

## Britten's Musical Language

Blending insights from linguistic and social theories of speech, ritual, and narrative with music-analytic and historical criticism, *Britten's Musical Language* offers fresh perspectives on the composer's fusion of verbal and musical utterance in opera and song. It provides close interpretative studies of the major scores (including *Peter Grimes*, *Billy Budd*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *War Requiem*, *Curlew River*, and *Death in Venice*) and explores Britten's ability to fashion complex and mysterious symbolic dramas from the interplay of texted song and a wordless discourse of motives and themes. Focusing on the performative and social basis of language, rather than on traditional notions of textual "expression" in vocal music, Philip Rupprecht pursues topics such as the role of naming and hate speech in *Peter Grimes*; the disturbance of ritual certainty in the *War Requiem*; and the codes by which childish "innocence" is enacted in *The Turn of the Screw*.

PHILIP RUPPRECHT is Associate Professor of Music at Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York. He has written on twentieth-century music in a number of journals and is a contributor to *The Cambridge Companion to Benjamin Britten* (1999).

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Philip Rupprecht



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*To my parents*

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