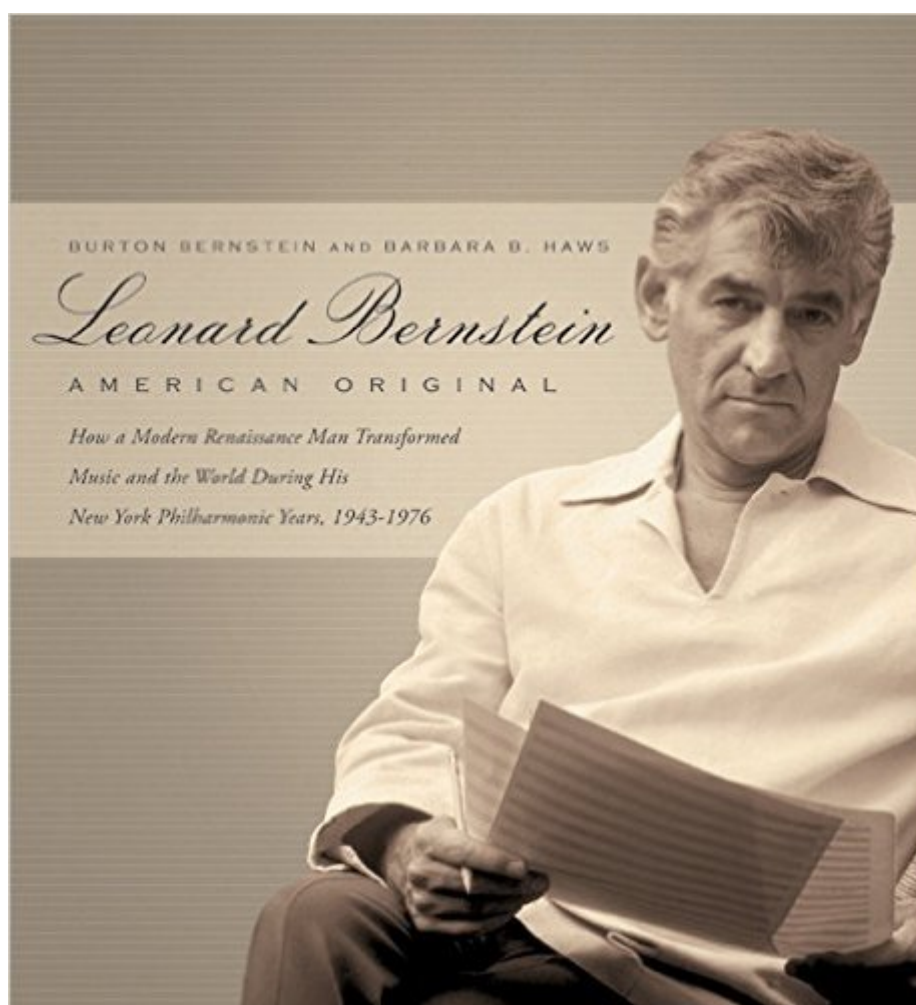


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# Leonard Bernstein: American Original



## Synopsis

One of the most gifted, celebrated, scrutinized, and criticized musicians in the second half of the twentieth century, Leonard Bernstein made his legendary conducting debut at the New York Philharmonic in 1943, at age 25. A year later, he became a sensation on Broadway with the premiere of *On the Town*. Throughout the 1950s, his Broadway fame only grew with *Wonderful Town*, *Candide*, and *West Side Story*. And in 1958, the Philharmonic appointed him the first American Music Director of a major symphony orchestra—a signal historical event. He was adored as a quintessential celebrity but one who could do it all—embracing both popular and classical music, a natural with the new medium of television, a born teacher, writer, and speaker, as well as a political and social activist. In 1976, having conducted the Philharmonic for more than one thousand concerts, he took his orchestra on tour to Europe for the last time. All of this played out against the backdrop of post-Second World War New York City as it rose to become the cultural capital of the world—the center of wealth, entertainment, communications, and art—and continued through the chaotic and galvanizing movements of the 1960s that led to its precipitous decline by the mid 1970s. The essays within this book do not simply retell the Bernstein story; instead, Leonard Bernstein's brother, Burton Bernstein, and current New York Philharmonic archivist and historian, Barbara B. Haws, have brought together a distinguished group of contributors to examine Leonard Bernstein's historic relationship with New York City and its celebrated orchestra. Composer John Adams, American historians Paul Boyer and Jonathan Rosenberg, music historians James Keller and Joseph Horowitz, conductor and radio commentator Bill McGlaughlin, musicologist Carol Oja, and music critics Tim Page and Alan Rich have written incisive essays, which are enhanced by personal reminiscences from Burton Bernstein. The result is a telling portrait of Leonard Bernstein, the musician and the man.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This incredibly handsome piece, in celebration of the Leonard Bernstein 90th year, concentrates on the conductor/composer's incredible relationship with the New York Philharmonic. Frankly, the price is a real bargain and well worth it for the photos alone, many of which are extremely rare. The forwards from Barbara Haws and Burton Bernstein are incredibly moving and informative and answer the question, "why do we need another book on Bernstein?" He was perhaps the great musician of 20th century America and this book offers us several new looks at the great man.

Although this book was originally scheduled for publication on 8-22, I received mine today, 8-19, a testament to .com's speedy delivery service. It's difficult to categorize this volume, falling somewhere between a coffee table picture book and a personal photo album. Bernstein's brother apparently came up with the idea, this in his brother's 90th year. There are articles and remembrances from mostly his years with the NYP, written by Alan Rich, Paul Boyer and others with Burton Bernstein commenting on each. There is a good amount of new black and white photos strewn among the 207 pages with lots of newspaper reproductions, sidebars and fancy graphics that I found a bit distracting and, again, make me want to put it on a coffee table rather than store more formally on a book shelf. But for those of us who cannot get enough of Bernstein and continue to re-read Humphrey Burton's masterful biography, this is a nice adjunct. It makes us miss him all over again.

Unlike the large and lengthy biographies of Leonard Bernstein, this offers a fresh new approach, with several different authors giving their impressions of "Lenny" at various times of his career. The photographs are many and wonderful, adding little known snippets of Bernstein's life and career.

This autobiography answered my questions about LB. It was clearly written with interesting details without sounding like gossip. Enough information both on LB's musical development and concerns and on his life

This bio has essays by Bernstein's brother and other composers who were in the arts. They paint

a vivid and intimate portrait of the composer/conductor/pianist/family member.

Such an inspirational man! Loved the way this book was set up, in telling both the story of Leonard Bernstein, but also the city of New York throughout his life

Great perspective of the Maestro from those who knew and worked with him. Some very nice pictures as well. Loved reading it.

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