

Benjamin Britten

1913–1976

Benjamin Britten was an English composer, conductor, and pianist. His birthday, November 22nd, happens to be the feast day of the patron saint of music, St. Cecilia—and when he was 16, he wrote a hymn in her honor.

Britten was born in Lowestoft, a town on the English seacoast. His mother loved to sing, and regularly held concerts in their home. From the moment he started playing the piano, Britten knew he wanted to earn his living as a composer. His first paying job was writing music for films.

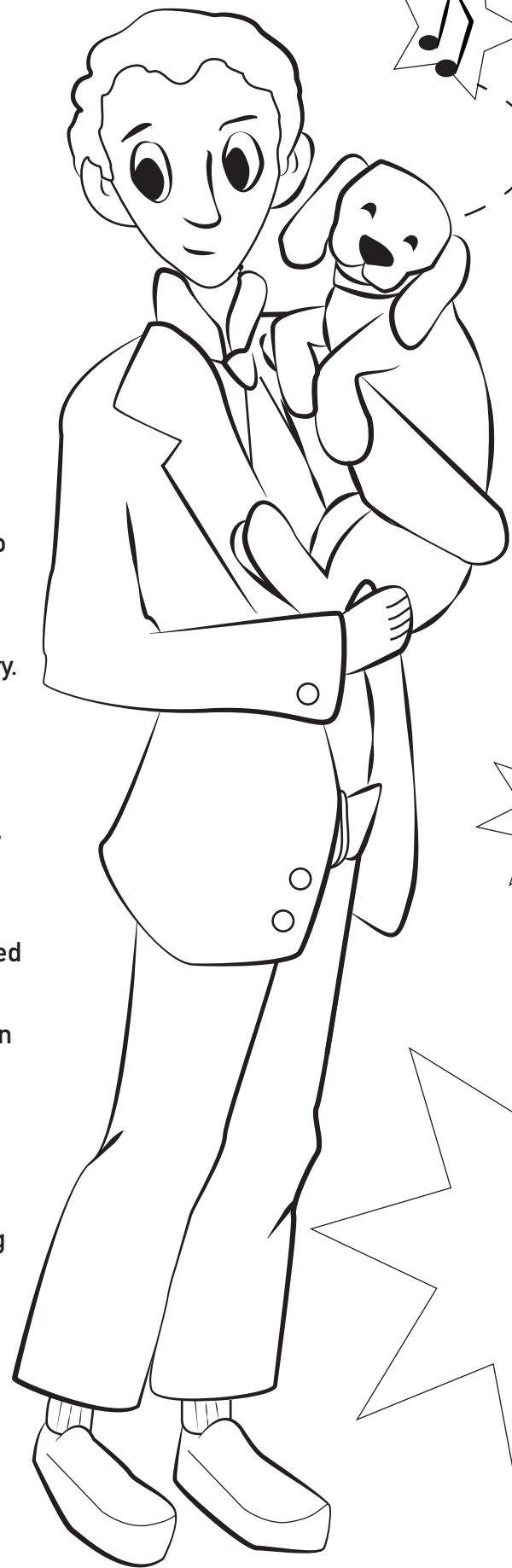
Britten was a pacifist, which means he didn't believe in fighting wars. So when it became obvious that England would go to war with Germany in 1939,

Britten left to go to the United States. But it was impossible to take the "Brit" out of Britten. In the middle of World War II, he sailed back to his native country.

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

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

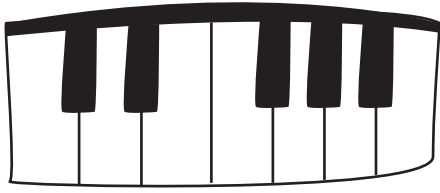
ACTIVITY: Color the picture of Britten and Snooks.



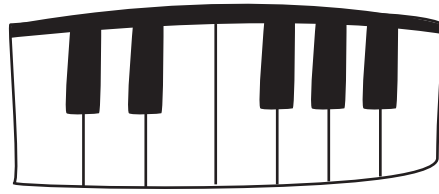
Quiz Question

What country did Benjamin Britten go to at the **beginning** of World War II?

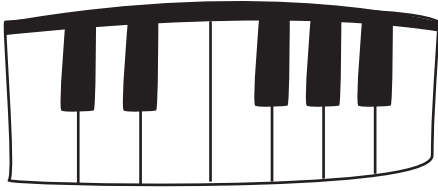
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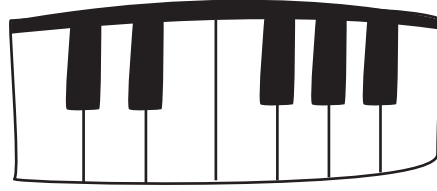
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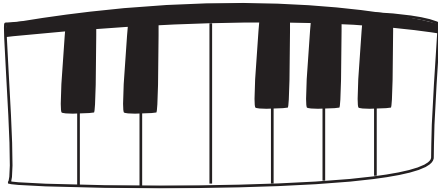
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ACTIVITY: Color the piano key that matches the note given below each piano.



Don't forget to color me in!

