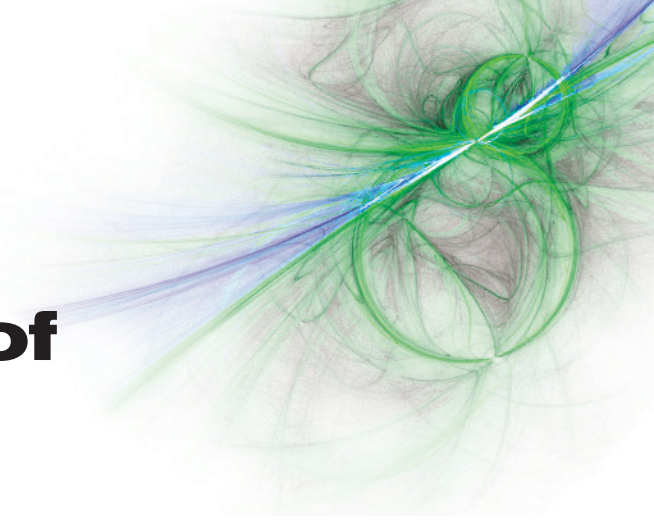




The Life and Times of Benjamin Britten

Compiled by Diana Weir

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| 1913 | ◆ Benjamin Britten is born on November 22 (St. Cecilia's Day). | 1935 | ◆ Britten works as composer for the G.P.O. (General Post Office) and meets W. H. Auden. |
| 1914 | ◆ Archduke Franz Ferdinand is assassinated in Sarajevo. | ◆ The Bank of Canada is established. | |
| | ◆ The First World War begins (ends 1918). | 1936 | ◆ German troops invade Rhineland. |
| 1924 | ◆ Britten begins formal music studies and by the age of 12 has composed several large-scale works. | ◆ <i>Gone with the Wind</i> by Margaret Mitchell wins the Pulitzer Prize. | |
| 1928 | ◆ Britten begins regular composition lessons with Frank Bridge. | ◆ The Olympic Games are held in Berlin. | |
| | ◆ The Supreme Court of Canada rules that women are not "persons" and cannot be elected to public office (overturned in 1929 by the British Privy Council). | 1937 | ◆ Britten's lifelong relationship with Peter Pears begins. |
| | ◆ Alexander Fleming discovers penicillin (in London, England). | ◆ Disney's <i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i> is released. | |
| | ◆ Amelia Earhart is the first woman to fly across the Atlantic. | ◆ Canadian doctors discover insulin can control diabetes. | |
| 1929 | ◆ The New York Stock Market crashes. | 1939 | ◆ Allied forces (including Canada) declare war on Germany, beginning the Second World War (ends 1945). |
| 1931 | ◆ Canada becomes independent. The Statute of Westminster grants Canada full autonomy from Britain. | ◆ Britten sails with Pears to America. | |
| 1933 | ◆ Britten meets Schönberg. | 1941 | ◆ Britten is awarded Library of Congress Medal for services to chamber music and writes <i>Paul Bunyan</i> , encouraged by W. H. Auden. |
| | ◆ Hitler is appointed Chancellor of Germany. | 1942 | ◆ Britten returns to England and is called to a conscientious objectors' tribunal. He is exempted from military service. |
| 1934 | ◆ Britten's father dies, and Britten briefly meets Peter Pears for the first time. | ◆ The first computer is developed in the U.S. | |
| | ◆ The Dionne Quintuplets are born in Callandar, Ontario. | ◆ Canadians of Japanese descent are evacuated from the cities and placed in internment camps. They are considered "security risks" to the country. | |

- 1944 ♦ *Peter Grimes* is first produced by Sadler's Wells Theatre.
- ♦ D-Day landings on Normandy take place.
- ♦ Tennessee Williams publishes *The Glass Menagerie*.
- ♦ First commercial non-stop flight between London and Canada takes place.
- 1946 ♦ Britten writes *The Rape of Lucretia* and *A Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*.
- 1951 ♦ *Billy Budd* is commissioned for the Festival of Britain.
- ♦ J.D. Salinger writes *The Catcher in the Rye*.
- ♦ Electric power is produced from atomic energy.
- 1953 ♦ The National Library is established in Ottawa.
- ♦ Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay attain the peak of Mount Everest.
- ♦ Cigarette smoking is identified as contributing to lung cancer.
- 1960 ♦ Britten meets Dmitri Shostakovich and Mstislav Rostropovich. He writes *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *War Requiem*.
- ♦ Prime Minister John Diefenbaker introduces Canada's first bill of rights.
- ♦ In Sharpeville, South Africa, police kill 69 black protesters and the African National Congress (ANC) is banned.
- ♦ *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee wins the Pulitzer Prize.
- 1967 ♦ Queen Elizabeth II opens the long awaited Maltins Concert Hall at Snape, home to the Alderburgh Festival, founded by Britten and Pears.
- ♦ Centennial celebrations take place throughout Canada.
- ♦ Expo '67 is held in Montreal.
- 1968 ♦ Pierre Elliott Trudeau becomes Prime Minister of Canada.
- 1970 ♦ Pierre Lapont, journalist and Vice Premier of Quebec is kidnapped and later murdered by the Quebec Separatist terrorist group Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ). This antigovernment protest was dubbed *The October Crisis*.
- 1973 ♦ Britten has an operation to replace a heart valve and completes his opera *Death in Venice*.
- ♦ The Vietnam War officially ends.
- ♦ *The Godfather* (Francis Ford Coppola) wins three Academy Awards.
- 1976 ♦ Parti Québécois under René Lévesque wins Quebec provincial election on separatist platform.
- ♦ Britten is created a Life Peer, granting him entitlement to a seat in the House of Lords. He dies on December 4.
- ♦ 200 people, mainly young black men, are killed in the Soweto uprising in South Africa.

Diana Weir is the COC's Education and Outreach Assistant.