

1 NYP 18-46 Bernstein Centenary: The YPCs

2 (MUSIC EXCERPT)

3 (ACTUALITY)

4 AB: Leonard Bernstein was born 100 years ago. And if  
5 you were to talk to a dozen people around New York  
6 City, I'd bet that more than half would have a  
7 Lenny story to share. That figure, of course,  
8 should climb significantly closer to Midtown and  
9 the Upper West Side. But even though he's been gone  
10 for a generation, Bernstein's name is still an  
11 integral part of cultural life around the world.  
12 But why? Aaron Copland also died in 1990, yet  
13 there are considerably fewer stories about him. He  
14 was quite the charmer too. Was he any less of a  
15 musician than Bernstein? Are his compositions  
16 somehow less important? Of course not. But while  
17 Copland was a transformative, impactful musical  
18 genius...Lenny was a star. Oh, and he was a genius  
19 too. Bernstein was a lot of things. And perhaps  
20 that's why he remains so relevant to so many  
21 people. He may have engaged in an art form that  
22 was centuries old, but he was just as interested in  
23 discussing the music of John Lennon as he was in  
24 talking about the Leningrad Symphony. Good music  
25 transcends boundaries. And so did Lenny.

26 AB: Hello again. This is Alec Baldwin and I'm so very  
27 pleased to be your host as we continue to celebrate  
28 *100 Years of Bernstein*...on the New York Philharmonic  
29 This Week.

30 AB: For this episode, we will discuss Bernstein's  
31 landmark efforts as an ambassador of fine  
32 music...with a special focus on the Young People's  
33 Concerts:

34 (ACTUALITY)

35 AB: A significant portion of Bernstein's legacy  
36 (especially where the New York Philharmonic is  
37 concerned) is tied to the series of Young People's  
38 Concerts (or "YPCs") he hosted and conducted from  
39 January, 1958 through December, 1971.

40 Now to be clear, the YPCs weren't Bernstein's  
41 invention. The origin of their current form dates  
42 back to at least 1924. Then, it was "Uncle" Ernest  
43 Schelling who led "Concerts for Children" that were  
44 enhanced by scripted oratory and illustrated kid-  
45 friendly program books. Before that, there are  
46 records of Walter Damrosch leading programs for the  
47 young in the late 1890s. There are also accounts of  
48 family matinees that date back even further than  
49 that.

50 AB: But on January 18, 1958, The Philharmonic's Young  
51 People's Concerts would be forever changed:

52 (ACTUALITY)

53 AB: It's not insignificant that the program book on  
54 that Saturday afternoon was the first to list  
55 Leonard Bernstein as "Musical Director &  
56 Conductor." But perhaps even more importantly,  
57 this was the first Young People's Concert to be  
58 televised:

59 (ACTUALITY: Rossini Barber of Seville Overture)

60 AB: With Bernstein at the helm, the Young People's  
61 Concerts evolved into something that was both  
62 thoroughly entertaining and thoroughly enriching.  
63 They might have been designed with children in  
64 mind, but adults were equally captivated by these  
65 programs too. And now, with the aid of television,  
66 the outreach of Bernstein and the Philharmonic was  
67 seemingly limitless.

68 (MUSIC: Marriage of Figaro Overture)

69 AB: Overture to the Marriage of Figaro by Mozart. The  
70 New York Philharmonic was conducted by Leonard  
71 Bernstein. The performance was originally given as  
72 part of a Young People's Concert from 1959.

73 AB: Without Bernstein's charisma and mass appeal, the  
74 YPCs would have been "just another concert." But  
75 without the Philharmonic, Bernstein's colorful and  
76 insightful commentary would have been challenged to  
77 retain a television audience for more than a few  
78 minutes. No, it was the perfect balance of talk and  
79 music that made Bernstein's Young People's Concerts  
80 special. Listen here as Bernstein seeks to answer  
81 the question, "What is Impressionism?"

82 (ACTUALITY/MUSIC)

83 AB: *Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea*, bringing to a  
84 close Debussy's three symphonic sketches, *La Mer*.  
85 The New York Philharmonic was conducted by Leonard  
86 Bernstein.

87 (SLIGHT PAUSE)

88 AB: In a way, The Young People's Concerts served as a  
89 kind of a culturally-informed variety show for  
90 classical music enthusiasts. While opera stars such  
91 as Rise Stevens or Robert Merrill might get a few  
92 minutes of air-time with Johnny Carson or Dick  
93 Cavett, composers and orchestral repertoire were  
94 vastly under-represented. So Bernstein seized the  
95 opportunity not only to present great music, but to  
96 also present great artists.

97 AB: Take, for example, the YPC from March, 1962 that  
98 was entitled, Happy Birthday, Igor Stravinsky:

99 (ACTUALITY)

100 AB: What a treat for the audience to be in the same  
101 room as Stravinsky and see that he wasn't just a  
102 name on a score page, but a living, breathing human  
103 being. Bernstein did the same with Aaron Copland,  
104 Dmitri Shostakovich, and several other giants of  
105 the period. For the Stravinsky program, Bernstein  
106 went on to present the composer's colorful ballet  
107 Petrushka with verve and fluidity:

108 (ACTUALITY)

109 AB: Petrushka. Music of Igor Stravinsky as presented  
110 for a Young People's Concert in March, 1962. The  
111 New York Philharmonic was conducted by Leonard  
112 Bernstein and the solo piano part was played by  
113 Paul Jacobs.

114 (SLIGHT PAUSE)

115 AB: Our exploration of Bernstein as a teacher and  
116 educator will continue shortly. I'm Alec Baldwin  
117 and you're listening to The New York Philharmonic  
118 This Week.

119 (ID)

120 (ACTUALITY)

121 AB: Another part of Bernstein's appeal was that he  
122 wasn't solely devoted to classical music. As we  
123 heard in that clip, he was only too pleased to  
124 reach into the world of pop music—especially to  
125 help demonstrate a point. His daughter, Jamie  
126 Bernstein, discussed her father's musical interests  
127 and what it was like behind-the-scenes at the YPCs:

128 (ACTUALITY)

129 AB: Jamie Bernstein is an author, narrator, and  
130 filmmaker. Her latest book, Famous Father Girl was  
131 recently published by Harper Collins.

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140 AB: Leonard Bernstein's appetite for educating  
141 audiences wasn't limited to the set of the Young  
142 People's Concerts. Nor did he only seek to discuss  
143 basic musical concepts, such as "syncopation" or  
144 "modes." Bernstein wanted his audiences to feel  
145 something when they attended a concert. And he  
146 would even put his own strong ideas aside to let  
147 the voice of a compelling artist be heard. One  
148 such instance was with Copland's Connotations for  
149 Orchestra. In short: Bernstein didn't care for the  
150 score, but he still conducted it multiple times  
151 over the course of several years. Why? Because he  
152 thought Copland deserved to be heard. Another,  
153 perhaps more notorious, example is when Bernstein  
154 engaged pianist Glenn Gould for a performance of  
155 the d-minor Piano Concerto by Brahms. That  
156 performance came with a disclaimer:

157 (ACTUALITY)

158 AB: An excerpt from the piano concerto No. 1 in d-minor  
159 by Johannes Brahms. The New York Philharmonic was  
160 conducted by Leonard Bernstein. The soloist was  
161 Glenn Gould. Bernstein famously disassociated  
162 himself from Gould's interpretation, as we heard.  
163 One year later, the pianist had this to say about  
164 his collaboration with Mr. Bernstein:

165 (ACTUALITY)

166 AB: **Classic Lenny.**

167 (SLIGHT PAUSE)

168 (ACTUALITY)

169 AB: **By the mid-1960s, all of the orchestra's concerts**  
170 **were taking place in Philharmonic Hall, now David**  
171 **Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center. This included the**  
172 **Young People's Concerts. And it was there that the**  
173 **orchestra and Bernstein presented the rather**  
174 **surprising Ninth Symphony of Dmitri Shostakovich in**  
175 **1965:**

176 (MUSIC)

177 AB: **Symphony No. 9 by Dmitri Shostakovich. The New**  
178 **York Philharmonic was conducted by Leonard**  
179 **Bernstein.**

180 (SLIGHT PAUSE)

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185 AB: With just a few words and a clever turn of phrase,  
186 Bernstein was able to galvanize the millions of  
187 people who tuned in for his Young People's  
188 concerts. And he continued to host the programs  
189 even after his tenure as Music Director of the New  
190 York Philharmonic ended. His final televised  
191 appearance in a YPC took place in December, 1971,  
192 when he presented *The Planets* by Gustav Holst:

193 (ACTUALITY)

194 AB: And if you're interested to experience the magic of  
195 Mr. Bernstein's YPCS first-hand, we should mention  
196 that several of these concerts are commercially  
197 available on two DVD box-sets, courtesy of *Kultur*.

198 And, of course, Bernstein's legacy lives on through  
199 the Philharmonic's numerous educational endeavors,  
200 including the Young People's Concerts, the VERY  
201 Young People's Concerts, and the Very Young  
202 Composers. More information is available when you  
203 visit [nyphil.org](http://nyphil.org). I'm Alec Baldwin. Thanks very  
204 much for joining me as we celebrate 100 years of  
205 Bernstein on the New York Philharmonic This Week.

206 (SLIGHT PAUSE)

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209 PROMO :

210 AB: In 1958, Leonard Bernstein became Music Director of  
211 the New York Philharmonic. As we continue to mark  
212 the Bernstein centenary for a third week, we take a  
213 closer look at what else was happening in the music  
214 world during that time--especially at the  
215 Philharmonic. This is Alec Baldwin. I hope you'll  
216 join me as we celebrate *100 Years of Bernstein*...on  
217 the New York Philharmonic This Week.