Benjamin Britten was a British composer, conductor, and pianist. His birthday, November 22nd, coincides with the feast day of St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music. At age 16, he wrote a hymn in her honor.

Britten was born in Lowestoft, a coastal town in England. His mother loved to sing and often held concerts in their home. From a young age, Britten knew he wanted to make a living as a composer. His first paid job was writing music for films.

Britten was a pacifist, meaning he opposed fighting wars. When it became clear that England was going to conflict with Germany in 1939, Britten left for the United States. It was impossible to remove the “Brit” from Britten. In the middle of World War II, he returned to his native country.

When the war ended, the biggest opera company in England held a gala reopening. They commissioned Britten to write a new work for the occasion. Britten was also asked to compose an opera for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

Aside from his musical talent, Britten had a big heart for animals. He even had a pet dog named Snooks!

**ACTIVITY:** Color the picture of Britten and Snooks.

**Quiz Question:** What country did Benjamin Britten go to at the beginning of World War II?
ACTIVITY: Color the piano key that matches the note given below each piano.

Don't forget to color me in!