

Overture to *Candide*



Leonard Bernstein
Born: August 25, 1918
Died: October 14, 1990

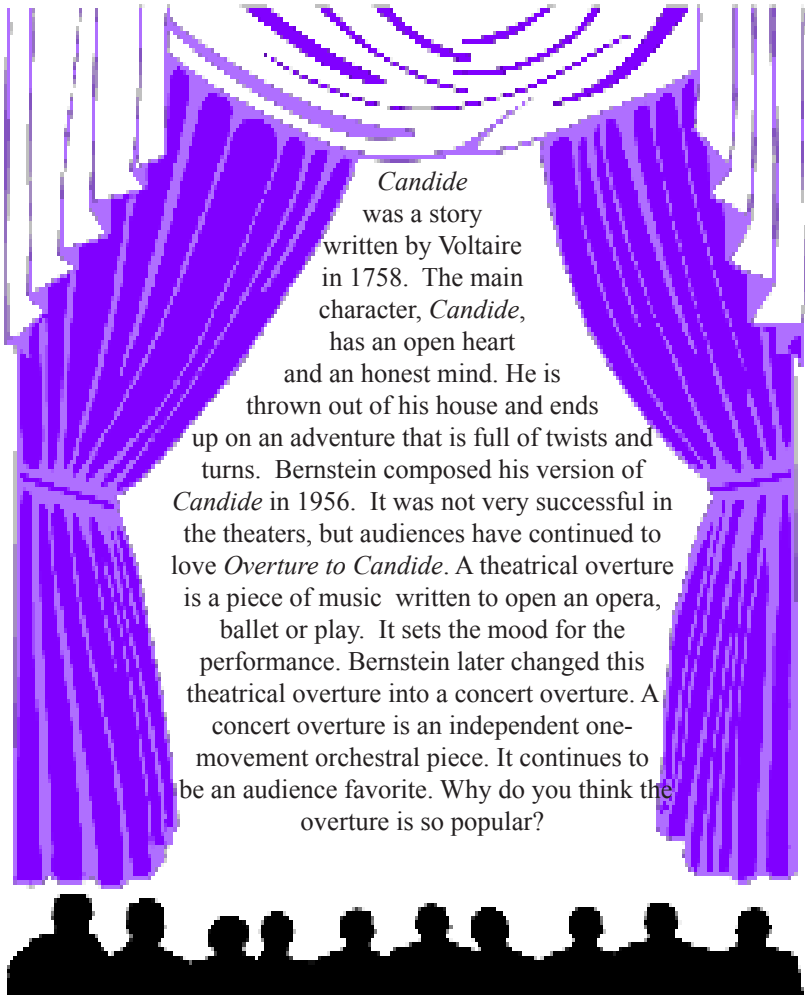
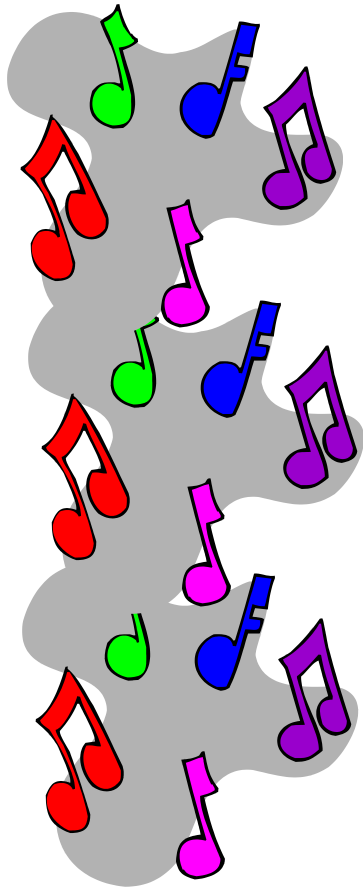
Leonard Bernstein was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts and grew up in the Boston area. His father sold wigs and beauty supplies, and wanted his oldest son to take over the business. But after Leonard—or Lenny, as all his friends called him—composed the class song for his high school graduation, he went on to Harvard and majored in music.

Leonard Bernstein had his big break when he was the 25 year-old assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic. At the last minute, he stepped in to conduct a concert in Carnegie Hall that was broadcast live over the radio all across America. The audience loved

him, and the event made front page headlines in the newspaper.

When Bernstein was eventually named music director of the New York Philharmonic, he was the first American to become permanent conductor of a major American orchestra. Leonard Bernstein used television, which was brand-new at the time, to bring classical music to a very wide audience through his *Young People's Concerts*.

Bernstein also loved to compose music theatre. His musicals include *On The Town*, *Wonderful Town* and *West Side Story*.

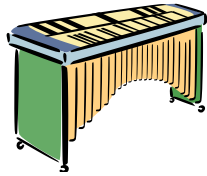


Candide was a story written by Voltaire in 1758. The main character, *Candide*, has an open heart and an honest mind. He is thrown out of his house and ends up on an adventure that is full of twists and turns. Bernstein composed his version of *Candide* in 1956. It was not very successful in the theaters, but audiences have continued to love *Overture to Candide*. A theatrical overture is a piece of music written to open an opera, ballet or play. It sets the mood for the performance. Bernstein later changed this theatrical overture into a concert overture. A concert overture is an independent one-movement orchestral piece. It continues to be an audience favorite. Why do you think the overture is so popular?

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Your Turn

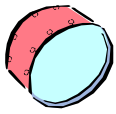
A composer chooses instruments as different “characters” in his/her music. If you were the composer, which instrument would you match up with each character? First, unscramble the name of the instruments on the left. Then, choose the instrument to fit your characters.



NEHOLOPXY



LTUFE



SABS RUDM



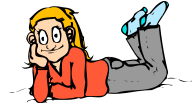
RPTTUME



PARH



OIVLNI



What's my Story?

Look at the scene to the right of this frame. Add in some characters and write a story about your picture. Fill in the ideas below and then write your story on a separate piece of paper. E-mail it to us at mail@classicsforkids.com. You could even write it as a short play or musical.

Main Characters _____

How do they look and act? _____

What happens to them? _____

How do they overcome their problem? _____

