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RAVINIA'S ACCLAIMED PRODUCTION OF LEONARD BERNSTEIN'S *MASS* RECEIVES BROADCAST PREMIERE ON *GREAT PERFORMANCES* MAY 15

**Marin Alsop conducts a cast of hundreds, including Tony winner Paulo Szot
as the Celebrant**

**Bernstein fans around the world are invited to a virtual “panel discussion”
with the artists before the show**

HIGHLAND PARK, IL — When Ravinia President and CEO **Welz Kauffman** and Chief Conductor and Curator **Marin Alsop** presented the little-seen music theater masterwork *Mass* as the centerpiece of Ravinia's 2018 celebration of Leonard Bernstein's centennial, the *Chicago Tribune* declared it one of the best concerts of 2018, and audiences clamored for a repeat performance. Ravinia obliged, reuniting more than 200 onstage artists—including the **Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Vocality**, a cast of “Street Singers,” and even the local high school marching band—for a single 2019 encore that Ravinia arranged to have filmed. The result premieres as an installment of the seminal PBS series *Great Performances* on Friday, May 15, at 9 p.m. on PBS, pbs.org/gperfb and the PBS Video app, including on Chicago's own WTTW, Channel 11.

A virtual “panel discussion” will be livestreamed on Ravinia's Facebook page just prior to the broadcast, beginning at 8:15 central time. For this talk, Alsop and Kauffman will be joined by Tony Award-winning (*South Pacific*) singer/actor **Paulo Szot**, who starred in the central role of the Celebrant in both Ravinia performances, as well as Chicago Children's Choir Artistic Director **Josephine Lee** and Highland Park High School Band Director **Joshua Chodoroff**. The panel will be moderated by WFMT Vice President and General Manager **George Preston**.

“Whether as the composer of *West Side Story*, or the longtime Music Director of the New York Philharmonic, or as ‘America's Music Teacher’ behind those legendary *Young People's Concerts*, Bernstein is a name most everyone knows. So imagine what a rare honor it is to revive a work that so few people had actually seen because of the tremendous resources required to put it on,” Kauffman said. “When we saw the result, we knew we had to not only capture it for posterity but

also to share it with the world. The coincidence that this show—about the loss and restoration of faith in times of crisis—will be broadcast in the midst of a global pandemic adds a heart-breaking immediacy to this long-dormant masterpiece. That said, viewers shouldn't be fooled by the title. This is not a sermon, nor is it a sacred work like Verdi's Requiem. It's more in line with *Hair* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* as a contemporary musical facing contemporary questions with wit, intelligence, and beautiful music."

The television program begins with a brief history of the work, which has rarely been performed since it was commissioned to open the Kennedy Center in 1971. Its 2018 performance marked its premiere for both Ravinia and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. That performance prompted a reteaming of Alsop and director Kevin Newbury after they earned a Grammy nomination for their 2005 recording of *Mass* with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

The televised production, filmed at Ravinia on July 20, 2019, brought Alsop and Newbury together again with the CSO; Chicago Children's Choir and Vocality, both led by Josephine Lee; the Highland Park High School Marching Band; a cast of "street" performers; and baritone Paulo Szot, performing as the Celebrant at the center of it all.

Directed for television by Michael Beyer and produced by Bernhard Fleischer, *Great Performances: Leonard Bernstein Mass* is a production of Bernhard Fleischer Moving Images; Welz Kauffman and Samuel J. Paul are Executive Producers. Directed for the stage by Kevin Newbury, Marin Alsop conducts the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Music and text by Leonard Bernstein with additional text and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz. *Great Performances* is produced by THIRTEEN Productions LLC for WNET. John Walker and Richard R. Schilling are producers, Bill O'Donnell is series producer and David Horn is executive producer.

Central to the theme of societal pressures eroding faith is a searing series of letters read by the street performers who cry out to the heavens. Ravinia connected the students from its Reach Teach Play music education programs to the drama by having them write their own letters about what gets them down and what brings them back up. Ravinia published those letters and will make them available on a special page devoted to *Mass* at Ravinia.org.

Ravinia is North America's oldest music festival, dating back to Aug. 15, 1904. The CSO first played the festival in 1905, and in 1936 Ravinia became the orchestra's official summer residence. In addition to the CSO, Ravinia presents chamber music, jazz, and all manner of popular music in more than 140 events every summer.

Bernstein's own history with Ravinia began on July 4, 1944, with his CSO debut—just eight months after his astonishing New York Philharmonic debut at Carnegie Hall. He conducted 10 more CSO programs at the festival through July 28, 1956. He returned to Ravinia in 1985 to conduct the National Symphony Orchestra on tour and finally in 1986 as Laureate Conductor with his own New York Philharmonic on tour. As pianist, he performed Ravel's Piano Concerto with Herman Felber Jr. conducting the CSO on July 6, 1944. In addition to his own First and Second Symphonies, *Serenade*, Suite from *Fancy Free*, *Songfest*, Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*, and Overture to *Candide*, Bernstein also conducted works by Beethoven, Brahms, Casadesus, Copland, Haydn, Liszt, Mozart, Schumann, Shostakovich, Sibelius, R. Strauss, Stravinsky, and Tchaikovsky at Ravinia.

Underwriters

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CREATIVE STAFF

Leslie Stifelman, music supervisor

Melissa Mahon, choreographer

Victoria "Vita" Tzykun, scene designer

Paul Carey, costume designer

Al Crawford, lighting designer

Darrel Maloney, video designer

Jeremy Thomas, video programmer

Nevin Steinberg, sound designer

Rachel Tobias, production stage manager

Daniel Sokalski, stage manager

George Miller, assistant director

Nicholas Cunningham, assistant choreographer

Rebecca Shouse, costume supervisor

Anna Wooden, associate costume designer

Rachel Garoon, assistant stage manager and production coordinator

Josephine Lee, director, Chicago Children's Choir and Vocality
Judy Hanson, senior associate director, Chicago Children's Choir
Joshua Chodoroff, director, Highland Park High School Marching Band
Michael Repper, rehearsal pianist
John Goodwin, rehearsal pianist, Chicago Children's Choir

STREET CHORUS

Andres Acosta
Hadleigh Adams
Curtis Bannister
Matt Boehler
John Clay III
Nicholas Cunningham (vocalist and dancer)
Nicole Fragala
Erica Gabriel
Devon Guthrie
Cameron Anika Hill
Alexa Jarvis
Amy Justman
Meredith Lustig
Timothy McDevitt
Barrie Lobo McLain
James Onstad
Michael Preacely
Daniel Rowan
Isabel Santiago
Summer Strallen (vocalist and dancer)
Karim Sulayman
Jeremy Weiss

ALTAR CHILDREN

Wyatt Parr
Myra Saha

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