

Old Palace of John Whitgift School



here's a place for us, A time and place for us...

WHITGIFT SCHOOL, 5-8 MARCH, 2014

Book by Arthur Laurents - Music by Leonard Bernstein - Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim Entire original production directed and choreographed by Jerome Robbins

Originally produced on Broadway by Robert E. Griffith & Harold Prince by arrangement with Roger L. Stevens

ented by arrangement with JOSEF WEINBERGER LIMITED on behalf of MUSIC THEATRE INTERNATIONAL of NEW YORK

# **CAST LIST**

Charlie Melbourne
Geddy Stringer
Rory Allen
Talisa Tossell
Jessica Hinds



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	AL CITED Y
<b>JETS</b>	
ACTION	Jack Wallis
BABY JOHN	Louis Danckwerts
A-RAB	Alex Buchanan
DIESEL	Abbas Khan
SNOWBOY	Jack Hill
BIG DEAL	Tobi Osibamowo
GEE-TAR	Kofi Addei
TIGER	Aubrey Chatriot
SLICK	Connor Fulham
ICE	Jesil Levine-Boateng
PIDGE	Jed Kelly
RUSTY	Finn Whittaker
THEIR GIRLS	
ANYBODYS	Bethany Cockshutt
VELMA	Verity Lee
GRAZIELLA	Sofie Spacey
MINNIE	Rebekah Elliott
CLARICE 12	Zara Kesterton
PAULINE	Elizabeth Babatunde
	Marie Control
ENSEMBLE	
Kaleah Alexander, Anjy Alli, Iyesha Bhind	da, Isobel Marchant,
Lavyne Vincent, Katie Morgan-Williams,	, Hannah Banwell
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DOC	Daniel Alsoof
SHRANK	Sam Herman-Wilson
KRUPKE	George Fagg
GLAD HAND	Todd Kelly
SOLO VOICE	Max Sitter



## **DIRECTOR'S NOTES**



hen interviewed for Rolling Stone magazine, composer Leonard Bernstein hailed West Side Story

as an "impossible project". He commented that the requirements for the young performers involved were often simply too much, and the score and demands of the writing were beyond young performers. Despite this, the musical is one of the bestloved pieces of American theatre, and is regarded as a true masterpiece by people all over the world. Jerome Robbins' original choreography stunned Broadway audiences when the show opened in September 1957, and the on-stage performances received overwhelmingly positive reviews. Musical theatre had become rather stilted in previous years, and the Bernstein/Sondheim/Robbins combination seemed to have fixed the rut in which Broadway had found itself.

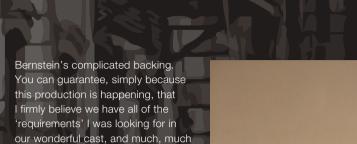
However, despite the phenomenal success of the production, and the seemingly all-conquering creative triumvirate, behind the scenes. Bernstein, Robbins and Sondheim simply didn't get on. All three were known for their flamboyant personalities, and they clashed on many occasions during the production and rehearsal process. Bernstein didn't like Sondheim's lyrics, Sondheim didn't like Bernstein's rhythms, and Robbins didn't like anything anyone else did! In fact, by the time the show opened on Broadway, none of the collaborators were talking to each other.



Robbins was often regarded as a real handful to work with, and for, with impossibly high standards in all of his direction and choreography; he was famously fired from the film production of West Side Story in 1960, before its completion. Despite having passed away in 1998, Robbins' choreography manual is still sent out with every performance license, for both amateurs and professionals, and there is a certain 'expectation' to use his 1950s-created dance moves. Although we have used some of the choreography Robbins originally came up with in our production, we felt, as a directorial team, some of the more balletic moves were somewhat outdated and didn't fit the sheer aggression of the gang members. After all, the show is about gang warfare, so we have made our fight scenes grittier, darker, bloodier, and, hopefully, more realistically shocking. However, we have kept the passionate and

frenetic moves that Robbins so stunningly pioneered in *America*, *Cool* and *Dance at the Gym*, as these energetic outbursts from the gang members and their girls have become part of what makes *West Side Story* great.

West Side Story is a challenging production. There are no two ways about it that Bernstein and Sondheim's iconic show is one of the most difficult scores to have ever been written, and, therefore, the decision to stage West Side Story should never be taken lightly. From a personal perspective, despite being what I consider to be the 'King of Musicals', I had always vowed to steer clear of staging this production unless I found the right voices for Tony and Maria, the appropriate ferocity for Bernardo and Riff, the required playfulness for Anita, and plenty of talented young people able to sing, act, and, most importantly, dance to the rhythm of



This show has it all, and I feel extremely proud of what our very talented cast members have achieved with their production. As we neared show-week, it became increasingly obvious that these young people had taken ownership of their characters, and the musical as a whole, fully immersing themselves in the issues dealt with throughout the play. As I took a step back and detached myself slightly, my pride grew immensely for what I consider to be the finest cast I have ever worked with. The emotional dynamics within West Side Story remain the main drive behind the hard-hitting message, and this cast has worked out how to draw out the impact of every line or dance move they deliver. This musical has always occupied a special place in my heart, for many different reasons, but this cast has made it even more special for me. I therefore hope that you enjoy the show, and appreciate the extraordinary amounts of work and rehearsal these young people have put into their production.

more.

It is a real privilege to have been part of this show, with this cast, at this school.

Mr Lloyd Beecham Director of Drama



# PLOT SYNOPSIS

The action takes place on the West Side of New York City during the last days of summer.

#### ACT ONE

Prologue:	The Months Before
	The Prologue shows the tension built up between two rival gangs in New
	York's Upper West Side, the Jets and the Sharks. The Jets are boys who
	were born in America, but have European roots; the Sharks are Puerto
	Ricans, who have immigrated to the US and are unwanted intruders.
5pm:	The Street
	Riff, the leader of the Jets, swears that he will chase the Sharks from 'their'
	territory. Riff informs his gang that he will challenge Bernardo, the Sharks'
	leader, to a fight for dominance at a dance taking place that evening.
5.30pm:	A Back Yard
	Riff asks Tony, his best friend and the co-founder of the Jets, to help him.
	Tony, who works at Doc's drugstore, agrees to help, even though he feels he
	has outgrown the gang and has bigger dreams.
6pm:	A Bridal Shop
	Anita, Bernardo's girlfriend, is sewing a dress for Maria to wear to the dance.
	Maria, who has only recently arrived from Puerto Rico, sees this dance as the
	beginning of her life in America. She, like Tony, is full of hope.
10pm:	The Gym
	In the tense atmosphere between the gangs at the dance, Tony and Maria
	meet for the first time: it is love at first sight. Bernardo notices this, angrily
	tears the two dancers apart, and makes it perfectly clear that they belong to
	enemy camps.
11pm:	A Back Alley
	After Tony finds Maria's parents' apartment without being noticed, he calls to
	her and she comes to the window. They promise to love each other forever,
	and plan to meet in the bridal shop the next day. Meanwhile, Anita and her
	friends meet on a rooftop, where they exchange conflicting views of their lives
	in New York.
Midnight:	The Drugstore
	The Sharks meet with the Jets. Tony suggests a fair fight, without any
	weapons, between the two best fighters from each group.



The	Next	Dav

5.30pm:	The Bridal Shop  Maria finds out about the fight from Anita. When Tony comes to the shop as planned, Anita leaves the lovers alone and they enact their imaginary
	wedding.
6pm:	The Neighborhood
	Everyone is preparing for The Rumble that night.
9pm:	Under the Highway
	The Jets and Sharks meet under a highway overpass in Manhattan for The Rumble.
ACT TWO	
9.15pm:	A Bedroom  Maria is with her friends, getting ready for her date with Tony, when Chino suddenly bursts into her room and tells her about the fight. Tony climbs through her window once Chino has left and tries to explain what happened. The lovers dream of a place where they might live peacefully without prejudice.
10pm:	Another Alley In a small alley, Krupke questions the Jets. The gang makes jokes about him and the police.
11.30pm:	The Bedroom  When Anita comes to see Maria, Tony leaves through the window. He agrees to meet with Maria at Doc's drugstore, so that they can escape together.  Anita finds out that Tony has been with Maria, but warns her that Chino is planning to kill Tony.
11.40pm:	The Drugstore The Jets keep Anita from seeing Tony, who is hiding in the basement, and their malicious tirade against Anita gets out of control. Humiliated and full of hate, she gives the Jets a false message.
11.50pm:	The Drugstore Doc relays Anita's message to Tony.
Midnight:	The Street  Tony wanders through the streets looking for Chino. He suddenly sees Maria

as she comes towards Doc's drugstore, as planned, and rushes towards her.

### MUSICAL NUMBERS

#### ACT ONE

#### SCENE ONE

- Prologue (Orchestra)
- Jet Song (Riff and Jets)

#### SCENE TWO

• Something's Coming (Tony)

#### SCENE THREE

• Dance at the Gym (Orchestra)

#### SCENE FOUR

• Maria (Tony)

#### SCENE FIVE

- Tonight (Maria and Tony)
- America (Anita, Rosalia and Shark Girls)

#### SCENE SIX

• Cool (Riff and Jets)

#### SCENE SEVEN

• One Hand, One Heart (Maria and Tony)

#### SCENE EIGHT

• Quintet (Jets, Sharks, Anita, Tony and Maria)

#### **ACT TWO**

#### SCENE ONE

- I Feel Pretty (Maria, Consuela, Rosalia and Francisca)
- Dream and Nightmare Sequence (The Company)

#### SCENE TWO

• Gee, Officer Krupke (Jets)

#### SCENE THREE

• A Boy Like That / I Have a Love (Anita and Maria)

#### SCENE FOUR

• Taunting Scene (Orchestra)

#### SCENE FIVE

• Finale (Maria, Tony and Company)





## INTRODUCING...



Geddy Stringer - Tony

Geddy is in the Upper Sixth Form, and, at the end of last year, was made Whitgift's School Captain. He was a member of the School's U15 rugby team which reached the Daily Mail semi-finals in 2011, and attended the Harlequins Rugby Academy, although eventually gave up the sport in favour of singing. Geddy is currently in his second year at the Royal Academy of Music's Junior Department, where he is studying Voice and Piano, At Whitaift, he has taken part in numerous musicals and plays, including: Oliver!, Carousel, Coram Boy, Macbeth, Skellig, The Ballad of Soloman Pavey, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Dr Faustus. He was also part of the highly-successful production of Bizet's Carmen. Most recently, Geddy received rave reviews playing the roles of Leo Bloom and Seymour Krelborn in Whitgift's outstanding productions of The Producers and Little Shop of Horrors respectively. He also played the Beast in Beauty and the Beast, and appeared as Peter in Jesus Christ Superstar. After West Side Story, Geddy will be taking up his unconditional offer from the University of Birmingham to read Music, with hopes of becoming a professional singer. Geddy is both proud and excited to be playing Tony as his 15th and final role on the Whitgift stage.



Talisa Tossell - Maria

Talisa is in the Upper Sixth Form at Old Palace of John Whitgift School, studying for A Levels in Psychology, Music, and Chemistry, Alonaside her schooling, she is also training to be a professional musical theatre performer at West End Masterclass, where she is taught how to sing, act and dance by industry professionals. Talisa also attends Southwark Playhouse's Young Company to further both her acting and ensemble skills. During the summer. Talisa collaborated with a small group of students from Whitgift and Old Palace School to stage a revised version of The Innocence. originally a Whitgift play, in which she played "Gila" in Harold Pinter's One For The Road. Since 2007, Talisa has been showcasing her musical talents around the world, at prestigious venues such as St. Mark's Basillica in Venice, La Madeline in Paris, and St. Paul's Cathedral in London, to name a few. When Talisa isn't performing, she helps others to hone their acting and musical theatre skills by running workshops with Tiny Planet Productions, during the summer. Talisa is the Head Chorister for Old Palace's elite chamber choir, and works alongside the music staff as the School's music prefect, helping to run music events.



Jessica Hinds - Anita

Jessica is an Upper Sixth Form student at Old Palace of John Whitgift School, and is currently studvina A Levels in Enalish Literature, Government & Politics, and History. Jessica has always participated and taken a keen interest in performing arts since the age of five, when she started taking ballet lessons. Throughout the years, she has achieved RADA Ballet grades, taken part in drama workshops at the BRIT school, performed alongside the cast of Mamma Mia! in the West End. at the Prince of Wales Theatre. and trained for eight years with the Italia Conti Performing Arts School, where she took classes in tap, musical theatre, jazz, singing and acting. In addition to this, Jessica has achieved excellent academic results in the performing arts field, gaining A\*s in her Drama GCSE and her Dance module in Physical Education. Last year, she made her debut on the Whitgift stage, playing Ursula in Much Ado About Nothing, and has contributed towards producing and performing many arts events at Old Palace. Jessica hopes to study Politics and International Relations at university next year, and is determined to continue performing through unions and societies.







Shooting of the film lasted for six months, with sound mixing and editing for seven.

The film ran in Paris for a grand total of 249 weeks, making it the longest-running film in French history.

The song One Hand, One Heart was written for the earlier musical Candide, but later discarded by Leonard Bernstein and revived for West Side Story.

Eliot Feld, who played Baby John, collapsed and ended up hospitalised with pneumonia during the demanding filming of *Cool*.

The lyrics to America were substantially changed for the film. There had been complaints that the Broadway version was too belittling to Puerto Ricans, in that the song mainly ridiculed Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans. The movie lyrics emphasise the racism and discrimination that Puerto Ricans were subjected to in America.

Throughout the movie, Natalie Wood wears a bracelet on her left wrist, not for any aesthetic reason, but because she had injured her wrist on the set of a previous movie, causing an unsightly bone protrusion. She wore the bracelet to hide her injury.

Audrey Hepburn was offered the role of Maria, but she turned it down because she was pregnant with Sean H. Ferrer at the time.

Robert Wise's original choice to play Tony was Elvis Presley.

The boys' jeans were dyed, re-dyed and 'distressed', using special elastic thread to allow for the severity of the choreography.

The interior sets were built six feet off the ground to allow for low-angle shooting with large 70mm cameras.

Director, Robert Wise, hired New York gang members to control crowds on location, and fought to shoot in New York City.

The script was originally intended to be a Catholic boy falling in love with a Jewish girl. The working title was East Side Story. However, after a boom of Puerto Rican immigration to New York in the late 1940s and 1950s, the story was changed.

Jerome Robbins worked Natalie Wood, who played Maria, 16 hours a day, until she begged to be fired from the film. She also wanted Richard Beymer, who played Tony, fired, complaining about his lack of singing and dancing chops (even though her song and dance skills were just as limited). Eventually, she figured out how to get along with both Robbins and Beymer, while the directors figured out how to shoot around her dance limitations.

Natalie Wood's singing voice was dubbed by Marni Nixon (who would do the same for Audrey Hepburn three years later in *My Fair Lady*). Wood herself didn't know about the dubbing, however, and had assumed her own singing voice would be used, at least for the lower-register parts. She didn't learn she'd be dubbed until the shoot was over.



# TECHNICAL CREW

Directors / Producers	Mr Lloyd Beecham Mr Sami Michael Mr William Collinson
Assistant Director	Mrs Faye Carter
Choreographer	Miss Jessica Hay
Additional Choreography	Ms Louisa McAlpine Mrs Alicia Palomo-Lopez
Fight Choreography	Mr Dan Peacefield
Musical Directors	Mr Philip Winter Mrs Rosanna Whitfield
Repetiteur	Mr William Church
Accent and Voice Coach	Mr Pablo Munoz
Properties and Costume	Miss Sarah Mynott Mrs Frances Simmons
Technical Director	Mr Peter Crook
Lighting	Raj Sukul
Sound	Mr David Jenkinson Avelina Joseph
Follow Spot	Charles Sladdin Camille Koosyial
Stage Manager	Paul Thomas
Deputy Stage Manager	Henry Parritt
Stage Crew	Euan Pringle Leon Bird Sophia Ahmed-Ashford Morgan Smith-Woodhams Ellie Gomez Rebecca Hughes
Costumes	Triple C Costumes
Make-up Team	Millie Pringle, Toke Debo- Aina, Ju'Varna Campbell, Riya Amin, Priyalisha Sivanathan, Imani Parker, Haleema Bashir, Callisto Singh, Lydia Oliveira
Set	Scenic Projects



#### Special thanks:

Mrs Sara Beecham, Mr Graham Maudsley, Mrs Gaynor Delger, Mr Peter Crook, Mr Gareth Hemmings, Mrs Carol Jewell, Mrs Jillian Mannion, Mr Thomas Biddle, Mrs Rebecca Parker, Mrs Jessica Michael, Mrs Janani Collinson, Mr Thomas Hayward, Mr Paul Dinnen, Mr Ben Prestney, Mrs Felicity Hewson, Mrs Tates Lisoire, Miss Amy Hinds, and The Headmaster, for his continued support.

# ORCHESTRA



Conductor	Mr Philip Winter
Violins	Dan-Iulian Druţac Hristo Dunev Ion Moşneaga Bona Wang Oriel Agranoff George Perkin Raghul Parthipan Nathanael Chan Dominic Oben Max Sitter Hei wai Lai Ambrose Regan Michael Morrison Harry Coomber
Cello	Alex Ciulin Alexander Lau Ashwin Gobiraj Alex Haseldine Miss Liz Parker
Double Bass	Conor Kearns Mr Chris Shaw
Flute and Piccolo	Grace Callaghan Emma Dinnage Jemma Upton
Clarinets and Saxophone	Harvey Agius Mr Sam Corkin Owen Evans Ms Maggie Gray Arman Uddin Mr Max Wellford
Oboe and Cor Anglais	Kamau Daniel
Bassoon	Zak Mohamed
Horns	Gideon Haffenden Miss Gillian Jones
Trumpet	Matt Day  James Dickinson

Mr Jim Marshall

Trombone	Will Hardman James Male Fred Sallabank
Timpani	Rohan Bahl
Percussion	Hristiyan Hristov Mr John Rockliffe
Drum Kit	Nick Wyatt
Piano / Celesta	Dilyan Todorov Atanas Yanchev
Electric Guitar / Spanish Guitar /	Mr Simon James

. Mandolin

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# www.whitgiftianassociation.co.uk



# WHITGIFTIAN ASSOCIATION

The Whitgiftian Association is a members' organisation welcoming all past pupils and current Sixth Formers of Whitgift School.

Join now, from just £30 per year at:-

# www.whitgiftianassociation.co.uk/join-us

to receive the benefits of membership, including...

\* discounts to social and reunion events \* discounts to West End musicals, London attractions and dinner-and-show packages \* regular discounts at the WA online Shop \* discounts with local restaurants and other partners \* Membership Card offering easy access to events and a discount on bar purchases and clubhouse letting fees at Whitgift Sports Club \* support with organising, publicising and arranging reunions and social gatherings \* receipt of WA publications including the bi-monthly "WA Newsletter", the annual "WA News" and bi-annual "Whitgift Life" \* notification of reunions \* membership of the Affiliated Societies (on payment of appropriate subscription) \* the rights to wear the colours and ties of the Association \* notice of and right to attend and vote at general meetings.



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