Those who know me well know that beneath my austere, modernist exterior resides a sentimentality as sickly as anything in Peter Grimes. If gushing acknowledgments threaten to overwrite a grueling process with a rose-tinted vision, as if this manuscript were penned in the midst of a cocktail party, this might not necessarily be a bad thing. After all, it was the conversations in between times—over coffee, lunch, dinner, at conferences and on holidays—that sustained me through the most difficult moments of writing. Even those teachers, colleagues, friends, and family who have little interest in its contents have helped to bring the book about in many different ways. It is a pleasure to thank some of them here.

Although I am generally skeptical of origin stories, this project has a specific one: a trip to Aldeburgh with Alastair Nichol, my school music teacher, fifteen years ago. I am grateful to Alastair for setting me on an unlikely career path and introducing me to the Britten myths against which I would productively recoil. Another East Anglian, Nicholas Mathew, helped this process along when I arrived in Oxford. Tutorials with Nick in the King’s Arms—on Albert Herring and the Philosophy of New Music—are among the fondest memories of my undergraduate days. He has remained my methodological guru, consistently encouraging me to push my conclusions to their farthest points. Thanks are also due to Peter Franklin and Emanuele Senici for the kind of thought-provoking courses that set up a young scholar for life, and for supervising my undergraduate and master’s theses respectively. Suzanne Aspden was another Oxford mentor who helped to set me on my musicological way. She taught me to bust binaries, so that I could eventually put them back together again. I would also like to thank Michael Burden for his early support, and for formal hall and afternoon tea; Roger Moseley for the distinction
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It was at Harvard that the seeds planted in Oxford began to bear fruit as a dissertation project. I am grateful to my fellow G1s, Will Cheng and Elizabeth Craft, for being there with experimental cooking, election parties in simpler times, and care-oriented musicology before it was a thing. Rowland Moseley made the transition to America much easier than it would have otherwise been, as did Toby Ottersen and Gavin Williams. Suzie Clark, another Mertonian at Harvard, was always on hand to offer moral support in the department lounge. Andrea Bohlman, Louis Epstein, Glenda Goodman, and Frank Lehman were model G2s, generous and challenging in equal measure. Matt Mugmon was an honorary middlebrow modernist. As dissertation adviser, Alex Rehding gave me the freedom to follow my own nose, but was always there for transatlantic Skype conversations when I needed him. Carolyn Abbate was a deep and careful reader, graciously continuing her involvement even as she moved away from Harvard and back again. The late and brilliant Dan Albright inspired me with his interdisciplinary virtuosity, offering incisive feedback on every chapter with superhuman speed. Martin Puchner afforded another model of interdisciplinary modernism, leaving a mark on the final chapter especially. Dana Gooley, Chris Hasty, Carol Oja, Sindhu Revuluri, and Anne Shreffler were also generous interlocutors, each leaving a palpable mark on my thinking, writing, and overall Harvard experience.

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The journey from dissertation to book has been an arduous and circuitous one, but supportive institutions, colleagues, and friends have buoyed me along. Raina Polivka has been a patient acquisitions editor and Francisco Reinking has handled the production side with just as much care. Editorial assistants Zuha Khan and Elena Bellaart have provided much reassurance with their prompt responses to my many clueless emails. Kevin Vaughn expertly typeset the almost-impossible musical examples. Robert Demke copyedited the manuscript with meticulousness. Josh
Rutner was every bit the sharp and penetrating indexer that he was rumored to be. Debbie Kabzinski and Janet Rudasics have provided invaluable administrative support. Nicholas Clark and other staff at the Britten-Pears Library have answered queries and supported my work for over a decade now. Without this wonderful archive, this book would not have been possible. Benjamin Kolhmann has been my font of literary knowledge, answering email questions thoughtfully and generously. Joe Auner and Joy Calico provided helpful leads on Schoenbergian matters. Brigid Cohen and Emily Dolan shared their book proposals and publishing advice, along with model monographs. Paul Kildea generously made unpublished material available even though he must have sensed differences of opinion and approach. Thanks are also due to Phil Rupprecht for late-night debates about British musical modernism and for all his encouragement and support. Arman Schwartz’s work has been a model for my own for many years now. His friendship, enthusiasm, and penchant for scholarly gossip have made musicology more fun.

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