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BERNSTEIN'S "PETER PAN"

[Frank Gagliano](#)

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RE THE NEW REVIVAL OF LEONARD BERNSTEIN'S LITTLE KNOWN "PETER PAN": I saw the original Leonard Bernstein 1950 "Peter Pan" Broadway production (music and lyrics) and still can hear in my musical memory ear Boris Karloff (the original screen Frankenstein Monster), as Captain Hook, delightfully singing "*Drink Blood.*" And Jean Arthur ("*Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*"), with her unique smokey speaking voice, and great comic chops, and slight build — an amazing Peter — and very physical. I could have sworn Jean Arthur sang in that production; The New York Times story (see below) says otherwise.

I believe the "*Peter Pan*" production started out to be a full fledged musical but, for a variety of reasons, it ended up a play with music. Listening to the full score that includes songs dropped from the production, I was struck by how some of Bernstein's songs approached art song quality — "*Dream with Me.*" "*Who Am I.*" "*Build My House.*" — even "*Hook's Soliloquy.*" Very advanced for their day. Apparently, one of the reasons the songs were dropped was because the principles couldn't handle Bernstein's music.

Bernstein is one of my favorite Musical Theatre composers (especially his scores for "*Candide,*" "*West Side Story*" and "*Wonderful Town,*") — and he was a terrific lyricist, too. Delighted that this and other recent "Peter Pan" productions, are extending Bernstein's Musical Theatre legacy. (Photos below: Jean Arthur as Peter; Boris Karloff as Hook; Bernstein)

Here's the link to the today's New York Times story: <https://www.nytimes.com/.../leonard-bernstien-peter-pan-bard...>

