

"What about doing it about the Chicanos?"¹

1. The anecdote is almost too good to be true: three young collaborators, struggling to find the perfect style, the right sound for a Broadway musical version of *Romeo and Juliet*, have become discouraged and shelved their project. The initial premise, warring families of Catholics against Jews, has yielded few dramatic ideas, fewer musical ones. By coincidence, playwright Arthur Laurents and composer Leonard Bernstein meet up at a Beverly Hills poolside after some months and share their disappointment over the flagging project. Then they notice a *Los Angeles Times* headline about gang warfare between Mexicans and whites. As Bernstein would later recall:

In New York we had the Puerto Ricans, and at that time the papers were full of stories about juvenile delinquents and gangs. Arthur and I looked at one another and all I can say is that there are moments which are right for certain things and that moment seemed to have come.²

2. In that moment, years of stalled progress turn into renewed dedication. Bernstein puts continuing work on his troubled *Candide* on hold, director Jerome Robbins is "ecstatic" over the new concept. The composer confides excitedly to his diary, "Suddenly it all springs to life. I hear rhythms and pulses and—most of all—I can sort of feel the form."³

The "form"—the shape and texture of the work—emerges from many styles and influences, but one element that pulls them together—and provides much of the flair that has made *West Side Story* (Plot Summary) so popular—is the Hispanic.⁴ It is neither integral to the underlying musical structure (which is widely recognized as hinging on the tritone motive that is the basis for most of the musical numbers) nor a purely exotic surface "gloss." Instead, the Hispanic element inhabits an area somewhere in between, suggesting both a familiarity with and an absorption of a specific and by then highly stylized culture. It appears, in fact, that the "rhythms and pulses" were, both for Bernstein and his audience, part of a *lingua franca* that already engaged in a convivial dialogue with concert and popular music styles. Although certainly one of *West Side Story*'s ultimate achievements lies in its successful synthesis of these two larger traditions, the adoption of a specific ethnic style in a serious and self-consciously "American" work has ultimately, and perhaps unexpectedly, earned for the musical Hispanic a level of legitimacy it had never before achieved.

"In New York we had the Puerto Ricans..."

3. The connection between Mexican unrest on the West Coast and Puerto Rican gang warfare on the East was not a difficult one to make in the mid 1950s. Juvenile delinquency, especially among minority groups, was a hot topic amongst both sociologists and the popular press. Almost daily, New York newspaper headlines reported dire warnings such as "Hoodlum, 17, Seized as Slayer of Boy, 15" and "57.2% rise in delinquency rate for youths over 16," echoing a growing alarm about what appeared to be the largest and increasingly most problematic of New York's minority populations. Although the articles rarely blamed Puerto Ricans outright, newspaper accounts tended to emphasize the whiteness and good breeding of the victims and the seemingly unprovoked and cold-blooded behavior of their clearly Hispanic assailants.⁵ Studies of the impact of Puerto Rican migration to the city surged during these years, raising concerns as to how this historically insular ethnic group was assimilating, in ever increasing numbers, into the American melting pot.⁶ The consensus seemed to be that they were not. *Immigration*, which had been steadily flowing since the 1830s became *migration* after Puerto Rico became a U.S. possession in 1898.⁷ The subsequent devaluation of the Puerto Rican peso, along with the Jones Act of 1917 (which gave Puerto Ricans American citizenship) made the United States an increasingly attractive destination for underemployed Puerto Ricans. The Johnson Act of 1921 restricting European immigration to the U.S. made migration even easier and more lucrative. In many ways, the United States had brought on the exodus: blaming overpopulation for Puerto Rico's woes, the U.S. government had recommended—as far back as 1917—bringing 50,000—100,000 Puerto Ricans to work in the American agricultural industry. The move was intended to relieve the strains that overpopulation had imposed on the island's resources, but the fairly constant flow of migration over the following decades also fed into a steady demand for a cheap and productive labor force in the United States. In the 1920s, starting wages in America had already been attractively higher than ending wages on the island; by the 1940s Puerto Ricans could earn double what they had in their homeland for the same work.⁸

- 4. Inevitably, almost all migration to the United States was to New York City, where Puerto Ricans settled in "colonias" or communities. "El Barrio" (translating roughly as "the district") in East Harlem, also known as "Spanish Harlem," was by far the largest: the first and often last destination for hopeful newcomers. However, the same burdens of poverty, illness, and overpopulation that plagued migrants followed them to their new home, and New York was starting to take notice. Lawrence Chenault's The Puerto Rican Migrant in New York City addressed the problem as early as 1938, some eight years after social workers had expressed grave concerns over tensions within Puerto Rican family life.⁹ Subsequent studies such as Island in the City: Puerto Ricans in New York and The Puerto Rican Journey: New York's Newest Migrants, drew wider attention to the issues.¹⁰ In 1948 the Migration Division of Puerto Rico's Department of Labor in New York City designed programs to educate Puerto Rican migrants about conditions in the metropolis, one of several attempts to quell the growing problem.¹¹ In the summer of 1955, the City hired a panel of Spanish-speaking legal-aid lawyers, and 50 school principals were sent to Puerto Rico to study the population and its culture. But no system could keep up with the growing number of migrants. With 27 different airlines servicing the San Juan to New York route, and airfares between \$30 and \$50, there was no sense of a long, arduous trek to a new world.
- 5. It would take until the 1960s for sociologists to fully grasp the implications of this mass migration.¹² Clarence Senior's *The Puerto-Ricans: Strangers—Then Neighbors* (published in cooperation with the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith), Oscar Lewis's La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty-San Juan and New York,¹³ and memoirs by Bernardo Vega and later, Piri Thomas of growing up in New York heightened awareness of the problems. But in the 1950s it just seemed to Americans that there were too many migrants and they were not assimilating; as Benjamin Nuñez, Costa Rican delegate to the United Nations put it, "New Yorkers don't love Puerto Ricans and Puerto Ricans don't love New Yorkers."¹⁵ Part of the problem was that the migrant population was not only growing, but changing. Many Puerto Ricans already had college degrees by the time they reached New York and were moving into white-collar jobs and upper education. This increased population and earning power resulted in increased animosity from other minority neighbors, especially Italians on the East Side. Overpopulation was forcing Puerto Ricans out of El Barrio, first to Washington Heights and the West Side, and eventually to all other areas of the city. Newspaper reports during mid 1955 vacillated wildly as to the number of Puerto Ricans flowing into the city. Some claimed migration was down 50%, others that numbers were up several hundred thousand, including a large and invisible invasion that was eluding researchers. Clearly, New Yorkers were worried, suddenly feeling that there was an entire "new" community taking over their world.¹⁶ Elena Padilla's ethnographic study, Up from Puerto Rico¹⁷ sensitively described the trials and tribulations of impoverished Puerto Ricans in a typical East Side neighborhood. In a similar attempt to replace fear with understanding, New York's Secretary of State, Carmine De Sapio, publicly denounced talk of the "Puerto Rican problem" as prejudiced, malicious, and untruthful generalizations.¹⁸ The problem, however, could not be ignored, especially when Puerto Rican gangs were continually implicated in youth crime.

6. In fact, juvenile delinquency in general was on the rise. A Senate Subcommittee was set up in 1957 to investigate juvenile delinquency in New York and studies of gang violence such as Marjorie Rittwagen's *Sins of Their Fathers*, soon followed.¹⁹ Although delinquency rates were statistically no higher among Puerto Ricans than in juveniles of other ethnic groups, they were seen as part of an ever-increasing threat to the safety of white Americans. All fears were manifested in the "Capeman" case of 1959, in which Salvador Agron, a 16-year-old member of the Vampires gang, stabbed two white teenagers in Hell's Kitchen. Earning his nickname for the black cape he sported, Agron was arrested and eventually became the youngest criminal in New York state history to be given the death penalty (later commuted).²⁰ This same year, *West Side Story* was in its first revival. Nothing could have been more topical.²¹

Mambo on Broadway

- 7. For all that New Yorkers may have resented the presence of their Latin American neighbors, one would never have known it from the pop charts. The "new" Hispanics brought with them musical styles and sounds that culminated in the biggest dance sensation of the decade: the mambo craze. The mambo was the most popular of many Latin dance styles current in the 1950s, some of which found their way into *West Side Story* in various guises. All were descendants of older dances, which, in turn, formed part of a long tradition of Latin American influence in popular music. From the early 1920s to the late 1950s, all became more and more assimilated into mainstream American music.²²
- 8. Jelly Roll Morton goes down in history as one of the first non-Hispanic musicians to extensively adopt the "Latin tinge,"²³ his term for the distinctive and pervasive syncopated rhythm which he felt was absolutely basic to the essence of jazz. However, Morton's "tinge" had been around since the earliest days of jazz, but entered the American popular mainstream in the 1930s in the form of the rumba. Two musicians were instrumental in the dissemination of the style: Don Azpiazú and Xavier Cugat (Pictured). Both were among a growing number of dance band leaders regularly enlisting Latin American talent, especially musicians from Puerto Rico and Cuba. Juan Tizol, a Puerto Rican trombonist and composer who exemplified the Latin style in his recordings with Duke Ellington in the late 1930s (particularly "Caravan" and "Conga Brava"), was one of the most successful soloists, combining South American elements with current North American musical practices. The eventual fusion of big band instrumentation and arrangement with Cuban percussion and musical structures became known as Afro-Cuban jazz. Born from "Cubop," already a fusion of bop and traditional Cuban elements, the Afro-Cuban style was exploited most regularly by Dizzy Gillespie, who established an Afro-Cuban jazz orchestra in 1947.²⁴ Although Cuban percussionists such as Arnando Peraza (who recorded "Poodle Mambo" with George Shearing on the latter's *Latin Escapade* album of 1956) were very active during this period, strictly Cuban styles eventually gave way to more generically Latin ones by the late 1950s, when Afro-Cuban jazz was on the decline.²

- 9. The vogue of Latin American styles into which the movement fell, however, did not wane for twenty years, and was so commonplace by the end of the 1950s as to be a standard part of the vernacular musical landscape. The methods of dissemination were a large part of the style's success. Xavier Cugat, although leading the resident band of Manhattan's Waldorf Hotel, gained most of his notoriety through his numerous appearances on film. Cugat appeared in a large number of B-grade movies of the 1930s, frequently alongside another icon of Latin Americanism, Carmen Miranda. (Pictured) Latin and Spanish themes had long been a feature of both Broadway musicals and film musicals, ranging from Latin numbers in Romberg's Nina Rosa (1929) to scenes in such films as Rodgers and Astaire's Flying Down to Rio (1933). But now the Hispanic was growing from an occasional romantic or humorous character piece within a primarily "white" context into the subject of full-length films. Movie makers did not jump on the bandwagon simply because the music was popular: this post-war boom came when European film markets were plummeting. Hollywood was looking southward for new audiences. Many of these films were ostensibly aimed at Latin Americans themselves, not an unexpected phenomenon since America was extending its "Friendly Neighbor" policy southward at this time. Musician and actor Desi Arnaz was one of a number of entertainers (and the only one who was actually Latin American) sent on a friendship visit to Mexico in 1941.²⁶ Arnaz, who became one of the Latin stars of mainstream America, used film, live Broadway performances, and television to build his career and also a following for Latin American music. The exposure coming from both east and west coasts ensured that Hispanic music would reach a wide audience across the continent.
- 10. One thing had not changed, though: for the most part, Hispanic culture and music were still portrayed inauthentically and humorously. Arnaz had had very little, if any, substantial contact with Latino musicians once he came to the U.S., and Carmen Miranda was certainly sending up herself along with South America. At the same time, more non-Latins were playing Latin American music, notably Dizzy Gillespie, Woody Herman, and Stan Kenton. Eventually, white musicians and ensembles began taking over the style, releasing "cover" versions of these tunes and new compositions in the same vein. Perhaps Cugat's explanation for his own style best addresses the phenomenon: "Americans know nothing about Latin music. They neither understand nor feel it. So they have to be given music more for the eyes than the ears. Eighty percent visual, the rest aural. To succeed in American I gave the Americans a Latin music that had nothing authentic about it. Then I began to change the music and play more legitimately."²⁷
- 11. The American public seemed less concerned than Cugat over the style's authenticity, judging by the proliferation of publications aimed at the amateur musician. By the early 1940s, one could find instructional publications teaching Latin American rhythms to either white drummers or amateurs. In 1959 the Remick Music Corporation, in a series called "Music for Everyone" presented *37 Latin American Favorites, Including Examples and Explanations of Latin American Rhythms: Bossa Novas, Merengues, Cha-Chas, Rumbas, Mambos, Paso Dobles, Sambas.* Of those musicians who provided

the Hispanic sound to the general population, the big band leaders were among the most popular, and they were behind the largest growth period for Latin Music, the 1940s. It was also the era of the Mambo Kings: first Azpiazu, then artists such as Tito Puente, Tito Rodriguez, and Perez Prado (Pictured) gained in popularity during the late 40s and 50s. They also popularized what would become the three hottest dance styles of the time: the mambo, the merengue, and the cha cha cha. Prado is often credited with starting the mambo craze with his composition, "Mambo #5," but, ironically, he was not part of the New York scene in which the mambo reached its zenith of popularity. Instead, he made his mark from touring with his orchestra and from recordings made for RCA. Although some claim that Prado "invented" the mambo, it was in fact-like most other dance styles of the time-a permutation on what had come before, a kind of "melting pot" in which American dance tastes were combined with Latin styles.²⁸ Prado himself was something of a musical hybrid: although his first success was within the Hispanic community, his tours and subsequent notoriety with white Americans led him into an ethnically suspect crossover realm which ultimately earned him the respect of neither group once the currency of the dance craze waned.²⁹ Until it did, though, Prado and bands like his sold sexy Latin rhythms to an insatiable dance audience. Recordings of the mid 1950s such as Tito Puente's Mambo on Broadway (Puente pictured) or Xavier Cugat's Mambo at the Waldorf, presented entire albums of strictly Latin American dances. Prado himself published some of his favorites arranged for solo piano.³⁰ But the most lucrative field by far for Latin music was in the dance halls, many of which offered instruction. Former bandleader Federico Pagani started "Latin nights" at the Alma Dance Studios on 53rd and Broadway in the early 40s, a time when Latin dance bands were drawing crowds of 5,000.³¹ Instructional dance records for home study abounded. The Arthur Murray dance empire offered an all-mambo record with cuts "personally recommended for dancing by Arthur Murray." The Fred Astaire Dance Studio Orchestra released a 1959 album of Merengues and Mambos, which included "Dance instruction booklet and one studio dance lesson"; one of Tito Rodriguez's recordings bore the imposing title Mambo Styles Strictly for Dancing. Certainly, Latin dances were not new. But the 1950s provided the broadest consumer market yet for pleasure dancing and its attendant romance.

- 12. Although the mambo itself was not an overtly lascivious dance, its association with the sensual lent it much of its glamor.³² Esy Morales's *Latin American Rhythms* was pressed on red vinyl to further its exotic appeal. And, as an endless number of mambo compositions sprang up, they tended to focus on the alluring feminine: "Marilyn Monroe Mambo" and "Mambo Bardot" (the second from the soundtrack to *And God Created Woman*) venerated two stars who epitomized female voluptuousness in the 1950s. Hopeful males could find the appropriate date music on an album entitled *She Adores the Latin Type*, part of a series put out by Decca called *Music for the Girl Friend*. "Hot in Haiti" and "Penthouse Mambo" number amongst its cuts.
- 13. To be sure, the mambo was not an intellectual genre. Titles such as "Ya ya ya cha cha cha" and "Merengue a la mode" reveal their inspiration in the frivolous. The style was everywhere and combined with seemingly everything. Perhaps the most stunning example was a collection released by Freddie Sateriale's Big Band in 1956, entitled

Broadway Latin American Party. This album consisted exclusively of Broadway show tunes adapted to cha chas, merengues and mambos. Selections included "Old Man River Cha Cha Cha", "On the Street Where You Live Cha Cha Cha," and "There's Nothing Like a Dame Cha Cha."³³ The vogue of the Latin American even crossed religious and ethnic boundaries, with a bossa nova rendition of "Hava nagilah" appearing on a Columbia recording of 1962. All in all, unlikely candidates for Bernstein's great tragic opera.

"I'm Spanish, I'm Suddenly Spanish"

- 14. Indeed, music that could be considered "Hispanic" by the 1950s would have come from diverse sources and traditions, not least of which was the mainstream of Western art music. Popular since the early nineteenth century, when composers in general starting emulating what they considered the exotic (i.e., the non-Western European), the Spanish style rubbed elbows with music inspired by the Orient, the Middle East, and in many cases, indigenous folk musics of other European countries. The vogue of the Hispanic which peaked in the 1880s found its ultimate vehicle in Bizet's *Carmen* (1875), a work fusing a French sensibility with melodies borrowed from real Spanish sources (whose publishers the composer credited in his score). Although Bizet did not adhere doggedly to any particular authentic style, the durability of his work has ensured the generalities of the "Spanish idiom" (as it is called by Gilbert Chase)³⁴ a place in the world of the best-known classical pieces. No one can hear the word "habanera" today without thinking of *Carmen*.
- 15. Although the Hispanic influence can be seen in music hailing from virtually all European nations, it was the French who took to it more readily and carried it most successfully into the twentieth century. Debussy in his many Spanish-inspired works, and especially Ravel,³⁵ who inherited much of his interest in Spain from his mother, downplayed the flamboyance and dance qualities of the Hispanic, and instead adapted its atmosphere and quiet exoticism to music that, as is often said of French music during this period, "suggests rather than depicts." Furthermore, works by Spanish composers, not just those inspired by them, began to see the light of day in Western concert programs; a production of Granados's Goyescas (in the original language) graced the 1915/16 Met season, the first opera by a Spaniard to be performed there.³⁶ The popularity of the Hispanic which prompted opportunities such as this ensured that works such as Albeniz's Tango in D and parts of Falla's El amor brujo and La Vida breve would achieve the rank of concert gem. In addition, though, the relationship between Hispanic and Pseudo-Hispanic composers, both in the classical and popular repertoires, showed a continuing cultural exchange between the old world and the new.³⁷ As the tango and habanera were the result of dances moving to Latin America and then back to Spain, so did Spanish composers such as Falla take cues from their French counterparts as to the most current fashion of depicting their country. The style, as in popular music, became so standardized that classical works by indigenous composers sometimes reflected more on contemporary Spanish works by foreigners than on current music of their homeland.

- 16. In fact, by this time there was no mistaking the "Spanish idiom" in music worldwide; it incorporated a variety of almost stereotypical musical elements from this wide range of Hispanic traditions and influences. The opening of Maurice Ravel's short character piece of 1918, *Alborada del Gracioso*, originally for piano and later orchestrated, provides a perfect example of how the Hispanic was most typically represented in concert music of the early century.
- 17. The first and most basic element is the distinctively Hispanic rhythm, based in a 3/4 or 3/8 time signature (the metre of the *jota*, one of the most widely known and borrowed of Spanish dance genres); in this piece, the grouping of eighth notes and the accented offbeats in the pizzicato strings provide the initial "habanera" rhythm, later reorganized to simulate the switching of metres. Triplet turns are also a prominent feature (especially on or after the first beat of the measure, as in the infamous genre of *bolero*), as are chains of descending thirds, syncopations, and the ubiquitous lowered second scale degree. Melodies often span the interval of a sixth, with an insistence on one note, and often the melodies and, subsequently, cadences tend to end on the fifth scale degree. In such cases, the sixth degree is often flat and the seventh natural, thereby reproducing—above the dominant—the augmented second degree often found above the tonic.
- **18.** In addition to purely melodic and rhythmic characteristics, a sense of instrumentation was essential to the Spanish idiom. The guitar, that paradigmatic Spanish stage prop, was usually present, or at least alluded to. The pizzicato and *style brisé* nature of its performance was easily simulated with pizzicato strings, and the gradual build-up of chords to form a strumming sound was also readily reproducible in lieu of the real thing, as in Scarlatti's keyboard sonatas. Less easy to simulate on piano or strings were the distinctive sounds of the castanets and tambourine, but these instruments found their way into the orchestral and operatic repertoire, where much of the "Spanish idiom" found its life. And, of course, into the Broadway musical.

"I want to be in America"

19. This "Hispanicizing" orchestral repertoire was largely French, and was widely disseminated through the Western world. Although most American composers were familiar with the style, none could have been more so than those who studied in Paris, the compositional center of the early century. Perhaps the most important of these—and surely the most influential on Bernstein—was Aaron Copland. Copland was one of the first in what was called the "Boulangerie," American composers who flocked to Paris to study with famed teacher Nadia Boulanger (Pictured). Virgil Thomson, among that initial generation, later commented that "every town in the United States could boast two things: a five-and-ten cent store and a Boulanger student."³⁸ Copland did not even know about Boulanger when he made his initial move to France; he was at Fontainebleau on an international scholarship studying with the deeply conventional Paul Vidal, but stayed in Paris for four more years to continue his studies with Boulanger, in whom he

found an ardent supporter and friend. The two most prominent "serious" composers of Copland's time there remained Stravinsky and Ravel, both using jazz and the latter, the Spanish style. Copland was already considering jazz as the most likely source for forging an authentic American musical voice (an opinion Bernstein shared and propounded in his Harvard thesis some years later);³⁹ Boulanger supported his early experiments in that vein. The rhythmic complexity of his jazz-inspired compositions (Copland claimed not to be able to play jazz himself) intrigued his teacher, but they were also not unlike the rhythms and rhythmic alterations which were a regular part of Spanish works both in Europe and in the popular music of America.⁴⁰ Although Copland did not take up a Spanish style while in Paris, it was not many years after his return to America that another influence brought him in contact with this Hispanic, this time from Latin America.

- 20. "He conquered Mexico through Chávez" was how Virgil Thomson succinctly put Copland's relationship with his neighbors to the south. "Aaron was the president of young American music, and then middle-aged American music, because he had tact, good business sense about colleagues, and loyalty."⁴¹ Copland was first invited to Mexico by composer and conductor Carlos Chávez in 1928, for performances of the Piano Concerto. Although Copland would not spend any extended time in Mexico until 1932, he returned to Santa Fe in 1977 and 1982 to be part of the Chamber Music Festival held there. He found, both in Chávez and the Mexican people, inspiration and motivation. In a letter to Thomson, Copland revealed, "The best is the people-there's nothing remotely like them in Europe. They are really the 'people'-nothing in them is striving to be bourgeois. (Thompson and Copland pictured) In their overalls and bare feet they are not only poetic but positively 'émouvant.'"⁴² His first-hand experience with Mexicans in overalls came when Chávez took him to a popular night spot called "El Salón México." The score eventually resulting from the experience was one of Copland's most popularly successful, even among the Mexican musicians who premiered it. It seems that Copland shared with the French an affinity for the musical style of a neighboring Hispanic culture. Indeed, he used many of the same earmarks of the "Spanish idiom" to reference Latin America.
- 21. "It took me three years in France to get as close a feeling to the country as I was able to get in these few months in Mexico," Copland wrote to Chávez near the end of his Latin American visit.⁴³ Boosey and Hawkes picked up publication of the work, Ralph Hawkes nicknaming it an "American Bolero." Hoping to further capitalize on the success of the piece, the company decided to commission a piano arrangement of the work in 1941 by a young musician named Leonard Bernstein. Copland's relationship to Bernstein was based on multiple affinities. One of the many substitute fathers who paraded through Bernstein's life, the older man represented everything that Bernstein could become as a composer. There seemed no limit to their shared sympathies and allegiances: both were gay sons of Russian Jews, both were intellectual products of the East Coast, both were concerned with social issues; and both were tireless promoters of an authentic American voice in music. "I went to him as to a magnet because he was *the* American composer and he was the closest thing I ever had to a composition teacher."⁴⁴ Bernstein found in Copland a spiritual and musical role model, and, although the Hispanic was well known

to Bernstein from the standard repertoire and the popular music that surrounded him, the tradition of composition in this style was handed down to him not from Ravel or Rimsky-Korsakov, but from Copland. It was Copland's imprimatur that made the Latin American, the Hispanic, part of an American voice, and that allowed it to meld so comfortably with the many other influences that infuse *West Side Story*. Copland's fingerprints are all over this piece, not least in those tinged with the Hispanic. Copland's *El Salón Mexico* was a work especially important to Bernstein; he actually made two different arrangements of it, one for piano solo, another for two pianos, performing the latter on several occasions with Copland. Later, Bernstein stated that (apart from obvious employment reasons) he made the *Salón* arrangement because he was tired of American pianists using a *Hungarian Rhapsody* for an encore. More than just an effective virtuosic turn, Bernstein's arrangement was intended also to contribute to American content in piano recital programming.⁴⁵ A letter of October 1938 from the Harvard senior to Copland reveals Bernstein's thoughts not just on the piece but also on the issues he would face in his own works for the musical theatre:

I saw the Group Theatre bunch today and they all asked for and about you. Odets, true to form, thinks the Salón Mexico "light," also Mozart except the G Minor Symphony. That angers me terrifically. I wish these people could see that a composer is just as serious when he writes a work, even if the piece is not defeatist (that Worker word again) and Weltschmerzy and misanthropic, and long. Light piece, indeed. I tremble when I think of producing something like the Salón.⁴⁶

- 22. Twenty years later, Bernstein would compose just such a piece. The very obvious and striking similarities between *Salón* and the Hispanic aspects of *West Side Story* suggest that, although Bernstein was certainly exposed to this style through other works in the classical repertoire, the link with Copland was the closest to home and probably the most present in his mind when he sat down to write the "Great American Opera".
- 23. Bernstein had another key and even more direct contact with Latin-American culture. His wife, Chilean-born actress Felicia Monteleagre, accompanied him on a tour of Latin America in the early part of his career,⁴⁷ and he had this to say (publicly) about the music:

The Latin American spirit has other ancestors besides 'Latin' (Spanish and Portuguese) ones. First of all there are Indians—the original inhabitants of these countries, and in some cases very strong civilizations in themselves. And secondly, Africans, a tremendously important influence, at least as important as in our own country. It is the mingling of these different ancestors, influences, and heritages which makes the Latin American spirit what it is, at least in music. The sweet, simple primitiveness of the Indian music mixes with the wild, syncopated, throbbing primitiveness of the African music; and both of these, mixed with the fiery flash of Spanish music and the sentimental sweetness of Portuguese songs, make up the music we know as Latin American.⁴⁸

As Bernstein seems to suggest, the Latin American musical world was in many ways analogous to the American, a connection which Bernstein had recognized (and expounded on at length) in his Harvard senior thesis, "The Absorption of Race Elements into American Music." For Copland, *Salón* was only the first of a number of later works, such as *Billy the Kid* and *Appalachian Spring*, in which he sought a particularly American sound by the adoption of folk material into an art music context. Europe's

fascination with the Hispanic seems to have provided (at the least) pleasantly distracting exotic color or (at most) a close embrace of the "Other." Once it was transplanted to America, however, the Latin American became similar to, if not intrinsically part of, "American" music in general. Along with relating to the non-Hispanic composer of Hispanic music, the American composer shared with real Hispanic composers—in different historical and geographical moments—the desire to forge a national identity while trying to get away from the European mainstream. Albéniz, Granados, Falla, Rodrigo, Ginastera, and Chávez served as good role models for how to do this and also earn international appeal. Copland's and Bernstein's interest in direct musical expression for everyday people—along with their interest in American musical identity—made them more interested than most in the possibilities of this "light" music.

"I am so easily Assimilated"

24. Bernstein's first major attempt to meld these serious and popular elements in a theatrical context came in *Candide*. It was also Bernstein's first large-scale attempt at the "Great American Opera" of which he dreamed and which *West Side Story* would, in its own way, become.⁴⁹ Although commercially and artistically less successful than anticipated, *Candide* continued the vein of eclecticism most evident in *Trouble in Tahiti*. Among the parodies of different operatic and musical theater styles is Bernstein's caricature of the Hispanic, "I Am Easily Assimilated." Clearly this is a song Bernstein called his own; in a work notorious for the number of collaborative forces involved (five librettists in the original version, not counting the much later additions by Wheeler and Sondheim), the composer wrote both text and music:

I was not born in sunny Hispania. My father came from Rovno Gubernya But now I'm here, I'm dancing a tango: Di dee di! Dee di dee di! I am easily assimilated. I am so easily assimilated.

I never learned a human language. My father spoke a High Middle Polish. In one half-hour I'm talking in Spanish: Por favor! Toreador! I am easily assimilated. I am so easily assimilated.

It's easy, it's ever so easy! I'm Spanish, I'm suddenly Spanish!

And you must be Spanish, too. Do like the natives do. These days you have to be In the majority. Tus labios rubí, Dos rosas que se abren a mí Conquistan mi corazón, Yo sólo con Una canción

Mis labios rubí, Drei viertel Takt, Mon très cher ami, Oui oui, sí sí, Ja ja ja, yes yes, da da, Je ne sais quoi!

Me muero, me saleuna hernia! A long way from Rovno Gubernya! Mis labios rubí, Dos rosas qui se abren a tí, Conquistan tu corazón, Y sólo con Una divina canción De mis labios rubí

25. The lyric alone is typical of Bernstein in general and *Candide* in particular in its wit, humor, and breadth of allusion. The eclecticism of the language-switching between German, French, Spanish, Russian-defines not only the assimilation of the Old Lady, but also the phoniness that characterizes her. Faking her way through a number of situations and cultures, she has survived by her ability to assimilate into any milieu. In the spirit of the political climate into which Candide fell, her admonition that "These days you have to be in the majority" fits in perfectly with the comic-cynical mood of the work as a whole. In all, what would be a Carmen Miranda-style production number in which virile males deify a seductive female lead is made into an absurd parody of a peripatetic Jewish mother figure who constantly reminds us that she is endowed with only "one buttock." In musical terms, too, the number functions as a stereotypical example of the Hispanic à la Bernstein. The orchestration is full of Spanish style features: the tambourine, the duet of English horn and piccolo, the heaviness and loudness of the brass and winds, the trombone glissandi, and the *pesante* string writing all point to the Hispanic. (Hear an excerpt) Also the mode, with raised 4th scale degree and flatted 7th, and the abundance of parallel chromatic major-third intervals are all stereotypical Spanish elements, as is the syncopated rhythm underlying the entire song (3 + 3 + 2 eighth notes in a 4/4 meter). It is, even in its comic context, a flashy dance

number providing local color; and it obeys the form of the Broadway song, a reminder that we are still in America, not sunny Hispania.

- 26. However, on a musical and thematic level, the song can also be read as Jewish. The mode is not unlike the hebraic formulas Bernstein employed in his Jewish works, notably the Kaddish and Jeremiah symphonies. The repeated note, often approached from above or below by an appoggiatura, is one of the features of Spanish music which, prominent scholars argued at the time, was inherited from Jewish chant,⁵⁰ and the orchestration—the English horn and piccolo sounded together—is not unlike the instrumentation of a Klezmer band. This similarity could not have been far from Bernstein's mind; although in the published score the number is simply entitled "I Am Easily Assimilated" with the tempo marking "Moderato", the composer's facsimile reads "Old Lady's Jewish Tango" with the marking "Moderato Hassidicamente." Even the composer's sketched-in orchestration dictates those aspects of the piece which make it sound both Hispanic and, to use Bernstein's term, "Hassidic."
- 27. The number sends up not just the Old Lady, but aspects of Bernstein's own image. The reference to "Rovno Gubernya" is no doubt an approximate allusion to the composer's father's roots, the "High Middle Polish" (a takeoff on the standard linguistic term "High Middle German") is likewise a reference to Bernstein's Jewish/Eastern European roots. The same may be said of the admonition, not just political but cultural, to fit in with a "majority." The constant shifting of languages, the ability to learn Spanish in "one-half hour" both celebrates Bernstein's verbal and musical acuity and reflects his predicament of being constantly pulled from one kind of musical expression to another.
- 28. Of course, the combination of the Jewish and Spanish was not an unusual one. Although Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492, they took many Spanish songs with them, combining Jewish chant with originally Spanish material. Recordings from the early twentieth century document the fact that Sephardic Jews in New York were still performing Spanish songs.⁵¹ But even in the New World, the Latin and Hassidic were closely related. The Jewish theaters of East Harlem were turning Latin, and a large number of the audiences for Latin bands were Jewish.⁵² As white bands had started taking over Latin music, many of the bandleaders and musicians were Jews, notably Alfredo Mendez, whose real name was Mendelsohn; and each of the succeeding generations produced its own important Jewish Latin bandleaders.⁵³ Of course, "I Am Easily Assimilated" was not the only send-up Jewish number in this highly irreverent score.

"I was not born in sunny *Hispania*..."

29. In retrospect, it seems odd that the Jewish tradition did not provide sufficient artistic inspiration for Bernstein to make some headway on a Jewish vs. Catholic score. Having grown up with a father devoted to his Hasidic ancestry and actively involved in the Conservative Jewish congregation of Mishkan Tefila in suburban Roxbury, Massachusetts, Bernstein was surrounded by a rich and regular diet of Jewish liturgical

music, from recordings of cantors on 78-rpm records to weekly meetings at the synagogue. The composer has credited his exposure to this tradition as one of the most important musical influences of his childhood. One arrangement by the temple's organist and choirmaster, Solomon G. Braslavsky, Bernstein describes as the first time he "discovered that there was such a thing as counterpoint: great obbligatos floating on high. 'Arrangement' is too small a word. It was a great composition. I knew every note of it because I heard it every year: it was like an opera."⁵⁴ Indeed, whether inspired by his own faith or as a gesture toward this heritage, Bernstein's compositional output is weighted heavily toward the Jewish. From a setting of Psalm 148 in 1932 (one of his first compositions) to "Oif Mayn Khas'neh" in his last work, Arias and Barcarolles, Bernstein had explored Jewish themes and musical styles in at least ten compositions, including two of his most substantial orchestral works, the first and third symphonies. By the mid-1950s, the works he had already written in this vein must have calmed any serious doubts that he may have held that he could employ Jewish material to communicate in a musically meaningful way. Nor was he unaware of the tremendous power born from the integration of current practices with a Jewish sensibility, so apparent (as he himself noted) in the creative works of his own hero, Mahler.⁵⁵ Still, although Mahler would influence West Side Story in other ways, he didn't provide a good primary model for a work steeped in the violence and grittiness of working-class youth on New York City's East Side.

30. It was probably more the timeliness of the theme and the influence of Jerome Robbins and Arthur Laurents than the result of an inner struggle that mitigated against Bernstein's following a Jewish/Catholic theme. "The East Side wasn't what it used to be, therefore the idea was old-fashioned-it would have been Abie's Irish Rose all over again and not very topical."⁵⁶ Although Robbins was the only choreographer ever to commission a work from Bernstein, it was not until Dybbuk (1974) that he set any of the composer's Jewish-inspired music to dance. Robbins commissioned Fancy Free (first performed in 1944) and Facsimile (1946) for his Ballet Theatre but had also found the composer's symphonic repertoire conducive to a dance treatment, setting the Age of Anxiety Symphony for the New York City Ballet in 1950. These early works were set in the jazzy, urban style which Bernstein cultivated after his move to New York City in the 1940s and that was aptly suited to the subject material.⁵⁷ The story lines of the Robbins/Bernstein ballets were driven by the adventures and mores of modern-day urbanites, not conflict on a grand scale. It was clearly this urbane, sophisticated style that answered Robbins' desire for a youthful and, moreover, violent gang world, but the basic dichotomy necessary to tell the story was not an obvious outgrowth of jazz, itself a synthesis of a number of different elements. "I had a strong feeling of staleness of the East Side situation and I didn't like the too-angry, too-bitchy, too-vulgar tone of it," Bernstein recalled.⁵⁸ But, without religion, there was no essential difference left between these New York Montagues and Capulets, and without a musical representation of difference, there would be no musical way to represent the conflict. The Hispanic element provided that difference; but how would Bernstein adapt the rather hackneved and stereotypical aspects of the Hispanic, which are precisely what make Candide's "I Am Easily Assimilated" work as a comic number, to suit the far more serious demands

of a musical tragedy? The way in which Bernstein was able to integrate this element into the fabric of the score is indeed one of the great achievements of *West Side Story*

"Tempo di Huapango (Fast)"

- 31. The most overtly Hispanic number is the (rather ironically titled) song "America," which describes the Puerto Rican adaptation to American life. The conflation of the Hispanic and exotic with the feminine is notable in this number. One could convincingly argue that the Puerto Ricans are given no real "voice" within the context of the musical; "America" is the Sharks' only dance number or song independent of the Jets. The number seems to correct this omission, and yet the stage version features only the Shark women. The allure of the Spanish skirt dancing on which this number capitalizes gives it a choreorgraphic raison d'etre. On another level, though, the worldliness and maturity of the women, evinced both by musical subtlety and clever lyrics, sets them apart from the "kids" who seem to populate the story. The film version adds men, making it more colorful and more filled with sexual tension; the various ways that female characters negotiate the traditions of 'home' and the realities of 'here' in the stage production are rendered instead as a conflict between men as upholders of traditional culture and women all seeming equally eager to cast aside the old ways and assimilate into the melting pot. In Robbins' original notes to composer and lyricist, he suggests that the number should either be an argument between Anita and Rosalia or one between Anita and her lover, Sharks leader Bernardo. At the bottom of the page, Robbins scribbles a further instruction that perhaps the male/female dichotomy is the best. For whatever reasons this was changed in the original version, it seems that perhaps Robbins was able to reinstate his original intention within the film version (which he co-directed with Robert Wise).
- 32. "America" is a kind of second-generation "I Am Easily Assimilated," treating the same subject matter in a way not dissimilar to its *Candide* predecessor. Here Bernstein keeps some of the more vital aspects of the Hispanic, and seems to treat it more "seriously," at least to the extent that it is the most authentically Hispanic piece in the score. The number is an amalgam of two Latin American traditions: it combines the indigenous *Mexican* form, the *huapango* with the Puerto Rican genre of the *seis*. The *huapango* was more than a dance for two people or groups of pairs; the term was also used to describe a genre: a type of dance party popular in South America. The essence of the huapango is its fast tempo and complex cross-rhythms: one instrument plays in 2/4, another 3/4, and a third 6/8.⁵⁹ This is precisely what Bernstein presents in the first bars of this number, adding as a tempo indication "Tempo di 'Seis.'" The seis was yet another form of Puerto Rican origin, although it also cropped up in Venezuela and Columbia. Taking its name from the guitar ("Six string") which accompanies it, the seis is an accompanied vocal piece in several stanzas of varying numbers of 6- or 8-syllable lines. The binary structure includes brief instrumental interludes performed usually by a guitar in strict V-I harmony with percussion accompaniment, followed by often unaccompanied, unmeasured text delivery.⁶⁰ The seis was not only one of the most popular of Puerto Rican forms, but also the most indebted to its Spanish heritage. Although there are no

unaccompanied sections to Bernstein's *seis*, he does borrow a technique from the subcategory of the seis de bomba (a bomba being a verbal blow aimed at one of the singer's audience members). Rosalia's nostalgic reminiscences of her homeland are countered with Anita's bombas. Anita does not even allow Rosalia to finish her 16-bar vocal, before jumping in two measures early with a sarcastic parody of Rosalia's sincere outpouring (Bernstein marks Anita's phrase "mockingly"). Anita then extends her own reportage of life in Puerto Rico with 4 extra bars of punctuated outcries (Bernstein instructs them to be performed "rhythmically") about the downside of life in the old country. Although the vocal line is certainly set in notated rhythm, the "unmeasured" aspect of this slow prelude does resemble the spirit, if not the letter, of the seis. Bernstein has also scored the piece fairly authentically: Spanish guitar, claves and guiro (the latter two essential to Latin American music, both in its authentic form and its North American counterparts). Even the piano/vocal score indicates the use of claves and guiro for the rhythmic "vamp" which precedes this number proper, an unusual indication considering that these instruments would likely not be part of the rehearsal pianist's percussion arsenal.⁶¹

- 33. The purpose of "America" is clearly to provide an opportunity for a dance number, and, although ostensibly addressing cultural problems, it would be ridiculous to imagine that it attempts to address social ills any more than "I Am Easily Assimilated" is a commentary on the Diaspora. However, the big comic number in this recurringly serious musical is "Officer Krupke," and it remains interesting that the cleverness of the lyric, the cynicism yet worldliness and insight presented in the song is the domain of the male, the white gang, not the Puerto Rican females. It also stops the show, long after we have forgotten the excitement of Anita's skirt-swirling dance display in "America."
- 34. The Dance at the Gym, another ripe site of Latin American influence, is even more intriguing, in that it performs its dramatic and emotional function without the aid of the ubiquitous Broadway lyric. Here we see Bernstein and Robbins create a framing device within which the mystical meeting of the two lovers takes place. Although the Dance scene begins in the "Puerto Rican" locale of the bridal shop, the musical segue (both in the stage version, and simulated through cinematic effects in the film version) takes us immediately into the "white" jazz world of the dance hall. From here on we see layers in which one Hispanically tinged section gives way to one which is even more so; the emotions of the characters and their conflict becomes more intense as they become more Hispanic. The "Promenade" (marked in a Tempo di Paso Doble) opens with a fanfare which seems clearly to mock the pompous attitude of the Master of Ceremonies, a character named (appropriately) Glad Hand. The heavy, repetitive, monotonous nature of this vamp-like interlude (Bernstein has even marked it "pesante") seems to be almost "pseudo-Hispanic." It ends with the standard "Cha Cha Cha" rhythm on the tonic note. Robbed of the rhythmic vitality and color of Latin jazz and Hispanic pop music, the drudgery of this section is clear both from the dull instrumentation and the plodding steps of the youths. It is Latin music as their parents might listen (or dance) to it. The decision to buck authority leads the two gangs suddenly into the "Mambo" section, and here we find the most vital and, in many ways, most Hispanic sections of the score. The instrumentation (bongos, cowbells, trumpets) takes its inspiration from the Latin jazz

band. The interpolated cries of "Mambo!" by the two gangs are a direct descendant of the flamenco tradition in which dancers are urged on by their enthusiastic onlookers. A "Cuadro Flamenco" is a kind of dance party in which groups form a semicircle and take turns performing as soloists.⁶² In fact, this is exactly what Robbins's dancers do; each gang forms a semi-circle around it's own dance performers who try to outdo the other "team." Certainly the average amateur dance enthusiast would not be able to execute Robbins's choreography, but the dance moves are based on conventions of Latin social dancing. Although the predominantly minor mode of the section has resonances in the "Spanish idiom" scale, the Hispanic is most clearly embodied here through the complex rhythm of the mambo.

- 35. When we reach the moment of the deepest, though also restrained, emotion, the Cha-Cha serves to represent the awakening feelings in the couple. Although not by nature a refined dance, the Cha-Cha here is stylized to such an extent that it has almost a "minuet" feel in this context. The spare orchestration, the periodic phrase structure; even a binary form with open and closed cadence points, is mirrored in the courtly dance style adopted by the young lovers. The tune, of course, we will hear only minutes later as "Maria." The dream-like world of the Cha-Cha is soon impinged upon by the steadily increasing tempo and volume of the Paso Doble, the outside world. Once we hear the sound of Glad Hand's whistle, we are instantly brought back into the everyday world. All Hispanic influence is gone, and we suddenly hear a very laid-back, cool "Jump." Clearly, the world of the Hispanic represents not just the passion of the dance contest, but the otherworldliness of the love relationship. As Tony re-enters the dream-like state of the initial meeting (and as the walls of the gym literally fly out of the scene), we hear the melody of the Cha-Cha, but now with the rhythmic underpinnings of the seis-the same type that underlies "America." In fact, the song "Maria," always referred to as a Cha-Cha, is not one at all, but a seis. The freely rhythmic opening section (even marked "slowly and freely" in the score) follows the same procedure that we later hear in "America"; and the accompaniment to "Maria" is identical (although the scoring is completely different): dotted "habanera" rhythm in the bass, combination of duple and triple meters in the melody and inner voices. At the same time, like "I Am Easily Assimilated," the song adheres to a fairly standard song form (with the exception that the orchestra takes over some of the inner repetitions from the singer). The reason we don't hear this song as overtly Hispanic is mostly due to the scoring; the exotic percussion instrumentation and guitar of "America" are missing here; instead we get lush, soaring string sound. The whole combination of elements beautifully reflects the way in which Maria and her Hispanic world have infiltrated the predominantly "white" milieu into which Tony fits.
- 36. Although interest in *West Side Story* has remained high since the film version catapulted it to worldwide attention in the early 1960s, the Latin American musical and cultural craze of the late 1990s seems to have added some luster to *West Side Story*'s legacy. A recent CD compilation, entitled "The Songs of *West Side Story*," features artists as diverse as Little Richard and the late Tejana singer Selena, each rendering a song in a different style. Emphasis here is not so much on the Hispanic aspects (with the exception of Selena's "A Boy Like That") as on integrating the original score with the

greatest variety of current popular music styles. In a similar vein, the GAP clothing company launched a print and television ad campaign in the spring of 2000, featuring versions of "America," "Cool," and "Mambo." The ads hinge less on the cultural signs of the Hispanic as on the audience's immediate acceptance of these particular dance scenes as embodying 1950s zeitgeist.

- 37. The advertisements at no point make any explicit reference to *West Side Story*. Even for the uninitiated viewer, the music and dance are presumably sufficient to conjure 1950s "cool." Even the large print advertisements need no further link to the original; the dance gesture of a crouched jump, accompanied by straight-down arms and finger snapping, is enough to identify the allusion. Robbins's original choreography is simulated in these truncated dance scenes, along with more modern head-tossing gestures that seem to have been borrowed from a later time period. The music is similarly edited to render the most distinct musical themes within the time constraints of a television commercial.
- 38. One of the most interesting aspects of the ads is how closely they correspond to the film as opposed to the stage musical. The reference in the print ad is bolstered by the inclusion of a dead ringer for film principal Richard Beymer (Pictured with Natalie Wood). The lighting of scenes, as well as the camera angles, simulate the analogous scenes in the film *West Side Story*. The ending to the number "Cool" provides a perfect example. In a departure from the stage musical, this relocated number in the film features the character Ice looking at the tenement neighbors who represent the censorious adult world. The same gesture and camera angle are used in the GAP ad to end the commercial spot. Whom, in the year 2000, does Ice address? The consumers of a primarily conservative and populist clothing line which the ad attempts to sell? In truth, the similarity of the "Cool," "Mambo," and "America" ads to one another fix them in a generic 1950s culture (filtered through the Hollywood musical film genre) in which gesture, dance, and music have lost much of their original meaning and have become iconic in the largest sense.

"The best of all possible worlds"

39. Although *Candide* failed for a number of different reasons, one thing which prevented it from being Bernstein's "Great American Opera" was that in many ways it was not American enough: the parodies of Gilbert & Sullivan, European operetta, and a number of other styles detracted from anything that seemed truly indigenous. *Candide* was American in its eclecticism and its worldly, cynical, yet hip world view, but not in its overall sound. (One problem was the locale, or plethora of locales in *Candide; West Side Story* stays very firmly in one, uniformly American, locale). Everyone could "understand it," as Bernstein had hoped, but not everyone could relate to it. The expansiveness, those open Copland-esque chords, the pioneering spirit of "Make Our Garden Grow" comes too late. The "too bitchy, too vulgar" tone which put Bernstein off the original concept of *East Side Story* was also what robbed *Candide* of its earnestness too early in the piece. Surely, "earnestness" would seem a foremost requirement in the creation of a Great American musical identity. With *West Side Story*, the eclecticism is just as

pervasive, and the exoticism just as striking, but the absorption and dovetailing of these features into each other allows that ethnicity to seem less "quoted"-it sounds American while still allowing for "difference" between the warring factions. And no doubt, the reason the Hispanic works so well in this context is because it can represent unity and disunity at once. This effect could only be achieved if the Hispanic were part of a larger body of repertoires, of in fact all repertoires within the American musical mainstream. In effect, the Hispanicism in all aspects of the work function like an "accent;" the musical and verbal style does not represent the "real language" of Puerto Ricans, just as their lives are not portrayed accurately in other ways in this piece. This results in two things: the "difference" of the Hispanic is less threatening to the audience, and it is more easily disguised within the other sources and styles which inform the work. In Benjamin Britten's opera Paul Bunyan, the use of a solo folk-song-style singer with guitar to narrate past events is a logical and authentic way of presenting the American legend it attempts to portray. The acoustic guitar is not the sole domain of the American folk artist, nor is the ballad style a foreign one to the composer's culture; and yet this whole number sticks out like of the rest of the work and seems strained and somewhat unnatural. Even though that is an "ethnic" opera for Britten, there seems something too literal and realistic about that representation of "Americanness" which prevents that number from coming across to an audience. In the same way, having enlisted real Puerto Rican music, language, or culture would have seemed just as "obvious" and forced in West Side Story.

- 40. Although the Hispanicism of *West Side Story* grew out of varied sources, it served in its own way to perpetuate a style that was, by the late 1950s, starting to decline. Shortly after the release of the film version, an album called "Kenton's West Side Story" appeared on the Columbia label. Kenton, one of the big band leaders who had introduced the Latin style long before Bernstein, recorded an entire album of jazz reworkings of the songs, including the Prologue. Kenton's nouveau-*West Side* included the most obvious Spanish numbers, "America" and "Dance at the Gym." Strangely enough, the remake of "America" was in some ways more authentic than Bernstein's original, a kind of second generation of the very anglicized Latin music that Kenton had originally promoted. In a similar vein, Copland's *Three Latin American Sketches*, which were really two sketches augmented by a third movement for publication in the 1970s, sounds more like Bernstein's score than Copland's earlier dabbling in this style. Perhaps both recognized in the composer's creation something which was more than just the "Latin tinge," something more American.
- 41. But there are other, more subtle resonances behind the adoption of the Hispanic. Take these two accounts, from the late 1950s:

Gilbert Chase on Copland's music:

[Copland's *Salón*] has caught a bit of color and movement that strikes like a flash of lightning through the drab cerebralism of academic modernism.⁶³

and on the music of Spanish composer Mompou:

Mompou himself has defined his aesthetic ideal as tending toward an intimate type of musical expression, the cultivation of music in a state of purity, motivated by a purposeful reaction against the "cerebralism" dominant in our epoch. He reacts against the "music of the laboratory," seeking a true form of expression in a lyrical feeling enriched by the musical experience of the past.⁶⁴

Aaron Copland:

My turn to a simpler style in *El Salón* and other pieces that followed puzzled some of my colleagues. Roger Sessions did not approve of my move to a "popular" style, nor did Arthur Berger. After *El Salón*, I occasionally had the strange sensation of being divided in half—the austere, intellectual modernist on one side; the accessible, popular composer on the other.⁶⁵

Purity, truth, cerebralism? It seems that the dichotomy drawn between "intellectual" modernism and "true" (indeed "pure") feeling at mid-century finds an interesting outgrowth in the Hispanic. The popularity of the "Spanish idiom" was certainly felt in the concert hall, but its representative pieces would hardly have made it into the canon of great masterworks. Nor would its styles have been taught in composition classes. Copland's reception as a composer would have been quite different had he eschewed the "popular" in his *oeuvre*. We can see how Bernstein has incorporated the Hispanic elements, and yet West Side Story has not gone down in history as "that Spanish musical." Even Joseph Swain, in his survey of the greatest of Broadway musicals, assigns West Side Story to the chapter "Tragedy as Musical" instead of "Ethnic Musical" (the chapter given to *Fiddler on the Roof*).⁶⁶ It seems that, in many ways, the dissonance of the score, the violence of the story, and the economy of the spoken dialogue and dance numbers mitigate against the languid, emotional qualities which were deemed quintessentially Hispanic. The very quick cutting from Hispanic to non-Hispanic (take the segue from "America" to "Cool," and the close proximity of the subsections of Dance at the Gym) keeps the Hispanic element in its place. It never escapes long enough to take over the score, and yet many of its rhythmic and harmonic aspects (the tritone as a melodic interval is, scholars have noted, a frequent feature of "Spanish idiom" music) allow a sense of continuity throughout the work. The universal appeal of this Hispanic "Americanism" is perhaps best explained by Chávez, himself deeply interested in this issue. "The feeling of universality is not new in history. Localism also has existed always, but with the limitations of fear, or poverty of spirit. For this reason, it has been an error to seek the originality of American art by way of nationalism inspired in localisms and limitations. No. The American is as universal as the rest."⁶

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1. Leonard Bernstein to Arthur Laurents, quoted in Otis L. Guernsey, *Broadway Song and Story: Playwrights/Lyricists/Composers Discuss Their Hits* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1985), 42.

2. Quoted in Guernsey, *Broadway*, 42 and Craig Zadan, *Sondheim & Co.* (New York: Harper, 1989), 15.

3. Quoted in "Excerpts from a *West Side Story* Log" in *Findings* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982), 145.

4. For the purposes of the general discussion, I will use the more wide-ranging "Hispanic," which refers to the people, language, and culture of Spain, Portugal and Latin America, as opposed to the more limiting "Spanish", "Latino," or "South American," although these other terms will appear where appropriate.

5. A front page *New York Times* story of May 1955 juxtaposed the victim, a "good student" at Mount St. Michael Academy and son of a prominent member of the community with his accused murderer, Mark Santana. Although gang rivalry was in general blamed for the murder, Santana and the Hispanic names of his gang friends were documented, along with Santana's inexplicable lack of remorse over the incident. The story followed one in which the Mayor urged an overhaul of the police force to deal with youth crime (*New York Times*, May 2, 1955, Sec. 1, p. 1).

6. The Puerto Rican Study, 1953-1957; A Report on the Education and Adjustment of Puerto Rican Pupils in the Public Schools or the City of New York (New York Board of Education, 1958); New York University Graduate School of Public Administration and Social Service, The Impact of Puerto Rican Migration on Governmental Services in New York City (New York: New York University Press, 1957); Conference on the Spiritual Care of Puerto Rican Migrants (Report on the First held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, April 11th to 16th, 1955. (New York: Office of the Coordinator of Spanish-American Catholic Action at the Chancery Office of the New York Archdiocese, 1955); Beatrice Bishop Berle, 80 Puerto Rican Families in New York City: Health and Disease Studied in Context (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958).

7. Here I will refer to Puerto Ricans as immigrants, since this more accurately reflects the light in which they were seen by New Yorkers during this period.

8. Virginia E. Sánchez Korrol, *From Colonia to Community: The History of Puerto Ricans in New York City*, 1917-1948 (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983), 35.

9. Lawrence Chenault, *The Puerto Rican Migrant in New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938).

10. Dan Wakefield, *Island in the City: Puerto Ricans in New York* (New York: Corinth, 1959). Numerous general studies of Hispanic groups in the United States emerged during this period, for instance: John H. Burma, *Spanish-speaking groups in the United States*. Duke University Press Sociological Series No. 9 (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1954). Benjamin Malzberg, *Mental Disease Among the Puerto Rican Population of New York State, 1960-61* (Albany: Research Foundation for Mental Hygiene, 1965); Joseph Fitzpatrick, *Puerto Rican Americans: The Meaning of Migration to the Mainland* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971).

11. Korrol, 35.; Luis A. Cardona: *The Coming of the Puerto Ricans* (Washington: Unidos, 1974). Edward B. Lockett, *The Puerto Rico Problem* (New York: Exposition Press, 1964); Nathan Glazer, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1963)

12. For instance, José Hernández Álvarez, "The Movement and Settlement of Puerto Rican Migrants within the United States, 1950-1960", *International Migration* Review 2, No. 2 (Spring, 1968), 40-51 and Edward B. Lockett, *The Puerto Rico Problem* (New York: Exposition Press, 1964).

13. Oscar Lewis, *La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty—San Juan and New York* (New York: Random House, 1966); Clarence Senior, *The Puerto Ricans: Strangers—Then Neighbours* (New York: Random House, 1966, reprinted 1968 and 1969).

14. Piri Thomas's *Down These Mean Streets* (New York: Knopf, 1967) and *Memoirs of Bernardo Vega: A Contribution to the History of the Puerto Rican Community in New York* (NY: Monthly Review Press, 1984). Other English-language memoirs on growing up Puerto Rican emerged from the 1960s on.

15. Nuñez made this statement at a luncheon attended by 500 people in 1955, quoted in the *New York Times*, April 17, 1955, Sec. 1, P.77

16. Most literature emphasized the cultural differences between white America and Puerto Rican, but also fostered a false sense of the "newness" of the migrant population. For example, see Oscar Handlin, *The Newcomers: Negroes and Puerto Ricans in a Changing Metropolis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959) and C. Wright Mills, *New York's Newest Migrants* (New York: Harper, 1950).

17. Elena Padilla, *Up From Puerto Rico* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958); Christopher Rand, *The Puerto Ricans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958).

18. Carmine G. DeSapio, quoted in the *New York Times* of June 12, 1955, Sec. 1, P. 15, at a dinner honoring Antonio Mendez, the first Puerto Rican to become a democratic leader in Manhattan.

19. United States Congress Senate Committee on the Judiciary. Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency. Juvenile Delinquency: New York Programs for the Prevention and Treatment of Juvenile Delinquency. Hearing before the Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency of the Committee on the Judiciary (December 4, 1957); Marjorie Rittwagen, Sins of Their Fathers (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958).

20. Stephen J. Dubner, "The Pop Perfectionist," *New York Times Magazine*, November 9, 1997, p. 45. Almost 40 years later, the Capeman case became the inspiration for a musical by the same name composed by pop artist Paul Simon. Attempting to integrate Latin American music with his own style, Simon spent seven years on the project, approximately the same amount of time

that collaborators took to create *West Side Story*. *The Capeman* opened on Broadway in January 1998 to generally horrendous reviews and closed two months later, losing \$11 million for its investors.

21. During this period, both the problems but also the ethnic identities of Puerto Ricans and African Americans were often conflated, factoring into a larger racial picture in both New York City and the entire United States to which *West Side Story* (in both musical and cultural ways) spoke.

22. The early stages of this development are chronicled in Ruth Glasser's *My Music Is My Flag: Puerto Rican Musicians and Their New York Communities, 1917-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

23. Sometimes referred to as the "Spanish" tinge, this style appears in Morton's works from the 1920s on.

24. Machito established the "Afro-Cubans" in the early 1940s in New York City, the first big band of this kind, but the style was associated with Gillespie throughout his career.

25. Gunther Schuller, "Afro-Cuban Jazz", *New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, Vol. I (London: Macmillan, 1988), 7.

26. John Storm Roberts, The Latin Tinge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 108.

27. Roberts, Tinge. 87.

28. The mambo was a variation on the rumba, and the cha cha was a further development of the mambo. The merengue was actually a dance hailing from Venezuela, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic but was influenced by Afro-Cuban dance styles.

29. Prado's release of *Rockambo* in 1961 probably signaled the demise of the genre, along with its success in fusing with newer pop music styles.

30. Perez Prado, Mambos for Piano (New York: Southern Music Publishing Company, 1955).

31. Roberts, *Tinge*, 113.

32. The mambo is a couples dance in which the partners either stand completely apart or in an embrace with space between their bodies. It is characterized by forward and backward steps and a dance step which begins, rather unusually, on the fourth beat of a 4/4 measure. Contrast this with the style of and furor over the later *lambada*.

33. Freddie Sateriale's Big Band, *Broadway Latin American Party: Cha chas, Merengues and Mambos* (Newark: Pirouette Records, 1956). Other titles from this album include "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes Cha Cha Cha" and "I Love Paris Cha Cha Cha."

34. Gilbert Chase, The Music of Spain, (New York: Dover, 1959)

35. Debussy's "Soirée dans Grenade" from *Estampes* and "Iberia" from *Images*; Ravel's *Habanera*, *Rapsodie Espagnole*, *L'Heure Espagnole*, *Bolero*, *Alborada del Gracioso* and others.

36. For a contemporary view of the popularity of the Hispanic in music of the early century, see Carl Van Vechten's *The Music of Spain* (New York: Knopf, 1918).

37. The "Pseudo-Hispanic" is another colorful but apt description coined by Gilbert Chase.

38. Quoted in Aaron Copland and Vivian Perlis, *Copland: 1900 Through 1942* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 62.

39. Reprinted in its entirety in Bernstein, Findings, pp. 36-99.

40. In describing the finale from his ballet *Grohg*, excerpts of which were later adapted into his *Dance Symphony*, Copland refers to rapid alternations of 5/4, 3/4 and 3/8, not unlike those of Latin American music. His *Short Symphony* was also noted for its rhythmic complexity, mostly the result of the same kinds of metric shifts; it was dedicated to Latin American composer Carlos Chávez.

41. Vivian Perlis interview with Virgil Thomson, quoted in Perlis, Copland: 1900, 200.

42. Letter to Virgil Thomon 5 December 1932, quoted in Perlis, Copland: 1900, 214.

43. Aaron Copland in a letter to Chávez 2 January 1933, quoted Perlis, Copland: 1900, p. 216.

44. Bernstein interview (date unknown) excerpted in television documentary *Reaching for the Note*, 1998.

45. John Gruen, liner notes to *Bernstein: Complete Works for Solo Piano*. Pro Arte PAD 109, 1983.

46. Letter from Leonard Bernstein to Aaron Copland, 20 October 1938.

47. Among Latin American compositions Bernstein recorded were Fernández's *Batuque*, Guarnieri's *Dansa brasileira*, Revueltas's *Sensemayá*, and Chávez"s *Sinfonía India*, all recently reissued on Sony's "Bernstein Century" series as *Latin American Fiesta*.

48.Leonard Bernstein, liner notes reprinted in Latin American Fiesta.

49. Bernstein wrote on the creation of the great American opera in 1948, reproduced in *Findings*, p. 129.

50. Chase, Spain, 224.

51. Chase, *Spain*, 36.

52. Roberts, *Tinge*, 88.

53. Roberts, *Tinge*, 91-92.

54. Humphrey Burton *Leonard Bernstein*, (New York: Doubleday, 1994, p. 9, quoted from a BBC-TV/Unitel film "Childhood." Also on Bernstein's early experiences with Jewish music, see Joan Peyser, *Bernstein: A Biography* (New York: William Morrow, 1987) and Meryle Secrest, *Leonard Bernstein* (New York: Knopf, 1994).

55. Bernstein discusses this in an essay on Mahler, reproduced in Findings, p. 255-64.

56. Quoted Zadan, 14.

57. Indeed, Bernstein's most jazz-inspired compositions have received the most frequent dance settings over his career, at least six choreographed versions of *Prelude, Fugue and Riffs* alone. For a more complete list of Bernstein works adapted for the dance, see Gottlieb's *Leonard Bernstein: A Complete Catalogue of His Works* (New York: Jalni, 1988).

58. Zadan, 15.

59. Pan American Union, *Music of Latin America* (Washington: General Secretariat of the Organization of American States, 1963), 13.

60. Jorg Duany, "Popular Music in Puerto Rico: Toward an Anthropology of *Salsa*", *Latin American Music Review* 5/2 (Fall/Winter 1984), 190.

61. Very few instrumentation cues are provided in the piano/vocal score, published by Boosey and Hawkes.

62. Chase, 226.

63. Chase, 304.

64. Chase, 320

65. Copland in Perlis, 245-251.

66. Joseph P. Swain, The Broadway Musical (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

67. Carlos Chávez, 1952, quoted in Ann Livermore, *A Short History of Spanish* Music (London: Duckworth, 1972), 244.