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This book is designed to introduce the non-specialist music lover to Britten's opera, *The Turn of the Screw*. The opening chapters by Vivien Jones and Patricia Howard deal with the literary source of the opera (Oakes's novella), the structure of the libretto, and the technique by which a short story was transformed into an opera. The central chapter, on the musical style and structures of the opera, includes an account of the composition process deduced from early sketches of the work by John Evans, an analysis of the unique form of the opera with a more detailed examination of the last scene by Patricia Howard, and an account of the significance and effect of the orchestration by Christopher Palmer. Finally, Patricia Howard traces the stage history of the work, from its initial reception in Venice in 1954, through some seminal reinterpretations in the 1960s to its present established position in the repertoire. The book is generously illustrated and there is also a bibliography and discography.

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**Benjamin Britten, the Turn of the Screw (Cambridge Opera Handbooks)** From Brand: Cambridge University Press **Bibliography**

- Rank: #1914745 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Cambridge University Press
- Published on: 1985-10-31
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .43" w x 5.43" l, .52 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 164 pages

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