

Valley Performing Arts Center Celebrates *Bernstein at 100!*

John Mauceri Conducts New West Symphony, Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles, Areté Vocal Ensemble, Suzanna Guzmán and Davis Gaines in *Bernstein on Stage*

Program includes music from *West Side Story, Candide, On the Town, Wonderful Town, Trouble in Tahiti* and more

Friday, November 17 at 8:00pm

(Los Angeles, CA) September 8, 2017 - Valley Performing Arts Center will partner with New West Symphony in November to celebrate the centenary and extraordinary legacy of American composer Leonard Bernstein with *Bernstein on Stage*. Bernstein specialist John Mauceri, a protégé of the legendary composer and conductor, will lead the New West Symphony Orchestra, the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles, Areté Vocal Ensemble along with Suzanna Guzmán and Davis Gaines on Friday, November 17 at 8:00pm. The official *Bernstein at 100* celebrations begin Sept 22 in Washington, DC and the VPAC performance will be among the first concerts subsequently to perform in Los Angeles.

The concert program includes selections from almost all of his stage works — *West Side Story, Candide, On The Town,* and *Wonderful Town*, as well as from lesser known works such as his opera *Trouble in Tahiti*, and the Broadway musical *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue* with lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner, and his monumental symphonic *Mass*. Mauceri is known for his engaging onstage commentary between musical selections and will no doubt share both personal anecdotes and musical insights learned from Bernstein himself.

Mauceri wrote of Bernstein, "Few composers capture their time and become the iconic voice of their age. Leonard Bernstein found his "voice" in the early 1940s and projected the sound of urban and urbane America from the period of World War II to the anti-war movements of the 1970s and the restoration of freedom in Europe, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and Soviet communism. Writing for small ensembles, symphony orchestras, Broadway, film and opera houses, Leonard Bernstein projected a simple message of understanding and hope employing both complex and simple forms and styles - yet always sounding like "Bernstein," a voice best known in his score to *West Side Story*."

"While his music finds its spiritual home in his world view, his music speaks with a New York accent, even though he was born in Massachusetts. His love affair with Europe and his sensitivity to his Russian and Jewish roots are never far from his lyrical expressivity, with its fragile sense of optimism, its loneliness, its humor and its demand for acceptance. All of this is wrapped in the rhythmic propulsion of a great American urban landscape. He has left us an aural image of his time and place and, at the same time, an eternal voice of humanity."

"As we embark upon the first of four performances in the coming year dedicated to astonishing work of the great Leonard Bernstein, VPAC is uniquely suited to present multiple sides of America's most multi-faceted musician," said Thor Steingraber, VPAC's Executive Director. "But it was Bernstein's compositions for the stage that seemed like the perfect way to kick off this celebration," said. "John Mauceri and I chose the

excerpts from shows that best exemplify Bernstein's versatility and his uncanny genius in matching music to a story."

Steingraber continues, "I'm particularly pleased to breathe life into the lesser known excerpts from *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue* and *Trouble in Tahiti*. Maestro Mauceri and I have worked together over two decades, and I know how beloved he is by L.A. audiences. When it came time to plan for the Bernstein centenary, I immediately called him. His personal relationship with Bernstein, coupled with his encyclopedic knowledge of the works, have made these two years of collaboration a great honor."

Bernstein on Stage is one of several *Bernstein at 100* events VPAC will present during the 2017-18 Season. On February 24, VPAC and New West Symphony collaborate again to perform Bernstein's only complete film score live during a screening of *On the Waterfront*. On February 3, Keigwin + Company will premiere two new dance pieces choreographed to Bernstein's *Piano Trio* and *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano*.

New West Symphony has been a regular VPAC partner for the past few seasons. Recently, they've collaborated with VPAC to present Buster Keaton's *The General* with live orchestral accompaniment, as well as Stewart Copeland's orchestral score to *Ben Hur: A Tale of the Christ*.

John Mauceri and Leonard Bernstein

In the summer 1971 Mr. Mauceri was invited to Tanglewood as a conducting fellow. There he studied with Bruno Maderna, Colin Davis, Seiji Ozawa, Gunther Schuller, and Leonard Bernstein. The next summer he was invited by Mr. Bernstein to be his assistant for a new production of *Carmen* at the Metropolitan Opera, as well as its recording on Deutsche Grammophon. For 18 years Bernstein and Mauceri worked together on many important projects. As a result, Mauceri has edited, supervised, and conducted numerous Bernstein works -- many of them premieres -- throughout the world, and at the invitation of the composer.

In 1973 Mr. Mauceri supervised a new musical version *Candide* for Mr. Bernstein, Harold Prince and Stephen Sondheim that received a special Tony Award for "advancement in musical theater." A variety of versions of *Candide* have been under Mr. Mauceri's supervision, including his Grammy Award winning 1983 Opera House version and the definitive Scottish Opera version that won an Olivier Award in 1989 when it moved to London's West End. This version, recorded by the composer, won Bernstein a posthumous Grammy in 1991. In 1983, Bernstein invited Mauceri to conduct the European premiere of his new opera, *A Quiet Place*. In addition to his conducting responsibilities, Mauceri worked with Bernstein to reshape the opera as well as its orchestration.

As the longtime conductor of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, John Mauceri has extensive experience conducting studio musicians. The New West Symphony is comprised primarily of studio musicians, making this a fantastic collaboration.

About Bernstein at 100

Leonard Bernstein at 100, a two-year global celebration of the life and career of the 20th century cultural giant with more than 1,000 events on six continents, kicks off at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on Friday, September 22, 2017 to officially launch celebrations, which continue worldwide through the end of August 2019

Leonard Bernstein's range of accomplishments was uniquely broad; in the new millennium, his legacy resonates more than ever. *Bernstein at 100* will celebrate the career of this monumental artist by focusing on four pillars of Bernstein's legacy: his work as a Composer; Conductor; Educator; and Activist/Humanitarian.

"*Bernstein at 100* will explore my father's legacy from every angle - and that's a lot of angles," his daughter Jamie Bernstein said. "I'm thrilled to be part of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to connect his multiple achievements to the 21st century, as well as introduce his legacy to new generations."

Bernstein was a man of the globe, and so there will be major events in London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Prague, Rome, Budapest, and Warsaw, as well as in Japan, China, India, Brazil, Australia, South Africa and Israel. Other Los Angeles performances include Los Angeles Philharmonic, LA Opera, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and more.

For the complete calendar of events, visit LeonardBernstein.com/News/Calendar.

About John Mauceri, Conductor

John Mauceri's distinguished and extraordinary career has brought him not only to the world's greatest opera companies and symphony orchestras, but also to the musical stages of Broadway and Hollywood, as well as the most prestigious halls of academia. Regarded as the world's leading performer of the music of Hollywood's émigré composers, he has taken the lead in the preservation and performance of many kinds of music and has supervised/conducted premieres by composers as diverse as Debussy, Stockhausen, Korngold, Bernstein, Hindemith, Elfman, Ives, and Shore.

As an accomplished recording artist, Mauceri has over 70 albums to his name, and is the recipient of Grammy, Tony, Olivier, Drama Desk, Edison, Cannes Classique, Billboard, two Diapasons d'Or, three Emmys, and four Deutsche Schallplatten Awards.

About New West Symphony

Founded in 1985, the New West Symphony is a professional orchestra that draws its players from the rich talent pool of professional Los Angeles area musicians. The Symphony presents an annual Masterpiece Series concert season and provides many educational opportunities for local youth through its annual Symphonic Adventures concerts, its traveling Music Van, and the Harmony Project of Ventura County. For more information go to www.newwestsymphony.org and follow them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/newwestsymphony.

Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles

For 39 years the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles has built an international reputation for musical excellence while remaining deeply rooted in service to the Los Angeles community. Hailed by the *Los Angeles Times* as "one of the last important links to a glorious tradition in music," GMCLA is one of the country's largest male choruses with over 250 singers. GMCLA also has an extensive youth outreach program that brings a message of love, acceptance, and hope to over 50,000 students in the Los Angeles middle schools, high schools, and juvenile detention centers.

About Areté Vocal Ensemble

Areté is an innovative professional ensemble of vocal artists based in Thousand Oaks, California with the goal of performing the widest possible vocal and choral repertoire including works from essentially all periods of music history with energy, passion, expertise, and virtuosity. Special attention will be given to contemporary, experimental, improvisatory, "cross-over", and ethnic music.

Areté has been created to address a pressing need in contemporary concert life. Visionary composers in the U.S. and beyond are creating a distinguished body of work for voices, but few professional American ensembles exist to perform this important repertoire, which combines the flexibility and intimacy of chamber music with the power and sonic variety of a symphonic chorus.

Areté seeks to build new audiences for this music by developing trailblazing modes of presentation, including unprecedented interdisciplinary collaborations, while maintaining the highest artistic standards. With an ear for the new, the unknown, and the unconventional, Areté strives to expose its audiences to exciting, adventurous and trendsetting music in formats that make the music accessible and alive. Through the combined power of words and music, an uncompromising attention to musical detail, and a passion for

live performance, an Areté concert promises to be a joyful, moving, educational, and soul-nurturing experience.

Areté will perform in flexible sizes and configurations, and in a variety of venues including concert halls, churches, clubs, festivals, and performance spaces.

With its youthful profile, eclectic spirit, hand-picked roster of outstanding singers, and commitment to the music of our time, Areté is poised to become a powerful force for musical excellence in the concert life of Southern California.

About Suzanna Guzmán

Actor, tv/radio host and mezzo soprano, Suzanna Guzmán has appeared as a principal soloist with orchestras and opera houses around the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, Washington National Opera, Dallas Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Opera de Genève and San Diego Opera, to name a few. Known for her portrayal of the title role in Bizet's *Carmen*, (*Fire-breathing actress, devastatingly sexy.*" TIME magazine), she is also a champion of new music, most recently, in The Industry's acclaimed *hopscotch, the mobile opera*. She has created premieres in lead roles in works by Michael Nyman, Daniel Catán, Giancarlo Menotti, Ian Krouse, and recently as the Mother in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*: "*Guzmán came across as so authentic, it transcended the artificiality of the theatrical experience. Everything seemed to melt away: the moment danced between sobering and exhilarating.*" -- Fresno Bee

Among her many honors, she received a Grammy nod for the 2006 Best Classical Recording, Helen Hayes Award best actress nomination for her portrayal of the Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* directed by Gian-Carlo Menotti, an honorary PhD from Occidental College and a 2015 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Nederlanders for service to Arts and Community. A member of the Music Center Education Division and Music Center on Tour, her one-woman show *Don't Be Afraid! It's Just Opera!* has been performed for over 200,000 inner-city students nationwide. Future engagements include the title role in the West Coast premiere of *Bless me, Ultima* by Hector Armienta, Mrs. Martinez with the L.A. Phil/Industry collaboration of *War of the World* music by Annie Gosfield, Mrs. Sarti in Bertolt Brecht's *Galileo* translated and directed by Yuval Sharon 2018, and in the title role of the 15th year anniversary of the pageant *Dios Inantzin: La Virgen de Tepeyac* with Latino Theater Center. More info? Visit www.suzannaguzman.com.

About Davis Gaines

Davis Gaines performed the title role in Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera* more than 2,000 times during his run on Broadway, in Los Angeles (L.A.'s longest-running Phantom) and in San Francisco (Bay Area Critics' Award for Best Actor). Other Broadway and National Tour credits include the world premiere of Lloyd Webber's *Whistle Down the Wind*, Cornelius Hackl in *Hello, Dolly!* (with Carol Channing), *Camelot* (with Richard Burton) and *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* (with Alexis Smith). Gaines' Off-Broadway appearances include Des McAnuff's *The Death of Von Richthofen as Witnessed from Earth*, the Maury Yeston/Larry Gelbart musical *One Two Three Four Five*, Stephen Sondheim's *Assassins*, *She Loves Me* and *Forbidden Broadway*. He made his New York City Opera debut in *The New Moon* and appeared in the concert versions of *Parade*, *Sitting Pretty*, *The Cat and the Fiddle*, *Pippin* and the Encores production of *The Boys from Syracuse*. In Southern California, he has appeared as Tito Merelli in *Lend Me a Tenor* (McCoy/Rigby), at Musical Theatre West as Juan Peron in *Evita*, Lawrence Jameson in *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, Don Quixote in *Man of La Mancha* (Ovation Award and Broadway World Award, Best Lead Actor in a Musical), King Arthur in *Spamalot*, Javert in *Les Misérables*, Harold Hill in *The Music Man*, Richard Henry Lee in *1776* and Mack Sennett in *Mack and Mabel*. He also portrayed Hannibal Lecter in *SILENCE! The Musical* (LA Weekly Award, Best Male Musical Performance), appeared as Fred/Petruccio in *Kiss Me, Kate* (Cabrillo Music Theatre/Ovation Nomination, Best Lead Actor in a Musical), in *I Do! I Do!* (with Vicki Lewis/Laguna Playhouse), *Parade* (with T.R. Knight/Mark Taper Forum), *Side by Side by Sondheim* (Rubicon Theatre/Pasadena Playhouse) and made his Los Angeles-area directing debut at Musical Theatre West with *Oklahoma!* In addition to his stage credits, Gaines has sung for five U.S. Presidents and performed with nearly every major symphony in the U.S. and at VPAC's Opening Gala in 2011.

About Valley Performing Arts Center (The Soraya)

Launching its seventh season in September, the mission of the Valley Performing Arts Center is to present a wide variety of performances that not only includes new and original work from the Los Angeles region but also work from around the world that appeal to all of LA's rich and diverse communities.

VPAC's 2017-18 season signals a new era for the premier event venue. Under the leadership of Executive Director Thor Steingraber, the renamed Younes and Soraya Nazarian Performing Arts Center (The Soraya) expands its programming and outstanding multidisciplinary performances. Located on the campus of California State University, Northridge, The Soraya's season offers a vibrant performance program of nearly 50 classical and popular music, dance, theater, family and international events that will serve to establish The Soraya as the intellectual and cultural heart of the San Fernando Valley, and further establish itself as one of the top arts companies in Southern California. The award-winning, 1,700-seat theatre was designed by HGA Architects and Engineers and was recently cited by the Los Angeles Times as "a growing hub for live music, dance, drama and other cultural events."

Calendar Listing for *Bernstein on Stage*

Venue: Valley Performing Arts Center
18111 Nordhoff Street
Northridge, CA 91330

Date: Friday, November 17 at 8:00pm

Tickets: Range \$43.00 to \$85.00

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Photos: Click here for photos from the 2017-18 Season:
<http://www.valleyperformingartscenter.org/press/press-photos/>