



CONVOCATION HONORING

LEONARD BERNSTEIN

MELINA MERCOURI

OCTOBER 7, 1983

CONCERT HALL

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

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PROGRAM

PROCESSIONAL	Empire Brass Quintet In Residence
CALL TO ORDER	Arthur G. B. Metcalf Chairman of the Trustees of Boston University
GREETINGS	Robert C. Mayfield Provost of Boston University
CONFERRING OF HONORARY DEGREES	Robert C. Mayfield
REMARKS	Phyllis Curtin Dean, School for the Arts
	Melina Mercouri
	Leonard Bernstein
CLOSING	Arthur G. B. Metcalf
RECESSIONAL	Empire Brass Quintet

HONORARY DEGREE

LEONARD BERNSTEIN DOCTOR OF HUMANE LETTERS

IN NOVEMBER 1943, when Bruno Walter was indisposed and could not conduct the New York Philharmonic, you first ascended the podium at Carnegie Hall. Since that first astonishing performance, you have both led and symbolized this country's emergence as a musical world power. Moving easily from *Wunderkind* to laureate, you have been recognized as *the* American conductor—our first native son to lead a great American orchestra and our first to attain international artistic celebrity.

Your nickname is a byword for sprawling talent. Should a young musician today display ability in more than one area—should he write the odd art song while pursuing work as a rehearsal pianist—he is instantly dubbed, with misplaced hyperbole, “another Lenny.”

Your career as a conductor, filling concert halls from Los Angeles to Leningrad—and over the world between them in both directions—selling many millions of records and, as the merest side-effect, reviving not only Gustav Mahler but Charles Ives, would have been more than most men could dream of. But it has not been enough to fill even your waking hours. You have composed powerfully emotional concert music that overflows the line between the sacred and the profane—a “Kaddish” as a symphony, a “Mass” as a theatre piece.

Your work for Broadway has set a standard that must leave other composers lamenting their limitations as they ponder meeting the challenge you have set them. In *Wonderful Town*, you provided the perfect setting for the perfect tribute to New York as welcomer and nurturer of the nation's talent. In *West Side Story*, you took on the daunting task of adapting Shakespeare to his and our benefit, and bore away the laurels. In *Candide*, you provided us with a convincing speculation as to the sort of music Voltaire might have composed.

Thanks to television and your own instinctive response to the medium, you have had more pupils than all the music teachers in history combined. Your “Young People's Concerts” were for a generation of viewers a national resource, and the more recent broadcast of your Norton lectures at Harvard reminded us that you remain unchallenged as an interpreter and explainer of music. Your brilliant and limpid analyses of how music works have educated and extended the taste and understanding of succeeding generations. And thanks to your steadfast acceptance and development of Serge Koussevitzky's Tanglewood legacy, each summer still another cohort of young musicians writes home saying they've seen you, heard you, and actually played for you.

More than any other individual you have come to embody America's place in the world of music. Boston University is proud to confer upon you the degree Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*.

HONORARY DEGREE

MELINA MERCOURI DOCTOR OF HUMANE LETTERS

THE DAUGHTER and granddaughter of respected politicians and an intense patriot, you have survived a military coup and seven years of exile to emerge as Greece's highly visible and quotably vocal Minister of Culture and Science.

Life has a way of making ironic comments on art. In *Never on Sunday*, you played an independent entrepreneur on the streets of Piraeus—a district that you have represented in Parliament since 1977. In *Topkapi*, you were associated with a daring attempt to steal a diamond from a Turkish museum; today, as you work to reverse another celebrated theft, campaigning for the return of the Parthenon Marbles—you lead an even grander and more frontal assault on the British Museum. Meanwhile, the work on restoring the parts of the Parthenon that Lord Elgin left behind goes forward under your leadership, and, having abolished the censorship of films as one of your first acts in office, you campaign tirelessly for contemporary Greek art, from theatre to music. That part of the world that acknowledges its overwhelming debt to fifth-century Athens watches with admiration your energetic reassertion of Greek cultural greatness in our own age. As you now fulfill this task, you earlier led the way as an artist in *Phaedra*, where you illuminated a brilliant adaptation of the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, setting in a thoroughly modern context one of the greatest of ancient Greek plays. Your brilliant performance made accessible to the modern viewer the meaning of possession by the goddess.

Vergil, who, inspired by Greek models, is the foremost artist to have achieved greatness by transmuting the culture of Greece for his own time and place, described you for us in a laconic phrase: *Vera incessu patuit dea*: The undisputed goddess was seen in her step.

Boston University proudly confers upon you the degree Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*.