.)

new-found sweethearts, is reunited with her just as the men have to return to their ship.

The energy and enthusiasm of the collaborators is embodied in Bernstein's music, and following the slow bluesy opening of 'I Feel Like I'm Not Out of Bed Yet', the three sailors burst onto the stage accompanied by the sound of syncopated urban jazz, reflecting the unbridled vivacity of the men as they descend on 'New York, New York'; their entrance is heralded with a fanfare to the city, a significant ascending motif that reappears at various points in the show, particularly in the dances. The driving rhythms with shifting accents and the dissonances of jazz harmonies encapsulate the constant hum of life in the city and the exhilaration and excitement of New York, especially as observed through the eyes of the visiting sailors. There is an edginess and restlessness that echoes the urban music of Copland and Gershwin. Further lively musical depictions can be heard at the end of the first half in 'Times Square Ballet', and in 'The Real Coney Island' towards the end of the show, in addition to featuring at other

moments in the action; the Big Apple emerges almost as a protagonist in the story in its own right, displaying different characteristics at various points in the evening, but always portrayed in the language of American contemporary culture. As pointed out by Baber, ‘the prevalence of jazz, from the opening of “New York, New York” through chase music and subway sequences that recall Gershwin’s *An American in Paris*, leaves no doubt as to the verve and energy of the New York locale’.<sup>11</sup>

The rhythmic vitality of *On the Town* is not only derived from the syncopations of jazz, but also from instances of Latin American dances. The first is a brief but significant example, when we hear a very recognisable rhythm in the ‘Conga Cabana’. This snippet of music had originally been composed by Bernstein for *The Peace*, and it would make another more significant appearance in *Wonderful Town*, as will be discussed below. The conga marks the change of scene into The Congacabana, a Latin nightclub where the sailors find themselves, together with Claire and Hildy. A nightclub singer wails ‘I Wish I Was Dead’, a number heard in a blues style in another establishment they had visited previously that night, but here transformed into a brisk beguine to suit the location. Having encountered Ivy earlier in the evening and arranged to meet her again, Gabey has been stood up, and with his mood rapidly descending, his shipmates and their new sweethearts attempt to cheer him up in the following ensemble number, ‘Ya Got Me’. The Latin influence continues in this song, which is underpinned by an insistent rumba rhythm, and demonstrated flamboyantly in an exhilarating dance break derived from the vocal music.

The energy and dynamism of New York also extends to its inhabitants and is particularly present in the comedy songs that characterise the female protagonists. Claire sings a mock-operatic comic duet with Ozzie as they bemoan the fact that they both get ‘Carried Away’, and Ivy leads a female ensemble number in ‘Carnegie Hall Pavane’, which begins as a scalar vocal warm up, gradually shifting in styles until it ‘provides a riotous flash point for the high–low fusions that define *On the Town*, invading the sacred space of “Carnegie Hall” with rousing swing rhythms and bluesy harmonies’.<sup>12</sup> Hildy has two songs that help to outline her very determined character: ‘Come Up to My Place’, where the objecting Chip is practically abducted in her cab, and ‘I Can Cook Too’, Hildy’s solo seduction song as she lists her extensive attributes. Oja points out that ‘the women usually had the last word in these songs, as they vigorously – sometimes raucously – breached the gender norms of their day’.<sup>13</sup> When heard separately from the metropolitan ladies, the

men sound a little tamer, even when they are setting out their intentions for adventure in 'New York, New York'. In the song 'Gabey's Comin'', Chip and Ozzie advise their friend on how to go about picking up a date, but there is still an element of innocence in the pick-up lines they suggest.<sup>14</sup> Gabey's romantic tendencies are embodied in the ballads that he sings, 'Lonely Town' and 'Lucky to Be Me', the sentimental and somewhat nostalgic sound contrasting strongly with the strident metropolitan music of the women's numbers.

Bernstein, Comden, Green and Robbins had collaborated to create a fun and thrilling Broadway musical, but there was one specific dimension that lifted *On the Town* to a different level of theatre entertainment: the dances. The ballets that Robbins choreographed to Bernstein's music helped to move the story forward in a way that had only been observed in a small number of shows prior to 1944, including Rodgers and Hart's *On Your Toes* (1936), and *Oklahoma!* (1943) by Rodgers and Hammerstein, the second of which is frequently considered to be one of the first integrated musicals, with all the elements having equal importance in advancing the narrative.<sup>15</sup> *On the Town* contains eight discrete dance movements, all of which present important elements of the story: 'Presentation of Miss Turnstiles', 'High School Girls', 'Lonely Town Pas de Deux', 'Times Square Ballet', 'Subway Ride and Imaginary Coney Island', 'The Great Lover Displays Himself', 'Pas de Deux' and 'The Real Coney Island'.<sup>16</sup> However, Bernstein's background in highbrow composition led to a symphonic aspect in the dances,<sup>17</sup> and a complexity not previously heard within the musical theatre. There were also interconnections between the movements created by employment of recurring motifs that had already been heard in the songs, and which, in the manner of leitmotifs, had garnered some significance. These motifs linked the dances either to Gabey or to the city, perhaps the two real protagonists of the story. Two years after the opening of the show, Bernstein extracted three of the dances and published them for concert use as *On the Town: Three Dance Episodes*. In the original programme note, he stated: 'That these are, in their way, symphonic pieces rarely occurs to the audience actually attending the show, so well integrated are all the elements.'<sup>18</sup> Bernstein's music for *On the Town* blends classical and popular, highbrow and lowbrow, symphonic techniques and Broadway traditions, creating an eclectic mixture that is a feature of Bernstein's writing. Of course, *On the Town* was not just the end of Bernstein's journey to Broadway, but also the start of another, as he and his collaborators continued their adventures on the New York stage.

Nine years would pass before Bernstein would write the score for another show on Broadway, and in the interim, he composed for three other theatrical projects. The first of these, the ballet *Facsimile* (1946), was another collaboration with Jerome Robbins, while for the second, Bernstein contributed incidental music and songs to a 1950 production of *Peter Pan*. The last of these ventures was his opera of 1951/52, *Trouble in Tahiti*, for which Bernstein wrote both the libretto and the music. The seven scenes tell a tale of marital disharmony and distrust in the relationship between Sam and Dinah, possibly reflecting the troubled marriage of his own parents, but with a touch of jazz lightening the mood in the observations of a trio of singers, a Greek chorus commenting on the action. There is also another moment of Latin American influence, in Dinah's aria 'What a Movie!', which is based on rumba and beguine rhythms.

### *Wonderful Town*

1952 saw Bernstein reunited with Comden and Green, working together to a very tight deadline, as they had less than five weeks to create the songs for *Wonderful Town*, a musical expansion of Jerome Chodorov and Joseph Fields' successful 1940 play *My Sister Eileen*. The writers had adapted their original work first for a movie version in 1942, starring Rosalind Russell in the central role of Ruth, and now they had crafted the libretto for a musical theatre production. The producers Robert Fryer and George Abbott had a contract for Miss Russell to reprise her role in the new version, but the contributions of their first-choice composer and lyricist had not been satisfactory, so the team from *On the Town* were brought in to complete the show, and furnish *Wonderful Town* with the musical numbers, before the contract expired. Although alterations were still being carried out through the try-outs in New Haven, the show opened to rave reviews at the Winter Garden on 26 February 1953: "Wonderful Town," which opened there last evening, is the most uproarious and original musical carnival we have had since "Guys and Dolls" appeared in this neighborhood.<sup>19</sup> One of the things that attracted Bernstein, Comden and Green to the project was the location, the action again set in New York, and more specifically in Greenwich Village, a district very close to the trio's heart where they had lived and performed in the late 1930s. As the show was to be set in 1935, this meant the creative team could indulge in a nostalgic excursion into the musical styles of their past, using specific sounds and genres to establish the period and inhabitants of the city. In the



first song, 'Christopher Street', a tour guide points out the streets and characters of the area, as the music opens with a vamp made famous by the flamboyant New York 1930s pianist and bandleader Eddie Duchin, setting the scene and defining the era of the show. Following our introduction to a rather bohemian and chaotic side of New York City, we meet two sisters, Ruth and Eileen, arriving from Columbus, Ohio and feeling a little overwhelmed in this new urban location. Just as the male protagonists of *On the Town* were from out-of-town, so the girls are new to the bustling metropolis, and the ensuing clash of cultures forms an important thread in the show. The girls' first duet, 'Ohio', laments the hometown they have left behind, the lazy swung bass line reminiscent of a cowboy song, evoking a provincial 'country' sound that contrasts sharply with the preceding exhibition of city life that we have just witnessed.

Ruth and Eileen attempt to forge new lives for themselves in New York, as a journalist and an actress respectively, but neither are successful; Ruth's journalistic endeavours are rejected, and Eileen receives more propositions than job offers. We are introduced to other interesting residents, including the girls' landlord Mr Appopolous, an out of season professional footballer nicknamed The Wreck, a local drug-store manager called Frank Lippencott, and Bob Baker, an editor at the *Manhattan* who eventually wins Ruth's heart. The character songs and ballads are standard fare for Broadway, although there is frequently an intellectual element that lends an extra depth to the lyrics and the music. Ruth's first solo, 'One Hundred Easy Ways to Lose a Man', is an inventive set of instructions on how to scare away male attention, apparently based on Russell's instruction that the song should be 'da-da-da-da-joke da-da-da-da-joke'.<sup>20</sup> The comedic nature of the lyrics, which include a grammar lesson directed at an imaginary unfortunate suitor, combines with Bernstein's relaxed swing music, with occasional impertinent orchestral punctuation, to underline the sardonic facet of Ruth's character. The ballads 'A Little Bit in Love' and 'A Quiet Girl', sung by Eileen and Bob respectively, are gentle and simple songs, oases of genuine emotion amongst all the posturing and pretence that appear to dominate the lives of the city dwellers.

One particularly inventive moment comes in 'Conversation Piece', when the sisters are visited by Frank, Bob and Chick Clark, who is attempting to inveigle himself into Eileen's affections by providing Ruth with a job opportunity; the combination of callers results in a very awkward dinner party. The tension and unease of the situation is encapsulated perfectly in a heavy and melancholic vamp which is interrupted by various attempts to initiate polite conversation, all of which fizzle away leaving the orchestra to



take over again. Eventually the tension is broken in a rather manic final section, as Eileen trills coloratura-like above the other singers, in a slightly hysterical manner.<sup>21</sup> The dramatic function of the music in this number was important to Bernstein: ‘That’s the kind of thing I like to do in the theatre. The background is pure theatre music, operating exclusively in theatre terms, not with an eye on Tin Pan Alley, and not to create a memorable tune, but something which is an integral part of the story’;<sup>22</sup> this integration, such a significant aspect in *On the Town*, is absent from the majority of *Wonderful Town*. In the place of the earlier show’s narrative ballets, we have a dance pantomime in ‘Conquering New York’, which depicts Ruth and Eileen’s struggles in their first weeks in the city, as their attempts to find employment are met with rejection and dismissal. The only other distinct dance item is ‘Ballet at the Village Vortex’, a diegetic number which appears at the opening of the final scene and functions to establish the atmosphere in the club rather than moving the story forward. Other significant sections of dance music can be found in ‘Swing!’, ‘Wrong Note Rag’, ‘Pass the Football’, ‘My Darlin’ Eileen’ and ‘Conga!’. The first two of these numbers demonstrate different aspects of jazz: the contemporary 1930s rhythmic phenomenon in ‘Swing’, and earlier ragtime and novelty piano styles in ‘Wrong Note Rag’. The final two songs in the list introduce pastiches of music from outside the city, indeed from outside the USA, that underline the diversity of New York, and its reputation as a melting pot of cultures and ethnicities. In ‘My Darlin’ Eileen’ the younger sister is serenaded by a contingent of the NYPD in the style of an Irish jig, while ‘Conga!’ is the energetic final number in the first half. Ruth finally has a writing assignment, and is sent to interview the Brazilian navy cadets who are docked in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The young sailors are more interested in dancing than talking, and despite Ruth’s best efforts to garner their opinions on a wide range of American issues and personalities, an uproarious conga begins (which at least one cadet believes is an American dance, although another does point out that it is Cuban). As mentioned previously, the underlying vamp for this number is recycled music, as it had already appeared in *The Peace* and *On the Town*, but here it is expanded and combined with a cross-rhythmic vocal line, the dramatic interest maintained by the encyclopedic references to the 1930s in the lyrics, while the excitement is escalated by ascending key changes, until it seems that the whole of Greenwich Village has joined in the dance.

Olin Downes had this to say about Bernstein’s contribution: ‘On the purely musical side a composer and a phenomenal musician . . . enriches his palette with many a pungent touch of dissonance and modern

harmonic color, while yet keeping very clearly to the popular tone, the rhythmic vigor, the common human touch of our contemporaneous music of entertainment.<sup>23</sup>

Following *Wonderful Town*, it was not long until Bernstein turned again to theatrical music, but this time for a different medium, as he created his one and only film score for Elia Kazan's 1954 *On the Waterfront*, starring Marlon Brando and Eva Marie Saint. There is an edginess and darkness to some of the music that Bernstein created for Kazan, reflecting the gritty nature of the story, as Terry (Brando) risks his life to take a stand against the crooked dockyard bosses in New York. There was more writing for the screen in 1955, although this time on a smaller scale, when Bernstein provided incidental music for a television production of Oscar Wilde's *Salome*, including a 'Dance of the Seven Veils'.<sup>24</sup> However, Bernstein had another encounter with Broadway between these two compositions, when he collaborated with Lillian Hellman on an adaptation of Jean Anouilh's play *The Lark*, based on the story of Joan of Arc. When the play opened in the Longacre Theatre on 17 November 1955, the audience were treated to the incidental choral music that Bernstein had crafted, utilising a seven-part a cappella ensemble, with some accompaniment from bells and hand drum; the songs were pre-recorded rather than performed live. The texts set were a mix of medieval French folk songs and the Roman Catholic liturgy, and Bernstein would later refashion the movements into his *Missa Brevis*.<sup>25</sup> This collaboration with Hellman occurred in the middle of another creative process involving the pair: the creation of *Candide*.

### *Candide*

Bernstein's return to Broadway on 1 December 1956 was not a return to the urban sophistication of *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town*, but to the world of operetta; jazz and Tin Pan Alley were replaced by the nostalgic sounds of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe. As the political atmosphere in the USA had become highly charged and vehemently anti-communist in the late 1940s, many of those who worked in the entertainment industry had found themselves under investigation, including Hellman herself. As a response to what became known as 'McCarthyism' – Senator Joseph McCarthy had been a prominent voice in the witch-hunt – Hellman settled upon Voltaire's 1759 novella *Candide* as a vehicle to protest the current situation. Although Bernstein was not called to testify before HUAC (the House Un-American Activities Committee), he had his own negative

encounter with the political establishment when the US Justice Department refused to renew his passport in July 1953. The situation was only resolved when he gave an extended affidavit under oath confirming that he was not now nor had ever been a member of the Communist Party.<sup>26</sup> Bernstein joined the *Candide* project early in 1954, and he later qualified his reasons for agreeing to work on the production: 'Voltaire's satire is international. It throws light on all the dark places, whether European or American ... Puritanical snobbery, phony moralism, inquisitorial attacks on the individual, brave-new-world optimism, essential superiority – aren't these all charges leveled against American society by our best thinkers? And they are also the charges made by Voltaire against his own society.'<sup>27</sup> Although Bernstein and Hellman were committed to the project, finding a lyricist to complete the creative team proved a complicated task. By the time *Candide* opened, lyric contributions had been made by John La Touche, Dorothy Parker, Richard Wilbur and Bernstein himself.<sup>28</sup> Despite the gravity of the original intentions, and what some considered to be a heavy-handed libretto created by Hellman, the score that Bernstein contributed contained some charming and light-hearted moments, as noted by the critic Brooks Atkinson, 'None of his previous theatre music has had the joyous variety, humor and richness of this score. It begins wittily. It parodies operatic music amusingly. But it also has a wealth of melody that compensates for the intellectual austerity of Voltaire's tale. While *Candide* is learning about life the hard way, Mr. Bernstein is obviously having a good time.'<sup>29</sup>

The story follows *Candide* on his picaresque journey around the globe as he attempts to find happiness in a world where the odds appear to be stacked against him. From our hero's optimistic beginnings in Westphalia with his teacher Pangloss, whose theories are embodied in 'The Best of All Possible Worlds', he travels to Lisbon, Paris, Buenos Aires, Eldorado and Venice, before returning to a now ruined Westphalia, having survived war, an inquisition, earthquakes, duels, slavery and drowning. Joining *Candide* at various points in this odyssey are his sweetheart Cunegonde, her brother Maximilian, an Old Lady, and a pessimist called Martin, together with a large cast of lesser characters. The variety of locations offered Bernstein the opportunity to employ a wide range of musical styles in skilful pastiches and parodies, including a Bach-like chorale ('Wedding Procession, Chorale and Battle Scene'), a rousing schottische in 'Bon Voyage', and a Straussian waltz in the 'Paris Waltz Scene'; we hear echoes of Bellini, Mozart, Gilbert and Sullivan, and twelve-tone music. However, even in his homage to operetta Bernstein still manages to indulge his predilection for Latin American dance rhythms. In the first scene in Buenos Aires we are

presented with 'I Am Easily Assimilated', a rather anachronistic tango as the eighteenth-century setting is at least one hundred years too early for such a dance to be heard, but the colour that the music adds to the Old Lady's explanation of her apparent ability to thrive in any circumstances reflects perfectly her attitude to life: 'faking her way through a number of situations and cultures, she has survived by her ability to assimilate into any milieu'.<sup>30</sup> This song also contains one of the few dance breaks in the show, as the surrounding crowd is infected by the Old Lady's confident and tenacious spirit.

One of the most performed songs from *Candide* is Cunegonde's aria, 'Glitter and Be Gay', sung by Candide's betrothed as she is installed in a luxurious and bejewelled Paris boudoir, generously endowed by two gentlemen. She laments her current unvirtuous situation in a jewel song in the mould of Gounod, but with elements of a laughing song and just the hint of a brisk habanera. The florid coloratura writing which attracts so many sopranos to this show-piece aria demonstrates the influence of the operas that Bernstein had conducted,<sup>31</sup> and, as previously noted, had been briefly foreshadowed by Eileen's vocal histrionics in 'Conversation Piece'.

The dance forms that Bernstein employed, the waltzes, gavotte and schottische, have rhythmic identities of their own, but as *Candide* is comic operetta rather than musical comedy,<sup>32</sup> there is a paucity of dance in the show, excepting the section in 'I Am Easily Assimilated', and the separate dance item 'Paris Waltz Scene'. With the strident patterns of jazz and swing notably absent from Bernstein's score, the rhythmic vitality of *Candide* is rooted in the use of complex metres and shifting time signatures. These are first seen in the 'Overture' where the metre fluctuates between duple and triple time, a device also utilised in 'Pilgrim's Procession', 'Venice Gambling Scene', and to a lesser degree in 'Make Our Garden Grow'. Bernstein also employs quintuple and septuple time signatures, particularly in 'Oh Happy We' and 'Ballad of Eldorado', and frequently includes strong cross rhythms, seen in 'The Best of All Possible Worlds', 'Glitter and be Gay', 'Bon Voyage', and 'Paris Waltz Scene'. These techniques have the effect of distancing the music of *Candide* from Bernstein's earlier musical theatre scores and aligning it with his highbrow compositions and operatic ambitions, although still retaining a sense of humour in the unexpected twists and turns.

At the end of Voltaire's tale, and Hellman's libretto, a great many events have occurred, but after all the melodrama, the struggles, fights, deaths, abandonments and lies, after all the parodies and pastiches and rhythmic trickery comes one of the only moments of genuine emotion in 'Make Our

Garden Grow’.<sup>33</sup> The foolish optimism of the beginning of the show has matured into a more realistic expectation of the future, as the characters accept that this world is not the paradise they once believed it to be, and that their lives are not destined for perfection. Richard Wilbur’s lyric takes its cue from Voltaire’s final line ‘mais il faut cultiver notre jardin’,<sup>34</sup> and from a rising octave melodic motif heard scattered throughout the show that is associated with Cunegonde, Bernstein fashioned some of the most expressive choral music he ever wrote; as Crist articulates in her article considering the political atmosphere surrounding *Candide*: ‘The grand and affecting style of “Make Our Garden Grow” casts aside Voltaire’s studied skepticism to realise the composer’s own humanistic credo ... [Bernstein’s] romantic faith in humanity and essential optimism resound throughout “Make Our Garden Grow”, which celebrates absolute unanimity.’<sup>35</sup>

Despite all the sparkle and wit in Bernstein’s score, it could not be reconciled with Hellman’s biting satirical libretto, and the 1956 *Candide* was not a success, running for only seventy-three performances at the Martin Beck Theatre. However, Bernstein had already begun work on his next Broadway project and he had in fact been composing both scores in parallel. His new show would mark a return to collaborating with Jerome Robbins, and would open in New York less than eleven months later, changing musical theatre forever.

## Notes

1. Humphrey Burton, *Leonard Bernstein* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 11.
2. Burton, *Leonard Bernstein*, 9, 19–20.
3. Burton, *Leonard Bernstein*, 22–24. *Carmen* came in 1934, with subsequent summers seeing productions of Gilbert and Sullivan’s *The Mikado* in 1935, and *HMS Pinafore* in 1936.
4. Burton, *Leonard Bernstein*, 23.
5. Robbins interviewed by Humphrey Burton, BBC Radio 3 *Composer of the Week*, 30 December 1996–3 January 1997.
6. John Martin, ‘Ballet by Robbins Called Smash Hit’, *New York Times*, 19 April 1944.
7. Quoted in the score foreword of Leonard Bernstein, *Fancy Free* (New York: Harms, 1950). Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
8. Carol Oja, *Bernstein Meets Broadway: Collaborative Art in a Time of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 36. In this book, Oja provides an excellent study of *On the Town*, especially its historical and cultural context.

9. Burton, *Leonard Bernstein*, 38–39, 102. Bernstein had also appeared on a recording with The Revuers in 1940, when he accompanied *The Girl with Two Left Feet* and *Joan Crawford Fan Club*. The two sketches were released on Musicraft as ‘Night Life in New York’ (Musicraft 1133–35, re-issued on CD in 1998 as *Leonard Bernstein – Wunderkind*, Pearl GEMS 0005).
10. Lewis Nichols, ‘The Play’, *New York Times*, 29 December 1940.
11. Katherine Baber, *Leonard Bernstein and the Language of Jazz* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019), 95.
12. Oja, *Bernstein Meets Broadway*, 253.
13. Oja, *Bernstein Meets Broadway*, 243.
14. This song was cut from the original Broadway production, much to the dismay of Bernstein, who lamented that the number contained thematic material that was central to the whole show (Robbins, quoted in Otis Guernsey, *Broadway Story and Song: Playwrights/Lyricists/Composers Discuss Their Hits* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1985), 9). The song was later reinstated and appears in the published 1997 Boosey and Hawkes score.
15. For more information regarding integration in Broadway shows, see Paul R. Laird, ‘Choreographers, Directors and the Fully Integrated Musical’, in *The Cambridge Companion to the Musical*, 3rd ed., ed. William A. Everett and Paul R. Laird (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 264–80.
16. The first and last of these dance numbers do include a small amount of sung material, rather than being completely instrumental, but the lyric section of ‘Presentation’ is significant within the story, while in ‘Real Coney Island’ the diegetic vocal line helps to set the scene.
17. Although it had been completed in December 1942, Bernstein’s *Jeremiah*, Symphony No.1 had premiered on 28 January 1944, only a matter of months before work began on *On the Town*.
18. Quoted in the score foreword of Leonard Bernstein, *On the Town: Three Dance Episodes* (New York: Amberson Enterprises, G. Schirmer, 1968). Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
19. Brooks Atkinson, ‘At the Theatre’, *New York Times*, 26 February 1953, 22.
20. Adolph Green, quoted in ‘Wonderful Town: A Conversation with Comden and Green’, *Prelude, Fugue & Riffs*, Fall 1994.
21. Eileen’s interjections are also perhaps a glimpse of the vocal gymnastics demonstrated by Cunegonde later in *Candide*. This fact is also noted by Daniel Gundlach in “‘Wär’ Ich Doch Wieder Zuhause!” – Nostalgie in *Wonderful Town*’, in ‘... wie die Stadt schön wird’, *Leonard Bernstein: Wonderful Town*, ed. Heiko Cullmann, Michael Heinemann and Andreas Eichhorn (Dresden: Thelem, 2017), 51.
22. Quoted in Stanley Green, *The World of Musical Comedy* (South Brunswick, NJ: A. S. Barnes, 1974), 292. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.

23. Olin Downes, 'Wonderful Time: Bernstein's Musical is Brilliant Achievement', *New York Times*, 10 May 1953, Section 2, 7.
24. The incidental score is written for the unusual combination of electric guitar, harp, piano, percussion (four players), and off-stage singers; unpublished score in the Leonard Bernstein Collection in the Library of Congress.
25. In the programme note in the score of Leonard Bernstein, *Missa Brevis* (New York: Jalni Publications, 1988), Jack Gottlieb states that this reshaping was suggested by renowned choral director Robert Shaw, who had attended one of the first performances of *The Lark*. However, the idea already seems to have occurred to Bernstein, as he mentions in a letter to his brother written the day after the play began its try-outs in Boston in October 1955; reproduced in Nigel Simeone, *The Leonard Bernstein Letters* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 349.
26. The story is told in more detail in Barry Seldes, 'Bernstein and McCarthyism', 67–85 in *Leonard Bernstein and Washington, D.C.: Works, Politics, Performances*, ed. Daniel Abraham, Alicia Kopfstein-Penk and Andrew H. Weaver (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 73–77; the affidavit itself is reproduced in Simeone, *Leonard Bernstein Letters*, 299–309.
27. Leonard Bernstein, 'Colloquy in Boston', *New York Times*, 18 November 1956, Section 2, 1, 3. Used by permission of The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc.
28. Richard Wilbur joined the team as librettist in December 1955 and wrote the majority of the original lyrics; Burton, *Leonard Bernstein*, 257.
29. Brooks Atkinson, 'The Theatre: "Candide"', *New York Times*, 3 December 1956, 40.
30. Elizabeth A. Wells, *West Side Story: Cultural Perspectives on an American Musical* (Lanham, MD, Toronto and Plymouth UK: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 118.
31. During early 1955, Bernstein had conducted Maria Callas in Bellini's *La Sonnambula* at La Scala; Burton, *Leonard Bernstein*, 243.
32. Whatever *Candide* may have become in the years since its original production, through major revisions in 1972, 1982 and 1988 to the version that now sits more comfortably in the opera house than the theatre, it was described as a comic operetta in its first incarnation (Leonard Bernstein, Richard Wilbur, John La Touche, Dorothy Parker, Lillian Hellman, *Candide: A Comic Operetta Based on Voltaire's Satire* (New York: Random House, 1957)).
33. The other places that are free from parody and pastiche are 'It Must Be So' and the instrumental 'Eldorado'.
34. Voltaire, *Candide et Autres Contes* (Paris: Éditions Flammarion Gallimard, 1992), 108.
35. Elizabeth B. Crist, 'Mutual Responses in the Midst of an Era: Aaron Copland's *The Tender Land*, and Leonard Bernstein's *Candide*', *The Journal of Musicology*, 23, no. 4 (2006), 514.