

Instrumentation

- Written in 1957 for a large show orchestra
- Requires players to 'double up' (play more than one instrument, e.g. clarinet in one song and saxophone in the next, then switch again in other songs).
- Includes woodwind, brass and strings
- Also uses a drum kit, 2 other percussionists, piano, acoustic guitar and electric guitar.
- The percussionists play timpani, glockenspiel, xylophone, police whistle, castanets, guiros and maracas amongst other instruments
- The latin-style percussion instruments (castanets, guiro, conga, maracas etc) represent the Puerto Rican gang
- Saxophones, guitar etc make reference to Jazz (the 'popular' music of the day) and represent the American gang
- This amounts to some 30 players.
- Strings sometimes play **tremolo** or **pizzicato**
- Brass players are sometimes **muted**
- Tony is sung by a **tenor** (a high male voice)

Make sure you can name at least 6 instruments used you can score up to 2 marks for naming 4 instruments, you don't need to know the all!

Piccolo, flute, oboe, cor anglais, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon, saxophone (soprano, alto, tenor, baritone), horns, trumpets, trombones, violins, cellos and bass, drum-kit, percussion, piano, celeste, and guitars (acoustic, electric and mandolin)

Purpose and Musical Style

- From a musical called *West Side Story*, which is loosely based on the story of Romeo and Juliet (Tony=Romeo) but is set in the ganglands of New York in the 1950s.
- It's about two rival gangs, the Jets (Americans) and the Sharks (Puerto Rican immigrants).
- It has two acts, with spoken dialogue between the songs. There are solos, duets, choruses and action songs. It also has a lot of numbers that are just danced to.
- It was quite different to other musicals at the time – it had a tragic ending, lots of dance scenes and examined social problems in America.
- This is a solo song. Other types of song used in this musical are duet, trio, quartet, quintet and chorus.



Something's Coming Leonard Bernstein

Structure

Starts with an intro

Then two main sections A and B with a varied repeat of each in the order: A B B1 A1

Ends with an outro/coda which fades into an instrumental (for a scene change)

It sounds unresolved at the end (like Tony's future) because it

Tonality/Harmony (i.e. chords used)

- D major throughout
- Jazz based harmony/dissonances
- Bi-tonal sections
- Uses extended (jazz) chords with added 7th/9th/11th
- Also conventional chords with added blue notes
- Sometimes chromatic
- Uses tritone /augmented 4th as part of chord (D major with

How is Tony's excitement reflected in the music?

- Fast tempo
- Push rhythms e.g. 'Could be...'
- Breathily singing style
- Syncopation and rests between the notes

Three musical points about this song that I like/dislike:

Justify your points and use musical vocabulary

Structure

See box left

Tonality & Harmony

See box left

Timbre and Texture (see left for instrumentation)

- **Melody and accompaniment**
- Some use of **imitation**

Melody & Pitch

- Blues scale/notes
- Use of tritone/augmented 4th in melody line
- Higher tessitura in second section than first (or vice versa)
- Syllabic
- Short two bar phrases
- Longer eight bar phrases ('around the corner')
- Contrasted lyrical sections with longer notes
- Melodic riffs used and ostinatos in many parts
- Word painting (eg cannon-balling down through the sky)

Dynamics

- Soft at opening, use of crescendo is important

Tempo & Rhythm

- Fast tempo reflects
- Syncopation and cross rhythms
- 'Push' rhythm anticipating the beat e.g. 'Could be...'
- Driving rhythms
- Accents
- Frequent use of short rhythmic riffs/ostinati
- Some use of straight rhythms too e.g. oom-pah/oom-cha bass sections
- In 3/4 but some layers feel like 6/8

Jazz influences

- Syncopation and push rhythms
- Blues notes
- Jazz chords i.e. 7ths, 9ths and 11ths added
- Use of saxophones/guitar/pizzicato bass/drumkit