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 Edited by Vicki P Stroehrer, Justin Vickers  
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## BENJAMIN BRITTEN IN CONTEXT

The contexts for Benjamin Britten's music, life, and work are explored in forty curated chapters by thirty-one authors whose areas of expertise encompass art, sociocultural, and music history and theory, performance, religion, and literature. Collated broadly, they offer an historically motivated illumination for discrete yet interlocking aspects of his existence. The prologue situates the composer in relation to society; the epilogue reconsiders Britten's influence beyond 1976. A list of sources offers both references cited and recommendations for further reading. We approached Britten's milieu from vantage points that could adequately represent the fullness of his position in England and in the twentieth century. We were rewarded by the richness of Britten's engagement with his contemporaries in music, art, literature, and film, British musical institutions, royal and governmental entities, and the church. Equally, his groundbreaking projects, which intersected across diverse entities and explored his philosophical and ideological tenets, provided food for thought. Although standard biographies examine their subjects from within, this series examines the subject from without. In pursuit of understanding this composer, we offer five major areas of inquiry: Britten's relationship with Peter Pears, and with his close friends, mentors, and colleagues; musical life in Britain; his interactions with previous and contemporary generations of composers; his choreographer, librettists, stage designers, and directors; and lastly, the sociocultural, religious, and political era in which he lived and composed. The ensuing chapters are flint, of sorts, to spark the reader's own exploration of each of the varied contexts surrounding Britten presented herein.

VICKI P. STROEHER is Professor of Music at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia. She is the co-editor of *My Beloved Man: The Letters of Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears*, with Jude Brimmer and Nicholas Clark (2016), which earned the 2017 C. B. Oldman Award (IAML–UK and Ireland) and *Benjamin Britten Studies: Essays on An Inexplicit Art* (2017), co-edited with Justin Vickers. She has also contributed to *Literary Britten*. Her current research project is a monograph on Britten's songs (Boydell, forthcoming).

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## COMPOSERS IN CONTEXT

Understanding and appreciation of musical works is greatly enhanced by knowledge of the context within which their composers lived and worked. Each of these volumes focusses on an individual composer, offering lively, accessible and concise essays by leading scholars on the many contexts – professional, political, intellectual, social and cultural – that have a bearing on his or her work. Biographical and musical influences, performance and publishing history and the creative afterlife of each composer's work are also addressed, providing readers with a multi-faceted view of how the composers' output and careers were shaped by the world around them.

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*For our fathers.*  
*Willie E. (Bill) Pierce*  
*(14 August 1913 – 15 June 1964)*  
*and*  
*John Eugene Vickers*  
*(13 October 1942 – 5 January 2017)*

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JUSTIN VICKERS is Professor of Music at Illinois State University. As a US Fulbright Scholar to the United Kingdom, he is completing his first monograph *The Aldeburgh Festival of Music and the Arts: A History of the Britten and Pears Era, 1948–1986*, forthcoming by the Boydell Press. He is co-editor of and contributor to *Benjamin Britten Studies: Essays on An Inexplicit Art* (Boydell Press, 2017) with Vicki P. Stroehrer. He has contributed to *The Sea in the British Musical Imagination* (Boydell Press, 2016) and *Literary Britten: Words and Music in Benjamin Britten's Vocal Works* (Boydell Press, 2019). His additional research focuses on Britten's song and the creative process, Peter Pears, and the English Opera Group, among other midcentury topics in the British Isles.

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## *Bibliographic and In-Text Abbreviations*

### **Archives**

BBC WAC	British Broadcasting Company Written Archives Centre, Caversham, UK
<i>GB-ALb</i>	Britten Pears Arts Archive, Aldeburgh, Suffolk, UK
<i>GB-Lbl</i>	The British Library, London, UK
<i>GB-Lcm</i>	Royal College of Music, London, UK
<i>GB-Lna</i>	National Archives of the United Kingdom, London, UK

### **Letters and Diaries Collections**

BBJB	<i>Journeying Boy: The Diaries of the Young Benjamin Britten, 1928–1938</i> . Edited by John Evans. London: Faber and Faber, 2009. For example, BBJB, D (March 4, 1932): Diary entry for Friday, 4 March 1938, p. 101.
LFAL I	<i>Letters from a Life: The Selected Letters and Diaries of Benjamin Britten</i> . Volume 1: 1923–1939. Edited by Donald Mitchell and Philip Reed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
LFAL II	<i>Letters from a Life: The Selected Letters and Diaries of Benjamin Britten</i> . Volume 2: 1939–1945. Edited by Donald Mitchell and Philip Reed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
LFAL III	<i>Letters from a Life: The Selected Letters of Benjamin Britten</i> . Volume 3: 1946–1951. Edited by Donald Mitchell, Philip Reed, and Mervyn Cooke. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
LFAL IV	<i>Letters from a Life: The Selected Letters of Benjamin Britten</i> . Volume 4: 1952–1957. Edited by Donald Mitchell, Philip

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- Reed, and Mervyn Cooke. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, Britten–Pears Foundation, 2008.
- LFAL V* *Letters from a Life: The Selected Letters of Benjamin Britten.* Volume 5: 1958–1965. Edited by Philip Reed and Mervyn Cooke. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, Britten–Pears Foundation, 2010.
- LFAL VI* *Letters from a Life: The Selected Letters of Benjamin Britten.* Volume 6: 1966–1976. Edited by Philip Reed and Mervyn Cooke. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, Britten–Pears Foundation, 2012. For example, Author to Recipient, Date, *LFAL V*, L983: 240: Letter no. 983, p. 240. Author to Recipient, Date, *LFAL I*, L172n2: 619. Letter no. 172, Note 2, p. 619.
- MBM* *My Beloved Man: The Letters of Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears.* Edited by Vicki P. Stroehrer, Nicholas Clark, and Jude Brimmer. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2016. For example, *MBM*, LIII: 135. Letter no. III, p. 135. *MBM*, LIII: 135n2. Letter no. III, Note 2, p. 135.

**Primary Sources**

- AFPB* *Aldeburgh Festival Programme Book*
- BBAA* Britten, Benjamin. *On Receiving the First Aspen Award.* London: Faber and Faber, 1964. (Reprinted in *PKBM*, 255–63)
- PKBM* *Britten on Music.* Edited by Paul Kildea. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

**Secondary Sources**

- CPBC* Palmer, Christopher (ed.). *The Britten Companion.* London: Faber and Faber, 1984.
- DHOB* Herbert, David (ed.). *The Operas of Benjamin Britten.* London: Herbert Press, 1979; New York: Herbert Press, 1989.
- HCBB* Carpenter, Humphrey. *Benjamin Britten: A Biography.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1992.
- HWBUP* Wiebe, Heather. *Britten's Unquiet Pasts: Sound and Memory in Postwar Reconstruction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.



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LWBBNP	Walker, Lucy (ed.). <i>Benjamin Britten: New Perspectives on His Life and Work</i> . Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009.
MCBFE	Cooke, Mervyn. <i>Britten and the Far East: Asian Influences in the Music of Benjamin Britten</i> . Woodbridge: Boydell Press; Britten–Pears Foundation, 1998.
MCCCBB	Cooke, Mervyn (ed.). <i>The Cambridge Companion to Benjamin Britten</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
MKBBC	Mitchell, Donald, and Hans Keller (eds.). <i>Benjamin Britten: A Commentary on His Works from a Group of Specialists</i> . London: Rockliff, 1952.
PEMB	Evans, Peter. <i>The Music of Benjamin Britten</i> . Revised edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
PKBB	Kildea, Paul. <i>Benjamin Britten: A Life in the Twentieth Century</i> . London: Allen Lane, 2013.
PKSB	Kildea, Paul. <i>Selling Britten: Music and the Marketplace</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
PRRB	Rupprecht, Philip (ed.). <i>Rethinking Britten</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
SVBBS	Stroehrer, Vicki P, and Justin Vickers (eds.). <i>Benjamin Britten Studies: Essays on an Inexplicit Art</i> . Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017.

**In-Text Abbreviations**

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CEMA	Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts
Op.	Opus
RAM	Royal Academy of Music, London
RCM	Royal College of Music, London

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