

# Benjamin Britten - a guide to research

Garland Pub. - Benjamin Britten: A Biography by Humphrey Carpenter



Description: -

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Philosophy of education  
Organization & management of education  
Britten, Benjamin, 1913-1976 -- Bibliography  
Benjamin Britten - a guide to research

-  
Collection Les Mille et une femmes

v. 39.

Garland composer resource manuals ;

v. 39

Composer resource manuals ;

vol. 1867

Garland reference library of the humanities ; Benjamin Britten - a guide to research

Notes: Includes indexes.

This edition was published in 1996



Filesize: 53.28 MB

Tags: #Benjamin #Britten #Facts #for #Kids

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Following these operas came two chamber operas, *The Rape of Lucretia* 1946 and *Albert Herring* 1947 ; a new version of *The Beggar's Opera* 1948 ; *Let's Make an Opera* 1949 , a work for children; *Billy Budd* 1951 ; *Gloriana* 1953 , written for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II; *The Turn of the Screw* 1954 ; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 1960 ; and three dramatized parables for church performance. Britten's strengths are his masterful handling of choral sonorities, alone or in conjunction with instruments, his imaginative treatment of the word-music relationship, his sharp sense for the immediate theatrical effect, and his unusual interest and skill in writing music for children.

## Britten's music

His next opera was *Owen Wingrave* , written for but soon produced in Covent Garden. His love of reading, a skill he developed at an early age, invoke in him a spirit of curiosity and a hunger for knowledge.

## The Music of Benjamin Britten

Cecilia for unaccompanied choir; poem by W. Beginning rather poorly with *Paul Bunyan* 1941 , he made a spectacular turnabout with *Peter Grimes*. In 1937 his *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge*, for string orchestra, won him international acclaim.

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He later studied under and Arthur Benjamin at the Royal College of Music in London and, while there, composed the set of choral variations *A Boy Was Born* 1933; revised, 1958. Aldeburgh Festival Benjamin Britten started what was to become the famous Aldeburgh Festival in the Jubilee Hall on Crabbe Street, a few doors down from his first home, in 1948. Britten received many honours both in Britain and in other countries.

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