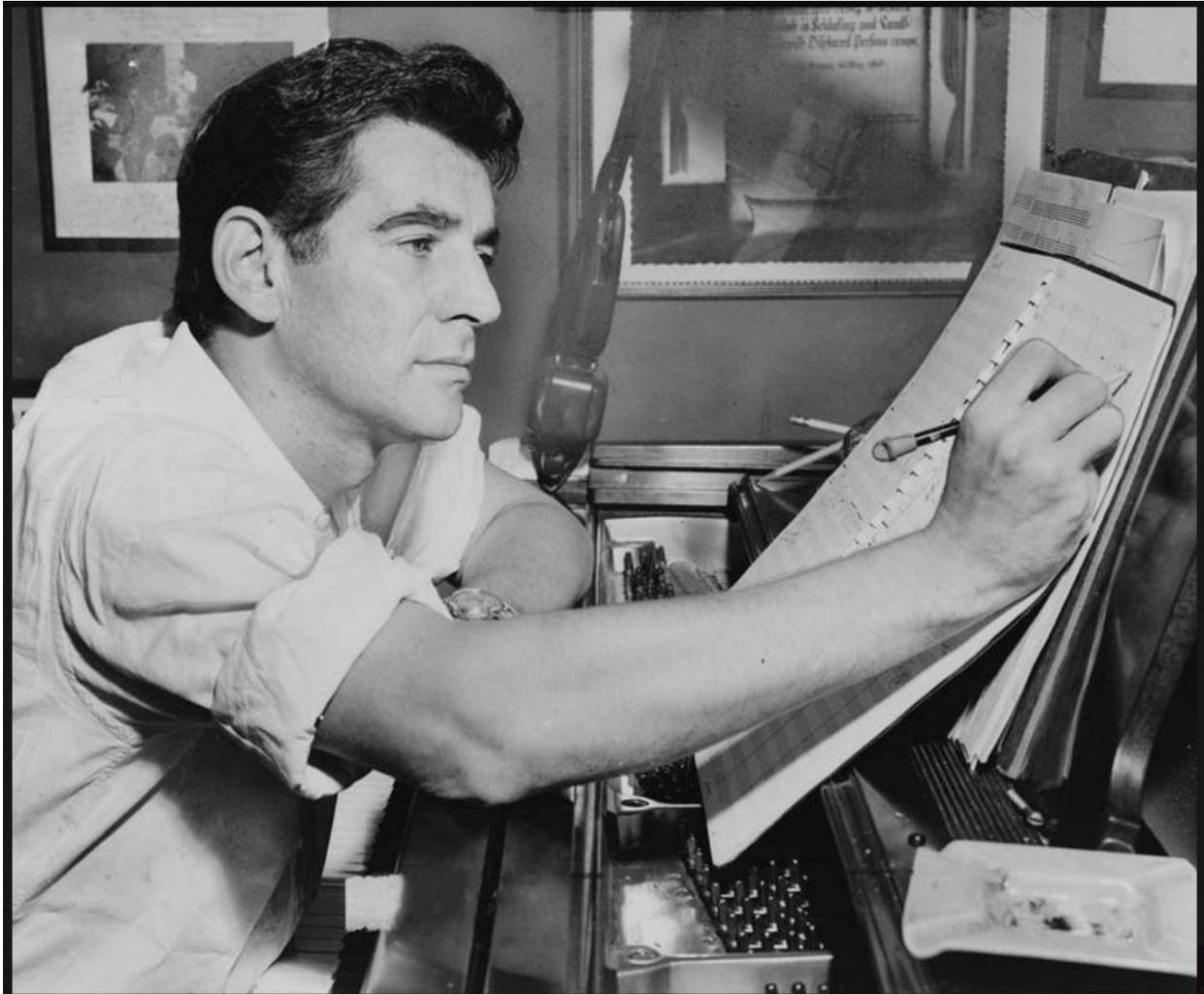


A Look at the Multifaceted Life of Leonard Bernstein at National Museum of American Jewish History

By MERIDEE DUDDLESTON • 23 HOURS AGO



Leonard Bernstein in 1955

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What did “faith” mean to Leonard Bernstein? Although to many his name is synonymous with music, he described his life’s work as a search for a solution to the 20th-century crisis of faith.

The National Museum of American Jewish History explores this search by the famous conductor, composer, educator and social activist in its exhibition *Leonard Bernstein: The Power of Music* from March 16 to September 2.



Leonard Bernstein with members of the Ex-Concentration Camp Orchestra, May, 1948, Munich, Germany

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Showcasing his insatiable intellect and musical passion, the museum delves into Bernstein's drive to identify solutions to social and political issues of the day. What emerges is a novel portrait of the famous composer of *West Side Story* and *Candide*.

Curator Ivy Weingram says while Bernstein's upbringing in an observant religious family created an indelible Jewish identity, he also thought about faith in broader terms: faith in humankind, and faith in government and our nation's leaders. "That's the lens that we apply to his life in this exhibition....These are the moments we see him wrestling with faith of one kind or another."

Leonard Bernstein: The Power of Music coincides with what would have been his 100th birthday this August 25, a milestone being recognized by orchestras, theaters, and cultural institutions around the world.

Film, photos, letters, interactive displays, family judaica, marked-up scores and a suit worn while conducting are among the items portraying the way Bernstein lived and engaged in the pivotal events of his day.

Here are a two more stops in a short audio walk through a some of the highlights with museum curator Ivy Weingram.

Bernstein lived through a tumultuous period of the 20th century that included World War II and the Holocaust, the Cold War, the Vietnam War and social change. [The exhibition at the National Museum of American Jewish History](#) illuminates how these large events touched this American powerhouse, and, in turn, how Bernstein used the power of music to touch them.



Bernstein with his parents, Jennie and Samuel Bernstein, c. 1921

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Leonard Bernstein conducting Marian Anderson at the now demolished Lewisohn Stadium at City College of New York, 1947

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