Snow Packet #3 Name:

Leonard Bernstein Class:

A presence on Broadway, in Hollywood, at Carnegie Hall and the New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein was a major force in twentieth century music. His exuberant and dramatic style caught the heart of America, bringing classical music to thousands of people from diverse backgrounds

Bernstein was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1918. His parents were first generation Jewish immigrants from Russia. Though he began learning the piano at age ten, his family hoped he would follow a more practical route, and sent him to the Boston Latin School. After graduating, he attended Harvard University, where he majored in music. His interest was in becoming a concert pianist, but upon graduating he began to seriously study orchestration at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

It was at the New York Philharmonic that Bernstein got his big break. Asked to fill in for an ailing guest conductor, Bernstein (then only twenty-five) conducted a difficult and energetic performance with only an evening’s preparation. Impressing all who came, Bernstein found himself on the cover of The New York Times — an instant celebrity. Within two years he was named the conductor of the New York City Symphony

In 1957, Bernstein returned to the New York Philharmonic, where he was to make his greatest contribution to the music world. The versatile musical genius that had made him a success on Broadway and in the classical concert halls of the world, found its true home at Lincoln Center. For the next eleven seasons, Bernstein would energize the Philharmonic and American classical music in a way no other director had done. Taking advantage of the recent technological advance of television, Bernstein presented classical music to a wider audience. For both children and adults, he created shows which were both entertaining and educational.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Bernstein concentrated on the solitary act of composing, while maintaining a presence in the music world. On April 19, 1990 Bernstein conducted a fiftieth anniversary concert commemorating his beginnings as a conductor at Tanglewood. Three months later he died. Until the very end of his life, Leonard Bernstein maintained the verve that had invigorated the American classical music world and brought thousands of listeners closer to the music he loved so much.

1. What instrument did Bernstein play?
2. What was his primary job after he turned 25?
3. What was the style of music that Bernstein brought to thousands of people?