

SUMMER FACULTY/STUDENT RESEARCH PROGRAM

Mary Horn and Charles M. Joseph
Department of Music

The Public Intellectual: Leonard Bernstein's Charles Eliot Norton Lectures

5 Week Research Period – 2nd Summer Session

Submitted: February 23, 2010

Summer Faculty/Student Research Application

Applicants: Mary Horn and Charles M. Joseph

**TITLE: THE PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL: LEONARD BERNSTEIN'S CHARLES ELLIOT
NORTON LECTURES**

PRECIS:

Bernstein held Harvard's Charles Eliot Norton Chair of Poetry in 1973-74. Attempting to establish the "universality" of a natural musical order that transcended individual cultures, his six lectures proved particularly provocative. Moreover, constantly tormented with self-identity issues, Bernstein viewed the Norton Chair as a public platform to prove his abilities as an intellectual/educator, rather than merely a theater composer.

We will have access to the lectures' unpublished primary sources at The Library of Congress, including Bernstein's researching of influential models; drafts of manuscript notes; annotated typescripts; revisions; correspondence; and documentation of friends who helped prepare the lectures. In studying these heretofore-unexamined materials, we hope to track the thinking that led to Bernstein's powerful commentary, as well as advance our understanding of his broader interests as an educator and artist.

Summer Faculty/Student Research Program

Title: The Public Intellectual: Leonard Bernstein's Charles Eliot Norton Lectures

Applicants: Mary Horn and Charles M. Joseph

Question #4 Faculty Statement on Working Relationship with Ms. Horn

My working relationship with Ms. Horn began during her sophomore year when she was a student in one of the Department of Music's required theory courses. From the start, it was clear that she would not allow me to get away with anything in class. That is, if something was not clear, or if she needed a further explanation, she was not hesitant about speaking up and pressing me until she felt she understood the point. This is an admirable quality, and one that has continued to impress me as our work has continued together. Of course her coursework has been consistently excellent in terms of recorded grades. But more importantly, Mary has an unquenchable need simply "to know." Finally, it does not take much to interest Mary in an idea. She grasps the importance of a thought or a concept very quickly, and after that, it is almost a matter of simply watching her run with it.

To the point, Mary works wonderfully with little guidance. Once she understands the problem, she approaches it creatively and diligently. For example, she became interested in primary source materials about a year ago in one of my classes. We decided to work together on an Independent Study during this last fall. But in fact she was spending last summer in New York as an intern at Lincoln Center. We made the time to work together at an archive there, where she had her first taste of working with priceless manuscripts and correspondence. I was amazed at how quickly she was able to divide those materials that were informative from those that were not—an important skill, I believe, when working under time pressures at an archive. Her Independent Study last fall was amazingly thorough and insightful. Moreover it sparked her current interests in Bernstein, whereupon she traveled on her own to the Library of Congress last term for her first look at the Bernstein Collection—a scouting trip, in effect, where she became familiar with the holdings.

The next step, we hope, will come in the form of this summer research opportunity where she can now focus upon a specific, manageable topic, and see it through to fruition. At the same time, the study of the Norton Lectures may well become an important component of her work in my Senior Seminar next term, and Mary's projected thesis topic as well. We have worked closely together in planning a program of courses, independent studies, primary source examinations, and a thesis—all leading to her enrollment in a Ph.D. program in musicology upon her graduation from Skidmore. I have little doubt that the opportunities she is pursuing at Skidmore will lead to a productive career as a scholar and teacher. She has all the requisite skills and continues to develop them beautifully.



Charles M. Joseph
Department of Music

Summer Faculty/Student Research Program

Project Title: The Public Intellectual: Leonard Bernstein's Charles Eliot Norton Lectures
Application Question #5 - Student Statement on Working Relationship with Faculty Member

A collaborative summer project with Professor Charles Joseph will provide the groundwork for my developing senior project as well as complement previously completed primary source research. Moreover, our findings hold potential for graduate studies in musicology.

Professor Joseph and I have worked closely for the past two years. As my current advisor and professor in both music theory and musicology, Professor Joseph encourages me to question, examine, and delve deeply into my studies. Professor Joseph's teaching enables my independence as he does not simply supply 'answers' upon question. This does not invite struggle, rather, I am allowed to be creative, discursive, and can come to my own conclusions, while Professor Joseph remains ever-supportive and helpful throughout the problem-solving process. With his guidance, I am quickly becoming an efficient and effective researcher. My increasing knowledge and passion in music creates an inventive environment, challenging and provoking progressive ideas from both teacher and student.

During the summer of 2009, using personal funds, Professor Joseph and I visited the Museum of the City of New York to work with the George M. Cohan primary source collection. This experience fostered growth in my abilities to work with primary source materials, formulate scholarly questions, and draw conclusions based upon personal findings. Using summer research as a launching point, I completed an independent study with Professor Joseph last fall. My studies centered on Cohan and Bernstein—landmark composers of the twentieth century—and culminated in a lecture to Professor Joseph's Broadway Musical Seminar, MU 205. To supplement secondary source work, I traveled to Washington D.C. during the fall term to study the Leonard Bernstein Collection at The Library of Congress. This trip was funded by Skidmore College Student Opportunity Funds.

Our chosen research topic, Leonard Bernstein's Norton Lectures of 1973-74, serves both Professor Joseph's and my increasing interests. The lectures merit close examination and will inform our continued studies, as they are a landmark in Bernstein's personal life and public career. Primary source materials, to which we have secured access, are held at The Library of Congress and remain unexamined by other scholars. This provides an increased incentive to complete research.

Findings will contribute to my own senior project and provide the groundwork for future graduate-level studies in musicology. As this is my last summer before graduation, the research completed here will guide my future endeavors and encourage my continued research. Previous work with Professor Joseph has proven to be successful and illuminating, but collaborative research this summer will surely provide an unparalleled undergraduate academic experience.

Mary Horn
Class of 2011

Summer Faculty/Student Research Program
Title: Bernstein's Norton Lectures
Applicants: Mary Horn and Charles M. Joseph
Question #6 – Goals, Proposed Activities, Format

Our principal goal is to investigate those unexamined primary source materials that address Bernstein's Norton Lectures. While this is an ambitious goal, given the number of documents preserved, still, it is a manageable focus, especially since the Bernstein Collection is efficiently catalogued. We believe we will be able to study all pertinent materials. If through our study we can answer some of the recurrent questions about Bernstein's shaping of the lectures, as well as formulate a better understanding of his own goals in undertaking the lectures, we will be pleased.

As a subsidiary goal, we hope to outline broader questions about Bernstein as both an educator and an artist based upon what the archives reveal. Since Bernstein intended the Norton Lectures to be seen as a representation of his deepest beliefs about music, he spent considerable energy organizing and delivering the six talks. This was an important teaching moment for him, with a very diversely based audience. If we can gain some insight into his pedagogical approach, as well as learn more about him as a scholar/artist—even if only in a preliminary way—then we will have set the table for our subsequent inquiries.

We are aiming for a completed, presentable paper, which we can summarize and share, at least in an abbreviated form, to other summer collaborative teams. It is our hope to jointly present a paper on campus, perhaps for the official opening celebration of the new Zankel Music Center, or perhaps as part of a panel or recital dealing with Bernstein's music. Ms. Horn will present her work to my Senior Seminar on the life and music of Bernstein this fall. Depending upon the success of our research, we might consider submitting the paper for presentation to the New York Chapter of the American Musicological Society, which meets each fall. In one form or another, there will be a presentation of our research on and perhaps off campus. Ms. Horn is likely to enfold this research into her senior thesis, which we also expect to be presented to the Department next spring. Finally, Academic Festival seems to be a natural venue for a campus-wide audience.

Summer Faculty/Student Research Program
Title: Bernstein—The Norton Lectures
Applicants: Mary Horn and Charles M. Joseph
Question #7 **BUDGET PROJECTION**

Since Scribner Library has copies of the Norton Lectures and the DVD set, and CMJ has personal copies of other relevant readings, we anticipate no need for books or supplies. Inasmuch as our work is based largely upon an examination of primary source materials at The Library of Congress, our costs, which are substantial, are those of travel and housing. We project the following expenses:

Round trip travel to Washington, D.C. and return to Saratoga:

	Mary Horn	CMJ
Airfare (to/from BWI)*	250	250
Trains into D.C.	40	40
Lodging (225 @ night)**	2250 (10 nights)	1350 (6 nights)
Meals (40 per day)	<u>400</u>	<u>240</u>
	2940	1880

Total Combined Travel Costs: \$4,820

We are, of course, willing to use our summer awards of \$1,250 and \$1,000 respectively. Total of \$2,250. We are requesting an additional \$750 for travel in lieu of the purchase of supplies and equipment. This would leave a balance of \$1,820, which we understand would be our responsibility.

Total Anticipated Expenditures	4820
Summer stipends combined	-2250
Request for additional funding	<u>-750</u>
Balance –our responsibility	\$1,820

*Southwest Airlines estimate

**Capitol Hill Suites (near LC)

To: Faculty Development Committee
From: Mary Horn and Charles M. Joseph
February 24, 2010
Re: Application for Summer Faculty/Student Research Program
Question #8 – Complete Description of Project

The Public Intellectual: Leonard Bernstein's Charles Eliot Norton Lectures

Established in 1925, Harvard University's Charles Eliot Norton Chair in Poetry continues to attract the world's most distinguished scholars and creative artists. Each recipient delivers six lectures addressing matters of "poetry in the broadest sense." Of the Chair's fifty-five recipients, eleven have been musicians. Igor Stravinsky was the first in 1939—the same year Leonard Bernstein graduated from Harvard. For Bernstein, who held the Norton Chair in 1973-74, the appointment provided a welcome, even coveted public platform. He wished to be seen as a "cross disciplinarian" capable of moving easily from one line of scholarly inquiry to another. Following Bernstein's first Norton lecture, Harvard President Derek Bok remarked, "Bernstein seemed desperate to get something across, far beyond the musical terms of the lectureship he assumed." More than the Oscars, Tony Awards, Grammys, and countless other honors heaped upon him, Bernstein wanted to be viewed as a public intellectual whose voice would be heeded.

Why was this so important to an artist already considered a brand name for classical music in America? Flamboyant, telegenic, free spirited, Bernstein embraced his iconic rock star status. Attending a Jimi Hendrix concert one night then flying to Vienna within hours to conduct Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* typifies his whirlwind life and disparate interests. Bernstein refused to be pigeonholed as part of either the *glitterati* or the *literati*. He wanted both. His ego demanded both. But he paid a price; for underneath the swirl of his multifaceted life as a composer, conductor, pianist, author, and television personality, there was a self-admitted uneasiness. Issues of self-identity perpetually haunted him. Revealingly, when he was asked to record his occupation on the ledger at the MacDowell Colony and to describe what he did, he entered only a question mark.

The Norton Chair would define him as a person of erudition, he hoped, and it came at a propitious moment. Bernstein's matinee-idol image had become tarnished as he had edged out on several political limbs during the late '60s. Fundraising for the Black Panthers, composing an anti-Vietnam "Mass," and collaborating on a new Broadway Musical ridiculing the Nixon Whitehouse—such improprieties raised eyebrows. These and other public protests had become so offensive that his first Norton lecture in Cambridge was interrupted by a bomb threat (one of several aimed at Bernstein during those volatile years). With Bernstein's appointment, and for the first time in its history, the Norton Chair would reach far beyond Harvard Yard. Each lecture would be videotaped the very next day in Boston's WGBH studios

and telecast over PBS. Bernstein relished the chance both to repair his image and to demonstrate that he was more than the affable pied piper of the popular “Young People’s Concerts” broadcasts (1958-1972) wherein the jovial maestro explained everything from Stravinsky to The Beatles in an engaging but superficial way.

Now, with the Chair of Poetry as his bully pulpit, an emboldened Bernstein would expound a monumental explanation and defense of his beloved tonal music, whose harmonic grammar was as old as the 17th century. He would argue against tonality’s demise in the face of a contemporary atonality’s encroachment. His six lectures (full of “rash hypotheses” Bernstein admitted) emerged as an unapologetic assault on a school of young atonal composers and effete academics determined to portray tonal music as fallow and passé. Bernstein argued that tonality was born of a natural order so culturally unbound as to stand as a universal phenomenon—indeed, a universal metaphor for humankind’s search for the resolution of conflict. The composer set out to prove that tonality’s grammar existed at a structurally deep level—a transformative level that united all tonal repertoire from the cerebral music of Bach to the Latin-American music of *West Side Story*, given their shared tonal roots. Nor were these roots confined only to Western literature. Tonicity had global implications. Great music was great music around the world ... as long as it employed the tonal vocabulary. Bernstein’s agenda could not have been more transparent, more sweeping, more controversial, and more defiant. His remarks constituted an apologia of immense implications ranging from our perception of music as an individual art to broader issues of aesthetics. Consequently, Bernstein’s lectures today remain the topic of heated debate, although no one has actually traced the thinking and the process by which he created his arguments.

We see our challenge as disentangling the assumptions upon which Bernstein based his hypothesis, and addressing both the fictions and criticisms that have long surrounded these keystone lectures. Several initial questions will guide our study:

- (1) Who were Bernstein’s models in developing the lecture’s interdisciplinary themes? Noam Chomsky and Kenneth Clark appear to have been particularly influential. We know that Chomsky’s *Language and Mind* was Bernstein’s point of departure. Clark’s eloquent refutation of the abstractionist movement was absorbed whole by Bernstein in shaping his own rebuttal to atonality. Just what were these influences, and were there others?
- (2) How effective was Bernstein’s use of linguistic metaphors as overlays to the musical examples he used? Why did he feel compelled to adopt metaphors as a means of explanation? We know he considered “music a language of metaphor.” But was this adaptation necessary? Or did it offer a strategy of countering atonality by turning to an externally imposed means of explication, thus averting an internal/musical justification that

would have been more difficult to make. Were his metaphors forced or illuminating? What do the source materials reveal about Bernstein's approach to forging such connections?

- (3) Were the lectures intended primarily for the Harvard community or for television? We know Bernstein imported an entire crew to Cambridge, including television producers, editors, and videographers—all assisting him in carefully planning the script and actually staging the composer's on-camera delivery. The archival catalogue suggests the videotaped sessions consumed most of Bernstein's energy. Did his dual audiences lead to a compromise in content?
- (4) How did Bernstein map out the six lectures in mounting his overarching defense of tonality? Why were certain musical examples and linguistic metaphors chosen? Bernstein's arguments move from a dissection of language, beginning with his first lecture on phonology, to a second lecture on syntax, a third addressing semantics, a fourth addressing the joys of ambiguities in good music, and finally two lectures adulating his personal champions of the "right" kind of music. Did the composer have a coherent and methodological design in mind; and what might the archives reveal about such an evolution?
- (5) How much of the lectures' content was actually ghostwritten by Mary Ahern and Thomas Cothran, two of the composer's closest confidants? Ahern had worked with Bernstein on his *Omnibus* telecasts, and was respected as a reliable scriptwriter. Cothran exercised considerable influence over Bernstein. "His musical sensibilities and poetic insights fertilized my every idea," Bernstein declared. The archives suggest both may have assisted Bernstein more than we know.

The Bernstein Collection consists of 386 boxes of archival materials, 39 of them devoted to various aspects of the Norton Lectures. Each of us has worked separately with the Collection, and we both have established a working relationship with Dr. Mark Horowitz, the curator. Besides the Norton Lecture boxes, there are additional files, which include Bernstein's correspondence with several people believed to have assisted the composer in crafting the lectures. For example, there are 50 letters from Mary Ahern and Thomas Cothran. Our examination of these sources is founded upon this projected timetable and division of labor.

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| July 4-11 | Work in Saratoga, reading the six lectures and studying the recently released DVD set. Survey the Bernstein Collection catalogue in preparation for our study in D.C. Read the secondary sources, some of which are as recent as this winter. |
|-----------|---|

- July 12-17 Examination of primary source materials at LC. Documents are to be found in Boxes 116-138, which contain notes, drafts, revisions, outlines of Bernstein, Cothran, Ahern, and others. We will investigate research materials Bernstein studied, early scripts for the telecasts, topically related articles, and production miscellany. We will also examine Box 90 (folders 13-16), which address Bernstein's concept of "pronominalization," the basic concept of the Norton Lectures (according to Bernstein).
- July 18-22 Mary Horn will remain in D.C. these five additional days to follow-up on ancillary materials, such as correspondence and other documentation found beyond the specific boxes of the Norton Lectures. This will provide an opportunity for Ms. Horn to work independently, while Prof. Joseph returns to Saratoga to analyze the research accomplished thus far.
- July 23-
August 1 Debriefing in Saratoga. How do the materials studied on site relate to the issues we first identified?
- August 2-7 Conclusions, written summary of our work, preparation of our presentation, projection of further questions for later study.

Our research will be incorporated into our work in the fall semester and beyond. For Ms. Horn, a study of the Norton Lectures will inform her broader interests in Bernstein as an educator as she researches her senior thesis. For Professor Joseph, the Norton Lectures will become an integral part of his MU 363 Senior Seminar on Bernstein, where an emphasis is placed on methods of scholarly inquiry, and especially the use of primary source materials.