

STEVEN LEBETKIN: COMPOSER, SPEAKER, THOUGHT LEADER

What makes great music *great*?

No one has dared to step into Leonard Bernstein's shoes to bring the joy of Western music through the eyes of a composer...until now. In his now famous Harvard Norton Lectures (1973) titled "The Unanswered Question" Leonard Bernstein communicated his ideas of the universality of musical language. The great achievement of the lectures is that through their breadth they make complex musical concepts accessible to a general audience.

Steven Lebetkin wants to bring a 21st century sensibility to the discussion with a new, electrifying lecture series that tells the story of why music speaks to us, getting to the mystery, magic, and heart of how we are hard wired for song.



Bernstein's enthusiasm for explaining what makes music tick and why it affects us led a generation to appreciate music in a way they had never dreamed they could. Steven Lebetkin has taken on Bernstein's life mission and adopted it as his own. Lebetkin seeks to fill that gap left by his loss. "What Makes Great Music *Great*" is the starting point of Lebetkin's mission to educate and invigorate a new generation by letting them in on the secret of great musical composition.

"Lebetkin cares deeply about helping the non-musician listener of music connect and understand...Is it surprising in a culture like ours where [music] is so central that [an appreciation of]... music is waning? Lebetkin intends to change this and blessed with an incredible musical gift he just might." --Irwin Kula, *The Wisdom Daily*

SPEAKER SERIES: WHAT MAKES GREAT MUSIC GREAT

Composers have made use of techniques, which Lebetkin calls the "secret sauce" from Bach to Beethoven to Bartok, to Elton John, Lennon/McCartney, now Adele, Fiona Appel, and other contemporary songwriters. The lecture series "What Makes Great Music *Great*" breaks down musical composition for the general public and entertainment industry professionals to educate and fashion an appreciation for music from classical to commercial markets. The series discusses the compositional techniques that do not appear in textbooks and materials in music schools throughout the world but are fundamental elements of music creation. This is where most composers fall short if they have not learned from those thoroughly familiar with these techniques. You can't find this elsewhere.

The episodes in the series include:

1. **Controlled repetition** - Once, Twice, Three times you're out. The art of repetition of notes, phrases, and other short musical gestures developed by Haydn and Mozart. These make or break techniques can be learned to enable non-musician adults to better understand why they enjoy certain pieces and why others miss the mark. For musicians, including composers, Lebetkin goes deeper and identifies where craft begins and ends, and where art and genius take over.
2. **Temporization** - is like a roadside rest on a long journey. This musical and compositional technique provides listeners with a brief break, almost like "active rest" in a difficult workout, so that the music continues without interruption but in a way that allows the listener to emotionally take in what they have heard before moving on to the next moment of musical interest. This technique will be identified for non-musicians, and explained more deeply in its application to trained musicians.
3. **The "Sounds" of Silence** - When the music stops, the beat goes on. It's all about heart. We all have a heart, which beats in pairs, so when you think the music has stopped, your beating heart takes over. Learn, for example why it's so difficult to dance to a waltz. Two legs, three beats. Do the math.
4. **Where is Sound? Why Schoenberg Lost His Footing** - Ever wonder why all humans hear music in much the same way? Music in the brain - the overtone series, the structural foundation of Western music, is hardwired and the brain creates its own sounds that may not appear in a music score. It's magic! It also rejects sound combinations that the brain is not wired for, hence where atonality fails.

5. **Sound Kernels** - The "real" new musical language of the last hundred years that works. After Richard Wagner stretched tonality to the breaking point, composers went into two directions in the race to provide listeners something to hold onto and prevent drowning in a meaningless sea of sound. Some composers reached for organized pitch structure (like twelve tone tonality and serialism), but others, like Bela Bartok created little worlds ("Mikrokosmos") that became the foundation for new integrated and completely accessible languages that only apply to a single musical work at a time.

The series began with a short lecture to the Kingston Festival of the Arts. To view a preview of Lebetkin's speaking series on **Controlled Repetition**, click on video link here: [What Makes Great Music Great?](#)

Who is the Audience?:

There are three types of audiences:

1. Consumers of all ages (non-musicians)
2. Musicians
 - Academic
 - Professional
3. Entertainment industry
 - Record Companies (executives and A&R)
 - Television, cable, and film executives
 - Producers and directors
 - Musical theater
 - Board members and investors (institutional, private equity, and high net worth)

The program can be presented together over a series of days, compressed for a short lecture, or one or more segments selected for emphasis. The series can be presented in one or more ways, depending on the audience and the time allowed:

- All day seminars
- Half day seminars
- Across several days for a series
- Workshops and corporate retreats
- Or, as a brief overall guest speaker and/or on a panel.

The Business Side of Composition

Imagine an executive with General Electric that ignored quality control in the manufacturing process? Entertainment executives spend money on music creation without course work on quality control of the music.

Steve Lebetkin is also a certified public accountant with thirty five years of corporate finance experience. He brings an unusual combination of high level artistry and a deep sensitivity of corporate stewardship, the fiduciary and fiscal responsibilities of corporate executives, investor accountability, and other important corporate perspectives. Decision making executives responsible for the deploying vast sums of money towards creative product can gain new perspectives and useful tools on how to:

- Select music
- Select composers to write music for projects
- Identify areas of weakness in music
- Suggest improvements in music
- Better communicated with composers to get the results you need.

BIO:

Known and admired in classical music circles for his innovative, captivating, compelling classical compositions and a sought after collaborator for commercial songs, jazz and scoring, Steven Lebetkin has developed an innovative and compelling approach to music composition. Now with his music on the verge of reaching a broader market, his consistent voice embraces an accessible style, whether in the form of commercial songs, symphonic, jazz, or more serious works.

Lebetkin was the youngest graduate in the history of Queens College, CUNY in the 1970s, with a Masters in Music Composition. He studied with Gabriel Fonrier, a premiere composer who trained the likes of Marvin Hamlisch, among other compositional masters. He also studied with Leo Kraft, Sol Berkowitz, Hugo Weisgall, George Perle, and others.

Lebetkin, along with lyricist and poet Jill Wright, is in the process of creating an original score and an album of contemporary parlour songs for an upcoming cable television series (to be announced in the near future) with an all-star award-winning cast and director that will air on a major cable television network.

Lebetkin has recently formed Ready Made Records, LLC with lyricist Jill Wright to produce and record artists in a market that lacks high quality creative material.

His more serious works in progress include Variations for Orchestra, Spoon River (an Opera/Oratorio based upon the anthology by Edgar Lee Masters), and several works for chamber groups. Click on the link to hear: [Symphonic Songs](#)

TESTIMONIALS:

"Steve and I have been friends and colleagues since our undergraduate years at Queens College. He is a brilliant musician and prolific composer who can write comfortably in many different musical styles and idioms. Steve is a craftsman with a keen grasp of the creative process, and he has the ability to articulate the language of music -- and how it works -- to his listeners."

Dr. Donald Pirone, Director of The Lawrence Eisman Center for Preparatory Studies in Music
Queens College, CUNY

"I recently reconnected with Steve to collaborate on some songs. He told me, at this point in his life, he's decided to devote all his time, energy and considerable talent entirely to his real love...music...how fortunate for us all. It's amazing how much he's accomplished thus far..in terms of composing, arranging, producing and networking. His musical acumen and sensibilities should work well in many genres...film, tv, pop and classical. With Steve's passion, commitment and skills, I don't think there's anything that will stop him from attaining his goals."

Hank Hoffman, Lyricist

"As the writer-creator of a new cable series, I've been working with Steve on the overall score and themes for the series as well as sound track songs that will serve as material created by one of the series regulars. Steve's knowledge of music, his ability to create on the spot and the fun we have along the way, makes working with Steve a joy and always a learning experience. He is a terrific collaborator and writes the most amazing music."

J. Dulin Jones, Writer/Producer, Storyteller Films

"I love working with Steve! He's knowledgeable, confident, talented and co-creates with sensitivity and respect. He reminds me of some of the greats like Johnny Mercer, Marvin Hamlisch and Bert Bacharach. Really good stuff. I'm looking forward to a long and fruitful songwriting collaboration with him. He's terrific!"

Jill Wright, Partner, Ready Made Records

For more information and to listen to more of Steven's music, visit www.stevenlebetkin.com