



West Side Story

In 1957, a new musical debuted on Broadway called *West Side Story*. Set in 1950s New York City, the musical reflected the social and cultural climate of Manhattan, which was experiencing a large increase in Latin-American immigration at that time. In the song "America," characters in the play compare their new lives in New York City with their former home in Puerto Rico.

"America"

Music by: Leonard Bernstein

Lyrics by: Stephen Sondheim

*Puerto Rico,
You lovely island
Island of tropical breezes
Always the pineapples growing,
Always the coffee blossoms blowing*

Puerto Rico
You ugly island
Island of tropic diseases
Always the hurricanes blowing
Always the population growing, and the money owing
And the babies crying, and the bullets flying
I like the island Manhattan
Smoke on your pipe and put that in

I like to be in America!
O.K. by me in America!
Everything free in America
For a small fee in America!

I like the city of San Juan...
I know a boat you can get on.

Hundreds of flowers in full bloom...
Hundreds of people in each room!

Automobile in America,
Chromium steel in America,
Wire-spoke wheel in America,
Very big deal in America!