The “Bernstein’s Boston” Project:

Cross-Disciplinary Research in the Classroom

Carol J. Oja and Kay Kaufman Shelemay
Harvard University
Society for American Music
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BOSTON'S BERNSTEIN: A TIMELINE

The following timeline focuses on Leonard Bernstein's Boston youth and ongoing connections to the city. Significant events outside of Boston and Massachusetts are printed in brown.

1918 Born August 25, Lawrence, MA. Named Louis Leonard, but known by family as Leonard.

Spends first two years in Mattapan, MA.

1920 Bernstein family moves to Allston, MA. Sam Bernstein joins Congregation Mishkan Tefila in Roxbury (near the Dorchester line).

1923 Family moves to Mattapan, and then Roxbury, living in a variety of rental accommodations over the next six years.

Samuel Bernstein Hair Company is founded.

1928 First piano lessons with Frieda Karp ($1 per lesson).

1930 Graduates William Lloyd Garrison Grammar School, Roxbury, MA.

Begins piano lessons with Susan Williams, New England Conservatory ($3 an hour).

1931 Bar Mitzvah, Congregation Mishkan Tefila.

1932 Family moves to newly built house on Park Ave. in Newton, MA, and purchases house in a summer colony in Sharon, MA.

Family joins Temple Adath Sharon.

First public piano performance in recital of students of Susan Williams, New England Conservatory.

Shortly after, begins piano lessons with Helen Coates, assistant to Heinrich Gebhard ($6 an hour).

Attends first orchestral concert in May: Arthur Fielder and Boston Pops (benefit for Palestine trade union movement).

1933 Buys BSO subscription and begins attending regularly.

1934 Appears as pianist in Grieg piano concerto with Boston Public School Orchestra, Roxbury High School.

Produces and stars in *Carmen*, with cast members in drag, Singers' Inn, Sharon, MA.

1935 Graduates Boston Latin. Composes class song, "All for one, and one for all."

Produces and stars in *The Mikado*, Town Hall, Sharon, MA.

Officially changes his name to Leonard.

Begins piano lessons with Heinrich Gebhard ($25 an hour).

Enters Harvard, residing in Wigglesworth House.

1936 Produces and stars in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, Town Hall, Sharon, MA.

Moves to Eliot House, Harvard.

1937 Summer job as music counselor at Camp Onota, Pittsfield, MA, where he meets Adolph Green and produces *The Pirates of Penzance* and Gershwin's *Of Thee I Sing*; also arranges *Rhapsody in Blue.*

Professional debut in Ravel's Piano Concerto with the State Symphony Orchestra at Sanders Theatre, Harvard.

Meets Aaron Copland, for whom he plays Copland's *Piano Variations.*

1938 Becomes Music Editor for *Harvard Advocate* and writes criticism for *Modern Music.*

1939 First formal appearance as a conductor, leading his own incidental music to a student production of *The Birds,* at Sanders Theatre, Harvard University.

Directs and performs, from the piano, Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock* with Harvard Dramatic Club. Blitzstein attends performance.

Submits senior thesis, "The Absorption of Race Elements into American Music."

Graduates from Harvard, *cum laude.*

1940 Spends first summer as a student of Serge Koussevitzky, at Berkshire Music Center, Lenox, MA.

Begins studies with Fritz Reiner at the Curtis Institute of Music, Philadelphia.

1941 Bernstein family leaves Newton to reside year-round in Sharon.

Receives diploma from Curtis Institute.

Writes incidental music for Aristophanes's *Peace*, produced by Harvard Student Union at Harvard.

Sets up piano teaching studio at 295 Huntington Ave., Boston.

1942 Premiere of *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano,* Boston.

Produces Copland's *Second Hurricane*, Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory.

1943 Premiere of *I Hate Music*, Public Library, Lenox, MA.

Named Assistant Conductor of Philharmonic Symphony Society of New York.

1944 Premiere of Symphony No. 1: *Jeremiah*, Pittsburgh, PA.

Boston premiere of Symphony No. 1: *Jeremiah*, Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Out-of-town preview of *On the Town*, Colonial Theatre, Boston.

Premiere of *On the Town*, Adelphi Theater, New York City.

1945 Begins three-year directorship of New York City Symphony.

1948 Conducts premiere of Harold Shapero's *Symphony for Classical Orchestra*, Boston Symphony Orchestra.

1949 Premiere of Symphony No. 2: *The Age of Anxiety*, Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Conducts premiere of Olivier Messiaen's *Turangalila Symphony,* Boston Symphony Orchestra.

1951 Becomes head of Orchestra and Conducting Departments of Berkshire Music Center (through 1955).

Marries Felicia Montealegre Cohn at Congregation Mishkan Tefila.

Becomes Professor of Music at Brandeis University, Waltham, MA (through 1954).

U.S. tour with Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

1952 Directs the first Festival of Creative Arts at Brandeis University, which includes conducting the premiere of his *Trouble in Tahiti* and of Marc Blitzstein's translation of Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*.

Birth of daughter, Jamie Anne Maria.

1953 Out-of-town preview of *Wonderful Town*, Shubert Theater, Boston.

Premiere of *Wonderful Town*, Winter Garden, New York City.

Directs second Festival of Creative Arts at Brandeis, which includes the American premiere of Francis Poulenc's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*.

1954 *On the Waterfront*, with score by Bernstein, released by Columbia Pictures.

First *Omnibus* television broadcast, on the sketches for Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, 1st movement.

1955 Birth of son, Alexander Serge Leonard.

1956 Out-of-town preview of *Candide*, Colonial Theater, Boston.

Premiere of *Candide*, New York City.

1957 Premiere of *West Side Story*, New York City.

1958 Commences 11-year period as Music Director of New York Philharmonic.

Begins Young People's Concerts with New York Philharmonic.

1959 Publishes *The Joy of Music* (New York: Simon and Schuster).

1962 Birth of second daughter, Nina Maria Felicia.

Publishes *Leonard Bernstein's Young People's Concerts*, ed. Jack Gottlieb (New York: Simon and Schuster).

1963 Premiere of Symphony No. 3: *Kaddish*, in Tel Aviv, Israel.

Helps with publishing music of Solomon Braslavsky, including "Unasaneh Tokev."

1965 Premiere of *Chichester Psalms*, New York Philharmonic.

1966 Publishes *The Infinite Variety of Music* (New York: Simon and Schuster).

1971 Premiere of *Mass*, Washington, D.C.

1973 Delivers six lectures entitled *The Unanswered Question* as the Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard.

1976 Publishes *The Unanswered Question* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).

1982 Publishes *Findings* (New York: Simon and Schuster).

1990 Dies October 14, New York City.

This timeline draws upon research undertaken by the Harvard seminar, "Before West Side Story*: Leonard Bernstein's Boston," which in turn was grounded in the following sources: Jack Gottlieb,* Leonard Bernstein: A Complete Catalogue of his Works *(New York: Leonard Bernstein Music Publishing Company, 1998); Humphrey Burton,* Leonard Bernstein *(New York: Doubleday, 1994).*

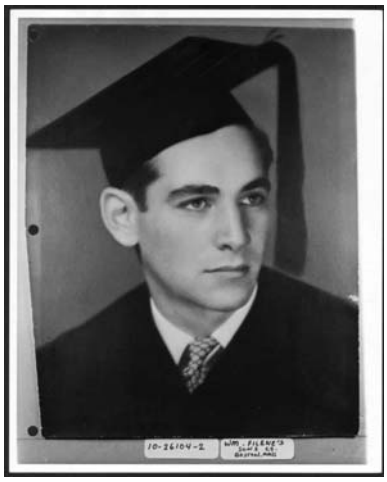
Before *West Side Story*: Leonard Bernstein's Boston

(Music 194)

Professors: Carol J. Oja and Kay Kaufman Shelemay

Teaching Fellow: Emily Abrams

Requirements



Emails: coja@fas.harvard.edu, shelemay@fas.harvard.edu, abrams@fas.harvard.edu

Office hours: Professor Oja and Professor Shelemay: 3-4pm on Wednesdays. Emily Abrams: 10-11am on Wednesdays.

Course description: This seminar will explore the childhood and early career of one of the 20th century's most renowned musicians and composers. Working in teams, students will fuse ethnography and archival research to explore the interlinking communities and institutions that shaped Bernstein's formative years. These include, but are by no means limited to, Congregation Mishkan Tefila in Newton, Boston Latin High School, Harvard (class of '39), and the BSO.

Together, we will be launching a major collaborative research project. As a result, the expectations and work flow will differ greatly from the usual seminar. Instead of focusing on exams or individual research papers, "Leonard Bernstein's Boston" involves lots of strategizing and working in groups. In other words, it requires a consistent time commitment and regular maintenance over the course of the semester, and it can only be successful if everyone pitches in at a steady pace. Regular attendance is essential. We will be functioning as a team, which means that it is crucial for everyone to be cooperative and collegial. All students will work on two levels: (1) preparation of and participation in class interviews and discussions, and (2) out-of-class research projects, pursued individually or in teams. There will be no midterm, final exam or traditional research paper. Graduate students will have additional requirements, which will be more clearly defined as the project unfolds.

Our seminar has been devised to dovetail with "Celebrating Leonard Bernstein," an international festival and conference, scheduled for Harvard, October 12-14, 2006. Individual students will be identified from the seminar to help prepare an exhibit for the conference over the summer and to give presentations at that event. Beyond that, we expect to uncover exciting original materials, both in the oral tradition and in archival sources, which may pave the way for future research. Depending upon what we find, there may be possibilities for team publications or projects yet-to-be-imagined.

In other words, this is a course in which you can spread your wings and take chances. You will leave with a solid set of research skills, and, depending on your ingenuity and industry, you might find yourself with an enticing project that will carry into the future.

Required readings
[*Available at the Coop for purchase.]

*Burton Bernstein. *Family Matters: Sam, Jennie, and the Kids*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse.com Inc, 2000.

Humphrey Burton. *Leonard Bernstein*. New York: Doubleday, 1994. (out of print – used copies available for purchase from Karen Rynne, Music Department)

*Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

*Janet Topp Fargion, ed. "Ethical and Legal Considerations" in *A Manual for Documentation, Fieldwork & Preservation for Ethnomusicologists*. 2nd ed. Bloomington, Indiana: The Society for Ethnomusicology, Inc., 2001, pp. 11-23.

*Jonathan Sarna. *The Jews of Boston*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.

Grading

20%	class and activity participation, including one written response to the readings and listening
20%	conducting class interviews and completing interview transcripts (*the latter prepared promptly and posted on our website*), also leading/participating in class discussion, when assigned to do so
20%	journal entries, which should be turned in at midterm and the end of term
20%	research project in one of the six areas defined in the introductory course materials; this can be done individually or in teams; it will include archiving all original data on the class website, whether interview transcripts, notes from primary sources, or xeroxes of sources (which need to be scanned and loaded on the website).
20%	final oral presentation about the research project (likely with team), which will share findings and analyze method

Journals/Field Notes
All students must keep a digitized journal of their experiences in the class, to be handed in twice during the semester. This material should include personal responses to all in-class interviews and class excursions. Critiques should be shaped on multiple levels, including interactions among class members and interview subjects, responses to what was said and what was avoided, interview subject's body language and other cues to content, and evaluation of how the interviewing went (that is, in terms of technique, exploring such questions as whether the interviewees were allowed to speak freely). Guidelines to participant observation and interview technique will be discussed and distributed during the first class session.

Preparation for In-Class Interviews
In order to make the in-class interviews a truly collaborative process, all students will post ideas and questions for that week's interview by the Saturday before class, at 5 pm. The cluster of students conducting that interview will then work those ideas into their questions. It is essential to have done the week's reading and listening before posting these suggestions.

Transcripts of Class Interviews
Complete transcripts need to be completed by the team conducting the interview and posted on the class site by the next Monday. The work should be divided fairly among team members. At the end of the transcript, team members should add comments about what went well, what didn't, and why, as well as areas that should be followed up.

Websites
Our course website (accessible through my.harvard.edu) will house streaming audio of listening examples, blogs for teams and for the class as a whole, facilities to upload (and playback) video and audio files of interview and their transcriptions, tips on interviewing and permissions, plus a large number of research materials, including images of items in the Library of Congress, lists of possible research projects, and other online, local, and national resources for Bernstein research.

Acknowledgements
This course has been generously funded from the following Harvard sources: Innovation Fund of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Center for Jewish Studies, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Bok Center Pilot Project in Community-Based Learning.
We are grateful to many people for helping with ideas and information about Bernstein's Boston years, especially the Bernstein family, Craig Urquhart and Marie Carter of the Leonard Bernstein Office, and Mark Eden Horowitz of the Music Division, Library of Congress.

Syllabus

February 7

1-4pm: Introduction
Ethnographic and Archival Methods: Strategies, Practices, Pitfalls
Class visitors: Marty Schreiner, Head of Morse Music & Media, Lamont Library and Sarah Adams, Keeper of the Isham Library

Reading:

David Schiff, "Bernstein, Leonard [Louis]" in *Grove Music Online.* Ed. L. Macy http://www.grovemusic.com.ezp1.harvard.edu/shared/views/article.html?from=search&session_search_id=461970741&hitnum=5&section=music.02883

Donal Henahan, "Leonard Bernstein, 72, Music's Monarch Dies," *New York Times*, October 15, 1990. (see course website)

William E. Mitchell, "A Goy in the Ghetto: Gentile-Jewish Communication in Fieldwork Research." In Jack Kugelmass, ed., *Between Two Worlds: Ethnographic Essays on American Jewry*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988, pp. 229-235.

Listening:

Leonard Bernstein, *West Side Story* (1957)

February 14

1-4pm: Bernstein and Judaism
Class guest: Jonathan Sarna, Joseph H. and Belle R. Braun Professor in American Jewish History, Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies, Brandeis University

[During class, sign up for class interview clusters and discuss research teams.]

Reading:

Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Jews of Boston in Historical Perspective," pp. 3-18; Leon A. Jick, "From Margin to Mainstream 1917-1967," pp. 87-104. Both in Jonathan D. Sarna, Ellen Smith, and Scott-Martin Kosofsky (eds.), *The Jews of Boston*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.

David Schiller, "Leonard Bernstein's *Kaddish*" In *Bloch, Schoenberg, Bernstein: Assimilating Jewish Music.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, 127-66.

Listening:

Leonard Bernstein, *Kaddish Symphony* (1963).
_____, *Hashkiveinu* (for cantorial solo, SATB choir, and organ) (1945)

Feb 17

2-4pm: Interview of Sylvia Shuman, Bernstein's 2nd cousin (attendance is optional)

February 21

1-2pm: Project planning and team forming
2-4pm: Class Guests--Two of Bernstein's Close Musical Associates and Friends from the 1930s and 1940s:
Harold Shapero, composer and Professor Emeritus of Music, Brandeis University
Sid Ramin, Broadway orchestrator (including of *West Side Story*)

[During class, confirm research teams]

Reading:

Howard Pollack, "Harold Shapero." In *Grove Music Online.* L. Macy ed., http://www.grovemusic.com.ezp1.harvard.edu/shared/views/article.html?from=search&session_search_id=783833739&hitnum=1&section=music.25586

Aaron Copland, "The New 'School' of American Composers," *New York Times* (March 14, 1948). (see course website)

Harold Shapero, "Lenny at Harvard (Reminiscence)." In Claudia Swan, ed., *Leonard Bernstein: The Harvard Years, 1935-1939*. New York: Eos Orchestra, 1999, 47-70.

"Sid Ramin," in *Composers and Lyricists Database Plus:* http://nfo.net/cal/tr1.html

Search through the index in Humphrey Burton's *Leonard Bernstein* for sections about Ramin and Shapero.

Listening:

Bernstein, *Symphonic Dances from 'West Side Story'* (1960) (orchestrated with the assistance of Sid Ramin and Irwin Kostal)
Bernstein, Sonata for Clarinet and Piano (1941-42)
Harold Shapero, *Symphony for Classical Orchestra* (1947)

Optional Reading and Listening:

Harold Shapero, *Four-Hand Sonata for Piano* (1941)

Howard Pollack, *Harvard Composers: Walter Piston and his Students, from Elliott Carter to Frederic Rzewski*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1992, 104-30, 166-88.

February 28

1-2pm: More Team Talk
2-4pm: More about Bernstein and Judaism
Class guests: Harvey Tattelbaum (graduate of Temple Mishkan Tefila, Harvard '55), and Judith Clurman (Director of Choral Activities, The Juilliard School)

Reading:

Paula E. Hyman, "From City to Suburb: Temple Mishkan Tefila of Boston." In *The American Synagogue. A Sanctuary Transformed*. Jack Wertheimer, Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 185-205.

Jeffrey A. Summit, *The Lord's Song in a Strange Land: Music and Identity in Contemporary Jewish Worship*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Introduction (especially pp. 3-5 and 8-22) and Chapter 1 (pp. 23-31).

Listening:

Accompanying CD for Jeffrey A. Summit, *The Lord's Song in a Strange Land: Music and Identity in Contemporary Jewish Worship*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Bernstein, "*Jeremiah," Symphony No. 1* (1942).
_____, *Yigdal* (1950)

March 5 (Sunday)

Afternoon bus tour of Bernstein's Boston sites: Boston Latin, Bernstein home in Newton, Congregation Mishkan Tefila (new location in Chestnut Hill and old one in West Roxbury), Sharon Colony, Blue Hill Ave., Samuel Bernstein Hair Company. (Exact time TBA)

Reading:

Bernstein letter to Helen Coates, July13, 1935, Library of Congress (American Memory Project) http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?lbcoll:1:./temp/~ammem_02jh::

Optional Reading:

Ron Gwiazda, "Leonard Bernstein at Boston Latin School." In *Leonard Bernstein: The Harvard Years 1935-1939*, 38-46.

Stephen J. Whitfield, "The Smart Set. An Assessment of Jewish Culture." In Jonathan D. Sarna, Ellen Smith, and Scott-Martin Kosofsky (eds.), *The Jews of Boston*, pp. 309-331.

March 7

1-4pm: The Bernstein Family
Class guests – Burton Bernstein, Jamie Bernstein Thomas, and Nina Bernstein Simmons

Reading:

Burton Bernstein, *Family Matters: Sam, Jennie, and the Kids*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse.com Inc, 2000.

Shirley Bernstein. *Making Music: Leonard Bernstein.* Britannica Bookshelf Great Lives. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1963.

Leonard Bernstein. "Father's Books" and "The Whole Megillah." In *Findings*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982, 13-14, 164-67.

Humphrey Burton, *Leonard Bernstein*. New York: Doubleday, 1994, 3-31.

Listening:

Bernstein, "Quiet Girl," from *Wonderful Town.*
Bernstein, *Chichester Psalms*

March 14

1-3pm: Consolidation and Stock Taking
3-4: Interview with Jonathan Sheffer, who reconstructed and conducted Bernstein's *The Birds* with The Eos Orchestra.

Reading:

Claudia Swan, ed., *Leonard Bernstein: The Harvard Years, 1935-1939*. New York: Eos Orchestra, 1999. (Read all.)

Listening:
Leonard Bernstein, *The Birds* (1938) (score on reserve)

March 21

No Class—Instead, Meetings of Individual Research Teams
The cluster conducting the interviews at Mishkan Tefila and Eliot House will need to confer with the teaching staff.

March 28

No class – Spring Recess.

April 4

Class visit to Congregation Mishkan Tefila

April 11

1-4pm: Bernstein at School and College (Class 2) – Harvard
7-9pm: Group interview of Harvard alumni at Eliot House (tentatively scheduled)

Reading:

Humphrey Burton, *Leonard Bernstein*. New York: Doubleday, 1994, 40-55.

Leonard Bernstein, "Juvenilia 1935-39." In *Findings.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982, 14-99.

Claudia Swan (ed.) *Leonard Bernstein: The Harvard Years, 1935-1939*. Review all, which we have already read.

Listening:

Bernstein, Piano Sonata (1938)

April 18

Open Session

April 25

1-4pm: Student Presentations

May 2

1-4pm: Student Presentations
Wrap-up and conclusions

Bernstein Web Resources

"Leonard Bernstein Collection." American Memory Project, Library of Congress. http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/lbhtml/lbhome.html

Leonard Bernstein Office. Homepage. www.leonardbernstein.com

Other useful items on reserve

Leonard Bernstein. *Leonard Bernstein Collection Scrapbooks [microform]*. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress Preservation Microfilming Program, 1999. Isham Lib. 3205.748.82.4 (1-62)

Humphrey Burton. "Professor Lenny." *New York Review of Books* 40 (13), 15 July 1993.

Jack Gottlieb. *Funny, It Doesn't Sound Jewish: How Yiddish Songs and Synagogue Melodies Influenced Tin Pan Alley, Broadway, and Hollywood*. New York: SUNY Press, 2004.

_____. *Leonard Bernstein, August 25, 1918 – October 14, 1990: A Complete Catalog of his Works, Celebrating his 80th birthday year, 1998-99.* New York: Leonard Bernstein Music Publishing Company, 1998.

Nat Hentoff. *Boston Boy: Growing up with Jazz and other Rebellious Passions*. Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2001.

Joseph Horowitz. "Professor Lenny." *The New York Review of Books* 40 (11), 10 June 1993.

Pauline Holmes. *A Tercentenary History of the Boston Latin School, 1635-1935*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935.

Paul Laird. *Leonard Bernstein: A Guide to Research*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Philip Marson. *Breeder of Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1963. [subject – Boston Latin School]

Vivian Perlis. "Dear Aaron, Dear Lenny: A Friendship in Letters." In *Aaron Copland and his World*, ed. Carol J. Oja and Judith Tick. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005, 151-78.

Jonathan D. Sarna. *American Judaism: A History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

_____. "'My Own Kaddish': Leonard Bernstein's Symphony No. 3," in *Key Texts in American Jewish Culture*, ed. Jack Kugelmass. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003.

Kay Kaufman Shelemay. "Together in the Field: Team Research Among Syrian Jews in Brooklyn, New York," in *Ethnomusicology*, vol. 32, no. 3 (1988), pp. 369-84.

Other useful recordings on reserve

Recordings from archives of Congregation Mishkan Tefila:

Israel: The Golden Calf, 1955 transcribed 2001
Sources of Strength: Rash Hashanah, 1954 transcribed 2001
Dedication of Temple, 1958 transcribed 2001
Rabbi Kazis, 1953 (topics: Israel, Arabs, the UN – also includes music of service)
Rabbi Kazis 1952 (topic: What Does Chunukah Mean to Us – also includes music)
Excerpts of speeeches and music, June 1957

Xeroxed materials on reserve

Various sheet music from Congregation Mishkan Tefila

Various correspondence and notes from Congregation Mishkan Tefila

Various items from the archives of Congregation Mishkan Tefila

Notes on panel discussion with Jonathan Sheffer, Bernstein: The Harvard Years 1935-39. Harvard, Office for the Arts, February 1, 1999.

Humphrey Burton, "Interview with Leonard Bernstein", "My Musical Childhood," 15 September 1986. Bernstein Collection, Library of Congress.

Various authors, *Congregation Mishkan Tefila 1858-1983* (private publication).