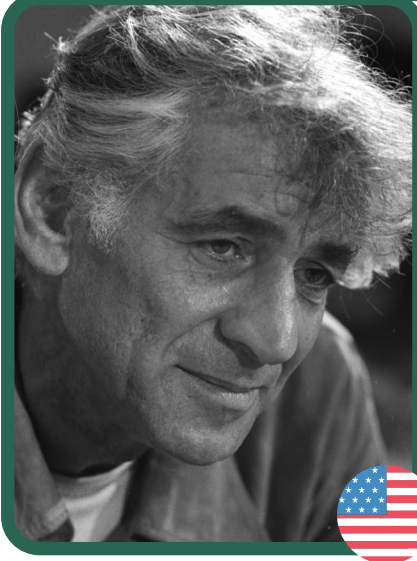




COMPOSER BIOGRAPHY

**LEONARD BERNSTEIN**

BORN: August 25, 1918

ERA/STYLE: Modern

DIED: October 14, 1990

HOMETOWN: Lawrence, Massachusetts

Leonard Bernstein was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1918. He began studying the piano when he was 10 years old. He graduated from Harvard University, where he majored in music. He then attended the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied piano, conducting, and composition. More important than any of his formal training, however, were the summers he spent in Tanglewood, Massachusetts, where he studied with a great conductor.

In 1942, Bernstein was invited to be the assistant conductor at Tanglewood. Though he was very young to be a conductor, his style and performances caught the attention of others in the classical music community, and in 1943, he was appointed to be the assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic. In 1958, he was named the regular conductor of the New York Philharmonic. For 11 seasons, he energized the Philharmonic and American classical music in a way no other director had done. He took advantage of the recent technological advances of television, and became the first conductor to share classical music with a mass audience on TV. He toured throughout the world, visiting 17 different countries, and concentrated on creating accessible performances for the average American. For both children and adults, he created shows which were both entertaining and educational. By the time of his resignation from the Philharmonic, he had conducted 939 concerts with the orchestra—an unprecedented amount.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Bernstein concentrated on composing music. He composed classical, Broadway, film, and jazz music. His best-known work is the Broadway musical *West Side Story*. He has been called “the first American composer to receive worldwide recognition.”