

TRANSFORMATIONS

A music and film project

This schools' project, led by Music in the Round and the Showroom Cinema, is part of the Transformations project which will tour around the UK in 2013 – 2014, bringing together newly commissioned music and film alongside and inspired by Benjamin Britten's *Six Metamorphoses after Ovid*.

Workshops are led by Polly Ives and Fraser Wilson (Music in the Round), Emma-Jayne Russell (Showroom), Katie Goodwin (freelance film-maker) and Adrian Wilson (oboe, Ensemble 360).

Feel free to use the extra information and activity suggestions below in your classroom to explore the topic further.

BENJAMIN BRITTEN: the composer

The composer – some FACTS

- Lived 1913 -1976
- Born in Lowestoft, Suffolk
- He played the piano and was a conductor
- The first composer to be given a life peerage
- 2013 is his centenary year
- **Visit here for a free learning resource**

<http://www.brittenpears.org/page.php?pageid=779>

Have a listen to some of his other pieces of music

- [Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra](#)
- [The Wasp](#)
- [Storm \(Sea Interludes\)](#)

Britten was inspired and influenced by other composers and writers; find out 5 facts about each of them

[Henry Purcell](#) (wrote operas & songs that Britten imitated/rewrote)

[John Dowland](#) (whose simple songs inspired Britten)

[Frank Bridge](#) (Britten's tutor and mentor)

[Dmitri Shostakovich](#) (Britten's friend and musical colleague)

[Gamelan of Bali...](#)

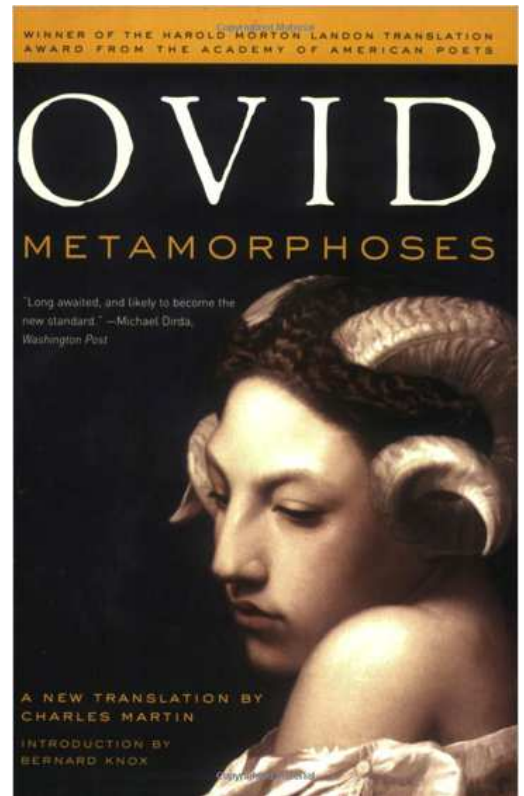
[W.H. Auden](#) (Britten's friend and librettist)

[William Shakespeare](#)



METAMORPHOSES: the poems

- You say this word: Metter-more-FOE-seez
- This is the Latin name
- In English, it means: TRANSFORMATIONS: changing!
- *Metamorphoses* is a book of poems. There are up to 15 volumes and it contains more than 250 different stories.
- Written by the Roman poet Ovid (43BC - 17AD)
- It forms a mythological history of the world (ending with the Roman emperor Julius Caesar) and studies the mysticism of nature.
- The first English translation was published in 1480 by William Caxton. The work influenced Chaucer and Shakespeare, amongst many others.
- **Read more about the poem** at Wikipedia here: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metamorphoses_\(poem\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metamorphoses_(poem))
- **Read a blog about the whole poem** here: <http://ovidsmetamorphoses.blogspot.co.uk/>



Benjamin Britten's piece of music *Six Metamorphoses after Ovid*

The piece of music we're exploring has six parts (called *movements*) and is written for solo oboe.

Each *movement* is based on a character. They are:

1. **Pan**, who played a flute containing Syrinx, the girl he loved.
2. **Phaeton**, who rode a chariot made of the sun. He was struck by thunder and fell into a river. (3'20)
3. **Niobe**, a sad mother, who was turned into a mountain! (5'30)
4. **Bacchus**, who hosted long parties full of song and enjoyment! (8'24)
5. **Narcissus**, who fell in love with his own reflection, and became a flower. (11'27)
6. **Arethusa** who, trying to avoid love, was turned into a fountain. (15'40)

- **Watch the film and hear the music (saved on your computer). Each movement starts at the times shown above.**

Our film

We will be creating a response piece (of film and music) exploring Phaeton and Narcissus.

Other activities to explore in the classroom

- **Image distortion:** Look at your face in the reflection on the back of a spoon. Draw what you see.
- **Mirror/ reflections** – in pairs, copy each others actions.
- **Clay/ plasticene** – create your own ‘Morph’ characters
- **Look at this picture.** Explore the similarities and differences of these two versions. How have they been ‘transformed’?

