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Benjamin Britten

Concert works published by
Faber Music Ltd

Introductory note

Twenty or so years after his death, we have a more complete picture of Benjamin Britten as a composer than during his lifetime. Works from his youth and works that he suppressed have been played and published; the late music can now be seen as a distinct phase, in some ways as forward looking and as influential as Stravinsky's. Above all, Britten's central place in the history of 20th-century music seems more and more assured. He is one of very few composers born this century whose whole output – from operas to solo pieces – has gained a secure place in the repertoire.

Britten was born into a middle-class family in Lowestoft, Suffolk, on 22 November 1913. His mother encouraged him to learn the piano and the viola, and to compose; by the age of fourteen he had written over 100 works. Little of this abundant juvenilia has so far been heard, but in 1969 Britten himself selected **Five Waltzes** for piano, composed between 1923 and 1925, for publication: they are not simply charming but have the feel of genuine music. In 1927 he began studying composition with Frank Bridge, and immediately made huge strides. The **Quatre Chansons Françaises** (1928) show an extraordinary sophistication both in the choice of texts and in the handling of the orchestra. A few years later he was writing chamber works, such as the **Quartettino** for string quartet, whose up-to-date musical language rivals anything being written in Britain at the time. The young Britten was iconoclastic, often scornful of his older, less gifted contemporaries; his music was brilliant and unsentimental. He was not only the cleverest composer around, but also the most musical.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s Britten was tirelessly prolific; his opused works are matched by the vast quantity of incidental music of all kinds – for films, plays and especially BBC radio – that he produced with unflagging industry. His 1939 score for J.B. Priestley's play, **Johnson over Jordan**, is a good example of the type of music that he was able to compose in a few days, yet with undiminished care and skill. The 'Spider and the Fly' shows his grasp of the popular musical idiom of the time, an interest that is fully evident in his first opera **Paul Bunyan** (1941), which sometimes uncannily anticipates *Oklahoma!* and contains some of the most invigorating music he ever wrote. Had he stayed in America, Britten might well have written Broadway hits as well as operas. As it was, his two years in America confirmed him as a tonal composer at a time when the idea of tonality was under threat – and had been questioned by Britten himself in some of his earlier music. The radiant diatonicism of **Young Apollo** – his first response to American light and space – symbolizes this fresh start.

In 1964 Donald Mitchell instigated the foundation of Faber Music with the prime purpose of taking over the publication of Britten's music. Britten was intimately concerned with the company as a director until his death in 1976. One of the first Britten works to be published by Faber, **Curlew River**, also marked a new departure for him. It presented a sparer, leaner style, with use of heterophony and greater rhythmic independence for the individual instruments, which was developed in two further Church Parables, **The Burning Fiery Furnace** and **The Prodigal Son**, and spills over into almost all his late pieces. Britten's last twelve years also produced the opera **Death in Venice**, which sums up the conflict of innocence and experience that obsessed him all his life, three cello suites for Rostropovich which are the finest since Bach, and a string quartet – no. 3 – worthy to stand alongside Bartók. There is a special poignancy about the works of the final three years, composed after his only partially successful heart operation: they bravely confront death, whether openly, as in **Phaedra**, or secretly, as in the last movement of the **Suite on English Folk Tunes** – a small masterpiece which, even if nothing else of Britten's were to survive, would mark him as a great composer.

David Matthews July 1997

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ORCHESTRAL

An American Overture (1941)

Duration 10 mins

3(III=picc).3.3(III=bcl).3 - 4331 - timp - perc(2):BD+cym/
tamb/SD/susp.cym/tam-t/t.bells/TD (if no small timp) -
(cel(=pno)) - 2 harp(II ad lib) - strings

FP: 8.11.83, Birmingham Town Hall: City of Birmingham
SO/Simon Rattle

Full score 50807 3 on sale, parts for hire

An American Overture

... a marvellously atmospheric show-piece. ...

Peter Reed, *The Guardian*, 23 February 1984

The piece comprises a processional of festive figures over a slow walking bass leading to a clipped perky allegro, before returning in grandiose apotheosis; its slyness of harmonic side-slipping and its skill in working up a structure from the slightest material are absolutely typical of the early manner which set elderly critics tut-tutting over Mr Britten's incorrigible 'cleverness'.

Bayan Northcott, *The Sunday Telegraph*, 26 February 1984

The Building of the House Op 79 (1967)

Overture with or without chorus

Duration 6 mins

2222 - 2201 - timp - perc(1): bells/tgl/susp.cym/SD/
xyl - strings - (organ) - SATB chorus

The Chorus can be replaced or added to by an organ
(chamber or grand) or by extra brass (3rd tpt and 3 trbns -
alto or tenor, tenor and bass)

Text: Psalm 127 (Eng)

Written for the Inaugural Concert of The Maltings Concert
Hall, Snape

FP: 2.6.67, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings: English
CO/Chorus of East Anglian Choirs/Benjamin Britten

Study score 50151 6, chorus part 50144 3 on sale, parts for hire

See also under *Symphonic Wind Band*

The Building of the House

... begins with a merry bustle; it might be the prelude to some operatic scene of surging industry; then from the activity there rises, soaring and strong, a chorale. The piece is an allegory with a simple, moving aptness. ... that makes its immediate appeal; and with a richness and subtlety of musical organisation that will surely give lasting value to the occasional piece. ...

Andrew Porter, *Financial Times*, June 1967

Children's Crusade Op 82 (1969)

Ballad for children's voices and small orchestra

See under *Choral*

The Company of Heaven (1937)

Cantata for speaker(s), soprano and tenor soloists, SATB
chorus, timpani, organ and strings

See under *Choral*

God Save the Queen (1971)

Orchestral arrangement of the National Anthem

Duration 1 min

2.picc.3.3.2.cbsn - 4431 - timp - perc(3): SD/cyms/BD -
harp - strings

Alternative orch 2.2.2.1.cbsn - 4231 - timp - perc(2):
SD/cyms/BD - strings

FP: 13.6.71, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings:
English CO/Benjamin Britten

Full score (fp) 55675 2 and set of parts (fp) 55676 0 on
sale

Inkslinger's Aria (1941)

from 'Paul Bunyan'

tenor soloist, TB chorus and orchestra

See under *Vocal*

Irish Reel (1936)

Duration c.3 mins

1(=picc).1.1.1 - 1000 - timp - harp - strings

Written as title music for the documentary film
'Around the Village Green'

1st concert perf: 17.6.95, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape
Maltings: City of London Sinfonia/Richard Hickox

Score 51653 X on sale, parts for hire

Johnson over Jordan (1939)

Incidental music to the play by J.B.Priestley

Duration 35 mins

1(=picc).1(=ca).3(I=Ebcl.III=bcl+asax).1 - 0210 -
timp - perc(1): susp.cym/BD/tam-t/ch.bl/SD/TD/
xyl/ drumkit/mil.drum/tgl/BD+cym/glsp - pno
(=xyl+ ch.bl) - gtr - strings - (soprano voice)

optional scoring (Spider and the Fly): 2 asax(=cl).2 tsax
(I=bcl.II=cl) - 3 tpt.2 trbn - drum kit - pno - gtr - vln.db

FP: 22.2.39, New Theatre, London

Full score and parts for hire

Johnson over Jordan: Suite for Orchestra

Hardly anything Britten composed fails to come off the page. ... the suite compiled by Paul Hindmarsh from the incidental music to J.B.Priestley's play 'Johnson over Jordan' is no exception. ... the popular dance movement 'The Spider and the Fly' is a wickedly memorable number. ...

David J Fanning, *Gramophone*, April 1992

Johnson over Jordan: Suite for Orchestra

Compiled by Paul Hindmarsh (1990)

Duration 18 mins

Overture; Incinerator's Ballet; The Spider and the Fly; End Music

1(=picc).1.2(I=Ebcl.II=bcl+asax) or 3(I=Ebcl.II=cl in A. III=bcl+asax).1 - 0210 - timp - perc(1): susp.cym / BD+hi-hat cym/tam-t/TD/SD - pno - strings

1st broadcast perf: 25.2.90, BBC Radio 3: Northern Sinfonia/Odaline de la Martinez

1st concert perf: 22.6.90, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings: English CO/Steuart Bedford

Full score 51166 X on sale, parts for hire

Lullaby of Dream Shadows (1941)

from 'Paul Bunyan'

SATB chorus and orchestra

See under Choral

Men of Goodwill (1947)

Variations on a Christmas Carol ('God rest ye merry, gentlemen')

Duration 8 mins

2.picc.2.2.2 - 4231 - timp - perc(2): cym/susp.cym/SD/TD/BD/xyl - harp - strings

FP: 25.12.47, BBC Radio: London SO/Walter Goehr

Full score 50620 8 on sale, parts for hire

Men of Goodwill

... a shrewd and entertaining concert-piece, the five variations consisting of a spirited jig, a seductive andantino cast in the form of a slow, opulently lyrical waltz, a rustic dance, pompous little march and rhetorical finale. Expertly scored, as one would expect, and written in his lightest vein. . .

Robert Henderson, The Daily Telegraph, 9 February 1982

Movement for Clarinet and Orchestra (1941-42)

Orchestrated by Colin Matthews (1989)

Duration 6 mins

2.2.0.bcl.2 - 4230 - timp - perc(1): SD/susp.cym/glsp - harp - strings

FP: 7.3.90, Barbican Hall, London: Michael Collins/Britten-Pears Orchestra/Tamas Vasary

Full score and parts for hire

Movement for Clarinet and Orchestra

... deliciously bright and ebullient, bowling along with heady energy. . . an overriding impression of originality, brilliance, and high good humour. . .

Max Loppert, Financial Times, 9 March 1990

Occasional Overture

... more and more impressed by its masterly integration, by a fullness of harmony and scoring rare in Britten, by its manifold pre-echoes of his later works -from *Gloriana* to the *Suite on English Folk Tunes*, from *The Prince of the Pagodas* to the *Cello Symphony* - and by one strange transition the like of which he never attempted elsewhere.

Bayan Northcott, The Sunday Telegraph, 26 February 1984

Occasional Overture (1946)

Duration 8 mins

3(III=picc).2.ca.Ebcl.2.2.cbsn - 4331 - timp - perc(3): SD/TD/susp.cym/BD/cym/whip/tam-t/tgl/xyl - cel - harp - strings

Commissioned by the BBC for the opening of the 'Third Programme', 29 September 1946

1st broadcast perf: 29.9.46, BBC Third Programme: BBC SO/Sir Adrian Boult

1st concert perf: 28.4.83, Orchestra Hall, Chicago: Chicago SO/Raymond Leppard

Full score 50713 1 on sale, parts for hire

Overture: Paul Bunyan (1941)

Orchestrated by Colin Matthews

Duration 5 mins

2(II=picc).1.2.bcl.1 - 2221 - timp - perc(2/3): BD/SD/cym/tamb/tgl/(TD) - (pno) - (harp) - strings

FP: 6.8.78, Royal Albert Hall, London: European Community Youth Orchestra/James Judd

Full score 50571 6 on sale, parts for hire

Phaedra Op 93 (1975)

Dramatic cantata for mezzo-soprano and small orchestra

See under Vocal

Praise We Great Men (1976/85)

SATB soloists and chorus with orchestra

See under Choral

Quatre Chansons Françaises (1928)

soprano and small orchestra

See under Vocal

The Rescue (1943)

Incidental music to the radio drama by Edward Sackville-West based on Homer's 'Odyssey'

soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor and baritone soloists and orchestra

2(II=picc).2.2(II=bcl).asax.2 - 4331 - timp - perc(2): SD/BD/xyl/cym/susp.cym/tamb/whip/2 gong/large block - pno(=cel) - harp - strings

Full score and parts for hire

The Rescue of Penelope (1943 compiled 1993)

Concert version of the radio drama 'The Rescue' narrator, soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor and baritone soloists and orchestra

Duration 45 mins

2(II=picc).2.2(II=bcl).asax.2 - 4331 - timp - perc(2): SD/BD/cym/susp.cym/tamb/whip/2 gong/large block - pno(=cel) - harp - strings

Text: Edward Sackville-West (Eng)

FP: 23.10.93, Snape Maltings: BBC SO/Nicholas Cleobury

Full score 51724 2 on sale (in preparation), voice part and orchestral parts for hire

The Rescue of Penelope

... extraordinarily powerful. . . Whatever his models, the keen inventiveness, the tautness and the energy are typical of Britten. . . This is music which is not just illustrative but strong and purposeful in heightening the drama, in bringing home emotions. . .

Edward Greenfield, *The Guardian*, 14 June 1996

... a graphic and compelling melodrama. . . the musical invention has all the fabulous fluency that one associates with Britten. . . an autonomous, atmospheric concert-drama.

Paul Driver, *The Sunday Times*, 31 October 1993

... a compelling work, a major addition to the concert repertoire.

Charles Parsons, *American Record Guide*, Jan/Feb 1997

Suite from Death in Venice Op 88a

Compiled by Steuart Bedford (1984)

Duration 27 mins

2(=picc).2.2(II=bcl).2 - 2221 - timp(=crot) - perc(4):
tuned drum/cyms/bell/2 glsp/vib/2 gong/xyl/
susp.cym/2 tam-t/mar/3 tom-t/(3 ch.dr) - pno -
harp - strings (min 6.4.3.3.2)

FP: 13.6.84, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings: English
CO/Steuart Bedford

Full score 50977 0 on sale, parts for hire

Suite from Death in Venice

... prodigious musicality. Everything to which the composer had responded, he had made his own, from Mahler to Balinese music. . .

Meirion Bowen, *The Guardian*, 23 July 1987

... an operatic symphony, designed to enable the listener to experience the dramatic tale in purely instrumental terms. . .

Peter Stadlen, *The Daily Telegraph*, 15 June 1984

Suite on English Folk Tunes

Each of its five brief movements is based on an English folk song and between them they encompass a wide range of moods, extending from the high-spirited dance, 'Hunt the Squirrel', to the wistful melancholy of 'The Bitter Withy'. . . the key to the work's title, 'A time there was. . . when all went well' (Hardy), perhaps lies in its finale, 'Lord Melbourne'. Here an elegiac lament on a solo English horn is built up to a powerful climax. Then there comes a brief but impassioned cry on oboe, clarinets and muted trumpet, after which the work sinks to a subdued close.

Peter Heyworth, *The Observer*, 15 June 1975

Suite on English Folk Tunes Op 90 (1974)

('A time there was. . .')

Duration 14 mins

Cakes and Ale; The Bitter Withy; Hankin Booby;
Hunt the Squirrel; Lord Melbourne

2(II=picc).2(II=ca).2.2 - 2200 - timp - perc(2):
SD/BD/ tamburo/tgl/t.bell - harp - strings

('Hankin Booby' commissioned for the opening of
the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London on 1.3.67)

FP: 13.6.75, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings:
English CO/Steuart Bedford

Full score 50820 0 on sale, parts for hire

Temporal Variations (1936)

oboe and string orchestra

Orchestration by Colin Matthews (1993)

Duration 15 mins

FP: 12.6.94, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings:
Nicholas Daniel/English CO/Steuart Bedford

Score 51502 9 on sale, parts for hire

Welcome Ode Op 95 (1976)

young people's chorus and orchestra

See under Choral

Welcome Suite

Jig, Roundel and Canon from 'Welcome Ode' for
string orchestra

Arranged by Tony Osborne (1994)

Duration 6 mins

Score and parts 51479 0 on sale

Young Apollo Op 16 (1939)

piano, string quartet and string orchestra

Duration 10 mins

Commissioned by Canadian Broadcasting
Corporation

FP: 27.8.39, Toronto, Canada: Benjamin Britten/
orchestra unknown/Alexander Chuhaldin

FP in UK: 20.6.79, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape
Maltings: Michael Roll/English CO/Steuart Bedford

Full score 50646 1 on sale, parts for hire

CHAMBER

Alla Marcia (1933)

string quartet

Duration 3 mins

FP: 24.6.83, Aldeburgh Festival, Jubilee Hall: Brodsky
Quartet

Study score 50668 2 and parts 50669 0 on sale

Published with *Three Divertimenti* for string quartet

Britten's Blues (1937/40)

Suite arranged for six-piece ensemble by Daryl
Runswick (1990)

Duration 18 mins

asax(=cl).tpt.pno.vln.db.drum kit

The Spider and the Fly; Blues; The Clock on the
Wall; Boogie-Woogie

FP: 8.6.90, Aldeburgh Festival, Jubilee Hall: Daryl
Runswick All Stars

Score and parts on hire

Gemini Variations Op 73 (1965)

*Twelve Variations & Fugue on an Epigram of Kodaly
quartet for two (or four) players*

Duration 15 mins

flute, violin and piano (four hands)

FP: 19.6.65, Aldeburgh Festival, Aldeburgh Parish Church:
Zoltán and Gábor Jeney

Piano score and parts 50014 5 on sale

Movement for Wind Sextet (1930)

Duration 8 mins

fl.ob.cl.bcl.bsn.hn

FP: 11.6.93, Aldeburgh Festival, Aldeburgh Parish Church:
Haffner Wind Ensemble

Score and parts for hire

Phantasy in F Minor (1932)

string quintet

Duration 11 mins

2vln.2vla.vlc

FP: 22.7.32, Royal College of Music, London: student
ensemble

Study score 50666 6 and parts 50667 4 on sale

Quartettino (1930)

string quartet

Duration 14 mins

FP: 23.5.83, SPNM 40th Anniversary Concert, Barbican
Hall, London: Arditti Quartet

Study score 50769 7 and parts 50770 0 on sale

Quartettino

*Few if any composers in Britain in 1930 were writing quartets as
adventurous as this in its head-reeling flouting of tonality. . .*

Edward Greenfield, *The Guardian*, 4 February 1985

*It is hard to believe that Benjamin Britten was 16 when he wrote the
Quartettino, such is the skill and intellectual command.*

Peter Stadlen, *The Daily Telegraph*, 25 May 1983

Rhapsody (1929)

string quartet

Duration 7 mins

1st public perf: 6.11.85, Royal Northern College of Music:
Alexandra Quartet

Study score 51009 4 and parts 51010 8 on sale

Rhapsody for String Quartet

*. . . reinforces the astonishing precocity, in the best sense, of this
fabulously talented composer. . . it shows complete assurance in the
instrumental writing and also an original grasp of structure, as well as
being melodically and imaginatively already typical.*

Michael Kennedy, *The Daily Telegraph*, 8 November 1985

String Quartet in D Major (1931 revised 1974)

Duration 19 mins

Allegro maestoso; Lento ed espressivo; Allegro giocoso

FP: 7.6.75, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings: Gabrieli
String Quartet

Study score 50071 4 and parts 50072 2 on sale

String Quartet No 3 Op 94 (1975)

Duration 28 mins

Duets; Ostinato; Solo; Burlesque; Recitative and
Passacaglia (La Serenissima)

Written for the Amadeus Quartet

FP: 19.12.76, Snape Maltings: Amadeus String Quartet

Study score 50522 8 and set of parts 50523 6 on sale

String Quartet No 3

*. . . it will stand as one of his most enduring creations. . . the closing
passacaglia, which is entitled 'La Serenissima', uses material from
Britten's last opera **Death in Venice**. . . [and] is one of Britten's most
haunting inspirations.*

Peter Heyworth, *The Observer*, 2 January 1977

The Sword in the Stone: Concert Suite (1939)

chamber ensemble of seven players

Compiled by Oliver Knussen and Colin Matthews (1983)

Duration 10 mins

fl.cl.bsn - tpt.trbn - perc(1): BD/SD/TD/susp.cym/
hi-hat/tgl/wdbl/gong/glsp - harp

FP: 14.6.83, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings:
Aldeburgh Festival Chamber Ensemble/Oliver Knussen

Score 50870 7 on sale, parts for hire

Three Divertimenti (1936)

string quartet

Duration 12 mins

March; Waltz; Burlesque

FP: 25.2.36, Wigmore Hall, London: Stratton String Quartet

Study score 50668 2 and parts 50669 0 on sale

Three Divertimenti

*The music is quite superbly laid out for the medium. . . After the
piquant 'March', with its characteristic double-stopped unisons,
glissandos and grace note motives, and the elegant 'Waltz' whose initial
simplicity moves to a surprising complexity, the final 'Burlesque'
generates almost symphonic impetus through its Sibelian tremolandos
and ostinatos; altogether a brilliant and attractive addition to the
repertory. . .*

The Daily Telegraph, 5 January 1983

CHORAL

A.M.D.G. (1939)

Ad majorem Dei gloriam - 7 settings of Gerard Manley Hopkins for unaccompanied SATB chorus

Duration 17 mins

Text: Gerard Manley Hopkins (Eng)

Prayer I; Rosa Mystica; God's Grandeur; Prayer II; O Deus, ego amo te; The Soldier; Heaven-Haven

FP (complete): 21.8.84, Purcell Room: London Sinfonietta Voices/Terry Edwards

Score 50816 2 on sale

A.M.D.G.

All Britten's fertile inventiveness of the 1939-49 period is here at its most prolific . . . an exciting example of Britten at his most virtuosic . . .

Michael Kennedy, *Gramophone*, October 1988

. . . the American period in Britten's early life has recently proved to be a rich vein and it has now revealed a group of seven part-songs on which the composer was working when he arrived in the U.S. Its ideas are strong and simple, the music strikingly interprets the essential thought within each of the poems. . . a fine and intellectually rigorous piece that rewards repeated listening. . .

Richard Fairman, *Financial Times*, November 1988

The Building of the House (1967)

Overture with or without chorus

See under *Orchestral*

Carry Her Over the Water (1941)

Partsong from 'Paul Bunyan' for unaccompanied SSATTBB chorus

Duration 1 min

Text: W.H. Auden (Eng)

Score 50594 5 (fp) on sale

Children's Crusade (Kinderkreuzzug) Op 82 (1969)

Ballad for children's voices and small orchestra

Duration 19 mins

Chorus of voices with 9 solo parts (5 trebles, 3 altos, 1 deep alto or tenor) - 2 pnos - small organ (chamber or elec) - 6 soli tuned perc: gong/ped drum/3 susp.cym/wdbl/tgl/SD/tabor/bells/tamb/2 glsp/TD/xyl/scraper/tam-t - large tuned/untuned perc group

Text: Bertolt Brecht (trans. Hans Keller) (Ger/Eng)

Written for the 50th Anniversary of Save the Children Fund

FP: 19.5.69, St Paul's Cathedral, London: Wandsworth School Boys' Choir/Russell Burgess

Full score 50330 6, chorus part 50332 2 on sale, parts for hire

Chorale after an old French carol (1944)

unaccompanied SSAATTBB chorus

Duration 4 mins

Text: W. H. Auden (Eng)

Commissioned by the BBC

FP: 24.12.44, BBC Radio: BBC Singers/Leslie Woodgate

Score 51283 6 on sale

Children's Crusade

The musical textures are simple, austere, the tragic story - unfolding like a troped plainchant - broken by sinister fortissimo sound-clusters or sustained by soft murmurs, eddies of wind and snow, the sound of distant guns, the narrative detail pointed and contrasted by short vocal solos. A work of powerful pity and anger, compassion, and quiet, sad beauty. . .

Dominic Gill, *Financial Times*, 20 May 1969

. . . the final comment on the children's death - 'Searching for a land where peace is' - was as compelling as anything in the War Requiem.

Edward Greenfield, *The Guardian*, 20 May 1969

Christ's Nativity (1931)

Christmas Suite for unaccompanied SATB chorus (div)

Duration 16 mins

Christ's Nativity; Sweet was the Song; Preparations; New Prince, New Pomp; Carol of King Cnut

Text: Henry Vaughan, William Ballet's Lute Book, Christ Church M.S, Robert Southwell, C.W.Stubbs (Eng)

FP: 14.6.91, Aldeburgh Festival, St Edmund's Church, Southwold: Britten Singers/Stephen Wilkinson

Score 51513 4 on sale

The Company of Heaven (1937)

Cantata for speaker(s), soprano and tenor soloists, SATB chorus, timpani, organ and strings

Duration 20 or 45 mins (short vrsn is without narration)

timp - organ - strings

Text: various selected by R Ellis Roberts (Eng)

Commissioned by the BBC

FP: 29.9.37, BBC Radio: Felix Aylmer/Ian Dawson/Stewart Rome/Sophie Wyss (sop)/Peter Pears (ten)/ BBC Chorus & Orchestra/Trevor Harvey

1st concert perf: 10.6.89, Snape Maltings: English CO/London Philharmonic Choir/Philip Brunelle

Full score 51188 0 and vocal score 51090 6 on sale, parts for hire

The Company of Heaven

Britten's glittering musical skills are everywhere in evidence, conjuring one brilliant stroke after another. . .

Malcolm Hayes, *The Daily Telegraph*, 11 June 1990

. . . the piece is notable for an opening depiction of chaos whose tugging rhythms recall the Lacrimosa from the Sinfonia da Requiem; for a remarkable account of War in Heaven for spoken male chorus with organ and brusque, Brittenesque timpani; and for a concluding setting of Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones that was clearly a trial run for the last movement of the 1948 cantata St Nicholas.

Nicholas Williams, *The Independent*, 11 June 1990

Jubilate Deo (1934)

SATB chorus and organ

Duration 3 mins

Text: Psalm 100 (Eng)

Score 50724 7 on sale

Lullaby of Dream Shadows (1941)

from 'Paul Bunyan'

SATB chorus and orchestra

Duration 6 mins

1.picc.1.1.bcl.asax.1 - 2221 - timp - perc(1): SD/tgl/
susp.cym - pno - harp - strings

Text: W. H. Auden (Eng)

Full score and parts for hire

The Oxen (1967)

Carol for women's voices (SA) and piano

Duration 3 mins

Text: Thomas Hardy (Eng)

Score 50167 2 on sale

Praise We Great Men (1976)

SATB soloists, SATB chorus with orchestra

Unfinished fragment edited for performance by Colin Matthews (1985)

Duration 7 mins

3(II+III=picc).2(II=ca).2(II=bcl).2 - 42(2/1)0 - timp - perc(2):
BD/cyms/vib/gls - pno - harp - strings

Text: Edith Sitwell (Eng)

FP: 11.8.85, Snape Maltings: Marie McLaughlin/Heather Harper/Philip Langridge/Richard Jackson/Philharmonia Chorus & Orchestra/Mstislav Rostropovich

Full score, vocal score and parts for hire

Sacred and Profane Op 91 (1975)

Eight Medieval Lyrics for unaccompanied SSATB chorus

Duration 15 mins

Text: Anon (early English, with pronunciation guide)

St Godric's Hymn; I mon waxe wod; Lenten is come; The long night; Yif ic of luve can; Carol; Ye that pasen by; A death

FP: 14.9.75, Snape Maltings: Wilbye Consort of Voices/Peter Pears

Score 50086 2 on sale

Sacred and Profane

Britten returns to simple madrigalian devices with supreme confidence and dexterity.

Gillian Widdicombe, Financial Times, 16 September 1975

Some are devoutly religious, others deal passionately with unhappy love or lovingly with nature; there is one that grimly, drastically ponders death. The deceptively simple sparseness of the works fits ideally to Britten's characteristic lightness of touch, to his elusive artfulness that never turns academic or doctrinaire.

Peter Stadlen, The Daily Telegraph, 17 September 1975

Sweet was the Song (1931, re-written 1966)

Carol for unaccompanied women's voices (SSAA)

Duration 3 mins

Text: William Ballet's Lute Book (Eng)

FP: 15.6.66, Aldeburgh Festival, Aldeburgh Parish Church: Purcell Singers/Imogen Holst

Score 50090 0 on sale

Included also in Christ's Nativity (see p.8)

The Sycamore Tree (1930, re-written 1967)

Carol for unaccompanied SATB chorus

Duration 2 mins

Text: Traditional (Eng)

FP: 19.6.68, Aldeburgh Festival, Aldeburgh Parish Church: Ambrosian Singers/Philip Ledger

Score 50096 X on sale

The Twelve Apostles (1962)

solo voice, unison chorus and piano

Duration 2 mins

Text: Traditional Song 'I'll Sing you one, oh' (Eng)

FP: 16.6.62, Aldeburgh Festival, Aldeburgh Parish Church: Peter Pears/London Boy Singers/Benjamin Britten

Score 50595 3 on sale

Voices for Today Op 75 (1965)

Anthem for boy's chorus, double SATB chorus and organ (ad lib)

Duration 10 mins

Text: Virgil's 'Eclogue IV' (Latin) and sentences from world literature (Eng)

Written for the 20th Anniversary of the United Nations

FP: Simultaneous triple première in London, New York and Paris, 24.10.65

Royal Festival Hall, London: LSO Chorus/ Choristers of Westminster Abbey/Ralph Downes/ Istvan Kertesz/ Douglas Guest

USA, UN General Assembly Hall, New York: Schola Cantorum/ Farmingdale Boys' Choir/Hugh Ross/Arpad Darazs

France, Maison de l'ORTF, Paris: French Radio Choir/ Jacques Jouineau/Jean-Paul Kreder

Score 50020 X on sale

Voices for Today

Every phrase rings with memorable and telling conviction. ... a work of startling invention and beauty.

The Times Educational Supplement, 17 June 1966

... a masterly essay in vocal sonorities, and in melodies which, note by note, build their harmonies. ...

Andrew Porter, Financial Times, 25 October 1965

A Wealden Trio - The Song of the Women

(1929 re-written 1967)

Carol for unaccompanied SSA chorus

Duration 3 mins

Text: Ford Madox Ford (Eng)

FP: 19.6.68, Aldeburgh Festival, Aldeburgh Parish Church:
Ambrosian Singers/Philip Ledger

Score 50079 X on sale

Welcome Ode Op 95 (1976)

young people's chorus (SAB) and orchestra

Duration 8 mins

March; Jig (orchestra); Roundel; Modulation (orchestra);
Canon

2222 - 4231 - timp(=SD) - perc(3): BD/SD/cyms/
susp.cym/tgl/tamb/xyl - pno - strings

Alternative orch: 2121 - 2220 - timp - perc(2): BD/SD/
cyms/susp.cym/tgl/tamb - strings

Text: 17th & 18th Century Lyrics (Eng)

Written for the occasion of Her Majesty the Queen's
Silver Jubilee visit to Ipswich

FP: 11.7.77, Corn Exchange, Ipswich: Suffolk
Schools' Choir and Orchestra/Keith Shaw

Full score 51102 3, vocal score 50526 0 on sale, parts for hire

Whoso Dwelleth under the Defence of the Most High (1937)

*Anthem for SATB choir unaccompanied
from 'The Company of Heaven'*

Duration 4 mins

Text: from Psalm 91 (Eng)

Score 51138 4 on sale

VOCAL

Ballads from 'Paul Bunyan' (1941)

Three songs for voice and piano or guitar

Duration each 3-4 mins

Text: W.H. Auden (Eng)

The Cold Wind Blew; The Spring Came and the Summer
and Fall; So Helson Smiled and Bunyan Smiled

Score 50653 4 on sale

Beware! (1922/6)

Three early songs for medium voice and piano

Duration each c.3 mins

O that I had ne'er been married (Robert Burns); Beware
(Henry Longfellow); Epitaph: The Clerk (Herbert Asquith)
(Eng)

Score 50762 X on sale

A Birthday Hansel Op 92 (1975)

Song-cycle for high voice and harp

Duration 17 mins

Text: Robert Burns (Scottish dialect)

Birthday Song; My Early Walk; Wee Willie Gray; My
Hoggie; Afton Water; The Winter; Leezie Lindsay

Written at the special wish of Her Majesty the Queen for
her mother's 75th birthday, 4 August 1975

1st public perf: 9.1.76, Schloss Elmau, Germany: Peter
Pears/Osian Ellis

Score 50537 6 on sale

A Birthday Hansel

*... perfectly measured to Pears's voice. . . The Scottish traits in the
work are indeed pervasive. Gaelic humour is firmly underlined in the
two comic songs and 'Leezie Lindsay', the finale, goes with something
of a highland fling. But the pick of the bunch is the least Scots number,
'Afton Water', for its simple melodic charm. Each song, however, and
each linking harp interlude has its touches of mastery.*

The Daily Telegraph, 20 March 1976

Cabaret Songs (1937-39)

voice and piano

Duration each 2-5 mins

Text: W.H. Auden (Eng)

Funeral Blues; Tell me the truth about love; Johnny;
Calypso

Score 50577 5 on sale

Cabaret Songs (1937)

female voice and six-piece chamber ensemble

Arranged by Daryl Runswick (1990)

Duration each 2-5 mins

asax(=cl).tpt.vln.pno.db.drum kit

Text: W.H. Auden (Eng) (titles as above)

Score and parts for hire

Canticle IV: Journey of the Magi Op 86 (1971)

counter-tenor, tenor, baritone and piano

Duration 11 mins

Text: T. S. Eliot (Eng)

FP: 26.6.71, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings: James
Bowman/Peter Pears/John Shirley-Quirk/Benjamin
Britten

Score 50438 8 on sale

Canticle V: The Death of Saint Narcissus

Op 89 (1974)

tenor and harp

Duration 7 mins

Text: T. S. Eliot (Eng)

FP: 15.1.75, Schloss Elmau, Upper Bavaria: Peter Pears / Osian Ellis

Score 50230 X on sale

Canticle V

... elegantly poised and subtly articulated. ... the music fits the talents of Peter Pears and Osian Ellis like a second skin. In its austere sensuousness this piece seems like a pendant to Death in Venice. ...

Jeremy Noble, The Sunday Telegraph, 22 June 1975

A Cradle Song: Sleep, Beauty Bright (1938)

soprano, contralto and piano

Duration 3 mins

Text: William Blake (Eng)

FP: 23.7.94, Snape Maltings: Victoria Bell / Kathleen Roland / Julian West

Vocal score 51480 4 on sale

Eight Folk Song Arrangements (1976)

high voice and harp

Duration each 2-3 mins

Text: Traditional (Eng/Welsh)

Lord, I married me a wife; She's like the swallow; Lemady; Bonny at morn; I was lonely and forlorn; David of the White Rock; The False Knight; Bird Scarer's Song

Written for Peter Pears and Osian Ellis

Score 50564 3 on sale

Eight Folk Song Arrangements (1976)

medium voice and piano

Piano version by Colin Matthews

Duration each 2-3 mins

Text: Traditional (Eng/Welsh) (titles as above)

Score 50576 7 on sale

Four Burns Songs

from 'A Birthday Hansel' (1975)

high voice and piano

Piano version by Colin Matthews

Duration each 2-4 mins

Text: Robert Burns (Scottish dialect)

Afton Water; Wee Willie Gray; The Winter; My Hoggie

Score 50547 3 on sale

Inkslinger's Aria (1941)

from 'Paul Bunyan'

tenor soloist, TB chorus and orchestra

Duration 5 mins

0000 - 0221 - timp - perc(1): SD - pno - harp - strings

Text: W. H. Auden (Eng)

Full score and parts for hire

Phaedra Op 93 (1975)

Dramatic cantata for mezzo-soprano and small orchestra

Duration 15 mins

timp - perc(2): t.bell/cyms/tam-t/TD/BD/susp.cym - harpsichord - strings

Text: Robert Lowell after Racine's Phèdre (Eng)

FP: 16.6.76, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings: English CO / Janet Baker / Stuart Bedford (harpsichord)

Full score 51099 X, vocal score 50521 X on sale, parts for hire

Phaedra

... a work of overwhelming force and certainty, perhaps even his most brilliant achievement since Curlew River.

Stephen Walsh, The Observer, 20 June 1976

A stunning experiment in the field of dramatic music. ...

Peter Stadlen, The Daily Telegraph, 17 June 1976

... has an extraordinary bleakness, like cold stone in winter sunlight. The instruments, mainly strings and percussion, are systematically drained of color, yet the final moments offer some of the most delicate orchestration ever written.

Bernard Holland, The New York Times, 19 February 1994

In effect Britten has been inspired to create an opera in microcosm. ... its concentration in four tautly-drawn sections, ending in a powerfully Purcellian death scene, speaks in a recognisably individual Britten voice, moulded to the art of a great singing actress. ...

Edward Greenfield, The Guardian, 17 June 1976

The Poet's Echo Op 76 (1965)

Six poems of Pushkin for high voice and piano

Duration 16 mins

Text: Pushkin (Russian/Eng/Ger)

Echo; My heart. . . ; Angel; The Nightingale and the Rose; Epigram; Lines written during a sleepless night

FP: 2.12.65, U.S.S.R, Small Hall of Conservatoire of Music, Moscow: Galina Vishnevskaya / Mstislav Rostropovich

Score 50035 8 on sale

The Poet's Echo

... among the most delicately laid out, appealing, and atmospherically sensitive music he has composed.

The Times, 4 July 1966

The freshness is enchanting but there is an elliptical quality to it that confers a strange note of regret and even puzzlement. It is most openly marked in 'The nightingale and the rose'; but the final song. . . is a striking addition to Britten's range over the music of night and indeed crystallises most clearly this whole vein of his imagination.

The Sunday Telegraph, 10 July 1966

Quatre Chansons Françaises (1928)

soprano and small orchestra

Duration 15 mins

2.1.2.bcl.2 - 4000 - perc(1): susp.cym - pno - harp - strings

Text: Hugo and Verlaine (French)

Nuits de Juin; Sagesse; L'Enfance; Chanson d'Automne

1st broadcast perf: 30.3.80, BBC Radio 3: Heather Harper/
English CO/Steuart Bedford

1st concert peerf: 10.6.80, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape

Maltings: Heather Harper/English Chamber

Orchestra/Steuart Bedford

Full score 50674 7, vocal score 50651 8 on sale, parts for hire

Quatre Chansons Françaises

... real masterpieces.

Peter Stadlen, The Daily Telegraph, 12 June 1980

... the sophistication of a young Ravel.

Edward Greenfield, The Guardian, 12 June 1980

Already in these settings... are displayed some of the major dramatic themes - most notably, the loss of innocence - that Britten would return to again and again throughout his career... his emotional response to the texts through music was nothing short of wondrous... The songs are tender, touching, beguilingly beautiful.

John van Rhein, Chicago Tribune, 20 May 1983

The Red Cockatoo & other songs (1935-1960)

high voice and piano

Duration each 1-4 mins

1. A poison tree (Blake); 2. When you're feeling like expressing your affection (Auden); 3. Not even summer yet (Burra); 4. The red cockatoo (Po Chü-i, trans. Waley); 5. Wild with passion (Beddoes); 6. If thou wilt ease thine heart (Beddoes); 7. Cradle Song (MacNeice); 8. Birthday song for Erwin (Duncan); 9. Um Mitternacht (Goethe)

FP: No 1. 22.11.86, Wigmore Hall, London: Henry Herford/Ian Brown

Nos 2,5,6,7 & 9. 15.6.92, Aldeburgh Festival, Blythburgh Church: Lucy Shelton/Ian Brown

No 3. 1937: Nell Moody/Gordon Thorne

No 4. 17.6.91, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings: Lucy Shelton/Ian Brown

No 8. 22.11.88, Royal College of Music, London: Christopher Hobkirk/Rosalind Jones

Score 51503 7 on sale

The Red Cockatoo & other songs (1935-1960)

medium/low voice and piano

(titles as above)

Score 51264 X on sale

Songs and Proverbs of William Blake Op 74 (1965)

Song-cycle for baritone and piano

Duration 22 mins

Text: William Blake (Eng)

Proverb I; London; Proverb II; The

Chimney-Sweeper; Proverb III; A Poison Tree;

Proverb IV; The Tyger; Proverb V; The Fly; Proverb

VI; Ah, Sun-flower; Proverb VII; Every Night and

every Morn

FP: 24.6.65, Aldeburgh Festival, Jubilee Hall:

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau/Benjamin Britten

Score 50015 3 on sale

Songs and Proverbs of William Blake

... the finest cycle that Britten has yet given us... it embraces both the light and the dark sides of Britten's complex musical personality... its impact was overwhelming.

Peter Heyworth, The Observer, 27 June 1965

My feeling is that these are the most profound songs Britten has yet composed.

Andrew Porter, Financial Times, 7 December 1965

Tit for Tat (1928-31 re-written 1968)

Five settings from boyhood of poems by Walter de la Mare for medium voice and piano

Duration 9 mins

Text: Walter de la Mare (Eng)

A Song of Enchantment; Autumn; Silver; Vigil;

Tit for Tat

FP: 23.6.69, Aldeburgh Festival, Jubilee Hall: John

Shirley-Quirk/Benjamin Britten

Score 50292 X on sale

Who are these Children? Op 84 (1969)

Lyrics, Rhymes and Riddles by William Soutar for tenor and piano

Duration 19 mins

Text: William Soutar (Eng/Scottish dialect)

A Riddle (The Earth); A Laddie's Sang; Nightmare;

Black Day; Bed-time; Slaughter; A Riddle (The

Child You Were); The Lark Lad; Who are these

Children?; Supper; The Children; The Auld Aik

Written for Tertie Liebenenthal's 700th National Gallery of Scotland Concert

FP (complete): 4.5.71, National Gallery, Edinburgh:

Peter Pears/Benjamin Britten

Score 50394 2 on sale

New edition to be published in 1997 includes an appendix of 3 additional Soutar settings: **Dawtie's Devotion, The Gully and Tradition**

PIANO

Cadenzas to Mozart's Piano Concerto in Eb K482 (1966)

Duration 6 mins

Written for Sviatoslav Richter

FP: July 1966, Tours: Sviatoslav Richter

Score 50091 9 on sale

Five Waltzes (1923-5 re-written 1969)

Duration each 2-3 mins

Score 50074 9 on sale

Five Waltzes

... innocent and fresh. ... a sheer delight from beginning to end.

American Record Guide, November/December 1991

Moderato and Nocturne (1940)

from Sonatina Romantica

Duration 7 mins

1st public perf: 16.6.83, Aldeburgh Festival, Jubilee Hall:
George Benjamin

Score 50878 2 on sale

Three Character Pieces (1930)

Duration each 2-3 mins

Poco allegro vivace ('John'); Poco andante grazioso
(('Daphne')); Poco presto e molto capriccioso ('Michael')

FP: 28.7.89, St Mary's Centre, Chester Summer Music
Festival: Sarah Briggs

Score 51089 2 on sale

Twelve Variations (1931)

Duration 8 mins

FP: 22.6.86, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings: Murray
Perahia

Score 50946 0 on sale

Twelve Variations

*... a happy combination of Britten's lyricism with a somewhat
Hindemithian neoclassicism. ... an eminently satisfying traversal of
textures and moods, from rugged fanfares to the most delicate melisma,
while retaining an engaging, effortless-seeming modesty and sweetness.*

American Record Guide, November/December 1991

Two Lullabies for Two Pianos (1936)

two pianos - four hands

Lullaby; Lullaby for a Retired Colonel

Duration each 3 mins

1st public perf: 22.6.88, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape
Maltings: Peter Frankl/Tamás Vásáry

2-piano score 51161 9 on sale

INSTRUMENTAL

Elegy (1930)

solo viola

Duration 6 mins

FP: 22.6.84, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings: Nobuko Imai

Score 50883 9 on sale

Nocturnal after John Dowland Op 70 (1963)

Reflections on 'Come Heavy Sleep'

solo guitar

Duration 14 mins

Written for Julian Bream

FP: 12.6.64, Aldeburgh Festival, Jubilee Hall: Julian Bream

Score 50005 6 on sale

Nocturnal after John Dowland

*The music proceeds strongly and regularly towards the point when the
guitar begins to play Dowland's 'Come, heavy sleep', then the listener
realizes that Britten has not merely been inventing glamorous or piquant
sounds for Mr Bream to realize. This **Nocturnal** is a lucid creative analysis
of Dowland's song, it holds the attention at many levels, and strikes deeper
than at any one of them.*

The Times, 13 June 1964

Reflection (1930)

viola and piano

Duration 3½ mins

1st concert perf: 24.10.96, Kleine Zaal, Concertgebouw,
Amsterdam: Nobuko Imai/Ellen Corver

Piano score and part 51752 8 on sale

Reveille (1937)*Concert study for violin and piano*

Duration 5 mins

Written for Antonio Brosa

FP: 12.4.37, Wigmore Hall: Antonio Brosa/Franz Reizenstein

*Piano score and part 50673 9 on sale***Suite for Harp Op 83 (1969)***solo harp*

Duration 14 mins

Overture; Toccata; Nocturne; Fugue; Hymn (St Denio)

Written for Osian Ellis

FP: 24.6.69, Aldeburgh Festival, Jubilee Hall: Osian Ellis

*Score 50360 8 on sale***Tema 'Sacher' (1976)***solo cello*

Duration 1 min

Written for Paul Sacher's 70th birthday

FP: 2.5.76, Tonhalle, Zurich: Mstislav Rostropovich

*Score 51107 4 on sale***Temporal Variations (1936)***oboe and piano*

Duration 13 mins

FP: 12.12.36, Wigmore Hall: Natalie Caine/Adolph Hallis

*Score and part 50591 0 on sale***Three Suites for Cello****Suite Op 72 (1964)**

Duration 21 mins

FP: 27.6.65, Aldeburgh Festival, Aldeburgh Parish Church: Mstislav Rostropovich

Second Suite Op 80 (1967)

Duration 22 mins

FP: 17.6.68, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings: Mstislav Rostropovich

Third Suite Op 87 (1971)

Duration 22 mins

FP: 21.12.74, Snape Maltings: Mstislav Rostropovich

*Score 50949 5 on sale***Suite for Cello***Few finer works than this for solo cello have been written since Bach.*

Noel Goodwin, Daily Express, 27 June 1965

Third Suite for Cello*The musical invention is very rich, the cello writing even more masterly than before. . . the most extraordinary individual movement is surely the Recitative, a fantastic succession of special effects put to idiosyncratic uses.*

William Mann, The Times, June 1974

Two Insect Pieces (1935)*oboe and piano*

The Grasshopper; The Wasp

Duration 3 & 2 mins

Written for Sylvia Spencer

FP(public): 7.3.79, Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester: Janet Craxton/Margot Wright

Piano score and part 50592 9 on sale

SYMPHONIC WIND BAND

The Building of the House Op 79 (1967)*symphonic wind band (with optional SATB chorus)**Arranged by Thad Marciniak*

Duration 6 mins

3.2.Ebcl.3.acl.bcl.2asax.tsax.bsax - 4.3.3.bar.2 - timp - perc(2) - (SATB chorus) - string bass

*Score and parts on sale (fp)***Paul Bunyan Overture (1941)***symphonic wind band**Arranged by Charles Fussell*

Duration 7 mins

picc.2.2.Ebcl.3.acl.bcl.2.asax.tsax.bsax - 4.3.3.euph.2 - piano - timp - perc(4) - string bass

Score and parts on sale (UK: Studio Music; USA: Hal Leonard)

BRASS ENSEMBLE/BAND

Russian Funeral (1936)

brass and percussion ensemble

Duration 6 mins

3 tpt.(4 hn).2 trbn.btrbn.tuba - perc(1):

susp.cym/SD/TD/BD

FP: 8.3.36, Westminster Theatre: London Labour Choral Union/Alan Bush

Score 50600 3 on sale, set of parts (fp) 50599 6 on sale

Russian Funeral (1936)

brass band

Arranged by Ray Farr

Duration 6 mins

Score and parts on sale (Studio Music)

The Spider and The Fly (1939)

brass band

Arranged by Philip Sparke

Duration 4 mins

Score and parts on sale (Studio Music)

REALIZATIONS

J S Bach: Five Spiritual Songs

Geistliche Lieder for high voice and piano

Duration each c.2 mins

Text: German with English translations by Peter Pears

Gedenke doch, mein Geist, zurücke; Kommt, Seelen, dieser

Tag; Liebster Herr Jesu; Komm, süßer Tod; Bist du bei mir

FP: 18.6.69, Aldeburgh Festival, Blythburgh Church: Peter Pears/Benjamin Britten

Score 50426 4 on sale

J S Bach: St John Passion (1723)

SATB soli, SATB chorus and orchestra

Edited by Benjamin Britten and Imogen Holst, English translation by Peter Pears and Imogen Holst

Duration 120 mins

Text: (Eng)

2.2(=oboe d'amore).0.1 - 0000 - organ - lute - strings

FP: 9.4.71, Snape Maltings: cond. Benjamin Britten

Full score, chorus, vocal part for hire, continuo parts for hire or on sale

Henry Purcell: The Fairy Queen

Shortened version of the Masque devised for concert performance by Peter Pears. Edited and realized by Benjamin Britten and Imogen Holst

2 sopranos, mezzo-soprano, 2 counter-tenors, 2 tenors, 2 basses. SATB chorus

OR

2 sopranos, mezzo-soprano, counter-tenor, tenor, bass. SATB chorus

Duration 96 mins

Text: anon., after Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' (Eng)

2(=picc).2.ca.0.1 - 0200 - timp - harpsichord - strings

FP: 25.6.67, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings: cond. Benjamin Britten

Full score and parts for hire, vocal score 50122 2 and chorus part 50121 4 on sale

Henry Purcell: Let the Dreadful Engines of Eternal Will

Voice (baritone or tenor) and piano

Duration 6 mins

Text: Thomas D'Urfey (Eng)

FP: 26.6.71, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings: John Shirley-Quirk/Benjamin Britten

Score 51285 2 on sale

Henry Purcell: A Miscellany of Songs

one/two voices and piano

Duration 18 mins

1. The Knotting Song (Sedley) for high/medium voice; 2. O Solitude (Philips) for high/medium voice; 3. Celamene (D'Urfey) for soprano and tenor; 4. Dulcibella, whene'er I sue for a kiss (Henley) for soprano or tenor, and bass; 5. When Myra sings (Granville) for soprano or tenor and bass

FP: No 1. 19.11.39, Hotel Henry Perkins, Riverhead, New York: Peter Pears/Benjamin Britten

No 2. 11.3.55, Wigmore Hall, London: Peter Pears/Benjamin Britten

No 3. 10.2.46, Cambridge Arts Theatre: Joan Cross/Peter Pears/Benjamin Britten

Nos 4 & 5. 26.6.71, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings: James Bowman (4 only)/Peter Pears (5 only)/John Shirley-Quirk/Benjamin Britten

Score 51474 X on sale

Henry Purcell: When Night her Purple Veil

Secular cantata for baritone, two violins, cello continuo and keyboard continuo

Duration 15 mins

Text: Anon (Eng)

FP: 24.6.65, Aldeburgh Festival, Jubilee Hall: Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau/members of the Albeni String Quartet/Benjamin Britten

Continuo score with parts 50178 8 on sale

Benjamin Britten 1913-1976



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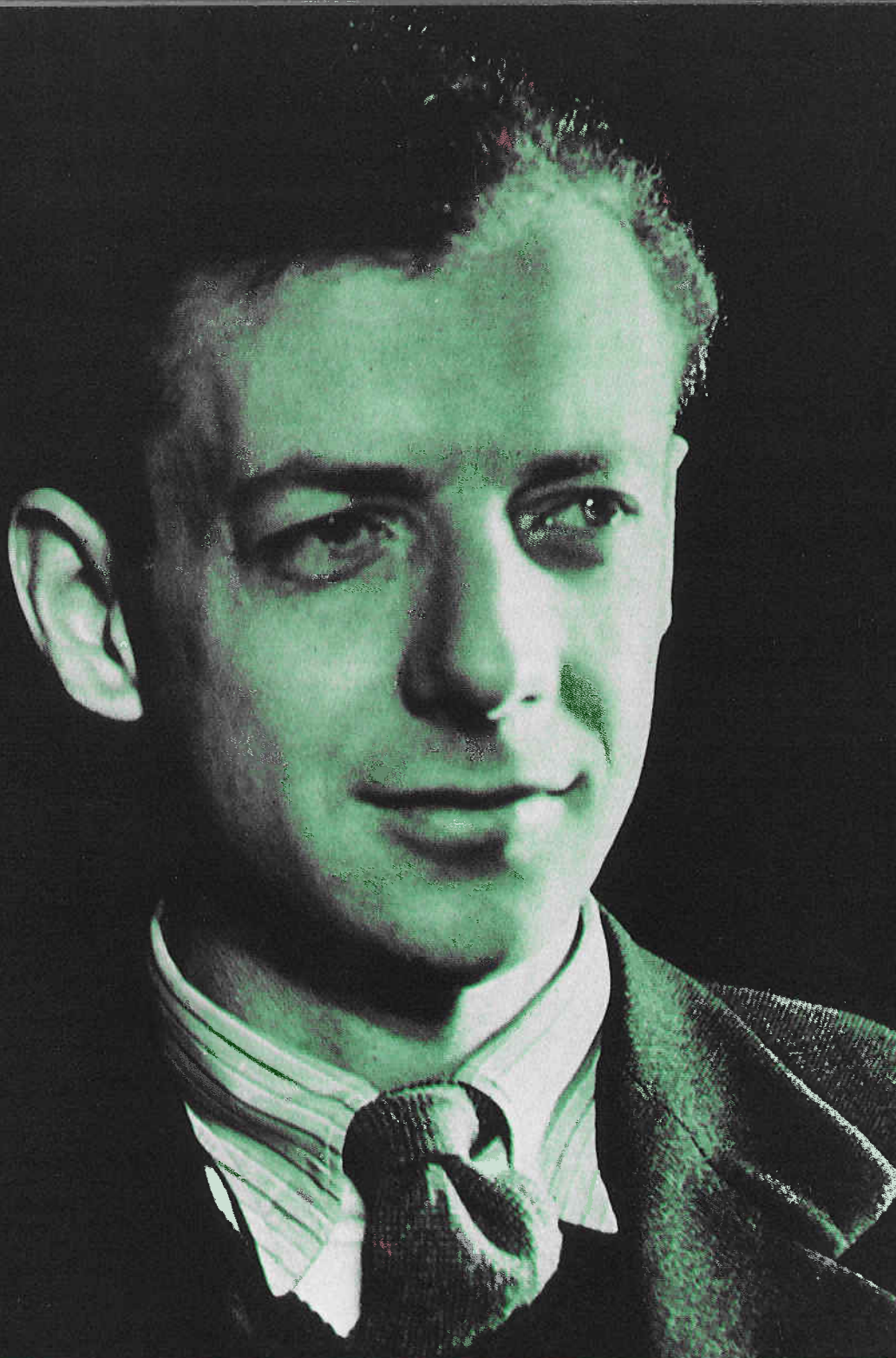
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Introductory Note

Twenty or so years after his death, we have a more complete picture of Benjamin Britten as a composer than during his lifetime. Works from his youth and works that he suppressed have been played and published; the late music can now be seen as a distinct phase, in some ways as forward looking and as influential as Stravinsky's. Above all, Britten's central place in the history of 20th-century music seems more and more assured. He is one of very few composers born this century whose whole **output** – from operas to solo pieces – has gained a secure place in the repertoire.

Britten was born into a middle-class family in Lowestoft, Suffolk, on 22 November 1913. His mother encouraged him to learn the piano and the viola, and to compose; by the age of fourteen he had written over 100 works. Little of this abundant juvenilia has so far been heard, but in 1969 Britten himself selected **Five Waltzes** for piano, composed between 1923 and 1925, for publication: they are not simply charming but have the feel of genuine music. In 1927 he began studying composition with Frank Bridge, and immediately made huge strides. The **Quatre Chansons Françaises** (1928) show an extraordinary sophistication both in the choice of texts and in the handling of the orchestra. A few years later he was writing chamber works, such as the **Quartettino** for string quartet, whose up-to-date musical language rivals anything being written in Britain at the time. The young Britten was iconoclastic, often scornful of his older, less gifted contemporaries; his music was brilliant and unsentimental. He was not only the cleverest composer around, but also the most musical.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s Britten was tirelessly prolific; his opused works are matched by the vast quantity of incidental music of all kinds – for films, plays and especially BBC radio – that he produced with unflagging industry. His 1939 score for J.B.Priestley's play, **Johnson over Jordan**, is a good example of the type of music that he was able to compose in a few days, yet with undiminished care and skill. The 'Spider and the Fly' shows his grasp of the popular musical idiom of the time, an interest that is fully evident in his first opera **Paul Bunyan** (1941), which sometimes uncannily anticipates *Oklahoma!* and contains some of the most invigorating music he ever wrote. Had he stayed in America, Britten might well have written Broadway hits as well as operas. As it was, his two years in America confirmed him as a tonal composer at a time when the idea of tonality was under threat – and had been questioned by Britten himself in some of his earlier music. The radiant diatonicism of **Young Apollo** – his first response to American light and space – symbolizes this fresh start.

In 1964 Donald Mitchell instigated the foundation of Faber Music with the prime purpose of taking over the publication of Britten's music. Britten was intimately concerned with the company as a director until his death in 1976. One of the first Britten works to be published by Faber, **Curlew River**, also marked a new departure for him. It presented a sparer, leaner style, with use of heterophony and greater rhythmic independence for the individual instruments, which was developed in two

further Church Parables, **The Burning Fiery Furnace** and **The Prodigal Son**, and spills over into almost all his late pieces. Britten's last twelve years also produced the opera **Death in Venice**, which sums up the conflict of innocence and experience that obsessed him all his life, three cello suites for Rostropovich which are the finest since Bach, and a string quartet – no. 3 – worthy to stand alongside Bartók. There is a special poignancy about the works of the final three years, composed after his only partially successful heart operation: they bravely confront death, whether openly, as in **Phaedra**, or secretly, as in the last movement of the **Suite on English Folk Tunes** – a small masterpiece which, even if nothing else of Britten's were to survive, would mark him as a great composer.

David Matthews

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*Above left: John Piper's original set for the stage première of **Owen Wingrave** at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in 1973. (photo Reg Wilson)*

*Above right: Peter Pears as Aschenbach in the first London performance of **Death in Venice** at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in 1973. (photo Nigel Luckhurst)*



*Bottom left: A scene from the English Music Theatre Company's production of **Paul Bunyan**, with Neil Jenkins as Johnny Inkslinger and Iris Saunders as Tiny. (photo Nigel Luckhurst)*

Curlew River Op 71 (1964)

Parable for Church Performance

Duration 71 minutes

In Tokyo in 1956 Britten attended two performances of the 15th-century Noh-play, 'The Sumida River', which made a profound impression on him. The simple story; the austerity, formalism and deliberate pace of the action; the mixture of chanting, speech and singing; the all-male cast with a handful of instrumentalists – all these offered what he described as a 'totally new operatic experience'. In collaboration with the poet William Plomer he conceived the transplantation of the original play to an English setting, presented along the lines of a medieval religious drama with plainsong taking the place of the traditional ancient Japanese music.

Monks and acolytes make up the cast of the Parable which tells the most moving of stories: a demented mother (a tenor role) seeks her lost son and finally discovers his grave by the side of the Curlew River.

Cast: Madwoman (T), Ferryman (Bar), Traveller (Bar), Spirit of the Boy (Treble), Leader of the Pilgrims/Abbot (B), Chorus of Pilgrims (3T, 3Bar, 2B), 3 Assistants (boys - silent roles)

The Instrumentalists (Lay Brothers):
fl(=picc) - horn - viola.double bass - harp - perc(1):
5 small untuned drums/5 small bells/
1 large tuned gong - chamber organ

Libretto: William Plomer, after the Japanese Noh-play Sumidagawa (Eng). Translations: Ludwig Landgraf (Ger), Jean-Marie Martin (Fr)

FP: 13.6.64, Aldeburgh Festival, Orford Church: English Opera Group

Full score (cased) (Eng/Ger) 50001 3 on sale, rehearsal score (Eng/Ger) 50002 1 on sale, rehearsal score (Fr) for hire, libretto (Eng) 50094 3 on sale, parts for hire

Curlew River

The story. . . is probably the simplest and, externally, most uneventful that has ever been enacted on a Western stage. The pace of the physical events is proportionally slow – and the pace of psychological, musical action proportionately quick. It is all over in one calm, exciting flash of absolutely continuous inspiration.

Hans Keller, The Spectator

. . . the sheer daring of Curlew River, the risky, perfectly achieved fusion of Noh play and medieval liturgical drama, the economy of means. . . and the faultless construction and pacing all add up to one of Britten's most startling and original achievements. . . And has any composer since the Gluck of Orfeo ed Euridice articulated in music the numbing pain of personal bereavement with such poignancy?

Rodney Milnes, The Times



Above: Robert Tear (kneeling) as The Madwoman in the English Opera Group's première production of *Curlew River* at the 1964 Aldeburgh Festival. (photo Dominic)

Left: Peter Pears (kneeling) as Nebuchadnezzar in the first performance of *The Burning Fiery Furnace* by the English Opera Group at the 1966 Aldeburgh Festival. (photo Dominic)

The Burning Fiery Furnace Op 77 (1966)

Second Parable for Church Performance

Duration 64 minutes

In Britten's second Parable the style of performance sustains the Noh tradition of *Curlew River*. But composer and librettist have here found the source of their inspiration in the familiar Biblical story of Ananias, Azarias and Misael. The music takes its point of departure from the plainsong, 'Salus aeterna', which recurs throughout a uniquely coloured score as a symbol of the Israelites' integrity. The figure of Nebuchadnezzar, the cult of 'the god of gold', and the resistance movement of the three exiles evoke themes of clear, contemporary significance.

Cast: Nebuchadnezzar (T), Astrologer/Abbot (Bar), Ananias (Bar), Misael (T), Azarias (B), Herald/Leader of Courtiers (Bar), Chorus of Courtiers (3T, 2Bar, 2B), 5 Attendants (Trebles)

The Instrumentalists (Lay Brothers): fl(=picc) - horn.alto trombone - viola.double bass (=Babylonian drum) - harp(=little harp) - perc(1): 5 small untuned drums/anvil(small untuned steel plate)/2 tuned wood blocks/lyra/glsp/Babylonian drum/multiple whip - chamber organ (=small cymbals)

Libretto: William Plomer, from the Book of Daniel (Eng). Translations: Ludwig Landgraf (Ger), Armand Bex (Fr)

FP: 9.6.66, Aldeburgh Festival, Orford Church: English Opera Group

Full score (cased) (Eng/Ger) 50721 2 on sale, full score (paper) (Eng/Ger) 50681 X on sale, rehearsal score (Eng/Ger) 50026 9 on sale, rehearsal score (Fr) for hire, libretto (Eng) 50088 9 on sale, parts for hire

The Burning Fiery Furnace

The range of the sound Britten draws from his voices and his handful of instruments hangs on in the mind – the flickering sting of his fire music, the stamping pagan violence of the Babylonian march as the players move round the church, the lash of his percussion, the clean treble voice that pierces the sound in the wonderful *Benedicite* in the furnace. It is a much richer score than *Curlew River*, and a more accessible one; and to hold the convention of these church parables with such an expansion of invention is an even more impressive demonstration of mastery. John Warrack, *The Sunday Telegraph*

The Prodigal Son Op 81 (1968)

Third Parable for Church Performance

Duration 72 minutes

Of all the parables in the New Testament, none has had quite such a universal and ever-renewed appeal as that of the Prodigal Son. With its unforgettable climax of reward and rejoicing being lavished not upon virtuous correctness but upon a sinner, this parable celebrates the triumph of forgiveness.

Cast: Tempter/Abbot (T), Father (B-Bar), Elder Son (Bar), Younger Son (T), Chorus of Servants (3T, 3Bar, 2B), 5 Young Servants (Trebles)

The Instrumentalists (Lay Brothers): afl(=fl) - horn.tpt - viola.double bass - harp - perc(1): 5 small untuned drums/ch.cym/conical gourd rattle/large tuned gong/3 wdbl - perc (on stage): small drum/cyms/tamb/sistrum/small bell-lyra - chamber organ

Libretto: William Plomer, from the New Testament (Eng). Translation: Hans Keller (Ger)

FP: 10.6.68, Aldeburgh Festival, Orford Church: English Opera Group

Full score (paper) (Eng/Ger) 50682 8 on sale, rehearsal score (Eng/Ger) 50231 8 on sale, libretto (Eng) 50270 9 on sale, parts for hire

The Prodigal Son

The Prodigal Son is the third of Britten's triptych of Church Parables. Each work is at once a ritual drama which strikes deeper at each enactment; a human drama which takes on new shades and shifts its inner tensions as the casts change; and a multilayered musical score which reveals new, beautiful secrets in its making each time it is heard.

Andrew Porter, *The Observer*

Britten's prodigious skill is apparent in every dimension of the score. His sense of timing is unerring. The least detail emerges with sculptural clarity and there is not a bar that does not serve a dramatic purpose, nor a note that is superfluous.

Peter Heyworth, *The Observer*

Death in Venice Op 88 (1973)

Opera in two acts

Duration 145 minutes (Act I - 80 mins, Act II - 65 mins)

Death in Venice was Britten's last opera, the culmination of the composer's unique contribution to twentieth-century operatic repertoire. The ageing novelist, Gustav von Aschenbach, seeks inspiration for his work in Venice and becomes infatuated by the beauty of a boy he sees on the beach. Tormented by guilt and unable to confess his love, he dies as the city is ravaged by plague.

Cast: Gustav von Aschenbach (T), the Traveller/multiple role (B-Bar), Voice of Apollo (Counter-tenor)

Small roles from SATB Chorus: 4S, 3C, 3T, 2Bar, B-Bar, B

Dancers: Polish Mother, Tadzio her son, her 2 Daughters, Governess, Jaschiu, Children, Strolling Players/Beach Attendants

Instrumentation: 2(=picc).2.2(II=bcl).2 - 2221 - timp - perc(5): 2 SD/2 TD/2 BD/tuned drum/3 tom-t/3 ch.dr/small drum/cyms/2 susp.cym/pair small cym/tamb/wdbl/tgl/2 whip/2 tuned gong/2 tam-t/wind machine/bells/bell tree/crot/vib/2 glsp/2 xyl/mar - pno - harp - strings (min 6.4.3.3.2)

Libretto: Myfanwy Piper, based on the novella by Thomas Mann (Eng). Translation: Claus Henneberg & Hans Keller (Ger)

Death in Venice

*Benjamin Britten has once again proved the impossible. Thomas Mann's **Death in Venice**, a compressed and intense story, an artist's inner monologue, lacking conversation, lacking plot, has against all odds become a great opera.*

Edward Greenfield, *The Guardian*

Britten's consummate skill as an opera composer has never been more apparent. In scene after scene he establishes atmosphere and dramatic points with uncanny rapidity and sureness of touch.

Peter Heyworth, *The Observer*

FP: 16.6.73, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings: English Opera Group/Peter Pears/John Shirley-Quirk/James Bowman/artists of Royal Ballet/children of Royal Ballet School/English Chamber Orchestra/Steuart Bedford

Full score (cased) (Eng/Ger) 50533 3 on sale, vocal score (Eng/Ger) 50514 7 on sale, chorus part (Eng/Ger) 50715 8 on sale, libretto (Eng) 51453 7 on sale, parts for hire

Owen Wingrave Op 85 (1971)

Opera in two acts

Duration 106 minutes (Act I - 64 mins, Act II - 42 mins)

Benjamin Britten's deep commitment to pacifism, so movingly evident in *War Requiem*, is also the central theme of *Owen Wingrave*. Set in England in 1895, the opera tells of a young man's rebellion against the military traditions of his family. In fighting for his pacifist ideals he proves himself as brave a soldier as any of his forebears.

Cast: Owen Wingrave (Bar), Spencer Coyle (B-Bar), Lechmere (T), Miss Wingrave (S), Mrs Coyle (S), Mrs Julian (S), Kate (M-S), General Sir Philip Wingrave (T), Ballad Singer (T), Colonel Wingrave and Young Wingrave (silent roles) Chorus: Trebles (off-stage)

Instrumentation: 2(II=picc).2.2(II=bcl+Ebcl).2(II=cbsn) - 2221 - timp - perc(3): SD/2 TD/BD/2 wdbl/whip/bell (in A)/3 susp.cym (large, medium + small)/cyms/small gong/large gong (=tam-t)/tom-t/vib/xyl/tamb - offstage perc: SD/BD/susp.cym - pno - harp - strings

Libretto: Myfanwy Piper, based on the short story by Henry James (Eng). Translations: Claus Henneberg and Karl Robert Marz (Ger); Armand Bex (Fr)

Commissioned by the Television Service of the BBC

FP: 16.5.71, BBC2 Television: Various/Boys of Wandsworth School Choir/English Chamber Orchestra/Benjamin Britten

Owen Wingrave

*Britten has packed his most skilful craftsmanship into **Owen Wingrave**. He uses a handful of musical techniques; among them, a percussive motif representing the military tradition of the Wingrave family, and a sequence of plain chords that recalls Billy Budd for the pacifist beliefs of Owen himself. . .*

Gillian Widdicombe, *The Financial Times*

One needs hardly emphasise how many threads from the deepest of Britten's preoccupations, formulated in wholly characteristic dramatic and musical images, are drawn together as the opera moves to its ironic close. These are major preoccupations and this is a major theatrical work, in which they are again pressed home with consummate art.

Donald Mitchell, *The Listener*

FP(stage): 10.5.73, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London: same cast/Steuart Bedford

Study score (Eng/Ger) 51542 8 on sale, vocal score (Eng/Ger) 50502 3 on sale, vocal score (Fr) for hire, chorus part (Eng/Ger) for hire, libretto (Eng) 50299 7 on sale, full score (Eng/Ger) for hire, parts for hire

Paul Bunyan Op 17 (1941 revised 1974)

Operetta in two acts with prologue

Duration 114 minutes (Prologue/Act I - 66 mins, Act II - 48 mins)

Paul Bunyan was Britten's first work for the musical theatre. From the start it was conceived for young singers and players to perform: there are big choruses, and many small parts rather than a few star roles. Its action moves swiftly, and its music is deliberately eclectic in style. Spoken dialogue is interspersed with catchy set numbers and there are narrative ballads - sung with guitar - to link the scenes.

The work is a parable of the development of the American continent from virgin forest to civilisation. Paul Bunyan, the folklore hero of the lumbermen, is the guiding spirit, heard but not seen. The human characters are sharply drawn as prototype figures: Helson, the man of brawn, but no brain; Inkslinger, the man of speculative intelligence; Slim, the successful charmer who marries the boss's daughter.

Cast: Voice of Paul Bunyan (spoken role), Johnny Inkslinger (T), Hot Biscuit Slim (T), Sam Sharkey (T), Ben Benny (B), Hel Helson (Bar), John Shears (Bar), Fido, a dog (high S), 2 cats - Moppet and Poppet (2M-S), Ballad Singer (T or Bar)

Small Roles from SATB Chorus: 4 Young Trees (2S, 2T), 3 Wild Geese (S, 2M-S), 4 Swedes (2T, 2B), Western Union Boy (T), Quartet of the Defeated (C, T, Bar, B), 4 Cronies (4Bar); Heron, Moon, Wind, Beetle, Squirrel (spoken roles)

Instrumentation: 2(II=picc).1.2(II=asax).bcl.1 - 2221 - timp(=perc) - perc(1): tgl/SD/TD/glsp/gong/BD+cym/cyms/wdbl/xyl/tamb/vib - pno(=cel) - harp - strings
For Ballad Interludes: violin - guitar (or banjo) - double bass

Alternative instr: 2 pianos and percussion

Libretto: W.H.Auden (Eng). Translation: Erich Fried (Ger)

Paul Bunyan

Catchy ballads, romantic numbers, parodies, character pieces, blues and big swinging choruses follow one another in rapid succession. But they do more than delight the ear. With a few simple strokes Britten again and again reveals an uncanny ability to seize the essence of a character or a situation.

Peter Heyworth, *The Observer*

FP: 5.5.41, Brander Matthews Hall, New York: Columbia Theatre Associates/New York Schola Cantorum/Hugh Ross

FP(revised version): 4.6.76, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings: English Music Theatre/Steuart Bedford

Full score (paper) (Eng) 50680 1 on sale, vocal score (Eng) 50538 4 on sale, chorus part (Eng) 50610 0 on sale, libretto (Eng) 50333 0 on sale, vocal score (Ger) for hire, full score (Ger) for hire, parts for hire



*Above: A scene from the 1996 French première production of **Owen Wingrave** by Atelier du Rhin. (photo Thierry Gachon)*

*Left: Robert Tear as Aschenbach and Paul Zeplichal as Tadzio in Glyndebourne Touring Opera's 1989 production of **Death in Venice**. (photo Guy Gravett)*

The Golden Vanity Op 78 (1966)

Vaudeville for boys and piano

Duration 17 minutes

The Golden Vanity is freely based on the old English ballad of the same name. It is a dramatic work for children, designed to be played on a stage or platform with the simplest of costumes and props and with the action mimed by the cast. It tells the story of a brave and enterprising cabin-boy who saves his ship and its cargo of gold by boring three holes in the side of the marauding pirate vessel ('The Turkish Galilee') but is cheated of his promised reward by the rascally captain and the bosun of 'The Golden Vanity' and perishes in his efforts to re-board the ship. There are rousing choruses for the contesting crews, vivid roles for the principals, and the colourful piano part is well within the scope of resourceful teacher/pianists.

Cast: the Captain (Alto), the Bosun (Treble), the Cabin-boy (Treble), Pirate Captain (Alto), Pirate Bosun (Treble)

Chorus: treble/alto chorus

Instrumentation: piano, drum

Libretto: Colin Graham, after the old English ballad (Eng).

Translations: Hans Keller (Ger), Mildrid Clary (Fr)

FP: 3.6.67, Aldeburgh Festival, Snape Maltings: Vienna Boys' Choir

Vocal score (Eng/Ger) 50106 0 on sale,
vocal score (Fr) 55492 X on sale (fp) or
for hire, chorus part (Eng/Ger) 50107 9,
on sale

The Golden Vanity

Britten once again proves his extraordinary genius in exploiting the musical possibilities of young voices. . . it would be hard to imagine a more charming or better mimed stage romp.

Felix Aprahamian, The Sunday Times

*Sooner or later somebody will dub this work "Mini-Budd". Not without cause, since there are many lines which recall the atmosphere of the earlier maritime opera. . . there are thematic ideas, too, that bring Billy Budd to mind: skirling clashes of tones and semitones like stiff breezes, and becalmed murmuring ostinatos, and bold chordal shouts. The vocal writing is entirely characteristic - already my head is ringing with the three-part chords that Britten sets to "Lowland, Lowland Sea", and with the captain's anxious portamenti at "I'm sure we shall be taken". . . Before many seasons are past, they, and other phrases, will be ringing in the heads of thousands of parents and teachers and schoolboys; *The Golden Vanity* is so simple to stage, such fun to do or watch, that every boys' school is going to pounce on it.*

William Mann, The Times

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