

Special Recognition

Leonard Bernstein

at 100

Uniting the World Through Music

Kjell Skyllstad^{*} (Norway)

Below is excerpts from a jubilee celebratory presentation given at the 16th Urban Research Plaza Conference ,Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Chulalongkorn University, February 7 – 8, 2018.

"My father clung hard to the belief that by creating beauty, and by sharing it with as many people as possible, artists had the power to tip the earthly balance in favor of brotherhood and peace. After all, he reasoned , if humans could create and appreciate musical harmony, then surely they were capable of replicating that very same harmony in the world they lived in."

Jamie Bernstein: "My Father's Idealism" www.Leonardbernstein.com/at/100/humanitarian.

I never had the occasion to meet and talk with Leonard Bernstein as I did with some of the other great music educators/composers of our time like Zoltan Kodaly of Hungary, Dmitri Kabalevsky of Russia and Alois Haba of Tsjekkia. Still he became my greatest inspirator during a critical period in my life, first of all through his compositions. Experiencing the West Side Story for the first time I became aware of the potential of music for conflict transformation in the multicultural society that inspired my own research, first and foremost the Resonant Community project. It is all about finding a new way of sharing, or as the final song expresses the hope of the new generation.

There's is a time for us,
Some day a time for us,
Time together with time to spare,
Time to learn, time to care, some day!
Somewhere.
We'll find a new way of living,

^{*} Kjell Skyllstad, University of Oslo, Department of Musicology, Norway. email: kmskyls@yahoo.com.

We'll find a new way of forgiving,
Somewhere... West Side Story

Throughout his life Bernstein sought to carry out his ideas in daily practice. He became a supporter of Amnesty International and created the Bernstein Education through the Arts Fund. And then seeking yet another way to reach out to the young generation he discovered Television, that already during my college years had become an important cultural national medium through its orchestral concert series. Then in 1954 the New York Philharmonic took a new and bold step forward in inviting Bernstein to start a series in prime time TV of Young Peoples Concerts that was to last for another 14 years. Within the framework of this years Urban Research Plaza's conference Bernstein's project could be remembered as the golden beginning of participatory education for global citizenship through music and the arts.

And there was more to come: *Artful Learning*. In a series of talks under the heading The Unanswered Question (title of a composition by Charles Ives) given at Harvard University in 1973 Bernstein said: "The best way to know a thing is in the context of another discipline."

A more direct support of interdisciplinarity is heard to find. Artful learning is described as a transformational learning model that empowers educators to use the arts and the artistic process to awaken and sustain the love of learning for all students. It stimulates and deepens academic learning through the arts (Alexander Bernstein).

Learning history through music was for Bernstein connected to the role he was going to play in the anti-war movement of the 70's. With Paul Newman, Bernstein co-hosted "Broadway for Peace" a fund-raiser at Lincoln Center's Philharmonic Hall to support the Congressional Peace Campaign Committee funding congressional candidates campaign for peace.

One single example would suffice to show Bernsteins passionate engagement for peace. It is found in the January 12, 1973 edition of the New York Times announcing an unusual double event for the Inaugural Presidential Inauguration Day with the heading: *Bernstein to Conduct Inaugural Day Peace Concert*

The article goes on to explain that the Philadelphia Orchestra will play Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture" a "festival" work celebrating Russia's victory over Napoleon's invading army, at the Inaugural Concert for Richard Nixon at the Kennedy Center in Washington. On that same evening Leonard Bernstein is said to conduct a "Plea for Peace" program, performing Haydn's "Mass in Time of War" also connected to Napoleon and composed during his war with Austria in 1796. It ends, like all masses with the final prayer "Dona Nobis Pacem" – "Grant Us Peace."

For extensive information about the life and works of Leonhard Bernstein our readers are kindly referred to the official jubilee website www.Leonardbernstein.com/at/100.