

Benjamin Britten



Benjamin Britten Photo © Angus McBean

A survey of Benjamin Britten's Life and Works
Text © courtesy of the Britten-Pears Library

1913-1919

Edward Benjamin Britten was born in the East Suffolk town of Lowestoft in 1913 on 22 November, the feast of Saint Cecilia, patron saint of music. Apart from a few years away, first in London and then in the United States, he made Suffolk his home for most of his life. His father, Robert, was a dentist whose practice was situated on the lower floor of the family house at 21 Kirkley Cliff Road. His mother, Edith, was a keen amateur musician who fully encouraged the children's love of music. Britten was the youngest of four, the others being Robert, Barbara and Beth. He attended South Lodge Preparatory School, very near his home in Lowestoft and there developed what became an enduring love of sport, particularly tennis, swimming and cricket. He was a competent student showing particular skill in mathematics, but his passion was music. His first attempts at composing were made when he was five, although, as he later confessed: "it was the pattern on the paper which interested me and when I asked my mother to play [the music], her look of horror upset me considerably".

1920-1927

At the age of seven Britten started having piano lessons with a near neighbour, Miss Ethel Astle, a teacher at his pre-prep. school, and at the age of ten he began to learn the viola with Mrs Audrey Alston, a professional violist who encouraged her pupil to attend concerts whenever he could. It was at one such concert during the Norfolk and Norwich Triennial Festival that he heard Frank Bridge's orchestral poem *The Sea* and was, in his own words, 'knocked sideways'. Mrs Alston arranged a meeting with Bridge and soon afterwards, during the school holidays of 1927, Britten began composition lessons with him. Britten's creative output was prodigious. As a child he produced a great many works, some of which were of a very high standard. They include a symphony, various other orchestral pieces, works for chamber ensemble, suites for solo piano, drafts for Masses, a symphonic poem *Chaos and Cosmos* and many songs. All these works now form the extensive

collection of his juvenilia at the Britten-Pears Library.

1928-1933

In September 1928 Britten went as a boarder to Gresham's School at Holt in Norfolk. Although often homesick he continued to enjoy sport and to write, perform and listen to music at every opportunity, often reading scores in bed. From this time come his settings of poems by Walter de la Mare in *Tit for Tat*, Ford Madox Ford *The Song of the Women: A Wealden Trio*, Hilaire Belloc's *The Birds*, *Quatre Chansons Françaises* (Victor Hugo and Verlaine) and the anonymous 14th Century A Hymn to the Virgin.

At sixteen Britten won a scholarship to the Royal College of Music and so left Gresham's for London, where he shared a flat with his sister Beth. He studied composition with John Ireland, whom he admired but often found difficult to work with, and piano with the genial Arthur Benjamin. Although the training he received was a useful supplement to his work with Bridge he was frustrated by a perceived lack of interest in the kind of music that he wished to write. From these three years at the College come his *String Quartet in D major* (1931), the *Phantasy in F minor* for string quintet, the *Sinfonietta op.1* for chamber orchestra, *Phantasy op. 2* for oboe, violin, viola and cello (all 1932) and the choral variations for unaccompanied voices *A Boy was Born op.3* (1933).

1934-1936

A Boy was Born was broadcast by the BBC in February 1934, gaining Britten recognition in musical circles as a composer of so much promise that his *Phantasy op. 2* was chosen by the International Society for Contemporary Music for performance at their Festival in Florence that year. Although he was terminally ill, Britten's father urged his son to attend this festival, but died before Britten, summoned by telegram, could get back home. In October 1934 Britten and his mother travelled to Vienna. There he met the music editor Erwin Stein, who later came to England as a refugee and took a position in the music publishing house Boosey and Hawkes, where the director Ralph Hawkes had already signed Britten up as a composer. On his return to England Britten found employment with the General Post Office Film Unit. The Unit's series of documentary films, made by John Grierson, showed aspects of English life, particularly examining the world of industry and the people who worked within it, such as those who mined coal (*Coal Face*) or ensured the delivery of mail (*Night Mail*).

Here Britten collaborated with the poet W. H. Auden, who supplied the narrative for some of the films accompanied by Britten's music. Their working relationship extended beyond the G.P.O. When Britten was commissioned to write a work for the Norwich Festival in 1936 he used a text devised by Auden, *Our Hunting Fathers op.8.* for a symphonic song cycle for high voice and orchestra. Ostensibly about animals in their relationship to human beings, this speaks just as strongly against the inhumanity that both composer and poet saw in the emergence of Nazism.

Other compositions at this time reflected Britten's versatility. The Simple Symphony op.4 of 1934 comprised themes from some of his juvenilia, also in 1934 came the Suite for violin and piano op.6; the twelve songs of Friday Afternoons, op. 7 (1935) were written for Friday afternoon music at his brother's school, Clive House, Prestatyn, and in 1936 he composed the music for the feature film Love from a Stranger, based on a short story by Agatha Christie and starring Ann Harding and Basil Rathbone.

1937-1938

1937 began sadly for Britten. In January his sister Beth caught influenza, and infected her mother, who had been nursing her. Weakened by the illness, Mrs Britten died of a heart attack. On 27 April his friend, the writer Peter Burra, was killed in a plane crash. Burra had owned a small cottage at Bucklebury and it fell to Britten and one of Burra's closest friends, the young singer Peter Pears, to sort out his papers. The two men soon formed a strong friendship that grew into a life-long personal and artistic partnership.

The young composer had been devastated by his mother's death, but Edith Britten had left her son sufficient money to enable him to buy a disused windmill in the Suffolk village of Snape, on the river Alde. This was converted into a suitable residence by Beth Britten's future father-in-law, the architect Arthur Welford, and Britten moved in in 1938. The lower floor housed a drawing room with a grand piano, the upper floor a bedroom and balcony from which Britten could see the river and a long established maltings building. At the Old Mill he was host to many friends such as the composers Lennox Berkeley and Aaron Copland, the writers W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, as well as Peter Pears.

1939-1940

The enormous success of the Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge op.10, which were composed for the Boyd Neel Orchestra to perform at the 1937 Salzburg Festival, had increased Britten's national and international standing, but despite this Britten felt frustrated and disillusioned by the lack of musical perception in the English establishment. In 1939 he and Peter Pears followed Auden and Isherwood across the Atlantic, giving a number of concerts in Canada before moving south through the States, intending to reach Hollywood where there had been the tentative offer of a film commission. On the way Pears wrote to a German emigrée friend, Elizabeth Mayer, asking if they might visit. This led to the Mayers offering them a room in their own home, a small cottage in the grounds of the hospital run by Dr Mayer on Long Island. When war broke out in September 1939 Britten and Pears wanted to return to England, but were told they would be more valuable if they stayed in the States and increased sympathy for Britain there. After the USA entered the war they tried again for visas to return home, but had such difficulty in gaining these that their 'short stay' lasted until March 1942.

During this American period Britten wrote the Violin Concerto, op.15 which

was premiered in New York in 1940 by Antonio Brosa and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. Other instrumental works included Young Apollo, op.16, a tour-de-force for piano, string quartet and string orchestra, the Canadian Carnival op.19, both of 1939, and the Sinfonia da Requiem, op. 20 of 1940. This was composed in memory of his parents although commissioned to celebrate the 2,600 Anniversary of the Founding of the Japanese Empire. It was not, however performed at the Japanese celebrations, ostensibly because of its Christian content.

Late in 1940 Britten and Pears moved for a while into a house in Brooklyn Heights, New York City with a number other artistic figures, headed by W. H. Auden who then collaborated with Britten on the operetta Paul Bunyan, op. 17, based on the American folk tale of a giant lumberjack who founded the nation. Although it found great favour with its audiences at the time, this work was largely discarded by both Auden and Britten until, near the end of his life, Britten made a revised version which was staged at the Aldeburgh Festival in 1976.

1941-1944

Before leaving England in 1939 Britten had set a number of poems for high voice and orchestra by the French poet Arthur Rimbaud under the collective title Les Illuminations, op. 18. The first performances were given by the Swiss soprano Sophie Wyss, but Britten was beginning increasingly to write vocal music for Pears to perform, and in 1941 he recorded Les Illuminations in Canada with Pears taking the vocal part. The same year saw the composition of String Quartet No.1 in D, op.25, dedicated to Mrs Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, the benefactor and friend of Frank Bridge.

While in America Britten composed music for several distinguished soloists in addition to the Violin Concerto for Brosa. These were Scottish Ballad op.26 for the pianist duo Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson who gave its first performance on 28th November 1941 at the Music Hall, Cincinnati and Diversions, op.21 for Piano (Left Hand) and Orchestra commissioned by Paul Wittgenstein who gave the first performance with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra on the 16th January 1942; Britten began, but unfortunately never completed, a clarinet concerto for Benny Goodman which was eventually edited and orchestrated by Colin Matthews as the Movement for Clarinet and Orchestra premiered by Michael Collins at the Barbican Hall in March 1990.

In 1941, inspired by E. M. Forster's article in The Listener, 'George Crabbe: the Poet and the Man' and Crabbe's narrative poem The Borough, Britten began to consider the possibility of writing an opera based on the character of Peter Grimes, an idea that was given focus when he received a generous commission to write an opera from the conductor Serge Koussevitzky. It is the story of a fisherman who is suspected by his fellow townfolk of murdering his young apprentices. Grimes's only sources of consolation are the love offered to him by the school teacher Ellen Orford and the help of Captain Balstrode.

At last, in March 1942 the longed-for visas were obtained and Britten and Pears returned to England on the Swedish cargo ship Axel Johnson. It was a hazardous voyage as the ship's funnel caught fire and the rest of the convoy had to leave the Axel Johnson to the mercy of an Atlantic dominated by Nazi submarines. During the voyage Britten completed *A Ceremony of Carols*, op.28, a setting of ten ancient carol texts for treble voices and harp first performed on 5 December at Norwich Castle, and the *Hymn to St Cecilia*, op.27 for unaccompanied mixed voice chorus, with words by Auden. On their arrival in England Britten and Pears registered as conscientious objectors. Although exempt from military service, they were under obligation to support the war effort through the use of their musical abilities. This meant recital tours for the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) to many remote and sometimes dangerous places as well as Britten's composing activities and Pears's involvement as a singer with the Sadler's Wells opera company.

1945-1947

Peter Grimes, with a libretto supplied by Montagu Slater, was completed in February 1945 and premiered on 7 June at Sadler's Wells Theatre with Pears singing the title role and Joan Cross as Ellen Orford. The work heralded a renaissance in British opera, paving the way for a whole generation of composers, as well as firmly establishing the path that Britten himself would now follow as a composer. *Peter Grimes* soon established itself as the most important opera by an English composer since Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, written 250 years earlier. In the same year Britten was commissioned to write the music for a Ministry of Education film on the instruments of the orchestra. For this he wrote a set of variations and fugue based on Purcell's theme from the theatre music for *Abdelazar: The Moor's Revenge*. These he called *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, op.34.

Peter Grimes had proved a costly undertaking and Britten realised that for opera to be more readily produced and to succeed financially smaller forces must be used. He, John Piper and Eric Crozier now formed a chamber company, the English Opera Group. Two quite different works *The Rape of Lucretia*, op.37 (1946), which Britten wrote with the librettist Ronald Duncan, and *Albert Herring*, op.39 (1947) with a libretto by Eric Crozier, were premiered by the EOG at Glyndebourne.

Lucretia had its basis in Livy's *History of Rome* and the play *Le Viol de Lucrece* by André Obey. The opera retells the story of the wife of Collatinus, who kills herself after the Etruscan prince Tarquinius has raped her for a bet. The role of *Lucretia* was taken by the contralto Kathleen Ferrier and shared with Nancy Evans. *Herring* was adapted from a short story by Guy de Maupassant and re-set in the imaginary Suffolk village of Loxford to tell of a young man, dominated by his mother, who is crowned May King when it becomes clear that no girl in the village is sufficiently virtuous to be a May Queen. *Albert*, emancipated after some rum-laced lemonade, declares his

independence by going on a pub crawl.

1948-1950

It was during an EOG tour 'half-way between the Holland Festival and the Lucerne Festival' that Peter Pears suggested, 'Why not make our own Festival?' Such an event would encompass not only music but also poetry, drama, lectures and exhibitions of art and literature. By 1947 Britten had moved from the Old Mill at Snape to a house on the sea front in the nearby town of Aldeburgh. A few doors down from this house in Crabbe Street is the Jubilee Hall and this accommodated many of the concerts of this new venture. Other venues used over the years were Aldeburgh's Parish Church and Baptist chapel, and further afield the churches of Blythburgh, Orford and Framlingham. A week-long series of concerts, exhibitions and lectures was arranged and in June 1948 the first Aldeburgh Festival of Music and the Arts took place.

One of the works performed that year was Britten's new cantata *Saint Nicolas* op.42, written to celebrate the centenary of Lancing College, Pears's old school. This work is scored for tenor solo, chorus, semi-chorus, four boy singers and string orchestra, piano duet, percussion and organ. Eric Crozier wrote the text, which chronicles the life of the saint, and Britten invites the audience to join in the hymns 'All creatures that on earth do dwell' and 'God moves in a mysterious way' which occur respectively at the conclusion of each part of the Cantata.

The next year Britten and Crozier worked together on 'an Entertainment for Young People' called *Let's make an Opera*, part of which survives as the opera *The Little Sweep*, op.45. This is the story of Sam, who escapes from life as a child chimney-sweep through the resourcefulness of a group of children to whose house he is sent to work. It received its first performance at the 1949 Aldeburgh Festival.

1951-1953

Britten's last collaboration with Crozier came in 1951 when E. M. Forster joined them in writing a large-scale opera to mark the Festival of Britain. *Billy Budd*, op.50, based on the novella by Herman Melville, calls for a large cast of male singers and chorus and tells the story of an ill-fated young foretopman accused of mutiny, from the point of view of his Captain, Edward Vere. In 1960 the opera was revised, condensing the original four acts into two.

The coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 was the occasion that prompted Britten's next opera *Gloriana*, op.53. The Queen's cousin the Earl of Harewood had recently read Lytton Strachey's *Elizabeth and Essex* and suggested to Britten the story of Queen Elizabeth I's turbulent relationship with Robert Devereux as the basis for an opera.

The libretto was written by William Plomer who included in the text excerpts

from speeches made by Elizabeth I and the poem 'Happy were he' by the Earl of Essex. Despite its imaginative re-creation of 16th century court life on stage, the opera was not well received by its first audience of court dignitaries and politicians, though later audiences in that first season gave it the same wide acclaim as it received ten years later at its revival.

At the Leeds Festival of October 1953 Britten and Pears's recital included the premiere of a new song cycle *Winter Words* op.52, setting of poems by Thomas Hardy. These evoke the landscape and moods of a West Country winter – such as the burial of the village choirmaster and a scene between a manacled convict and a boy with a violin on a train station at night.

1954-1956

Britten returned to chamber opera in 1954 with an adaptation of Henry James's ghost story of a Governess who battles with two spirits (one, the former Governess, Miss Jessel, the other the recently deceased valet Peter Quint) for the souls of two children, *The Turn of the Screw*, op.54. The librettist was Myfanwy Piper, wife of the artist John Piper, who had designed many of the sets and costumes for the earlier operas. There are only seven singing parts (the tenor usually sings both the Prologue and the role of Quint) and the orchestra is small, but this brilliant piece of theatre fully succeeds in depicting the drama and suspense of James's original tale. The opera was first performed at the Teatro La Fenice, Venice, with David Hemmings as Miles, Pears as Quint and Jennifer Vyvyan as the Governess.

In 1955 Britten and Pears, with their friends the Prince and Princess of Hesse and the Rhine, toured the East, including a visit to the island of Bali where Britten was fascinated by the sound of the gamelan orchestra. The aural impact was profound and in 1956 partly inspired his three-act ballet *The Prince of the Pagodas*, op.57, choreographed by John Cranko. Although written in a western idiom, the high proportion of percussion instruments in the orchestra, and the way in which these are used, reveals the influence of the gamelan. The story concerns a princess who is courted by four kings but eventually falls in love with a young prince whom she has released from a spell.

1957-1960

The eastern tour also influenced a song cycle written in 1957 for Pears and the guitarist Julian Bream – a series of Chinese poems translated by Arthur Waley, *Songs from the Chinese*, op.58. In this same year Britten and Pears exchanged residences with the artist Mary Potter who, for a number of years had lived in *The Red House*, adjacent to the Aldeburgh golf course. Despite the purchase in 1970 of a cottage in the village of Horham, to which Britten went from time to time to compose in greater peace and quiet, *The Red House* was to be their home for the remainder of their lives.

Mediaeval drama and Shakespeare were the sources for Britten's next major vocal works. In 1958 he and Colin Graham adapted the *Chester Miracle Play*

Noyes' Fludde. This became op.59 – a work in which the orchestra includes recorders, and the percussion section is augmented by handbells and china mugs slung on strings. This, with the cast of Mr and Mrs Noye, their sons and their wives and a large contingent of animals and birds, allowed the involvement of many of the local schools and amateur music societies as well as professional musicians. As with *Saint Nicolas* the work includes hymns for audience participation: 'Lord Jesus think on me', 'Eternal Father, strong to save' and 'The spacious firmament on high'.

In 1959 Britten and Pears adapted the text of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the opera of that name, op. 64, cutting away a third of the original play and adding one line only: 'compelling thee to marry with Demetrius'. The orchestration evokes a dream-like, ethereal world, but the composer is also always aware that this is a comedy and so the music reflects the humour as well as the legendary background of Shakespeare's play. The character of Puck (a speaking role) is associated with a brisk trumpet voluntary.

1961-1969

There is a sharp contrast between the comic writing for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the setting of the *Missa pro Defunctis* which Britten entitled *War Requiem*, op.66. This was composed for the consecration of the rebuilt St Michael's Cathedral, Coventry, the original building having been almost totally destroyed during World War II. Britten incorporated into his setting of the Roman liturgy poems by the First World War poet, Wilfred Owen. The result is a work for large forces (soprano, tenor and baritone soloists, chorus, orchestra, chamber orchestra, boys' choir and organ) which resounds with the composer's own intense commitment to peace.

By the mid-1960s the Aldeburgh Festival had found a new, much larger, main concert venue in the Maltings which had been part of Britten's surroundings when he lived at Snape. In 1966 the building was leased, underwent a significant conversion into a concert hall and on 2 June 1967 was formally opened by the Queen at the beginning of the 20th Aldeburgh Festival. Two years later, on the first night of the 1969 Festival, a fire destroyed this beautiful building so that only the shell of the outer walls remained. Everyone rallied to help at this disaster. Concerts scheduled for the Maltings were resited in local churches and by the next June the hall had been rebuilt and was ready for the Queen to return to re-open it at the first concert of the 1970 Festival. Everyone rallied to help at this disaster. The scheduled concerts were, with one exception, re-sited in local Churches and by the next June the hall had been rebuilt and was ready for the Queen to return to re-open it at the first concert of the 1970 Festival.

Partly in response to the restrictions of space at Aldeburgh's Jubilee Hall which made opera performance difficult, Britten embarked in 1964 on an opera specifically for church performance. The creative influences here stem from his fascination with the mediaeval miracle plays and the Noh tradition which he had seen in Japan. Whilst there the composer had attended a

performance of Sumidigawa, the drama of a madwoman's search for her dead son. Britten and William Plomer adapted this story as *Curlew River*, op.71, the first of three Church 'Parables' which were all premiered in Orford Church. The second, *The Burning Fiery Furnace*, op.77 recounts the Biblical story of three Israelites, thrown into a furnace for their refusal to worship Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold but saved from death by God. The third (1968) retells Christ's parable *The Prodigal Son*, and was inspired in part by Britten's encountering Raphael's *The Return of the Prodigal* in the Hermitage. Plomer provided the texts for all three works. *The Prodigal Son* was dedicated to the composer Dmitri Shostakovich, who was later to dedicate his own *Fourteenth Symphony* to Britten.

Many musicians were among Britten's friends and numerous pieces were composed especially for them. In 1960, through selecting his intended soloists for the *War Requiem*, he made the acquaintance of the Russian cellist Mstislav Rostropovich and his wife, the soprano Galina Vishnevskaya. They became great friends and the song cycle to Pushkin texts, *The Poet's Echo*, op. 76 (1965) was composed for them both; for Rostropovich Britten also wrote the *Cello Sonata in C*, op.65, three suites for solo cello (op. 72, 1964; op.80, 1967; op.87, 1974) and the *Symphony for Cello and Orchestra*, op.68 (1963). Julian Bream, who accompanied Pears on both lute and guitar, was the dedicatee of the solo guitar piece *Nocturnal after John Dowland*, op.70 of 1963 and *Osian Ellis* of the *Suite for Harp*, op.83 (1969).

Other works composed during this prolific decade testify both to Britten's industry and his sense of responsibility as an artist in the international community. They include the *Cantata Misericordium* written for the Red Cross, *Voices Today* for the United Nations, the *Children's Crusade for Save the Children*, and his last major voice and piano cycle *Who are these Children?* with its central pacifist theme.

1970-1976

Never afraid of a new challenge, Britten accepted a commission from the BBC to compose his first opera to be written specifically for television. Working again with Myfanwy Piper, he adapted another Henry James story *Owen Wingrave*, op.85 (1970). This is the tale of a young man who renounces his military training to embrace pacifism, much to the horror of his family and his fiancée. Owen frees himself from his ancestors' military tradition but accepts the challenge to spend the night in the haunted room at his family seat of Paramore. In the morning he is found there, dead.

Next to Suffolk it may be said that Britten loved and felt most at home in Venice. For many years Thomas Mann's novella *Death in Venice* had intrigued him as a possible opera plot and in 1973 he set to work on this with Myfanwy Piper for a third and final time as his librettist.

There are only three principal solo voices in the opera: that of the novelist Aschenbach (tenor), the Traveller (baritone), who also sings the multiple roles

of Elderly Fop, Hotel Manager, Barber, Gondolier, Leader of the Players and the Voice of Dionysius, and a counter-tenor who provides the Voice of Apollo. There are a chorus, mimes and dancers, the chief solo dancers being Tadzio, the boy whom Aschenbach sees as incarnate perfection, and his mother, 'the lady of the pearls'. In the music for these the gamelan influence is again clearly heard. The opera was premiered at Snape Maltings on the 16th of June during the 1973 Aldeburgh Festival. Pears, the opera's dedicatee, sang the demanding role of Aschenbach but the composer was too frail to be present.

By 1973 Britten's health had deteriorated considerably. In the spring of that year he underwent an operation to replace a heart valve, but this was not completely successful. His career as accompanist and conductor ceased completely, but with constant medical supervision and the help of a devoted staff he was still able to compose. Final works include the *Suite on English Folk Tunes* op.90 *A time there was...* of 1974, an orchestral suite that takes its name from the final song of *Winter Words*, and the dramatic cantata *Phaedra*, written for Janet Baker. These received their first performances at the 1975 and 1976 Aldeburgh Festivals.

Britten had long been the recipient of numerous awards and honorary degrees. In 1976, after years of refusing a personal accolade he now at last accepted 'for music' an honour from the Queen, who on 12 June of that year created him a Life Peer, 'Baron Britten of Aldeburgh in the County of Suffolk'.

In September 1976 his *String Quartet No.3*, op.94, written in the autumn of 1975, was played to him privately by the Amadeus Quartet in the library at The Red House. Its first public performance was given in the Maltings at Snape a fortnight after Britten's death on 4 December, 1976.

Britten's funeral service was held at the Aldeburgh Parish Church on 7 December 1976. The service was led by the Lord Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, the Right Reverend Dr. Leslie Brown who had visited the composer shortly before his death. Dr. Brown caught the essence both of Britten's modesty and the general impact of his music on the world when he proclaimed in his address: 'Ben will like the sound of trumpets, though he will find it difficult to believe they are sounding for him'. The composer's friends Bob and Doris Ling, caretakers of the Maltings, paid their own tribute to the composer by lining his grave in the churchyard with rushes gathered from the riverbank at Snape.

Britten's music is undoubtedly his greatest lasting memorial, and his legacy continues also in the Aldeburgh Festival and the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme which he founded. A poignant visual memorial to the composer is to be found in the church at Aldeburgh. It is a stained glass window representing scenes from the three Church Parables which was designed by his friend John Piper and interpreted in glass by Patrick Reyntiens in 1979. The window's three images, the Father welcoming back his prodigal son, a

curlew descending toward the river, and the salvation of the three Israelites from the Burning Fiery Furnace reflect not only Britten's triumph as a musician but also his belief in the power of peace.

Vist <http://www.brittenpears.org/> for a fully illustrated and interactive version of this text.

OPERAS

Albert Herring op. 39

1947

2 hr 17 min

Comic opera in three acts

Text: Libretto by Eric Crozier, freely adapted from a short story of Guy de Maupassant (E,Bg,F,Fl,Fn,G,H,I,P,Sw)

2S,2M,A,2T,2Bar,B; Children's roles:Tr,2S

1(=picc,af),1.1(=bcl),1-1.0.0.0-perc(1);timp/SD/TD/BD/tgl/cyms/cast/
tamb/gong/bells/glsp/whip/wdbl-harp-pft(=conductor)-
strings(1.1.1.1.1)

9790060013881 **Libretto**

9790202519301 **Libretto (German)**

9790060013850 **Study Score (hardback) - Hawkes Pocket Score 854**

9790060013867 **(Vocal Score)**

World Premiere: 20 Jun 1947

Glyndebourne, United Kingdom

Frederick Ashton, director; English Opera Group

Conductor: Benjamin Britten

The Beggar's Opera op. 43

1948

1 hr 48 min

Ballad-Opera by John Gay (1728), realized from the original airs by Benjamin Britten

Text: Text by John Gay (E,F,G)

S,2M,T(or Bar),T(or speaker),Bar,B,speaker; chorus

1(=picc),1(=corA),1.1-1.0.0.0-perc(1);timp/susp.cym/SD/TD/BD/tamb/
tgl/gong/wdbl-harp-strings (1.1.1.1.1)

9790060030734 **(Vocal Score)**

9790051933990 **Voice, Piano**

9790060096877 **Study Score (hardback) - Hawkes Pocket Score 1276**

World Premiere: 24 May 1948

Arts Theatre, Cambridge, United Kingdom

Tyrone Guthrie, director; English Opera Group

Conductor: Benjamin Britten

Billy Budd (original 4-Act version) op. 50

1951

2 hr 42 min

Opera in four acts

Text: Libretto by E M Forster and Eric Crozier, adapted from the story by Herman Melville (E,G,I)

Major roles: T,Bar,B; minor roles: 4T,7Bar,BBar,2B;

children's roles: 4Tr,boy speaker,boy actors; men's chorus

4(II,III,IV=picc).2.corA.3(II=Ebcl/bcl,III=bcl).asax.2.dbn-

4.4(III in D).3.1-timp(3).perc(6):xyl/glsp/tgl/wdbl/tamb/SD/TD/BD/

whip/cyms/small gong/4drums(on-stage)-harp-strings

World Premiere: 01 Dec 1951

Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London, United Kingdom

Basil Coleman, director; Royal Opera Covent Garden

Conductor: Benjamin Britten

Billy Budd (revised 2-Act version) op. 50

1951, rev.1960

2 hr 38 min

Opera in two acts

Text: Libretto by E M Forster and Eric Crozier, adapted from the story by Herman Melville (E,G,I)

Major roles: T,Bar,B; minor roles: 4T,7Bar,BBar,2B;

children's roles: 4Tr,boy speaker,boy actors; men's chorus

4(II,III,IV=picc).2.corA.3(II=Ebcl/bcl,III=bcl).asax.2.dbn-

4.4(III in D).3.1-timp(3).perc(6):xyl/glsp/tgl/wdbl/tamb/SD/TD/BD/

whip/cyms/small gong/4drums(on-stage)-harp-strings

9790060013973 **Libretto**

9790060013966 **(Vocal Score)**

9790060065545 **Study Score (hardback) - Hawkes Pocket Score 962**

World Premiere: 01 Dec 1951

Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London, United Kingdom

Basil Coleman, director; Royal Opera Covent Garden

Conductor: Benjamin Britten

Dido and Aeneas

Henry Purcell, arranged by Benjamin Britten

1689

50 min

Opera in three acts, edited by Benjamin Britten and Imogen Holst (1951, rev. 1958-59)

Text: Libretto by Nahum Tate (E,G)

4S,S(orT),3M,T(orBar); chorus
strings and continuo

9790060021442 **(Vocal Score) (English, German)**

9790060021435 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 728**

World premiere of version: 01 May 1951

Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, London, United Kingdom

Joan Cross, director; English Opera Group

Conductor: Benjamin Britten

Gloriana op. 53

1953, rev.1966

2 hr 28 min

Opera in three acts

Text: Libretto by William Plomer after Lytton Strachey's 'Elizabeth and Essex' (E,G)

Major roles: 2S,M,T,3Bar,B;

minor roles: S,M,2T,Bar,2B,mimes; chorus; ballet

3(II,III=picc).2.corA.2.bcl.2.dbn-4.3.3.1-timp.perc(4);glsp/t.bells/

gong/SD/TD/BD/cyms/whip/wdbl/tamb/tgl-harp-strings

stage band: historical instruments

9790060014420 **Libretto**

9790060074578 **Study Score (hardback) - Hawkes Pocket Score 1118**

9790060014413 **(Vocal Score)**

World Premiere: 08 Jun 1953

Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London, United Kingdom

Basil Coleman, director / John Cranko, choreographer; Royal Opera, Covent Garden

Conductor: John Pritchard

Let's Make an Opera op. 45

1949

2 hr 10 min

An Entertainment for Young People

Text: Libretto by Eric Crozier (E,F,G,I)

Adult roles:2S,A,T,B; children's roles:4Tr,2S; audience participation
perc(1):timp/BD/SD/gong/cyms/tgl/cast/lge & sm wdbl-pft(4hands)-solo string quintet
(also arranged for piano duet with or without percussion)

The first two acts are in the form of a play illustrating the preparation and rehearsal of 'The Little Sweep', the opera which is performed in the third act.

Alternative play text: 'The Climbing Boy' by Paul Johnson

World Premiere: 14 Jun 1949

Jubilee Hall, Aldeburgh, United Kingdom

Basil Coleman and Stuart Burge, director; English Opera Group

Conductor: Norman Del Mar

The Little Sweep op. 45

1949

45 min

The opera from 'Let's make an Opera', an entertainment for young people

Text: Libretto by Eric Crozier (E,Bg,Cz,F,Fn,G,I,Tk). Additional audience song
translations available (Dn,N,Sw)

Adult roles:2S,A,T,B; children's roles:4Tr,2S; audience participation
perc(1):timp/BD/SD/gong/cyms/tgl/cast/lg & sm wdbl-pft(4hands)-solo string quartet
(also arranged for piano duet with or without percussion)

This work can be performed with the introductory play 'Let's Make An Opera' - see
separate entry
for details.

9790202519226 **Unison (German)**

9790060014611 **(Vocal Score)**

9790060014628 **Unison**

9790060014604 **(Full score)**

9790060014635 **Libretto (English)**

World Premiere: 14 Jun 1949

Jubilee Hall, Aldeburgh, United Kingdom

Basil Coleman and Stuart Burge, director; English Opera Group

Conductor: Norman Del Mar

A Midsummer Night's Dream op. 64

1960

2 hr 24 min

Opera in three acts

Text: Libretto adapted from Shakespeare by Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears (E,Cz,F,G,H,I,P,Sc,Sw)

colS,S,M,A,CT/A,3T,2Bar,BBar,3B,acrobat speaking role;
children's roles: 4Tr,chorus
2(=picc).1(=corA).2.1-2.0.Dtpt.1.0-perc(2):tgl/cyms/tamb/gong/2wdbl/
vib/glsp/xyl/tamburo/SD/TD/BD/timp/2bells-2harps-hpd(=cel)-
strings (min 4.2.2.2.2)-Stage band:sopranino recorders/cyms/2wdbl

9790202519318 **Libretto (German)**

9790060014666 **Study Score (hardback) - Hawkes Pocket Score 734**

9790060014673 **(Vocal Score) (English, German)**

9790060014680 **Libretto**

World Premiere: 11 Jun 1960

Jubilee Hall, Aldeburgh, United Kingdom
John Cranko, director; Aldeburgh Festival
Conductor: Benjamin Britten

Noye's Fludde op. 59

1957

50 min

The Chester Miracle Play set to music by Britten, for adults' and children's voices, children's chorus, chamber ensemble and children's orchestra

Text: The text is from 'English Miracle Plays, Moralities and Interludes' (E,F,G,I,Pt,S)

A,BBar,speaker; children's roles: 3Tr,3S,chorus
professional orchestra:treble recorder-pft(4hands)-org-timp-
string quintet; amateur/children's orchestra: recorder band-bugles-
perc.band-bells-strings

9790060014826 **Hymn Sheet (English)**

9790060014796 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 761**

9790060014802 **(Vocal Score) (English, German)**

9790060116513 **Hymn Sheet (German)**

9790060014789 **(Full score)**

9790060014819 **(Choral Score)**

9790060837401 **(Choral Score) (English, German)**

9790060836640 **Book**

World Premiere: 18 Jun 1958

Orford Church, Aldeburgh Festival, United Kingdom
Colin Graham, director; Aldeburgh Festival
Conductor: Charles Mackerras

Peter Grimes op. 33

1945

2 hr 27 min

Opera in three acts and a prologue

Text: Libretto by Montagu Slater, derived from a poem by George Crabbe (E,Bg,Cz,Dn,F,Fl,Fn,G,H,I,J,P,Sc)

Major roles: S,A,T,Bar; minor roles: 2S,M,2T,Bar,2B,2mimes; chorus
2(=picc).2(II=corA).2(II=EbcI).2.dbn-4.2.Dtpt.3.1-timp.perc(2):SD/TD/
BD/tamb/tgl/cyms/gong/whip/xyl/rattle-cel-harp-strings
Off-stage:organ-bells-tuba*
Dance band on-stage*:2cl-perc:cym/SD/BD-pft(ad lib)-vln.db
(*taken from the orchestra)

9790060014949 **Libretto**

9790060014925 **Study Score (hardback) - Hawkes Pocket Score 749**

9790060014932 **(Vocal Score)**

9790060014864 **SATB**

World Premiere: 07 Jun 1945

Sadler's Wells, London, United Kingdom
Eric Crozier, director; Sadler's Wells Opera
Conductor: Reginald Goodall

The Rape of Lucretia op. 37

1946, rev.1947

1 hr 47 min

Opera in two acts

Text: Libretto by Ronald Duncan, after the play by André Obey (E,Cz,Fi,G,I,S,Sc)

2S,M,A,T,2Bar,B
1(=picc,afI).1(=corA).1(=bcI).1-1.0.0.0-perc(1):timp/susp.cym/gong/
BD/TD/SD/tgl/whip/tamb-harp-pft(=conductor)-strings (1.1.1.1.1)

9790060015069 **Study Score (hardback) - Hawkes Pocket Score 656**

9790060015083 **Libretto**

9790060015076 **(Vocal Score) (English, German)**

World Premiere: 12 Jul 1946

Glyndebourne, United Kingdom
Eric Crozier, director; Glyndebourne Festival Opera
Conductor: Ernest Ansermet

The Turn of the Screw op. 54

1954

1 hr 41 min

Opera in a prologue and two acts

Text: Libretto by Myfanwy Piper, after a story by Henry James (E,F,Fn,G,I)

Tr,3S,S(orM),2T

1(=picc.af).1(=corA).1(=bcl).1-1.0.0.0-perc(1):4timp/BD/SD/TD/tom-t/
gong/cyms/tgl/wdbl/glsp/t.bells-harp-pft(=cel)-strings(1.1.1.1.1)

9790060015496 **Study Score (hardback) - Hawkes Pocket Score 784**

9790060015502 **(Vocal Score) (English, German)**

9790060015519 **Libretto**

World Premiere: 14 Sep 1954

Teatro La Fenice, Venice, Italy

Basil Coleman, director; English Opera Group

Conductor: Benjamin Britten

BALLETS

The Prince of the Pagodas op. 57

1956

1 hr 59 min

Ballet in three acts

3(II,III=picc).3(II,III=corA).2.Ebcl.asax.3(III=dbn)-4.3.3.1-
timp.perc(7):gong/xyl/native dr/picc.timp/tom-t/susp.cym/tam-t/tgl/
cast/wdbl/BD/SD/tamb/TD-harp-pft(4hands)-cel-stings

9790060071294 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 1115**

FULL ORCHESTRA

Canadian Carnival op. 19

(Kermesse Canadienne)

1939

14 min

for orchestra

2(II=picc).2(II=corA).2.2-4.3(2).3.1-timp.perc(2):xyl/sm susp.cym/lg
susp.cym/SD/BD-harp-strings

9790060014000 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 953**

Gloriana

The Courtly Dances

1953

10 min

2.2.2.2-4.2.3.1-timp.perc(3):SD/TD/BD/cyms/tamb/tgl-strings

This title is available for sale in the <a
href="http://www.boosey.com/shop/prod/Britten-Benjamin-Orchestral-Anthology-volume
-1-Full-Score-Masterworks-series/598721"> Benjamin Britten Orchestral Anthology
(Volume 1), ISMN 9790060106064

9790051656622 **Symphonic Band (full score)**

9790051656615 **Symphonic Band (score & parts)**

9790060046599 **Hawkes School Series 95 (score & parts)**

Gloriana op. 53

Symphonic Suite

1953

26 min

2.picc.2.corA.2.bcl.2.dbn-4.3.3.1-timp.perc(4):gong/cyms/BD/SD/tamb/TD-harp-strings-t
enor(oboe)solo

Matinées musicales op. 24

1941

13 min

Second Suite of Five Movements from Rossini

2(II=picc).2.2.2-4(2).2.3.1(0)-timp.perc(2):cyms/tgl/wdbl/BD/SD/tamb/
TD-harp(pft)-cel(ad lib or pft)-strings

This title is available for sale in the <a
href="http://www.boosey.com/shop/prod/Britten-Benjamin-Orchestral-Anthology-volume
-1-Full-Score-Masterworks-series/598721"> Benjamin Britten Orchestral Anthology
(Volume 1), ISMN 9790060106064

9790060022883 **(Full score)**

9790060022890 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 778**

Mont Juic op. 12

1937

12 min

Suite of Catalan Dances (with Lennox Berkeley)

2(II=picc).2.2.asax(ad lib).tsax(ad lib).2(II=dbn)
-4.2.3.1-perc(3):glsp/xyl/cyms/tam-t/gI/BD/SD/
tamb/TD-harp-strings

9790060014710 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 951**

Peter Grimes op. 33

Four Sea Interludes

1945

17 min

2(=picc).2.2(II=Eb).2.dbn-4.3.3.1-timp.perc(2):gong/t.bells/xyl/
cyms/BD/SD/tamb-harp-strings

This title is available for sale in the <a
href="http://www.boosey.com/shop/prod/Britten-Benjamin-Orchestral-Anthology-volume
-2-Full-Score-Masterworks-series/601996"> Benjamin Britten Orchestral Anthology
(Volume 2), ISMN 9790060107641

Peter Grimes op. 33

Passacaglia

1945

7 min

2(=picc).2.2.2.dbn-4.3.3.1-timp.perc(2):gong/cyms/tam-t/BD/SD/tamb/
TD-harp-cel-strings

This title is available for sale in the <a
href="http://www.boosey.com/shop/prod/Britten-Benjamin-Orchestral-Anthology-volume
-2-Full-Score-Masterworks-series/601996"> Benjamin Britten Orchestral Anthology
(Volume 2), ISMN 9790060107641

The Prince of the Pagodas

Pas de Six

1956

12 min

3(III=picc).2.corA.2.Ebcl.asax.2.dbn-4.3.3.1-timp.perc(2):cyms/BD/
tamb-harp-pft-strings

The Prince of the Pagodas op. 57

Prelude and Dances

1956

27 min

selected by Norman Del Mar

2.picc.2.corA.2.Ebcl.asax.3-4.3.3.1-timp.perc:gong/xyl/native dr/
picc.timp/tom-t/susp.cym/tam-t/tgl/cast/wdbl/BD/SD/tamb/TD-harp-pft-
strings

9790060015014 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 919**

The Prince of the Pagodas op. 57

Suite

1957

47 min

compiled by Mervyn Cooke and Donald Mitchell

3(II,III=picc).2.corA.2.Ebcl.asax.3(III=dbn)-4.3.3.1-timp.perc(7):xyl/vib/
glsp/tgl/cast/tamb/3tom-t/SD/BD/sm.timp/sm.cyms/susp.cym/cyms/2gongs-
cel-harp-pft.duet-strings

World Premiere: 04 Jun 1997

Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester

Conductor: Vladimir Ashkenazy

Sinfonia da Requiem op. 20

1940

20 min

for orchestra

3(III=picc,af1).2.corA.2.bcl(=Ebcl).asax(ad
lib).2.dbn-6(4).3.3.1-timp.perc(4):xyl/cyms/whip/BD/SD/tamb-
2(1)harps-pft-strings

9790060107641 **(Full score - Masterworks)**

Soirées musicales op. 9

1936

11 min

Suite of Five Movements from Rossini

2(II=picc).2.2.2-4.2.3.0-timp.perc(2):glsp/xyl/cyms/susp.cym/tgl/cast/BD/SD-harp(pft)
-strings; reduced version:

1.1.1.0-0.1.1.0-perc(1):glsp/cyms/susp.cym/tgl/cast/BD/SD-harp(pft)-strings

This title is available for sale in the <a
href="http://www.boosey.com/shop/prod/Britten-Benjamin-Orchestral-Anthology-volume
-1-Full-Score-Masterworks-series/598721"> Benjamin Britten Orchestral Anthology
(Volume 1), ISMN 9790060106064

9790060022913 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 777**

FULL ORCHESTRA 13

9790060836503 **(Parts)**

What the Wild Flowers tell me

Gustav Mahler, arranged by Benjamin Britten

1893-96, arr.1941

10 min

2nd movement from Symphony No.3, version for reduced orchestra by Britten

2(II=picc).2.2.2-4.3.1.0-perc:glsp/susp.cym/tgl/tamb/rute-harp-strings

The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra op. 34

1946

17 min

Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell for orchestra with narrator ad lib

Text: Eric Crozier; German version by Egon Waldmann (E,G); alternative version by
John Amis (E)

2.picc.2.2.2-4.2.3.1-timp.perc(3):gong/xyl/cyms/tgl/cast/tpl.bl/whip/BD/SD/tamb-harp-stri
ngs

9790060015632 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 606**

9790060106064 **(Full score - Masterworks)**

FULL ORCHESTRA 13

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Chacony in G minor

Henry Purcell, arranged by Benjamin Britten

arr.1948, rev.1963

4 min

for string quartet or string orchestra, arranged by Benjamin Britten

9790060049552 **String Orchestra (Full score)**

9790060049569 **String set**

Prelude and Fugue op. 29

1943

9 min

for 18-part string orchestra (10.0.3.3.2)

9790060015038 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 952**

Rossini Suite

1935

12 min

Five movements from Rossini, for chamber ensemble

boys' voices (wordless)-1(=picc).1.1.0-0.0.0-perc:SD/BD/cym/tgl/
xyl/glsp/wdbl/cast-pft

Sinfonietta op. 1

1932

15 min

for ten instruments

1.1.1.1-1.0.0-0-0-0-string quintet (or small string orchestra)

9790060015267 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 11**

Sinfonietta op. 1

version for small orchestra

1932, arr.1936

15 min

for small orchestra

1.1.1.1-2.0.0-0-strings

Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge op. 10

1937

25 min

for string orchestra

strings

This title is available for sale in the Benjamin Britten Orchestral Anthology (Volume 2), ISMN 9790060107641

Variations on 'Selleger's Round' (Aldeburgh Variations)

1953

13 min

Composite work written by Britten, Berkeley, Oldham, Searle, Tippett, Walton

strings

SOLO INSTRUMENT(S) AND ORCHESTRA

Diversions op. 21

1940, rev.1954 23 min

for piano (left hand) and orchestra

2(II=picc).2(II=corA).2(II=Ebcl).asax(ad lib).2.dbn-4.2.3.1-timp.perc(2/3):gong/xyl/cyms/tgl/BD/SD/tamb-harp-strings

9790060014215 **2 Pianos, 4 Hands**

9790060079252 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 1146**

Lachrymae op. 48a

1948,orch.1976 15 min

for solo viola and strings

9790060014581 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 904**

9790060014598 **Viola, Piano**

Piano Concerto (original version) op. 13

1938 34 min

for piano and orchestra

2(I,II=picc).2(II=corA).2.2-4.2.3.1-timp.perc(2):glsp/cyms/whip/BD/SD/tamb/TD-harp-strings

Piano Concerto (revised version) op. 13

1938, rev.1945 33 min

2(I,II=picc).2(II=corA).2.2-4.2.3.1-timp.perc(2):glsp/cyms/whip/BD/SD/tamb/TD-harp-strings

9790060014161 **2 Pianos, 4 Hands**

9790060014154 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 826**

Scottish Ballad op. 26

1941 13 min

for two pianos and orchestra

2(II=picc).2.2.2.dbn(ad lib)-4.2.3.1-timp.perc(2):cyms/tam-t/whip/BD/SD/tamb-harp-strings

9790060015199 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 842**

9790060015205 **2 Pianos, 4 Hands**

Symphony for Cello and Orchestra op. 68

1963 34 min

2(II=picc).2.2(II=bcl).1.dbn-2.2.1.1-timp.perc(2):gong/vib/cyms/tam-t/whip/BD/SD/tamb/TD-strings

9790060015427 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 759**

9790060015434 **Cello, Piano**

Violin Concerto op. 15

1939, rev.1954/65 31 min

3(II,III=picc).2(II=corA).2.2-4.3.3.1-timp.perc(2):glsp/cyms/tgl/BD/SD/TD-harp-strings

9790060014178 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 768**

9790060014185 **Violin, Piano**

VOICE(S) AND ORCHESTRA

A Charm of Lullabies op. 41

Benjamin Britten, arranged by Colin Matthews

1947

12 min

for mezzo-soprano and orchestra

Text: Blake, Burns, Robert Greene, Thomas Randolph, John Philip

2.2.2(II=bcl).2-2.0.0.0-harp-strings

World premiere of version: 22 Jan 1991

Indianapolis, Indiana, United States

Maureen Forrester, mezzo-soprano; Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: Raymond Leppard

Folk Songs

Come you not from Newcastle?

1945

1 min

2.2.2.2-2.0.0.0-timp.perc:tamb-4vln.db solo

Folk Songs

Little Sir William

1945

2 min 30 sec

2.2.2.2-2.2.0.0-timp-strings

Folk Songs

O can ye sew Cushions?

1945

2 min

2.1.corA.1.bcl.2-2.0.0.0-harp

Folk Songs

O Waly, Waly (The Water is Wide)

1945

3 min

strings

Folk Songs

Oliver Cromwell

1945

40 sec

1.picc.2.2.2-2.2.0.0-timp-strings

Folk Songs

The Bonny Earl o'Moray

1945

2 min 30 sec

2.2.2.2-2.2.0.0-perc:cyms/BD-strings

Folk Songs

The Ploughboy

1945

2 min

picc-string quartet

Folk Songs

The Salley Gardens (version for solo voice and chamber orchestra)

1955

3 min

for high or medium voice and orchestra

bn (or solo vlc)-harp (or pft)-strings

Folk Songs

The Salley Gardens (version for solo voice and strings)

1942

3 min

for high voice and string orchestra

strings

Fourteen Folk Songs

1941-46

16 min

arranged for voice and orchestra

9790060106200 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 1308**

French Folk Songs**1946** 9 min 50 sec

for high or medium voice and orchestra

Text: traditional (F)

2(II=picc),2(II=corA),2.2-2.2.0.0-timp.perc-harp-strings

French Folk Songs**Eho! Eho!**
1946 1 min 30 sec

2.2.0.2-2.0.0.0-strings

French Folk Songs**Fileuse**
1946 1 min 30 sec

0.1.corA.0.0-0.2.0.0-perc-harp-strings(senza vln)

French Folk Songs**La belle est au jardin d'amour**
1946 2 min 30 sec

2.0.2.1-0.0.0.0-strings

French Folk Songs**The Orphan & King Henry**
La Noël passée
1946 3 min

strings

French Folk Songs**Le Roi s'en va-t'en chasse**
1946 2 min

0.2.2.2-0.2.0.0-strings (senza db)

French Folk Songs**Quand j'étais chez mon pere**
1946 2 min

2(II=picc),2.2.2-2.2.0.0-timp.perc:SD-strings

Gloriana op. 53**Second Lute Song of the Earl of Essex**
1953 4 min

arranged for tenor (or oboe), harp and strings by Imogen Holst

9790060119293 **Voice, Guitar****Les Illuminations op. 18****1939** 21 min

for high voice and strings

Text: Arthur Rimbaud (F)

9790060014536 **High Voice, Piano**9790060110078 **(Full score - Masterworks)****World premiere complete: 30 Jan 1940**

Aeolian Hall, London, United Kingdom

Sophie Wyss, soprano; Boyd Neel Orchestra

Conductor: Boyd Neel

Nocturne op. 60**1958** 25 min

for tenor, seven obbligato instruments, and strings

Text: various (E)

1.0.corA.1.1-1.0.0.0-timp-harp-strings

This work is available for sale in the Masterworks Library, Britten Works for Voice & Chamber Orchestra, ISMN 9790060110078

9790060014765 **High Voice, Piano**9790060014758 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 713**

Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal

1943

5 min

for tenor, horn, and strings (rejected movement from Serenade op.31)

Text: Tennyson (E)

tenor, horn and strings

This work is available for sale in the Masterworks Library, Britten Works for Voice & Chamber Orchestra, ISMN 9790060110078

9790060079269 **(Full score)**

World Premiere: 03 Apr 1987

Friend's House, London, United Kingdom

Neil Mackie (tenor); English Chamber Orchestra

Conductor: Steuart Bedford

Our Hunting Fathers op. 8

1936

27 min

for soprano and orchestra

Text: WH Auden (E)

2(II=picc).2(II=corA).1.Ebcl(=bcl).asax.2-4.2.3.1-timp.perc(2):xyl/cyms/tgl/BD/SD/tamb/
TD-harp-strings

9790060014901 **High Voice, Piano**

9790060014895 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 755**

Serenade op. 31

1943

24 min

for tenor, horn, and strings

Text: various (E)

see also Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal

This work is available for sale in the Masterworks Library, Britten Works for Voice & Chamber Orchestra, ISMN 9790060110078

9790060015236 **Voice, Piano**

9790060015229 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 71**

World Premiere: 15 Oct 1943

Wigmore Hall, London, United Kingdom

Peter Pears, tenor / Dennis Brain, horn / orchestral ensemble

Conductor: Walter Goehr

Spring Night

(Frühlingsnacht)

Robert Schumann, arranged by Benjamin Britten

arr.1942

1 min 30 sec

arranged for voice and orchestra

Text: Joseph von Eichendorff (E,G)

1.1.2.1-2.2.1.0-perc:tgl-harp(pft)-strings

Suite of Six Songs from 'Orpheus Britannicus'

Henry Purcell, arranged by Benjamin Britten

arr.1946

13 min

for medium voice and orchestra realized by Benjamin Britten

Text: (E)

2.2.0.1-0.1.0.0-strings

1.Let Sullen discord smile strings

2.Why should me quarrel 2fl-strings

3.So when the glittering Queen of Night strings

4.Thou tunest the world 2ob.bn-tpt-strings

5.'Tis holiday strings 6.Sound fame thy brazen trumpet tpt-strings

Three Songs for Les Illuminations

Phrase, Aube & À une raison

1939, orch. 2004

8 min 30 sec

orchestration for high voice and strings by Colin Matthews

Text: Arthur Rimbaud (F)

Three Songs from 'Orpheus Britannicus'

Henry Purcell, arranged by Benjamin Britten

arr.1963

12 min

for medium voice and orchestra realized by Benjamin Britten

2(II=picc).2.0.2-0.0.0.0-strings

1.Hark the Echoing Air 2.2.0.2-strings

2.Not all my torments strings

3.Take not a woman's Anger 2.2.0.2-strings

The Trout

(Die Forelle)

Franz Schubert, arranged by Benjamin Britten

arr.1942

4 min

arranged for voice and small orchestra

Text: Schubart (E,G)

2cl-strings(4.3.2.2.2)

CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA

Ballad of Heroes op. 14

1939 15 min

for tenor (soprano) solo, chorus, and orchestra

Text: Randall Swingler and W H Auden (E)

3(2)(II=picc).3(2)(II=corA).2.Ebcl(ad lib).3(2)(III=dbn)-4.2.3.1-timp.perc(2):xyl/cyms/whip/BD/SD/TD-harp-strings
off-stage (ad lib) 3 trumpets-SD

9790060090851 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 1196**

9790060013935 **SATB (Vocal Score)**

Cantata Academica, Carmen Basiense op. 62

1959 22 min

for soprano, alto, tenor and bass soloists, chorus, and orchestra

Text: compiled by Bernhard Wyss (L)

2(II=picc).2.2.2-4.2.3.1-timp.perc(4):glsp/t.bells/xyl/cyms/tam-t/
tgl/tpl.bl/BD/SD/tamb-2(1)harps-pft(=cel ad lib)-strings

9790060014017 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 719**

9790060014024 **SATB (Vocal Score) (Latin)**

Cantata Misericordium op. 69

1963 20 min

for tenor and baritone soloists, small chorus and orchestra

Text: Patrick Wilkinson (L)

timp-harp-pft-string quartet-strings

9790060014062 **SATB (Choral Score) (Latin)**

9790060014048 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 752**

9790060014055 **SATB (Vocal Score) (Latin)**

Friday Afternoons op. 7

1935 20 min

Arranged for chorus (SSA) and orchestra by Heuwell Tircuit

3(III=picc).2.corA.2.bcl.2.dbn-4.2.3.1-timp.perc(3);SD/BD/cyms/susp.cym/tam-t/tgl/
tamb/ratchet/washboard/2cowbells/t.bells/glsp/xyl-harp-strings

The National Anthem

1961 2 min

for chorus and orchestra

Text: (E)

2.2.2.2-4.2.3.1-timp.perc(2):cyms/BD/SD-strings

The National Anthem

(reduced orchestration)

1961, rev.1967 2 min

for chorus and orchestra

Text: (E)

2.2.2.2-2.2.0.1(0)-timp.perc(1):cyms/SD-strings

Psalm 150 op. 67

1962 5 min

for two-part children's voices and instruments

Text: (E)

Chorus: SA with divisions;
ensemble - minimum: 1 treble instrument-1 drum-1 keyboard instrument
parts available: 2 treble instruments in C.2cl-hn.tpt (harmonica or
oboe).trbn-timp.perc:cyms/tgl/SD/tamb-keyboard instrument-vla-bass
instruments

9790060046636 **(Full score)**

9790060015045 **(Vocal Score)**

9790060015052 **(Choral Score)**

9790060046643 **Orchestra (parts)**

Rejoice in the Lamb op. 30

1943 16 min

Festival Cantata for chorus, with orchestral accompaniment by Imogen Holst

Text: Christopher Smart (E)

1.1.1.1-1.0.0.0-perc(1):timp/gong(ad lib)/susp.cym/tgl/cast/wdbl/
tamb-organ(ad lib)-strings(minimum:2.2.2.1)

Saint Nicolas op. 42

1948

50 min

Cantata for tenor solo, chorus (SATB), semi-chorus (SA), four boy singers, and orchestra

Text: Eric Crozier (E)

timp.perc(2 or 1):gong/cyms/tgl/whip/BD/SD/tamb/TD-pft(4 hands)-org-strings

9790060015175 **SATB (Choral Score)**

9790060015144 **(Full score)**

9790060015151 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 63**

9790060015168 **SATB (Vocal Score)**

World Premiere: 05 Jun 1948

Parish Church, Aldeburgh, United Kingdom

Peter Pears, tenor; The Aldeburgh Festival Choir / unnamed chamber orchestra

Conductor: Leslie Woodgate

Spring Symphony op. 44

1949

45 min

for soprano, alto and tenor soloists, chorus, boys' choir, and orchestra

Text: various (E)

3(III=afl.picc).2.corA.2.bcl.2.dbn-4.3.3.1-cow horn-timp.perc(4):
gong/t.bells/vib/xyl/cyms/cast/wdbl/BD/SD/tamb/TD-2harps-strings

9790060015335 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 66**

9790060015342 **SATB (Vocal Score)**

9790060015359 **SATB (Choral Score)**

War Requiem op. 66

1961

1 hr 25 min

for soprano, tenor and baritone soloists, chorus, boys' choir, orchestra, and chamber orchestra

Text: Missa pro Defunctis and poems of Wilfred Owen (E-L)

main orchestra: 3(III=picc).2.corA.3(III=Ebcl,bcl).2.dbn-6.4.3.1-
timp.perc(4):2crot/glsp/gong/t.bells/vib/cyms/tgl/cast/tpl.bl/whip/
BD/2SD/tamb/TD-pft-portable organ(harmonium)-grand organ (ad lib)-
strings

chamber orchestra: 1(=picc).1(=corA).1.1-1.0.0.0-perc(1):timp/gong/
cyms/BD/SD-harp-string quintet

9790060015588 **Boys (Choral Score)**

9790060015557 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 742**

9790060015564 **SATB (Vocal Score)**

9790060015571 **SATB (Choral Score)**

9790060107078 **(Full score - Masterworks)**

World Premiere: 30 May 1962

St Michael's Cathedral, Coventry, United Kingdom

Heather Harper, soprano / Peter Pears, tenor / Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone /
Coventry Festiva

Conductor: Benjamin Britten

ENSEMBLE AND CHAMBER WITHOUT VOICE(S)

Alpine Suite

1955 8 min

for recorder trio
9790060013898 **3 Recorders**

Fanfare for St. Edmundsbury

1959 3 min 30 sec

for three trumpets
3tpt

9790060014253 **3 Trumpets**

Phantasy Quartet op. 2

1932 12 min

for oboe, violin, viola and cello
9790060014970 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 10**
9790060014987 **Oboe, Violin, Viola, Cello**

String Quartet No.1 in D op. 25

1941 26 min

9790060015373 **(Parts)**
9790060015366 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 31**

String Quartet No.2 in C op. 36

1945 31 min

9790060015380 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 89**
9790060015397 **(Parts)**

ENSEMBLE AND CHAMBER WITH VOICE(S)

Canticle III "Still Falls the Rain" op. 55

1954 12 min

for tenor, horn and piano

Text: 'The Canticle of the Rose' by Edith Sitwell (E)

9790060014093 **Tenor, Horn, Piano**

Folk Songs

The Salley Gardens (version for solo voice and chamber orchestra)

1955 3 min

for high or medium voice and orchestra

bn (or solo vlc)-harp (or pft)-strings

Folk Songs

The Salley Gardens (version for solo voice and strings)

1942 3 min

for high voice and string orchestra

strings

The Heart of the Matter

1956 27 min

for narrator, tenor voice, horn and piano

Text: Edith Sitwell (E)

9790060096457 **narrator, tenor voice, horn and piano**

Three Songs for Les Illuminations

Phrase, Aube & À une raison

1939, orch. 2004 8 min 30 sec

orchestration for high voice and strings by Colin Matthews

Text: Arthur Rimbaud (F)

You twice ten-hundred deities

Henry Purcell, arranged by Benjamin Britten

1965 5 min

for baritone, two violins, cello and piano

Text: John Dryden and Sir Robert Howard from 'The Indian Queen' (E)

PIANO(S)

Holiday Diary op. 5

1934 16 min

Suite for solo piano
9790060014451 Piano

Introduction and Rondo alla Burlesca op. 23

1940 9 min

9790060014567 2 Pianos, 4 Hands

The Little Sweep op. 45

Benjamin Britten, arranged by Arthur Oldham

45 min

arrangement for piano duet and percussion

Text: Libretto by Eric Crozier (E,Bg,Cz,F,Fn,G,I,Tk). Additional audience song
translations available (Dn,N,Sw)

Adult roles:2S,A,T,B; children's roles:4Tr,2S; audience participation
perc(1):timp/BD/SD/gong/cyms/tgl/cast/lg & sm wdbl-pft(4hands)

This work can be performed with the introductory play 'Let's Make An Opera' - see
separate entry
for details.

Mazurka Elegiaca op. 23

1941 7 min

for two pianos
9790060014659 2 Pianos, 4 Hands

Night Piece (Notturmo)

1963 5 min

for solo piano
9790060014741 Piano

Soirées musicales op. 9

1936 11 min

Suite of Five Movements from Rossini arr. for 2 pianos 4 hands

INSTRUMENTAL

Cello Sonata in C op. 65

1961 18 min

for cello and piano
9790060015298 **Cello, Piano**

The Dark Tower

1945 20 min

Music for the radio drama, for trumpet, percussion and strings

Text: Louis MacNeice (E)

tpt-timp.perc(Eb bell/tgl/tam-t/susp.cym/SD/BD/gong)-strings

The Little Sweep op. 45

Benjamin Britten, arranged by Arthur Oldham

45 min

arrangement for piano duet and percussion

Text: Libretto by Eric Crozier (E,Bg,Cz,F,Fn,G,I,Tk). Additional audience song translations available (Dn,N,Sw)

Adult roles:2S,A,T,B; children's roles:4Tr,2S; audience participation
perc(1):timp/BD/SD/gong/cyms/tgl/cast/lg & sm wdbl-pft(4hands)

This work can be performed with the introductory play 'Let's Make An Opera' - see separate entry for details.

Prelude and Fugue on a theme of Vittoria

1946 6 min

for organ
9790060015021 **Organ**
9790060116438 **Organ**

Six Metamorphoses after Ovid op. 49

1951 13 min

for oboe solo

oboe solo

9790060015274 **Oboe**

Suite op. 6

1935 18 min

for violin and piano

9790060015465 **Violin, Piano**

9790060836572 **Violin, Piano**

VOCAL

The Birds

1929, rev.1934 2 min

for voice and piano

Text: Hilaire Belloc (E)

9790060013980 **Voice, Piano**

9790060092121 **Unison**

Canticle I "My Beloved is Mine" op. 40

1947 7 min

for high voice and piano

Text: Francis Quarles (E)

9790060014079 **High Voice, Piano**

Canticle II "Abraham and Isaac" op. 51

1952 17 min

for alto, tenor and piano

Text: From the Chester Miracle Play (E)

9790060014086 **Voice, Piano**

A Charm of Lullabies op. 41

1947 12 min

for mezzo-soprano and piano

Text: Blake, Burns, Robert Greene, Thomas Randolph, John Philip

9790060014130 **Medium Voice, Piano**

Complete Folksong Arrangements

for voice and piano

9790051933747 **Voice, Piano**

9790051933754 **Voice, Piano**

Dialogue of Corydon and Mopsa

Henry Purcell, arranged by Benjamin Britten

1950 3 min 30 sec

for two voices and piano

Text: Anon from 'The Fairy Queen' (E)

Eight Folksong Arrangements

1976

for voice and harp

Evening, Morning, Night

1944 4 min

from 'This Way to the Tomb' for medium voice and harp or piano

Text: Ronald Duncan (E)

9790060080807 **Medium Voice, Piano**

Fancie

1961 1 min

for unison voices and piano

9790060014239 **Unison**

Fish in the Unruffled Lakes

1937

Six Settings of W.H.Auden for high voice and piano

9790060102677 **High Voice, Piano**

Folksong Arrangements Volume 1

British Isles

for voice and piano

9790060014307 **Medium Voice, Piano**

9790060014314 **High Voice, Piano**

Folksong Arrangements Volume 2

France

for voice and piano

9790060014321 **Medium Voice, Piano (French, English)**

9790060014338 **High Voice, Piano (French, English)**

Folksong Arrangements Volume 3**British Isles**

for voice and piano

9790060014345 **Medium Voice, Piano**

9790060014352 **High Voice, Piano**

Folksong Arrangements Volume 4**Moore's Irish Melodies**

for voice and piano

9790060014369 **Voice, Piano**

Folksong Arrangements Volume 5**British Isles**

for voice and piano

9790060014376 **Voice, Piano**

Folksong Arrangements Volume 6**England**

for voice and guitar

9790060014383 **Voice, Piano**

Gloriana**Choral Dances**

1953, arranged 1982

10 min

arranged for tenor solo, harp and SATB chorus

Text: William Plomer (E)

9790060014444 **Tenor, SATB, Harp**

The Holy Sonnets of John Donne op. 35

1945

26 min

for high voice and piano

Text: Donne (E)

9790060014475 **High Voice, Piano**

In these delightful pleasant groves

Henry Purcell, arranged by Benjamin Britten

1968

3 min

for SATB (choir or soli) and piano

Text: Thomas Shadwell from 'The Libertine' (E)

Mother Comfort

1936

2 min 30 sec

for two voices and piano

Text: Montagu Slater (E)

9790060020018 **Voice, Piano**

On this Island op. 11

1937

13 min

five songs for high voice and piano

Text: W H Auden

9790060014888 **High Voice, Piano**

The Rape of Lucretia**Flower Song**

1946

3 min

for contralto and piano

9790060014284 **Voice, Piano**

Sechs Hölderlin-Fragmente op. 61

1958

12 min

Text: Friedrich Holderlin (G)

9790060015212 **High Voice, Piano (German)**

Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo op. 22

1940

15 min 50 sec

for tenor and piano

Text: Michaelangelo Buonarroti (I)

9790060015243 **Voice, Piano**

Songs from the Chinese op. 58**1957** 10 min

for high voice and guitar

Text: Chinese poets, translated by Arthur Waley

9790060015311 **Voice, Guitar**

Tom Bowling and Other Song Arrangements

28 min

for voice and piano (2 songs for 2 voices and piano, 1 for voice, piano & cello ad lib)

Two Songs by Thomas Hardy**1953** 5 min 30 sec

for high voice and piano

Text: Thomas Hardy (E)

1. If it's ever Spring again
 2. The Children and Sir Nameless
- (These settings were discarded from the final version of 'Winter Words')

These songs are now published as an appendix to Winter Words, ISMN 9790060015601
They are published of course to be enjoyed, but as individual songs. In no circumstances should they form part of the cycle itself, which has its own established integrity,

World Premiere: 22 Nov 1983

Wigmore Hall, London, United Kingdom

Neil Mackie, tenor; Iain Burnside, piano

Underneath the Abje Willow**1936** 3 min 30 sec

for two voices and piano

Text: WH Auden (E)

9790060115547 **Voice, Piano**

Winter Words op. 52**1953** 19 min 30 sec

for high voice and piano

Text: Thomas Hardy (E)

high voice, piano

9790060015601 **High Voice, Piano**

CHORAL

Advance Democracy

1938 3 min

for unaccompanied choir

9790051431922 **Mixed Voices**

9790060800351 **Mixed Choir (Choral Score)**

Antiphon op. 56b

1956 3 min

for choir (SATB with optional solos) and organ

9790060013904 **SSS Soli, SATB**

The Ascent of F6

1937 25 min

Incidental music for the play by Auden and Isherwood

female voice, 2 male voices-SATB

perc: glsp/tgl/tamb/susp.cym/wdbl/SD/TD/BD-ukelele-2pft

The Ballad of Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard

1943 9 min

for male voices and piano

9790060013942 **TTBB**

A Ceremony of Carols op. 28

Benjamin Britten, arranged by Julius Harrison

1942 23 min

arranged for SATB chorus and harp (or piano)

9790060014116 **SATB (English, German)**

9790060014208 **SATB**

A Ceremony of Carols op. 28

1942 23 min

for treble voices and harp

9790060014109 **SSA (English, German)**

9790060015618 **SSS**

9790060014550 **SSS**

9790060015328 **SS**

9790060013911 **SSS**

9790060014123 **Harp**

9790060014192 **SSS**

9790060015458 **SSS**

9790060015441 **SSS**

Deus in adjutorium meum

1944-45 4 min

for SATB chorus a cappella

Text: Psalm 70

9790060014246 **SATB, Harp**

Festival Te Deum op. 32

1944 5 min

for chorus (SATB) and organ

9790060014260 **SATB (Vocal Score)**

Five Flower Songs op. 47

1950 11 min

for chorus (SATB) a cappella

Text: Herrick, Crabbe, Clare, Anon (E)

9790060014642 **SATB**

9790060015472 **SATB**

9790060095115 **SATB**

Friday Afternoons op. 7

1933-35 20 min

Twelve Children's Songs with piano accompaniment

Text: Various

9790060015489 **Unison**

9790060014857 **SSS**

9790051467389 **(Vocal Score)**

9790060014734 **SS/A**

9790060105005 **Unison Upper Voices**

Gloriana**Choral Dances****1953**

8 min

for unaccompanied chorus

Text: William Plomer (E)

9790060014437 **SATB****Gloriana****Choral Dances****1953, arranged 1982**

10 min

arranged for tenor solo, harp and SATB chorus

Text: William Plomer (E)

9790060014444 **Tenor, SATB, Harp****The Holly and the Ivy****1957**

3 min

arranged for unaccompanied chorus (SATB)

9790060014468 **SATB Soli, SATB****A Hymn of St Columba - Regis regum rectissimi****1962**

2 min 30 sec

for chorus and organ

9790060014482 **SATB****Hymn to St Cecilia (choral version) op. 27****1942**

12 min

for five-part chorus (SSATB) with solos

Text: W H Auden

9790060014499 **SSATB****Hymn to St Cecilia (version for solo voices) op. 27****1942**

12 min

for five solo voices (SSATB)

Text: W H Auden

Hymn to St Peter op. 56a**1955**

6 min

for choir (SATB with treble solo) and organ

Text: from the Gradual of the Feast of St Peter and St Paul

9790060014505 **SATB (Vocal Score)****A Hymn to the Virgin****1930, rev. 1934**

3 min

Anthem for unaccompanied chorus (double SATB)

Text: Anon (circa 1300) L/E

unaccompanied chorus (double SATB)

9790060014512 **SSAA, TTBB****In these delightful pleasant groves**

Henry Purcell, arranged by Benjamin Britten

1968

3 min

for SATB (choir or soli) and piano

Text: Thomas Shadwell from 'The Libertine' (E)

King Herod and the Cock**1962**

2 min

arranged for unison voices and piano

9790060014574 **Unison****Missa Brevis in D op. 63****1959**

11 min

for boys' voices and organ

9790060014703 **Boys (Choral Score)**9790060014697 **SSA (Vocal Score)****On the Frontier****1938**

20 min

Incidental music to the stage play

Text: W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood (E)

Male voice, SSATTBarB-2tpt in C-perc:susp.cym/SD/TD/BD/gong-accordion-pft(2 & 4 hands)

Rejoice in the Lamb op. 30

1943, arr. 1966

16 min

arranged by Edmund Walters for upper voices (SSAA) and organ

Text: Christopher Smart (E)

9790060829826 **SSAA**

Rejoice in the Lamb op. 30

1943

16 min

Festival Cantata for chorus (SATB) with treble, alto, tenor and bass solos and organ

Text: Christopher Smart (E)

9790060015120 **SATB (Vocal Score)**

Song: We are the darkness in the heat of the day

1956

2 min

for five-part mixed choir a cappella

Text: Edith Sitwell (E)

9790060105852 **SSATB**

This Way to the Tomb

1944-45

27 min

for SMTBass soli, SATB chorus, percussion and piano (4 hands)

A Wedding Anthem op. 46

1949

10 min

for soprano and tenor soli, choir (SATB) and organ

Text: Ronald Duncan (E)

9790060015595 **SATB (Vocal Score)**

MISCELLANEOUS

The Dark Tower

1945

20 min

Music for the radio drama, for trumpet, percussion and strings

Text: Louis MacNeice (E)

tpt-timp.perc(Eb bell/tgl/tam-t/susp.cym/SD/BD/gong)-strings



