

Notes

Introduction

- 1 Peter Evans, 'Instrumental Music I', in Stephen Banfield (ed.), *The Blackwell History of Music in Britain Vol. 6: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 186.
- 2 DMPR, p. 191.
- 3 DMPR, p. 364, and HCBB, p. 51 (the latter quoted from an interview Britten gave to *High Fidelity Magazine* in December 1959).
- 4 William McNaught, 'String Orchestras', *Musical Times* 78 (November 1937), p. 990.
- 5 William McNaught, 'The Promenade Concerts', *Musical Times* 79 (September 1938), pp. 702–3.
- 6 See MCPR, pp. 138–40.
- 7 Stephen Williams, writing in the *Evening News* on 3 December 1951.
- 8 For Mitchell's riposte to the early critical reaction to *Billy Budd*, see his 'More Off Than On *Billy Budd*', *Music Survey* 4/2 (February 1952), pp. 386–408, repr. in DMCN, pp. 365–92.
- 9 Unpublished letter from Britten to Donald Mitchell and Hans Keller, 21 January 1953.
- 10 Peter Tranchell, 'Britten and Brittenites', *Music & Letters* 34/2 (1953), pp. 124–32.
- 11 Peter Schaffer, review in *Time and Tide*, 7 June 1962. For a full account of the critical reception of the *War Requiem*, see MCWR, pp. 78–91.
- 12 Review of Stephen Banfield, *Sensibility and English Song*, and Ian Kemp, *Tippett: The Composer and His Music*, in *Music Analysis* 4/3 (1985), p. 308.
- 13 Patricia Howard, *The Operas of Benjamin Britten* (London: Barrie & Rockliff, 1969); Eric Walter White, *Benjamin Britten: His Life and Operas* (London: Faber & Faber, 1970). The latter was expanded from White's *Benjamin Britten: A Sketch of His Life and Works* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1948), which had appeared in a German translation in its year of publication and was updated in 1954. White's 1970 text was revised by John Evans for publication by Faber in 1983 (EWWB).
- 14 HCBB, p. 290.
- 15 HCBB, pp. 213 and 512.
- 16 Robin Holloway, 'Benjamin Britten: Tributes and Memories', *Tempo* 120 (1977), pp. 5–6.

1 Juvenilia (1922–1932)

- 1 The *Sinfonietta* was Britten's second publication: the first was a set of three songs for two-part women's voices to poems by Walter de la Mare: see HCBB, pp. 41–2.
- 2 See MSBC, p. 114, and Benjamin Britten, 'Early Influences: A Tribute to Frank Bridge', *Composer* 19 (1966), pp. 2–3.
- 3 In saying this, I do not intend to suggest that Britten was trying to give the impression he was a better composer as a child than in fact he was – though it is noticeable that the published scores of the *Five Waltzes* and the 1931 Quartet give no indication of any revision having taken place.
- 4 Chief among these were the *Quatre chansons françaises* (1928; first broadcast on 30 March 1980, and first performed in concert on 10 June of that year; published and commercially recorded in 1982) and the *Quartettino* (1930; first performed on 23 May 1983; published in 1983; commercially recorded in 1986).
- 5 See CMEB, p. ix, and PEMB, p. 548.
- 6 The following works are investigated in more detail in CMEB: *Humoreske*, *Quatre chansons françaises*, *Quartettino*, the originals of the songs published under the title *Tit for Tat*, *A Hymn to the Virgin*, the String Quartet in D major of 1931, and the Phantasy Quintet.
- 7 Beth Britten, *My Brother Benjamin* (Bourne End: The Kensal Press, 1986), p. 49. For a biographical note on Audrey Alston, see DMPR, p. 162.
- 8 CMEB, p. 7.
- 9 See CMEB, p. 10; extracts from the beginning and the end of the first movement, and from the beginning of the slow movement, are transcribed on pp. 291–3.
- 10 See CMEB, p. 8; the Waltz is reproduced in facsimile on pp. 273–6.
- 11 Britten may have played Schumann's *Etudes Symphoniques* by this time, but he did not apparently own a score: what seems to be a shopping list on the back of the viola part for the viola and piano piece 'First Loss' dated 6 April 1926 itemizes the following works (see Britten–Pears Library Microfilm A70, Frame 166):
 - 1 *Etudes Symphoniques* Schumann Op. 13 No. 8430 price 2/4
 - 2 Liszt Campanella 26 No. 5912 2/6

- 3 (Pianoforte) Duet Beethoven Septet Op. 20 price 2/6 No. 8518
 4 Piano solo Beethoven Concertos (1–4) price 3/- each No. 7998 a–d
 5 Brahms Sonata in F minor price 3/- [? indecipherable] 5105 Op. 5.
- 12 HCBB, p. 27.
 13 Britten started collecting miniature scores in 1925, numbering them in acquisition order. A list of those extant in the Britten–Pears Library can found in CMEB, Appendix II, pp. 335–41.
 14 Reproduced in facsimile in CMEB, pp. 281–2.
 15 ‘Beware!’ is reproduced in Imogen Holst, *Britten* (London: Faber & Faber, 1966), p. 15. See also MKB, pp. 2 and 3.
 16 DMPR, p. 88.
 17 The score was submitted with an accompanying letter written by Britten’s father: see DMPR, pp. 86–7, which gives a facsimile of the opening to the overture.
 18 Reproduced in facsimile in CMEB, pp. 278–9.
 19 See DMPR, p. 13.
 20 The term ‘dissolving ending’ was coined by Arnold Whittall to describe the ending of the Phantasy Quartet: see AWBT, p. 23.
 21 HCBB, p. 16.
 22 See, for example, Britten, ‘Early Influences’.
 23 See CMEB, p. 11.
 24 Prefatory note to the collection *Tit for Tat* (London: Faber Music, 1969).
 25 Britten’s source for his texts was *The Oxford Book of French Verse: XIIIth Century – XIXth Century*, selected by St John Lucas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924): see DMPR, p. 92.
 26 Identified as the folksong ‘Biquette’ in DMPR, p. 92.
 27 These lines are translated in the vocal score (London: Faber Music, 1982) as ‘The poor sweet creature sang all day, and the mother coughed all night.’
 28 See PEMB, p. 550, and CMEB, pp. 18–19.
 29 See DMPR, pp. 8–9 and 96–7.
 30 HCBB, p. 30.
 31 DMPR, pp. 127–8.
 32 See CMEB, p. 30.
 33 DMPR, p. 418. Layton was also the dedicatee of the first movement (‘P.T.’) of the quartet entitled *Go Play, Boy, Play* (1933): see DMPR, p. 420.
 34 See Britten’s diary entries in DMPR, pp. 147, 150, 153, and 154.
 35 Preface to the score of the 1931 String Quartet in D major (London: Faber Music, 1975).
 36 See CMEB, pp. 37–8.
 37 DMPR, p. 141.
 38 Reproduced in facsimile in CMEB, pp. 310–14; the work is discussed on pp. 31–2.
 39 ‘Christ’s Nativity’ (dated 2 March 1931, though it was rewritten from Friday 13 March: see Britten’s diary entry for that date in DMPR, p. 166), ‘Sweet was the Song’ (13 January), ‘Preparations’ (11 March), ‘New Prince, New Pomp’ (25 February), and ‘Carol of King Cnut’ (16 February).
 40 DMPR, p. 171.
 41 The first page of the scenario in Violet Alford’s hand is reproduced in facsimile in DMPR, p. 189. For a biographical note on Alford, see *ibid.*, p. 188.
 42 See the facsimile in DMPR, p. 193.
 43 He acquired the piano score of the Viola Concerto on 9 September 1931 before hearing the work, which he very much admired, on the next day: see DMPR, pp. 201 and 204. He heard *Belshazzar’s Feast* on 25 November 1931: see DMPR, p. 217.
 44 See CMEB, pp. 42–4.
 45 See DMPR, pp. 243–4 and 190 respectively.
 46 See DMPR, p. 245.
 47 See CMEB, pp. 50–8.
- 2 Britten, Auden and ‘otherness’**
 1 ‘Poets and the Crisis’, *The Times*, 26 September 1938, p. 13. The leader writer is possibly quoting ‘The Poet’ by W. H. Davies (1871–1940): ‘A human pack, ten thousand strong, / All in full cry to bring me down; / All greedy for my magic robe / All crazy for my burning crown’. Davies is partly referring to Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* when, in Act V scene 1, Prospero enters in his magic robe.
 2 Quoted in Humphrey Carpenter, *W. H. Auden: A Biography* (Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 291.
 3 Britten himself described the genesis of *Peter Grimes* in these terms: ‘A central feeling for us was that of the individual against the crowd, with ironic overtones for our own situation [as conscientious objectors]’ (MSBC, p. 116).
 4 W. H. Auden, ‘The Prolific and the Devourer’, in Edward Mendelson (ed.), *The English Auden* (London: Faber & Faber, 1986), p. 397.
 5 *Ibid.*
 6 *Ibid.*
 7 Auden, ‘The Liberal Fascist’, in Mendelson, *The English Auden*, p. 322.
 8 Benjamin Britten, ‘How to Become a Composer’, *Listener*, 7 November 1946, p. 624.
 9 Based on the catalogue of Britten’s juvenilia, Britten–Pears Library.
 10 Britten’s *Quatre chansons françaises* were also composed in this year.
 11 Arnold Whittall, ‘The Signs of Genre:

- Britten's Version of Pastoral', in Chris Banks, Arthur Searle and Malcolm Turner (eds.), *Sundry Sorts of Music Books: Essays on The British Library Collections Presented to O. W. Neighbour on his 70th Birthday* (London: The British Library, 1993), p. 363.
- 12 Auden, 'The Prolific and the Devourer', in Mendelson, *The English Auden*, p. 397.
- 13 The contrast to the period 1940–79 – from the advent of the wartime coalition government to the formation of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government – could not be more complete: the Conservatives were in power for only 17 years, as was Labour, and they both formed the wartime coalition.
- 14 A. H. Halsey, *British Social Trends Since 1900* (London: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 304–5. Support for the Conservatives was 55% in 1931, 54% four years later. If figures are calculated on a 'two party preferred' basis, support for the Conservatives was 67% in 1931 and 59% in 1935.
- 15 Halsey, *British Social Trends*, p. 318. In 1931 the figures were 77% and 55%. By contrast, in 1938 only 1.7% of the pertinent British age group attended university.
- 16 Ross McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class: Social Relations in Britain 1880–1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 266–7; my italics.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 275.
- 18 Auden, 'The Liberal Fascist', in Mendelson, *The English Auden*, p. 325.
- 19 Auden, 'The Prolific and the Devourer', in Mendelson, *The English Auden*, p. 400.
- 20 Carpenter, *W. H. Auden: A Biography*, p. 52.
- 21 Mark Simpson, *It's a Queer World* (London: Vintage, 1996), p. 26.
- 22 The Earl of Arran, speaking in the House of Lords on 21 July 1967, quoted in Patrick Higgins, *A Queer Reader* (London: Fourth Estate, 1993), p. 196; my italics.
- 23 Bernard Macfadden developed theories on kinesiology – the study of the mechanics of body movements – and espoused them in his own journal and in his *Encyclopaedia of Physical Culture* (1920). Percy Grainger was a devotee.
- 24 Samuel Hynes, *The Auden Generation* (London: Pimlico, 1976), p. 122.
- 25 Auden, 'Underneath the abject willow', in Mendelson, *The English Auden*, p. 160. This poem is dedicated to Britten.
- 26 Britten's diary, 28 July 1937 (Britten–Pears Library).
- 27 See Donald Mitchell, 'Schoolroom and Cabaret', in DMBA, pp. 103–31. See also his introduction in DMPR, pp. 17–23.
- 28 Valentine Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties* (Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 142. But then, joked John Strachey, the real world is a schoolboy world, where you join the Communist Party in a huff at not getting into the Eton Cricket XI (*ibid.*, p. 131.)
- 29 Even the near-mythical and masculine T. E. Lawrence, according to Isherwood, had a 'giggling laugh, played practical jokes and interspersed his conversation with schoolboy slang' (Cunningham, *British Writers*, p. 143).
- 30 Whilst still at school, Esmond and Giles Romilly – whom Britten met in 1936 – published an infamous magazine *Out of Bounds*, 'against Reaction, Militarism and Fascism in the Public Schools'. Gresham's response to the first two issues was significant: 'At a recent debate a motion that "In the opinion of this House a Fascist Dictatorship is preferable to Socialism" was carried by ninety-nine votes to fifty-four' (DMPR, p. 403).
- 31 Cunningham, *British Writers*, pp. 150–1.
- 32 Britten to Mrs Britten, 28 July 1936 (DMPR, p. 436). Four days earlier Britten had written in his diary: 'A long walk after dinner, after which I sketch a bit of a funeral march to those youthful Spanish martyrs.'
- 33 Nevill Coghill, 'Sweeney Agonistes', in Richard March and James Meary Tambimuttu (eds.), *T. S. Eliot: A Symposium* (London: Editions Poetry London, 1948), p. 82.
- 34 Auden, 'I have a handsome profile', in Mendelson, *The English Auden*, p. 123.
- 35 Britten in discussion with the Earl of Harewood, BBC 'People Today', [May/June] 1960; my italics.
- 36 Hynes, *The Auden Generation*, p. 166. *The Poet's Tongue* dates from the year in which Auden and Britten first met. Eliot had also experimented with such popular forms.
- 37 Auden, 'Here on the cropped grass of the narrow ridge I stand', in Mendelsohn, *The English Auden*, p. 142.
- 38 Cunningham, *British Writers*, pp. 280 and 285.
- 39 D. L. LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 310.
- 40 John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses* (London: Faber & Faber, 1992), p. 38.
- 41 It did not help that the majority of those working in the GPO Film Unit were graduates of either Oxford or Cambridge. See Stuart Hood's essay 'John Grierson and the Documentary Film Movement', in James Curran and Vincent Porter (eds.), *British Cinema History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983), pp. 99–112.
- 42 Auden, 'Coal Face', in Mendelsohn, *The English Auden*, p. 290.
- 43 Cf. 'And kiss me, Kate, we will be married o' Sunday' (*The Taming of the Shrew*, Act II scene 1, line 317).

- 44 Stephen Spender, *Forward From Liberalism* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1937), pp. 192–3; my italics.
- 45 Christopher Isherwood, *Mr Norris Changes Trains* (London: Hogarth Press, 1935), p. 77; my italics.
- 46 J. M. Hay, 'Writers' International', *Left Review* 1/6 (1935), p. 221, quoted in LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy*, p. 313.
- 47 Cunningham, *British Writers*, p. 274. Britten set Swingle's *Advance Democracy* in 1938.
- 48 DMBA, pp. 86–9.
- 49 *Ibid.*, p. 67.
- 50 The *Pacifist March* is reproduced in DMBA, pp. 68–9. The chorus begins with this imploration: 'March, stride to resist, strong with force not with fist.'
- 51 See Donald Mitchell's essay accompanying W. H. Auden, *Paul Bunyan: The Libretto of the Operetta by Benjamin Britten* (London: Faber & Faber, 1988), pp. 87–148.
- 52 The destructive nature of this eclecticism is underlined by the independent popularity of 'Inkslinger's Song': it is the most 'authentic' Britten piece in the opera.
- 53 Mitchell, essay accompanying Auden, *Paul Bunyan*, pp. 147–8.
- 54 Olin Downes in the *New York Times*, 6 May 1941 (quoted in DMPR, p. 915).
- 55 Britten described Downes as the 'snarkest and most coveted' of the New York critics in a letter to Kit Welford, 4 April 1940 (quoted in DMPR, p. 792).
- 56 Mitchell, essay accompanying Auden, *Paul Bunyan*, pp. 94–8.
- 57 Auden, 'August for the people and their favourite islands', in Mendelsohn, *The English Auden*, p. 157.
- 58 This was first published by Little, Brown and Company in 1942.
- 59 DMBA, p. 38.
- 60 Randall Swingle, 'You who stand at your doors', set by Britten in *Ballad of Heroes*.
- 61 Carpenter, *W. H. Auden: A Biography*, p. 245.
- 62 *Ibid.*, p. 246.
- 63 It should be noted that certain key statements in Britten's interview with the Earl of Harewood are incorrect.
- 64 Auden, 'September 1939', in Mendelsohn, *The English Auden*, p. 246.
- 3 Britten in the cinema: *Coal Face***
- 1 For a discussion of the music for *The King's Stamp*, see Philip Reed, 'The Incidental Music of Benjamin Britten: A Study and Catalogue Raisonné of His Music for Film, Theatre and Radio', Ph.D. dissertation (University of East Anglia, 1987), pp. 48–69.
- 2 *Weather Forecast* (New Era for GPO/New Era, 1934), first shown in 1934. Producer: John Grierson; director: Evelyn Spice; sound supervision: Alberto Cavalcanti. Rachael Low describes the film as possessing 'some beautifully chosen shots further embellished by a soundtrack showing the influence of Cavalcanti. Music, commentary, and the sound of the sea, the winds, gulls screaming, dance music on the radio, a soft background of women's voices as they relay storm warnings complement the visuals . . . this modest but satisfying little film, though neglected later, was a pioneer of free cutting of the soundtrack and made with considerable style' (Rachael Low, *Documentary and Educational Films of the 1930s* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1979), p. 77).
- 3 *Spring on the Farm* (New Era for EMB/New Era, 1933), first shown 1934. Producer: John Grierson; director: Evelyn Spice; music direction: J. E. N. Cooper.
- 4 Quoted in Elizabeth Sussex, *The Rise and Fall of British Documentary – The Story of the Film Movement Founded by John Grierson* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 29. Ms Sussex does not commit herself to any interpretation of this evidence; the surviving documents relating to the script for *Coal Face*, notably the three draft typescripts at the Britten–Pears Library, Aldeburgh (see p. 57), probably invalidate Legg's recollection (which was made forty years after the event). The typescripts were surely the matrix on which any library footage was assembled.
- 5 See Paul Rotha, *Documentary Diary* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1973), p. 232.
- 6 See Reed, 'The Incidental Music', pp. 222–38, and DMPR, pp. 414–17.
- 7 The winning entry was Montagu Slater's *Easter 1916*, first performed in December 1935 with incidental music by Britten. See Reed, 'The Incidental Music', pp. 205–21.
- 8 Of these three projects, only *The Tocher* – a 'silhouette' film by the pioneer of the technique, Lotte Reiniger – could be considered experimental. This delightful film was accompanied by a charming set of Rossini arrangements by Britten, some of which later found their way, in altogether grander orchestrations, into the concert suites *Soirées musicales* and *Matinées musicales*.
- 9 *Coal Face* is thus named by Grierson in one of his notebooks including a list of 'films to be done' held in the collection of the John Grierson Archive, University of Stirling (G3N10: 16/17).
- 10 See Charles Osborne, *W. H. Auden: The Life of a Poet* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1980), p. 109.

- 11 Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass (1) and Democratic Vistas*, with an introduction by Horace Traubel (London: Dent, 1912; 1935 imprint), p. 183.
- 12 Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, pp. 160–1.
- 13 See Sussex, *The Rise and Fall of British Documentary*, p. 65.
- 14 See John Grierson, 'The G.P.O. Gets Sound', *Cinema Quarterly* 2/4 (Summer 1934), p. 221.
- 15 Humphrey Carpenter, *W. H. Auden: A Biography* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981), p. 178.
- 16 Osborne, *Life of a Poet*, p. 109.
- 17 From Auden's unpublished contribution to Anthony Gishford (ed.), *A Tribute to Benjamin Britten on His Fiftieth Birthday* (London: Faber & Faber, 1963). This memoir first appeared in Osborne, *Life of a Poet*, p. 111. Although Auden's contribution arrived too late for inclusion in the Britten *Festschrift*, the poet made a characteristic appearance in a televised tribute to the composer broadcast by the BBC in 1963.
- 18 See Donald Mitchell's annotated interview with Enid Slater in *PBPG*, pp. 23, 27–8. Enid Slater recalled: 'Montagu got to know quite a few miners in Millom [his home town, in Cumbria] – to his family's horror, because that wasn't the sort of thing that was done. So he knew quite a lot about mining.' Edward Mendelson, in the first volume of his magisterial complete Auden edition, states categorically that Slater was the author of the 'prose narration about coal mining' (but *not* the chants), although he, like Rachael Low, gives no source for this important piece of information. See W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, *Plays and Other Dramatic Writings by W. H. Auden, 1928–1938*, edited by Edward Mendelson (London: Faber & Faber, 1989), p. 665.
- 19 *Stay Down Miner (Reportage 1)* (London: Martin Lawrence, 1936). It was the publisher Martin Lawrence who initiated a series of reportage accounts of contemporary industrial conditions. Slater subsequently made a dramatized account of the Welsh miners' protests under the same title, first performed by the Left Theatre in May 1936 with incidental music by Britten. See Reed, 'The Incidental Music', pp. 222–38, and *DMPR*, pp. 415–17.
- 20 See Walter Leigh, 'The Musician and the Film', *Cinema Quarterly* 3/2 (Winter 1935), pp. 70–74, and Reed, 'The Incidental Music', pp. 41–6.
- 21 Donald Mitchell recalls: 'Britten himself had some interesting memories of what was involved technically in securing the right sonority for a particular passage. I remember,

for instance, his recalling the realization of the characteristic "swish" of a train passing through a tunnel . . . in *Coal Face*. This was achieved by striking a light jazz cymbal with a hard beater and then reversing the recorded sound at high speed' (*DMBA*, p. 85).

22 A telling example of both techniques from the composer's last years can be found in *Canticle IV: Journey of the Magi* (1971), a setting of Eliot's famous poem for countertenor, tenor, baritone and piano. As Donald Mitchell has observed: 'Britten seizes on Eliot's own unforgettable art of significant repetition (very much part of Eliot's "music", this) and builds on it, so that it becomes as if it were an Eliot-like feature of the Canticle's compositional technique' (Sleeve-note to Decca SXL 6608).

23 Grierson, 'The G.P.O. Gets Sound', pp. 215–21.

24 Britten was later memorably to employ whistling in 'The driving boy' from the *Spring Symphony* (1949): see the passage between Figs. 16 and 18.

25 For further information about the GPO Film Unit's earlier experiments with the sound-film, see Reed, 'The Incidental Music', pp. 33–46. Leigh himself acknowledged the influence of Satie's 'ballet réalistique', *Parade* (1917), on the scoring of *Six-Thirty Collection*, and further comparisons might be drawn with the work of Russolo and the Italian Futurists.

4 'He descended into Hell': Peter Grimes, Ellen Orford and salvation denied

1 *PBPG*, pp. 148–9.

2 Quoted in Alan Blyth, *Remembering Britten* (London: Hutchinson, 1981), p. 20.

3 See Britten's handwritten annotations to his copy of the miniature score of the *Four Sea Interludes*, quoted in *PBPG*, p. 205.

4 For example, Peter Porter has written that 'almost everything in *Peter Grimes* is superbly realized by the music, except the character of Peter himself. Yet the miracle of Britten's score is that this does not injure the effect of the whole work. Our noses are simply pointed in other directions.' ('Benjamin Britten's Librettos', in Nicholas John (ed.), *Peter Grimes/Gloriana*, ENO Opera Guides No. 24 (London: John Calder, 1983), p. 13.)

5 *DMHK*, pp. 111–31 (repr. in *PBPG*, pp. 105–20).

6 Philip Hope-Wallace, 'Peter Grimes', *Time and Tide*, 14 June 1945, p. 496.

7 *DMPR*, p. 1189.

8 *PBPG*, p. 67.

9 *The Life of George Crabbe by his Son* – another Rev. George Crabbe – with a foreword by E. M. Forster (London: Oxford University Press,

1932) is still highly recommended as an introduction to the poet. Kenneth Green's early costume design for the operatic character of Rector Horace Adams had his face drawn to look like Crabbe's (who was himself an Anglican clergyman of Aldeburgh) as depicted in the painting by Thomas Philips. This lends a note of implied criticism of Crabbe when Boles upbraids the Rector in Act II scene 1 with the lines: '[Is it] Your business to ignore Growing at your door Evils, like your fancy flowers?' and his constant references to watering his roses in Act III scene 1 (Crabbe was a noted collector and analyst of plant life).

10 *The Poetical Works of the Rev. George Crabbe* (London: John Murray, 1851). See BBPG, p. 172, for further information on this source.

11 Crabbe, *The Borough*, lines 26–54.

12 Montagu Slater, 'The Story of the Opera', in Eric Crozier (ed.), *Benjamin Britten: Peter Grimes* (London: John Lane/The Bodley Head, Sadler's Wells Opera Books No. 3, 1945), p. 26. Slater's more misogynistic and sinister view of Ellen Orford, unlike the positive views held by Britten and Pears, is also expressed in this essay.

13 The operatic Ellen performs a spiritual role equivalent to that of Peter Grimes's father in Crabbe's poem. Britten removed Grimes senior from his earlier operatic sketches, originally paralleling the poem with a cathartic deathbed confrontation between him (being waited on by Ellen) and Grimes junior. It is possible that the spirituality embodied in the father was transferred to the operatic Ellen. The significance of this is also noted by Eric Walter White, who quotes the same four lines of Crabbe's poem as Slater (lines 26–54): see EWWB, pp. 122–3.

14 MKB, p. 170.

15 Stephen Walsh, 'A Commentary on the Music', in John (ed.), *Peter Grimes/Gloriana*, p. 20.

16 Peter Pears, 'On Playing Peter Grimes', in CPBC, p. 105. Joan Cross commented (in conversation with Pears and John Evans) that she 'always regarded Ellen's attitude towards Grimes as one of sympathy and understanding and a desire to help him out of his difficulties. She has a deep regard for him and a feeling that here is a poet, a man that nobody understands . . . I remember I used to take great pleasure in performing in the Prologue . . . I never took my eyes off Peter during this scene, willed him to do this, that and the other, and was saddened and grieved and distressed by the fact that everybody turned against him at the end' (John (ed.), *Peter Grimes/Gloriana*, pp. 64–5). In the original production, Pears was aged thirty-five and Cross forty-five, and part of Britten's desire

to use Cross in the role was her maturity. This, in combination with Britten's purging of certain aspects of the relationship between Grimes and the boy in the libretto sources, suggests that the kind of love Britten envisaged between Ellen and Grimes was more like a mother's for her son.

17 Letter to Pears dated 19 January 1944 (DMPR, p. 1181).

18 Philip Reed has observed that in neither sketch of the duet does Britten use key signatures to notate the bitonality (BBPG, p. 99).

19 Cf. Hans Keller's remark that 'every second Interlude in the opera . . . is a Grimes Interlude' (DMHK, p. 122).

20 The same may be said of their cry (not to God) at the end of the storm chorus: 'O Tide that waits for no man spare our coasts!', a reference to 'Time that waits for no man.'

21 Christopher Palmer commented of this moment (when the Borough questions Ellen with 'What! And be Grimes' messenger?'): 'the sound of the chorus, as it intones the line to the major seventh chord [of Interlude I] is curiously angelic, almost implying that Ellen as Grimes' messenger is heaven-sent, sea-delivered, joined with Grimes in elemental unity' (CPBC, p. 116).

22 CPBC, p. 106.

23 *PEMB*, p. 106.

24 Where Ellen is not physically present, Balstrode invariably is. The fact that Balstrode to a lesser extent also stands outside the Borough, and that after initiating Grimes's suicide he leaves the stage with Ellen, would strongly suggest his supportive perspective. Hans Keller implied Freudian Mother, Father and sibling resonances in these two characters in his *Three Psychoanalytic Notes on 'Peter Grimes'*, edited by Christopher Wintle (London: Institute of Advanced Musical Studies, King's College London, 1995). In the final analysis, whatever the degree of mother–father love in any relationship, it is whether true and sincere love exists that is the proving criterion.

25 Sackville-West, 'The Musical and Dramatic Structure', in Crozier (ed.), *Benjamin Britten: Peter Grimes*, p. 33. Joan Cross also commented: 'a most extraordinary effect emotionally is Ellen's exit after she agrees to go and collect the new apprentice for Grimes. The succession of downward phrases in the orchestra is so moving. Time after time I used to land up off the stage in tears. I cannot tell you why. It had such incredible dignity and power, and it was something that made these villagers, these people who were being so tiresome, give way to her as she walked through them, and it's in the music' (John (ed.), *Peter Grimes/Gloriana*, pp. 64–5).

26 For an early and perceptive discussion of the function of these tonal centres in the opera, see Anthony Payne, 'Dramatic Use of Tonality in *Peter Grimes*', *Tempo* 66/67 (1963), pp. 22–6. 27 CPBC, p. 106.

28 Deryck Cooke regarded Ellen's phrase 'Glitter of waves, and glitter of sunlight' as an example of a melodic shape 'almost always employed to express the innocence and purity of angels and children, or some natural phenomenon which possesses the same qualities in the eyes of men'. See Deryck Cooke, *The Language of Music* (Oxford University Press, 1959; repr. 1989), pp. 151–5 and Ex. 64j.

29 Mervyn Cooke, 'Britten's Prophetic Song: Tonal Symbolism in *Billy Budd*', in MCP, p. 89.

30 PBPG, p. 130.

31 CPBC, p. 106.

32 John (ed.), *Peter Grimes/Gloriana*, p. 27.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 14. Porter does not appear to be aware of the connection he is making between the nature of Grimes and that of the overtly evil John Claggart in *Billy Budd*.

34 Joan Cross and John Evans linked the quartet with the trio at the end of Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*, the score of which Britten requested from Ralph Hawkes to study while in hospital with measles during the writing of *Grimes* (John (ed.), *Peter Grimes/Gloriana*, p. 66). The effect of Strauss's trio for Sophie, the Marschallin and Octavian (the last sung by a woman) in Act III, bars 285–93, is preserved by the three-part textures of Britten's quartet – in which both Nieces sing a single line – and by the yearningly high tessitura of the vocal writing. According to Pears, the quartet was included at Britten's insistence to provide 'some softening, some change, some relaxation after the intensity of the march to the hut' (*ibid.*, p. 66).

35 Arnold Whittall, *Music Since the First World War* (Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 112.

36 Wilfrid Mellers, 'Through *Noye's Fludde*', in CPBC, p. 158.

37 PEMB, pp. 119–20. Wozzeck's 'Wir arme Leut!' ('What it is to be poor!') is linked to his relationship with his young son who – as he explains to the Captain in Act I (bar 136), where the motif first occurs – was born outside of wedlock as a result of his poverty. It recurs in Act II (bar 114) in exchanges with Marie, the boy's mother, as Wozzeck gives her money. Tellingly, it is next heard in the mouth of the Drum-Major, with whom Marie is conducting a sexual relationship, in Act II scene 5 (bar 778) as he humiliates Wozzeck. Finally (Evans's point) it emerges orchestrally in the interlude preceding the final scene in which Wozzeck's

and Marie's young boy is informed by his playmates that his murdered mother's body has been discovered. Wozzeck has killed her and then, like Grimes (though perhaps in more 'accidental circumstances'), drowns himself.

38 As in the case of the handwritten programmatic designations in Britten's earlier sketches and miniature score of the *Four Sea Interludes*, his annotations to his miniature score of the *Passacaglia* (BBPG, p. 205) are perhaps to be understood in the concert rather than operatic context.

39 Again Berg's *Wozzeck* is possibly an influence, particularly the dance scene in Act II scene 4 (extended scherzo and trio movement) and the recapitulation of dance music in Act III scene 4 (invention on a six-note chord, bars 240ff.) as Wozzeck stumbles across the body of Marie, whom he has previously murdered.

40 PEMB, p. 115.

41 I am indebted to Bram Gay, formerly administrator at the Royal Opera House, for this insight. Joan Cross, remembering Britten's attendance at all of her and Pears's performances of Verdi's *La Traviata* and Mozart's *Così fan tutte* at Sadler's Wells from 1943 onwards, said: 'I've often wondered whether *Come scoglio* gave him ideas. All those wide leaps and difficult intervals in the Mozart could have influenced his writing of the "Embroidery" Aria' (John (ed.), *Peter Grimes/Gloriana*, p. 65).

42 AWBT, p. 100.

43 Christopher Wintle has observed that 'for his part, Grimes describes "her breast" as a "harbour" that "shelters peace", to music that transforms the kiss motif from *Otello*: here understanding resides in not neglecting Verdi, the overt sexuality of whose music is transformed by Britten into a regressive cry for the protection of the good mother' ('The Living Conflict', *Times Literary Supplement*, 26 April 1991, p. 20).

5 The chamber operas

1 Letter to Ralph Hawkes, 30 June 1946, cited in HCBB, p. 225.

2 HCBB, p. 225.

3 See EWWB, p. 147.

4 For a full discussion of the opera's genesis, see Margaret S. Mertz, 'History, Criticism and the Sources of Benjamin Britten's Opera *The Rape of Lucretia*' (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1990).

5 Peter Porter, 'Benjamin Britten's Librettos', in Nicholas John (ed.), *Peter Grimes/Gloriana*, ENO Opera Guides No. 24 (London: John Calder, 1983), p. 11.

- 6 EWWB, p. 145.
- 7 For Duncan's own account, see RDWB, especially pp. 75–7. See also HCBB, pp. 235–6.
- 8 Philip Brett, 'Grimes and Lucretia', in Nigel Fortune (ed.), *Music and Theatre: Essays in Honour of Winton Dean* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 360.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 360.
- 10 Donald Mitchell, 'The Serious Comedy of *Albert Herring*', Glyndebourne Festival Programme Book, 1986; repr. in DMCN, pp. 352–64.
- 11 Philip Brett, 'Character and Caricature in *Albert Herring*', *Musical Times* 127 (1986), p. 545.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 547.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 547.
- 14 Guy de Maupassant, 'Le Rosier de Madame Husson' (1887). For an accessible English version, see 'Madame Husson's May King' in Guy de Maupassant, *Mademoiselle Fifi and Other Stories*, trans. David Coward (Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 167–84.
- 15 Erwin Stein, 'Form in Opera: *Albert Herring* Examined', *Tempo* 5 (Autumn 1947), pp. 4–5.
- 16 Norman Del Mar, 'Albert Herring', in DMHK, p. 154.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 149.
- 18 See Antonia Malloy, 'Britten's Major Set-back? Aspects of the First Critical Response to *Gloriana*', in PBBG, pp. 49–65, and pp. 113–28 of the present volume.
- 19 See HCBB, pp. 332–3.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 331. For a full discussion of issues concerning the libretto, see PHTS, pp. 23–62.
- 21 See Arnold Schoenberg, *Theory of Harmony*, trans. Roy E. Carter (London: Faber & Faber, 1978), p. 323.
- 22 See PHTS, pp. 64–5.
- 23 Although the published score of the opera numbers the scenes of Act II from 1 to 8, I will preserve the parallel numbering with the variations in this commentary.
- 24 See Donald Mitchell, 'Britten's Revisionary Practice: Practical and Creative', *Tempo* 66–7 (Autumn–Winter 1963), pp. 15–22; repr. in DMCN, pp. 393–406.
- 6 *Gloriana*: Britten's 'slighted child'**
- 1 *The Tongs and the Bones: The Memoirs of Lord Harewood* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1981), pp. 134–5.
- 2 London: Chatto & Windus, 1928, repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971.
- 3 Material survives from the early stages of work on two such operas, both of which were later abandoned: *The Tale of Mr Tod* (which was to have been based on the story by Beatrix Potter) and *Tyco the Vegan* (with an original space-travel scenario, unusual amongst Britten's operatic projects in not deriving from a literary original).
- 4 The Festival of Britain operas were Arthur Benjamin's *A Tale of Two Cities*, Alan Bush's *Wat Tyler*, Berthold Goldschmidt's *Beatrice Cenci* and Karl Rankl's *Deidre of the Sorrows*. At the same time, Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*, Walton's *Troilus and Cressida* and Lennox Berkeley's *Nelson* were being completed. Of the seven, only *Nelson* achieved its première ahead of *Gloriana*.
- 5 Stanley Bayliss, headline in *Daily Mail*, 9 June 1953.
- 6 Marie Stopes, letter to *The Times*, 20 June 1953, p. 7.
- 7 D. Watkins, letter to *Music and Musicians* 1/12 (August 1953), p. 23.
- 8 Anon., 'Gloriana', *Times Educational Supplement*, 19 June 1953, p. 561.
- 9 Martin Cooper, 'Gloriana and Benjamin Britten', *The Score* 8 (1953), p. 61.
- 10 Anon., 'Royal Opera House *Gloriana*', *The Times*, 1 July 1953, p. 5.
- 11 Martin Cooper, 'Britten at Bay', *Spectator*, 19 June 1953, p. 783.
- 12 For a more detailed discussion of the critical reaction to the première, and other aspects of *Gloriana's* early history, see PBBG, pp. 49–65.
- 13 Work on the libretto began in summer 1942, and the orchestration was completed in early 1945.
- 14 Britten first mentioned *Sumidagawa*, the Japanese Nô play on which the first Church Parable is based, in a letter to Plomer dated 13 May 1956, but *Curlew River* was not premièred until 14 June 1964; see pp. 179–81. Similarly, Britten's strong interest in the Henry James story that formed the basis for *Owen Wingrave* (1970) dated from some sixteen years before the opera came to be composed, originating when he was preoccupied with *The Turn of the Screw*.
- 15 RDWB, p. 61.
- 16 For a detailed description of the evolution of *Billy Budd*, see Eric Crozier, 'Staging First Productions', in DHOB, pp. 31–3.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- 18 *Billy Budd* was reduced from four acts to two some eight years after its première (see MCPR, pp. 74–84), and *Paul Bunyan*, Britten's first operatic venture, underwent major revision at the end of his life.
- 19 Eric Crozier, 'Staging First Productions', p. 33.
- 20 Towards the end of 1952 it became obvious that this commission would have to wait, and La Fenice eventually agreed to postpone the première of the opera – which was to have taken

place in September 1953 – for a further year. *The Turn of the Screw* was finally premièred on 14 September 1954 as part of their festival of contemporary music.

21 While he was working on the libretto he continued to act as a reader for the publisher Jonathan Cape, produced several poems and also saw a new book, *Museum Pieces*, through the press.

22 Quoted in Peter F. Alexander, *William Plomer: A Biography* (Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 239.

23 These problems notwithstanding, Plomer clearly proved to be a highly sympathetic colleague, since Britten returned to him for the libretti of the three Church Parables (*Curlew River*, *The Burning Fiery Furnace* and *The Prodigal Son*) in the 1960s.

24 Edmund Tracey, 'Benjamin Britten talks to Edmund Tracey', *Sadler's Wells Magazine* 4 (Autumn 1966), pp. 5–7.

25 Quoted in anonymous article, 'Mr Britten Discusses *Gloriana*', *Lowestoft Journal*, 17 April 1953.

26 Quoted in Robert Muller, 'Gloriana is Born', *Picture Post* 59/11, p. 67.

27 J. E. Neale, *Queen Elizabeth I* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1934, repr. Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1971).

28 See, for example, the opening of *The Murder on the Downs*:

Past a cow and past a cottage,
Past the sties and byres,
Past the equidistant poles
Holding taut the humming wires . . .

29 William Plomer, 'Notes on the Libretto of *Gloriana*', *Tempo* 28 (Summer 1953), p. 6.

30 Quoted in Tracey, 'Benjamin Britten talks to Edmund Tracey'.

31 In fact, as early as January 1954 an experimental version of the ending – from which the ghostly visitors were removed – had been performed. Britten's comment (in a letter to Plomer dated 31 January) that it 'worked well' obviously paved the way for the formal rewriting that took place before the 1966 production. Interestingly, the same performance also cut Act II scene 1 in its entirety; according to Britten, 'Everyone missed "Norwich", but many agreed the work gained in dramatic intensity, if it lost in open-airness or splendour.' Presumably these reductions were originally made with the needs of a touring company in mind; the opera visited the provinces (and then Bulawayo) at this time.

32 Fortunately, Britten anticipated Plomer's material remarkably accurately and made little alteration to his 'setting' when he received the

words. On 23 November he wrote to Plomer thanking him for them and commented: 'the lovely Essex speech fits what I'd planned (and even sketched in!) like a glove. A lovely case of thought transference!'

33 Unpublished letter to Basil Coleman (who produced the opera's première), 6 October 1952.

34 Britten's original suggestion, Frederick Ashton, had been refused because he might be needed for a possible separate ballet on the same gala evening. Then John Cranko's name was put forward and seemingly agreed upon.

Once it became clear that there was to be no ballet other than that required within the opera, however, Ninette de Valois wrote to Britten telling him that Ashton would, after all, be available, and was preferable to Cranko. In the end, Britten prevailed and Cranko was reinstated, thus beginning a creative association that was to result in Britten's only full-length ballet, *The Prince of the Pagodas* (see p. 171).

35 Quoted by Donald Mitchell in CPBC, p. 91.

36 Quoted in 'Mr Britten Discusses *Gloriana*' (see note 25 above).

37 From the *Second Set of Madrigals* (1609).

38 Throughout his life, Britten retained a liking for this literal kind of quotation: see, for example, his use of the hymn tune 'Mount Ephraim' in his setting of Thomas Hardy's 'The Choirmaster's Burial' (in *Winter Words*), a poem which deals with a church musician's dying wish to have 'Mount Ephraim' played at his graveside.

39 Imogen Holst recalled in her diary that Pears was not in favour of this ending to the act, but Britten refused to change it, because he felt that 'the orchestra during the slow curtain would be absolutely terrifying, and was necessary to the drama'.

40 Her contribution to Britten scholarship is also considerable: the diary she kept during work on *Gloriana* contains fascinating personal reminiscences of day-to-day work on the opera and is an important source of firsthand documentation of Britten's working methods. A copy of her diaries is deposited at the Britten–Pears Library, Aldeburgh.

41 Other alterations made at this time included the shortening of the Queen's soliloquy and prayer at the end of Act I scene 2 and the entrance of Cecil in Act III scene 1.

42 Quoted in Tracey, 'Benjamin Britten talks to Edmund Tracey', p. 6.

43 It is perhaps fitting that the music he provided for two of the pageant scenes (the Norwich masque and the courtly dances) has found itself a place outside the opera house, in

the form of the *Choral Dances* and the *Symphonic Suite*, both of which are popular additions to the repertory of amateur groups the like of which he sought to encourage. A version of the *Courtly Dances* for school orchestra was prepared for Boosey & Hawkes by David Stone in 1963: see PBBG, pp. 143–4.

44 Quoted in MSBC, p. 118.

45 This economy also extended to the opera's motivic structure, which is far simpler than that of its predecessor, *Billy Budd*.

46 The conflict of Britten's public and private responsibilities, and its reflection in the material of the opera, is sensitively and perceptively discussed by Donald Mitchell in his essay 'Public and Private in *Gloriana*' in CPBC, pp. 170–6.

47 Robert Henderson, 'Budd and *Gloriana* Reconsidered', *Tempo* 68 (Spring 1964), p. 31.

7 Britten and Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

1 Benjamin Britten, 'A New Britten Opera', *Observer Weekend Review*, 5 June 1960, p. 9.

2 Line references correspond to the Arden text of Shakespeare's play, ed. Harold Brooks (London: Methuen, 1979).

3 In Shakespeare's play, the nuptials follow a single night of woodland scenes in spite of the implications of Theseus's opening lines 'four happy days' (quoted on p. 134): the larger interval of time is necessary to justify the duke's impatience, and the effect is nullified by Britten's drastic relocation of the speech to Act III of the opera. Shakespeare's double-time device is also to be seen in *Othello*, where (presumably deliberate) inconsistencies allow for two interpretations, one of which sees the plot taking several months to develop and the other only a few days, thus capturing both the protracted nature of inexorable fate and the bewildering speed of the eventual dénouement.

4 Britten, 'A New Britten Opera'. The composer's facsimile of the First Quarto was a present from Imogen Holst inscribed in March 1960, by which time most of the opera's music had been composed.

5 William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. G. B. Harrison (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1953).

6 Cuenod was apparently offered the part, but turned it down because of prior commitments: see HCBB, p. 395.

7 PEMB, p. 238. It should be noted that an optional cut Britten sanctioned between Figs.

17 and 19a in Act III unfortunately weakens the effect of the gradual approach of Theseus's horn

calls. This cut is observed in Britten's own recording of the work (Decca 425663-2).

8 Brooks (ed.), *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. xcv. This function of the wood corresponds to that of the forests in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *As You Like It*, the tomb in *Much Ado About Nothing*, the cave in *Cymbeline* and the island in *The Tempest*.

9 On 14 December Britten declared in a letter to Pears that he was 'well into the 2nd Act'. The composer thanked Mrs Piper for her Prologue in a letter dated 29 December ('I am considering it'), and on 9 January he wrote again to Pears to say 'I struggle on with Act 2, sometimes good, sometimes not so.'

10 For the complete text of Mrs Piper's Prologue, see Mervyn Cooke, 'Britten and Shakespeare: Dramatic and Musical Cohesion in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', *Music & Letters* 74/2 (1993), pp. 255–6. See also William H. L. Godsvalve, *Britten's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream': Making an Opera from Shakespeare's Comedy* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1995), pp. 72–3, where the author expands on observations first made by the present writer in an undergraduate dissertation in 1984.

11 The sketch is reproduced in Cooke, 'Britten and Shakespeare', p. 256.

12 For a concise summary, see EWWB, p. 224.

13 It is intriguing to note the similar intervallic construction of the lovers' distinctive theme and Mrs Grose's equally pregnant melody of foreboding at Fig. 39 in Act I of *The Turn of the Screw*.

14 Personal communication from the librettist of *Cantata Misericordium*, the late Patrick Wilkinson. A classicist and onetime Senior Tutor of King's College Cambridge, Wilkinson had been suggested by E. M. Forster (also a Fellow of King's) as a librettist capable of producing the Latin text required by Britten for this international commission. Wilkinson later compiled an anthology of Latin love poetry in the hope that it might be set to music by Walton, but this projected song-cycle came to naught.

15 For further instances of Britten's characteristic delight in musical puns of this nature, see MCWR, p. 71 and p. 106, n. 24.

16 Compare the directly analogous tonal tension between B minor and B \flat major in *Billy Budd* (1951), and between E \flat minor and D major in *The Burning Fiery Furnace* (1966).

17 See Mervyn Cooke, 'Britten's Prophetic Song: Tonal Symbolism in *Billy Budd*', in MCPR, pp. 85–110.

- 18 For a listing of comparable instances of Britten's symbolic use of A major, see MCPR, p. 165, n. 5. See also p. 84 above.
- 19 Noël Goodwin, 'The Aldeburgh Festival', *Musical Times* 101 (1960), p. 503.
- 20 John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris (eds.), *Early Shakespeare* (Stratford-upon-Avon Studies, 3; London, 1961), p. 183.

8 Eros in life and death: *Billy Budd* and *Death in Venice*

- 1 See Clifford Hindley, 'Britten's Parable Art: A Gay Reading', *History Workshop Journal* 40 (1995), pp. 63–90.
- 2 F. Barron Freeman, *Melville's Billy Budd* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948), p. 64. E. M. Forster acquired this volume during the writing of the libretto.
- 3 E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (London: Edward Arnold, 1927; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976 repr. 1987), pp. 129–30. Attention was drawn to the passage (including the extracts quoted in the text) in a radio discussion between Britten, Crozier and Forster, broadcast by the BBC on 12 November 1960 (BBC transcript, pp. 3–4).
- 4 See Philip Brett's chapter 'Salvation at Sea: *Billy Budd*', in CPBC, pp. 133–43.
- 5 The development of the friendship is well portrayed by Philip Reed in MCPR, pp. 42–5.
- 6 Crozier's own account of the collaboration was published in 'The Writing of *Billy Budd*', *Opera Quarterly* 4/3 (1986), pp. 11–27.
- 7 The four-act version was revived at Covent Garden in 1995. Act and scene numbers given in this chapter refer to the two-act version, published by Boosey & Hawkes in 1961.
- 8 Billy's remarkable influence on the sailors' morale in his former ship, *The Rights o' Man*, is stressed in Melville's narrative. It may be reflected in Britten's derivation of the theme for the sailors' fervour for battle from Billy's arpeggio motif: see Brett, 'Salvation at Sea', p. 140.
- 9 On the preoccupation with mutiny and its links with the key of B minor, see Mervyn Cooke in MCPR, pp. 18, 31 and 91ff.
- 10 For a fuller account of the music associated with fate see Clifford Hindley, 'Britten's *Billy Budd*: The "Interview Chords" Again', *Musical Quarterly* 78/1 (1994), pp. 99–126.
- 11 Herman Melville, *Billy Budd, Foretopman*, introduction by William Plomer (London: John Lehmann, 1946), p. 8. Crozier specifies this edition in his account of 'The Writing of *Billy Budd*', p. 12.
- 12 Letter from Forster to Lionel Trilling, 16

April 1949: see Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank (eds.), *Selected Letters of E. M. Forster* (London: Collins, 1985), No. 389. Melville had described Billy lying in chains between two guns as 'nipped in the vice of fate'. (Herman Melville, *Billy Budd, Sailor and Other Stories* ed. Harold Beaver (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967, repr. 1981), p. 396.)

13 Forster's sympathy with this kind of Stoicism is seen in the lengthy quotation from Father Mapple's sermon in *Moby Dick* which he transcribes in *Aspects of the Novel*, p. 127.

14 For a description of these papers and the full text of Forster's note, see Clifford Hindley, 'Love and Salvation in Britten's "Billy Budd"', *Music & Letters* 70/3 (1989), pp. 363–81.

15 A more detailed analysis of the libretto drafts from this point of view is given in Hindley, 'Love and Salvation'. See also the subtle manipulation of the reference to Billy's 'flower of masculine beauty and strength' as a source of sexual attraction for Vere (*ibid.*, p. 376).

16 For this view of these operas, see Clifford Hindley, 'Homosexual Self-affirmation and Self-oppression in Two Britten Operas', *Musical Quarterly* 76/2 (1992), pp. 143–68, and 'Not the Marrying Kind: Britten's *Albert Herring*', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 6/2 (1994), pp. 159–74.

17 Lago and Furbank (eds.), *Selected Letters of E. M. Forster*, No. 394.

18 One of the most remarkable (though tiniest) modifications recorded in the libretto drafts is the change of 'God has blessed me' into 'He [i.e., Billy] has saved me and blessed me.' This reflects Forster's deep humanist convictions, and confirms our inferring a human rather than divine significance for the phrase 'the love that passes understanding'. (See Hindley, 'Love and Salvation', pp. 371ff.)

19 Britten's recognition of this tradition at a more popular level is seen in the central section of his *Canadian Carnival* (1939), where a slow waltz with its melody in consecutive thirds is marked 'Andante amoroso' (Fig. 13) and subsequently 'Andante, più amoroso che prima' (Fig. 16).

20 Of Billy's last cry, Forster wrote (in an unpublished letter) that it was 'insoluble' but expressed 'compassion, comprehension, love. I wish it could have been purely musical' (letter from Forster to Britten, dated 8 August 1951, in the Britten–Pears Library). I cannot help feeling that Britten's ethereal concord wonderfully meets that wish.

21 Barrie Emslie, 'Billy Budd and the Fear of Words', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 4/1 (1992), pp. 43–59.

- 22 For Britten's views on communication, see Hindley, 'Britten's Parable Art', pp. 76–7.
- 23 Relevant passages include 'Antique' (dedicated to Wulff Scherchen) from the song-cycle *Les illuminations*; 'Sokrates und Alkibiades' from the song-cycle *Sechs Hölderlin-Fragmente*; several passages to accompany avowals of love in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (see pp. 139–43); the brass chords which sound at Aschenbach's first meeting with Tadzio, and the three piano triads which punctuate the older man's declaration of love at the beginning of Act II in *Death in Venice*.
- 24 Other examples are the Borough's appropriation of Grimes's theme in *Peter Grimes*; the sharing (with variations) of much thematic material between Quint and the Governess in *The Turn of the Screw*; and the use of Tadzio's theme in *Death in Venice* in both Apollonian and Dionysiac contexts. See Clifford Hindley, 'Homosexual Self-affirmation and Self-oppression' and 'Why Does Miles Die: A Study of Britten's "Turn of the Screw"', *Musical Quarterly* 74/1 (1990), pp. 1–17.
- 25 See PEMB, pp. 163–87, and – for much insight in respect of *Billy Budd* – Mervyn Cooke, 'Britten's "Prophetic Song": Tonal Symbolism in *Billy Budd*', in M CPR, pp. 85–110.
- 26 For different views of the extent to which the opera may function as a parable of redemption, see Arnold Whittall, '“Twisted Relations”: Method and Meaning in Britten's *Billy Budd*', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 2/2 (1990), pp. 145–71, and Hindley, 'Britten's *Billy Budd*: The Interview Chords Again'.
- 27 In his book *The Enchafed Flood* (London: Faber & Faber, 1951), W. H. Auden provides a quasi-theological analysis of Melville's *Billy Budd* as Christ figure. But though often quoted in opera programmes, this work was first published (in New York) only in 1950, at a time when the friendship between Britten and Auden was strained if not already broken, and it seems unlikely to have influenced the creation of the opera. (In Hindley, 'Britten's *Billy Budd*: The Interview Chords Again', n. 11, the publication date is wrongly given as 1949.)
- 28 'Letter from E. M. Forster', *Griffin* 1 (1951), pp. 4–6. Cf. also Forster's letter to Britten of 20 December 1948 (*Selected Letters*, No. 387), where he writes, 'Billy is our Saviour, yet he is Billy, not Christ or Orion.' In *Aspects of the Novel* Forster had spoken more cautiously of Billy's securing 'harmony and temporary salvation' (my emphasis). On Orion, see P. N. Furbank, *E. M. Forster, a Life* (Oxford University Press, 1979), vol. I, p. 162.
- 29 Letter of 20 December 1948 (see preceding note); cf. the quotation from *Aspects of the Novel* on pp. 147–8 above. The idea of universalization was also reflected in the broadcast discussion where, with Britten's agreement, Crozier spoke of the ship as an image of the world, '[floating] on the sea of time and of infinity' (BBC transcript, p. 5). It does not seem to me that the opera's Epilogue implies (as some have suggested) a perpetual repetition of Vere's self-reproach.
- 30 See T. J. Reed, 'Mann and His Novella: "Death in Venice"' and 'I was Thomas Mann's Tadzio', in DMDV, pp. 163–7 and 184–5.
- 31 For the quotations from Mann and George, see the letter of 4 July 1920 from Mann to Carl Maria Weber in *Letters of Thomas Mann 1889–1955*, selected and translated by Richard and Clara Winston (London: Secker & Warburg, 1970), vol. I, pp. 103 and 105.
- 32 T. J. Reed, 'Mann and His Novella'.
- 33 Myfanwy Piper, 'The Libretto', in DMDV, p. 45.
- 34 See Rosamund Strode, 'A *Death in Venice* Chronicle', in DMDV, p. 28.
- 35 HCBB, pp. 542–51.
- 36 Letter from Auden to Britten, 31 January 1942, in DMPR, pp. 1015–16. Britten's comment is in a letter to his brother-in-law Kit Welford, 1 March 1942 (*ibid.*, p. 1021). See the discussion of this issue in DMDV, pp. 21–3. For Pears's recollection, see Christopher Headington, *Britten* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1981), p. 139.
- 37 DMDV, p. 207, n. 15.
- 38 For Mann's subtly ironic deployment of the classical references, see Clifford Hindley, 'Contemplation and Reality: A Study in Britten's "Death in Venice"', *Music & Letters* 71/4 (1990), pp. 512–16.
- 39 Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice, Tristan, Tonio Kröger*, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955, repr. 1986), p. 190. At the end of the novel Kröger declares, 'For if anything is capable of making a poet of a literary man, it is my bourgeois love of the human, the living and usual. It is the source of all warmth, goodness, and humour . . .' Cf. Myfanwy Piper, in DMDV, pp. 45ff.
- 40 See DMPR, letters No. 201 (to Enid Slater, 29 July 1939) and No. 227 (to Wulff Scherchen, 8 December 1939).
- 41 For detailed arguments in support of this interpretation, see Hindley, 'Contemplation and Reality', pp. 511–23, and 'Platonic Elements in Britten's "Death in Venice"', *Music & Letters* 73/3 (1992), pp. 407–29.
- 42 Plato, *Symposium* 210, a passage noted by Mann: see T. J. Reed, *Thomas Mann: Der Tod in Venedig* (Oxford University Press, 1971, repr. 1978), p. 179, n. 210.

- 43 As published in Archibald T. Davison and Willi Apel, *Historical Anthology of Music* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1946), vol. 1, no. 7a.
- 44 I address the published text of the opera. There is, however, evidence in an unpublished section of the composition sketch (in the Britten–Pears Library at Aldeburgh) that Britten considered, only to reject, the idea that Aschenbach’s ‘moment of reality’ would be fully experienced in the physical consummation of his love for Tadzio (see Hindley, ‘Platonic Elements’, pp. 420–4). This possibility surely leaves its trace in the mounting agitation of the interludes between the clauses of Aschenbach’s aesthetic creed.
- 45 PEMB, p. 534.
- 46 Myfanwy Piper in DMDV, p. 50.
- 47 See T. J. Reed’s introduction to *Der Tod in Venedig*, pp. 41–3.
- 48 Compare the conflict between Claggart (fourths) and Vere/Billy (thirds, and their close allies sixths and tenths) in *Billy Budd* (above, p. 151), and that between false gods, Merodak and Jehovah (fourths) and the purity of the Young Men’s obedience to conscience (thirds) in *The Burning Fiery Furnace*, for which see Hindley, ‘Homosexual Self-affirmation and Self-oppression’ (note 16 above).
- 49 A reminiscence surely of Plato *Symposium* 183, which speaks of the tolerance afforded by Athenian society to the lover in this predicament.
- 50 PEMB, p. 535.
- 51 The Elderly Fop and the operation of the Barber in creating Aschenbach in the Fop’s image are woven into the plot of musical ambiguity by two interrelated references. First, there is the brief rising sequence of two-note chords comprising all twelve tones which occurs when the Fop first speaks to Aschenbach (Fig. 31): it is reiterated as they part, following the Fop’s ‘Pray keep us in mind’ (Fig. 40⁴). This request is ironically fulfilled when the chord sequence is recalled at the beginning of Aschenbach’s invocation of Tadzio in his hymn to Apollo (Fig. 176). The recall adds to the elements of ambiguity and warning in Act I the hint that idolization of Tadzio will in the end lead Aschenbach to assume the Fop’s image. This in fact happens in Scene 16, where the Fop’s reference (in Act I) to the ‘pretty little darling’ is conflated with Tadzio’s chord, implying that Tadzio has now, for Aschenbach, taken over the role of ‘the pretty little darling’. (In this note I am indebted to various insights by Mervyn Cooke, John Evans and Donald Mitchell in DMDV, pp. 111, 126 and 213, n. 7.)
- 52 The words are attributed to Plato’s Socrates in conversation with Phaedrus, but in fact neither the form nor the sentiments have much to do with the Platonic dialogues. Peter Evans speaks of ‘a terrible access of clear-eyed vision’ (PEMB, p. 533).
- 53 *Death in Venice*, Fig. 3: *Billy Budd*, Act II, lead up to Fig. 100. The Aschenbach theme recurs briefly to confirm Aschenbach’s self-esteem (Fig. 62, trumpets only, Fig. 103^{7–8}, Fig. 234, and, at the end with bitter irony, Fig. 307²).
- 54 Contrast Plato, who envisages the development of a positive relationship between lover and beloved (*Symposium* 208–9).
- 55 Donald Mitchell, ‘A *Billy Budd* Notebook’, in MCPR, p. 116.
- 56 ‘The pearl of great price’, Matthew 13:46. E. M. Forster said that in creating Billy he was concerned to make goodness interesting: see the radio discussion (note 3, above), BBC transcript, p. 6. ‘Goodness’ of course includes intolerance of evil – in Forster’s description, a ‘goodness of the glowing aggressive sort which cannot exist until it has evil to consume’ (*Aspects of the Novel*, p. 128).
- 57 Mitchell, ‘A *Billy Budd* Notebook’, in MCPR, pp. 129ff., and references there given, especially to Christopher Palmer (following Hans Keller) in Nicholas John (ed.), *Peter Grimes/Gloriana*, ENO Opera Guides No. 24 (London: John Calder, 1983).
- 58 As the drafts show, the librettists found a good deal of difficulty in deciding upon the stance to be taken by Vere at the trial: see Hindley, ‘Love and Salvation’, pp. 372–5. There seems to be no ground in the opera for suggesting that Vere was motivated by the need to repudiate his ‘sexual self’, and nothing in his utterance comparable to Queen Elizabeth’s ‘From my other self I turn.’ Indeed it is improbable that either Forster or Britten, having gone so far to develop a relationship between Vere and Billy, would have wished to draw back in this way.
- 59 One cannot help feeling that this is what Forster meant when, in writing to Britten after the first performance, he said, ‘You and I have both put into it something which lies deeper than artistic creation, and which we both understand . . . this opera is my *Nunc dimittis*, in that it dismisses me peacefully and convinces me I have achieved’ (*Selected Letters of E. M. Forster*, No. 398).
- 60 BBAA, especially pp. 10–12.
- 61 Compare Humphrey Carpenter’s suggestion that the opera was intended as an *apologia pro vita sua* (HCBB, p. 553).

9 Distant horizons: from Pagodaland to the Church Parables

1 Quoted in Donald Mitchell, 'What Do We Know About Britten Now?', in CPBC, p. 40, n. 23.

2 See Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 356.

3 78rpm set 513/4. These recordings were first issued on CD in 1995 (Pearl GEMM CD 9177), transferred from a copy of the 78s in the International Piano Archives at the University of Maryland: the production team appears not to have been aware of the existence of Britten's set. Britten's copies of the recordings were transferred to CD to accompany the publication of MCBE in 1998.

4 See DMJE, Plate 174.

5 *Ibid.*, Plate 176.

6 See David Matthews, 'Act II Scene 1: An Examination of the Music', in PBPG, pp. 122–4, where the discovery of this connection is credited to Bayan Northcott. See also p. 89 of the present volume.

7 See Somsak Ketukaenchan, 'A (Far Eastern) Note on *Paul Bunyan*', in PRMB, pp. 275–9.

8 The itinerary of Britten's world tour may be reconstructed in some detail, since he wrote many substantial letters home during the tour and Pears kept an informative but somewhat erratic diary during its latter stages (PRPP, pp. 16–72). From January 1956 these accounts are augmented by a travel diary compiled by Britten's travelling companion, Prince Ludwig of Hesse, which relates their movements in the Far East and in the Indian subcontinent on the journey home (Prince Ludwig of Hesse, *Ausflug Ost* (Darmstadt: privately printed, 1956); brief extracts in English translation were included in Anthony Gishford's *Tribute to Benjamin Britten on His Fiftieth Birthday* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), pp. 56–65). For a full account of Britten's activities in Bali and Japan, see MCBE, pp. 50–85 and 112–29.

9 Prince Ludwig of Hesse, *Ausflug Ost*, pp. 30–1.

10 *Ibid.*, pp. 34–5.

11 For Pears's evocative description of the island, see PRPP, pp. 43–7.

12 Their story is recounted in John Coast's memoirs, *Dancing out of Bali* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954). For the extraordinary trail of coincidences linking this gamelan with Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, see Donald Mitchell, 'An Afterword on Britten's *Pagodas*: The Balinese Sources', *Tempo* 152 (March 1985), pp. 7–11.

13 Letter from Britten to Imogen Holst, written from Ubud on 17 January 1956.

14 Jaap Kunst, *Music in Java*, trans. Emile van Loo (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1949; 3rd edn, 1973), vol. I, p. 362.

15 Personal communication.

16 Hans Keller, 'Introduction: Operatic Music and Britten', in DHOB, pp. xxix–xxx.

17 Prince Ludwig of Hesse, *Ausflug Ost*, p. 65.

18 Although carrying the same title (in a variant spelling), this piece is not the same as the 'Taboeh Teloe' transcribed by McPhee in his *Balinese Ceremonial Music*.

19 *The Prince of the Pagodas* was finally performed on New Year's Day 1957, and revived at Covent Garden in 1958, 1959 and 1960 before being dropped from the repertory in spite of a triumphant production under Britten's baton at La Scala, Milan (May 1957) and a favourable reception in New York (October 1957). Cranko went on to stage the ballet in Stuttgart in November 1960; in their 1971–2 season, the Kirov Ballet mounted a new production in Leningrad. British public interest in *Pagodas* notably revived following a concert performance of large sections from the score at the 1988 Aldeburgh Festival by the London Sinfonietta under Oliver Knussen, and the ballet returned to the Covent Garden stage in December 1989 (with choreography by Kenneth Macmillan). Knussen recorded the complete ballet for Virgin Classics in 1990, reinstating the four dances which Britten had completely excised in the shortened version of the work he had recorded for Decca in 1957. An extended concert suite from the ballet (which, unlike that prepared by Norman Del Mar under the title *Prelude and Dances*, includes the Balinese sections) has been compiled by Mervyn Cooke and Donald Mitchell, and was first performed at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, on 4 June 1997 by the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin under Vladimir Ashkenazy.

20 See Mitchell, 'An Afterword on Britten's *Pagodas*'. A detailed analysis of Britten's Balinese sketches is to be found in MCBE, pp. 75–85.

21 For further on the Poulenc Concerto, and on Western composers' gamelan borrowings in general, see Mervyn Cooke, 'The East in the West: Evocations of the Gamelan in Western Music', in Jonathan Bellman (ed.), *The Exotic in Western Music* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), pp. 258–80.

22 Personal communication from the late Mrs Piper. Her telling remark calls to mind Debussy's cultivation of a gamelan sound-world in open rejection of outmoded Austro-German musical procedures.

23 For further on the Balinese dimension in

- Death in Venice*, see Mervyn Cooke, 'Britten and the Gamelan', in DMDV, pp. 115–28, and MCBE, pp. 220–44.
- 24 William Plomer, programme note on Britten's Church Parables, *Edinburgh Festival Programme Book* (1968), p. 28.
- 25 Originally published in two volumes as *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* (Dublin: Dundrum Cuala Press, 1916) and 'Noh' or *Accomplishment* (London: Macmillan, 1916), the latter title referring to the literal meaning of the word *nō*. Britten's copy was a first edition of *The Translations of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber & Faber, 1953).
- 26 Prince Ludwig of Hesse, *Ausflug Ost*, p. 90. English translations of Prince Ludwig's description of this seminal encounter with *Nō* are to be found in Gishford, *Tribute to Benjamin Britten*, and MCBE, pp. 118–19.
- 27 For the circumstances in which this tape recording was procured, see PRPP, pp. 64. A representative extract from the tape is included on the CD accompanying MCBE.
- 28 The full text of the address is to be found in *Aldeburgh Festival Programme Book* (1991), pp. 18–19.
- 29 D. J. Enright, *Memoirs of a Mendicant Professor* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1969), p. 45.
- 30 Sukehiro Shiba, *Gagaku – Japanese Classical Court Music*, vol. I (Tokyo Ryugin-Sha, 1955).
- 31 For an examination of specific elements borrowed from Western mediaeval religious drama, see MCBE, pp. 160–65. Further research in this area has been carried out by Stephen Arthur Allen, who has investigated Britten's creative reaction to the Beauvais *Play of Daniel* (which the composer saw in a performance by the New York Pro Musica at King's Lynn in 1960), and made a detailed assessment of the composer's debt to Karl Young's two-volume study *The Drama of the Medieval Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933).
- 32 Japanese Classics Translation Committee, *Japanese Noh Drama* (Tokyo: Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai, 1955).
- 33 Letter to the present author, 24 January 1986. Graham subsequently studied *Nō* in greater depth, prior to working on *The Burning Fiery Furnace*. See also Colin Graham, 'Staging First Productions 3', in DHOB, p. 49.
- 34 Kunio Komparu, *The Noh Theater: Principles and Perspectives* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill/Tankosha, 1983), p. 190.
- 35 See Shigeo Kishibe's description of what he describes as 'chaophony' in his book *The Traditional Music of Japan* (Tokyo: Japan Foundation, 1984), p. 27. The same type of canonic ensemble, which is used for the dancers' entrances and exits, is described in Robert Garfias, *Music of a Thousand Autumns: The Tōgaku Style of Japanese Court Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 76.
- 36 See MCWR, p. 70.
- 37 For further on Britten's knowledge of *shō* technique, see Mervyn Cooke, 'Britten and the *Shō*', *Musical Times* 129 (1988), pp. 231–3, and MCBE, pp. 124, 129 and 181–4.
- 38 For the work's continuing debt to Japanese models, see Mervyn Cooke, 'From *Nō* to Nebuchadnezzar', in PRMB, pp. 135–45, and MCBE, pp. 190–205.
- 39 For a penetrating critical reaction to all three parables, see Robin Holloway, 'The Church Parables II: Limits and Renewals', in CPBC, pp. 215–26.
- 40 The event took place on 14 June 1958. I am grateful to Jenny Doctor for providing me with details both of this performance, and of the Indian event mounted at the Aldeburgh Festival in 1965 (see following note).
- 41 The performance, which took place on 21 June in the Jubilee Hall, featured the Indian dancer Balasaraswati in a recital of Bharatanatyam (classical dance from South India).
- 42 PRPP, pp. 94–5.
- 43 Alain Daniélou, *The Rāga-s of Northern Indian Music* (London: Barrie & Cresset, 1968), p. 269. Britten and Pears met Daniélou in person in Madras on 11 March 1956, on which occasion they had lunch together: see PRPP, p. 71. For further on *The Prodigal Son*, see Mervyn Cooke, 'Eastern Influences in Britten's *The Prodigal Son*', *Melos* 19/20 (Stockholm, 1997), pp. 37–45, and MCBE, pp. 205–19.
- 44 Kunst, *Music in Java*, vol. I, p. 326.
- 45 Neil Sorrell, *A Guide to the Gamelan* (London: Faber & Faber, 1990), p. 3.
- 46 Philip Brett, 'Eros and Orientalism in Britten's Operas', in Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood and Gary C. Thomas (eds.), *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology* (New York and London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1994), pp. 235–56.

10 Violent climates

- 1 Britten wrote in his diary on 8 April 1936: 'The fuss caused by the Censor not passing that little Rotha Peace film is colossal. ½ centre pages of [Daily] Herald & News Chron'cle, & Manchester Guardian – BBC. News twice. Never has a film had such good publicity!'
- 2 *Advance Democracy*, a film directed by Bond and released in October 1938, the end-title music of which, according to Philip Reed, took

the shape of a ‘medley of various left-wing songs including *The Internationale* and *The Red Flag*.’ (See Philip Reed and John Evans, ‘The Incidental Music: A Catalogue Raisonné’ in *BSB*, p. 143.) Another work of the same title as the film, though without musical connections with its predecessor, was to follow in 1938, taking the shape of an unaccompanied chorus for mixed voices to words by Randall Swingler. This was the time of the Munich crisis, but even that political and moral mess scarcely justifies the awful *agitprop* banalities of Swingler’s text, e.g.

There’s a roar of war in the factories,
And idle hands on the street
And Europe held in nightmare
By the thud of marching feet.
Now sinks the sun of surety,
The shadows growing tall
Of the big bosses plotting
Their biggest coup of all.

3 Interestingly enough, a scrutiny of *Voices for Today* and the early item of choral propaganda, *Advance Democracy* (see also note 2 above), reveals a hitherto unobserved communality of musical treatment. I am not thinking of a shared transparency of texture but, more importantly, of at least one stroke of invention that foreshadows the future. The most striking idea in *Advance Democracy* is the very opening of the chorus – ‘Across the darkened city / The frosty searchlights creep’ – where the nervy, disjointed chant of the tenors and basses is accompanied by a wordless *legatissimo* obbligato for the sopranos – on ‘Ah’. This device was to be precisely replicated in 1965 in *Voices*, the opening of the setting of Virgil. The boys’ voices have an obbligato on ‘Ah’, while the chorus chant the Eclogue. The wheel has turned full circle, from the threatening days of Munich in 1938 to a plea for peace in 1965, first heard at the United Nations. Despite their contrasts in political and historical context, it is fascinating to discover that these two works share a similar realization of their musical ideas. The consistency of imagery should not go unremarked, while recognizing that Virgil in this instance was a better bet for Britten than Swingler.

4 *New Statesman*, 21 May 1971, p. 713.

5 In *The Times* (‘Saturday Review’ section), 15 May 1971.

6 The ‘Peace’ chord with which Owen’s aria concludes (at Fig. 260) calls for special attention, introducing as it does A^b – the twelfth – into the sequence of triads. We note that the triad incorporates F, endowing the A^b triad with the status of an added sixth (all other eleven preceding chords are straight triads). This type of chord plays a special role as the opera comes

to an end – see for example the overwhelming eruption of C major at Fig. 279 as Owen enters the haunted room – and elsewhere in Britten’s music, for example in the finale – ‘Requiem aeternam’ – of *Sinfonia da Requiem* (1940) and, as Mervyn Cooke has pointed out, in the great orchestral interlude between Scenes 1 and 2 of Act III of the full-length ballet, *The Prince of the Pagodas* (1956; see the climax leading up to Fig. 25). Two very different works from very different periods; but the added sixth (again in C in *Pagodas*) which, undoubtedly, was permanently impressed on Britten’s consciousness by Mahler’s use of it in the final bars of the ‘Abschied’ of *Das Lied von der Erde*, might be said to play a common role, i.e. in both cases it represents a kind of conciliation, a kind of spiritual victory: the *Sinfonia*’s ‘Requiem aeternam’ restores and heals what has been violently disrupted and dismembered in the preceding ‘Dies irae’, while in *Pagodas* – a speculation, this – the chord celebrates the transformation of the exiled Prince from reptile to radiant manhood by the compassion of the Princess. Likewise the ‘Peace’ chord at the end of Owen’s aria. It is certainly possible to read this (hear it, that is) as Owen’s triumph over the ancestors who are his foes. On the other hand, because of the particular composition of the chord it is no less possible to read it as a defeat. I have gone into this more fully in a short text in *DMCN*, pp. 335–7, n. 8.

7 Closely allied to the image of the hunt, specifically so in *Grimes*, was that of the ‘trial’, again a recurring feature in Britten’s dramatic works. I have myself pursued this topic in ‘*Peter Grimes: Fifty Years On*’, in *BBPG*, pp. 125–66.

8 For example, on 5 November 1936 Britten wrote in his diary: ‘Madrid bombed by air for umpteenth time. No. of children not specified. 70 were killed in one go the other day. What price Fascism?’

9 See for example Britten’s letter to Ursula Nettleship, 31 October 1944, in *DMPR*, pp. 1228–9. There are in fact numerous references in volume II of *DMPR* to air-raids on London during the period 1942–5.

10 The sixth song, ‘Slaughter’, provides us in its accompaniment with a further brilliant example of heterophony, the type of polyphony that increasingly invaded Britten’s contrapuntal techniques towards the end of his life. Its closest and similarly agitated parallel is with the accompaniment of Vere’s aria, ‘Scylla and Charybdis’, in *Billy Budd*, Act II, which belongs to 1951 and thus dates from well before Britten’s world tour. This only goes to show that the heterophonic principle was already in fertilizing place at an earlier stage, probably as a

result of Britten's encounter with Colin McPhee and South-East Asian techniques in the early 1940s. For further on Britten's heterophonic techniques, see pp. 169ff.

11 See, for example, DMPR, pp. 485–6, n. 3.

12 To begin with, I have no doubt, Britten was seized by this concept under the potent influence of Auden who, in 1933, had written a play entitled *The Dance of Death* for the Group Theatre. It was dedicated to Robert Medley and Rupert Doone. Britten was to be closely associated with the Group Theatre and its leading members during the 1930s: see DMBA, and W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, *Plays and other Dramatic Writings by W. H. Auden, 1928–1938*, ed. Edward Mendelson (London: Faber & Faber, 1989). A crucial and specifically relevant collaboration was of course on *Our Hunting Fathers*. Thereafter the shape the concept assumed was dilated, developed, and finally dictated by Britten's imagination. He had made it his own.

13 Incidentally, the relationship of animals and men was to show up again in the 'operetta', *Paul Bunyan*, that Britten and Auden were to write in New York in 1940–1. Indeed, 'Animals and Men' are among the very last words we hear as the work concludes. Interesting, too, that in the 1990s *Bunyan* leaves one thinking deeply about Conservation.

14 One notes, though, a certain intellectual confusion in the *Ballad*, which honours the dead but falls short of outright condemnation of the acts of violence that inevitably entail the sacrifice of young lives. In this respect the work is perhaps peculiarly representative of its period. The Spanish War had iconic status, even among pacifists for whom – perhaps – it was a 'just' war even if they were themselves unwilling to participate in the violence. There was an apparent schism here that is apparent in the *Ballad* and makes it peculiarly part of the history of its time.

15 See, for example, DMPR, p. 761.

16 In 1946, Ronald Duncan, the librettist of *The Rape of Lucretia* and himself a pacifist, 'attempted to interest Britten in a post-Hiroshima oratorio to be entitled *Mea Culpa*' (see Mervyn Cooke, 'Owen, Britten and Pacifism' in MCWR, p. 17). In 1948 there was also some discussion, again with Duncan, of a requiem in honour of Gandhi, who had been assassinated that year. This project, like *Mea Culpa* before it, came to nothing; on the other hand *War Requiem* might be thought of as a fulfilment, in part at least, of those earlier ideas. (See also Philip Reed, 'The *War Requiem* in Progress', in MCWR, p. 20.)

17 In BBPG, pp. 135–51.

18 The concerto has been recorded with the original slow version in place as an option by Joanna MacGregor on Collins Classics 1022, with the English Chamber Orchestra conducted by Stuart Bedford.

19 Perhaps it is worth mentioning here that this invasion of poison has its equally graphic counterpart in one of Britten's last works, *Phaedra*, though in the cantata of 1975 it is by means of harmony that the poison spreads through Phaedra's veins, not counterpoint.

20 See Michael Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues: An Autobiography* (London: Pimlico, 1991), and in particular 'The World's Stage' and 'The Heart's Assurance'.

21 Ian Kemp, *Tippett: The Composer and his Music* (London: Eulenburg Books, 1984), p. 152.

22 Tippett, *Those Twentieth Century Blues*, p. 187.

23 It is my own view that another basic distinction may be made that is possibly not altogether irrelevant to my consideration of the two composers' philosophies: Tippett, I believe, was basically an optimist, Britten a pessimist.

24 See MCWR, p. 19 and p. 103, n. 51.

25 In this context one should not forget *Owen Wingrave*, the commission of which for television provided Britten with a ready-made 'mass' – in this case, global – audience to see and hear the case against militarism and for Peace. It was an opportunity, typically, that he seized. However, it is hard to believe that a television opera espousing anti-militarism and Peace was precisely what the BBC would have been looking for when the idea was first floated.

26 See 'Mapreading: Benjamin Britten in conversation with Donald Mitchell', in CPBC, pp. 95–6.

27 See Philip Reed, 'The *War Requiem* in Progress', in MCWR, p. 36.

28 The relevant files may be consulted at the Britten–Pears Library at Aldeburgh.

29 Copland too was a victim. On 22 May 1953 he received a telegram from Senator Joseph McCarthy

'directing him to appear before the State Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. The hearing into his alleged communist affiliations took only two hours, and Copland acquitted himself well. But the mere fact that he had been called to testify was to reverberate in many unpleasant ways, including anonymous, cancelled performances and passport problems [*sic*].

Copland tried to treat the hearing humorously sometime mimicking the way committee counsel Roy Cohn pronounced "communist" with a bovine moo. But the toll

on time and money was exceeded only by the terrible emotional drain – something recalled decades later in 1980 when Copland was celebrating his eightieth birthday and a glowing tribute to him was read into the *Congressional Record*. Learning of this, Copland quipped, “Has anyone told Roy Cohn?” (Patricia Edwards Clyne, ‘Fanfare for an Uncommon Man’, *Hudson Valley*, March 1997, pp. 67–8.)

11 Britten as symphonist

- 1 See his telegram to Boosey & Hawkes, 2 April 1940 (DMPR, p. 791). At this same time Britten also described his Piano Concerto as ‘No. 1’, and had actually sent it to his publisher with that title towards the end of 1939.
- 2 Several statements and criticisms will illuminate Britten’s urgent need for self-redefinition and the genre transgressions that attended this. Britten said the following in 1969: ‘Almost any situation *could* be made into an opera. I do hope, as I’m sometimes told, that my operas *are* all different, each with a style appropriate to itself, but I hope that comes from absorption with each subject while it is at hand’ (‘No Ivory Tower: Benjamin Britten Talks to Opera News’, *Opera News* 63, 5 April 1969, p. 10). Critic Tom Sutcliffe ridiculed the Church Parables purely for their transgressions of genre, calling them ‘a new brain-wave recipe mixing plainchant and monks and Japanese Noh theatre and percussive Balinese timbres’ (Documentary television series *J’accuse*, 1991; cited by Philip Brett, ‘Eros and Orientalism in Britten’s Operas’, in *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), p. 254, n. 15). Such reactions to Britten’s handling of genre were common even at the outset of his career, and were not necessarily negative responses; for example, in 1940 Olin Downes greeted the Violin Concerto as ‘something that has a flavor of genuine novelty in the violin concerto form’ (cited in DMPR, p. 789).
- 3 Instead of evasion, it might be more appropriate to speak of generic ‘uncertainty’ in the sense that Philip Rupprecht has applied that word to Britten’s tonality: see Rupprecht, ‘Tonal Stratification and Uncertainty in Britten’s Music’, *Journal of Music Theory* 40 (1996), pp. 311–46. Whether seen from the perspective of harmony or texture, Rupprecht says, there is an ‘inbuilt ambivalence of Britten’s idiom’ that lies in a characteristic and ‘precarious balance between dichotomy and unity’. Britten’s ‘uncertainties’ of genre should encourage us to expand upon and develop the connections that

Rupprecht draws between Britten’s ‘uncertain’ manipulations of tonality and more general aspects of his style.

- 4 For some of Britten’s views on Beethoven and Brahms, see Charles Stuart, ‘Britten “The Eclectic”’, *Tempo* II/4 (Spring 1950), p. 247; MSBC, p. 119; and Alan Blyth, *Remembering Britten* (London: Hutchinson, 1981), p. 20. In the second of these sources, Britten complains particularly bitterly of the last movement of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in C minor, Op. 111: ‘The sound of the variations was so grotesque I just couldn’t see what they were all about.’ More to the point, Murray Perahia’s discussions of Beethoven with Britten left him with the understanding that ‘Britten found Beethoven too intellectual, in the sense that his melodies had often been worked out in great detail and did not flow as naturally as Schubert’s, for example. They were not vocal tunes. He was also chary of the insistence in Beethoven’s musical make-up’ (Perahia paraphrased by Alan Blyth in *Remembering Britten*, p. 170).
- 5 Carl Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later Nineteenth Century*, trans. Mary Whittall (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1980), p. 50. One of Britten’s statements particularly illuminates his working methods: ‘Usually I have the music complete in my mind before putting pencil to paper. That doesn’t mean that every note has been composed, *perhaps not one has*, but I have worked out questions of form, texture, character, and so forth, in a very precise way so that I know exactly what effects I want and how I am going to achieve them’ (MSBC, p. 123; my italics). Compare this with Eric Crozier’s account: ‘My impression was that he worked from forms towards detail in all the time that I worked with him. It seemed to me that he thought first in terms of shapes, of balancing sections, fast sections against slow sections, rather like an architect planning a building’ (Crozier, ‘Staging First Productions I’, in *DHOB*, p. 26).
- 6 There is some truth to Elizabeth Lutyens’s disapproving description of Britten as ‘a brilliant journalist, able to produce an instant effect at first hearing, understandable to all’ (cited in DMPR, p. 264). Likewise, Desmond Shawe-Taylor’s description of Britten hardly sounds like the developmental essence attributed to middle-period Beethoven: ‘I feel tolerably sure that his ideas never occur to him as anything but sheer sensuous sound, and that it is to this fact that they owe the force and freshness with which they strike the listener’s ear’ (cited in Keller, ‘The Musical Character’, in

DMHK, p. 326). See also Christopher Mark's comments on pp. 14–15.

7 Charles Reid, 'Back to Britain with Britten', *High Fidelity* 9 (December 1959), p. 74. See also the present volume, p. 2.

8 From a liner-note written by Schoenberg in 1936 and reprinted in Ursula von Rauchhaupt (ed. and trans.), *Schoenberg, Berg, Webern/Die Streichquartette: Eine Dokumentation* (Hamburg: Deutsche Grammophon, 1987), p. 33.

9 A *Times* reviewer singled out the finale for comment, describing it as 'built out of rhythmic figures rather than purely musical themes [*sic*]. On this occasion Mr. Britten permits himself to indulge effects of barbarism, which at least hold the attention' (cited in DMPR, p. 344).

10 Britten, 'On Behalf of Gustav Mahler', *Tempo* 11/2 (February 1942); repr. in *Tempo* 120 (March 1977), p. 14.

11 AWBT, pp. 64–5.

12 PEMB, p. 19.

13 A B minor reading of this second large bass-interruption does seem plausible, but only in retrospect, and F surfaces constantly if also fleetingly to conflict with B. For a full account of the harmonic implications here, see CMEB, pp. 204–6.

14 Keller writes, 'He is probably incapable of those dramatic sonata forms which expose extremely contrasting, yet complementary ideas within a narrow space, and of which the first movement of Beethoven's Fifth is a supreme example' (DMHK, p. 344). See also Keller, 'Introduction: Operatic Music and Britten', in DHOB, pp. xiii–xix.

15 From a letter that Auden drafted, with Britten's input, to the Japanese Vice-Consul in New York (DMPR, p. 890).

16 Shostakovich also shared many gestures and points of style with Mahler, and in later Britten it becomes difficult to separate the voices of those two composers from Britten's own. But it is not yet known how much of Shostakovich's work – especially among the symphonies – Britten knew before their meeting and friendship in the 1960s. For an account of the mutual influences over that decade, see Eric Roseberry, 'A Debt Repaid? Some Observations on Shostakovich and His Late-Period Recognition of Britten', in David Fanning (ed.), *Shostakovich Studies* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 229–53.

17 Thus Donald Mitchell's observation: 'There is no doubt that Britten learned a great deal from Mahler: but . . . the *Sinfonia da Requiem* shows that learning only partially digested' (Mitchell, 'A Note on *St. Nicolas*: Some Points of Britten's Style', *Music Survey* 2 (1950), p. 224).

18 Alfred Einstein, *Mozart: His Character, His Work* (London: Cassell, 1946), p. 250.

19 Britten once even hinted at a possible Shintoist interpretation of the *Sinfonia da Requiem*: 'The *Sinfonia* as I had originally conceived it was in memory of my mother, but in scale and type it was well suited to a festival. Through the British Council I cabled to the Japanese a description of the work, with titles and subtitles, all of which struck me as compatible with a creed that involves ancestor worship' (Reid, 'Back to Britain with Britten', p. 76). For an account of the commission and rejection of this work by the Japanese government as seen through Britten's letters and other primary sources, see DMPR, pp. 880–4.

20 Britten, 'A Note on the Spring Symphony', *Music Survey* 2 (Spring 1950), p. 237.

21 In a description of his Eighth Symphony, Mahler himself drew a distinction between his later use of the voice as an instrument and his earlier use of 'words and the human voice merely to suggest, to sum up, to establish a mood . . . to express something concisely and specifically' (from a 1906 conversation with Richard Specht, cited by Constantin Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, trans. Vernon and Jutta Wicker (Portland, Oreg.: Amadeus Press, 1993), p. 214).

22 There is no better demonstration of the "naive" operatic character and 'love of human drama' that Keller attributed to Britten in contradistinction to the 'sentimentalic' Mahler – who, had he written operas, might have fallen into Keller's 'sentimentalic' tradition of 'writing oratorios for the stage' (DHOB, pp. xvi–xvii). Still, Britten stops short here of dividing vocal styles along the lines of recitative and aria: the *Spring Symphony* is based entirely on measured lyric poetry, and differs from a cantata like *Saint Nicolas* in that it has no recitatives or dramatic scenes.

23 Britten's 'reawakening of the earth and life' narrative for the *Spring Symphony* proves uselessly vague as a tool for understanding the structure of this work – especially when compared with the more concrete narratives of Schubert's *Schöne Müllerin*, or Mahler's 'Resurrection' Symphony, *Das Lied von der Erde*, and *Kindertotenlieder*. Keller described the composer's account of the *Spring Symphony* as 'vapid', with some justification. Britten's description does tell us little about a narrative aspect that is not very significant to an understanding of the *Spring Symphony*, and it has induced various misleading Mahlerian readings of this work. (See Britten, 'A Note on the Spring Symphony', p. 237; and Keller's

contribution to Blyth, *Remembering Britten*, p. 88.)

24 Carl Dahlhaus, 'Mahler: Finale der Zweiten Symphonie', in *Analyse und Werturteil* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1970), pp. 89–93. In this light, one can only question the comparisons Anthony Milner has drawn between the *Spring Symphony* and Beethoven's Ninth and Mahler's Second as works that are end-directed (Anthony Milner, 'The Choral Music', in *CPBC*, p. 335). Indeed, an interesting detail of the *Spring Symphony*'s publication would seem to suggest that the constituent songs need not necessarily be performed with all the others, or even in any particular sequence: in the 1950 Boosey & Hawkes edition the copyright information appears anew at the beginning of each song, suggesting independent availability and possibilities for independent performance.

25 As Peter Porter has written, 'Britten's song cycles of mixed origin show a poetic taste which reflects Auden's many popular compilations. The *Nocturne*, for instance, and the *Serenade* are excellent pocket anthologies, much more like Auden's vision of poetry than any other literary person's' (Porter, 'Composer and Poet', in *CPBC*, p. 283). Regarding compositional predecessors, it is interesting that the original *London Times* review of the *Spring Symphony* (23 July 1949) invoked Arthur Bliss's *Pastoral* and *Morning Heroes* as a context for Britten's anthologizing. But the fact that the reviewer mentioned Bliss and not Mahler is perhaps more a sign of Mahler's neglect in England in the 1940s than a delineation of any non-Mahlerian aspects to Britten's composition.

26 Britten, 'A Note on the Spring Symphony', p. 237.

27 *PEMB*, p. 324.

28 Cited by John Evans, 'The Concertos', in *CPBC*, p. 411.

29 Eric Roseberry wrote the following on the works that Britten wrote for Rostropovich in the 1960s, the Cello Symphony among them: 'These works seemed to fulfil at last the hopes of his admirers who had waited for a sequel to his earlier instrumental music . . . It would be absurd to imply that "absolute music" is a higher goal of creative endeavour than vocal music, but we can be grateful to the Russian virtuoso for turning Britten's thoughts once again to these modes of musical discourse and expression' (Roseberry, 'The Solo Chamber Music', in *CPBC*, p. 380).

30 See the 'Voice' chapter in Joseph Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1966), pp. 191–222.

31 *AWBT*, pp. 65–6.

32 Roseberry, 'A Debt Repaid?', p. 236.

12 The concertos and early orchestral scores: aspects of style and aesthetic

1 See *DMPR*, p. 665 (letter to Ralph Hawkes).

2 Britten's notorious remark 'The rot (if that isn't too strong a word) began with Beethoven' (see Charles Stuart, 'Britten the Eclectic' in *Music Survey* II/4 (Spring 1950), pp. 247–50) was only one of many such pronouncements made in public and private throughout his career. As for Brahms, Britten's own outlook strongly rejected 'the Brahms influence on English music' of the older generation (see *DMPR*, p. 397), and this prejudice was maintained. See also Arved Ashby's remarks on p. 218.

3 *DMPR*, p. 502.

4 Prophetically, because in the Piano Concerto of 1938 Britten's original titles ('Toccata', 'Waltz', 'Recitative' and 'Aria' [in the later substitution, 'Impromptu'] and 'March') would seem to correspond to the same suite-like deposition of the 'absolute' genre. In the slow passacaglia finale of the Violin Concerto and the Requiem Mass titles of the three movements of the *Sinfonia da Requiem* a corresponding shift away from the traditional sonata-cycle aesthetic is evident.

5 See, in this connection, Peter Evans's acute perceptions in *PEMB*, p. 42. It is not generally known that Bridge's theme had already served Britten in an unfinished set of six piano variations dating from 1932 but, beyond the obvious fascination of the theme for Britten, there is nothing in these pianistically devised (and comparatively short) variations to suggest unfinished business that the later work brought to fruition.

6 The programme note is reproduced in full in *DMJE*, p. 111. Britten was, however, reluctant to see 'meanings' in the concerto. See, for example, *DMPR*, p. 576.

7 See my article, 'Britten's Piano Concerto: The Original Version', *Tempo* 172 (1990), pp. 10–18.

8 Britten was at pains to deny its apparent pomposity. See *DMPR*, p. 580.

9 *Listener*, 6 January 1937. See *DMPR*, p. 579.

10 For this interpretation I am indebted to a conversation with the late Christopher Headington.

11 Even the acutely perceptive Peter Evans refers misleadingly to its 'irritatingly smart vulgarity' (*PEMB*, p. 47).

12 See, for instance, *The Holy Sonnets of John Donne* and *The Rape of Lucretia*. It seems relevant to point out that even the 'abstract' passacaglia interlude in *Peter Grimes* had, for Britten, quite specific programmatic associations: see *PBPG*, p. 205.

13 *DMHK*, p. 288.

14 CPBC, p. 403.

15 The idea for such a theme may have been suggested to Britten by the open-string figuration in the first movement of Berg's Violin Concerto.

16 Further parallels with the opera suggest themselves: the variation structure, the cadenza-like allure of its wide conception and the prominent role of solo piano, which in the opera has a whole scene to itself.

17 For further information on the *American Overture* and *Occasional Overture*, see Mervyn Cooke's sleeve notes to 'Rattle Conducts Britten' (EMI CDS 7542702, 1991), p. 11. Simon Rattle was responsible for mounting the posthumous first performance of the *American Overture* in 1983; the *Occasional Overture* received its première under the direction of Adrian Boult in 1946 to celebrate the inauguration of the BBC Third Programme.

13 The chamber music

1 Benjamin Britten, 'Britten looking back', *Sunday Telegraph* (17 November 1963), p. 9. See DMPR, pp. 248–67, for details of Britten's activities as a pianist in chamber-music performances (often *chez Bridge*) during his RCM years.

2 Benjamin Britten, 'On Writing English Opera', *Opera* 12/1 (January 1961), pp. 7–8.

3 DMPR, p. 961. Britten here seems to recognize the predominance of D major in his compositions of the 1930s, from *A Boy was Born* (1933) – a favourite of Mayer's – to the *Michelangelo Sonnets* and *Sinfonia* of 1940. See also Eric Roseberry's comments on the significance of this key in the *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge* elsewhere in this volume (p. 235).

4 Peter Evans writes of the sonata form in the *Sinfonietta* (1932), 'Instead of an arch, Britten has drawn a line that continues to rise after the mid-point' (PEMB, p. 19).

5 David Matthews (CPBC, p. 386) compares the form to the first movement of Mahler's Fourth Symphony (the score of which Britten purchased in 1934); in an article on Mahler published soon after writing the First Quartet, Britten notes especially how 'the form was so cunningly contrived; every development surprised one and yet sounded inevitable' ('On Behalf of Gustav Mahler' [1942]; repr. in *Tempo* 120 (1977), pp. 14–15).

6 Two reviewers of the première likened the opening to that of Wagner's *Lohengrin*: see Stephen Banfield, "'Too Much of Albion?" Mrs. Coolidge and her Contemporaries', *American Music* 4/1 (1986), pp. 59–88.

7 Britten's sketches for the third movement suggest an earlier, more cyclic, conception of the quartet. Its canopy textures recall a similar polarization of registers – diatonic clusters above a melodic line – in the 'Lacrymosa' of the recent *Sinfonia da Requiem*, also in D major.

8 For an analytical account of Britten's stratified approach to tonal dualism, see Philip Rupprecht, 'Tonal Stratification and Uncertainty in Britten's music', *Journal of Music Theory* 40/2 (1996), pp. 311–46.

9 CMEB, p. 5.

10 See his letter to Mary Behrend, 3 December 1945 (DMPR, p. 1285).

11 Hans Keller, 'Benjamin Britten's Second Quartet', *Tempo* [old series] 18 (March 1947), p. 6.

12 Compare the quartet's development, juxtaposing pedal-based textures and trilling stretto entries, with Grimes's Act I aria, 'Now the Great Bear'. Musical ideas for both quartet and opera date back to at least 1940; p. 9 of Britten's sketchbook, for example, includes notations for Grimes's 'Old Joe has gone fishing' and a 'Tarantella' that became the quartet's Scherzo (DMPR, p. 1044).

13 One might question Keller's view of sonata form – in Beethoven's Op. 31 No. 3, for example, 'introduction' and 'first-theme' functions coalesce (see Janet Schmalfeldt, 'Form as the Process of Becoming: The Beethoven-Hegelian Tradition and the "Tempest" Sonata', in L. Lockwood and J. Webster (eds.), *Beethoven Forum* 4 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), pp. 37–71). But his ideas were familiar to Britten (see Keller, 'Britten's Last Masterpiece', *Spectator* (2 June 1979), pp. 27–8), and the composer commissioned a 'functional analysis' of the Second Quartet from him.

14 Cited in Schmalfeldt, 'Form as the Process of Becoming', p. 54.

15 Keller, 'Benjamin Britten's Second Quartet', p. 8.

16 DMPR, p. 1248.

17 As Eric Roseberry notes (CPBC, p. 376), the March from the *Temporal Variations* (1936) is a precursor for that in the Sonata; bitonal fanfares in the latter prefigure the *War Requiem*.

18 See Britten's Foreword to the score of *Curlew River*, and pp. 177–83 of the present volume.

19 In the fourth movement of Quartet No. 8 (1960), Shostakovich frames two self-quotations with the motto from his Cello Concerto No. 2; in Quartet No. 11 (1966), he links seven short movements. Britten, in his Second Suite, pays musical homage to Shostakovich by a direct allusion at the opening to the Fifth Symphony. On stylistic relations

between the two composers, see Eric Roseberry, 'A Debt Repaid? Some Observations on Shostakovich and his Late-period Recognition of Britten', in David Fanning (ed.), *Shostakovich Studies* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 229–53.

20 Cited in DMDV, p. 26.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 215; the vocal line is scored for viola, Britten's own string instrument.

22 Britten's remark to Colin Matthews came at a play-through of the Third Quartet on 8 December 1975: see Colin Matthews, 'Britten's Indian Summer', *Soundings* 6 (1977), pp. 42–50; p. 48.

23 Cf. the orchestral Variation 8 opening Act II of *The Turn of the Screw*.

24 Peter Pople hears further valedictory echoes of the 'Phaedrus' aria in the Passacaglia's closing paragraph, at bar 104 (sleeve note to the Alberni Quartet recording, CRD 1095, 1981).

25 See David Matthews, "Death In Venice" and the Third String Quartet', in DMDV, pp. 154–61; quotations from pp. 157, 160.

26 Cf. *Peter Grimes*, where Britten builds the passacaglia on a theme first uttered by the protagonist at a dramatic turning-point.

27 Britten's theme was 'inspired by the sound of some actual Venetian bells', David Matthews noted when reviewing the quartet's première ('Britten's Third Quartet', *Tempo* 125 (1978), pp. 21–4).

28 Similarly, in the 'Trio' of the 'Burlesque', conflicting key signatures underline dramatic separation between members of the quartet.

29 For a case-study of Britten's tonal symbolism, see Mervyn Cooke, 'Britten's "Prophetic Song": Tonal Symbolism in *Billy Budd*', in MCPR, pp. 85–110. A third pole of tonal attraction in *Death in Venice* is Tadzio's A major. For an account of the later opera's 'tonal ambiguity', see Eric Roseberry in DMDV, pp. 86–98.

30 Though Mitchell comments that Britten did not consider the movement a sonata (CPBC, p. 373), Keller hears the necessary contrast articulated by textural opposition between the 'duets' of the title and larger instrumental groupings, most notably in the 'development', bars 40–56 ('Britten's last masterpiece', 1979).

31 Britten's very personal adaptation of certain aspects of serial technique, particularly in the later music, belies his public attitude to its supposed intellectualism (cf. MSBC, p. 120).

32 As Colin Matthews notes, the 'C majorishness' of Britten's late music is bound up with motions towards harmonic clarity ('Britten's Indian Summer', p. 45).

33 The discarded opera sketch is reproduced in DMDV, p. 108.

34 Colin Matthews, 'Working Notes. String Quartet No. 3: Autumn–Winter 1975', in Alan Blyth (ed.), *Remembering Britten* (London: Hutchinson, 1981), pp. 176–9; p. 177.

35 The C⁶ chords in 'Duets' (Ex. 13.5) resolve – or transfigure – the intervallic tension of the movement's climax (bar 54). In 'Solo', the added-sixth quality inflects the major triad in each of the quasi-birdsong cadenzas, but the non-triadic pitch is most prominent melodically with the final arrival on C major. Britten's fascination with Mahler's 'Der Abschied' dates back at least to his acquisition of the score in 1936. In June 1937, after listening to the newly released recording of a 1936 performance conducted by Bruno Walter, Britten wrote to Henry Boys, 'that final chord is printed on the atmosphere' (DMPR, p. 493).

36 As Christopher Palmer points out, Britten overlays the C root at the end of *Phaedra* with an additional dissonance, D, enhancing the chord's pentatonic impression (CPBC, p. 410). In the Third Quartet, the fourth chord of 'Ostinato' presents yet a further extension of this Mahlerian enrichment of a C tonic.

14 Music for voices

1 Benjamin Britten, Preface to *Tit for Tat* (London: Faber Music, 1969).

2 MSBC, p. 121.

3 See CMEB, pp. 31–2.

4 For a full discussion of the creative relationship between Britten and Auden, including a detailed examination of *Our Hunting Fathers*, see DMBA, *passim*.

5 PEMB, p. 69.

6 CPBC, p. 283.

7 Paul Hamburger, 'Mainly about Britten', *Music Survey* 3/2 (December 1950), pp. 98–107.

8 CPBC, p. 277.

9 MSBC, p. 121.

10 *Opera* 2/3 (February 1951), p. 114.

11 Imogen Holst (ed.), *Henry Purcell: Essays on his Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 10–11.

12 CPBC, p. 314.

13 Eric Roseberry, 'A Note on the Four Chords in Act 2 of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', *Tempo* 66 (1963), p. 36; see also the present volume, p. 138.

14 Paraphrased in Alan Blyth (ed.), *Remembering Britten* (London: Hutchinson, 1981), p. 90.

15 MSBC, p. 121.

16 Eric Crozier (ed.), *Benjamin Britten: Peter Grimes*, Sadler's Wells Opera Books No. 3 (London: John Lane/The Bodley Head, 1945), p. 8.

17 For further on this compositional borrowing, see MCWR, pp. 67–70, and Eric Roseberry, ‘“Abraham and Isaac” Revisited: Some Reflections on a Theme and its Inversion’, in PRMB, pp. 253–66.

18 CPBC, p. 337.

19 For the relationship between the *Missa Brevis* and the *War Requiem*, which was composed soon afterwards, see MCWR, pp. 54 and 56.

20 For the close musical connection between a song Britten excluded from the *Serenade* (‘Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal’) and the later *Nocturne*, see Donald Mitchell, ‘“Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal”: Britten’s Other *Serenade*’, *Tempo* 169 (June 1989), pp. 22–7, repr. in DMCN, pp. 345–51.

21 David Herbert (ed.), *The Operas of Benjamin Britten* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979), pp. xxvii–xxviii.

22 Pears described how Britten’s first playing of this song in Pushkin’s house was eerily accompanied by the chiming of the Russian poet’s own clock: ‘It was the most natural thing to have happened, and yet unique, astonishing, wonderful’ (Peter Pears, *Armenian Holiday* (Colchester: Benham & Co., 1965), p. 36; repr. in PRPP, p. 133).

15 Britten and the world of the child

1 CPBC, p. 216.

2 For a concise introduction to this Platonic concept, see ‘The Archetypal Forms’, in Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind* (London: Pimlico, 1996), pp. 6–12. For further on its relevance to Britten’s work, see Clifford Hindley’s remarks in Chapter 8 of the present volume.

3 Evelyn Fox Keller, ‘Love and Sex in Plato’s Epistemology’, in *Reflections on Gender and Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 21–32, and Gregory Vlastos, ‘The Individual as an Object of Love in Plato’, in *Platonic Studies* (Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 3–42.

4 See Clifford Hindley, ‘Platonic Elements in Britten’s *Death in Venice*’, *Music & Letters* 73/3 (1992), pp. 407–29.

5 Humphrey Carpenter, ‘Overtures of Violence’, *Sunday Times*, 13 November 1996.

6 There are numerous examples of a symbolic use of A major in Britten’s music, one being *Young Apollo* (1939) – a work, significantly, about Wulff Scherchen (see DMPR, p. 742).

7 Philip Brett, ‘Britten’s Dream’, in Ruth A. Solie (ed.), *Musicology and Difference* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 259–80.

8 See MCWR, pp. 56–9.

9 See Philip Reed’s notes on the work in the new edition of the score published by Boosey & Hawkes in 1994.

10 For perceptive observations on the difference between ‘child-like’ and ‘childish’ in Britten’s psychology, see Donald Mitchell in DMCN, pp. 367–8.

11 DMHK, p. 346.

12 See PEMB, pp. 271–2; MKB, p. 194; and AWBT, p. 124.

13 PEMB, p. 281; HCBB, pp. 383–4.

14 AWBT, p. 232.

15 Plato’s exaltation of the universal Form of Beauty in personal relations tends to deprecate the beloved person as an object (i.e. idol) rather than an individual to be loved for his or her own sake. In political theory, this applies when the ideal republic depreciates individual citizens as mere statistics. See Vlastos, ‘The Individual as an Object of Love’.

16 This opinion is shared by Peter Evans: see PEMB, p. 284.

17 Quoted in HCBB, p. 488. For further on the violence in the work, see Donald Mitchell’s remarks on pp. 204–5.

16 Old songs in new contexts: Britten as arranger

1 For Britten’s hostility to Brahms’s influence on English music see, for example, DMPR, p. 397.

2 See Britten’s letter to Alfred Goldberg.

7 October 1941: ‘I have arranged a few British folksongs which have been a “wow” whenever performed so far’ (DMPR, p. 983).

3 See Donald Mitchell, ‘The Musical Atmosphere’, DMHK, p. 47; Graham Johnson, ‘Voice and Piano’ in CPBC, p. 303; and Arnold Whittall, ‘Along the Knife-Edge: the Topic of Transcendence in Britten’s Musical Aesthetic’, PRMB, p. 292.

4 On 17 March 1948, Britten wrote to Pears on the subject of *The Beggar’s Opera*: ‘I must stop myself too much “canonizing” of the music, which is probably more entertaining to write than to listen to!’ (Donald Mitchell and Philip Reed, sleeve notes to *The Beggar’s Opera*, Argo 436850-2, 1993, p. 22.)

5 Whittall, ‘Along the Knife-Edge’, p. 292.

6 Quoted in DMPR, p. 347.

7 For a remarkable interpretation of this arrangement in the context of the man-hunt chorus in Act III of *Peter Grimes*, see Donald Mitchell, ‘The Composer as Arranger’, in the sleeve note accompanying the Collins recording of the complete folksongs (CD 70392, 1993), p. 10, and ‘*Peter Grimes*: Fifty Years On’, in BBPG, pp. 125–66.

- 8 See Lennox Berkeley, 'The Light Music', in DMHK, p. 288.
- 9 DMPR, p. 347.
- 10 For a fuller coverage of the work as a whole than space permits here, the reader is referred to Norman Del Mar's account in DMHK, pp. 163–85, and to Hans Keller's key-orientated programme note in CPBC, p. 346.
- 11 See vocal score of the Austin edition (Boosey & Co. Ltd, 1920), pp. 11–12.
- 12 See BBC report by Julian Herbage, 23 April 1942, in DMPR, p. 653.
- 13 See Philip Reed's sleeve note to Collins CD 70392 (1993), p. 25.
- 17 Aldeburgh**
- 1 BBAA, p. 21.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- 3 Eric Crozier, 'The Origin of the Aldeburgh Festival', in *Aldeburgh Festival Programme Book 1* (1948), p. 6; repr. in Ronald Blythe (ed.), *Aldeburgh Anthology* (Aldeburgh and London: Snape Maltings Foundation Ltd in association with Faber Music Ltd, 1972), p. 8.
- 4 Although Eric Crozier wrote in 1948 that 'we could not hope to repeat the experiment another year', the English Opera Group was later to make several tours of Europe.
- 5 Britten had met Elizabeth Sweeting at Glyndebourne, where she was working as Front of House Manager during the 1947 season at which the EOG performed *Albert Herring* and *The Rape of Lucretia*. When asked to join the EOG at the end of the season, Sweeting knew nothing of plans for a festival; by the following year she found herself in the new post of Festival Manager.
- 6 Elizabeth Sweeting, 'A History of the Early Aldeburgh Festivals', lecture given to the Aldeburgh Festival Club, 13 October 1988 (cassette recording at the Britten–Pears Library, Aldeburgh).
- 7 Crozier, 'The Origin of the Aldeburgh Festival', p. 6.
- 8 E. M. Forster, 'Looking Back on the First Aldeburgh Festival', broadcast talk (BBC Third Programme, 20 June 1948); published in the *Listener*, 24 June 1948, pp. 1011–13 and repr. in *Aldeburgh Festival Programme Book 2* (1949), p. 7, and Blythe (ed.), *Aldeburgh Anthology*, p. 11.
- 9 *Saint Nicolas* was written for first performance at the centenary celebrations of Lancing College in July 1948. The Lancing Centenary Committee generously allowed the work to be performed twice at the Aldeburgh Festival before its official first performance in Lancing College Chapel.
- 10 E. M. Forster, 'Looking Back'.
- 11 Imogen Holst, *Britten, The Great Composers* (London: Faber & Faber, 1966), p. 47.
- 12 Peter Pears, interviewed by Donald Mitchell in September 1979 (unpublished cassette at the Britten–Pears Library, Aldeburgh).
- 13 Crozier, 'The Origin of the Aldeburgh Festival', pp. 6–7.
- 14 The dedication read 'Affectionately dedicated to the real Gay, Juliet, Sophie, Tina, Hughie, Jonny and Sammy – the Gathorne-Hardys of Great Glemham, Suffolk.' These children included the sons and daughters of the Aldeburgh Festival's Chair, Fidelity Cranbrook. The first performance of the work is described in HCBB, p. 276.
- 15 Stephen Reiss, 'How the Festival Developed', in Blythe (ed.), *Aldeburgh Anthology*, p. 16.
- 16 The programme book for 1958 does not credit the support of the BBC Transcription Service for the late-night series.
- 17 Imogen Holst, 'Working for Benjamin Britten (I)' in CPBC, p. 49.
- 18 The 1958 programme book contained an article by John Steuart-Gratton about St Bartholomew's Church, Orford.
- 19 The success of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was such that even four performances were not enough to satisfy public demand for tickets.
- 20 The final cost of the Snape Maltings Concert Hall was £175,000: see Stephen Reiss, 'A Festival in the Making', in Blythe (ed.), *Aldeburgh Anthology*, p. 19.
- 21 Osian Ellis became Pears's principal accompanist after Britten's stroke in 1973. For further on the folksong arrangements with harp accompaniment, see pp. 304–5.
- 22 Peter Diamand, interviewed by John Drummond (BBC Radio 3, 18 August 1992).
- 23 In 1963 Rostropovich described Britten's involvement with the festival as follows: 'Britten's energy and capacity for work during the Festival were phenomenal. He was the heart and brain of the Festival. He took part in it as an organizer and composer, as a pianist and conductor. He was at all the rehearsals and concerts, he looked into literally every trifle' (Mstislav Rostropovich, 'Dear Ben . . .', in Anthony Gishford (ed.), *Tribute to Benjamin Britten on his Fiftieth Birthday* (London: Faber & Faber, 1963), p. 18).
- 24 Holst, 'Working for Benjamin Britten (I)', pp. 49–50.
- 25 As Rostropovich wrote, 'Britten-the-conductor makes any music he is conducting penetrate the soul of the listener. The music is purified and revealed in its initial beauty, unspoiled by any "interpretation"'

(Rostropovich, 'Dear Ben . . .', p. 17).

26 The Fiftieth Aldeburgh Festival included the première of a major 'new' orchestral work: Britten's Double Concerto for violin and viola (1932), performed on 15 June 1997 by Katherine Hunka and Philip Dukes with the Britten–Pears Orchestra at the Snape Maltings.

27 Recent concerts have featured Julian Anderson and Thomas Adès.

28 The Britten Award for Composition and the Benjamin Britten International Competition for Composers.

29 BBAA, p. 20.