

introduction to the composer Leonard Bernstein and his iconic orchestral work West Side Story. As well as a specially composed song to aid learning, there are links to short YouTube clips to accompany the re-telling of the plot, an activity to explore themes and suggestions of topics that could be explored further in a PHSE setting.



(1918 -1990) was an American composer, conductor and pianist.

is piece of musical theatre with singers, dancers and an orchestra. The music mixes classical



in 1957 on Broadway in New York.

10 Oscars in 1961.

Leonard Bernstein later turned the music from West Side Story into an orchestral piece – without the singing or dancing. These were called the Symphonic Dances from West Side Story.



## Understanding the story

The story of West Side Story is based on William Shakespeare's play Romeo and Juliet.

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## The Rumble

The two rival gangs set up a 'rumble' to settle the question of who is in charge. They are going to make the challenge to each other at the neighborhood dance that evening. Tony and Maria meet at the dance. Tony used to be a Jet and is still best friends with the Jets' leader Riff. Maria is the sister of the leader of the Sharks - Bernado. At the dance, while the gangs get aggressive with each other, Tony sees Maria and they dance together and fall in love.



## Dance at the Gym

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbgt5byRQUs>

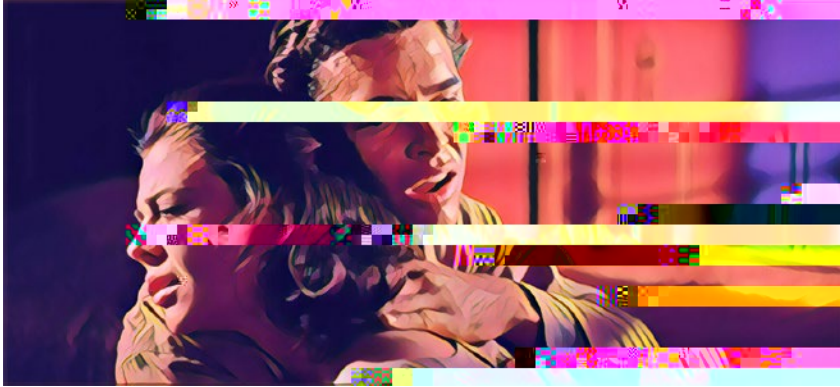


Tony learns the name of the girl he has just fallen in love with: Maria

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DyofVWtwObqY>

## Tony & Maria

The story of West Side Story is of how Tony and Maria try to be together despite coming from enemy gangs. However, it is a very sad story



This scene is where they're dreaming of running away together.

"There's a place for us"

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_SQ4ogstDVE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_SQ4ogstDVE)







Sam Chaplin's specially composed song, 'We're Gonna Dance' is full of jazz rhythms and harmonies like West Side Story. The song delves also into ideas & themes from West Side Story.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j10fGCTdOrk>





This BBC Ten Pieces resource explores Mambo from Symphonic Dances from West Side Story in more detail.



[CBBC - Ten Pieces - 'Mambo' from Symphonic Dances from 'West Side Story' by Leonard Bernstein](#)