



Famed Conductor Focus Of Exhibit At National Museum Of American Jewish History

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PHILADELPHIA (CBS) — One of the first conductors born and educated in the U.S. to receive worldwide acclaim is the focus of an exhibition at the National Museum of American Jewish History, highlighting his life, identity and social activism.

“Leonard Bernstein, The Power of Music” features artifacts and photographs, even his personal piano, in a multi-media format.

“When asked if there was one central theme to his body of original works, Leonard Bernstein said that he was always ‘searching for a solution to the 20th century crisis of faith,’” said curator Ivy Weingram.

Two of Bernstein’s three grown children, Alexander and Nina, were at the opening. Alexander calls that “crisis of faith” line “brilliant.”

“It brings to together his legacy as composer, conductor, educator and social activist,” said Alexander.

It’s one of 2,500 events during the worldwide centennial celebration of Lenny’s birthday, according to museum CEO Ivy Barsky.

“Telling the story of a first generation American child of immigrants who changed the face of musical history, through a unique Jewish lens, introducing new aspects of his music and his life,” said Barsky.

One question was whether they inherited their father’s musical genes, like playing the piano.

“No, we all took lessons and we all failed,” said Alexander.

Nina added, “Abysmal failure.”

But they did inherit Bernstein’s education gene as all three children went to Harvard. Alexander only admits to “attending.”

The Bernstein exhibition is on view through early September.