

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Skirball Cultural Center unveils details about major retrospective

### LEONARD BERNSTEIN AT 100

April 26–September 2, 2018

Official centennial exhibition, curated by the GRAMMY Museum®,  
is most comprehensive museum presentation on the great American artist

LOS ANGELES, CA—The Skirball Cultural Center today unveiled details about *Leonard Bernstein at 100*, the official exhibition celebrating the centennial of Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990). Through more than 150 objects—including photographs, papers, scores, correspondence, costumes, furniture, and films, as well as interactive displays—the retrospective explores half a century of activity by the renowned American composer, conductor, pianist, and humanitarian, who dedicated his life to making classical music a vibrant part of American life. In particular, it offers insight into Bernstein's creative process and enduring legacy, including his contributions as both a pioneering educator and an engaged citizen who lent his voice to many social justice causes.

*Leonard Bernstein at 100* is curated by the GRAMMY Museum® and makes its West Coast debut at the Skirball April 26–September 2, 2018.

"Leonard Bernstein continues to have an immeasurable influence on classical music and popular culture. His achievements not only as a conductor and composer, but as an educator, musician, social activist, and cultural ambassador, continue to inspire future generations of artists," said Bob Santelli, exhibition curator and Founding Executive Director of the GRAMMY Museum®. "The GRAMMY Museum is honored to partner with the Skirball to give West Coast audiences the opportunity to revisit, discover, and pay tribute to this great American icon."

"The Skirball is proud to join the yearlong international celebration of Leonard Bernstein's centennial, comprising an array of arts presentations and educational programs across Southern California and around the world," added Robert Kirschner, Skirball Museum Director. "As an institution committed to celebrating American democratic ideals and promoting social justice, we are inspired by Bernstein as a cultural figure who used his prominence to advance intercultural understanding and the cause of equal rights for all Americans."

Objects on display in *Leonard Bernstein at 100* will include:

- Bernstein's conductor baton and podium
- Bernstein's childhood piano
- Desk used to compose *West Side Story*
- Handwritten lyrics of "Maria" from *West Side Story*

- Handwritten score sheets for songs from *West Side Story*, including "America" and "Tonight"
- Report card and student papers from Bernstein's undergraduate years at Harvard University
- Program of Bernstein's first appearance as conductor of the New York Philharmonic with last-minute overstrike adding his name for first time—The appearance was reported on the next day, on the front page of the *New York Times*
- Program from the opening of Lincoln Center
- Oscar nomination plaque for *On the Waterfront*, for Scoring of a Dramatic or Comedy Picture
- Original costume for the first production of Bernstein's *Mass*
- Original Broadway poster for *Candide*
- Poster from the American Anti-Vietnam Concert for Peace in Washington, DC, in 1973, at which Bernstein led the volunteer orchestral and choral forces in Washington's National Cathedral as a protest to the Vietnam War
- Poster by Peter Max for the 1980 Democratic National Convention, inscribed and signed by Senator Edward Kennedy.
- Five of Bernstein's GRAMMY® Awards, as well as his Recording Academy™ Lifetime Achievement Award
- Furnishings and memorabilia from Bernstein's home studio in Connecticut, including his desk and piano
- Handwritten letter from the very young Bernstein requesting to be taken on a student by his first piano teacher
- One of Bernstein's conducting batons given to famed conductor Gustavo Dudamel, who subsequently broke it during a performance—This object is accompanied by a video of Dudamel telling the story of how it was broken.

Exclusive to the Skirball's presentation of the exhibition is a staging of the iconic set of window and fire escape where Maria and Tony sing "Tonight" in the *West Side Story* film adaptation.

In addition to the many objects, *Leonard Bernstein at 100* includes a number of interactive exhibits. A listening bar will enable visitors to explore some of Bernstein's most noted works, while a vocal booth invites visitors to sing lead in "America" from *West Side Story*. Another interactive deconstructs the parts of a symphony for greater understanding of Bernstein's orchestral works, while another entices visitors to step into Bernstein's conducting shoes and "lead" the Vienna Philharmonic. Also included are Bernstein home movies; GRAMMY® performances; interviews with Bernstein's contemporaries and colleagues, including David Amram, Joshua Bell, Gustavo Dudamel, Michael Feinstein, and Michael Tilson Thomas; clips of his most noted stage works; segments from Bernstein's famous *Young People's Concerts*; and performances with the New York Philharmonic.

*Leonard Bernstein at 100* premiered in September 2017 at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, then traveled to the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts during the winter of 2017. After the Skirball presentation, the exhibition will continue to travel throughout the United States for the following two years.

## About Leonard Bernstein

Born on August 25, 1918, in Lawrence, Massachusetts, Leonard Bernstein was a towering figure of twentieth-century music and culture. As a composer, he embodied the syncretism of the American musical tradition. Blending his Jewish roots with the Western classical canon, jazz, and popular music, he crossed genre lines and wrote landmark scores for musical theater (*West Side Story*, *Candide*) and film (*On the Waterfront*), and produced a large body of symphonic and choral works. As a conductor, Bernstein defined the profession for decades both at home and abroad. The first American-born principal conductor and music director of the New York Philharmonic, he dazzled the public with the passionate intensity of his performances while promoting works by a remarkably wide array of composers, including Gustav Mahler, Aaron Copland, Charles Ives, and George Gershwin. As an educator, Bernstein pioneered the use of television as a medium

that could offer an accessible yet sophisticated musical education to the widest possible audience. Through his *Young People's Concerts*, he empowered thousands of children to find classical music relatable and exciting and influenced a generation of young musicians. Finally, as a citizen engaged with the moral questions of his day, Bernstein maintained a lifelong commitment to social justice, using his celebrity to bring attention and support to a number of causes.

Honors bestowed on Bernstein during his lifetime include twenty-two honorary doctorate degrees, Commander of the French Legion of Honor, the Kennedy Center Honor, ten Emmy Awards, sixteen GRAMMY® Awards, and a Recording Academy® Lifetime Achievement Award. Posthumously, he was an inaugural inductee in the American Classical Music Hall of Fame and inducted into the Television Academy Hall of Fame. The corner of Broadway and West 65th Street in New York City was renamed "Leonard Bernstein Place" in 1993.

Bernstein had deep connections with Los Angeles and its environs. He made his first appearance at the Hollywood Bowl on August 26, 1944, conducting Oscar Levant in Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. He returned to the iconic venue in 1955 to serve as artistic director of the five-day "Festival of the Americas," which included symphonies, choral works, jazz, musical theater, the Martha Graham Dance Company, Carlos Chávez, Dave Brubeck, and a symposium with Billie Holiday and Andre Previn—the first major music festival to be produced in Los Angeles. *On the Town* was filmed in Hollywood in 1949. In 1955, a poolside meeting at the Beverly Hills Hotel with writer Arthur Laurents reignited the plan, originally conceived by Jerome Robbins, to write a modern musical based on *Romeo and Juliet*. Bernstein was inducted into the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1960; his star is at 6200 Hollywood Boulevard. He cofounded, with Ernest Fleischmann, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Institute, which provided world-class training for young musicians and conductors. Bernstein conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl in 1983, and received his Lifetime Achievement GRAMMY® Award at the Shrine Auditorium in 1985.

*Leonard Bernstein at 100* was curated by the GRAMMY Museum® in collaboration with The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts and the Bernstein Family. Presented in cooperation with the Bernstein Family, The Leonard Bernstein Office, Inc., Brandeis University, and the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.



The exhibition and its related educational programs at the Skirball Cultural Center are made possible in part by generous support from:

**The Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation**  
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### **About the Skirball**

The Skirball Cultural Center is a place of meeting guided by the Jewish tradition of welcoming the stranger and inspired by the American democratic ideals of freedom and equality. We welcome people of all communities and generations to participate in cultural experiences that celebrate discovery and hope, foster human connections, and call upon us to help build a more just society.

### **Visiting the Skirball**

The Skirball Cultural Center is located at 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90049. Museum hours: Tuesday–Friday 12:00–5:00 p.m.; Saturday–Sunday 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.; closed Mondays and holidays. Admission to exhibitions beginning March 1, 2016: \$12 General; \$9 Seniors, Full-Time Students, and Children over 12; \$7 Children 2–12. Exhibitions are always FREE to Skirball Members and Children under 2. Exhibitions are FREE to all visitors on Thursdays. For general information, the public may call (310) 440-4500 or visit [skirball.org](http://skirball.org).