

PRESS RELEASE

BB Promotion GmbH in association with Sundance Productions, Inc. NY presents a production of Michael Brenner

No. 1 'Greatest Musical of All Time'

The Times

WEST SIDE STORY

**The internationally celebrated production of West Side Story
on world tour:**

**Deutsches Theater Munich, 25.04. – 14.05.2017
Musical Dome Cologne, 09.01. – 14.01.2018**

Concept and choreography by Jerome Robbins

Book by Arthur Laurents

Music by Leonard Bernstein

Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Provocative finger snapping of street gangs, Puerto Rican girls' whirling skirts on New York City's flat roofs, derelict West Side back yards – just a few notes of Leonard Bernstein's world-famous score, featuring songs such as *Maria*, *Tonight*, *Somewhere*, *America* and *I Feel Pretty*, immediately evoke these images of **West Side Story**. At its 1957 Broadway premiere the musical redefined an entire genre both musically and in terms of dance. The genius of its four creators – Leonard Bernstein, Jerome Robbins, Arthur Laurents and Stephen Sondheim – produced a piece whose great artistic quality remains unquestioned to this day. The film version won ten Oscars and brought the masterwork to an audience of millions just a few years later. Today **West Side Story** stands unchallenged as the No. 1 of American musical theatre – daring, realistic, and as relevant as on the day of its premiere.

Experience Robbins' original choreography exclusively live on stage

At present Joey McKneely's award-winning staging of West Side Story, the only production in the world to currently feature Jerome Robbins' original choreography, is again on the road for a global tour. After many highly acclaimed performances within the European area, the 15 month lasting tour until January 2018 will visit international theatres and opera houses in Auckland, Bangkok, Bratislava, The Hague, Dubai, Dublin, Hong Kong, Istanbul, Manila, Muscat, Paris, Prague, Singapore, Vienna and Tokyo as well as selected concert halls in Germany.

One of the most successful and tightest stage shows of all time

When Leonard Bernstein, Jerome Robbins, Arthur Laurents and Stephen Sondheim came together to create what was to become **West Side Story**, they aimed to work on a level of complete equality. Each of them should be able to contribute their talent unreservedly – a plan that was as ambitious as it was promising. The result was awe-inspiring. The four achieved a unity of music, dance, book and lyrics that no one had ever realised before, and that has hardly been matched since. Bernstein wrote a complex score that combined influences from American jazz with classical and Latin American music to create a sublime work of art. Arthur Laurents, already a successful dramatist and scriptwriter for directors such as Alfred Hitchcock and Max Ophüls, delivered one of the shortest and at the same time tightest books in the entire genre. Jerome Robbins managed to make his choreography an integral part of the story. The youthful desires, fears, and swagger described so tersely and precisely in Arthur Laurent's script were translated into dance in a way that was as brilliant as it was timeless and authentic. With his choreography Jerome Robbins braved uncharted waters as much as Leonard Bernstein did with his music. Stephen Sondheim, then only an unknown young musician and lyricist who would later rise to great musical heights with works such as *Gypsy*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Into The Woods*, managed to condense the painful process of coming-of-age into concise and punchy song lyrics. Only in the unique interplay of all these elements does **West Side Story** reveal its true power.

Mambo, jazz, and a tragic love caught between the firing lines of enemy gangs

It's the final sweltering days of summer in Manhattan and the boys from the Upper West Side neighbourhood are on the prowl. Ready to explode at any moment they dance with their girls, the air vibrating with the rhythms of mambo, rock 'n' roll and jazz. They belong to two enemy street gangs ruling New York City's immigrant quarter – the "Jets" and the "Sharks" – and a clash is imminent. The "Jets", sons of previous immigrants to America, are fighting the new arrivals from Puerto Rico, the "Sharks", for domination of the streets in the area. Among them Tony, a "Jet", and Maria, sister to the leader of the enemy "Sharks".

The action takes place over no more than a few hours of two consecutive days and makes virtuosic use of the entire range of narrative means: Love story, action thriller and social study all at the same time, **West Side Story** tells the tale of a love between two young people whose happiness is destroyed by the hate of two enemy camps in New York City's urban jungle.

A lavish production of great topicality

Jerome Robbins' original choreography for **West Side Story** is recreated by director and choreographer Joey McKneely, a former pupil of Jerome Robbins. Musical supervisor is the renowned conductor Donald Chan, who studied under Bernstein himself, taking part in several master classes with the late maestro. A large rhythm section and a section of classical strings guarantee the rich, typically 'American', sound of Bernstein's compositions. Regarding its performers, the production is cast to equally exacting standards. Joey McKneely, who worked extremely closely with his artistic mentor on several projects including the six-month rehearsal period for *Jerome Robbins' Broadway* in 1989, has cast an

ensemble of young, professional performers for his staging who all match their young characters in age. The youthful, predominantly American cast perform as if they were living this unique work, which demands everything from them in terms of singing, dancing, and acting ability. All castings are taking place on Broadway in New York City, the only place to find performers with the necessary technical brilliance and energy. The lavish production with its 32 performers and over 70 backstage staff brings **West Side Story** back to the stage in all its topicality, of which it has lost nothing over the last 60 years.

Great musical theatre: award-winning and internationally celebrated

Joey McKneely's celebrated staging of **West Side Story** has played to sold-out houses all over the world, from London to Paris and Berlin, from Sydney to Tokyo. It was nominated for London's renowned theatre prize, the Laurence Olivier Award, and awarded two Theatregoers' Choice Awards in the British capital in 2009. The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* wrote about its run at the Théâtre du Châtelet: "Overwhelming visuals in gorgeous colours, a perfect musical realization, an enthralling production and a convincing ensemble both in their acting and their dancing [...] Astonishing precision in the dance scenes combined with explosive impact and a searing spirit. [...] A great piece of musical theatre in an amazing staging that literally tore the audience from its seats." London's *Evening Standard* rejoiced: "It's a fabulous, emotionally power-packed revival."

The pre-sale is on!

WEST SIDE STORY

April 25th to May 15th
Munich,
Deutsches Theater

January 09th to January 14th
Cologne,
Musical Dome

- Duration:** 145 Min. (incl. 20 min. intermission)
- Language:** English (with surtitles in German)
- Tickets:** from 29 to 89 EUR incl. ticket fee
50% discount for children and adolescents 16 years and under
- Ticket Hotlines:** 01806-101011 (0,20 €/ German landline call, German mobile max. 0,60 €/ min.)
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- Further information:** www.westsidestory.de; www.westsidestory.ch;
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