

Discuss how Bernstein exploits contrasts of
orchestration, texture and pace in the score to 'On the waterfront'

Bernstein creates the contrasts within this piece 'on the waterfront (1954)' by using different musical compositional techniques, such as orchestration, texture and pace. This was taken from the film 'on the waterfront' starring Marlon Brando set in the New York docks, a story depicting crime and corruption he experiences there.

The piece varies in its orchestration, from using solo instruments, as at the start with the solo horn (bars 1-6) to using the whole orchestra, tutti from 78-88. The effect of this is the creation of variety within the piece. Bernstein's 'style' included a lot of brass and especially percussive writing, apparent from the use of timpani throughout the piece, bar 20 to 42 for example set the new speed for a percussive section with low piano chords and off beat rhythms for these 22 bars. This continues with the entry of a monophonic alto saxophone solo, until the introduction of the trumpets build up to the *sfz*, and a sudden rim shot brings in the rest of the orchestra playing unison rhythms. After the tutti at 78 the whole orchestra are playing unison rhythms but in dissonant 'dark' chords. In stark contrast to this is at bar 100 with long tied notes being played by most and the moving timp part underneath it. The marking then comes for flutter tonguing within the flute, oboe and trumpet parts, with the return of fast unison rhythms again. These continue to a sudden end.

The texture of the piece varies throughout, similar to the orchestration. The monophonic melody at the start opens the piece with an almost mysterious air, especially with the gradual build up of the instruments to the *presto barbaro* (fast and barbaric). From here on in the percussion is an integral part of the texture of the piece, playing almost continuously. At 78 the texture is very tight, with even though there is a full orchestra, there are no opposing rhythms, therefore although the clash of instruments is heard; the texture is quite thin, although the speed of the piece makes it difficult to hear this. The rhythms of this section gradually decrease, such as the difference between bars 84 and 85. This tails off suddenly, leaving the side drum alone, causing a sudden thin texture to be heard with sudden quavers from the other instruments, followed by the 5 bars at 100 of long notes, with a long pause to tumble into the next and final section, 2 hemi quavers and a demi quaver played at the beginning of every bar, with strings playing long tied notes underneath. This creates the sense of sudden loud but still with a audible under note, almost like pedal notes.

The pace of the piece differs throughout, although split into three main sections. This is the first, stated as *andante* (with dignity) at a crotchet at 60 (metronome marking). The *rall.* up to 20 is to contrast with the sudden increase in tempo with the *presto barbaro*, with a minim at 96 (metronome marking). This speed continues to 106 when the new marking of *Adagio*, crotchet being 76 (metronome marking) until the end. These changes in pace allow not only for the different textures and timbre a change in pace allows, but also to contrast each of the sections.

The use of these three compositional devices specifically means that contrast is achieved throughout the piece, helping it to reflect upon the story it was written for.

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