Carnegie Hall’s 125th anniversary season has been an exciting milestone. It has been a time to reflect on the Hall’s incredible legacy of performances, while celebrating who we are today. Perhaps most important, it has been a wonderful chance to look ahead, encouraging us to imagine how the Hall can continue to inspire and serve future generations through great music.

With this in mind, Carnegie Hall launched The Somewhere Project in early 2016, a sprawling citywide exploration of West Side Story, mounted in honor of the Hall’s 125th anniversary. Nearly 10,000 people from across all five boroughs engaged with this masterwork’s timeless music and themes. From March 4–6, 2016, three extraordinary culminating performances of West Side Story were presented at the Knockdown Center, a restored factory in Queens. In the weeks leading up to the production, students and community members across New York City wrote original songs inspired by West Side Story in the Hall’s songwriting projects. A group of community-based arts organizations also joined Carnegie Hall in this journey, exploring the themes of the project in their own programming. In all of these settings, young people, artists, and community members have affirmed how the themes found in this quintessential New York story written 60 years ago—love, conflict, learning to live alongside those who are different in this diverse and complex city—still resonate among us in such a contemporary way.
WEST SIDE STORY
Based on a Conception of JEROME ROBBINS

Book by ARTHUR LAURENTS
Music by LEONARD BERNSTEIN
Lyrics by STEPHEN SONDHEIM

Entire Original Production Directed and Choreographed by JEROME ROBBINS

Originally Produced on Broadway by Robert E. Griffith and Harold S. Prince
By Arrangement with Roger L. Stevens

with
Skylar Astin | Bianca Marroquin | Donald Jones Jr. | Manny Stark

and
Alex Aquilino | Stanley Bahorek | Olutayo Bosee | Ariana Crowder
Karli Dinardo | Zack Everhart | Hannah Florence | Damon J. Gillespie | Sam Lips | Robin Masella | Raymond Joel Matsamura
Melissa Hunter McCann | Dashi Mitchell | Emilio Ramos | Julian Ramos | Alex Ringler | Sherisse Springer | Clay Thomson
James Tolbert | Jessica Walker | Michelle West | Ricardo Zayas

Kaitlyn Benzant | Angel Blanco | Kendall Carter | Emanuel Figueroa | Alexis Garcia | Fabian Garcia | Sebastian Garcia
Reyna Guerra | Anijah Lezama | Alexa Maetta | Hallie Richardson | Sydney Richardson | Jillian Scheer | Martina Viadana
Daniella Zunic

featuring
Chuck Cooper | Peter Gerety

and introducing
Morgan Hernandez

Scenic Design
Eugene Lee

Sound Design
Nevin Steinberg

Hair Designer
J. Jared Janas

Casting
Stewart/Whitley

General Management
Mitch Weiss
MW Entertainment Group

Costume Design
Tracy Christensen

Orchestra Contractor
Seymour “Red” Press

Fight Director
Tom Schall

Community Activities Coordinator
Eduardo Placer

Lighting Design
Edward Pierce

Production Manager
David Benken

Musical Supervisor
Leslie Stifelman

Jerome Robbins Choreography Re-Created by
Julio Monge

Additional Choreography by
Sean Cheesman

Musical Director and Conductor
Marin Alsop

Production Directed and Conceived by
Amanda Dehnert

Jerome Robbins’s classic choreography was reset in this production by Julio Monge. Pictured: Ricardo Zayas (Anxious), Donald Jones Jr. (Bernardo), and Julian Ramos (Luis) in the Prologue
The project culminated in three special performances of *West Side Story* at the Knockdown Center in Queens. Directed by Amanda Dehnert, this production blurred the boundary between students and professionals. High school-aged apprentice performers joined the cast of the production, immersing themselves in every dance step of this incredible work alongside professionals. The production also featured a choir of high school students from across the city, adding a new dimension to Leonard Bernstein’s iconic score under the direction of Marin Alsop.

The Knockdown Center, a restored glass and door factory, provided an unforgettable setting for the performances. The expansive space—part-block party, part-city street—represented the open, community nature of the project. The setting was only the beginning of what was re-imagined in this production. With a colorblind approach to casting, the audience was unable to identify the Sharks and Jets by the color of their hair or skin; instead a few color-coded elements of the costumes (red for Jets, purple for Sharks) were the only unifying feature within each gang. Jerome Robbins’s choreography—reset in this production by Julio Monge—is one of the most iconic parts of *West Side Story*. It draws on a mixing pot of influences—the mambo, Lindy, American swing, stage fighting, and ballet. Sean Cheesman provided additional choreography for the production, bringing influences from popular dance of the last few decades into the mix.
“It’s humbling, getting to work alongside these people who have been part of *Wicked, The King and I, Aladdin* ... it’s really an honor. Sometimes I just stand around and think, ‘Wow! I’m here!’”

—Anijah Lezama, apprentice cast member, age 16

The high point of Act I was the exhilarating finale of the “Tonight Quintet,” with nearly 300 cast, orchestra, and choir performers onstage.

Musical Director Marin Alsop, a protégée of Bernstein’s, led the performances of *West Side Story*.

The production included new choreography created by Sean Cheesman, performed here by high school-aged apprentice performer Emanuel Figueroa (Big Deal) and professional cast member Olutayo Bosede (Gee-Tar).

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**West Side Story Performers**

- **200** high school singers from all five boroughs
- **15** high school apprentice cast members
- **32** high schools represented in the production
- **29** professional cast members
- **40-piece professional orchestra**
“If theater is a reflection of our society, The Somewhere Project’s take on the classic musical *West Side Story* this past weekend provides hope that there can be peace if only we ask what it means universally to be human, instead of reinforcing the labels that make us different.”

— The Huffington Post

Click here for the full review.

“Gee, Officer Krupke,” a lighthearted number with a serious message, gives a still-relevant critique of society’s treatment of youth.

— The New York Times

Click here for the full review.

“A musical miracle”

— Broadway.com

Click here for the full review.

“The sound of so many voices added a layer of emotional plushness to the songs that was goose-pimple-inducing, and utterly irresistible. So, really, was the entire production, which may have been conceived in part as a public-spirited educational project, but ultimately became a simple yet transporting production of a great musical.”

— The New York Times

Click here for the full review.
Songwriting Projects and Neighborhood Concerts

With *West Side Story* as its anchor, The Somewhere Project extended throughout New York City. For the past seven years, Carnegie Hall has partnered with city and state agencies to offer songwriting workshops designed to have a powerful impact on participants’ daily lives. This season, public school students and community members—including court-involved youth, young mothers in foster care, and adults in the correctional system—were given the opportunity to express themselves through their own original music inspired by *West Side Story*. Much of this music was performed in free Neighborhood Concerts in each borough of New York City in the weeks leading up to Carnegie Hall’s *West Side Story* production.

February 5
Chris Washburne and the SYOTOS Band
The Bronx Museum of the Arts | Bronx

February 19
Slavic Soul Party!
BRIC House | Brooklyn

February 21
The Itty Biddies
Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden | Staten Island

February 24
Sarah Elizabeth Charles
Harlem Stage Gatehouse | Manhattan

February 26
Brown Rice Family
LaGuardia Performing Arts Center | Queens

5 free Neighborhood Concerts, one in each of the five boroughs, featuring original music by students and community members.

43 original songs inspired by the themes of *West Side Story*

Click here to listen to a playlist of some of these songs.

Students from Bronx Hope Academy, Intikana, and Chris Washburne and the SYOTOS Band perform at the Bronx Museum of the Arts.

carnegiehall.org/WestSideStory
Sing Sing inmate Kenyatta Hughes performed alongside mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato in his original song titled “A Place for Us” on December 18. DiDonato visited participants in Carnegie Hall’s Musical Connections program as part of The Somewhere Project, assisting them with their compositions and performing in a concert for the rest of the facility.

“Before incarceration, we think of home as a single place. Home is only inside your home and everywhere else is not. In here, when we talk about ‘When are you going home?’ we don’t mean a specific place. We mean, ‘anywhere but here.’”

—Kenyatta Hughes, inmate at Sing Sing Correctional Facility

Belmont Academy
Bronx Hope Academy
Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music
DeWitt Clinton High School
The New York Foundling
Make the Road New York and Bushwick Campus Community School
Sing Sing Correctional Facility
Carnegie Hall Youth Programs

New York City Administration for Children’s Services
New York City Department of Education
New York City Department of Homeless Services
New York City Department of Probation
New York City Mayor’s Office for Immigrant Affairs
New York State Department of Corrections
New York State Office for New Americans
Center for Community Alternatives
Good Shepherd Services
Leake & Watts
SCO Family of Services
Sheltering Arms
A young man performed his verse on the song “Who Knows” in the culminating concert by Belmont Academy students.

“Yo, I’m tired of the violence
I’m tired of the nonsense
Projects to projects
We running outta options
The streets be the wisest
Now, we organizing
from “Authorized” by Enrique, Justin, and Malcolm with Matuto and Intikana
Bronx Hope Academy
Carnegie Hall Musical Connections

A place for us
We will find a place and be free from this world of hate
Let’s come together to be one
Together we can find a place for love
A place for us
from “We Will Find a Place” by Dysani and the Carnegie Hall Youth Programs songwriting group with Thomas Cabaniss, Sarah Elizabeth Charles, and Toni Blackman
Carnegie Hall Youth Programs

“It teaches you how ... to express yourself through music, and let the world know how it is for you. I never used to relate [my ideas] like that, but now I feel like I could do it in a better way instead of doing it a negative way.”
—Jay, student at Belmont Academy

“We are working with expectant and often young mothers who, more often than not, feel displaced in some way. To dream about ‘a place for us,’ for our children, allowed us to speak more intimately, instill more trust, become more vulnerable with one another.”
—Saskia Lane, Lullaby Project artist
Visitor Forbidden: A Visual Art and Installation Project showcased original graphics, visuals, and tags created by members of Park Avenue Armory’s Youth Corps on optical white Chuck Taylor All Star sneakers. The artwork represents the major characters, themes, and events from West Side Story, depicting a kind of scenographic “footprint” of iconic moments.

12 partner organizations, working across all artistic disciplines, also joined the project, exploring its themes in their own programming.

The Bronx Museum of the Arts, Bronx
Brooklyn College Community Partnership, Brooklyn
DreamYard, Bronx
Hudson Guild, Manhattan
LaGuardia Performing Arts Center, Queens
Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center, Bronx
New York Public Library BridgeUp, Bronx and Manhattan
Opportunity Music Project, Manhattan
Orchestra of St. Luke’s and Youth Orchestra of St. Luke’s, Manhattan
Park Avenue Armory, Manhattan
Renaissance Youth Center, Bronx
University Settlement, Manhattan

carnegiehall.org/WestSideStory
“Our students were completely riveted. The project truly succeeded in taking an iconic work of art and opening it up to youth of today. Our kids from Bushwick made *West Side Story* their own through developing a series of monologues based on the theme of ‘oppositions’ in their lives.”

—Steve Ausbury, Deputy Director of the Brooklyn College Community Partnership

“It’s not about us anymore. It’s about having the younger ones grow up and know what’s going on, and understand that somewhere, somehow there is a place for them to fit in.”

—Tramaine Bembury, participant from LaGuardia Performing Arts Center, speaking about his group’s original theater piece titled *Unpacking American Identity: Black Lives Matter*

“It’s so interesting that brotherhood is introduced early in the story. It’s what brings them together, the Sharks and the Jets, but it’s also what drives them apart, this feeling of not wanting to leave your own brethren. I wanted to center my piece on this ... The love between brothers is such a beautiful thing because people underestimate how powerful it really is.”

—Ethan Graham, artist from University Settlement

—Isaiah Quiñones, participant from Brooklyn College Community Partnership
Online Companion Course

Carnegie Hall partnered with online music school Soundfly to produce an interactive online companion course that is available to users around the globe free of charge.

22 videos in an online companion course exploring the music, dance, social issues, and other artistic elements of West Side Story

8 of the world’s foremost experts on these subjects

More than 90,000 unique users who viewed these videos

5 creative challenges for the public

“West Side Story really proposes the question of will the bloodshed and violence ever truly end and if so, when and where? As the son of two immigrants from South America, this issue is something I find to be very personal, as I have also dealt with such racial hostility.”

—Michael, Soundfly student
The companion course has been shared with teachers across New York City. A seventh grader at Growing Up Green Middle School in Long Island City created this clay sculpture, inspired by the song “One Hand, One Heart” from West Side Story.

“I agree wholeheartedly with the quote ‘Love can’t survive in a world where there is no love.’ Love only flourishes when others love. The news and media are filling our society with hate. All we do is hate, and observe and comment on these hate crimes. It is causing people to be blinded and making people think that there is no end and no hope. West Side Story offers a chance for people to begin to see that we need a change and that people can’t live like this.”

—Haylee, Soundfly student

Charles Burchell: “Social Issues in West Side Story”

Marin Alsop: “Somewhere”
Show us your “Somewhere” on social media using #SomewhereProject

carnegiehall.org/WestSideStory