UNDERSTANDING DUALITIES IN LEONARD BERNSTEIN’S MASS:
COMPOSITION, PERFORMANCE, AND RECEPTION

THESIS

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Leonard Bernstein's *Mass: A Theatre Piece for Singers, Players and Dancers* was commissioned for and premiered at the opening of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C. on September 8, 1971. Its reception varied greatly among critics, churchmen, and audience members. The extreme positions are perhaps best represented by two important figures in American Catholicism: the Archbishop of Cincinnati denounced *Mass* as irreverent and proscribed Catholics from attending performances, while the Bishop of New York praised Bernstein's insights into the priesthood and Catholic theology. Although such contradictory assessments complicate the task of situating *Mass* in the social and musical context of the time, they also reflect the contradictory nature of that context, as well as the composer's reception throughout the entirety of his career. Analysis of Bernstein's works in both serious and popular idioms reveal *Mass* to be the product of his high musical aspirations to create a new and distinct American musical form. In a similar fashion, this work's problematic reception may be seen as closely linked to its composer's reception in other domains. While a complete analysis of this composition would include discussions of its dance and theatrical components, the scope of the present study is limited to musical characteristics of the work and the corresponding reception of those elements.
The contradictions within Mass's reception history simultaneously reflect a particularly salient feature of the work, the duality of opposites. This duality is seen in Bernstein's juxtaposition within Mass of sacred and profane, faith and doubt, death and rebirth, and high art and popular culture. The composer uses dichotomous materials to build structure and meaning through the layering of opposites. The postmodern theories of Charles Jencks, Fredric Jameson, and Andreas Huyssen resonate with the language employed by the composer to describe his works, the oppositions that characterized his life, and the many dualities that operate within Mass. In particular, Jencks's theory that postmodern art uses "double coding" to communicate on multiple levels helps to explain how multiple meanings for multiple audiences arise from duality in Mass. Bernstein and his Mass are thus shown to be a part of the broader trend in the 1960s and 1970s of rethinking the goals and methods of modernism in an attempt to reconnect art with mainstream audiences.
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INTRODUCTION

Biographers and critics have frequently cited Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990) as one of the most prominent and successful figures in twentieth-century American music.\(^1\) He is renowned for his contributions as a conductor and music educator, and his *West Side Story* (1957) remains one of the best-loved and most highly acclaimed products of the Broadway stage. Yet despite numerous accolades for achievements in each of his disparate roles, scholars tend to evaluate Bernstein’s musical contributions only in terms of their popular reception and as examples of the pervasive eclecticism that characterized his career. Rarely are the composer or his works linked with the cultural politics of the Cold War that dominated the time of his career or the emerging postmodernity of the 1960s and 70s. It is unclear why a musician of Bernstein’s stature should be ignored in such discussions of some of the most significant musical issues of his time and why these same issues are not used to contextualize his works, particularly given his own desire to be remembered primarily as a composer of serious music.\(^2\) Perhaps the answer lies in his decision to integrate so-called lowbrow styles into serious works and in his popularity.

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with audiences, both of which created a perceived distance between Bernstein and his high-modernist contemporaries. Nevertheless, it is problematic to ignore questions of cultural politics and musical discourse of the mid-twentieth century with regard to the man and his music. Throughout his career, Bernstein was conscious of the social, political and cultural climate of the world around him, and unlike the high modernists, who sought to divorce music from such worldly concerns, he saw music as a vehicle for communicating his ideas about art, as well as contemporary issues and the potential productive relationship between the two. Closer examination of Bernstein and his works through the analytic lens of his musical philosophies and ambitions suggests that the composer’s legacy remains uncertain as a result of a critical and historical bias toward music that is disengaged and conforms to the traditional genre norms associated with serious art music. Understanding this bias is essential to making sense of his eclectic output and reception, and therefore approaching a clearer picture of the relationships between the man, his music, and the larger culture of his time.

Bernstein’s concern for modern-day cultural issues and the potential of music to communicate both musical and extramusical meaning is most apparent in his 1971 Mass: A Theatre Piece for Singers, Players, and Dancers. The composer himself identifies this work as a particularly significant step in the realization of his musical aspirations, describing it as “. . . without precedent. It is a piece I have been writing all my life, and everything I have written before was in some way a rehearsal for it.”3 In keeping with this statement, Mass represents the composer’s most ambitious attempt to integrate disparate elements of art music and popular styles into a single, large-scale composition.

Therefore, it is not surprising that discussions of this work reflect both the dominant tendency to judge Bernstein’s music only in terms of its popular reception and the critical dismissal of his personal, professional and compositional eclecticism as simply a stubborn refusal to choose a single direction in which to develop his talents to their fullest potential.\(^4\) The problematic nature of Mass and its reception is revealed in the reactions of his contemporaries, who almost without exception identify this work as a monumental and very personal undertaking for the composer, but turn reticent or negative when asked to situate it within his compositional career. Justin Brown, a Bernstein protégé whose first professional conducting experience was directing a performance of Mass in 1986, criticized the piece as too eclectic, too political, and too much a part of the fashionable culture of the 1960s and 70s to become part of the canon of Western art music. At the same time he recalls Bernstein’s perpetual defense of the work, claiming that “…it was the one that nobody could understand and he felt protective toward it.”\(^5\) From this and other such responses it is possible to infer that most of the composer’s contemporaries misunderstood his Mass, in particular its eclecticism and extramusical content as expressed in the juxtaposition of serious and popular idioms, the use of a religious ritual in a theatrical format, the significance of its social and political commentary, and the use of Roman Catholic materials by a Jewish composer.

\(^4\) In Conversations About Bernstein, William Westbrook Burton interviewed composers, conductors, performers and critics who knew and worked with Bernstein at varying points in his career. Criticisms of Bernstein’s eclecticism were a frequent topic of discussion, and Burton summarizes these views in his introduction. Among those specifically quoted is Igor Stravinsky’s categorization of Bernstein as a “musical department store.” William Westbrook Burton, “Introduction and Profile of a Musician,” in Conversations About Bernstein, xi-xxxv, xi-xii.

\(^5\) Burton’s interviews in Conversations About Bernstein often included discussions of Bernstein’s Mass, its reception, its place within his works as a whole, his feelings about the work, and its possible longevity in the canon of Western art music. Brown’s responses to these questions are representative of all of those interviewed. Justin Brown, “Bernstein’s Protégés,” in Conversations About Bernstein, 94-104, 95.
All too often discussions of Bernstein’s *Mass* focus on the perceived failure of this composition to express a unified style and to transcend the social, political and cultural issues of its time. The result is a general dismissal of *Mass* as the idiosyncratic creation of a composer who could not make up his mind. Such dismissals undoubtedly reflect the frustrations of critics who struggled to reconcile Bernstein’s persistently eclectic output with the traditional models of critical evaluation based upon demonstrating musical coherence through theoretical analysis, as well as the notion of explaining individual works as examples of their composer’s growth and progress toward a single musical goal. Nevertheless, this focus on traditional models of analysis, along with the failure of scholars and critics to link Bernstein and his *Mass* with the issues facing other composers of so-called “serious” music during the 1960s and 70s, contributes to the difficulty of assessing both this composition’s place in the composer’s output and its cultural and aesthetic value. An alternative analysis of *Mass* through the lenses of its context, its construction, and its numerous autobiographical connections to the composer speaks to these questions, thus addressing an important gap in Bernstein studies. Such analysis offers insight into the composer’s categorization of this work as a central example of his musical ambitions, as well as linking both composer and composition to contemporary postmodern discourse. In addition to offering alternative perspectives regarding compositional construction and social commentary, this link in turn shows *Mass* to be Bernstein’s attempt to resolve disparate musical and cultural issues that plagued him throughout his long and multifaceted career.

Examination of Bernstein’s *Mass* in the various contexts of its composition, performance, and reception reveals the duality of opposites as lying at the heart not only
of the frequent contradictory assessments of the work and its value, but also of the eclectic musical materials and thematic content within work itself. While a complete analysis of this composition would include discussions of its dance and theatrical components, the scope of the present study is limited to musical characteristics of the work and the corresponding reception of those elements. Therefore, the following discussion traces the many manifestations of duality that characterize all aspects of this composition with the goal of posing an alternative positioning of Mass at the center of Bernstein’s musical thoughts, ambitions, output, and reception. The first chapter introduces the composition and reception history of the work, with particular attention to the polarized reviews that it provoked in audiences coming from a wide variety of musical backgrounds. A comparison between responses to Mass and Bernstein’s career and personality suggests parallels between composer and composition, and demonstrates strong connections between the work and his musical aspirations. Chapter 2 engages the problem of Bernstein’s reception more directly by analyzing responses to Mass in conjunction with examples of the composer’s efforts in the serious and popular musical arenas. Such analysis indicates that many of the difficulties associated with evaluating the relative success or failure of his works may be attributed to his continual challenging of musical genre norms and expectations.

Chapter 3 turns to an explanation of dualities as they are used in Mass to create a structure built through layers of dichotomies, and the ways in which they provide the composer with a venue for musical and social commentary. The commentary presented in Mass shows additional connections between Bernstein and his work in its articulation of his musical philosophies and ambitions. The final chapter discusses the strong
resonance of *Mass*’s internal and external dualities with the theories of postmodernism, which first emerged as a critical tool in the 1950s.⁶ Although Bernstein never identified himself as a postmodernist, nor has this link been explored in any published accounts of his career, the parallels between postmodern discourse and the composer’s use of dualities in his *Mass* offer new possibilities for understanding this work in the contexts of its time and its composer’s musical oeuvre. Through this analytic lens, *Mass* may be understood as Bernstein’s most comprehensive attempt to express his musical philosophies and as a part of a larger cultural move in the 1960s and 70s to restore social relevance to the arts.

CHAPTER 1

THE PARALLEL RECEPTIONS OF COMPOSITION AND COMPOSER

Opposing Reactions

At the suggestion of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Bernstein's *Mass: A Theatre Piece for Singers, Players and Dancers* was commissioned for and premiered at the opening of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C. on September 8, 1971.\(^7\) Bernstein himself maintained complete creative control over the work, composing all of the music and supervising all other aspects of the production; however, he enlisted lyricist Stephen Schwartz to assist in the preparation of the text and Alvin Ailey to choreograph the dance portion of the work. As the full title of the piece and the occasion for its commission suggest, this work is not a Roman Catholic Mass intended for performance during a worship service, but rather a theatrical presentation of the ritual action in a Mass. The action takes the Catholic service as its framework and includes musical settings of each of the five movements of the Latin Mass Ordinary, but Bernstein deviates from the model of the traditional Mass by interspersing sections of English text throughout the work set in a wide variety of styles that draw both from serious and popular idioms. Maurice Peress, conductor of the premiere performance of *Mass*, describes the effect of this eclectic content as "a kaleidoscopic voyage from

Harlem to the Rhine," going on to summarize the breadth of musical material included in this composition as follows: "... folk song, blues, marches, rock songs, black gospel, and jazz scat stand cheek by jowl with Mahlerian meditations for orchestra, Hebrew prayer, chamber music, Arabic dances, and a Chilean folk ballad." Such juxtapositions of contrasting texts and musical styles within the framework of the Catholic Mass provide the composer with a way to comment directly upon the ritual, its context, and its meanings, both past and present.

Although the score calls for more than 200 performers, including two orchestras, two choirs, and numerous soloists performing in a variety of musical styles, the focal point of Mass is the Celebrant, a role that lends itself well to multiple interpretations. In accordance with the occasion for the work’s commission, this central character has been described as paying homage to John F. Kennedy, the first Catholic President of the United States, by metaphorically depicting his aspirations, trials, successes, and tragic assassination. More generally, the Celebrant may be understood as a symbol of organized religion in the modern world. At the beginning of the work he appears as a simple and faithful man who then assumes the role of leading the worship service. As Mass progresses the congregation rebels, professing their crisis of faith, crying out for peace, and ultimately indicating that organized religion does not provide answers for their contemporary problems. Mass reaches a climax when the Celebrant himself experiences a crisis of faith, destroying the sacramental vessels and rejecting his priestly attire. The

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9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.
work ends with a rebirth of faith, apart from the formalities of organized religion, as the
Celebrant appears once again as a simple and faithful man. The liner notes for one
recording speak to this multifaceted nature of the Celebrant and the composition as a
whole, suggesting that Mass was created

   . . . because the composer believes that the crisis of faith is the principal
crisis of our century, because he has long been intrigued with the idea of
writing a comprehensive religious service; because of his fascination with
Roman Catholicism, especially since the memorable papacy of John
XXIII; and finally because of his love for the man whose name the Center
celebrates.\[11\]

Thus Bernstein's Mass is a composition that can be interpreted in many ways, including
the composer's tribute to a memorable leader; commentary about the social, political, and
cultural climate of his time; Bernstein's personal reaction to the Catholic Church; and a
statement about the perceived role of spirituality and religion during the middle of the
twentieth century. The many possible interpretive lenses through which this composition
may be understood contributed to a complex and often contradictory reception history
that has made situating Mass within the context of Bernstein's output and American
music of the mid-twentieth century a difficult task.

Reception of Mass varied greatly among critics, churchmen, and audience
members. The opening of the Kennedy Center was a much anticipated event in political
and cultural circles due to the strong emotions associated with Kennedy's memory, the
Center's ambitious mission to present works representing the highest quality of American
performing arts, and the involvement of presidential appointees in planning the Center's

\[11\] Quoted in: W. Anthony Sheppard, "Bitter Rituals for a Lost Nation: Partch's Revelation in the
activities. Excitement surrounding the event was heightened by construction delays that postponed the opening from 1969 to 1971. In addition, musical and political controversy preceded Mass. On June 23, 1966, Roger L. Stevens, Chairman of the Kennedy Center Board of Trustees, announced that at the behest of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Bernstein had been commissioned to write a piece to commemorating the opening of the Center bearing her husband’s name. Stevens went on to express his expectations for the forthcoming work, indicating that “I would hope that it would be quite a lot like West Side Story.” Shortly thereafter it was reported that Bernstein had chosen to compose a Mass, and critics began to question the potential musical value of a Mass written by a Jewish Broadway composer.

Speculation regarding Mass was not limited to its aesthetic content. Bernstein was notorious for his leftist political sympathies, and was widely known as a composer who did not shy away from incorporating into his works extramusical issues for which he had strong personal feelings. His reputation caused anxiety on the part of politicians who would be expected to attend the premiere due to its dedication to Kennedy’s memory, but worried that they would find themselves tacitly sanctioning ideas that opposed their

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12 According to the inaugural issue of the Kennedy Center Program Magazine, published September 8, 1971: “The John F. Kennedy Center Act passed by the United States Congress reads, ‘There shall be an Advisory Committee on the Arts composed of such members as the President may designate, to serve at the pleasure of the President. The Advisory Committee on the Arts shall advise and consult with the Board [of Trustees] and make recommendations to the Board regarding existing and prospective cultural activities to be carried on in the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.’ Since March 1970, the President has appointed 114 men and women from all walks of life and representing the 50 states to serve on the Advisory Committee. They are divided into three working committees—Finance, Public Relations, and Education and Programming.” “The Advisory Committee on the Arts appointed by President Nixon,” Kennedy Center Program Magazine, 8 September 1971, 16.


policies by applauding the performance. Columnist Jack Anderson has suggested that President Richard Nixon declined to attend the opening on advice of this nature from J. Edgar Hoover. He wrote that:

On July 12, 1971, Hoover wrote to White House major-domo H. R. Haldeman and Attorney General John Mitchell, warning of “proposed plans of antiwar elements to embarrass the United States Government.” Composer Leonard Bernstein, Hoover correctly reported was composing a mass. . . . “The source advised the words will follow an antiwar theme,” he said. “Important Government officials, perhaps even the President, are expected to attend this ceremony and it is anticipated they will applaud the composition without recognizing the true meaning of the words.” The source said the newspapers would be given the story the following day that “the President and other high ranking Government officials applauded an anti-government song.”

Such speculation and controversy, along with the political significance of the event and the high artistic aspirations of the Center, guaranteed the presence of several important critics at the premiere. It likewise foreshadowed the contradictory assessments that have plagued scholars and critics attempting to situate and evaluate *Mass.*

Both Harold Schonberg’s *New York Times* review, “Bernstein’s New Work Reflects His Background on Broadway,” and Paul Hume’s *Washington Post* review, “Bernstein’s Mass: ‘A Reaffirmation of Faith,’” appeared the day after the premiere, and express the extremes of critical opinion that follow *Mass* throughout its entire performance history. Schonberg, who was perhaps Bernstein’s most stringent critic,

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16 Schonberg became the senior music critic for the *New York Times* in 1960, only two years after Bernstein was named director of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, and held that position through 1980. He has been labeled Bernstein’s “severest detractor” as a result of his numerous negative responses to Bernstein’s efforts as both a conductor and composer. Schonberg explains these negative reviews as follows: “I never had any argument with Bernstein’s talent; his talent was formidable — that was never in dispute. What I felt was that his ego was getting in the way of his music-making. . . . so much of what Lenny did was egocentric, whether as conductor or composer.” Harold C. Schonberg, “Writers/Critics on Bernstein,” in *Conversations About Bernstein*, 33-39, 33.
viewed *Mass* as a banal and overly sentimental reaction to the social and political problems of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Musically, he labeled it a “stylistic phantasmagoria,” going on to argue that

> The serious musical content is pretentious and thin, as thin as the watery liberalism that dominates the message of the work. . . . It is a pseudo-serious effort at rethinking the Mass that basically is, I think, cheap and vulgar. It is a show-biz Mass, the work of a musician who desperately wants to be with it.¹⁷

Hume, by contrast, saw *Mass* as a superbly fitting piece with which to dedicate the new Kennedy Center. As opposed to Schonberg’s condemnation that *Mass* and its message were merely attempting to be fashionable, Hume regarded it as a profoundly emotional piece that posed important questions about the role of religion in modern life. He called it “the greatest music Bernstein has ever written,”¹⁸ citing beautiful melodies, skillful choral writing, and stylistic flexibility among its virtues. The way in which Bernstein links contrasting elements to form a coherent whole, however, was the source of Hume’s strongest accolades:

> Mass moves in an unbroken line from beginning to end. But Bernstein scatters through it a brilliant array of musical forms and styles whose variety builds without interrupting, sustained emotional power. Like a great mosaic it is a work from which no single episode can be removed.¹⁹

Taken in isolation, it is difficult to make sense of such opposing reactions. Both reviews address the composition’s musical eclecticism and extramusical content, so their contradictory conclusions cannot simply be explained away as the result of reviewers


¹⁹ Ibid.
responding to different aspects of the performance. Thus, without additional contextual information, readers may be left wondering who to believe regarding the musical and aesthetic value of *Mass*.

The reactions of American Catholics to *Mass* were equally disparate, and are worth mentioning due to the religious themes of this work. Members of the Catholic Church heard and interpreted this composition in the context of the Second Vatican Council, which had opened in 1962 under Pope John XXIII, and focused on modernizing Catholic practices. The Council's meetings concluded only six years before *Mass* premiered. The issues facing the Council were manifold, but for most of these issues two opposing views reigned: those who wished to preserve the entirety of the Catholic liturgy in its traditional form and those who wished to update ritual practices in order to make them more accessible to modern congregations. Ultimately the Council authorized a number of changes to the Mass ritual, responding to the idea that organized religion should be able to adapt to modern needs. The Council's decision to allow the use of vernacular languages in some parts of the Mass, including the sacramental rites, was among the most noteworthy of the changes. With regard to sacred music, however, the Council's pronouncement was vague. They reaffirmed Gregorian chant as the music best suited to the Catholic liturgy, but allowed for the inclusion of other types of sacred music, particularly that which reflects the characteristic musical traditions of a people or that which allows for full congregational participation.\(^{20}\) The changes implemented by the

Council and the role of sacred music in the Church remained highly contested issues at the time Bernstein's *Mass* premiered, and these debates form the backdrop for churchmen's responses to the work.\(^{21}\)

Influenced by his conservative views on the Vatican II changes, the Archbishop of Cincinnati, Paul F. Leibold, saw *Mass* as a direct affront to the long-held traditions and practices of the Catholic Church. In particular he reacted viscerally against the idea that the Latin Mass could be taken out of its sacred context and used for secular, theatrical purposes. He wrote that:

> The main issue is that this production is a blatant sacrilege against all we hold sacred. Does any artist have the right to use elements of our central act of worship as a vehicle to present his theme? Indeed we may strongly disagree with his using our sacred instruments, prayers and rituals in any crude manner for any purpose. It seems to me that here is the real issue. I believe that from this point of view the production is offensive to our Catholic sense of belief.\(^{22}\)

Leibold went so far as to proscribe Catholics from attending performance of *Mass* when it was presented in his city in May 1972.

Paul Moore Jr., the Bishop of New York, represents the opposite end of the spectrum with regard to Vatican II and his response to Bernstein’s *Mass*. His more progressive views of Catholic practices allowed him to see the composition as an allegory for the role of religion in modern life instead of as a challenge to the Catholic Church and the faith that it represents. In a letter dated June 11, 1972, Moore praised Bernstein’s insights into his profession and Catholic theology:

\(^{21}\) Sheppard, 471-472.

I had the privilege of seeing your MASS in Washington the evening when you brought Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy. I wanted you to know how deeply moved I was by the creativity of the piece and the deep insights which you showed about the priesthood and the theology of the Eucharist. I was discussing it with a friend the other day and said in many ways it’s the story of my life. I could deeply identify with the inordinate demands people make upon the church and the priest and with the deep revulsion one sometimes feels toward the role. Using the priest’s collapse, if you will, as a symbol of the sacrifice of the Mass which in a sense brought about the possibility of the resurrection scene in the end was a brilliant stroke on your part. I am not sure if this interpretation is correct but it seemed to make sense to me.

I was so moved by it that I used it in a sermon the following Sunday...

As in the examples of critical reviews of Mass premiere, both churchmen responded to the same aspects of the performance. In this case, the opposing reactions are based upon the use of religious materials in the theatrical context; however, the responses of the two Bishops reveal their differing views about the appropriate use of such materials, as well as their contradictory opinions regarding the composer’s intention to degrade or venerate the act of worship. That one should publicly denounce the work and that the other should use it as the basis of a sermon reflects the controversy surrounding the updating of religious practices, in addition to reinforcing the polarized nature of the critical reviews of Bernstein’s composition.

Such opposing reactions to Mass characterize its reception in critical, religious, and popular spheres alike, and this contradictory reception history forms the basis for the general dismissal of this piece in scholarly discussions of Bernstein’s compositional output. It is easy to see where the tendency to evaluate Bernstein’s works solely in terms of their reception would cause difficulties for scholars seeking to situate this composition.

in the context of the composer’s career: it can neither be categorized as wholly serious or popular, nor can it be clearly declared a success or failure. Problems reconciling these incongruous assessments frequently lead to the conclusion that *Mass* was a highly personal and eccentric experiment, and that it is ultimately unimportant in discussions of Bernstein’s contributions to American music of the mid-twentieth century. More often, works like *West Side Story* (1957) and *Kaddish: Symphony No. 3*, with their less ambiguous reception, are chosen as examples in examinations of the composer’s high musical ambitions and unique musical vocabulary, despite Bernstein’s own identification of *Mass* as the culmination of all of his musical efforts to date.\(^{24}\) In addition, when taken in the context of Bernstein’s multifaceted career and his other works, the content and reception of *Mass* are revealed as neither surprising nor unprecedented. Important parallels between the composer and his composition, as well as patterns in the direction and perceived successes and failures of the composer’s career emerge from this analysis. As a result, an alternative reading of *Mass* as a central example of Bernstein’s compositional output may be proposed.

The contradictory assessments that complicate the task of situating *Mass* in the social and musical context of the time reflect a particularly salient feature of the work, the duality of immanent opposites. This duality is seen throughout the piece in Bernstein’s juxtaposition of the sacred and the profane, faith and doubt, death and rebirth, and high art and popular culture. Such opposing themes may be found at all levels of *Mass*, governing its structure and content. If these dualities are taken as central to the composition, then its contradictory reception history may be understood as a logical

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\(^{24}\) Zadikov, 42.
outgrowth of the composer’s efforts: the dualities extend beyond the work to its reception. Moreover, an analysis of Bernstein’s own reception, conception of music, and musical oeuvre reveal that the same types of dualities seen in Mass were ever-present concerns in both his personal and professional lives. Mass, therefore, may be seen to embody its composer’s musical ambitions and his omnipresent contradictions and dualities.

Bernstein’s multifaceted career offers ample evidence to support his standing as one of the most prominent and successful figures in twentieth-century American music. As a conductor, he won international fame as the first American-born director of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. In addition to establishing the orchestra as a central part of the city’s cultural life, Bernstein used this prestigious position to make music education a priority through a series of televised Young People’s concerts, which presented musical concepts in a format accessible to and enjoyable for children.25 Bernstein is equally renowned for his compositional achievements. His Broadway musicals, such as Candide (1956) and West Side Story, are perhaps his best known and most performed works; however, his sizable musical oeuvre spans the gamut of styles and genres from popular songs to symphonies and operas. As early as 1968, three years before Mass premiered, Bernstein biographer John Gruen characterized his significance to American music as follows:

Leonard Bernstein at fifty: a man of vast complexity and staggering accomplishment. Lenny, who at twenty-five became the youngest, most volatile, and most publicized all-around musician America has ever

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25 David Schiff, “Re-hearing Bernstein,” Atlantic 271, no. 6 (June 1993): 55-76, 60.
produced, has emerged as Bernstein, a major international figure whose place in the world of conducting is assured, and whose stature as a front-ranking twentieth-century man of music is unquestioned.\textsuperscript{26}

Gruen’s assessment of Bernstein demonstrates his formidable position in American music from the middle of the twentieth century on, but it ignores the controversy and mixed reception that characterized his entire career. In fact, in many ways it can be said that the reception of Bernstein’s personality paralleled that of his \textit{Mass}. He was praised by many, but for each admirer there was another who believed that his lifestyle was too flamboyant.\textsuperscript{27} He was equally applauded and criticized for maintaining the dual roles of conductor and composer, with his detractors constantly encouraging him to devote the entirety of his energies to one occupation.\textsuperscript{28} He was a strong proponent of art music, as evidenced by his emphasis on music education and the programs he selected for the New York Philharmonic, yet his Broadway musicals appealed to a dramatically different audience and remain his most performed works. And perhaps most significantly, the aspect of his music that came under the most critical scrutiny was the manner in which the dualities of his personal life manifest themselves in eclectic compositions throughout his career. This mixed reaction mystified and dismayed Bernstein, who viewed all of his musical efforts as working to the same goal of creating a new, distinctly American musical form and whose chief desire was to be remembered as a composer of serious music.\textsuperscript{29}


\textsuperscript{27} Myers, 6.

\textsuperscript{28} Burton, xii.

\textsuperscript{29} Diamond, 25.
Mahlerian Aspirations

While there has been much speculation with regard to the many possible interpretations of Mass, it is clear that Bernstein’s choice of form was at least partially motivated by his ardent wish to be remembered for his contributions to serious music. For Bernstein, this need to compose a serious artistic masterpiece was the result of both internal and external pressures. There is little doubt that his obsession originated during his childhood as the result of his life-long troubled relationship with his father. Samuel Bernstein, a Russian-Jewish immigrant, was a successful businessman and Talmudic scholar who discouraged his son’s passion for music. He was a strong believer in the American dream, and wanted his son to follow in his footsteps by either going into business or becoming a rabbi. Needless to say, the elder Bernstein strongly and vocally disapproved of his son’s insistent pursuit of a career in music. The Bernstein biographer Joan Peyser described his objections as follows:

In 1908 Sam had fled from his family in the Ukraine for a better life in the United States. At home he had known Jews as musicians only as klezmers, strolling players who performed for weddings and bar mitzvahs in exchange for a few kopecks, some food, or a night’s lodging. Sam Bernstein refused to believe that he had gone through three weeks in the filthy steerage of a ship, hard work at the Fulton Fish Market in New York, menial chores in a Hartford, Connecticut barbershop, and an aggressive career building a beauty supply business in Boston so that his firstborn son could spend his days playing piano “under a palm tree in some cocktail lounge.”

Therefore, despite his prodigious talent and numerous musical accolades, Bernstein felt pressure to prove to his father that music was a serious and respectable career. Success in the realm of popular entertainment, such as Broadway, could never be enough because, in

30 Peyser, Bernstein: A Biography, 20.
his father’s eyes, that would only be a more visible form of the klezmers in the Ukraine. His son would merely be playing a larger instrument, in the form of a Broadway orchestra, in a larger kind of cocktail lounge, for a slightly higher price. Still he would be squandering the opportunities that Samuel Bernstein had worked so hard to provide. Success in the realm of art music, however, would bring prestige, respect, and a lasting musical legacy, all of which might help to redeem his chosen profession in his father’s eyes.

Bernstein also strongly admired and identified with the late-Romantic composer Gustav Mahler (1860-1911). There are certainly parallels between the two composers: both were Jewish and struggled throughout their lives with their Jewish identities, with Mahler eventually converting to Christianity in order to become a conductor of the Vienna State Opera and Bernstein using most of his serious works as vehicles for venting religious frustrations; both had distinguished conducting careers in addition to being successful composers; both were noted for incorporating a wide variety of musical styles into their works; and a certain duality characterized both of their lives. Bernstein commented on his love of Mahler and their common dualities in one of his Young People’s Concerts:

I admit it’s a problem to be both a conductor and a composer. There never seems to be enough time and energy to be both things. I ought to know, because I have the same problem myself. And that’s one of the reasons why I’m so sympathetic to Mahler. I understand his problem; it’s like

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31 In his 1967 article, “Mahler: His Time Has Come,” Bernstein himself identified dualities as characterizing all aspects of Mahler’s life and governing his music. He summarizes these dualities by referring to the dichotomous nature of Mahler’s career, faith, philosophies, and musical ambitions. According to Bernstein, these dualities are continually played out in the various aspects of Mahler’s music. Leonard Bernstein, “Mahler: His Time Has Come,” in Findings, 255-264 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 255.
being two different men locked up in the same body. One man is a conductor and the other is a composer and they are both one fellow called Mahler, or [pause] or Bernstein. It’s like being a double man.\textsuperscript{32}

These parallels drew Bernstein to Mahler and his music, and in many ways Mahler came to represent that which he most wanted to achieve. Mahler, after all, is remembered primarily as an ambitious symphonist who expanded this already lengthy and serious genre beyond the limits of what people of his time thought possible. As Bernstein wrote in his article, “Mahler: His Time Has Come”:

Mahler was left straddling; his destiny was to sum up, package, and lay to ultimate the fantastic treasure that was German-Austrian music from Bach to Wagner. It was a terrible and dangerous heritage. Whether he saw himself as the last symphonist in the long line started by Mozart, or the last \textit{Heilige Deutsche Künstler} in the line started by Bach, he was in the same rocky boat. To recapitulate the line, bring it to climax, show it all in one, soldered and smelted together by his own fires – this was a function assigned him by history and destiny, a function that meant years of ridicule, rejection, and bitterness. But he had no choice, compulsive manic creature that he was. He took all (all!) the basic elements of German music, including the clichés, and drove them to their ultimate limits.\textsuperscript{33}

Mahler’s symphonies also reflected his own dualities, continually pitting the serious and the banal, the sacred and the profane, and the sentimental and the vulgar against one another. Bernstein would likewise choose large-scale forms such as the symphony and the Mass as the appropriate genres in which to pursue his serious compositional goals.

Given Bernstein’s affinity for Mahler and his music, it is interesting to note that the content and troubled reception history of \textit{Mass} in some ways parallel those of


\textsuperscript{33} Bernstein, “Mahler: His Time Has Come,” 260.
Mahler's symphonies. Bernstein himself posits that the content of Mahler's symphonies is built upon duality. He identified these dualities as follows:

A vision of his world, crumbling in corruption beneath its smug surface; fulsome, hypocritical, prosperous; sure of its terrestrial immortality, yet bereft of its faith in spiritual immortality. The music is almost cruel in its revelations; it is like a camera that has caught Western society in the moment of its incipient decay.\(^{34}\)

Although this description was published four years before the premiere of *Mass*, much of it is applicable to Bernstein's composition. Like Mahler's symphonies, *Mass* presents its composer's vision of a contradictory world, and deals specifically with the theme of spirituality in Western civilization. In addition, Bernstein's choice of eclectic musical styles that draw from serious and the popular idioms alike highlight the contradictory content of the work, and give the composer a voice with which to criticize the failings of society and culture. While Bernstein himself never identified any of Mahler's symphonies as specific sources of inspiration for his *Mass*, it is clear that he was considering the duality of opposites and its possible use as a vehicle for musical commentary during the years preceding his work on this composition.

If, however, he was thinking specifically of Mahler and his symphonies while writing his *Mass*, Bernstein should not have been surprised by its reception. Once again, parallels to his composition are evident in his description of Mahler's works:

But to Mahler's own audiences none of this was apparent: they refused (or were unable) to see themselves mirrored in these grotesque symphonies. They heard only exaggeration, extravagance, bombast, obsessive length – failing to recognize these as symptoms of their own decline and fall. They heard what seemed like the history of German-Austrian music,

\(^{34}\) Ibid., 256.
recapitulated in ironic or distorted terms – and they called it shameful eclectic
ism. . .35

This description of the negative reception of Mahler’s symphonies calls to mind
Schonberg’s dismissals of Mass as its composer’s attempt to be fashionable and as a
“stylistic phantasmagoria.”36 It also reveals Mahler and Bernstein to have suffered from
the same kind of criticism on the basis of their dualities. More importantly, though, this
kind of description demonstrates that Bernstein was considering the role of critical
reception in the legacy of a great composer. Perhaps, believing himself misunderstood,
hewasyetanotherparallelbetweenhimselmandMahler, and felt protective toward his
Mass throughout the entirety of his career because he hoped that, like Mahler’s
symphonies, its time would come.

Bernstein’s esteem for Mahler and his obsession with writing an artistic
masterpiece that would assure him a place in music history alongside his idol
demonstrate that he was also at least partially influenced by the modernist attitudes that
dominated the early to mid-twentieth century. The modernist conception of history was
essentially linear, meaning that time and, thus, artistic innovation are in a perpetual state
of forward motion. New ideas and styles were thought to develop by building upon or
critiquing their immediate predecessors, as they would then become the future material
for building or critique. The result is a process of continual improvement and growth,
and therefore the most important art, that which retains a memorable position in the
progression, is that which looks forward and challenges previously established artistic

35 Ibid.
36 Schonberg, “Bernstein’s New Work Reflects His Background on Broadway,” 51.
limits. Along with this modernist view comes an awareness of history. Because the artist recognizes the linear progression of history there is a moral imperative to continue pushing art forward in new and innovative ways. This is the only way to guarantee a significant place in history. Bernstein, along with many of his contemporaries, struggled with this moral imperative as he attempted to follow in Mahler’s footsteps.

Along with his attempts to emulate Mahler and to secure his place in canon of Western art music, Bernstein wrestled with the musical norms of the mid-twentieth century. These norms remained largely defined by the nineteenth-century reverence for so-called “absolute music,” or music that is complete in itself and free from external reference. To modernists, this idea seemed natural and logical, but absolute music was, in fact, a construction of the nineteenth century. Prior to that time, music was considered to be inexorably tied to spoken language. Thus vocal music was regarded as music’s highest form, and instrumental music was considered a mere abstraction in its separation of music from language. However, the early part of the nineteenth century saw the advent of romanticism, which opposed classicism’s ideals of logic and clarity in favor of the fantastical, the abstract, and the difficult. As a result, the aesthetic paradigm which held vocal genres as music’s highest form was reversed, and instead instrumental music was praised as the purest form of music. In his book, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, Carl Dahlhaus summarizes the consequences of this reversal as follows:

Now instrumental music, previously viewed as a deficient form of vocal music, a shadow of the real thing, was exalted as a music-esthetic paradigm in the name of autonomy – made into the epitome of music, its

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essence. The lack of a concept or concrete topic, hitherto seen as a deficiency of instrumental music, was now deemed an advantage.\textsuperscript{38}

Musical autonomy became the most important hallmark of artistic success. Instrumental genres such as the symphony, expanded in ambition, musical forces, and form under the influences of Beethoven and Mahler, and quickly became associated with the ideals of absolute music. These genres were generally regarded as the most serious musical pursuits, and a compositional success in one of these realms could immediately guarantee its composer a place in the canon of Western art music.

In the twentieth century, under the influence of modernism, the idea of “absolute music” was transformed into an emphasis on abstraction, or purging music of any extramusical reference. According to some modernists, divorcing music from such worldly concerns as social, political, and cultural events was imperative in all serious artistic endeavors in order to free them from the strictures of traditional conventions. In music, these modernists contended that composers throughout history had been most constrained by the expectation that their efforts should be relevant and understandable to the general public of non-musicians. Bernstein’s contemporary, Milton Babbitt (b. 1916) was among the most vocal supporters of this notion. In his 1958 article, originally entitled “The Composer as Specialist,” but renamed “Who Cares if You Listen?” Babbitt argued the necessity of liberating musicians from such public accountability. He drew parallels between musicians and specialists in other fields, indicating that there is no such expectation of general understanding with regard to achievements in mathematics and

theoretical physics. According to this view, musical achievement is crippled by the ignorance of its supposed audience just as physics would stagnate under the pressures of making its theories accessible to laymen. Babbitt writes that:

Granting to music the position accorded other arts and sciences promises the sole substantial means of survival for the music I have been describing. Admittedly, if this music is not supported, the whistling repertory of the man in the street will be little affected . . . But music will cease to evolve, and, in that important sense, will cease to live.

With this imperative toward continual evolution, only musicians who pursued the forward progression of music toward greater levels of abstraction could be regarded as artists in the eyes of the extreme modernists. Thus during the mid-twentieth century, composers seeking to make their mark in the serious musical world faced the dual pressures of living up to the achievements of their predecessors and conforming to the trend of increasing abstraction.

As opposed to his modernist contemporaries, Bernstein was a well-known proponent of the idea that music should be used above all as a means for communication with an audience, and this musical philosophy carried over into all facets of his career. In one of his Young People’s Concerts, entitled “What Does Music Mean?,” Bernstein went so far as to link the value of a composition with the emotional responses of its listeners:

Let’s forget about all the music that tells stories or paints pictures, and think about music that describes emotions, feelings – like pain, happiness,

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40 Ibid., 41.

41 Botstein.
anger, loneliness, excitement or love. I guess most music is like that; and the better it is, the more it will make you feel the emotions that the composer felt when he wrote it.42

This naturally put him at odds with his modernist contemporaries, such as Babbitt, who dismissed the idea that music needed to communicate to any but the musical elite.43 As a result, Bernstein actively sought alternatives to the modernist musical abstraction, an ambition that is apparent in his program notes for the premiere of Mass:

As to any further program-note of an analytic nature, I hope that none is necessary, since the intention of MASS is to communicate as directly and universally as I can a reaffirmation of faith.44

While it is clear from the problematic reception of Mass that Bernstein’s communication was not as universal as he had hoped, it is evident that the work reflects both his Mahlerian aspirations and his search for an alternative to the exclusive modernism of composers like Babbitt.

It is significant that even though his critics viewed Mass and Bernstein’s generally eclectic output as the product of the composer’s inability and unwillingness to commit to a single musical focus, Bernstein himself regarded all of his musical efforts as marrying his joint ambitions of being remembered as a composer of serious music and of seeking new and effective means of musical communication. In this regard, the composer viewed his musical oeuvre as following the kind of progression toward a single goal that his


43 This notion of the composer’s responsibility to the audience and their potential for directly comprehending the composer’s intent directly contradicts Babbitt’s views of the general listener: “Like all communication, this music presupposes a suitably equipped receptor. I am aware that ‘tradition’ has it that the lay listener, by virtue of some undefined, transcendental faculty, always is able to arrive at a musical judgment absolute in its wisdom if not always permanent in its validity. I regret my inability to accord this declaration of faith the respect due its advanced age.” Babbitt, 38.

44 Bernstein, “A Note from the Composer,” Kennedy Center Program Magazine, 8 September 1971, D.
detractors were unable to identify: the ultimate goal of creating a new, distinctly American, musical form. In a September 1971 interview about Mass, Bernstein succinctly expressed this understanding of his musical output, positioning this work at the core of his efforts to fulfill his lofty musical ambitions. This composition represented his most comprehensive attempt to date to create a new form that, much as Mahler achieved in the realm of German music, would combine and push to their limits all of the aspects of American music, serious and popular.

Bernstein communicated his conviction that Mass represented an important step toward realizing his aspirations in an interview conducted during the year after its premiere:

> It also marries those apparently unmatchable elements of so-called pop, serious music, spoken vernacular, Latin, and non-vernacular poetry. . . . my almost lifelong conviction that there is a particular American form that will mature and grow out of the American musical into something lasting, something equivalent to what happened to opera in Italy, growing out of its popular roots. I hope Mass is a way station.46

Contrary to the composer’s hopes, the inconclusive reception of Mass and its frequent critical dismissals in discussions of his musical contributions did not bode well for its inclusion in the canon of Western Art music, nor its use as a model for future American works. Nevertheless, the composer’s identification of this work as an all-encompassing synthesis of his previous efforts suggests that the seeds of the all-too-frequent dismissals

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45 Zadikov, 42.

of this work lie in Bernstein’s earlier compositions, their relations to his Mahlerian
ambitions, and the ways in which he negotiated the genre norms of the mid-twentieth
century.

Rather than considering Bernstein’s aspirations to create a new American musical
form, scholarly accounts of his career often divide his works into categories based solely
upon their genre descriptors, and assess their relative success or failure based upon the
norms of those genres and their popular reception within this limited context. Such
accounts fail to acknowledge that the materials with which Bernstein worked were so
frequently the same, regardless of the genre assigned to each individual composition.
That the composer’s works can be divided into categories according to different idioms
demonstrates that he attempted to address same problem of bridging the gap between the
serious and the popular from both sides of the stream. Each of Bernstein’s musical
contributions, including those deemed merely popular, reveals the composer negotiating
the demands of a modern musician wishing to make a serious contribution in addition to
his conviction that music should be relevant and accessible to his audience. He sought to
contribute to the forward progression of music by challenging the definitions of musical
genres, and Mass and its reception emerged out of his previous efforts to these ends.
CHAPTER 2

GENRE DESIGNATIONS AS PREDICTORS OF CRITICAL SUCCESS

A Story of Bittersweet Success

A salient example of Bernstein’s challenge to genre norms can be seen in a comparison of West Side Story and Kaddish: Symphony No. 3. Both were written at the height of his career and both show the composer taking on ambitious projects, expanding his musical vocabulary, and moving toward the creation of a new hybrid form that would be distinctly American. In addition, both engage musical and extramusical themes that later became central to Mass, which was the next large-scale composition to follow them. The reception of these themes in their contrasting contexts set the stage for the composition of Mass, its own reception, and current scholarly understandings of this work.

West Side Story remains to this day the most popular and acclaimed of Bernstein’s works. Critics such as Howard Taubman praised it for going beyond the popular realm and creating a new kind of serious musical theater. Yet Kaddish, a symphony for orchestra, mixed chorus, boys’ choir, speaker, and soprano solo, was widely criticized for attempting the same goal of serious musical theater, meant to be evaluated in serious

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47 Peyser, Bernstein: A Biography, 404.

terms. In fact, the critics of Kaddish implied that it was little more than the arrogant attempt of a Broadway composer to write a symphony, perhaps the most serious of the artistic genres. This comparison reveals an important trend in reviews of Bernstein’s works: critics attempting to reconcile Bernstein’s eclecticism tended to evaluate his Broadway works alongside and in terms of more serious genres, and tended to judge his more serious compositions alongside and in terms of his popular works. The effect was to elevate Bernstein’s Broadway musicals to new artistic heights, above the status of mere popular entertainment. Conversely, this critical approach lowered his serious compositions to popular attempts at artistic achievement. Paul Myers describes this incongruous reception in his biography of Bernstein:

Sadly, few of the serious works enjoyed unanimous critical acclaim. To his chagrin, none of them even earned the prestigious Pulitzer Prize, an honour conferred on the works of several lesser composers. In later years, Bernstein seemed increasingly obsessed with composing that one elusive masterpiece by which he would be forever remembered, but it did not happen. Perhaps he was too distracted by the need to perform, and the instant gratification that an adoring public brought to him. As Bernstein’s universal fame and popularity grew, one had the feeling that the critics were ‘gunning’ for him, damning each new offering with faint praise, with sullen indifference or with open hostility towards the man as much as his music. Not every new work was destined for immortality, but many of them deserved a better fate, or at least a kinder reception.

Thus Bernstein, who wanted to be remembered primarily as a composer of serious music, struggled to transcend his status as a popular icon.

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50 Ibid., 226.

51 Diamond, 25.
West Side Story was the result of the collaboration between Bernstein, director and choreographer Jerome Robbins, playwright Arthur Laurents, and lyricist Stephen Sondheim. Although there is some debate as to the origin of the idea to adapt Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet to the Broadway stage, it is clear that the collaborators shared the common goal of elevating the musical above the level of popular entertainment.\footnote{In his biography of Bernstein, Michael Freedman cited the composer’s love of Shakespeare and desire to update Romeo and Juliet as the impetus behind the work, while Mary E. Williams, editor of Readings on West Side Story, assigns Robbins this same credit. Nevertheless, both describe their shared passion and aspirations for the project. Freedman, 139.; and Mary E. Williams, “West Side Story and its Creators,” in Readings on West Side Story, 14-28, ed. Mary E. Williams (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2001), 15.} Bernstein himself sought to realize his Mahlerian ambitions of pushing the characteristic and disparate elements of American music to their limits, as well as to create a new, distinctly American, musical form. His conception of this new form took particular inspiration from Richard Wagner’s idea of the total art work (Gesamtkunstwerk) that perfectly unites art, music, poetry, and drama. In her 1994 biography of Bernstein, Meryle Secrest characterized his ambitions with regard to this project as follows:

He did not want to write operetta, or musical comedy, or even opera, but something so new no one had a name for it. In his determination to fuse popular and high culture he became something of a proselytizer for the idea . . . What to call it, how to describe it, what elements to use, how to educate his audience, how to make the new form uniquely American, all obsessed him. . . . His theater would succeed in such fresh and inventive ways that it became something that transcended all other forms; it would be Wagner’s vision, a Total Theater.\footnote{Secrest, 211.}

The resulting story went beyond the norms of the happy-go-lucky 1950s musical, illustrating such important social issues as violence, prejudice, and racial conflict.

Mirroring the more serious content of the plot, Bernstein’s score was more than simple
accompaniment to lighthearted popular songs. Laurents described Bernstein’s contribution as follows:

It was the best theater music that’s ever been written. He didn’t think. The music just poured out of him. He somehow knew how to take the vernacular and raise it up, make it music instead of a pastiche. He had that rare quality of being able to feel each character; he was a musical dramatist.\footnote{Quoted in: Williams, 22.}

He incorporated a wide variety of musical styles, which served to illustrate and enhance characters and events. Instrumental passages played the important roles of linking and unifying contrasting dramatic scenes by mixing styles and bringing back significant motives, many of which were associated with specific characters or dramatic moods. This music is frequently cited by critics, biographers, and performers as one of the most technically demanding musical score ever written.\footnote{Ibid.} Likewise, many of his songs are more operatic than popular in style and vocal technique.

The four collaborators initially struggled to find the necessary financial backing to produce their ground-breaking new musical, but following the premiere, West Side Story became a clear success. Critics and audiences alike praised its ambitious goals, the successful execution of those goals, and the careful balance of serious elements with lightheartedness. As Henry Hewes indicated in his October 5, 1957 review:

“West Side Story” is not so much a musical as a ballet-opera. . . . in Act II comes a number which brings out the best in composer Leonard Bernstein, lyricist Stephen Sondheim, and choreographer Robbins. We are treated to a sarcastic impromptu dramatizing the absurd rigmarole that ensues when juvenile delinquents are brought into custody. The notions that “playgrounds keep deprived kids off the streets” or that they are
psychologically “distoibed,” or victims of “a social disease,” or marijuana-puffing fiends are devastatingly mocked.\textsuperscript{56}

Bernstein’s music was almost unanimously recognized and acclaimed as an integral component in this “ballet-opera’s” success. Here, his use of eclectic styles, drawing from both serious and popular traditions, was praised as an innovative and illustrative device for developing characters and creating links between contrasting scenes. Critics used the term “symphonic” to describe several of the dance pieces, and identified the score as containing stylistic devices largely foreign to the Broadway genre. In particular, they named his sophisticated use of recurring musical motifs and sometimes harsh dissonances, including frequent tritones and minor sevenths, as successful solutions to the problem of unity in a large-scale work.\textsuperscript{57} These remarks are noteworthy both because they are reminiscent of discussions of Wagner’s use of leitmotives to create unity in his lengthy operas, and, more generally, because the theatrical critics of \textit{West Side Story} discussed Bernstein’s music in the same language employed by art music critics when discussing and evaluating the success of his works in the serious realm.

\textit{West Side Story}’s composition and reception histories reveal an abundance of connections with Bernstein’s \textit{Mass}. It is clear from descriptions of the composer’s ambitions that he was already feeling strong pressures to create a work that would guarantee him a place in the history of serious composition by the 1950s.\textsuperscript{58}


himself articulated these sentiments, along with his conviction that his legacy would lie in
the realm of dramatic composition in a 1948 writing entitled “Me Composer – You Jane”:

I suppose that any composer would define his aims as being an ultimate
personal expression. I imagine that the various elements of my
background which contribute to the “personal” quality or nature of my
music will soon be integrated; at the moment they are not.
One thing I have already discerned, however. I have a basic interest in
theater music. . . . Where it will lead I cannot tell; but if I can write one
real, moving American opera that any American can understand (and one
that is, notwithstanding, a serious musical work), I shall be a happy man. 59

Likewise, he saw the simultaneous possibility of contributing to the forward progression
of music history while offering an alternative to the modernist call for greater degrees of
musical abstraction in the creation of a hybrid art music and musical theater form. Such a
form would engage the persistent duality of so-called serious and popular culture,
allowing the two to comment upon and push the limits of one another. 60 The dualities
present in West Side Story later form the core of Mass’s structure and content.

In addition to Bernstein’s ambitions and the emerging prevalence of dualities in
his career and works, West Side Story features an emphasis on social commentary similar
to that of Mass, using musical devices to communicate the composer’s attitudes about
particular issues to his audience. The music is intentionally eclectic, with disparate styles

60 Bernstein described the interaction of these disparate elements in West Side Story in several entries in his
“West Side Story Log.” On July 8, 1957 he recorded the success of the popular element of casting young
performers rather than professionals, stating that: “I can’t believe it . . . Forty kids singing five-part
counterpoint who never sang before – and sounding like heaven. I guess we were right not to cast
‘singers’; anything that sounded more professional would inevitably sound more experienced, and then
the ‘kid’ quality would be gone.” In his August 20, 1957 entry, Bernstein went on to indicate the success of
the serious elements: “. . . I am now convinced that what we dreamed all these years is possible; because
there stands that tragic story, with a theme as profound as love versus hate, with all the theatrical risks of
death and racial issues and young performers and ‘serious’ music and complicated ballets – and it all added
up for audience and critics.” Bernstein, “Excerpts from a West Side Story Log” in Findings, 144-147, 146-

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to highlight emotional situations and as a means for both musical and extramusical commentary. The nearly unanimous positive reviews of Bernstein’s novel combinations and musical devices foreshadows the best reviews of Mass, in which he is praised for his seamless linking of contrasting elements, his skillful and innovative writing, and his ability to connect with the emotions of his audience.  

However, West Side Story’s success was bittersweet for Bernstein. On the one hand, he had largely achieved his goal, if not in creating a perfect American Gesamtkunstwerk, certainly in elevating the musical to something more than light entertainment. He was also the beneficiary of numerous positive reviews, and people all over the country were humming the tune to “Maria.” This satisfied Bernstein’s craving, as described by Myers, for the instant gratification associated with popular success. But, on the other hand, success in the popular sphere did not satisfy his overwhelming need to be taken seriously in the world of art music. Contemporaries identify a trend in Bernstein’s career that as his popularity grew so did his obsession with composing an artistic masterpiece. This presented the composer with a conundrum because his popular acclaim created such a strong and pervasive association between Bernstein and the Broadway musical that it undermined his image as a serious musician. Bernstein’s fellow composer, Lukas Foss explained the process as follows:

... that was what people thought, that he wasn’t a serious composer.
What would happen was that sometimes people would not take him so

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61 Hume, C3.; and Moore.
62 Myers, 134.
63 Diamond, 25.; and Peyser, Bernstein: A Biography, 44-46.
seriously, and then one would get the wrong image, that image would be made into a cliché and so on. You know, in our age people always want to simplify things, to pigeon-hole artists...64

Bernstein reacted so strongly to the idea of being “pigeon-holed” as a popular composer that he refused to allow West Side Story to appear among his credits at concerts of his serious works and when he conducted abroad. Likewise, he focused all the more attention on producing an important serious work that would supplant the musical as his most famous and significant composition.65

This attitude of dismissing West Side Story and refusing to acknowledge it as an important contribution both to the development of the American musical and, more generally, to the whole of American music frustrated his colleagues, many of whom believed that this genre was most suited to Bernstein’s particular talents. His collaborator, Laurents, expressed these sentiments best:

For me it was the artistic pinnacle of his career, but it wasn’t for him. The reason was cultural snobbism. Musical theater is an art form, but he couldn’t believe it. He didn’t trust his innate talent and his instincts.66

Although he identified the Broadway musical as a source of great potential for the development of a new and distinctly American musical form, Bernstein could not see musical theater in itself as an art form equivalent to opera or the symphony precisely because of his need to be taken seriously by those in the art music community who refused to see it as such. For this reason, following the success of West Side Story in

64 Lukas Foss, like Bernstein, was a composer and conductor. The two studied conducting together under Fritz Reiner at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia and Serge Koussevitzky at Tanglewood, and became friends. Bernstein also performed many of Foss’s works. Foss, 12.


66 Quoted in: Secrest, 220.
1957 he left Broadway to become the first American-born conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra in 1958, and turned to *Kaddish: Symphony No. 3* as his next major compositional endeavor.

**Serious Musical Theatre in the Guise of a Symphony**

Bernstein abandoned Broadway as a venue when he accepted the New York Philharmonic Orchestra position, but he did not abandon his Mahlerian ambitions or his desire to create a new American total art form. Instead, he applied these ideas to the symphonic genre, striving toward that ever-present goal of the serious, artistic masterpiece. *Kaddish: Symphony No. 3* was the first of only three works that Bernstein completed during his tenure with the New York Philharmonic. The Koussevitzky Foundation commissioned this piece in 1953 for the 1955 celebration of the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s seventy-fifth anniversary. Bernstein began gathering ideas and considering possibilities for the work’s content and form almost immediately, but, due to the demands of his work on *West Side Story* and later responsibilities with the New York Philharmonic, he did not begin composing until the summer of 1961. His work on the

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67 Russian-born conductor, Serge Koussevitzky (1874-1951) was the conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1924 to 1949. His contributions to the Orchestra were numerous, and he was widely recognized as one of the most important figures in American concert life of the time. Following his wife’s death in 1942, he established the Koussevitzky Foundation to provide the necessary funds to commission new pieces from upcoming composers. Bernstein was a natural choice for the Koussevitzky Foundation commission for the Boston Symphony’s landmark seventy-fifth anniversary because Koussevitzky had been one of his conducting mentors. Bernstein went to Tanglewood during the summer of 1940 to study with Koussevitzky, who recognized his talents immediately, invited him to continue his studies in Boston, and groomed him to take a conducting position with a major symphony orchestra. The relationship between the two had been a close one, such that Bernstein later identified Koussevitzky as a kind of surrogate father. Sercrest, 81.; José Bowen, “Koussevitzky [Kusevitsky], Sergey (Aleksandrovich), in *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy, 2004 [cited 18 August 2007], available from http://www.grovedcom.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu; INTERNET.; and Neil Butterworth, *The American Symphony* (Brookfield, Vermont: Ashgate, 1998), 169.
symphony was nearly complete when John F. Kennedy was assassinated in November of 1963, and Bernstein decided to dedicate the piece to the President’s memory immediately thereafter. Recognizing the strong Jewish themes present throughout the composition, the Boston Symphony Orchestra relinquished their rights to its first performance, and the world premiere of *Kaddish* occurred on December 10, 1963 in Tel Aviv, Israel. The American premiere followed in Boston on January 31, 1964.

*Kaddish* is the name of the Jewish prayer for the dead. Despite this traditional context, this prayer never mentions death, but instead is a prayer of hope, praising God, affirming life, and expressing a fervent desire for peace. Typically, it is recited at the end of a synagogue service or by children mourning at their parents’ graves. Bernstein’s use of the prayer as the framework for his composition both reveals the composer using his works as a medium in which to engage persistent and problematic issues from his personal life, and foreshadows the structure and content of *Mass*. This prayer and its traditional use by children mourning a parent have particular significance for the composer because he struggled with religious faith and his relationship with his father throughout his life. Moreover, the two were inexorably linked in the composer’s mind because the majority of his early religious education came from his father, and because his father pushed so strongly for Bernstein to follow with a kind of blind faith the path that had been set for him. Thus, Bernstein viewed his relationship with God as

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68 Secrest, 289.

69 Myers, 132.

70 Ibid.; and Secrest, 288.

71 Diamond, 17.
somewhat parallel to his relationship with his father. Both represented “unapproachable authorities” in the composer’s life, and he strongly felt their disappointment, whether directly expressed or merely assumed when he felt compelled to question his faith. Bernstein therefore used the prayer as a framework for presenting the themes of faith and doubt that characterized religion’s role in his own life.\(^{73}\)

The three-movement Kaddish Symphony calls for a speaker, a soprano soloist, boys’ choir, mixed chorus, and a large orchestra. Each of the movements sets the kaddish prayer in a different musical style. In addition, Bernstein wrote English texts to be performed by the speaker and interspersed between the prayer settings. The speaker, originally Bernstein’s wife Felicia, attempts throughout the symphony to engage God in a conversation, and expresses sentiments ranging from joyful faith to anger and doubt.

Myers describes the scenario as follows:

...this prayer is sung three times: the first time, anguished; the second, as a peaceful lullaby for soprano and female choir; the third, jubilant. Binding the three together is a Speaker, who introduces the first kaddish with an Invocation, calling upon God to listen. The kaddish is followed by a Din-Torah (or ‘Trial by God’s Law’) in which the Speaker angrily reproaches God for forsaking mankind, accusing Him of withdrawing hope. Then, apologizing for such an outburst, the Speaker introduces the second kaddish – the lullaby – which offers God comfort for His disappointment in His creatures. This is followed by the most critical point, dramatically and musically, of the work: a Scherzo, in which the Speaker mentally reverses roles with God, to persuade Him to renew His faith in man. A jubilant boys’ choir introduces the third kaddish. The dream ends, a new, wiser person emerges, reborn at peace with God and with faith restored and renewed.\(^{74}\)

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\(^{72}\) Secrest, 338.


\(^{74}\) Myers, 132.
Because of the heavy emphasis on the role of the speaker as the individual who both questions God and takes on the role of God, as well as the seemingly secondary role of the orchestra, *Kaddish* has often been characterized as an oratorio or a dramatic monologue rather than a true symphony.

Bernstein described *Kaddish* as a “religious, theatrical and deeply personal” composition, language that recalls his colleagues’ later characterizations of the place in his output held by *Mass*. It is unsurprising, therefore that *Kaddish* reflects both his Mahlerian ambitions and his desire to create a serious work of musical theater. Adapting a Jewish prayer to be set as a choral symphony was a new and innovative idea, and when Bernstein announced the concept critics were excited at the prospect of a potential new direction for the symphony. His musical treatment of religious subject matter was also creative. Bernstein was an ardent believer that tonality was the natural way of organizing music, indicating that even the early dodecaphonists, such as Arnold Schöenberg and Anton Webern, organized their music according to a tonal center. In *Kaddish*, he

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75 Freeland, 198.

76 Brown, 95.

77 Freedland, 198-199.

78 In his 1973 presentation for the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard University, Bernstein indicated that: “It seems somehow inevitable that the sense of tonality haunts his [Schönberg’s] most beautiful works ... Does this sound paradoxical? It shouldn’t, if you keep in mind that the twelve tones employed by Schoenberg are the same old twelve tones employed by everyone else, derived in the same way from the same natural harmonic series. They are the same twelve well-tempered tones of Bach, only their universal hierarchy has been destroyed – or, at least, an attempt has been made to destroy it. Schoenberg himself was the first to recognize this all-important truth, and, indeed the first to renounce the word ‘atonality’, even to deny the possibility of atonality. ... with those twelve universals neither Schoenberg nor Berg nor Webern could ever escape the nostalgic yearning for the deep structures implied by, indeed inherent in, these notes.” Bernstein, *The Unanswered Question: Six Talks at Harvard* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 289
equated atonality with sections of crisis and tonal passages with faith, citing historical circumstances as linking tonality and religion long ago. As Secrest indicated:

> It was curious, he wrote later, that Wagner, the last of the great tonalists, died in 1883, the very year that Nietzsche supposedly announced the death of God. Just as one felt an “agony of longing for tonality,” so, he implied, one felt the same longing for an idea of God and “a blind need to recapture it.”

Bernstein’s piece sought to present these dual crises of tonality and faith, as well as to suggest a possible resolution. In so doing, he hoped to fulfill his lofty musical goals, and to communicate the widely relevant issue of a crisis of faith in the language of one of the most debated musical issues of his time.

As in the case of *West Side Story*, this discussion of *Kaddish*’s composition history in the context of Bernstein’s ambitions demonstrates numerous connections with *Mass*. It is notable that *Kaddish* attempts to engage the same problem as *West Side Story*: that of pushing genre norms to include disparate and seemingly opposing materials to create a new kind of American total art form. However, in this composition and in *Mass*, Bernstein adopts a genre with a long and illustrious history in the realm of art music as the framework for his experiments. This decision shows the composer’s conviction that his works held the potential to contribute to the forward progression of music without the high modernist imperative toward ever increasing levels of abstraction. His use of such serious forms as both a part of the title for *Kaddish: Symphony No. 3* and *Mass* may be seen as Bernstein’s signal to serious musicians and critics alike that his works should not immediately be dismissed as merely popular because their musical and extramusical content is relevant to the concerns of the art music world.

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79 Secrest, 289.
*West Side Story* showed Bernstein experimenting with the kind of dualities that are foundational for *Mass*, as well as beginning to explore the possibilities of using such dualities as a tool for presenting commentary. In *Kaddish*, the composer continues in this direction, such that the form of *Mass* can be seen to take shape in this work. Here, dualities and disparate elements do more than just recall characters and link various episodes. Instead the verbal alternation of Hebrew prayer and English text, as well as the musical alternation of tonal and atonal passages, create a form that operates like a conversation. In this conversation, each opposing element responds to the other, either critiquing or building upon the previous statements. Bernstein employs this idea on a larger scale in *Mass*. In both cases, the effect of this structure is in accordance with the composer’s strong desire to communicate with his audience because this kind of textual and musical commentary draws the listener into the conversation by raising and attempting to answer the kinds of questions relevant to listeners and their contemporary concerns.

In addition to its dedication to Kennedy’s memory, *Kaddish* also foreshadows many of the themes that are central to *Mass*, particularly in its treatment of religious materials and its concern with the issue of a crisis of faith. This can be seen most clearly in the parallels between the roles of the Speaker in *Kaddish* and the Celebrant in *Mass*. Despite the fact that one operates in the realm of Jewish faith and the other interacts with the conventions of the Catholic ritual, both share the task of questioning God’s involvement in the modern world. Both are also angered by the demands of faith and the lack of satisfactory answers, and both experience a crisis of faith before ultimately coming to terms with their relationships to the Divine.
With so many connections between the two, it is unsurprising that *Kaddish* should also foreshadow aspects of *Mass* in its critical reception. Unlike *West Side Story*, with its unambiguous success, criticisms of *Kaddish* foreshadow the negative reactions to *Mass*. Responses to *Kaddish* ranged from faint praises of Bernstein’s valiant attempt at composing in this most serious of artistic genres to hostile attacks on both composer and composition. All agreed, though, that this was neither the best example of Bernstein’s talents nor a composition worthy of acclaim, much less a place in the canon of Western art music. Generally criticisms of the symphony fell into four categories: 1. irreverent or vulgar content; 2. poorly constructed text; 3. music being relegated to a secondary role; and 4. musical incompetence. Each of these categories of criticism provides insight into various aspects of *Mass*’s reception history.

Perhaps the most frequent criticism of *Kaddish* was that the speaker’s text, questioning God and demanding answers in return, was irreverent and vulgar. The following is such an excerpt from Scherzo section:

This is Your Kingdom of Heaven, Father,  
Just as You planned it.  
Every immortal cliché intact.  
Lambs frisk. Wheat ripples.  
Sunbeams dance. Something is wrong.  
The light: flat. The air: sterile.  
Do You know what is wrong? There is nothing to dream.  
Nowhere to go. Nothing to know.  
And these, the creatures of Your Kingdom,  
These smiling, serene and painless people –  
Are they, too, created in Your image?  
You are serenity, but rage  
As well. I *know*, I have borne it.  
You are hope, but also regret.  
I *know*. You have regretted me.  
But not these – the perfected ones:
They are beyond regret, or hope.
They do not exist, Father, not even
In the light-years of our dream.  

Although it is not uncommon in the Jewish faith for individuals to seek answers to their religious questions by posing challenges to God, a fact that most reviewers did acknowledge, the critical consensus was that Bernstein went too far, crossing the line from appropriate questioning into the arrogant presumption that he could call God to task and expect an answer. The general tone of these reviews may be characterized by the question: “who does he think he is that he believes he can attack God and call it art?”

Irving Kolodin wrote one such review for the Saturday Review, in which he stated that:

> Anyone has the right to address himself to God after his own fashion, and the program book takes note that as Job raised his voice in protest, so “Mr. Bernstein feels strongly the peculiarly Jewishness of this Man-God relationship” that “allows things to be said to God which are almost inconceivable in another religion.” But is it expectable that a deity would answer to such challenges as “Listen, Almighty, with all your might.” or “Do I have your attention?” or, a little later on, “Did you hear that, Father?” Apparently the God that Bernstein references is made in his own image, for there are, presently, indications that some rapprochement has been achieved, that it is the weaknesses of the deity that are being forgiven rather than those of the man who speaks so rudely.

In the eyes of the critics, the idea that God should need forgiveness from man negates his almighty status as well as Bernstein’s affirmation of faith. This same attitude certainly characterized many responses to the announcement that Bernstein, a Jewish Broadway composer, would choose to write a Mass. It also featured prominently in the reactions of American Catholics who perceived Mass as sacrilegious.

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81 Kolodin, 28.

82 Peyser, Bernstein: A Biography, 429-430.
Closely related is the criticism that Bernstein’s text was poorly constructed, and therefore rendered ineffective from the outset. Michael Steinberg, who reviewed the American premiere for the *Boston Daily Globe*, felt that Bernstein’s idea was a good one, but remarked that in practice he was unable to fulfill its potential. He wrote:

The idea is splendidly imaginative, and it is tempting to think of what a poet like Auden might have made of it. But Bernstein as a writer of words has only fluency at his command, and that fluency produces a lava-flow of clichés wherein a few cozy intimacies (Speaker to God. “We’ll make it a sort of holiday.”) are contrasted against the tinny rhetoric of Norman Corwin’s radio plays from the forties.⁸³

Though none of the critics go so far as to label Bernstein’s music “kitsch,” the term is implicit in their descriptions of frequent clichés and emotional button-pushing.⁸⁴ Once again, this critical language may be seen in the reception of *Mass*, in particular Schoenberg’s descriptions of its content as “pseudo-serious” and “cheap and vulgar.”⁸⁵ Such sentiments may also be found in Arnold Whittall’s 1974 characterizations of the work as “ultimately complacent” and “intolerably pretentious,”⁸⁶ as well as Paul Snyder’s 1976 assertion that “Leonard Bernstein’s *Mass* is kitsch.”⁸⁷

⁸³ Steinberg, 12.


⁸⁵ Schoenberg, “Bernstein’s New Work Reflects His Background on Broadway,” 51.


Although Bernstein’s musical efforts in Kaddish did not receive the full force of the criticisms largely reserved for its text, critical responses suggest that it was considered equally deficient. Perhaps one reason that the music attracted less attention was simply that reviewers perceived it as entirely subservient to the text, present only for dramatic effect. Winthrop Sargeant of the New Yorker described it as “the music that ornaments this curious concoction,” going on to say that “when the symphony was over, I found that I retained very little of it in my memory except a general impression of noisiness.”\textsuperscript{88} The implication in such remarks is that Kaddish cannot possibly be a true “symphony” with so little emphasis on the music. However, not all of the reviewers agreed about the largely forgettable quality of the music. Some found it nearly as offensive and incompetent as the text. Steinberg, in fact, reserved his most scathing remarks for his critique of Bernstein’s music:

\ldots Bernstein shows that he can compose and I just wish he would. Mostly, he seems to prefer the easier way of assembling a series of tricks. These tricks are mutually incompatible, and they are generally irrelevant to the task at hand. The program notes explain how atonal chromaticism is associated with despair and G flat major with faith, but no symbolism can justify the musical illogic of the transition. The idea of such a symbol is perfectly plausible, but Bernstein just has not managed to compose it out properly.\textsuperscript{89}

Here, as well as in other reviews of both Kaddish and Mass, Bernstein is accused of compositional incompetence for failing to create any sort of unity between his combination of eclectic styles and other musical devices. Instead, critics heard his most serious works as long strings of musical clichés, put together for no greater purpose than highlighting the desired moment-to-moment affects of the composition. Again, though it

\textsuperscript{88} Sargeant, 185-186.

\textsuperscript{89} Steinberg, 12.
is never explicitly stated, the critics suggest that these musical clichés are examples of kitsch rather than serious artistic contributions. Such criticisms make dismissing *Kaddish*, *Mass*, and Bernstein’s serious musical ambitions as the pretensions of a popular composer an easy decision. Nevertheless, this discussion has shown Bernstein’s *Mass* to have grown out of the same ambitions present in both *West Side Story* and *Kaddish*. Seeds of its content, structure, and reception are evident in both, showing the composer attempting to engage the same issues and solve the same problems from both ends of the serious-popular musical spectrum.

In this regard, *Mass* may be understood as the culmination of Bernstein’s compositional efforts up to this point. It takes from *West Side Story* its theatrical format, the idea of integrating serious and popular idioms, and the emphasis on social commentary, while drawing from *Kaddish* its use of a serious genre as a structural framework, its alternation of verbal and musical languages to denote commentary, and its religious themes. With this synthesis of his efforts into a single large-scale work, it is easy to see why Bernstein would say that “it is a piece I have been writing all my life, and everything I have written before was a rehearsal for it.”\(^{90}\) The question that remains is why *West Side Story* should be remembered as a compositional triumph, why *Kaddish* should be considered a failure, and most of all, why assessments of *Mass* and its value should remain ambiguous.

\(^{90}\) Zadikov, 42.
The Consequences of Broadway Success

An important commonality between West Side Story, Kaddish, and Mass is that each challenges the norms and limitations of the genre to which it ostensibly belongs. In West Side Story, Bernstein took the framework of the Broadway musical, a genre often dismissed as mere popular entertainment rather than art, as the starting point for his attempt to create a new and distinctive American musical form. In so doing he integrated elements of so-called high art into this supposed popular genre, and the reception of his efforts was enthusiastically positive. Bernstein adopted the same methodology of bending genre norms in Kaddish, taking the serious art form of the symphony and incorporating aspects of vernacular culture in order to explore the possibilities of a more serious kind of musical theater. The resulting composition was far from successful from a critical standpoint. Mass: A Theatre Piece for Singers, Players, and Dancers occupies a middle ground between West Side Story and Kaddish. Its title reflects the fact that Bernstein drew equally from the serious and popular realms in creating his composition, taking the structural framework of Mass and placing into the context of the theatrical stage. It likewise draws equally from elements of elite and popular culture, such that it is impossible to say that this work belongs more to one world than the other. The resulting reception history is confusing and often contradictory, with critics unable to agree whether Bernstein raised the level of the theatrical stage or dragged the form of the Mass down to an inappropriately popularizing level.

91 Hewes, 22.; and McClung and Laird, 177.

92 Steinberg, 12.; and Sargeant, 185-186.
The root of Bernstein’s problematic reception may lie in the fact that the critical evaluation of each of his works was based in the norms of the genres with which their titles associate them, despite the composer’s constant challenging of such conventions. This analytic lens reveals the very significant impact of genre designation on the formation of aesthetic judgments. *West Side Story* was a success because it transcended the traditional bounds of the Broadway musical by adding elements of serious art music. These serious elements effectively raised the musical in the perceived hierarchy of musical forms, although not to the level of true art according to the views of art music critics of the time. Bernstein followed the same formula of mixing styles in *Kaddish*, but this approach held a different meaning in the much older and more serious symphonic genre. According to traditional associations and genre definitions, the symphony was among the most serious of the serious genres, and therefore in the eyes of proponents of modernist abstraction, adding any popular element was seen as lowering its hard-earned status at the peak of Western Art music. Thus it was almost inevitable that *Kaddish*, with its intentional disregard for symphonic conventions and intentional disruption of the form through dramatic recitations reminiscent of the theatrical stage, would be dismissed as aesthetically deficient.

By applying this analytic lens to Bernstein’s *Mass: A Theatre Piece for Singers, Players, and Dancers*, the opposing reactions that characterize its entire reception history my be seen as both the product of its ambiguous genre affiliation and as growing out of the critical responses to *West Side Story* and *Kaddish*. The full title of the work and its performance context reveal this composition to belong neither entirely to the world of serious art music nor to that of popular musical theater. It is neither truly a Mass, in that
its purpose is not to perform and act of worship according to the traditions of the Catholic Church, nor is it musical theater in any conventional sense. *Mass* occupies a middle ground between the ritual and a performance, as well as between the serious and the popular. As such, neither the customary criteria for judging the success and aesthetic value of a Mass, nor those associated with musical theater truly fit this composition. Nevertheless, critics attempting to situate this composition continue to rely on the traditional genre norms, thus revealing their difficulty in dealing with music that cannot easily be “pigeon-holed” into clear categories.\(^9^3\) The resulting assessments of *Mass* equate the perceived success or failure of this composition with Bernstein’s previous efforts in either serious or popular idioms, depending upon the individual critic’s personal reaction to the work. Thus, positive responses to *Mass* rely on language similar to reviews of *West Side Story*, indicating the reviewer’s position that the composer succeeded in raising musical theater to an even high level than that of his previous contributions to the genre. On the other hand, *Mass*’s strongest detractors make use of the same kinds of criticisms that characterize the reception history of *Kaddish*. These condemnations focus on the ways in which Bernstein popularizes the Mass, much to the detriment of this serious genre. It is possible to infer, therefore, that one reason for the many contradictions in the work’s reception history might be that the representatives of each of the critical extremes were speaking the different languages of different genre conventions. However, whether positive or negative, neither side of the critical debate examined *Mass* in its own terms, independent of both Broadway and art music conventions.

\(^9^3\) Foss, 12.
Moreover, much of Bernstein’s contradictory reception may be seen as the product of his Broadway success, particularly with his contributions to the genre in *West Side Story*. The harsh critical reception of *Kaddish* was undoubtedly influenced by his reputation as a composer of Broadway musicals. Since its premiere in 1957, *West Side Story* had only increased in popularity, and was adapted into a movie in 1981. The movie version of the musical won eleven Academy Awards, including the award for Best Picture, elevating Bernstein’s fame and popularity to unprecedented levels. The downside to this success was, as Myers indicated, that the more his popularity grew the more his critics in the realm of art music seemed to be “gunning” for him. Occupying the uncomfortable position as Bernstein’s first major serious composition following the success of *West Side Story*, *Kaddish* certainly suffered, as did *Mass*, from its composer’s efforts to bridge the gaps between the serious and the popular and the concert hall and the theatrical stage.

The majority of negative reviews of both *Kaddish* and *Mass* implied that Bernstein, as a composer predominantly associated with the Broadway musical genre, was somehow overstepping his bounds by writing and presenting works in such serious genres as the symphony and the Mass. This is despite the fact that both compositions were specifically commissioned, and neither represented his first attempt at serious writing. Much like the critical attitude toward his questioning God and the nature of religion, the dominant critical tone was one of “who does he think he is?” In the cases of both works, the critics were questioning how a popular composer could be qualified to

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94 Williams, 26.

95 Myers, 226.
join the ranks of such serious composers as Mahler and Wagner. A few critics, including Kolodin, explicitly referenced Broadway musicals as a means for expressing their disdain for *Kaddish* and its composer:

The plot of *Kaddish* – for it is a theatrical composition, meant to be listened to as such – resembles the scheme of many musical comedies, though here it is “Boy meets God, boy loses God, God gets boy.” This may strike the reader as irreverent – especially if he hasn’t heard *Kaddish* – but it is the essential philosophic pattern of the exclamations in English, which run, in all immodesty from “Lord God of Hosts, I call you to account” and “If I die, you die with me.” to “You ask for faith: where is your own?” In the end, in a striking paraphrase of the silent cinema’s favorite subtitle, the speaker announces, “The dawn has come.” God has justified himself to man, and the chorus joins in a fugue of veneration.  

Here the reviewer implies that Bernstein was so mired in the popular vocabulary, gesture, and sentiment of the time that it was impossible for him to escape the accompanying conventions. Instead of transcending the bounds of the symphony and creating a serious musical drama, he does little more than repackaging a musical as a symphonic composition. The implications are the same in Schonberg’s evaluation of *Mass* as “a pseudo-serious effort” and “a show-biz Mass.” Such interpretations seemingly render futile Bernstein’s efforts to be taken seriously as an artistic composer.

For Bernstein, his associations with the Broadway stage, and particularly the legacy of *West Side Story*, were inescapable. The expectations and evaluations of all of his subsequent contributions and even of the composer’s personality were at least partially based upon prior knowledge of these ties to the realm of popular entertainment.

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96 Kolodin, 28.

97 Schonberg, “Bernstein’s New Work Reflects His Background on Broadway,” 51.
a fact that mystified and dismayed Bernstein. His friend and fellow composer, David Diamond described the situation as follows:

He suffered because he knew he was a fine musician, and he never understood why his serious music was not accepted. I told him if he were not Leonard Bernstein the conductor, and the composer of West Side Story and On the Town he might be taken in a different way. 98

This view raises important questions about the musical criticisms of Mass. For example, when Schonberg labeled the composition a “stylistic phantasmagoria,” 99 did he find the music to be deficient based solely on what he heard, or was recalling the composer’s Broadway associations? If Bernstein had not previously established a reputation as a Broadway composer it is possible that this Mass would have been taken more seriously and analyzed as such, rather than being dismissed out of hand as a hybrid musical-Mass written by a presumptuous composer. Perhaps in place of the popular models frequently cited and used as criteria for dismissing any lasting value, critics would have looked to Wagner’s Gesamtkunstwerk and Mahler’s combinations of the serious and the banal to find Bernstein’s influences, and therefore taken his ambitions more seriously. Without his popular background, could Bernstein instead have been considered at the cutting edge of compositional developments, with his unique synthesis of large-scale musical forms and elements of serious and popular idioms? By considering the ways in which Mass challenges existing norms and defies traditional categorizations, productive links may be made between Bernstein’s work and the musical and cultural thoughts of his contemporaries. In addition to embodying the many dualities of its composer’s life,

98 Diamond, 25.

99 Schonberg, “Bernstein’s New Work Reflects His Background on Broadway,” 51.
career, and reception, the numerous oppositions presented in *Mass* resonate with the emerging postmodernity of the 1960s and 70s, as well as creating a medium through which Bernstein's voice may be heard.
CHAPTER 3

DUALITIES AS BUILDING BLOCKS FOR STRUCTURE AND COMMENTARY

Opposing Materials

As discussed in the previous chapter, some of the most problematic aspects of Bernstein’s Mass and its reception history emerge from and may be considered consequences of the work’s numerous and pervasive dualities. These dualities include pairings of high art and popular culture, the sacred and the profane, faith and doubt, and death and rebirth, to name a few. To say that the use of such dualities is a manifestation of the composer’s ambitions, an attempt to synthesize his previous musical efforts and an expression of his own personal dualities helps to explain why Bernstein might have placed this composition at the center of his musical oeuvre. Although this kind of analysis lends insight into the progression of his career, it does not account for the significance of dualities as they operate within Mass. During the same interview in which Bernstein labeled Mass as the culmination of his compositional achievements to date, he described the function of the many pairings of opposites that appear throughout the work:

It is just as though you are attending a Mass, or participating in it or just listening to it, and as it goes along simultaneously there are thoughts, reactions, objections, questions, doubts and emotions engendered by the

100 Zadikov, 42.
liturgy itself. The Mass is constantly interrupted by these thoughts: “Wait a minute! Just hold it for a second! I have a question about that, or I do not believe that!” All these interruptive thoughts are actually prayers in themselves. No matter how violent they are, no matter how angry they are, they are prayers born of an immense desire to believe, which is in conflict with the inability to go along blindly with it.¹⁰¹

Thus Bernstein’s view holds duality at the core of a crisis of faith, and his composition is structured accordingly. In fact, dualities govern all aspects of the work, from its basic materials and presentation to its structure and expression. Bernstein builds his composition through the use of layers of dichotomies, such that oppositions in his chosen materials lead to dualities in presentation and structure. These larger levels of duality lead to possibilities for musical and social commentary that build still larger layers of potential musical meanings.

Two categories of oppositions comprise the basic materials through which Bernstein constructs his Mass: juxtapositions of Latin and English texts and those of elite and popular musical styles. Each pairing contains one element that is clearly aligned with so-called high culture and one associated more closely with so-called low culture. In many ways, Bernstein relies on the historical aspect of such associations, such as the fact that art music traditionally holds higher regard than popular styles, as well as the idea that Latin is a language known only to the educated elite. Thus in pairing Latin texts with serious musical idioms he is able to emphasize the high cultural status of both. In other cases, the composer constructs associations through his combinations and juxtapositions of various contrasting elements, as in his use of the English language to question the content of Latin religious texts. The result of this pairing is that English becomes

¹⁰¹ Ibid.
associated with comprehensibility, and the Latin texts appear to continue, unchanging
and independent of the world around them. But regardless of the sources of their
associations, these basic oppositions and their interactions provide important points of
entry into the dichotomous nature of Mass, its structure, and its thematic content.

The duality of Latin and vernacular texts is immediately apparent in the work’s
alternation of episodes. The contents of the composition are as follows:

I. DEVOTIONS BEFORE MASS
   1. Antiphon: Kyrie Eleison
   3. Responsory: Alleluia

II. FIRST INTROIT (Rondo)
   1. Prefatory Prayers
   2. Thrice-Triple Canon: Dominus Vobiscum

III. SECOND INTROIT
   1. In nomine Patris
   2. Prayer for the Congregation
      (Chorale: “Almighty Father”)
   3. Epiphany

IV. CONFESSION
   1. Confiteor
   2. Trope: “I don’t Know”
   3. Trope: “Easy”

V. MEDITATION No. 1 (orchestra)

VI. GLORIA
   1. Gloria Tibi
   2. Gloria in Excelsis
   3. Trope: “Half of the People”
   4. Trope: “Thank You”

VII. MEDITATION No. 2 (orchestra)

VIII. EPISTLE: “The Word of the Lord”

IX. GOSPEL-SERMON: “God Said”

X. CREDO
   1. Credo in unum Deum
   2. Trope: “Non Credo”
   3. Trope: “Hurry”
   4. Trope: “World without End”
   5. Trope: “I Believe in God”

XI. MEDITATION No. 3 (De Profundis, part 1)

XII. OFFERTORY (De Profundis, part 2)

XIII. THE LORD’S PRAYER
1. Our Father . . .
2. Trope: “I Go On”

XIV. SANCTUS
XV. AGNUS DEI
XVI. FRACTION: “Things Get Broken”
XVII. PAX COMMUNION (“Secret Songs”)

This list of contents demonstrates that Bernstein’s composition follows the prescribed order of the traditional Catholic Mass. As expected in a composition entitled Mass, each of the five movements of the Mass Ordinary, Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei, appear and are preformed in their original Latin. The composer also incorporates several additional Latin episodes that derive directly from the traditions of Catholic daily prayers and retain their typical locations and functions within the Mass. These sections are as follows: Alleluia, In nomine Patris, Dominus Vobiscum, and Gloria Tibi. The only Latin text used by Bernstein that does not belong specifically to the Mass tradition is the De Profundis, which is used in the “Meditation No. 3” and “Offertory” episodes of the composition. This text is the Latin translation of Psalm 130, and would typically be performed in the Divine Office of Vespers. None of the Latin texts is altered, nor are any newly composed sections of text presented in Latin. This presentation speaks to the largely fixed and unchanging quality of the Catholic ritual service. At least in this limited sense, Bernstein’s use of the Latin ritual texts is true to Catholic traditions.

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104 For the purposes of this study, discussion of the specific relationships between elements of Bernstein’s composition and the particulars of the Catholic Mass tradition is necessarily restricted by the availability of the full score, including comprehensive stage directions, of this work. This score has yet to be published for retail or research purposes, and the materials contained therein are only available for perusal under limited conditions, which could not be met within the time constraints of this project. Mark Horowitz, letter to author, 12 September 2007.
Nevertheless, Bernstein almost immediately deviates from Catholic Mass conventions in his frequent interpolations of English-text episodes. While the Second Vatican Council did allow for the inclusion of vernacular languages into the standard worship service,\textsuperscript{105} the texts used in Mass go far beyond the acceptable function of making the ritual accessible to a larger population. These passages attempt to engage the ritual texts directly, often commenting on their content, appealing for further answers, and questioning their validity. It is significant that the majority of these English interpolations are labeled as “tropes,” a musical term taken directly from the Mass tradition. A trope refers to new music, text, or a combination of the two, added to the service in order to expound upon the original Mass. Bernstein’s own tropes serve precisely this function, but their effect is more to show the problematic rigidity of organized religion than to reaffirm the ritual in a contemporary form.

It is also significant that Bernstein uses his vernacular episodes to attempt direct communication with his audience, and in so doing to reveal the failure of traditional religious rituals to address contemporary problems. A particularly salient example is the pairing of the \textit{Credo} movement of the Latin Mass Ordinary (See Appendix, Example 1) and its trope, entitled “Non Credo” (See Appendix, Example 2). As the text of the \textit{Credo}, meaning “I believe,” indicates, this is the portion of the Mass ritual in which the congregation expresses their shared belief in the official Doctrine of the Catholic Church: Jesus Christ was the Son of God, he was born of the Virgin Mary, he lived as a man, he died on the cross to save mankind, and he was resurrected to return to heaven forever. This text proclaims unwavering faith in the tenets of the Catholic Church. As evidenced

\textsuperscript{105} The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council.
by the title of its trope, "Non Credo," Bernstein's English text engages and questions the ritual text from the outset. The soloist proclaims that Jesus never really lived a human life because he always knew that he was the Son of God, and that upon his death he would return to His Father's side in heaven. The soloist goes on to observe that he did not choose life as a man, in all of its complexities, nor was he given such guarantees of immortality. His final words sum up his wish to engage more directly with the sacred sphere and his fervent desire for it to provide answers instead of empty ritual:

I'll never say credo.
How can anybody say credo?
I want to say cr...  

By their questioning of the ritual texts and the absence of any direct Latin reply, the English texts reveal the ritual to be set and unaccommodating to the difficulties associated with contemporary life. That the ritual is presented in Latin, with no attempts at translation or explanation, demonstrates its position as removed from daily life, much as high art is set apart from popular culture. Bernstein's linguistic duality, a feature of the composition that is impossible to ignore, therefore provides a point of entry into larger levels of structural and thematic opposition.

Like the manner in which Bernstein employs linguistic contrasts, the juxtaposition of numerous disparate musical styles from both popular and art music traditions constitutes one of the basic materials through which he builds the composition. One of the most frequent criticisms of Mass was levied against this particular aspect of the work. Schonberg was among its most vocal critics, claiming that:

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106 Bernstein, Mass, 154-155.
... [it] was a combination of superficiality and pretentiousness, and the greatest mélange of styles since the ladies’ magazine recipe for steak fried in peanut butter and marshmallow sauce.\textsuperscript{107}

Such critical reviews neglect that the interaction of opposing musical styles serves the same function as the alternation between the Latin Mass movements and the English commentary: articulating the dichotomous nature of this work. As expected, more often than not the shifts of musical style follow the shifts from Latin to English text; however, the relationship between musical styles is somewhat more fluid than that of their textual counterparts. The settings of the Latin Mass movements are consistently representative of styles associated with the realm of art music. In some cases these settings draw explicitly from the traditions of Church composition, while in others Bernstein adopts the musical vocabulary associated with various serious composers, such as Ludwig von Beethoven, Gustav Mahler, Arnold Schönberg, and Igor Stravinsky. In most instances, Bernstein’s music only alludes to the styles of his predecessors and contemporaries, a fact that he appeared to address in a 1972 interview, in which he indicated that “All composers are eclectic in that they are unable to produce what they have produced without what has gone before.”\textsuperscript{108} However, Bernstein admitted to directly quoting from a passage of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 in the melodic theme of his orchestral “Meditation No. 2.”\textsuperscript{109} Regardless of their specific stylistic sources, these passages of serious music are marked throughout the score with the conventional Italian tempo

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markings, like “Allegretto con spirito”\textsuperscript{110} and “Maestoso”\textsuperscript{111} that one would expect to find in a work of serious art music.\textsuperscript{112} The use of these materials in conjunction with the Latin Mass texts articulates the traditional high regard for the ritual and its presentation, as well as delineating the sacred space of worship as separate from everyday concerns.

As in the case of the musical settings of the Latin Mass movements, the settings of the English texts are somewhat variable in terms of their specific musical style, but all may be generally associated with popular idioms. In most cases, Bernstein adopts the form and style of jazz or popular songs, and his cast accordingly includes three blues singers and three rock singers, all of whom perform in the trope “Easy.” Changes in the musical style within these sections are often marked by a change in the performing forces, such as the alternation between the rock band and blues combo in this same trope. Whereas the Latin movements are consistently marked with Italian tempo markings, Bernstein often incorporates additional vernacular performance indications into the English episodes, as in the case of his markings of “precise and swinging”\textsuperscript{113} and “a bit more urgent, moving forward.”\textsuperscript{114} These popular settings further emphasize the contrast between the Latin and English sections, but it is significant that some aspects of art music appear amidst the popular in moments when the performers attempt to engage with and accept the religious materials.

\textsuperscript{110} Bernstein, Mass, 1.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 7.

\textsuperscript{112} As in the case of the discussion of particular relationships between Bernstein’s Mass and the Catholic Mass tradition, analysis of the specific musical details of this composition throughout this study is limited by the inaccessibility of the work’s full score. Horowitz, letter to author.

\textsuperscript{113} Bernstein, Mass, 23.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 158.
Once again, the Credo and “Non Credo” are representative examples (see Appendix, Example 6). Bernstein’s setting of the Credo adheres so strictly to the techniques of serial composition as to become a parody. His melodic material consists of only one twelve-tone row and its inversion. The movement begins with two identical statements of the row, followed by two identical statements of its inversion, and concluding with the same two statements of the row. None of the row-ends coincide with the ends of textual phrases, a characteristic that, when coupled with the frequent direct melodic repetition, creates the effect that the music is out of sync with the text. The musical texture and vocal timbre of this movement somewhat resemble that of the Gregorian Chant of the Catholic Mass tradition in that all four voices sing in unison octaves throughout its entirety. Nevertheless, the rhythmic qualities of the setting detract from the chant-like effect of the melody. Despite frequent, complicated metric shifts, the vocal rhythm follows static quarter-notes throughout, and the singers follow the performance indication that “there must be no feeling of stopping for breath.” This unison, homorhythmic declamation with no pauses or indications of phrase endings, along with the lack of any melodic development, creates a mechanical quality. The style is clearly aligned with the high art of Bernstein’s modernist contemporaries, but the performance of the Credo carries the feeling of an empty or abstract ritual.

The “Non Credo” is the Credo’s stylistic opposite. Where the melodic material of the Credo is serial, the “Non Credo” is tonal; where the Credo is characterized by rhythmic stasis, the “Non Credo” employs frequent syncopation; where the Credo is performed by a seemingly mechanical choir, an expressive soloist sings the “Non Credo.”

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115 Ibid., 146.
This trope is set in a rock style and accompanied by a rock band, where the Credo was accompanied only by percussion instruments. But the influence of the Credo setting may be heard in the performance of the final three lines of text, where the soloist attempts to engage the Credo directly. During these three phrases, the soloist adopts the static rhythmic quality of the Credo, but inserts pauses between each phrase. The melody also alludes to that of the Credo, with its identical final three phrases, a melodic range that is significantly narrower than the rest of the movement, and the closing interval of a perfect fifth, an inversion of the final interval of the Credo. As in the case of their texts, the contrasts between the musical settings of these two episodes are impossible to ignore, and these oppositions serve to highlight this composition’s pervasive dichotomies. In this particular example, the conflicts between faith and doubt and elite and mass culture are especially evident; however, Bernstein uses this technique of pairing opposites to raise a variety of issues throughout his Mass. It is, in fact, the ways in which Bernstein makes use of this oft-criticized eclecticism of styles that gives his composition its structure and opens it to the possibility of a variety of musical meanings.

**Techniques of Dual Presentation**

Bernstein’s use of popular materials alongside serious styles and presentation of dichotomous content is far from unprecedented in the realm of Catholic music. As indicated above, the composer explicitly adopts the common medieval practice of troping in the tradition of Mass performance. Within this tradition it was common to find tropers drawing on contemporary styles, and even popular songs for their melodic content from the earliest instances of tropes appearing in the context of the Catholic worship service.
The same may be said of the poetic content of such tropes. In this respect, the dual content of Bernstein’s *Mass* may be seen as a continuation of a longstanding tradition of making the performance of the religious ritual accessible and relevant to contemporary listeners. Paul S. Minear emphasizes this point by comparing Bernstein’s use of diverse texts and music in *Mass* with Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* and Brahms’s *German Requiem*:

Like Bach, Bernstein employed contemporary poetry to interpret those [Biblical] texts, poetry that is often low-brow rather than high. . . . Both skillfully adopted secular ditties to sacred uses, employing current musical styles to stimulate sympathy with ancient traditions, fulfilling the hermeneutical goal of bridging the chasms of space and time . . . Both Brahms and Bernstein give musical expression to the basic paradoxes of biblical faith – suffering and joy, despair and hope.\(^\text{116}\)

It is noteworthy that similar techniques of incorporating dual materials and themes, as characterize all aspects of *Mass*, may be found in the religious works of two such revered composers as Bach and Brahms. Bernstein, however, breaks away from the traditionally acceptable use of these materials in his reversal of the ritual action to move from faith to crisis and his presentation of this action, in all of its inherent contradictions, in a theatrical context.\(^\text{117}\)

This theatrical presentation of *Mass* both grows out of the duality of the composition’s basic materials, and adds an additional layer of oppositions. The score begins with the following passage describing the visual setting for the performance:

There is a continuous path that originates in the pit and rises as the stairs onto the stage apron where there is a square of earth suggesting a small

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\(^{117}\) Ibid., 147.
consecrated area. This path leads to a central playing area which, in turn, leads to a raised circular Altar space and then continues as stairs that ascend to a distant summit point. During the third sequence, choir pews appear upstage right and left, abutting the stair path, and remain there throughout the work.\textsuperscript{118}

In practical terms, this means that the performance space is divided in two: the lower consecrated area and the raised Altar space. The only way to move between the two is by the path that Bernstein has set. It is noteworthy that the same path also connects the space occupied by the audience with the lower section of the performance area, thus serving as a visual and a literal point of entry into \textit{Mass}. Throughout most of the performance, action relating to sacred activities, namely the singing of the Latin Mass, takes place in the upper section, while action having more to do with the secular world occurs in the lower area. The Celebrant frequents the central portion of the stage, acting both as the focal point of the performance and as an intermediary between the sacred and secular spaces. In this setting he is literally a figure caught between two different worlds.

Bernstein’s description of the division and function of the singers, players, and dancers mirrors that of the performance space:

\begin{quote}
The orchestra is divided into two parts: A pit orchestra of strings and percussion, plus two organs (a concert and a “rock” organ); a stage orchestra of brass, woodwinds, electric guitars and keyboards, etc. These stage instrumentalists are in costume and act as members of the cast. The chorus of street people consists of singers and dancers. Filling the upstage pews is a sixty-member mixed choir in robes. A complement of dancers in hooded robes play Acolytes who assist the Celebrant in the ritual of the Mass.\textsuperscript{119}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{118} Bernstein, \textit{Mass}.

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid.
The visual separation of the two groups and the differing costumes assigned to each immediately distinguish them as having different roles in Mass, particularly because they remain largely separated throughout the performance. As expected from Bernstein’s description, the robed choir remains primarily in the upstage sacred space, singing the Latin Mass movements. The street choir, located on the lower portion of the stage interjects English commentary into the religious ritual.

Bernstein’s treatment of these two opposing groups of performers articulates the contradictory quality of his linguistic and musical materials, and emphasizes the clear delineation of the performance space into two distinct worlds. The pit orchestra and the robed choir occupy the typical positions of performers in the Western art music tradition, but it is significant that in this role they are separated from the audience and the action happening in other areas of the performance space. Thus these performers exhibit the traditional distance between art music and its audience, as well as expressing the autonomy of the ritual from the concerns of everyday life. The street ensemble, on the other hand, enacts Bernstein’s own conviction that music should communicate and be relevant to the audience and their contemporary concerns.\footnote{Bernstein, \textit{Leonard Bernstein's Young People's Concerts}, 82.} The costumed stage orchestra acts as a part of the cast, and in so doing participates in all of the same action as the singers and dancers, indicating that the music is both a part of and affected by the larger society. In addition, the street musicians attempt to engage the audience directly. Bernstein himself characterized their role in the drama as voicing “the reactions, doubts, protests, and questionings – positive and negative – of all of us who are attending and
perceiving this ritual.\footnote{Bernstein, “Notes by the Composer,” in Three Meditations from “Mass” (New York: Amberson/Schirmer, 1978).} The street ensemble’s attempts to induce audience participation sharply contrast with the literal and figurative distance between the audience and the more traditional pit orchestra and robed choir. Much as in the case of the physical path leading from the space occupied by the audience up into the performance areas, the actions and interactions of the two groups of performers draw the listeners into the many conversations taking place throughout the composition.

Along these same lines is the alternation throughout Mass of pre-recorded and live music. This adds another dimension to the performance space, drawing a distinction between those who are present in the ritual space and events that happen independently of the ritual and its participants. Only sacred texts and serious musical idioms are included in the pre-recorded portions. The pre-recorded episodes include: the opening Kyrie Eleison, Alleluia, In nomine Patris, the instrumental “Epiphany,” and Credo. With the notable exception of the “Epiphany,” these sections represent some of the least changeable portions of the ritual, and include the texts that most strongly express unquestioning faith in the tenets of the Catholic Church. Therefore, they can also be described as the most autonomous episodes, as well as those that are furthest removed from the performers and the audience.

It is significant that Mass begins with one such section of pre-recorded music. The performance note that preceded the opening Kyrie Eleison is as follows: “In total darkness a Quadraphonic tape is heard, coming from four speakers placed in the four
corners of the house.” Each speaker is associated with a specific combination of vocalists and percussion instruments, performing the same Kyrie text. Their entrances are staggered in order to create an effect of ever-increasing complexity and volume. The musical setting of the movement also contributes to this effect in its high degree of dissonance, as well as melodies and rhythms that mimic the sound of aleatoric music. Thus the audience is surrounded by the musical equivalent of chaos, but in its pre-recorded state this chaos is fixed and exists outside the context of the live performance. The recorded Kyrie Eleison is then interrupted by the Celebrant, performing live and in a style completely opposite that of the preceding episode. Peress describes the effect of this contrast as follows:

When all four Kyries are going full force, lights pierce the blackness to reveal the Celebrant, who, with a single stroke on his folk guitar, wipes out the mad cacophony. . . . At once Bernstein silences the enemy — overamplified twelve-tone aleatoric (chance) music — with live folk-rock song. Decadent art, replicated by Bernstein with mocking mastery, is vanquished by the even more skillfully conceived and crafted rock-based “simple” song.

Peress’s comments illustrate the instantaneous and strong impression of duality at the opening of Mass: light replaces darkness; simplicity and order supplant the impression of complexity and chaos; the immediacy of live music takes the place of the apparently autonomous pre-recorded sound; and the accessible popular idiom overtakes the abstract

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122 Bernstein, Mass, 1.

123 The scoring associated with each speaker is as follows: Speaker 1, Right front includes high soprano (coloratura), unison glockenspiel and xylophone, and small cymbal; Speaker 2, Left rear includes bass solo, five timpani, and large cymbals; Speaker 3, Right rear includes second soprano and alto soli, vibraphone, four temple blocks, and triangle; Speaker 4, Left front includes tenor solo, baritone solo, marimba and wood block. Ibid.

124 Peress, 147.
and remote high art. Such dualities of presentation, built from the inherent oppositio ns in Bernstein's basic materials, contribute to a structure that is constructed through larger layers of dichotomy.

**Structuring Dualities**

The structure of Bernstein's *Mass* is based upon alternating episodes that depict the tensions between the sacred and the secular domains, as well as the realms of high art and popular culture. While dichotomies in the composer's basic textual and musical materials, in addition to theatrical techniques of presenting oppositions articulate the duality of these themes, alone they do not create any structural unity between episodes. The character of the Celebrant is at the center of Bernstein's structure, as he occupies the central role in the plot. The Celebrant himself embodies and enacts many of the composition's primary dichotomies: he occupies the roles of both worshipper and priest; he attempts to meet the demands of both the sacred and the secular worlds; he engages the ideas of both high and lowbrow cultures; he attempts to meet the demands of public life without losing himself in the process; his faith and doubt are at the core of the work's climactic crisis of faith; and his symbolic death and rebirth grow out of all of these dualities. As such, the Celebrant is both the link and the intermediary between Bernstein's opposing worlds, although he belongs entirely to neither. He performs texts in Latin and English, and the musical settings of these texts draw from both serious and popular idioms. He is also the only character to traverse the path between the secular and sacred performance spaces, as he attempts to engage the ritual and the congregation alike.
In his occupation of this literal and symbolic middle ground, the Celebrant remains a clear point of reference in the endless flow of dualities, and his experiences interacting with the composition's opposing worlds give the work its structure.

The structure of alternating episodes with the Celebrant at the center is cyclical. Through the ever-increasing demands of the street ensemble and the resultant pressure felt by the Celebrant, each episode increases the tension between the sacred and secular domains. In a similar fashion, as the Celebrant attempts to move between the two worlds, taking on musical characteristics of both, each episode narrows the distance between the performance spaces and musical styles that originally were presented as sharply delineated. Thus the climax of the work, which comes at the point when the Celebrant can no longer mediate between the street ensemble’s demands that religion address their concerns and the unyielding Mass ritual, is a violent moment. The Celebrant expresses his own crisis of faith by adopting a mixture of all of the serious and popular styles that have been featured up to this point. W. Anthony Sheppard describes the scene as follows:

In the penultimate section, entitled “Fraction,” the Celebrant refers to the “braying and shouting” of the Street Chorus. Throughout the course of this solo scene, the Celebrant parodies all the major styles and melodies that have been heard in the work. This is a mad scene, of course, but the popular musical styles have been directly implicated in his psychological disintegration.125

Sheppard seems to indicate that the street ensemble, and its popular styles bear complete responsibility for the Celebrant’s breakdown, and while it is certainly true that the demands of this congregation forced him to question his religion more than he would

125 Sheppard, 477.
have otherwise, the serious styles are also implicated. If that were not the case, then the Celebrant would have been able either to retreat into the Mass ritual and away from the people’s demands, or to continue to mediate between the two. The Celebrant’s breakdown resulted from the opposing pressures exerted by both groups; the street ensemble’s rebellion and the Mass ritual’s inability or refusal to provide answers to contemporary problems. The fact that the root of the Celebrant’s crisis of faith and eventual breakdown may be located equally in the work’s conflicting worlds demonstrates the duality at the core of the composition’s structure. Through his theatrical Mass, Bernstein turns the Catholic Mass tradition of reaffirming the unwavering beliefs of its practitioners inside out, moving instead from faith into crisis, and revealing the numerous perceived contradictions between religious belief and life in the modern world that arise from a ritual that appears to exist apart from the social world. This duality of opposites manifests itself in every layer of the composition, such that it is impossible for the Celebrant – or the audience – to ignore its effects and retreat into the comfortable familiarity of performing the ritual act.

**Interruptive Thoughts: Duality as a Venue for Commentary**

Bernstein described the function of Mass’s pervasive dualities as “interruptive thoughts” and “prayers born of an immense desire to believe, which is in conflict with the inability to go along blindly with it.” The cyclical structure of alternating episodes that arises from the inherent oppositions in the work’s basic materials, its techniques of theatrical presentation, and the Celebrant’s role as an intermediary between the

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126 Zadikov, 42.
composition's conflicting worlds is also conversational in nature. Its episodes do not exist and proceed independently from one another, but rather attempt to question and comment upon each other through the questions and demands of the street ensemble, as well as the Celebrant's attempts at mediation. This conversation is both the source of Mass's drama and a venue for the composer to interject commentary upon a variety of subjects. As may be expected, much of this commentary focuses on the relationships between religion and contemporary life and the relative value of art music versus popular idioms, but Mass's theatrical context and conversational structure allow additional topics to be introduced into the discussion. Bernstein's commentaries emerge as products of the work's characteristic dichotomies, and their interactions offer multiple possible readings.

Four categories of commentary are central to the numerous potential interpretations of Mass: observations about the ritual through the alternation of Latin and English texts; commentary about socio-political situations through the questions and demands of the street ensemble; criticism of the traditional dismissal of popular styles by proponents of art music, articulated through the interactions of disparate musical materials; and opinions about the pressures of contemporary life presented through the Celebrant's eventual breakdown. Due to the length and complexity of the work, as well as the sheer volume of dualities incorporated throughout, innumerable examples of these commentaries exist in the work, and the layering of such dichotomies contributes still more possible meanings and interpretations. For the purposes of this discussion, only one example of each category will be examined in order to demonstrate the mechanisms through which Bernstein constructs his commentary.
The use of contrasting texts as a means for commentary about the relationship between organized religion in the form of the standard Catholic Mass ritual and everyday contemporary life is evident throughout Mass because it is the interaction between these two elements that drives the work’s dramatic plot. There are many instances of the street choir demanding answers from religious authorities, but one especially interesting case may be found in the interactions between the first three texts of the Gloria portion of Mass (See Appendix, Examples 3-5). During the first of these episodes, a robed boys’ choir located in the upper level of the performance area, along with the Celebrant, perform the text to the Gloria Tibi, or “Glory be to the Father.”

This is one of the many standard prayers of the Catholic tradition that appears word for word and in its original Latin in Mass, and, like the Credo, it expresses unwavering faith. The full robed choir joins the performance in the following episode, the Gloria in Excelsis. Under normal circumstances, this text would represent a continuation of the praise begun in the Gloria Tibi; however Bernstein’s presentation of the text is distorted from that of the traditional Mass ritual. In one instance, the composer reverses the order of the phrases “Benedicimus te” and “Adoramus te,” while in other cases he alters the placement of phrase breaks, such that “Domine Fili, unigenite, Jesu, Christe Domino Deus, Agnus Dei” becomes “Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe Domine Deus, Agnus Dei.”

The effect of these changes is to destabilize the ritual text, thus revealing the ritual’s inherent rigidity, and to open the door to doubt in the faith expressed by the text. This doubt is

127 Ciesielski, 47.

then taken up by the street chorus in the trope “Half of the People,” which features the following text by Paul Simon:

    Half of the people are stoned
    And the other half are waiting for the next election.
    Half of the people are drowned
    And the other half are swimming in the wrong direction.129

This text directly questions the traditional joy and faith expressed by the Gloria, and instead appeals for realistic answers. The content and positioning of these texts reveals Bernstein’s attitude that if religious ritual remains fixed and apart from its practitioners, it will become nothing more than empty words. This begs the street choir’s perpetual question of what is left in the practice of a ritual once it has become irrelevant in the daily life of worshippers.

It is clear from the relationship between the Latin ritual texts and the English interruptive thoughts described above that much of Bernstein’s religious commentary focuses on the perceived distance between the spiritual concerns of worship and the practicalities of daily life in the middle of the twentieth century. This is despite the fact that much of faith, according to his street choir and his Celebrant, is based upon whether or not the messages of worship may be seen as applicable to the practitioner’s life. A crisis of faith occurs when an individual’s desire to believe is no longer able to conquer the contrary evidence of the world around them. This criticism of organized religion’s failure to address contemporary concerns leads into Bernstein’s commentary about the social and political realities of his time because many of the questions and demands posed by the Celebrant and the street ensemble directly engage these issues. One salient

129 Bernstein, Mass, 112.
example is the Celebrant’s call for peace, a theme that runs throughout the composition, and contributes to the work’s climactic crisis of faith. Peace is a theme that figures prominently in the Catholic liturgy, but is at odds with the realities of the 1960s and 70s, which included continuing social conflicts about civil rights and the Vietnam War. The street ensemble alludes to the war at several points in the text, including during the “Gospel-Sermon,” when a soloist proclaims:

God said to spread his commands
To folks in faraway lands;
They may not want us there,
But man it’s out of our hands.  

Another such instance occurs in the trope “Hurry,” when a singer interrupts a taped portion of the Credo with the following text:

You said you’d come again
When?
When things got really rough
So you made us all suffer
While they got a bit rougher

Tougher and tougher
Well things are tough enough.  

Along with the failure of the ritual to address the spiritual concerns of the congregation, the lack of any response to the frequent cries for peace figure prominently into the Celebrant’s breakdown at the end of the composition. Minear describes this moment as follows:

Bernstein has said that he was interested in depicting the crisis of faith as the central crisis of our time. At the end of this work it becomes apparent that he intended the scene of death on the stage to force the audience to

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130 Bernstein, Mass, 141.

131 Ibid., 156-157.
share that crisis, to think about their own faith, or lack of it, and to ponder the meaning of the cry for peace and the perennial futility of that cry.\textsuperscript{132}

Thus the composer’s commentary links the crisis of faith with the socio-political realities of his time, also drawing parallels between the void left by empty ritual and the struggles of war. But \textit{Mass} ends with a message of hope, with the Celebrant returning to the stage and the kiss of peace being passed from the cast into the audience. As a part of the culmination of so many dichotomies, this ending clearly expresses Bernstein’s views about the futility of the war.

Another type of entirely musical commentary runs throughout \textit{Mass}. It is articulated by the many contrasts between serious and popular idioms, but also builds upon the other dualities of the work to make connections between the inability of the ritual to adapt to contemporary needs and the inability, or refusal, of modern music to communicate with audiences. The association of serious musical idioms with the Latin texts of the Mass ritual reveals the separation of both from the concerns of contemporary life. As discussed in Chapter 1, Bernstein disagreed with his modernist contemporaries about the perceived necessity of freeing serious music form the need to connect with audiences of laymen in order to guarantee its continued survival.\textsuperscript{133} His use of popular styles to set the emotional outcries of the Celebrant and the street choir illustrate his emphasis on selecting musical styles that speak to a broader audience as a means to make communication more possible. Beyond simply providing contrast to the popular styles of the street ensemble, his uses of modernist compositional techniques are significant in

\textsuperscript{132} Minear, 158.

\textsuperscript{133} Babbitt, 38-40.
their communication of his attitudes toward such musical language and their reinforcement of other themes that run throughout the work. Bernstein expressed his thoughts about serial composition as follows in *The Unanswered Question*:

The trouble is that the new musical rules of Schoenberg are not apparently based on innate awareness, on the intuition of tonal relationships. They are like rules of an artificial language, and therefore must be learned. This would seem to lead to what used to be called “form without content,” or form at the expense of content – structuralism for its own sake.¹³⁴

Thus the mechanistic quality of Bernstein’s twelve-tone *Credo*, as described above, functions both as an illustration of the emptiness and distant quality of the ritual and those same features of modernist composition. The melodic content of the *Credo* is a parody of serial composition in that it presents only a single row and its inversion, stripping away the added complexities of most twelve-tone compositions to reveal a setting that expresses “form at the expense of content.” The musical setting of the “Non Credo,” therefore represents more than just the *Credo*’s stylistic opposite, but also an alternative to “structuralism for its own sake” in the form of music and content that communicate and are relevant to the audience.

While many such examples of Bernstein’s criticism of modernist musical abstraction may be found throughout the work, the composer’s use of art music idioms is not entirely negative. This fact may be seen in the final episode of the composition, “Pax Communion (‘Secret Songs’)” (see Appendix, Example 7), which represents a rebirth of hope following the Celebrant’s dramatic crisis of faith. Much as the Celebrant’s collapse may be understood as the equal product of the opposing pressures exerted upon him by the realms of elite and mass culture, so too may his metaphoric rebirth be attributed to

their interactions. "Pax Communiohn" begins with a haunting melody performed by a solo flute. This melody is significant because it is the same as that featured in the earlier instrumental "Ephiphany" (see Appendix, Example 8). While the melody remains the same, its performance, context and associations have been transformed. The "Ephiphany" episode is one of the sections of pre-recorded music, a feature that is emphasized by the indication that the music should be "darting about among the four speakers."\(^{135}\) In this context, the melody is performed by an oboe and accompanied by an electric piano. The effect of this presentation is to heighten the disquiet and doubt that the composer has begun to introduce into the ritual. When this melody reappears in "Pax Communiohn," however, it is unaccompanied and performed by a single live performer. Given these changes and its placement after the Celebrant's despairing breakdown, the effect is to restore hope that the crisis does not necessarily mean the end.

The flute melody leads into the vocal performance of "Secret Songs," which adopts the same melody as the Celebrant's opening number, "A Simple Song" (see Appendix, Example 9). In its original form the Celebrant performs the melody syllabically and in a straightforward, folk-like style. At the conclusion of the work, the melody is introduced by a solo boy soprano, who had been a part of the upstage religious choir. His version begins in a syllabic fashion, but after the first phrase becomes melismatic, and its style strongly resembles the chant performance tradition of Catholic worship services. The boy soprano passes his melody to a bass soloist from the street ensemble, who performs it once in a simple fashion before the two sing in duet. This duet merges elements of the serious and the popular. The straightforward nature of the

\(^{135}\) Bernstein, Mass, 66.
melody is preserved in that the setting is only slightly more ornamented than the original. However, the rhythmic aspect of the performance is noticeably more complicated, with several metric shifts. Following this duet, the entire cast gradually joins the performance of the “Secret Song.” With its placement at the conclusion of the work and the point at which Bernstein emphasizes a reaffirmation of faith, this combination of musical styles seems to suggest a possible reconciliation of the artistic and popular musical realms in the form of a serious musical idiom that is able to communicate to a mass audience.

A final category of commentary may be seen in the experiences of the Celebrant. As the central figure of the plot, the intermediary between Mass’s conflicting worlds, and the focal point of the work’s climactic crisis of faith, he occupies a unique middle ground that allows, and, in fact, forces him to engage with and comment upon the sacred and the secular and the elite and the mass culture alike. Therefore, in addition to providing structural unity to the composition, the Celebrant also bears much of the responsibility for posing and answering questions on a variety of subjects. In this regard, the Celebrant’s breakdown may be understood as the result of more than just the pressures of reconciling the differences between the ritual and the congregation. His collapse occurs because he has been forced to carry the combined weight of all of the composition’s opposing materials, to traverse the path between the work’s two worlds, to provide a sense of unity amidst contradictory voices, and to seek answers for the great variety of issues raised throughout the drama. This may be seen as Bernstein’s comment on the many pressures and opposing forces at work in contemporary life. The Celebrant’s rebirth through faith and peace rather than empty ritual may give insight into the composer’s perceptions of
necessary societal changes, but this is only one interpretation. The many possible readings of this composition depend upon the elements of the work and aspects of its many layers of dualities that resonate most strongly with its audience.
CHAPTER 4

BERNSTEIN'S DOUBLE VISION AND THE POSTMODERN CONDITION IN MUSIC

"Greater than the Sum of its Parts"\textsuperscript{136}

The question of musical meaning is especially important in the music of Leonard Bernstein, particularly given his insistence that part of what makes a piece of music aesthetically valuable is that it succeeds in communicating with its audience.\textsuperscript{137} This is doubly true in the case of his \textit{Mass} due to his strong personal attachment to the work, its problematic reception history, and the ever present dualities which define its structure, presentation, and expression. The preceding analysis establishes dualities as building blocks for commentary, but interpreting \textit{Mass} is not a task that is tantamount to adding oppositions and explaining their sum. In describing his experiences conducting several productions of \textit{Mass}, Peress made reference to the fact that the work engenders profound emotional reactions that are seemingly disproportionate to the musical means that provoke them:

At the end of the first-ever \textit{Mass}, the members of the company, and many in the audience, were shattered, in tears. The sadness and sense of loss – for the Celebrant, for our innocence, for John Kennedy – was palpable. . . .

\textsuperscript{136} Peress, 149.

\textsuperscript{137} Bernstein, \textit{Leonard Bernstein's Young People's Concerts}, 82.
Every one of the six productions I have worked on has produced this emotional reaction. *Mass* proves to be greater than the sum of its parts.  

This effect of provoking such unexpectedly strong feelings in its cast and listeners has proven to be a point of critical contention. As in the case of Bernstein’s notable use of diverse musical materials, detractors of *Mass* have identified this compositional characteristic to be a manifestation of the composer’s use of the kind of emotional button-pushing typically found on the Broadway stage. That such effects should make their way into the Mass genre makes Bernstein’s compositional transgressions all the more serious. On the other hand, virtually all positive reviews of the work, critical or otherwise, include comments in agreement with Peress’s notion that the work is “greater than the sum of its parts.” Nevertheless, few such accounts go beyond simple descriptions of the composition’s effects, and fewer still posit explanations as to the source of this particular ability to communicate so effectively. Once again, the lack of such interpretations prevents us from situating *Mass* properly within the contexts of Bernstein’s musical output and within American music of the mid-twentieth century.

One possible solution to the problems created by these notable gaps in Bernstein studies is to examine *Mass* through the interpretive lens of contemporary postmodern discourse. While the composer himself never identified any of his music as postmodern, nor any published scholarly texts seem to have linked Bernstein to such ideas, a brief analysis of the work of several prominent postmodern theorists reveals numerous parallels and connections between postmodernism and composer and composition alike.

138 Peress, 149.

139 Ibid.
This analysis speaks to the dichotomies that characterized Bernstein’s life, their manifestation in the *Mass*, and the multiplicity of readings that arise from this work’s layering of different types of dualities.

**Postmodern Theory and American Music of the 1960s**

Although postmodernism occupies a prominent position in the discourse of literary theorists and critics from all artistic disciplines, there is currently no consensus regarding a uniform definition of the term and its application to the analysis of art.\(^{140}\)

This is especially true in music, where little discipline-specific postmodern theory exists, and therefore scholars are forced to turn to social theory and other arts for definitions on which to base discussions of the emergence of musical postmodernism. For the purposes of this study, Charles Jencks’s architectural discussion of the postmodern and the theoretical works of Fredric Jameson and Andreas Huyssen will be taken as a basis for a working definition. While this admittedly limited approach does ignore some facets of postmodernism as a cultural or scholarly phenomenon, it isolates salient features of postmodern theory and art that are particularly relevant to a study of Bernstein and his *Mass*.

“Post-modern,” according to Jencks, is a term that first appeared in 1945 and was specifically used to describe architecture that somehow went beyond modernism. The

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central feature of his theory is the idea that postmodern art uses “double-coding,” or the juxtaposition within a single work of modernist aspects along with disparate elements often taken from traditional or popular forms, in order to simultaneously provide points of entry and communicate multiple meanings to different audiences.\textsuperscript{141} Often these different audiences are composed of two opposing groups: educated insiders who appreciate the technical innovations of modernism and are concerned with the continued progress of art; and the general public, for whom modernism has largely lost its appeal. Jencks cites this failure of modernism to communicate with any beyond the educated elite as the impetus for the development of postmodernism in the arts.\textsuperscript{142}

Jencks’s description of postmodern double-coding is based on architecture as a simultaneous art form, or an art whose elements all exist and can be perceived at the same time. This profoundly affects the manifestation of double-coding in a postmodern building. He cites the example of a museum designed by James Stirling:

To signify the permanent nature of the museum, he has used traditional rustication and classical forms including an Egyptian cornice, an open-air Pantheon, and segmental arches. These are beautiful in an understated and conventional way, but they are not revivastal either because of small distortions, or because of the use of a Modern material, such as reinforced concrete. They say “we are beautiful like the Acropolis or the Pantheon, but we are also based on concrete technology and deceit.”\textsuperscript{143}

Due to the nature of architecture, the disparate elements that make this museum postmodern coexist at the same moment. A trained architect can study the modern materials and the technical innovations necessary to achieve this design at the same time.

\textsuperscript{141} Jencks, 33.

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., 33-37.

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., 35.
that a class of school children can appreciate the same building’s beauty and similarity to pictures that they may have encountered in text books. Each audience will come to a different conclusion about the artistic meaning of the building based upon the elements that communicate to them because multiple meanings exist simultaneously. Although his discussion deals exclusively with architecture, these ideas of double-coding, modernism’s failure to communicate to a mass audience, and the alternatives offered by postmodernism are readily applicable to music, particularly compositions dating from the 1960s forward.

As Jencks hints in his description postmodern art’s inclusion of modernist elements plus something more to communicate to larger populations, the postmodern ideas of the 1960s had their roots in the high modernism of the 1950s. Prior to World War II, modernist artists thought of themselves, and each other, as radical innovators who were interested in the advancement of art; however, the political and cultural connotation of modernism changed during the post-war period in America. In the context of the cultural politics of the Cold War, modernism offered an opposing standard of artistic value to the socialist realism emphasized by the Soviet government. Particularly in music, where serialism was the dominant modernist mode of composition, modernism became the style most supported by the academic elite because proponents asserted that its value could be assessed in terms of technical achievement and scientific rigor. In addition, its focus on artistic autonomy made high modernist art a seemingly “insuperable

obstacle\textsuperscript{145} to the insertion of propaganda into music, and therefore a negation of one of
the primary characteristics of socialist realism. In its limited or rarified connections to
the social world, modernism also moved away from its original impetus to reveal and
critique the degenerative facets of society and culture. As Peter Davison indicates:

Modernism was born in the revolutionary white heat of idealism; a desire
for renewal, to strip away the façade. Yet history tells us that most
revolutions end in moral failures, as the revolutionaries assume the mantle
of their former oppressors. The tyrannized become the tyrants of a new
orthodoxy.\textsuperscript{146}

Thus, the high modernists, once regarded as revolutionaries were transformed into
cultural conservatives in the sense that their innovations were limited to the auditory and
theoretical arenas rather than the realm of direct social action. This association between
modernist endeavors and the elite helped both to facilitate the alienation of mass
audiences as well as to signal the necessity of an artistic paradigm shift that would
facilitate positive social change.\textsuperscript{147}

Fredric Jameson likewise engages the problematic relationship between the
modern and the postmodern in his book, \textit{Postmodernism, or, The Logic of Late
Capitalism}. While eschewing the notion that the complexities of the postmodern can be
fully grasped through a catalog of stylistic features or an account of its influences and
manifestations within a given artistic movement in favor of a more theoretical
orientation, his approach to the category draws from Jencks's architectural conceptions


\textsuperscript{146} Peter Davison, "Reviving the Muse," in \textit{Reviving the Muse: Essays on Music After Modernism}, 120-148, 130.

\textsuperscript{147} Huysssen, \textit{After the Great Divide}, 185-186.
and mobilizes encounters between the modern and the postmodern within a variety of artistic arenas. In doing so he contextualizes the emergence of postmodernism with regard to the history and ideas of its modern predecessors, and introduces valuable tools for the analysis of various forms of postmodern culture.

Jameson begins this analysis by crediting Jencks and his architectural theories as having a formative influence on his own understanding of postmodernism and, more broadly, for most clearly raising and articulating the issues facing postmodernism. The significant drawback of these theories, however, is that they are necessarily limited to the practical considerations of the discipline. As demonstrated above, Jencks's idea of double-coding is predicated on the simultaneous experience of disparate elements, a possibility that is inherent in visual media, but impossible to replicate in other domains. Jameson, therefore, seeks to explain the postmodern imperative more generally, though similarly citing its emergence out of the failures of modernism.

The failure of high modernism to appeal to mass audiences and its subsequent annexation by cultural conservatives, according to Jameson, are symptoms of the larger cultural realities of the late capitalism that emerged after World War II. Globalization, postcolonialism, the growth of new technologies and forms of media, commodification taken to new extremes, and the growing divide between social classes are among the political, economic, social, and cultural problems that came to the forefront in this period, and that have come to characterize late capitalism. All of these factors contributed to a


149 Ibid., 2.
new understanding that far from being realized, modernism's ideal of progress has produced and compounded these issues. Jameson writes, therefore, that:

... the economic preparation of postmodernism or late capitalism began in the 1950s, after wartime shortages of consumer goods and spare parts had been made up, and new products and new technologies (not least those of the media) could be pioneered. On the other hand, the psychic habitus of the new age demands the absolute break, strengthened by a generational rupture, achieved more properly in the 1960s ... 150

This postmodern break is characterized, among other things, by challenges to the modernist conceptions of time and progress and the reassertion of culture's social relevance. Two important analytic tools emerge from his discussion of postmodernism's challenges to the moderns: the ideas of simulacra and the so-called "schizophrenic"151 structure of postmodern experiences.

For Jameson, the notion of simulacra in postmodernism relates both to altered relations between subjects and objects, as well as to the superficiality that he calls "perhaps the supreme formal feature of all the postmodernisms."152 Such superficiality both contrasts modernism's emphasis on depth and reflects the ease of reproduction made possible through the advent of new technologies. In art, Jameson cites photography as contributing significantly to the prominent role of postmodern superficiality and simulacra. The images captured by the photographic lens and preserved as negatives signal a kind of "disposition of the subject,"153 whereby the subject is no longer necessary for the reproduction of an image. Instead, the negative becomes the source, but in and of

150 Ibid., xx.
151 Ibid., 6.
152 Ibid., 9.
153 Ibid.
itself it is a simulacrum, or a copy of an original that does not really exist. Images become commodified for their own sake, at times to the extent that the subject is defined more by its images than by itself, as in the case of Marilyn Monroe.\textsuperscript{154} Beyond visual media, though, this concept is useful for developing an understanding of the experience of postmodern culture, along with its characteristic allusions to popular icons that do not demand in-depth understanding of each referenced subject in order to fully appreciate the experience.

The notion of postmodern experiences, and therefore postmodern art, as "schizophrenic"\textsuperscript{155} is similarly useful. Observing that one of the major features of postmodernism is a break from the modern concept of linear time, Jameson uses the psychological theories of Lacan to explain the effects of this altered perception of time on human consciousness. The term "schizophrenic" is mobilized to describe a "breakdown in the signifying chain, that is, the interlocking syntagmatic signifiers which constitutes an utterance or meaning."\textsuperscript{156} According to Jameson’s understanding of the modernist conception of time, events flowed smoothly from one to another, creating a chain of meanings and linking individual subjectivity and perceptions of identity to temporal experiences. However, the rejection of a linear notion of time breaks the chain by disassociating events from one another, such that each is experienced as a free-floating signifier. According to Jameson, the results are twofold. First, he explains that:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 26.
\end{flushright}
The present suddenly engulfs the subject with undescrivable vividness, a materiality of perception properly overwhelming, which effectively dramatizes the power of the material – or better still, the literal – signifier in isolation.  

Under these circumstances events cease to be relative, but rather are experienced as intensely in the moment because there is no chain of meaning in which to situate them.

Second, this schizophrenic quality frees postmodern artists from the necessity of consistently presenting coherent representations of single styles. They are free instead to explore a new “mode of relationships through difference” because the free floating nature of signifiers permits extreme contrasts that then can suggest connections otherwise too far removed from one another in the temporal chain to hold any meaning.

While Jameson never directly engages Jencks’s notion of double-coding, his explanations of the postmodern situation produced by late capitalism and the resulting simulacra and schizophrenic experiences illuminate how double-coding relates to the larger changes produced by postmodernism, as well as suggesting how it can be effective. Double-coding reflects what Jameson calls the brand of “realism” employed by postmoderns. He writes that:

Cultural production is thereby driven back inside a mental space which is no longer that of the old monadic subject but rather that of some degraded collective “objective spirit”: it can no longer gaze directly on some putative real world, at some reconstruction of a past history which was once itself a present; rather, as in Plato’s cave, it must trace our mental images of that past upon its confining walls. If there is any realism left here, it is a “realism” that is meant to derive from the shock of grasping that confinement and of slowly becoming aware of a new and original

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157 Ibid., 27.

158 Ibid., 31.
historical situation in which we are condemned to seek History by way of our own pop images and simulacra of that history, which itself remains forever out of reach.\textsuperscript{159}

Thus double-coding is one manifestation of the postmodern pervasiveness of simulacra, and a particularly salient example of its power because the architect introducing double-coding self-consciously exploits the schizophrenic quality of postmodern experience by intentionally juxtaposing historically and stylistically disparate elements. It is, therefore, not only effective in simultaneously appealing to different audiences in different ways, but can also simultaneously carry multiple meanings for a single individual.

Andreas Huyssen uses neither Jencks’s double-coding, nor Jameson’s concepts of simulacra and schizophrenic experience, yet his theories draw from the same notions of postmodernism’s break from modernist teleological thought, its revision of the dominant concept of linear time, and its use of stylistic pluralism to construct new meanings and connections. In many ways his presentation of postmodern thought bridges the gap between Jencks’s specifically architectural discussions and Jameson’s more theoretical orientation because he locates the crisis of modernism not only in the social and economic realities of late capitalism, but also in the relationship between art and society. Art, Huyssen observes, underwent a curious transformation throughout the course of the modern period. With the advent of modernism, avant-garde art was recognized as a locus for social critique and change. Following World War II, though, despite the high-modernist emphasis on abstract qualities, art continued to be “privileged as the only

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., 25.
authentic voice of critique and protest, even when it seemed to withdraw into itself.\textsuperscript{160}

According to Huyssen’s analysis, an important part of the postmodern project is the reintroduction of socially relevant material into art. Stylistic pluralism is one of many tools mobilized to this end, in particular because of the sharp contrasts that it provides with modernist abstraction.

During the 1960s, therefore, emergent postmodern artists reacted against the elitist image of high modernism, frequently looking to popular culture as a possible source of socially relevant material. Contrary to the notion that the advent of postmodernism brought about a complete break with the modernist tradition; however, Huyssen explains that:

\textellipsis the revolt of the 1960s was never a rejection of modernism \textit{per se}, but rather a revolt against that version of modernism which had been domesticated in the 1950s, become part of the liberal-conservative consensus of the times, and which had even been turned into a propaganda weapon in the Cold War.\textsuperscript{161}

Like their modernist predecessors, who sought to revolutionize art by going beyond traditional techniques and materials, the postmodernists of the 1960s began with the modernist tradition and, rather than rejecting it outright, explored new directions in order to go beyond modernism and restore art’s full expressive potential.\textsuperscript{162} Huyssen locates the promise of postmodernism to produce revolutionary social change in its operation within a “field of tension”\textsuperscript{163} that challenges art to respond to tradition and social


\textsuperscript{161} Huyssen, \textit{After the Great Divide}, 190.

\textsuperscript{162} Scott, 12-13.

\textsuperscript{163} Huyssen, “Whither Postmodernism,” 506.
conditions in new and innovative ways. Heightening this tension, he suggests, opens new potential for productive social and artistic critiques. This historical and theoretical background helps to substantiate Jencks’s definition of postmodernism as a continuation of modernism with the added juxtaposition of older, more popular, or more exotic styles.

The postmodern desire to restore expression and social relevance to art, as articulated by each of the theorists discussed above, resonates with a general trend toward stylistic pluralism in American music of the 1960s. Although he never uses the term “postmodern,” the language that Robert P. Morgan uses in his chapter about this “New Pluralism” evokes the ideas of introducing schizophrenic musical experiences and double-coding as common procedures among composers who during this time rejected their serial backgrounds in favor of greater expressive possibilities.

The most distinctive new feature of musical quotations in the 1960s is that they are normally treated as “foreign objects” – as things drawn from other times and places, with stylistic conventions anachronous to their immediate contexts. Tonal music is typically set off against non-tonal music, or against other, conflicting tonal music. . . . the range of borrowings is unprecedented. Not only is material chosen from radically divergent sources – Gregorian chant, Renaissance polyphony, Baroque instrumental figuration, late nineteenth-century chromaticism, and so on – but these sources are freely joined in an eclectic mix; the most unlikely partners are intimately juxtaposed.\textsuperscript{164}

Jencks’s theory of double-coding, Jameson’s notions of simulae and the schizophrenic quality of postmodernism, and Huysen’s emphasis on art’s necessary connections to social issues to music of this period, therefore, seem particularly valuable in explaining the new pluralism of American music.

Above all, this application of postmodern theories to American musical trends of the 1960s and 70s is relevant to Bernstein and his *Mass*. As described in Chapter 1, Bernstein himself was a well-known proponent of the idea that music should be used as a vehicle to communicate relevant messages to more than just the educated elite, and this musical philosophy carried over into all facets of his career. He was outspoken in this belief, using his Young People’s Concerts, lectures at Harvard, and various interviews as venues to promote his views and to challenge the modernist conception of music as a science. In one such interview, he indicated that:

> Everything I do – composing, conducting, playing the piano – represents an attempt to share my feelings and thoughts about music with others. For me nothing really exists until I’ve shared it with someone else. The love of mankind has always been the main principle of my life.\(^{165}\)

As a result of his convictions, Bernstein actively sought alternatives to the modernist musical abstraction. In his capacity as a composer and conductor of a number of vastly different musical activities, he is undoubtedly a part of the new move toward musical pluralism that Morgan described.

In many ways his *Mass* encapsulates Bernstein’s pluralist tendencies, with its juxtaposition of serious and popular idioms and sacred and secular materials. Although no published analysis has applied the label “postmodern” to *Mass*, its composer is identifiable with the 1960s “New Pluralism” and postmodern double-coding seems well suited to the numerous dualities that characterize the piece. Likewise, *Mass* epitomizes Huyssen’s description of postmodern works as operating

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\(^{165}\) Quoted in: Hausfeld, , 17.


... in a field of tension between tradition and innovation, conservation and renewal, mass culture and high art, in which the second terms are no longer automatically privileged over the first ...\textsuperscript{166}

Numerous possibilities for interpretation arise from this association of Bernstein and his music with the theories of postmodernism, and each speaks to the connections between the composer’s life and this composition that he characterized as the culmination of his musical aspirations. Because this composition, in its structure built upon the layering of dualities, lends itself so well to having multiple points of entry for multiple audiences, and, in fact, multiple potential associations for single individuals, it is impossible to catalog all of its potential interpretations. Nevertheless, a few salient examples suggest how this composition is able to become “greater than the sum of its parts,”\textsuperscript{167} and thus to provoke disproportionately strong reactions in performers and audience members alike.

**Musical Double-Coding and the Creation of Multiple Points of Entry**

One way of examining this work through the lens of postmodernism is the application of Jencks’s theory of double-coding and Jameson’s notion of schizophrenia to the numerous instances of dualities that occur at every level of *Mass*. Jencks’s notion of double-coding, however, must be revised in order to accommodate music’s properties as a temporal, rather than a visual, art form. Instead of all elements coexisting in the same moment, musical elements unfold over time. This is not to suggest that time does not play an important role in the perception of architecture. The eye cannot take in and interpret all elements of a building in a single instant, and therefore an overall impression

\textsuperscript{166} Huysen, “Whither Postmodernism, 506.

\textsuperscript{167} Peress, 149.
is formed over time. However, the difference in artistic media has important implications for the function of double-coding. The contrasting aspects of a postmodern building exist and are presented in the same moment, and as such perception and interpretation are based at least partially upon the order in which an individual chooses to assess its various characteristics. The composer, unlike the architect, much structure materials so they make sense to different audiences through the course of the performance time. A composition, for example, could not be considered doubly-coded if musical elements in several disparate styles were simply superimposed onto one another. For all but the educated listener, the resulting sound would likely only cause confusion, therefore failing to communicate with any but that elite audience. Thus musical double-coding requires different techniques than architectural double-coding, based upon differences in audience perception. Nevertheless, the goal remains the same: to provide multiple points of entry in order to communicate on a variety of levels to multiple audiences.

Bernstein’s *Mass* is an interesting case of musical double-coding. The composer accomplishes his double-coding through layering of the work’s many dualities. As an alternative to directly superimposing modernist and non-modernist elements, he juxtaposes opposites at close chronological intervals, and uses these local dualities as building blocks for musical double-coding. Through the layering of dualities, Bernstein continually reminds his listeners that this is not a work that can be understood through a single analytic lens, and at the same time is able to use this dual material to build larger meanings. Likewise, experiencing a performance of Bernstein’s *Mass*, with its close juxtapositions of opposites is a perfect example of Jameson’s notion of a postmodern
schizophrenic experience, in which the moment to moment details of the work cannot be tied to any kind of modernist model, but the connections made through these juxtapositions cause the audience to experience music in a new way.

A salient example of this kind of schizophrenic experience may be located in the close juxtaposition of contrasting musical styles in the *Credo* and “Non Credo” episodes, as described in Chapter 3. Bernstein’s *Credo* appropriates the serial techniques of his high-modernist contemporaries, as well as referencing the performance practices and vocal timbre of the Catholic chant tradition. In this same episode, the composer mimics Stravinsky’s frequent use of complex, shifting meters and accompaniments constructed through the layering of percussive sounds. Each of these musical signifiers exists within the same episode, and therefore is experienced by the listener in a unique context of the composer’s own construction, rather than directly as a part of a linear historical progression. The schizophrenic experience is then amplified by the stylistic shift to a rock idiom in the “Non Credo.” This change fits with Jameson’s description of such experiences as disassociating events from their expected contexts, and thus dramatizing the materials. At the same time, however, musical echoes of the *Credo* may be heard continuing into the “Non Credo.” The rock band accompaniment recalls the percussive sounds of the previous episode, and at the end of the selection the soloist adopts a portion of the *Credo* melody. In this manner, the listener experiences the *Credo* materials in a new way, and must reevaluate this music according to a new context of stylistic juxtapositions.

As the above example demonstrates, musical relationships are fluid throughout *Mass*, and it follows that at the local level do not necessarily equate double-coding.
While the dichotomous materials of this work are generally aligned with elite and popular culture they cannot always be broken down into a juxtaposition of modernism and non-modernism. Such is the case with the basic materials that makes up the work. As a religious ritual that has existed for thousands of years and an important traditional genre in Western art music, the Mass Ordinary, which forms the framework of the piece, can undoubtedly be linked with high art culture. Likewise, the sections of commentary are more of a mass culture element, but neither can be called “modernist.” The same is true for the juxtaposition of Latin and English texts. These local dualities, however, serve as points of entry into the double-coding of Mass. The familiarity of the Latin Mass movements for Catholics and educated musicians communicate to one segment of the audience, while commentary in English creates a frame of reference for those who have never experienced a Catholic Mass.

In a similar fashion, Bernstein’s presentation of dichotomous materials reveals additional points of entry into the work’s doubly-coded meanings. For example, the division of the work’s performing forces into two groups further articulates the separation of modern and anti-modern ideas. By itself the presence of two ensembles, divided according to elite and mass culture, is not an indicator of double-coding, but Bernstein’s treatment of these opposing groups aligns them with distinctly modern and anti-modern ideas. The performers in the pit orchestra and robed choirs represent the modernist idea that serious art music should be autonomous in their clear visual separation from the rest of the performance. The street ensemble, on the other hand, represents the opposing notion of reconnecting music with a larger audience and their respective social situations.
The possible interpretations of *Mass* are as numerous as the points of entry constructed by the composer and the associations and connections that they raise for members of the audience. One such interpretation that would have immediately occurred to the premiere audience is the socio-political connotations of both the event and the composition. The opening of the Kennedy Center was a much publicized and politicized event. On the one hand, it provided an opportunity for some of the most important political figures in the country to honor the Presidency of John F. Kennedy and his legacy to America. These political figures were expected to attend the performance and expected to applaud the new works presented there. In addition, the building of a national culture center represented a longstanding Cold War political agenda because it was seen as a means to promote American prestige abroad. On the other hand, the Vietnam War was very much on the minds of all who would have attended the premiere. Kennedy himself was the first U.S. President to commit troops to Vietnam, and shortly before his assassination he had begun discussing the possibility of bringing them home. Bernstein could have chosen to exclude political commentary from the work, but instead chose to present a strong anti-war message within the religious ritual. This doubly-coded content is most evident in the end of the work, where the symbolic death of the Celebrant may be interpreted as an allegory for the Last Supper or a commemoration of Kennedy’s assassination. Likewise, *Mass* ends with a kiss of peace, and while some viewed it as the sign of an optimistic future, others recognized that it as momentary respite in a world that somehow is always fighting in order to achieve peace.\(^{168}\)

\(^{168}\) Minear., 159.
Another important source of doubly-coded meanings is revealed through analysis of the work on the basis of its religious content. The dichotomous nature of this material is apparent from the outset because of Bernstein’s clear delineation of the performance space into sacred and secular realms. In addition, oppositions of the sacred and profane, faith and doubt, and death and rebirth appear more frequently than any other pairings throughout the work. This spiritual content may be understood to be doubly-coded. As suggested above, the structure of *Mass* is cyclical, bringing the disparate worlds of the Roman Catholic Mass ritual and the worldly lives of the street ensemble closer together with each new section. For those educated listeners, be they members of the Catholic Church or trained musicians, the progression of the Latin Mass movements will likely be the element that comes across most clearly. As the piece moves toward the climax they see and hear the gradual breakdown of the traditional ritual, and as the Celebrant smashes the sacramental vessels they will understand that the ritual cannot be restored to its traditional role. For the other segment of the audience, those who have not experienced a Catholic Mass or those who are not attached to the Mass a form of sacred music, the spiritual meaning of Bernstein’s *Mass* is more optimistic. Throughout the work they experience the growing unrest of the street ensemble as they begin to realize that no matter how much they want to believe in the ritual it is not going to provide them with the answers they seek. The climax is still a breaking point, but for this audience it is a crisis that leads to the rebirth of a more practical faith that could possibly help to solve contemporary problems in a way that the formal ritual could not. Minear suggests that:
At the end of the work it becomes apparent that he intended the scene of death on the stage to force in the audience to share that crisis, to think about their own faith, or the lack of it...\textsuperscript{169} 

This is a crisis to which everyone in the audience can relate, but it has been presented in such a way that each individual’s spiritual background can inform their ultimate conclusions about its message. In this way the double-coding of \textit{Mass} allows for the simultaneous existence of two completely opposite, though equally valid, meanings.

\textbf{The Autobiographical Celebrant}

It is interesting to note that several authors have suggested that Bernstein’s own affinity for this commonly dismissed project lie in the fact that an autobiographical connection exists between the composer and his Celebrant; yet, they have failed to recognize parallels between the receptions of composer and composition, and have not gone farther in their interpretations than to describe the their shared crisis of faith and ultimate return to spirituality.\textsuperscript{170} While the duality of faith and doubt is one of the central themes of the work, it is far from the only parallel between the two. Throughout the course of \textit{Mass}, the Celebrant faces all of the most important dualities that characterized the entirety of Bernstein’s personal and professional life. The connections between the two reveal one layer of meaning built from the work’s numerous dualities, as well as suggesting a possible reason that Bernstein’s colleagues could identify \textit{Mass} as an immensely personal undertaking for the composer, but struggled to identify its place within his works.

\textsuperscript{169} Minear, 158. 
\textsuperscript{170} See for example: \textit{Peyser, Bernstein: A Biography}; and Sheppard.
With regard to the composer’s attitude toward faith and spirituality, the parallel to the Celebrant is clear. As indicated in Chapter 1, his difficulties with religion are inexorably linked with his relationship to his father. This relationship was difficult from the beginning, and it has been suggested that this troubled father-son relationship was the origin of Bernstein’s struggles with spirituality. He fought his father’s authority in the same way that he fought acknowledging God as a higher power, beyond his understanding. This cycle continued throughout his life, and manifested itself in several of his serious compositions, including the Jeremiahsyphony, the Kaddish symphony, and The Age of Anxiety. As a part of his cycles of faith and doubt, Bernstein went through periods of learning all that he could about concepts of God in multiple religions. He was fascinated with Pope John XXIII, and his reform movement to make the Catholic Church more relevant to modern life. Thus when asked why he was composing a Mass, Bernstein answered, “We have to educate ourselves. We have to learn more about it.” The gathering of knowledge appealed to his academic sensibilities, but ultimately did not provide the answers for which he was searching. In a similar fashion, the Celebrant began his spiritual journey by trying to go through the motions of the ritual and to learn everything that he could, but then discovered that the answers that he sought could not be found in organized religion. Also like Bernstein, his faith was reborn at the end of the work, but apart from the formalities of the Catholic ritual. Thus he was free to worship on his own terms.

Beyond the parallels between the spiritual situations of Bernstein and his Celebrant, much of the language associated with the postmodern theories described above

171 Peyser, Bernstein: A Biography, 421.
resonates powerfully with both the composer and his character. This includes the postmodern impetus toward restoring the socially productive communicative function to art, as well as terms such as “duality,” “double-coding,” and even “schizophrenic.” It is interesting to note that many biographers have observed that the majority of Bernstein’s personal and professional lives were characterized by pervasive dualities, and they have kept a well-documented catalog of such oppositions:

... with power and adulation and fame and money, he wanted everything (he wanted everything before he had all of that), both sides of every coin. He may have been homosexual but he also wanted a family life; he wanted to be respected and respectable so he had a conducting career, but meanwhile he played on and off with Broadway, which I feel was his real gift. Then there’s the complex connection with his Jewishness. He wants to appear the committed Jew and then he ends up his conducting career as one of the primary conductors of the Vienna Philharmonic, which has got to be one of the most anti-Semitic orchestras in the world.¹²

Nevertheless, the critical and scholarly tendency, as seen in Peyser’s above commentary, is to regard these many dichotomies as examples of the composer’s inability to commit to a single musical direction. Rarely are they linked with the musical and thematic content of any of his compositions, or are they treated as anything more than examples of Bernstein’s eccentricities.

A different picture of the role of duality in the composer’s life emerges in the context of his ambitions and his writings. As discussed in Chapter 1, Bernstein felt a strong personal and professional affinity with Gustav Mahler, partly as the result of their similar situations in the musical world of having to balance the demands of conducting with those of composing. At various points in his career, Bernstein characterized that particular burden in language that resonates with postmodernism, including descriptions

of being “like being a double man,”\textsuperscript{173} and living in a “schizophrenic world.”\textsuperscript{174}

Moreover, in his article, “Mahler: His Time Has Come,” the composer described Mahler’s life and work through a list of oppositions that could equally be applied to his own experiences:

Basically, of course, all of Mahler’s music is about Mahler – which means simply that it is about conflict. Think of it: Mahler the creator vs. Mahler the performer; the Jew vs. the Christian; the Believer vs. the Doubter; the Naïf vs. the Sophisticate; the provincial Bohemian vs. the Viennese \textit{homme du monde}; the Faustian philosopher vs. the Oriental mystic; the operatic symphonist who never wrote an opera. But mainly the battle rages between Western Man at the turn of the century and the life of the spirit. Out of this opposition proceeds the endless list of antitheses – the whole roster of Yang and Yin – that inhabit Mahler’s music.\textsuperscript{175}

It is highly significant that Bernstein located the many dualities of Mahler’s life as being played out continually in his music. This description, along with his self-comparison to Mahler, his ambitions to emulate Mahler, and his frequent assertions that his music is rooted in an undeniable impetus to communicate his ideas to the world, suggest that Bernstein’s own dualities are more than mere distractions that prevented him from committing all of his efforts to a single direction. Instead, it is likely that all of Bernstein’s music is about Bernstein, and therefore his contradictory nature and life may be an important source of inspiration with regard to the structure and content of his works. This view lends credence to the notion that \textit{Mass} is an example of layered dualities that lead to many layers of meanings, with one of those potential meanings relating directly to its composer’s personal experiences.

\textsuperscript{173} Copeland, 201.


\textsuperscript{175} Bernstein, “Mahler: His Time Has Come,” 255.
Throughout his life, Bernstein fought with the problem of conflicting identities. Bernstein’s dualities ranged from the highly personal to the professional. One personal duality that illustrates the irreconcilability of dualities in Bernstein’s personal life was his bisexual orientation. Although he was married to Felicia Bernstein, they had three children together, his family life was especially important to him, and he professed his love for her up through the end of his life, Bernstein was also attracted to men. His bisexuality ultimately caused their divorce in 1975.

Perhaps the most important of Bernstein’s numerous professional dualities was the opposition of his roles as a composer of Broadway musicals and as a serious conductor and performer. It has already been mentioned that the duality of Bernstein’s roles of composer and conductor persisted throughout his career and was the source of many of the strongest criticisms levied against him:

His abundance of musical gifts was in fact one of his problems. Critics complained that Bernstein “spread himself too thinly” and characterized him as a musician who could never make up his mind whether his particular gifts were for Broadway or the concert hall, conducting or composing, or — something in which he excelled — as educator and purveyor of music to the masses. Colleagues were no less bewildered by the plethora of Bernsteins pulling in different directions, and Stravinsky referred to him as a musical “department store.”

No matter how much criticism it caused, Bernstein felt that he could not abandon either role. Bernstein the conductor and Bernstein the composer exist independently of one another, though they reside within the same man. It is not necessary to understand both

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176 Burton, xi-xii.
to appreciate one or the other; however there is a constant tension within him as he tries to be true to both identities. This is the same phenomenon as the duality of opposites in his *Mass*.

In a similar fashion, Bernstein dealt with dualities within each of these disciplines. As a conductor, Bernstein had the responsibility of selecting the programs for his orchestra. While he was a strong proponent of art music and sincerely desired to educate his audience in the full variety of serious idioms, he was not a supporter of modernist ideas. His conflicted views on the subject were apparent to his contemporaries:

> Throughout his tenure at the Philharmonic in the 1960’s, Bernstein programmed a good deal of contemporary American music, including some of the dodecaphonic specialists, but he was never entirely comfortable performing music of the avant-garde, mainly because of his own beliefs in tonality.\(^{177}\)

Yet his discomfort with modernist techniques did not keep him from experimenting with them in his own compositions, as in the case of *Mass’s Credo*.

A further duality in Bernstein’s conducting career is appointment as the director of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, where he had more success with the critics than he ever had in New York. William Westbrook Burton describes the odd situation surrounding that appointment:

> It is one of the anomalies of Bernstein’s career that as a Jew he should have enjoyed the adulation of what is reputed to be one of the most anti-Semitic cities in Europe... His reasons for all of this were probably manifold. In one sense he perhaps saw himself as a force for good, and to some extent he was, taking the Vienna Philharmonic on its first tour of Israel, where trees were planted to the memory of Jewish martyrs, and restoring the bust of Mahler – removed by Hitler – to its place at the Vienna Staatsoper. All the signs, however, pointed to the fact that anti-Semitism in Austria was still alive and well... When Bernstein, a man

\(^{177}\) Ibid... xxvii.
who always liked to appear socially conscious, was asked whether he would be returning to conduct in Vienna, he replied that the musicians were his “Brüderlein” and that he could not abandon them.\textsuperscript{178}

Once again this shows Bernstein the double-man, trying to be true to his Jewish heritage and his musical identity at the same time.

As the above quotation implies, Bernstein also occupied a curious socio-political middle ground. On the one hand, he held the prominent position as the conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and he was generally regarded as one of America’s best loved and most well-known musicians. On the other hand, his leftist political sympathies were generally frowned upon by the government and his critics in particular. During the 1950s investigations by the House Un-American Activities Committee, Bernstein, along with longtime friends Aaron Copland and Marc Blitzstein, were cited as giving “tacit confirmation” of the Soviet socialist realist music.\textsuperscript{179} Although he was never called to testify, Bernstein’s anti-modernist musical philosophies were always under a certain degree of suspicion.

Perhaps more pertinent to Bernstein’s composition of Mass, an infamous incident, in which the Bernsteins gave a dinner at their home to raise funds for the Black Panthers, took place shortly before he began the work. Although by this point, he was well-known as a leftist sympathizer, this event was ridiculed by the critics as an example of Bernstein trying to be fashionable without really understanding the cause that he was supporting.

\textsuperscript{178} Ibid., xxx.

Thomas Wolfe coined the phrase “radical chic” in order to describe Bernstein’s social and political stance. He describes Bernstein’s liberal ideas as typically originating in insomnia-introduced inspirations, such as the following:

Suddenly he had a vision, an inspiration. He could see himself, the _egregio maestro_, walking out on stage in white tie and tails in front of a full orchestra. On one side of the conductor’s podium is a piano. On the other is a chair with a guitar leaning against it. A guitar! One of those half-witted instruments, like the accordion, that are made for the Learn-To-Play-in-Eight-Days E-Z-Diagram 110-IQ fourteen-year-olds of Levittown. But there’s a reason. He has an anti-war message to deliver to this great starchy white-throated audience in the symphony hall. He announces to them: “I love.” Just that. The effect is mortifying. All at once a Negro rises up from out of the curve of the grand piano and starts saying things like, “The audience is curiously embarrassed.” . . . Finally Lenny gets off a heartfelt anti-war speech and exits. . . . For a moment, sitting there alone in his home in the small hours of the morning, Lenny thought it might just work and he jotted the idea down. . . . But then his enthusiasm collapsed. He lost heart.\(^{180}\)

While this description reduces the composer’s strong social convictions to something along the lines of a child’s wildly innocent concept of the world and short attention span, it also paints Bernstein as a largely harmless figure in the political world. According to this account, his ideas change with what is fashionable, and therefore he would be likely to abandon them before taking any action of consequence. Thus, while this incident and others of the like generated some embarrassing publicity, Bernstein did not suffer any persecution as a result of his liberal ideas. This may be largely because the part of the public which was aware of such antics and their implications was too busy laughing at his supposed social and political ignorance.

Perhaps it is also because the public was laughing at Bernstein’s supposed attempts to be fashionable and the critics were busy lamenting his inability to decide whether he was Bernstein the conductor or Bernstein the composer that no clear or systematic connections were made between the composer’s many personal dualities and the dichotomous nature of the structure and content of his *Mass*. Yet these connections are apparent in the character of the Celebrant.

Like the composer, Bernstein’s Celebrant is a double-man. At the beginning of *Mass* he appears as a simple, faithful worshiper, but at the behest of the people he takes on the additional responsibility of leading the worship service. From that point, up until his crisis of faith, the Celebrant functioned as an intermediary between the sacred and secular worlds, but never really fitting into either. His role and his responsibility to traverse the path between the two worlds, as well as to answer the demands of both parallels Bernstein’s own negotiation of his dual roles as conductor and composer. As a result, like Bernstein, the Celebrant becomes a musical chameleon, imitating the styles of those around him and equally versed in each, but never fully accepted by either.

Both Bernstein and his Celebrant struggled with a public who wanted them to adopt a certain identity and the responsibilities that came along with it. For the Celebrant, that meant taking on the role of the priest in the Mass celebration, and trying to mediate between a doubting public and the religious ritual. The end result was his own crisis, in which he had to find his way back to his faith. For Bernstein, his critics constantly encouraged him to choose one or the other, conducting or composing, and yet
he strongly identified with both roles. As a result he participated in many different kinds of musical activities, faced mixed reviews throughout his entire career, and was simultaneously an insider and an outsider in several musical communities.

Thus another example of double-coding in Mass exists in these important connections between Bernstein and the Celebrant. Many of the lower layers of duality, as described in Chapter 2, point to a Mass centered on the Celebrant; however, the parallels between the two suggest that one of Mass’s readings centers on Bernstein himself. He hints at this idea in one of his Young People’s Concerts, saying that “the better it [music] is, the more it will make you feel the emotions that the composer felt when he wrote it.” If, as Bernstein suggests, the better a piece of music is the more the audience will feel what the composer felt when he wrote it, then Bernstein is self-consciously putting himself into each of his compositions. In Mass he is taking the role of the “celebrant”-composer who simultaneously exists inside and outside of his work, and therefore Bernstein is a clear example of an early innovator in musical postmodernism.

Ritual and Simulacra

Looking at Mass through the lens of postmodern theory, it is possible to suggest another interesting example of doubly-coded content: the simultaneous occurrence of a ritual and a stylized ritual. This concept can lead to important discussions regarding the role of ritual in a postmodern society. Bernstein himself readily admits that he created

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181 Bernstein, Leonard Bernstein’s Young People’s Concerts, 82.
this work as a stylized ritual, or a work that represents the general sense of a ritual but is never meant to be performed as such. He writes:

I have not written a Mass. I have written a theater piece about a Mass. It cannot be performed in a church as a Mass.\textsuperscript{182}

It is also stylized in the sense that the audience is one step removed from the ritual action; they witness the performers enacting the sequence of events for this one particular Mass, but do not experience the ritual themselves. In this vein, Sheppard suggests that \textit{Mass} serves a didactic function:

It offered a translation of the Latin liturgy into contemporary language and articulated a contemporary relevance. The numerous translation passages are frequently musically underlined by a continuation of the same melody for both the Latin and the English texts. Bernstein “translated” the spiritual drama of the Catholic Mass in terms of the social drama of his time.\textsuperscript{183}

This stylized ritual is a kind of simulacrum, as described by Jameson, inauthentically imitating an original ritual. At the same time, however, Bernstein’s \textit{Mass} is a kind of all-inclusive ritual in its own right. The audience witnesses the profoundly emotional death and rebirth of the Celebrant, and then at the end of the work the Boys’ Choir passes the kiss of peace through the cast and on to the audience with the instructions that they should “pass it on.” Bernstein describes the success of his ritual at the premiere as follows:

And this is the miracle I saw take place: the waves of tenderness, these waves of touching and embracing, began to spread from the stage to the

\textsuperscript{182} Zadikov, 42.

\textsuperscript{183} Sheppard, 475.
house, until they passed through the whole audience and then even out into the street. I saw people embracing strangers on the street – cops, just ordinary people.\textsuperscript{184}

That the kiss passed through the audience and outside into the city at the close of the premiere performance justifies labeling \textit{Mass} as a ritual. Double-coding exists here between the inner, stylized ritual of the Latin Mass Ordinary and the outer ritual of passing the kiss of peace from the performers to the audience.

Double-coding in the \textit{Mass} also operates on a still higher level. All of these readings and more exist simultaneously in the piece, and it is not necessary to understand or even be aware of their existence to appreciate and get a sense of meaning from the work. The meaning that each individual listener takes from \textit{Mass} is dependent upon which aspects of the many dualities resonate most clearly with that listener’s personal musical and socio-cultural knowledge. In this regard, Bernstein’s \textit{Mass} is truly “greater than the sum of its parts,”\textsuperscript{185} because the experience of the composition is not limited to the performance taking place on the stage. The conversational structure of the work transcends its presentation, drawing the audience into the discussion by allowing their various lives and situations to contribute to the process of constructing meaning.

\textsuperscript{184} Zadikov, 42.

\textsuperscript{185} Peress, 149.
CONCLUSION

Leonard Bernstein’s *Mass: A Theatre Piece for Singers, Players and Dancers* may be considered one of its composer’s most problematical works because of its troubled reception history and the many inconclusive analyses that focus only on its stylistic eclecticism and attempts to bring the theatrical conventions of Broadway to the realm of serious composition. Nevertheless, Bernstein identified this piece as central to his musical output, defending it against its critics through the end of his life. The confusion surrounding its reception and the general difficulty of identifying any single trend in the composer’s musical oeuvre has caused an all-too-frequent dismissal of this immense and personal compositional experiment. Yet, when taken in the larger context of Bernstein’s own reception and his self-proclaimed Mahlerian ambitions, *Mass* may be seen as both its composer’s attempt to synthesize his musical efforts to date and a logical outgrowth of those previous efforts. In a similar fashion, its inconclusive reception may be understood as the product of Bernstein’s propensity to take existing musical genres as the basis for structure and presentation, and to bend their norms to include elements of both elite and mass culture. A trend emerges, whereby the composer’s attempts to raise so-called popular forms are met with critical acclaim, while his efforts in the opposite
direction receive sharp criticisms, in spite of their similar techniques and content. In this regard, it is possible that genre descriptors may considered be a predictor of critical success in Bernstein’s output.

The duality of opposites is at the center of all aspects of Mass, paralleling its composer’s own personal and professional dualities, as well as articulating many of the dichotomies associated with contemporary society and culture. Bernstein constructs his composition through the layering of these dualities, from its basic materials and presentation into larger layers of commentary and musical meanings. Analysis of these meanings through the lens of contemporary postmodern discourse reveals this composition to be related to the postmodern trend of the 1960s and 1970s, and its attempts to rethink the goals and methods of modernism. Although Bernstein and his works have never formally been linked with this discourse, its language resonates with their content, and its tools prove useful in understanding some of the many possible interpretations of Mass.
APPENDIX

TEXTUAL AND MUSICAL EXAMPLES FROM BERNSTEIN’S MASS
Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem,  
Factorem caeli et terrae,  
Visibilium omnium et invisibilium.  
Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum.  
Et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula.  
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,  
Deum verum de Deo vero.  
Genitum, non factum,  
consubstantalem Patri:  
Per quem omnia facta sunt.  
Qui propter nos homines et propter nostrum salutem descendit de caelis.  
Et incarnates est de Spiritu Sancto  
Ex Maria Virgine: et homo factus est.  

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth,  
And of all things visible  
And invisible.  
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God.  
Born of the Father before all Ages.  
God of God, light of light,  
True God of true God;  
Begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father:  
Through whom all things Were made.  
Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from Heaven.  
And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost  
Of the Virgin Mary: and was made man.  

**First Solo** (baritone with male vocal group)
And you became a man
You, God, chose to become a man
To pay the earth a small social call
I tell you, sir, you never were
A man at all
Why?
You had the choice
When to live
When
To die
And then
Become a god again . . .

**Group**
And was made man . . .

**Solo**
And then a plaster god like you
Has the gall to tell me what to do
To become a man
To show my respect on my knees
Go genuflect, but don’t expect guarantees
Oh
Just play it dumb
Play it blind
But when
I go
Then
Will I become a god again?

**Group**
Possibly yes, probably no . . .

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Example 2 continued

Solo
Yes, probably no
Give me a choice
I never had a choice
Or I would have been a simple tree
A barnacle in a silent sea
Anything but what I must be
A man
A man
A man!

Group
Possibly yes, probably no . . .

Solo
You knew what you had to do
You knew why you had to die
You chose to die, and then revive again
You chose, you rose
Alive again
But I
I don’t know why
I should live
If only to die
Well, I’m not gonna buy it!

Group
Possibly yes, probably no . . .

Solo
I’ll never say credo.
How can anybody say credo?
I want to say cr . . .
Celebrant
Gloria tibi, Gloria tibi,
Gloria!

Boys’ Choir
Gloria tibi, Gloria tibi,
Gloria!

Celebrant and Boys’ Choir (antiphonally)
Gloria Patri,
Gloria Filio,
Et Spiritui Sancto.
Laudamus te,
Adoramus te,
Glorificamus te,
Benedicimus te.
Gloria Patri,
Gloria Filio,
Et Spiritui Sancto.
Gloria!

Glory to You, Glory to You,
Glory!

Glory to You, Glory to You,
Glory!

Glory to You, Glory to You,
Glory!

Glory to the Father,
Glory to the Son,
And the Holy Ghost.
We praise You,
We adore You,
We glorify You,
We bless You.
Glory to the Father,
Glory to the Son,
And the Holy Ghost.
Glory!

Choir and Pit Orchestra

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
et in terra pax hominibus
bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te,
Adoramus te,
Benedicimus te,
Glorificamus te.

Gratias agimus tibi propter
Magnam gloriam tuam:
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite,
Jesu Christi;
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,
Filius Patris:
Qui tollis peccata
mundi,
miserere nobis;
suscipe deprecationem nostrum;
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,
Tu solus Dominus,
Tu solus Altissimus:
Jesu Christe,
Cum Sancto Spiritu: in gloria
Dei Patris, Amen.

Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace to men of
good will.
We praise You,
We adore You,
We bless You,
We glorify You.
We give Thee thanks for Thy
great glory:
Lord God, heavenly King,
God the Almighty Father.
Lord Jesus Christ, only-begotten
Son;
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of
the Father:
Who takest away the sins of the
world,
have mercy upon us;
Receive our prayer;
Thou who sittest at the right hand
have mercy upon us.
For Thou alone art the Holy One,
Thou alone art Lord,
Thou, Jesus Christ, alone art the
Most High,
With the Holy Ghost, in the glory
of God the Father. Amen.

Example 4. “Gloria in excelsis,” in Mass: A Theatre Piece for Singers, Players and
Street Chorus and Band
Amen!
Half of the people are stoned
And the other half are waiting for the next election.
Half of the people are drowned
and the other half are swimming in the wrong direction.

They call it Glorious Living
They call it Glorious Living
And baby, where does that leave you,
You and your kind –

Choir
... *Miserere nobis, suscipe* ... have mercy upon us, receive
*deprecationem nostrum...* our prayer...

Street Chorus and Band
- you and your youth and your mind?
Nowhere, Nowhere, Nowhere.

Half of the people are stoned
And the other half are waiting for the next election –

Example 6 continued

Continued
Example 6 continued
Example 6 continued

BAR. SOLO

You, God, chose to become a man. To pay the earth's

And was made man.

And was made man.

small social call I tell you, sir, you never were a man at all. Why?

And was made man.

And was made man.

choice When to live, When to die, And then Become a god again.

And was made man.

And was made man.

Continued
Example 6 continued

And then a plaster god like you
Has the...gall to tell me what to do
To be

God like you

Guitar

(cresc.)

come a man
To show my respect on my knees,
Go genuflect, but don't expect guarantees.

too,

Be like a man

too,

Be like a man.

(f sub.)

Oh,...
Just play it dumb, Play it blind,
But when I go
Then Will I become a

Continued
Example 6 continued

good again? ——

Yes, probably no.

Prob-ably no...

Possibly yes, possibly no...

Give me a choice... I nev-er had a choice... Or I would have been a

sim-ple tree, A bar-na-cle in a si-lent sea, An-y-thing but what I must be...
Example 6 continued

A man, A man, A man,
You knew what you had to do,
You knew why...

Chorus (4 Men)
Possibly yes, probably no,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
Possibly yes,
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Example 6 continued
Example 6 continued
Example 6 continued
XVII PAX: COMMUNION ("Secret Songs")

Sustained silence, then:

Prestissimo a piacere

Example 7 continued

(Lauda, Lauda, Lauda, Lauda, Laudie, Deum, Laudate Deum.)

(The Boy crosses the stage slowly...)}
Example 7 continued

... and stops beside a man (bass) of the Street Chorus.

Bass Solo

Lauda, Laudé, Laudá,

Laudé, Laudé Deum,

(The boy and the man embrace.)

Tempo I

Laudé Eum.
Example 7 continued

* of the Street Chorus

Continued
Example 7 continued

SOP. SOLO

Laudë, De ûm, La ûd-e, E-um, La ûd-a,

Laudë, La ûd-a, La ûd-a, E-um, La ûd-a, De ûm, La ûd-a,

Laudë, La ûd-a, La ûd-a, De ûm, La ûd-a, La ûd-a, E-um, La ûd-a,

Laudë, La ûd-a, La ûd-a, La ûd-a, E-um, La ûd-a, La ûd-a, De ûm, La ûd-a, E-um, La ûd-a, Street Chorus

SOPRANOS and ALTOS (gradually joining at 60) virtuoso

Laudë,
Example 7 continued

(The chains of embraces spread all over the stage.)

Lauda, Laudá, Laudé. Laudá, Laudá, Laudá te De-um. Laudá,
cresc. poco a poco

E-um. Laudá, Laudá, Laudá, Laudé. Laudá, Laudá, Laudá te

SOPRANOS, ALTONS

Laudá, Laudá, Laudá. Laudá, Laudá, Laudá te De-um, Laudá,
cresc. poco a poco

TENORS and BASSES (gradually joining in)

(Tenor, Alto)

Laudá, Laudá- te E-um. Laudé De-um, Laudá- te E-um. Laudá,

cresc.

(Tenor, Bass)

De-um. Laudá, Laudá, Laudá te E-um. Laudé De-um, Laudá-
te

* Plus Choir members and stage instrumentalists gradually joining in, until full Tutti at 10.
Example 7 continued

*Please choir members and stage instrumentalists gradually joining in until full tutti at $\text{\texttt{+}}$.\n
Continued
Example 7 continued

Continued
Example 7 continued

Continued
Example 7 continued
Example 7 continued

Continued
Example 7 continued

(The Boys' Choir descends the steps on either side and into the house.
The Boys fill the aisles, bringing the touch of peace to the audience.*

* In the original production the Boys said "Puss it on" with each touch.

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Continued
Example 7 continued

Voice: The Mass is ended: go in peace.

First, second, third, and fourth wash the dishes.

Second, third, and fourth wash the dishes.

Third, and fourth wash the dishes.

Fourth wash the dishes.
Example 9 continued

sim-ple song: Lau-da, Lau-de... Make it up—as you

go a-long: Lau-da, Lau-de... Sing like you

like to sing. God loves all sim-ple things, For God is the

sim-plest of all, For God is the sim-plest of all.
Example 9 continued

(The curtain rises.)

Poco meno mosso (\textit{no tempo change})

\textit{I will sing the Lord a...}

\textit{Guitar doubles the melody}

\textit{To praise Him, to bless Him, to bless the Lord...}

\textit{I will sing His praises...}

\textit{while I live...}

\textit{All of my days...}

\textit{Blessed is the man who...}

\textit{Who leaves...}

\textit{left...}

\textit{Blessed is the man who praises Him...}

\textit{Lauda...}

\textit{Lauda...}

Continued
Example 9 continued

Laudē... And walks in His ways.
I will lift up my eyes to the

hills from whence comes my help.
I will lift up my voice to the Lord.

(A Solo boy from the Boys Choir enters.)

Lauda, Laudē.
For the Lord is my shade, is the
Example 9 continued

shady upon my right hand, And the sun shall not smite me by day Nor the

(Two altar boys appear.)

moon by night. Blessed is the man who loves the Lord.

(Lauda, Lauda, Lau-de, And walks in His ways.

(Solo boy takes Celebrant's guitar. Altar boys invest him with a simple robe.)

Continued
Example 9 continued

Celebrant
Cadenza (freely)

\[ \text{Lauda, Laudà, Laudé, \quad Laudà, Laudà di da di da ...} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{quasi } f \\
\end{array} \]

\[ \text{a tempo (più lento)} \]

\[ \text{All of my days.} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{Flute} \\
\text{pp} \\
\text{quasi rall.} \\
\end{array} \]

\[ \text{attacca subito} \]
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