



2017.18 MSO Teen Series

# **BERNSTEIN 2018!**

**Randal Swiggum**, *conductor*

STUDENT GUIDE

February 14, 2018  
Uihlein Hall

**MISO**  
MILWAUKEE SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA

# The Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra

# BERNSTEIN 2018!

## PROGRAM

Overture to *Candide*

*Chichester Psalms*

"Make Our Garden Grow" from *Candide*

MSO Teen Choral Partners

Plymouth High School Concert Choir • Amanda Smith, director

Sheboygan Lutheran High School Konzertchor • Sarah Meyer, director

Milwaukee High School of the Arts Concert Chorale • Raymond Roberts, director

Simon Johnson, boy soloist

Randal Swiggum, conductor

### **SPOILER ALERT: There aren't any.**

*Seeing a movie for the first time, we usually don't want to know what happens ahead of time. Classical music is just the opposite—the more you know the piece ahead of time, the better you understand it when you hear it live. And the better you understand it, the more likely you are to love it.*

*Spend some time listening to the three pieces on this program before the concert. There are lots of recordings on YouTube and Spotify and your public library will have multiple versions on CD to check out.*

*The more you know these pieces ahead of time, the more you'll already have your favorite spots to look forward to. The more details you'll catch and the deeper layers you'll understand. The more familiar the piece, the more thrilling the concert. Guaranteed.*

# LEONARD BERNSTEIN: American Voice

In the years since his death in 1990, one figure has come to dominate the 20th century in American music: Leonard Bernstein.

Musicians often argue about who might have been a better composer or conductor or pianist or author or television celebrity than Bernstein. But there has really never been anyone that did all these things, and did them so brilliantly, as Bernstein did. His influence is unsurpassed and his legacy continues to blaze brighter than ever.

Bernstein was born in 1918. All around the globe, his work is being marked this year by 100th anniversary celebrations of his life and music.

Bernstein's biography is the stuff of myth and legend—but it's all true. Born to immigrant parents from Ukraine, he showed an early gift for playing the piano—and entertaining anyone who would listen with his made up songs and operas, always featuring himself in the lead role. He graduated from Harvard in 1939 and gradually was “discovered” by older, more famous conductors who recognized his talent.

His big break came on Sunday, November 14, 1943. He was the assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic—the most famous orchestra in America. But this was a kind of thankless job. Assistant conductors are like an understudy in a play—they have to learn all the music, but rarely get to conduct. That morning, Bernstein got a phone call saying that Bruno Walter, the conductor scheduled for that afternoon's concert, was ill, and Bernstein would have to step in and conduct the concert. With no rehearsal. And with the whole nation listening (it was broadcast on the radio).

Bernstein was nervous but his conducting was spectacular and the audience roared with applause. The next morning the New York Times screamed the event on its front page. Bernstein was 25 years old and suddenly world famous. His life as a celebrity had begun.

Bernstein went on to compose *West Side Story*, to conduct every major orchestra in the world, write operas, ballets, symphonies and the film score for *On the Waterfront*, publish books, perform as a concert pianist, appear on television, and speak as a political activist. In December 1989, near the end of his life, he conducted Beethoven's Ninth Symphony “Ode to Joy” at the Berlin Wall as it was being dismantled. The orchestra included musicians from East Germany, West Germany, and the four nations that had partitioned Berlin after World War II. Who else could musically summon forth the impulse for world peace and universal brotherhood? Only Leonard Bernstein.



# LEONARD BERNSTEIN: Jewish Voice

Leonard Bernstein deeply treasured his Jewish heritage, and although as an adult he was not an outwardly religious person, he never abandoned the Jewish roots of his family and childhood.

Bernstein's parents were Jewish immigrants from Ukraine and his grandfather had been a rabbi. As a teenager, Bernstein himself considered becoming a rabbi. His earliest musical memories were from the worship services at his family's synagogue and the first piece of music he wrote—at age fourteen—was a setting of Psalm 148 in Hebrew.

Over the next forty years, Bernstein would write over twenty pieces on Jewish themes—one quarter of his orchestral pieces and half of his choral pieces. His Symphony No. 1 (“Jeremiah”), written in 1942, uses Hebrew text from the book of Lamentations of Jeremiah, and was written in response to early reports of Nazi destruction of Jews in Europe. His Symphony No. 3, “Kaddish” was written in 1963, shortly before the *Chichester Psalms*. “Kaddish” refers to the Jewish prayer chanted at a service for the dead.

Many of Bernstein's pieces, whether on Jewish themes or not, deal with the “modern crisis of faith”—the question of whether contemporary man, in the scientific age, can still believe in God. This was a question that Bernstein wrestled with personally and also as a composer.

Even many of Bernstein's secular (non-religious) pieces deal with matters of belief and trust. His musical *Candide*, for example, follows a small band of friends who wander the globe searching for meaningful philosophy, but in the end discover that what is most significant is their faith in each other. *West Side Story* is essentially the story of two gangs of marginalized youth who live without hope, except for a couple (Tony and Maria) who find hope and faith in their love for each other, even though it is tragically brief.

## ***Faith and Doubt in the Chichester Psalms***

The *Chichester Psalms* is not a drama and has no “story” or characters. It does, however, follow a kind of dramatic arc.

The first movement is simple praise of God, using Psalm 100—one of the most familiar texts in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Doubts rise in the second movement, where the innocence and trust of a boy singing “The Lord is my shepherd” is shattered by the war and violent arrogance of Psalm 2, a tension that feels unresolved when that movement ends.

Movement 3 begins with a piercing cry of anguish and doubt in the orchestra interlude. But eventually, faith is restored again—the simple faith of a child, content in his mother's lap.

Bernstein goes further than this image of personal trust and contentment, though. The final image of the piece is the peace and unity of all people.



**Samuel Bernstein**, age 37

**Jennie Bernstein**, age 33

**Leonard Bernstein**, age 11

**Shirley Bernstein**, age 6



An ancient Greek psaltery

## What's a Psalm?

The Book of Psalms is a collection of 150 lyric poems and songs of the ancient Jewish people, written over the span of 1000 years. It is the work of multiple authors including Moses (Psalm 90), Solomon (Psalm 72), and others. About half of the psalms are attributed to King David, including most of the psalms Bernstein chose for this piece (Psalms 108, 131, and 133). But the most famous Psalm of all is also by David, the beloved Psalm 23, “The Lord is my Shepherd”, which Bernstein chose as the centerpiece of his middle movement.

The Psalms are lyric poems, which means they are intended to express feelings, in this case the inner feelings of a person whose soul is stirred by thinking about God. Some psalms (like 108 and 100, which Bernstein used for the first movement) are full of joyful praise and thanks. Others (like 131 and 23, also used by Bernstein) are thoughtful, introspective poems of intimacy with God. Some Psalms express anger or frustration or injustice (Psalm 2 “Why do the nations rage?”), and some express a wish for peace and unity (Psalm 133 “How good and pleasant it is...”).

We typically expect poetry to rhyme and be in rhythm, and Western poetry of the last 500 years often does. But ancient Hebrew poetry did not use rhythm or rhyme as its organizational tool. Instead, the Psalms use parallelism—where an idea is stated, and then restated a second time, but with different words, or a slightly different twist. This can be seen in the very first words of the *Chichester Psalms*, from Psalm 108:

***Awake, psaltery\* and harp!***

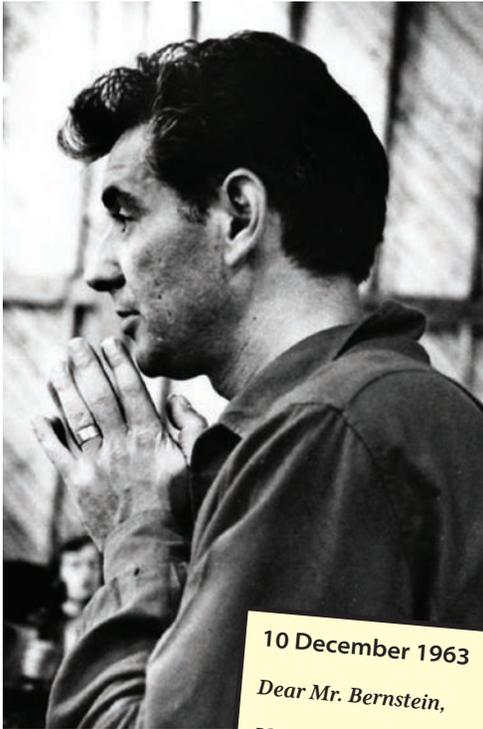
***I will awake the dawn!***

Both lines are different words, but the same idea: awake!

We know that in Biblical times, many of the Psalms were sung, but the music has not come down to us. Throughout the last 1000 years, however, many composers have set the texts of the Psalms to new music. In fact, there has been more music written to Psalm texts than any other source of poetry in history. Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* stands as part of that long tradition.

The Psalms have had a huge influence on literature and music. While most poetry of the ancient world has faded into oblivion, the Psalms still feel remarkably contemporary and are widely known, even after 3000 years.

\*Psaltery was an ancient hand-held harp



## Why “Chichester?”

People often assume that composers create music just on their own whims, when they feel like it, or are inspired with something special to say. Sometimes that’s true—composers just get an idea, and go ahead and write a piece. More often, though, pieces start with a commission—an outside party requests a piece from a composer, sometimes for a special occasion or to commemorate a person or event. That’s how the *Chichester Psalms* came to be.

The request came to Bernstein from the Reverend Walter Hussey, the Dean of Chichester Cathedral in Sussex, England. Chichester Cathedral had a long tradition of joining two other nearby cathedrals in the cities of Winchester and Salisbury for a summer choral festival, which brought together their choirs (of men and boys, in the Anglican tradition). The performance took place on July 31, 1965. But the story of the piece began two years earlier, with a letter:

10 December 1963

Dear Mr. Bernstein,

*I hope you will forgive my writing to you and will not think me presumptuous.*

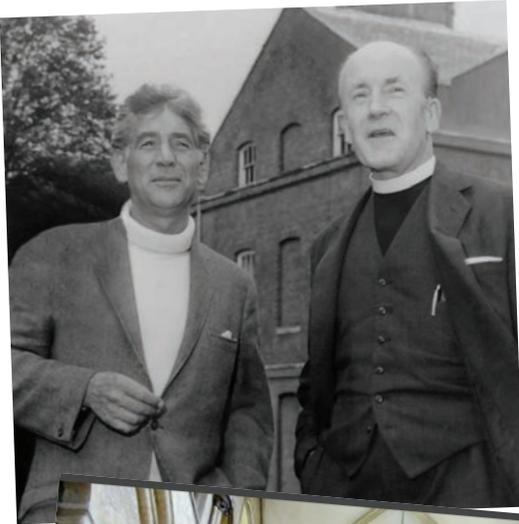
*The Chichester Organist and Choirmaster, John Birch, and I, are very anxious to have written some piece of music which the combined choirs could sing at the Festival to be held in Chichester in August, 1965, and we wondered if you would be willing to write something for us. I do realize how enormously busy you are, but if you could manage to do this we should be tremendously honoured and grateful.*

*The sort of thing that we had in mind was perhaps, say, a setting of the Psalm 2, or some part of it, either unaccompanied or accompanied by orchestra or organ, or both. I only mention this to give you some idea as to what was in our minds.*

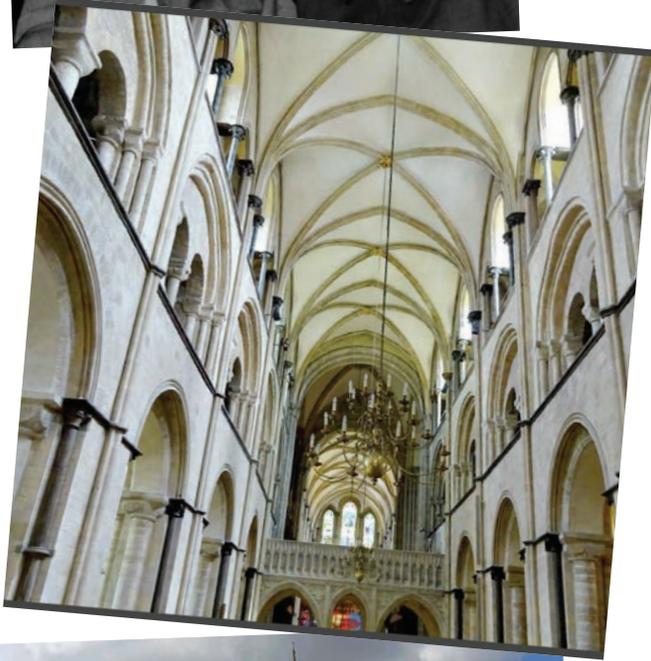
*...I hope you will feel quite free to write as you wish and will in no way feel inhibited by circumstances. I think many of us would be very delighted if there was a hint of “West Side Story” about the music....*

*Yours sincerely,  
Walter Hussey*

Bernstein had taken a year off from his conducting job with the New York Philharmonic orchestra, specifically to have time to compose. He answered Hussey with a yes, and proposed a piece called “Psalms of Youth” but later changed the title to “Chichester Psalms” because he didn’t want to give the impression that the music was easy or suitable for children.



Bernstein with Rev. Walter Hussey, outside Chichester Cathedral



Chichester Cathedral, founded in 1025, one of the most famous medieval English cathedrals, and built in Gothic style. Its resonant acoustic and echo made the *Chichester Psalms* performance lively and exciting.



The spire of its cathedral towers over the city of Chichester (pop. 26,000) and can be seen for miles across the meadows of the Sussex region. It's the only medieval English cathedral visible from the sea, which made it a landmark for sailors.

## Creating Unity: Motif

One of the hardest tasks for anyone trying to create a large work of art—whether music or poetry or drama—is to create a sense of unity. Large pieces have many competing features which create contrast, but something must hold them together, to make the piece feel like everything fits.

One way to do this is by using a motif, a short idea which is repeated and adapted throughout the work. Shakespeare does it in *Macbeth* with multiple images of blood—and blood becomes a theme or a motif in the play.

Beethoven built his whole Fifth Symphony with this famous four-note motif:



And Bernstein does the same thing in the *Chichester Psalms*, with a five-note motif:

Listen to it played. What do you notice about it? Is it mostly steps or skips? Why do you think so? The leap from notes 2 to 3—what interval is that? What is the effect of that large leap—more dramatic or less dramatic? (There is a famous song from Bernstein's *West Side Story* that begins with this interval. Can you find it?)



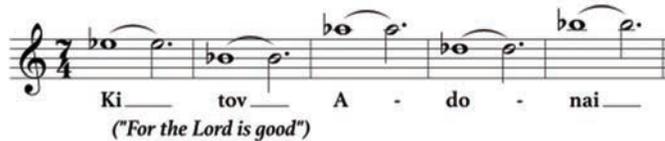
Bernstein tells us that this motif is going to be important because it's literally the first thing we hear in the piece:



This is immediately followed by the orchestra, playing a new version of it. How is it different?



Listen for the motif throughout the piece, but especially at the end of the first movement where Bernstein does something quite stunning. The chorus sings the motif in long notes and transposed to a new key:



The movement ends with a witty and sparkling version of the motif for xylophone and strings plucking (pizzicato):



This motif will hold the entire three-movement piece together. We'll hear it again as a dramatic opening to Movement III played by the orchestra. And at the very end, the chorus will sing it in a hushed, ethereal version to the words "Hineh ma tov umah nayim" (Behold how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in unity). And just when it seems the piece is finished, a lone solo trumpet plays the motif one more time. The effect is stunning.

## CREATING UNITY: Balance

Bernstein was very intentional about which psalms he chose for his piece, and how he used them to create a balanced musical and poetic structure. There are three movements and each one uses exactly two psalms, for a total of six.

But even the way Bernstein paired them was very specific: in each movement, one psalm is used in its entirety and the other quotes just a few verses. In the outside movements (I and III), the two psalms complement each other and have similar moods. The middle movement, however, uses two Psalms that could not be more different, contrasting the gentle peace of Psalm 23 (“The Lord is My Shepherd”) with the violent, warlike Psalm 2 (“Why do the nations rage?”). The third movement uses the entire Psalm 131 (“Lord, my heart is not proud.”) and concludes with just one verse from Psalm 133 (“Behold how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in unity.”).

## CREATING UNITY: Eclectic

The one word that is most commonly used to describe Bernstein’s music is eclectic. Oftentimes it was intended as a criticism, as if to say that Bernstein couldn’t decide who he really was, or what he wanted?

**eclectic** /e-KLEK-tic/ adj.

**Borrowing ideas or styles from a diverse or contrasting range of sources**

and *On the Town*. In the *Chichester Psalms*, he was expected to write a serious piece for chorus and orchestra—something suitable for a cathedral in the Church of England. What he wrote often sounded like *West Side Story* and although it was in Hebrew, sometimes sounded Latin American, with its bongos and rhythms.

Today it’s easier to understand why Bernstein’s music was eclectic and full of contrasts. It was the same with his personality, which had its own conflicting sides and contradictions. For example, he was a worldly, sophisticated celebrity but never strayed too far from his humble Jewish roots. He was happily married with three children, but had romantic relationships with both women and men. He was confident, brash, and outspoken but masked his own introverted insecurities

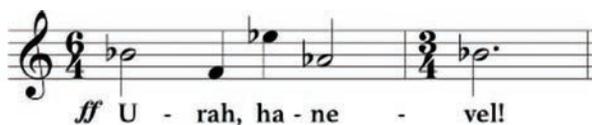
Bernstein believed that “eclectic” was logically what American music should be—an expression of diversity. In his mind, America was, after all, a giant melting pot of immigrants, just like his parents. (He would have loved the musical *Hamilton*, with its emphasis on America’s strength coming from its diverse peoples. “Immigrants — we get the job done.”) So combining so many eclectic musical styles, as he did in the *Chichester Psalms*, was not only an expression of America’s very identity—it was a representation of Bernstein’s identity too.

For example, was he a serious musician or not? After all, he conducted the New York Philharmonic, one of the most prestigious orchestras in the world. But he liked to visit nightclubs and play jazz. He wrote several very serious symphonies. But he also wrote musicals—shows like *Candide* and *West Side Story*



# Movement I: Awake!

The *Chichester Psalms* opens with burst of energy, calling all to attention. Like the clang of a cosmic chime or the blast of the shofar—the ram’s horn trumpet which for centuries has summoned Jews to stand before God in reverence and worship—it says “Wake up, soul!” Bernstein uses the 5-note motif that will unify the entire piece:



After this epic wake-up call, the orchestra begins a rollicking dance in 7/4 meter, and the chorus bursts into a jubilant setting of Psalm 100, one of the most familiar and famous of all psalms. Bernstein seems to have been inspired by the words “Hari’u l’Adonai kol ha’arets” (Make a joyful noise to the Lord!) This music is a joyful noise indeed, with the jazzy, musical theatre flavor of *West Side Story*, just as Rev. Hussey had requested.

## Psalm 108: verse 2

עֹרָה, הַנְּבִל	<i>Urah, hanevel,</i>	Awake, psaltery and harp:
; וְכִנּוֹר	<i>v'chinor!</i>	I will rouse the dawn!
אֶעִירָה שָׁחַר.	<i>A-irah shaḥar</i>	

## Psalm 100 (complete)

*Hari’u l’Adonai kol ha’arets.  
Iv’du et Adonai b’simḥa  
Bo’u l’fanav bir’nanah.  
Du ki Adonai Hu Elohim.  
Hu asanu v’lo anahnu.  
Amo v’tson mar’ito.*

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands.  
Serve the Lord with gladness.  
Come before His presence with singing.  
Know that the Lord, He is God.  
He made us, and we are his.  
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

*Bo’u sh’arav b’todah,  
Ḥatseirotav bit’hilah,  
Hodu lo, bar’chu sh’mo.  
Ki tov Adonai, l’olam ḥas’do,  
V’ad dor vador emunato.*

Come unto His gates with thanksgiving,  
And into His court with praise.  
Be thankful unto Him and bless His name.  
For the Lord is good, His mercy everlasting  
And His truth endures to all generations.

# THE WORLD'S LONGEST, HAPPIEST MELODY

This is the melody Bernstein wrote for the opening of Psalm 100. What do you notice about it?

First of all, it is continuous—18 measures of non-stop action. Second, it is actually many short phrases broken up between the four voice parts: bass, tenor, alto, and soprano. Third, they keep interrupting each other, so each new voice enters on the note(s) that the voice before it ends with (a continuous stream of notes). It's a catchy melody—listen to it a few times.

*Make a joyful noise to the Lord!*

(Tenor) Ha - ri - u I'A do - nai Kol ha - a - rets.

(Bass) Ha - ri - u I'A - do - nai kol ha - a - rets.

*Serve the Lord with gladness!  
Come before his presence with singing!*

(Tenor) Bo - u, bo - u l' - fa - nav bi - r' - na - nah.

(Bass) Iv' - du et A - do - nai b' - si - m' - cha

*Know that the Lord, He is God.  
He has made us, and not we ourselves.*

(Tenor) Hu a - sa - nu Hu a - sa - nu

(Soprano) D'u - ki A - do - nai Hu E - lo - him.

*We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.*

(Soprano) A - nah - nu a - mo V' - tson ma - r' - i - to

(Alto) Hu V' - lo a nah - nu A - nah - nu a - mo V' - tson ma - r' - i - to.

## The Number 18

It's no coincidence that Bernstein made his first section of music 18 measures long. The number 18 is powerfully symbolic in Jewish numerology (the hidden spiritual mystery of numbers). In fact, it's considered lucky. Why? Because it's the sum of the letters in the Hebrew word *chai*, the word for "life." 18 is the numerical value of life itself.

## Hebrew

Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* is still the most famous choral piece in Hebrew. No one questions its language now. But it was a radical idea in 1965, when Bernstein told Rev. Hussey he wanted to write the piece using the original language of the psalms. (In the English choral tradition, psalms had always been sung in translation: English or Latin.)

It was not an unusual choice for Bernstein, though. Not only was he Jewish—he actually had learned Hebrew from attending worship as a child. He spoke it so fluently that when he rehearsed the Israel Philharmonic, he could address the orchestra players in their own language.

When we listen to the *Chichester Psalms*, it's important to remember that Bernstein knew every word he was setting—not just the general idea, but the specific meaning of every word. If we know a few key words, and watch for them, it helps us understand Bernstein's musical intentions.

In this movement, watch for:

**Urah** ("awake")  
**Adonai** ("Lord")

**Elohim** ("God")  
**Bo-u** ("Enter" or "Come in")

## WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

### 1. The Meter

7/4 is a fun time signature. It feels like 4/4 except every measure gets a little rushed or clipped short at the end, which gives it a surge of forward energy. Try counting 1-2, 1-2, 1-2-3, and then try counting and stepping side to side in place (you'll have to lift a bit on the 1-2-3). Then try it in a predictably familiar 1& 2& 3& 4&, and you'll feel how energized 7/4 can be!

### 2. Joyful Noise: Percussion!

One of the ways Bernstein gets such a colorful, dazzling sound is with percussion. The composer asks for 7 percussionists plus a timpani player! Wow!

### What do they play? Listen for:

Snare Drum, Tambourine, Triangle, Glockenspiel, Suspended Cymbal, Crash Cymbals, Bass Drum, Xylophone, Wood Block, Temple Blocks, Rasp, Chimes, Whip, and Bongos.

Bongos usually are played in pairs, but Bernstein (in another radical move) called for 3 bongos!

# THAT'S COOL

Near the end of the movement, Bernstein inserts a little puzzle for the listener, a special moment for anyone paying attention. He uses an old trick called text painting, where the notes

*The Lord is good, His mercy is everlasting. His faithfulness endures to all generations.*

Alto Ki-tov A-do-nai, l'o-lam ha-s' do

Tenor V-ad dor va-dor

Bass Va-dor, va-dor a mu-na-to

of the meaning of the words, but in a very specific way. Here the text speaks of God's mercy being passed down through the generations: parents to children and then on to their children, forever. Bernstein wrote a literal "passing down" of mercy, starting with the alto voice, passing down to tenor, passing down to bass. And just to make sure we don't miss it, these words are sung not by the whole choir, but by soloists—a sudden change in texture that gets our attention, but also makes the words feel a little more personal and tender.

## Psalm 23

### Solo Boy

*Adonai ro-i, lo ehsar.  
Bin'ot deshe yarbitseini,  
Al mei m'nuhot y'nahaleini,  
Naf'shi y'shovev,  
Yan'heini b'ma'aglei tsedek,  
L'ma'an sh'mo.*

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He makes me to lie down in green pastures,  
He leads me beside the still waters,  
He restores my soul,  
He leads me in the paths of righteousness,  
For His name's sake.

### Women

*Gam ki eilech  
B'gei tsalmavet,  
Lo ira ra,  
Ki Atah imadi.  
Shiv'r'cha umishan'techa  
Hemah y'nahamuni.*

Yea, though I walk  
Through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
For Thou art with me.  
Thy rod and Thy staff  
They comfort me.

## Psalm 2:1-4

### Men

*Lamah rag'shu goyim  
Ul'umim yeh'gu rik?  
Yit'yats'vu malchei erets,  
V'roznim nos'du yahad  
Al Adonai v'al m'shiho.  
N'natkah et mos'roteimo,  
V'nashlichah mimenu avoteimo.  
Yoshev bashamayim  
Yis'hak, Adonai  
Yil'ag lamo!*

Why do the nations rage,  
And the people imagine a vain thing?  
The kings of the earth set  
themselves,  
And the rulers take counsel together  
Against the Lord and against His  
anointed.  
Saying, let us break their bands  
asunder,  
And cast away their cords from us.  
He that sits in the heavens  
Shall laugh, and the Lord  
Shall have them in derision!

## Psalm 23 (continued)

### Women

*Ta'aroch l'fanai shulchan  
Neged tsor'rai  
Dishanta vashemen roshi  
Cosi r'vayah.*

Thou preparest a table before me  
In the presence of my enemies,  
Thou anointest my head with oil,  
My cup runneth over.

### Solo Boy

*Ach tov vahesed  
Yird'funi kol y'mei hayai  
V'shav'ti b'veit Adonai  
L'orech yamim.*

Surely goodness and mercy  
Shall follow me all the days of  
my life,  
And I will dwell in the house of  
the Lord  
Forever.

# Movement II: Peace and War

The middle movement of the *Chichester Psalms* is high drama and contrast. It begins with the innocent sound of a boy soprano singing the words of the shepherd boy, David.

(Harp) (Boy soloist)  
A - do - nai ro - i, lo eh - sar  
*The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want (I don't need anything else).*

The women echo these words of Psalm 23 in a shimmering, dream-like texture on the words “walk through the valley of the shadow of death.”

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...*  
Sopranos Gam ki - ei - lech b' - gei tsal - ma - vet  
Altos Gam ki ei - lech b' - gei tsal - ma - vet

Look closely at the two parts. The altos follow the sopranos in canon, singing the exact same notes and words but one measure later. Not only does this create a mysterious, gauzy effect—it also is another example of text painting. The words include “shadow of death” and what’s a shadow? An image of ourselves that follows us, close behind.

This tranquil scene is violently interrupted by the men (and percussion) crashing in with Psalm 2 (“Why do the nations rage?”)

*Why? Why? Why do they rage? Why do the nations rage?*  
La - mah! La-mah! La-mah ra-g'-shu? La-mah ra-g' shu go-yim, La-mah ra-g'-shu? La-mah ra-g'-shu go-yim, La-mah ra-g'-shu, La-mah ra-g'-shu?

And then, in a stroke of compositional genius, Bernstein combines the two ideas. As the women sing with confidence about peacefully sharing a meal with enemies, the “enemies” rage underneath.

*You prepare a table before me, in the presence of my enemies... (blissfully unaware of the threat)*  
Ta' - a - roch l' - fa - nai  
*The Lord laughs. He scorns them (his enemies).*  
Yi-s'-hak A-do-nai Yi-s'-hak A-do-nai Yi-l'-ag la-mo  
hak A-do-nai Yi-s'-hak A-do-nai Yi-l'-ag la-mo

The movement eventually is calm again, with the boy soprano restoring the tranquility of the opening. But the menace never leaves entirely. Listen to the quiet but snarling trumpet and xylophone at the end. Even in the peaceful ending, the uncertainty remains. Bernstein himself described this ending as “in unresolved fashion, with both elements, faith and fear, interlocked.”

## Hebrew Words to Listen For

### Psalm 23 (The Lord is my Shepherd)

Adonai (“Lord”)

Roi (“my shepherd”)

### Psalm 2 (Why do the nations rage?)

La-mah (“why?”)

**Goyim** (pronounced “goy-YEEM”, this word can be translated as “nations” or “Gentiles” and meant all non-Jews.)

**Ya-chad** (“together”, as in “the rulers take counsel together”)

# JETS AND SHARKS



This movement of the *Chichester Psalms* is the most “theatrical” of the three, especially the men’s voices singing the intense words of Psalm 2. This is no coincidence. For this music, Bernstein reused some earlier music he had written for *West Side Story*, but ended up not needing. Originally the show was to open with a Prologue called “Mix,” sung by the gang of Jets about their bitter rivals, the Sharks. The angry words were “Mix! Make a Mess of ‘Em” (which you can imagine being set to the snarly notes of “La! La-mah ra-g’-shu”—a very similar mood of violence and aggression.)

## WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

### 1. That Middle Eastern Sound

Bernstein manages to create a sense of time and place with a quick, opening musical gesture. With just the strum of the harp, and the ring of the triangle and suspended cymbal, we are in the ancient Far East, the land of the biblical David

### 2. Sinister percussion

The brittle, dry sounds of wood block, rasp, temple blocks, and xylophone give a dark, menacing undertone to Psalm 2. It sounds random and violent, like gunfire or the clash of swords!

### 3. Counterpoint

The human ear has the remarkable ability to hear two contrasting lines of music at the same time. This is called counterpoint and Bernstein makes powerful use of it by combining the tranquil melody of Psalm 23 with the brutal, percussive rhythms of Psalm 2.

## WHO WAS DAVID?

David is one of the most important figures in Jewish history. He probably lived about 1000 B.C.E. According to the Hebrew Bible, he was a brave and handsome shepherd boy who first became famous by slaying the giant Goliath with a slingshot and two stones. He later was anointed King of Israel and was a mighty warrior who led the Israelite army to victory, conquering Jerusalem and making it his capital.

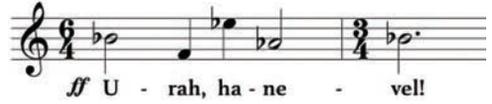
For hundreds of years, David has been the subject of paintings, sculptures, and even movies. Michelangelo’s marble statue, David, is one of the most famous.

David was also famous as a musician, who played the harp, sang beautifully, and wrote psalms. Psalm 23, “The Lord is my shepherd,” is his most famous song, but most of the psalms in the Bible are attributed to him. Bernstein evokes the shepherd boy David with his harp in the second movement of the *Chichester Psalms*.

# Movement III: Together in Unity

The third movement picks up the unresolved tension of Movement 2 and ratchets it up. This is certainly the most emotional music of the *Chichester Psalms*, but there are no words—it is just the strings of the orchestra, in a piercing cry of anguish.

The opening “Awake!” which was noble and confident:



has now become harsh and dissonant, through added notes, tightly constricting and clashing with the 5-note motif:

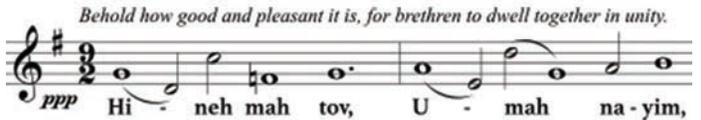


This tension eventually is given over to a calm, rocking motion in the harps, and the men of the choir sing a gentle, lyrical melody, one of the most beautiful Bernstein ever wrote:



This is sung by the choir, then played in a tender version by solo cello, then sung again on “ah”, then sung by four soloists—as if the music, like a child, is slowly being lulled to contented sleep. And

then Bernstein does something surprising—something we have not heard yet. The orchestra stops and we are left with just the sound of voices, singing Psalm 133



Bernstein wants to make sure we get the point: the singers are barely audible, singing *ppp*—just a whisper. And the melody? Of course—it’s the 5-note motif of the very beginning, the “Wake up” theme. Now we are to “wake up” to the idea of peace and brotherhood. We have come full circle.

## I) Orchestra Prelude

## II) Psalm 131 (complete)

*Adonai, Adonai,*

*Lo gavah libi,*

*V'lo ramu einai,*

*V'lo hilachti*

*Big'dolot uv'niflaot*

*Mimieni.*

*Im lo shiviti*

*V'domam'ni,*

*Naf'shi k'gamul alei imo,*

*Kagamul alai naf'shi.*

*Yahel Yis'rael el Adonai*

*Me'atah v'ad olam.*

Lord, Lord,

My heart is not proud,

Nor mine eyes lofty,

Neither do I exercise myself

In great matters or in things

Too wonderful for me to understand.

Surely I have calmed

And quieted myself,

As a child that is weaned of his mother,

My soul is even as a weaned child.

Let Israel hope in the Lord

From henceforth and forever.

## III) Psalm 133:1

הִנֵּה מַה טוֹב,

וְיִמָּה נְעִים

שְׁבֵת אַחִים

גַּם יוֹדֵד.

*Hineh mah tov,*

*Umah na'im,*

*Shevet aḥim*

*Gam yaḥad.*

Behold how good,

And how pleasant it is,

For brethren to dwell

Together in unity.

## Hebrew Words to Listen For

### Adonai, Adonai

(“Lord, Lord”)

### Gam ya-chad

(“in unity, together”)

Interestingly, the word “yachad,” which in Psalm 2 was repeated so violently 13 times by the conspiring rulers “together” against God, now becomes a soothing word of unity and peaceful brotherhood



## THAT'S COOL 2

After the choir sings “gam ya-chad” (“together in unity”) not once but twice, the piece is essentially over. The tumult of the piece has been quieted and the fighting is over. But Bernstein has one more expressive moment left to share. The voices now do something they have never done before: they sing the word Amen (“Let it be so”) in absolute unison (everyone on the same note). The effect is both haunting and beautiful, as we have never heard this texture before. This is, of course, more text painting—the voices are “together in unity.”

But keep listening. There it is again—the 5-note motif, played once more, very hushed and calm, by the battle trumpet and David’s harp, now also “together in unity.”

## BERNSTEIN’S POLITICS

It’s not surprising that Bernstein ended the *Chichester Psalms* with Psalm 133, which paints a picture of diverse peoples living in unity—this was a vision he believed in deeply. In fact, the whole piece—by combining Hebrew words and Christian choral tradition—was a musical symbol of Bernstein’s hope for universal peace and brotherhood.

But Bernstein’s view of the world was not just an artistic one—he was famously political and a strong, public voice for progressive views. In a 1980 speech at Johns Hopkins University he said:

**“War is obsolete. Our nuclear folly has rendered it obsolete, so it now appears to be something like a bad old habit, a ritualistic, quasi-tribalistic obedience to the arrogance of excessive nationalism, face-saving, bigotry, xenophobia, and above all, greed.”**

Bernstein believed that his compositions were more than pleasant concert pieces—he wanted them to make a difference in the world, a political difference. He saw himself as part of a universal movement toward tolerance, human rights, and genuine peace.

Three days after the assassination of John F. Kennedy in Dallas, Bernstein (speaking before the United Jewish Appeal in New York), rhetorically asked what had provoked the Kennedy assassination. “Ignorance and Hatred—the exact antonyms of Learning and Reason.” In this tribute, Bernstein was referring to the speech Kennedy was to make in Dallas on November 22, 1963, in which the president intended to say, “America’s leadership must be guided by learning and reason.”

# CANDIDE Overture

Our concert will open and close with music from Bernstein's 1956 Broadway musical *Candide*—in fact, its opening and closing numbers.

Although the show was not an immediate hit (and had to be reworked several times over the next twenty years), its Overture was hugely successful from the beginning. It has been recorded more than 40 times. Two interesting facts about the piece: since Bernstein's death in 1990, the New York Philharmonic always plays this piece without a conductor, in tribute to Bernstein. The orchestra also included this piece in its historic concert in Pyongyang, North Korea, on February 26, 2008.

Knowing the structure of the piece is not necessary to enjoy it, but it is fascinating to see how Bernstein constructs this witty parade of musical quotations from the show, plus a main theme, written especially for the Overture. A fanfare introduces the piece (based on the song "Best of All Possible Worlds"), followed by the Main Theme—a scampering, giggling melody in the violins. Then Bernstein starts over: Fanfare, Main Theme, and a new theme: the Battle Music. With only one exception (an interlude right in the middle), this is the pattern he follows: introduce a new idea and then start over and run through them all again in order. The Love Theme is Candide and Cunegonde's duet "O Happy We" and the sparkling solo aria "Glitter and Be Gay" is Cunegonde's jewel aria. The last run-through (the closing 28 seconds of the piece) abbreviates each theme to ridiculously tiny size, and with a frivolous "pop," the piece ends.

## What's so funny?

Even someone who didn't know the story of *Candide* could guess that this is a wildly funny show—a satire—just from hearing the Overture. What makes it funny?

- Very fast, almost manic tempo
- Quick changing musical ideas, like magic tricks
- Giddy, tuneful melodies
- Funny juxtapositions of timbre (piccolo solo followed by full orchestra, xylophone solo)
- Giggling violin figures, swoopy brass glissandos
- Surprise last-minute substitutions of instruments taking each other's themes
- Surprise ending (last two notes)

## Finale: "Make Our Garden Grow"

The show ends with the main characters, who have roamed the world searching for meaning but instead suffer a madcap series of adventures and mishaps, finally realizing that their happiness will be what they make it.

You've been a fool  
And so have I,  
But come and be my wife.  
And let us try,  
Before we die,  
To make some sense of life.  
We're neither pure, nor wise, nor good,  
We'll do the best we know.  
We'll build our house and chop our wood,  
And make our garden grow...  
And make our garden grow.

Let dreamers dream  
What worlds they please.  
Those Edens can't be found.  
The sweetest flowers,  
The fairest trees  
Are grown in solid ground.  
We're neither pure, nor wise, nor good.  
We'll do the best we know.  
We'll build our house and chop our wood,  
And make our garden grow.  
And make our garden grow!

What are these lyrics actually saying? What philosophy of life do they describe? Put it into your own words. Do you agree with this view?



## Randal SWIGGUM

Conductor Randal Swiggum returns for this year's Milwaukee Symphony's Teen Partners concert, having previously conducted Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Fauré *Requiem*, Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem*, and last year's *Gloria* of Francis Poulenc. Widely known as a conductor of concerts for young audiences, Swiggum has created ten seasons of original education concerts for the award-winning Elgin Symphony Orchestra, The Florida Orchestra, the Madison Symphony, and other regional and professional orchestras. These popular concerts have been praised by kids, parents, and teachers alike for their imaginative approach in getting young people excited about symphonic music. Concerts like *Dvořák in America*; *Traveling Music*; *The Amazing Mr. Copland*; *Fascinating Rhythm*; *Leonard Bernstein: Humor in Music*; *What's So Scary About a Rubber Shark?—The Magic of Movie Music*; and *Through Sound-Colored Glasses: The Amazing Technicolor Orchestra*.

Recently Swiggum premiered another original concert, *Symphony Safari: What Nature Tells Use About the Orchestra*, which examined patterns, sequences, imitation, the acoustic "ecosystem," and motifs as DNA, and featured the music of Mahler, Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich, Schubert, and Vivaldi. *Symphony Safari* played to three sold out audiences of enthusiastic middle school audiences in Madison's Overture Hall. He also led the Madison Symphony in their "Symphony Soup" series for young people K-3, and their Carnegie Hall Link-Up concerts, *The Orchestra Sings*. Another favorite with Madison Symphony youth concert audiences was his *Beethoven Superhero*.

Mr. Swiggum is Artistic Director of the acclaimed Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra, a thriving program of five orchestras, brass choir, percussion ensemble, and a vibrant Chamber Music Institute. It serves nearly 400 young musicians ages 9-21 from over sixty different communities from suburban Chicago to Rockford and southern Wisconsin who have performed with Yo Yo Ma, Midori, and the Jersey Boys, and appeared on NPR's *From the Top*, WFMT's "Introductions" and the Ravinia Festival. He makes his home in Madison, where he also co-conducts the Madison Boychoir. As a longtime fan of the MSO, he is always grateful to be "back home" in Milwaukee where he lived for fifteen years, and working with longtime colleagues and friends on this magnificent piece.

Simon Johnson, age 13, attends Hamilton Middle School in Madison, where he participates in Science Olympiad, Future Problem Solvers, and Ultimate Frisbee. He plays percussion in his school band, cello in the Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra and takes piano lessons. He also has been a member of the Madison Boychoir since he was seven.

Simon sang the boy soprano solo in the *Chichester Psalms* in 2016 with the UW-Madison Symphony Orchestra and Choral Union, under the direction of Beverly Taylor. He has also sung onstage in several operas, including *Carmen*, *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, and Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* with Madison Opera, where his first role was as the child Dolore in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* when he was four. He has also played the title role in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*.

In 2017 he played Miles in UW-Opera's production of Benjamin Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*. Musical theatre roles include Winthrop (*The Music Man*), Pugsley (*The Addams Family*), and the title role in *Oliver!*. Simon enjoys photography, drawing cartoons, writing songs with GarageBand, epic backyard Nerf battles, and anything Star Wars.



**Simon  
JOHNSON**



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