

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Temporal Variations

(1936)

for oboe and piano

Preview File Only

FABER *ff* MUSIC

Britten's *Temporal Variations* were completed on 12 December 1936 and first performed three days later at the Wigmore Hall, London, by Natalie Caine and Adolph Hallis. (The programme for the first performance, at odds with the manuscript, gives the title as 'Temporal Suite'.) Although Britten's diary entry for 15 December indicates that he was pleased with the work, unaccountably, no further performance took place during the composer's lifetime.

The manuscript fair copy was partly written out by a copyist (the composer Grace Williams) and partly by Britten himself, but it stops half-way through No. 7, the Waltz. It is clear that, at the first performance, the pianist used Britten's composition sketch for the last three variations.

A certain amount of editing has been necessary. The only important difference between this published edition and the fair copy occurs in bars 17 to 18 of the Theme, where it is clear that Britten intended to contract three bars of music into two. The tempo indications which appear in square brackets in the Polka are not found in Britten's composition sketch, but seem to be demanded by the character of the variation.

COLIN MATTHEWS

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To Montagu Slater
TEMPORAL VARIATIONS
(1936)

Benjamin Britten
(1913-1976)

I Theme

Andante rubato

The musical score is written for Oboe and Piano. The Oboe part is in the upper staff, and the Piano part is in the lower two staves. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats), and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked 'Andante rubato'. The score consists of four systems of music, with measures numbered 1, 4, 7, and 10. The Oboe part begins with a *pp espress.* dynamic and includes markings for *ten.* (tension), *pp*, and *morendo*. The Piano part features a steady accompaniment of eighth notes, with *pp* dynamics and *7* (sevens) markings. A large diagonal watermark 'Preview File Only' is overlaid across the center of the page.

13

f *poco dim.* *mf*

dim. *mf* *mf* *p*

16

p *p*

p

19

pp *morendo*

pp *pp*

[attaca]

♠-♠ See introduction

II Oration

Lento quasi recitativo

pp (*quasi accel.*) *cresc. poco a poco* *f*

pp

24

f declamato *sf* *f* *ten.*

5 6

This system contains measures 24, 25, and 26. The upper staff features a melodic line with various articulations and dynamics, including *f declamato*, *sf*, and *f*. Fingerings 5 and 6 are indicated. The lower staff provides piano accompaniment with dynamics *sf* and *ff*.

27

f *ff* *rit.* *sf f marc.*

3 3 7

This system contains measures 27, 28, and 29. The upper staff has a melodic line with triplets and a *rit.* marking. The lower staff has piano accompaniment with dynamics *f* and *sf f marc.*.

30

p cresc. espress. *p più espress.* *p*

3 5

This system contains measures 30 and 31. The upper staff features a melodic line with dynamics *p cresc. espress.*, *p più espress.*, and *p*. The lower staff has piano accompaniment with dynamics *sf* and *f*.

32

ten. *ten.* *ten.* *ten.* *p comodo* *p* *mf dim.* *pp*

p comodo *mf* *dim.*

This system contains measures 32, 33, 34, and 35. The upper staff has a melodic line with *ten.* markings and dynamics *p comodo*, *p*, *mf dim.*, and *pp*. The lower staff has piano accompaniment with dynamics *p comodo*, *mf*, and *dim.*.