

Chronology of Tippett's life and career

JONATHAN REES

| Date | Biography | Works | Cultural and Historical Events |
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| 1905 | Michael Kemp Tippett born in London on 2 January to Henry William Tippett and Isabel Clementine Binny Kemp; the family soon moves to Wetherden, Suffolk | | Strauss, <i>Salome</i> ; Debussy, <i>La Mer</i> ; Trotsky formulates the theory of Permanent Revolution and is one of the leaders of the 1905 Russian Revolution |
| 1910 | Begins piano lessons | | Vaughan Williams, <i>Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis</i> ; Yeats, <i>The Green Helmet</i> |
| 1913 | | | Ives, <i>Holidays Symphony</i> (one of Tippett's choices for the BBC radio programme <i>Desert Island Discs</i> ¹) |
| 1914 | Joins Brookfield Preparatory School in Dorset, having being schooled by a governess at home since November 1909 | | Vaughan Williams, <i>The Lark Ascending</i> ; Yeats, <i>Responsibilities</i> ; the Austro-Hungarian invasion of Serbia on 28 July initiates the conflict of World War I |
| 1916 | | | The Irish Easter Rebellion, on which, in the 1930s, Tippett planned to base his first opera; the Military Service Act allows conscientious objectors to be exempted from combat and perform civilian service or non-combatant army service |
| 1917 | | | The 1917 Russian Revolution deposes the Tsarist autocracy and leads to the formation of the Soviet Union – Lenin and Trotsky are among the principal activists |
| 1918 | Enters Fettes College in Edinburgh, continuing piano lessons, whilst joining the school choir and beginning organ studies | | World War I ends on Armistice Day, 11 November |
| 1919 | Tippett's parents leave England; he then spends school holidays visiting them, particularly at the hotel in Cannes of which Tippett's father was the proprietor, and later in Corsica and Florence; this gives him a strong connection to a European sensibility and fluency in French by the age of | | Elgar, Cello Concerto; Reed, <i>Ten Days that Shook the World</i> , which deeply affected Tippett's socialist politics |

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| 1920 | <p>ten; he later also becomes fluent in German, and well versed in Italian</p> <p>Is moved to Stamford Grammar School in Lincolnshire after unpleasant experiences at Fettes; his piano lessons with Frances Tinkler, Malcolm Sargent's former teacher, nurture his desire to become a composer</p> | | <p>Stravinsky, <i>Symphonies of Wind Instruments</i> (another <i>Desert Island Discs</i> choice)</p> |
| 1921 | | | <p><i>The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse</i> (film), a viewing of which in 1923 confirms Tippett's pacifism due to its graphic depiction of the World War I trenches</p> |
| 1922 | <p>Expelled from Stamford Grammar School due to his non-conformism and overt atheism; his ambition to compose is firmly crystallized after attending a concert in Leicester in which Sargent conducts works including Ravel's <i>Mother Goose Suite</i>; continues his musical training with Frances Tinkler and by studying Stanford's book <i>Musical Composition</i>; a local organist helps him with species counterpoint; attends an International Congress of Youth in Brussels, which makes him aware of the plight of child victims of the war – in his registration as a conscientious objector in 1940 he describes this as his first political act</p> | | <p>Vaughan Williams, <i>The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains</i>; Schoenberg, <i>Die Jakobsleiter</i> (unfinished); Eliot, <i>The Waste Land</i></p> |
| 1923 | <p>Accepted into the Royal College of Music (RCM), despite requiring some remedial study; begins compositional study with Charles Wood, supplementing this with his own study of counterpoint, particularly Renaissance polyphony</p> | | <p>Walton, <i>Façade</i>; Stravinsky, <i>Les Noces</i>; Yeats becomes the first Irishman to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature</p> |
| 1924 | <p>Begins conducting a small madrigal choir in Oxted, Surrey, mainly in order to continue his own study of contrapuntal and vocal techniques; later he combines this with a local amateur theatre group to mount productions of English operas, such as Vaughan Williams's <i>The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains</i> and Stanford's <i>The Travelling Companion</i></p> | | <p>Vaughan Williams, <i>Hugh the Drover</i></p> |

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| 1926 | Following Wood's death he studies with C. H. Kitson; as a student at the RCM he studies piano with Aubin Raymar and conducting with Malcolm Sargent and Adrian Boult | | |
| 1928 | Passes the B.Mus. exams in December, having failed them in September | Conducts his own realization of <i>The Village Opera</i> (1927–8) with his Oxted group | Schoenberg, <i>Variations for Orchestra</i> ; Yeats, <i>The Tower</i> |
| 1929 | Moves to Oxted; teaches French part-time at Hazlewood Preparatory School, where he meets Christopher Fry, with whom he collaborates in some early works | | Eisler, <i>Song of the Working People</i> ; Yeats, <i>The Winding Stair and Other Poems</i> ; the Great Depression begins following the Wall Street Crash on 29 October |
| 1930 | The first concert of Tippett's own music takes place on 5 April in the Barn Theatre, Oxted; he later withdraws all this music and begins a two-year course of study in counterpoint with R. O. Morris, an expert in sixteenth-century polyphony, who had impressed Tippett in a tutorial given at the RCM during his student days | The April concert includes the early works <i>Concerto in D</i> (1928–30), <i>String Quartet in F</i> (1928, rev. 1930) and <i>Psalm in C</i> (1930) | Shostakovich, <i>The Nose</i> ; Stravinsky, <i>Symphony of Psalms</i> ; Eliot, <i>Ash Wednesday</i> ; Trotsky founds the International Left Opposition |
| 1932 | Takes on responsibility for music in the work camps for unemployed miners in Boosbeck, set up in 1931 by Major Pennyman; accepts his first role in Morley College, London, organizing and directing the South London Orchestra, consisting of out-of-work professional musicians; also takes on the task of conducting two choirs run by the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society; is introduced to the painter Wilfred Franks, with whom he begins an intense personal relationship | <i>String Trio in B♭</i> | Eisler, <i>Ballad of the Women and the Soldiers</i> ; Schoenberg, <i>Moses und Aron</i> (unfinished); Britten wins the Cobbett Chamber Music Prize for his <i>Phantasy</i> string quintet; Maritain, <i>The Degrees of Knowledge</i> ; Trotsky, <i>The History of the Russian Revolution</i> |
| 1933 | Conducts a well-received production of <i>The Beggar's Opera</i> with members of the work camp | <i>Symphony in B♭</i> (rev. 1934) | The Balham Group, a faction of the British Communist Party, sets up its own party, the Communist League, to follow Trotskyan principles |
| 1934 | The November issue of the Communist League's paper, <i>The Red Flag</i> , introduces Tippett to Trotsky's <i>The History of the Russian Revolution</i> , which has a profound effect upon him; conducts two performances of the Pageant of Labour at the Crystal Palace, depicting the hardships of a working-class family from the Industrial Revolution to the present time | <i>Robin Hood</i> | Vaughan Williams, <i>Symphony No. 4</i> ; Shostakovich, <i>Lady Macbeth of Mtzensk</i> ; Britten, <i>A Boy was Born</i> , <i>Simple Symphony</i> ; Eisler, <i>Song Against War</i> ; Priestley, <i>English Journey</i> , which powerfully portrays the poverty and degradation caused by unemployment in the North of England, the principal effect of the Great Depression in the UK |

xxiv *Chronology of Tippett's life and career*

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|------|--|---|---|
| 1935 | His work with the unemployed bolsters his interests in Trotsky's ideas and he joins the Communist Party for a short time, leaving when he realizes that he would not be able to convert his branch to Trotskyism; sings in a choir representing Britain in the first International Workers' Music Olympiad, which he claims to have taught him more about socialism than any book; presents the political songs of Hanns Eisler in a concert in March; a performance of his play, <i>War Ramp</i> , examining how bank credit is used to finance war, is organized by the Labour League of Youth | String Quartet No. 1 in A (1934–5; rev. 1943), which the composer called his first mature composition | Gershwin, <i>Porgy and Bess</i> ; Eliot, <i>Murder in the Cathedral</i> ; the Reverend Dick Sheppard founds the Peace Pledge Union (PPU), attracting sponsors such as Bertrand Russell and Aldous Huxley; the Communist League is disbanded; A. J. Cronin's novel <i>The Stars Look Down</i> argues a strong religious case for conscientious objection |
| 1936 | | | The public trials and execution of Grigory Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev as part of Stalin's Great Purges convince Tippett of the importance of Trotskyism as an alternative to Stalinism |
| 1937 | Is introduced to T. S. Eliot, who becomes an important friend and mentor, introducing him to the poetry of W. B. Yeats and the philosophy of Jacques Maritain and Susanne Langer | <i>A Song of Liberty</i> | Vaughan Williams, <i>Riders to the Sea</i> ; Bartók, <i>Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste</i> ; Berg, <i>Lulu</i> ; Shostakovich, Symphony No. 5; Eisler, <i>Peace Song</i> ; the PPU formally merges with the No More War Movement |
| 1938 | The anti-Jewish events in Germany and Austria set Tippett's mind to the creation of <i>A Child of Our Time</i> , for which he asks Eliot to contribute a libretto – Eliot recommends that the composer should write it himself; the breakdown of his relationship with Wilfred Franks catalyses a personal crisis that leads him to submit himself to Jungian analysis under John Layard; joins the Socialist Anti-War Front | Piano Sonata No. 1 (1936–38; rev. 1942) | Hindemith, <i>Mathis der Maler</i> ; von Horváth, <i>Ein Kind unserer Zeit</i> , from which Tippett derives the title <i>A Child of Our Time</i> ; Beausobre's <i>The Woman Who Could Not Die</i> reveals the atrocities of torture and labour camps used by the Russian secret police; the Munich Pact allows Hitler's annexation of Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland; the shooting of a German embassy official by a young Polish Jew, Herschel Grynszpan, a reaction to Nazi persecution, leads to brutal anti-Jewish pogroms culminating in the <i>Kristallnacht</i> destruction of Jewish shops and homes on 9 and 10 November |
| 1939 | Following the Jungian model he analyses his own dreams between January and August, | Concerto for Double String Orchestra (1938–9) | Harris, Symphony No. 3; Cage, <i>Imaginary Landscape No. 1</i> ; Eliot, <i>The Family Reunion</i> ; |

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| | resulting in a greater acceptance of his homosexuality and personal needs; influenced by writings such as Beausobre's <i>The Woman Who Could Not Die</i> he turns away from party politics, refocusing his efforts on composition; Willy Strecker, the director of Schott in Mainz, offers him a publishing contract, but the outbreak of the war delays the actual publications | | World War II begins with the Nazi invasion of Poland and the declaration of war from France, Britain and members of the Commonwealth in September; the National Service (Armed Forces) Act enforces military conscription in the UK and results in nearly 60,000 registered conscientious objectors; the PPU campaigns against conscription and supports conscientious objectors |
| 1940 | Becomes Director of Morley College, London, after the former director Arnold Foster is evacuated from London; directs the college choir and secures performances of rarely heard pieces of early and contemporary music by composers such as Tallis, Dowland, Purcell, Monteverdi, Stravinsky, Hindemith and Britten; joins the PPU in November, registering as a conscientious objector in the same month; becomes a very active member of the Union, offering support to other conscientious objectors | | Stravinsky, <i>Symphony in C</i> ; Schoenberg, <i>Violin Concerto</i> ; Britten, <i>Les illuminations</i> ; Webern, <i>Variations for Orchestra</i> ; Sitwell, <i>Still Falls the Rain</i> ; Trotsky dies on 21 August from brain damage received in an assassination attempt |
| 1941 | The release of a recording of Phyllis Sellick's performance of the Piano Sonata No. 1 on Rimington, Van Wyck Ltd marks the first recording of his music | <i>Fantasia on a Theme of Handel</i> (1939–41); <i>A Child of Our Time</i> (1939–41) is completed although not premiered until 1944 | Messiaen, <i>Quatuor pour la fin du temps</i> |
| 1942 | Begins a long relationship with publishers B. Schott's Söhne, Mainz, with the publication of the Piano Sonata No. 1; his registration as a conscientious objector comes before a tribunal on 3 February – Vaughan Williams supports his cause, declaring his music a 'distinct national asset'; he refuses to undertake the non-combatant military duties allocated to him | String Quartet No. 2 in F# (1941–2); Two Madrigals: <i>The Source</i> and <i>The Windhover</i> | Britten, <i>Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo</i> , <i>A Ceremony of Carols</i> ; Langer, <i>Philosophy in a New Key</i> |
| 1943 | In January he gives his first radio broadcast, 'Portrait of Stravinsky' on the BBC; on 21 June he begins a three-month sentence (reduced to two) in Wormwood Scrubs Prison | <i>Boyhood's End</i> (composed for Britten and Peter Pears); <i>Fanfare No. 1</i> | Vaughan Williams, <i>Symphony No. 5</i> ; Messiaen, <i>Visions de l'Amen</i> ; Britten, <i>Rejoice in the Lamb</i> ; Bartók, <i>Concerto for Orchestra</i> ; Hindemith, <i>Symphonic Metamorphoses of Themes by Carl Maria von</i> |

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| | for failing to meet the conditions of his tribunal | | <i>Weber</i> ; <i>Die Weisse Rose</i> student uprising against the National Socialist Government in Germany, led by Sophie and Hans Scholl, is ended with the capture and guillotining of its leaders |
| 1944 | Receives his first commission from the BBC (which became very important to his development through many future commissions) resulting in the motet <i>The Weeping Babe</i> ; writes a pamphlet, 'Abundance of Creation' for the PPU; his meeting and collaboration with countertenor Alfred Deller helps to establish a great deal of Purcell's music that had been forgotten | <i>Plebs Angelica</i> (1943–4); <i>The Weeping Babe</i> | Messiaen, <i>Vingt regards sur l'enfant Jésus</i> ; Britten, <i>Festival Te Deum</i> |
| 1945 | After the war, he gives more regular talks on the BBC Third Programme and World Service, many of which would be published in his collection <i>Moving into Aquarius</i> (see 1959) | Symphony No. 1 (1944–5) | Britten, <i>Peter Grimes</i> ; Prokofiev, Symphony No. 5; Eliot, <i>Four Quartets</i> ; Sitwell, <i>The Song of the Cold</i> ; World War II ends with the total surrender of Germany on 8 May, followed on 15 August by the surrender of Japan |
| 1946 | Begins work on his first opera, <i>The Midsummer Marriage</i> | String Quartet No. 3 (1945–6); <i>Preludio al Vespro di Monteverdi</i> for organ (written to precede the first British performances of Monteverdi's <i>Vespro della Beata Virgine</i> of 1610); <i>Little Music</i> for string orchestra | Britten, <i>Rape of Lucretia</i> ; Copland, Symphony No. 3; Stravinsky, <i>Symphony in Three Movements</i> ; Prokofiev, <i>War and Peace</i> |
| 1948 | Develops severe hepatitis, possibly as a result of the stress of combining work on <i>The Midsummer Marriage</i> and <i>The Heart's Assurance</i> with his responsibilities at Morley College | <i>Suite in D for the Birthday of Prince Charles</i> | Lutoslawski, Symphony No. 1; Henze, Symphony, No. 1; Britten, <i>Saint Nicolas</i> ; Fry, <i>The Lady's Not for Burning</i> ; the National Service Act formalizes peacetime military conscription |
| 1949 | Awarded the Cobbett Prize for services to chamber music; becomes a member of the Music Advisory Committee, British Council – a position which he holds until 1965 | | Bliss, <i>The Olympians</i> ; Messiaen, <i>Turangalila-symphonie</i> ; Eliot, <i>The Cocktail Party</i> |
| 1951 | Moves to Tidebrook Manor, near Wadhurst in Sussex; income from the BBC broadcasts means that he can concentrate more fully on composition; gives up his position at Morley College after conducting a series of concerts for the Festival of Britain | The song cycle <i>The Heart's Assurance</i> (1950–1) premiered by Britten and Pears | Vaughan Williams's <i>The Pilgrim's Progress</i> and Britten's <i>Billy Budd</i> performed as part of the Festival of Britain; Stravinsky, <i>The Rake's Progress</i> ; Hindemith, Symphony in Bb for Concert Band |

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| 1952 | | <i>Dance, Clarion Air</i> , a madrigal which is later included in <i>A Garland for a Queen</i> – a collection of works by British composers to celebrate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II; <i>The Midsummer Marriage</i> (1946–52) – the <i>Ritual Dances</i> are premiered in the following year, but the whole opera will not be performed until 1955 | Vaughan Williams, <i>Sinfonia Antartica</i> ; Cage, <i>4'33"</i> ; Maritain, <i>The Range of Reason</i> |
| 1953 | Runs into a series of problems with performers, beginning with the replacement of Malcolm Sargent as the conductor of the <i>Fantasia Concertante</i> after Sargent publicly criticized the work for being overly intellectualized; becomes the artistic director of the St Ives Festival of the Arts for one year | <i>Ritual Dances</i> from Act 2 of <i>The Midsummer Marriage</i> are premiered two years before the complete opera; <i>Fantasia Concertante on a Theme of Corelli</i> ; <i>Fanfares Nos. 2 and 3</i> , composed for the St Ives Festival | Britten's <i>Gloriana</i> is performed at Covent Garden as part of the celebrations for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II; Stockhausen, <i>Kontra-Punkte</i> ; Shostakovich, Symphony No. 10; Maritain, <i>Approaches to God</i> ; Langer, <i>Feeling and Form</i> |
| 1954 | | <i>Four Inventions</i> for recorders; <i>Divertimento on 'Sellinger's Round'</i> (1953–4), which incorporates his contribution to the collection <i>Variations on an Elizabethan Theme</i> | Lennox Berkeley, <i>A Dinner Engagement</i> ; Britten, <i>The Turn of the Screw</i> ; Walton, <i>Troilus and Cressida</i> ; Varèse, <i>Déserts</i> ; Fry, <i>The Dark is Light Enough</i> (with incidental music by Bernstein) |
| 1955 | Julius Katchen refuses to premiere the Concerto for Piano, claiming the piano part to be unplayable – Louis Kentner replaces him and plays the score from memory; the Dennis Brain Wind Ensemble find the Sonata for Four Horns to be written too high and demand that the work be transposed for the premiere | Concerto for Piano (1953–5); Sonata for Four Horns | Boulez, <i>Le marteau sans maître</i> |
| 1956 | | <i>Bonny at Morn</i> ; <i>Four Songs from the British Isles</i> | Nono, <i>Il canto sospeso</i> |
| 1957 | The premiere of Symphony No. 2 breaks down in the first movement, whilst being broadcast live on the radio – conductor Adrian Boult shoulders the blame and begins the work again; these problems with performers reinforce the prevalent criticism of Tippett's amateurism in composition; he is elected to the presidency of the PPU | Symphony No. 2 (1956–7) (another <i>Desert Island Discs</i> choice) | Stravinsky, <i>Agon</i> ; Hindemith, <i>Die Harmonie der Welt</i> ; Stockhausen, <i>Gruppen</i> |
| 1958 | | The cantata <i>Crown of the Year</i> written to celebrate the centenary of Badminton School (commissioned by | Boulez, <i>Doubles</i> ; Cage, Piano Concerto |

xxviii *Chronology of Tippett's life and career*

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|------|---|---|---|
| | | musicologist Eric Walter White, whose daughter attended the school); the hymn tune <i>Unto the Hills Around Do I Lift My Longing Eyes</i> | |
| 1959 | <i>Moving into Aquarius</i> , a collection of Tippett's radio broadcasts, essays and articles is published; ² awarded the CBE | <i>Lullaby</i> | |
| 1960 | Moves to Parkside, in Corsham, Wiltshire | <i>Music; Words for Music, Perhaps</i> | Britten, <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> ; Boulez, <i>Pli selon pli</i> ; Ligeti, <i>Apparitions</i> ; the abolition of National Service means that armed forces consist entirely of volunteers, removing the need for conscientious objection |
| 1961 | Becomes a Fellow of the Royal College of Music | <i>King Priam</i> (1958–61); <i>Songs for Achilles</i> , the first song of which is taken from <i>King Priam; Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis</i> | Penderecki, <i>Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima</i> |
| 1962 | <i>King Priam</i> first performed at the Coventry Festival celebrating the opening of the new cathedral; the work is a great success and marks a turning point for the composer's reputation | Piano Sonata No. 2; Incidental Music for Shakespeare's <i>The Tempest</i> in response to an invitation from the Old Vic, London; <i>Songs for Ariel; Praeludium</i> for brass, bells and percussion | Britten, <i>War Requiem</i> ; Solzhenitsyn, <i>One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich</i> |
| 1963 | The BBC studio recording of <i>The Midsummer Marriage</i> , conducted by Norman Del Mar, is very well received by the critics and reinforces Tippett's growing international reputation; <i>King Priam</i> becomes his first opera to be performed abroad, in a production at the Badisches Staatstheater, Karlsruhe, in German translation | Concerto for Orchestra (1962–3) | Williamson, <i>Our Man in Havana</i> ; Henze, Symphony No. 5; Maritain, <i>God and the Permission of Evil</i> ; Stravinsky, <i>Abraham and Isaac</i> |
| 1964 | Is made an honorary Doctor of Music at the University of Cambridge | | Britten's <i>Curlew River</i> is dedicated to Tippett in anticipation of his 60th birthday the following year; Davies, <i>Second Taverner Fantasia</i> ; Messiaen, <i>Couleurs de la cité céleste</i> |
| 1965 | Makes first visit to America, to act as the composer-in-residence at the Aspen Music Festival; America becomes an important cultural and spiritual influence on Tippett thereafter – seen particularly in his next operas; begins an association with the excellent Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra | <i>The Vision of Saint Augustine</i> (1963–5) | R. R. Bennett, <i>The Mines of Sulphur</i> ; Birtwistle, <i>Tragoedia</i> |

xxix *Chronology of Tippett's life and career*

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| 1966 | Awarded a knighthood for services to music | <i>Braint</i> for orchestra, included in the collection <i>Severn Bridge Variations</i> | Stravinsky, <i>Requiem Canticles</i> ; Goehr, <i>Arden Must Die</i> |
| 1968 | Steps in for an indisposed Stravinsky at short notice in a concert with the St Louis Symphony in April, conducting his own Concerto for Orchestra | | Birtwistle, <i>Punch and Judy</i> ; Britten, <i>The Prodigal Son</i> ; Berio, <i>Sinfonia</i> |
| 1969 | Joins Colin Davis and Jack Phipps to help the ailing Bath Festival and inaugurates the Bath Festival of Blues | <i>The Knot Garden</i> (1966–9) | Birtwistle, <i>Down by the Greenwood Side</i> , <i>Verses for Ensembles</i> ; Davies, <i>Worldes Blis</i> , <i>Eight Songs for a Mad King</i> ; Weiss, <i>Trotsky in Exile</i> |
| 1970 | Moves to the Marlborough Downs; takes over the Bath Festival and runs it single-handedly until 1974, widening the scope of the festival to include progressive pop music as well as blues; begins to suffer from macular dystrophy, an eye disease that forces him to read with a magnifying glass and use large-print manuscript paper for composition; an amanuensis, Michael Tillett, is engaged to help complete scores | <i>The Shires Suite</i> (1965–70) written for the Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra; <i>Songs for Dov</i> (1969–70) | Maw, <i>The Rising of the Moon</i> ; Carter, Concerto for Orchestra |
| 1971 | | <i>In memoriam magistri</i> , commissioned by the journal <i>Tempo</i> in memory of Stravinsky | Britten, <i>Owen Wingrave</i> ; Bernstein, <i>Mass</i> ; Ligeti, <i>Melodien</i> ; Birtwistle, <i>The Triumph of Time</i> , <i>Tombeau in memoriam Igor Stravinsky</i> |
| 1972 | Several television appearances over the previous decade introduce Tippett to a new audience and culminate in the documentary made for the BBC by Mischa Scorer, <i>Poets in a Barren Age</i> | Symphony No. 3 (1970–2) | First performance of Davies's opera <i>Taverner</i> |
| 1973 | A German production of <i>The Midsummer Marriage</i> is given at the Badisches Staatstheater | Piano Sonata No. 3 (1972–3) | Britten, <i>Death in Venice</i> |
| 1974 | A 'Sir Michael Tippett Festival' is mounted in his honour at Tufts University, USA, on 13 February; the American premiere of <i>The Knot Garden</i> at Northwestern University, Illinois, on 22 February is the first performance of any Tippett opera in America | | |
| 1975 | Visits Zambia for a performance of <i>A Child of Our Time</i> in Lusaka Cathedral | | The fall of Saigon on 30 April precipitates the end of the Vietnam War after almost twenty years of conflict |
| 1976 | Undertakes a lecture tour in America, including the Doty Lectures in Fine Art at the | <i>The Ice Break</i> (1973–6) | Davies, Symphony No. 1, <i>The Martyrdom of St Magnus</i> ; Glass, <i>Einstein on the Beach</i> ; |

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| | University of Austin, Texas; is awarded the Gold Medal of the Royal Philharmonic Society | | Britten, <i>Phaedra</i> ; Holloway, <i>Clarissa</i> |
| 1977 | Although his involvement in the PPU decreases, he speaks out against President Carter's development of the neutron bomb at the opening of a PPU exhibition on 8 August | Symphony No. 4 (1976–7) | |
| 1978 | <i>The Ice Break</i> receives its first German production on 26 June; he visits Java and Bali during a stay in Australia to conduct his Symphony No. 4 – the sounds of the gamelan he experiences on these islands influence his Triple Concerto | String Quartet No. 4 (1977–8) | Davies, <i>Salome</i> |
| 1979 | Awarded the Companion of Honour | Triple Concerto for Violin, Viola, Cello and Orchestra (1978–9) | Davies, <i>The Lighthouse</i> |
| 1980 | Publication of <i>Music of the Angels: Essays and Sketchbooks of Michael Tippett</i> , ³ a collection of essays and broadcasts not published in <i>Moving into Aquarius</i> | <i>Wolf Trap Fanfare</i> | |
| 1982 | | <i>The Mask of Time</i> (1980–2) | Langer, <i>Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling</i> |
| 1983 | Awarded the Order of Merit and becomes the President of the London College of Music | <i>The Blue Guitar</i> (1982–3); <i>Festal Brass with Blues</i> | Martland, <i>Babi Yar</i> |
| 1984 | | Piano Sonata No. 4 (1983–4) | Davies, Symphony No. 3; Birtwistle, <i>The Mask of Orpheus</i> ; Holloway, <i>Seascape and Harvest</i> |
| 1985 | Celebrates his 80th birthday with a two-week tour of Texas including concerts of his music; he conducts some of his music despite now being blind in his right eye | | Goehr, <i>Behold the Sun</i> |
| 1987 | Has an operation for colon cancer in October but is well enough to take part in a celebration of his music in Manchester only three months later | | Davies, <i>Resurrection</i> |
| 1988 | | <i>New Year</i> (1986–8) | Turnage, <i>Greek</i> |
| 1990 | His 85th birthday is celebrated by twelve hours of continuous broadcasting devoted to his music on BBC Radio 3; goes on two-month tour of Australia and New Zealand to attend performances of his work | <i>Byzantium</i> (1989–90) | Birtwistle, <i>Gawain, Ritual Fragments</i> ; Adès, <i>Five Eliot Landscapes</i> ; MacMillan, <i>The Confession of Isobel Gowdie</i> |
| 1991 | | String Quartet No. 5 (1990–1) | |
| 1993 | Declares <i>The Rose Lake</i> to be his final composition – after this he completes only <i>Caliban's</i> | <i>The Rose Lake</i> (1991–3) | MacMillan, <i>Seven Last Words from the Cross</i> ; Martland, |

xxxii Chronology of Tippett's life and career

| Date | Biography | Works | Cultural and Historical Events |
|------|--|-----------------------|---|
| 1994 | Song for the tercentenary Purcell celebrations in 1995 Unveils the Commemorative Stone to Conscientious Objectors in Tavistock Square, Bloomsbury on 15 May | | <i>Dance Works</i> ; Turnage, <i>Your Rockaby</i> Birtwistle, <i>The Second Mrs Kong</i> |
| 1995 | To celebrate his 90th birthday English National Opera revives <i>King Priam</i> and Sir Colin Davis devises and conducts a festival of Tippett's music at the Barbican titled <i>Vision of Paradise</i> , culminating in a performance of <i>The Rose Lake</i> | <i>Caliban's Song</i> | Goehr, <i>Arianna</i> ; Adès, <i>Powder Her Face</i> |
| 1996 | Moves to Isleworth, Middlesex, in order to be nearer friends and carers as his health deteriorates | | Davies, Symphony No. 6 |
| 1997 | Contracts pneumonia whilst on a trip to Stockholm for a retrospective concert of his music | | Davies, <i>Job</i> ; Adès, <i>Aslyra</i> ; MacMillan, Cello Concerto |
| 1998 | Dies on 8 January | | Dove, <i>Flight</i> ; MacMillan, <i>Quickening</i> |

Notes

1 Tippett made two appearances on *Desert Island Discs*, in 1968 and 1985. For a full listing of his choices for both programmes, see www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/desert-island-discs.

2 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul); expanded edn (St Albans: Paladin Books, 1974).

3 Selected and ed. Meirion Bowen (London: Eulenburg Books, 1980).

