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Office of the Director

## Press Release

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### NASHVILLE NAMED HOME TO THE LEONARD BERNSTEIN CENTER

NASHVILLE, Tennessee. The home of the Grand Ole Opry and country music has been selected as the site for The Bernstein Center for Education through the Arts. The Center's mission is to sponsor educational arts-related projects and research, performance programs and training events for teachers from around the world, according to Dr. Scott Massey, president of the Nashville Institute for the Arts (NIA). The surprise for most of the art world is that the center will be based in Nashville, TN as a division of the NIA.

The reason for the unusual site selection is due to the three-year association between the late conductor and the NIA just before the maestro's death in October 1990.

"We knew that Lenny had been very impressed with what the NIA was doing, and that he and Scott Massey had been exchanging ideas," said Schuyler G. Chapin, trustee and executor of Bernstein's estate. "Last July, Alexander (Bernstein's son) and I decided to go to Nashville and see for ourselves what they were doing. We were stunned by the commitment to arts education we found in that city and in Tennessee more generally.

"We immediately understood why Lenny had been so committed to this. Instead of just talking about the arts...this was...where they were doing something.... We realized that

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their desire to establish a Bernstein Center was an interesting idea. (We decided) we might as well put the center where it's happening...."

The Bernstein Center will open this summer with a temporarily limited training session for teachers only from metropolitan Nashville schools. Once fully established the center will be open to international audiences.

"What will make the center different is that its programs are not self-serving," Dr. Massey said in a recent interview with the *New York Times*. "They're not about creating more audiences for the arts or turning out more oboe players, but about the impact of arts on the life of the mind."

"My father was deeply committed to the idea of the arts as being totally connected to the process of learning, and to the idea that you cannot study any particular subject in a vacuum," Alexander Bernstein said. "I know he was thrilled by what they were doing in Nashville. I think he would love the connection with country music."

The country music industry is responding very favorably to the news about the center.

"The Bernstein Center will be a significant addition to the musical and cultural life of Nashville," said Kitty Moon, president of the Country Music Association and Scene III.

"Nashville has a very varied and rich artistic life, with much more diversity than is often realized. The Bernstein Center will certainly be...an important new dimension for Nashville's international reputation as a world music center."

Mayor Phil Bredesen sees the Bernstein Center as having a major impact on the education and lives of school children within Nashville, the nation and beyond.

"Through the legacy of Leonard Bernstein, the young people of Nashville will have the opportunity to have their worlds expanded and lives enriched as few children anywhere have," Mayor Bredesen said. "From what we learn in Nashville schools about the power of the arts in learning, I trust that we will contribute significantly to educational reform across the country."

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