



# Composer Portfolios

# BERNSTEIN



Name	Leonard Bernstein
Nationality	American
Born-Died	1918-1990
Quote	<i>'To achieve great things, two things are needed; a plan, and not quite enough time.'</i>
	 <i>'Music can name the unnameable and communicate the unknowable.'</i>

## Interesting Stories

### Bernstein and the Motorcycle

Arriving at an airport one day, Bernstein was asked by a photographer if he would mind posing for a picture astride a motorcycle. Bernstein objected. "I don't ride a motorcycle," he said. "It would be phony." The photographer tried to persuade him. He showed him the controls, explaining briefly how to operate them. "I'm sure you could ride it if you tried," he said encouragingly. Bernstein climbed onto the machine and, to the horror of his colleagues, shot off at top speed across the airfield. After a few other manoeuvres he returned, grinning broadly. "Now you can take your picture," he announced. "I'm a motorcycle rider."

### Second Fiddle

Leonard Bernstein, the famous composer, pianist and orchestra conductor was once asked by an admirer, "What is the hardest instrument to play?" Bernstein responded without hesitation, "Second fiddle. I can always get plenty of first violinists, but to find one who plays second violin with as much enthusiasm, or second French horn, or second flute, now that's a problem. And yet if no one plays second, we have no harmony."

### Facts

- Bernstein was born in Massachusetts on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1918
- Bernstein's parents were Ukrainian Jewish Immigrants
- He was originally called Louis- he changed his name to Leonard when he was 16.
- Bernstein was an amazingly energetic man who remains a commanding figure in 20<sup>th</sup>-century classical music.
- Bernstein divided opinion during his lifetime. In 1976 he came out publicly as bi-sexual.
- Bernstein was one of the most acclaimed and 'in demand' conductors in the world
- Bernstein and his wife hosted a party for the extreme African-American Group, the Black Panthers in the 1970's which didn't go down well politically.
- He died only five days after retiring

### Bernstein's Music

*Now we know more about the man, why not listen to some of his music!*

- West Side Story
- On the Town
- Candide
- On the Waterfront, Symphonic Suite
- Symphony No.1, 'Jeremiah'
- Symphony No.2, 'The Age of Anxiety'
- Symphony No.3, 'Kaddish'
- Chichester Psalms
- Serenade
- Trouble in Tahiti