<table>
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<th><strong>Elisabeth Lutyens</strong></th>
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<td><strong>E-lis-uh-beth Lut-chens</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Born:</strong> July 9th, 1906, Bloomsbury, London, UK</td>
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<td><strong>Died:</strong> April 14th, 1983, Hampstead, UK</td>
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<td><strong>Period of Music:</strong> Modern Era</td>
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**“If one can see a world in a grain of sand, that grain of sand for me is music.” – Elisabeth Lutyens**

**Biography:**
Elisabeth Lutyens, born in London in 1906, was the daughter of a respected and successful architect, Sir Edwin Lutyens. As a child, she learned to play the piano, like many respectable young women of the time. But by the time she was 9, it was clear that her interest and ability in music was serious, and she began to study for a career as a composer. She attended the *Ecole Normale* in Paris and, following that, the Royal College of Music in London, where she studied viola and composition. Her first public performance was a long and complex ballet, “The Birthday of Infanta” in 1952, but this has since been withdrawn from publication.

She was a perfectionist and spent many years refining her work. As her composing progressed, she felt that her earlier pieces did not represent her style, so she withdrew them. As a result, we have little to show the development which led to the astonishing music she produced in the 1940’s. Elisabeth Lutyens had to struggle to earn her place among the composers of classical twentieth century musical canon, and her music is still seldom heard or recorded. Her autobiography, *A Goldfish Bowl*, describing life as a female musician in London, was published in 1972.

Elisabeth was an innovative and dedicated composer. She wrote more than 15 stage works, including ballets and operas, over 60 pieces for solo voice or chorus with varying instrumentations, and at least 70 instrumental compositions. She chose evocative titles for her works such as “Time Off? Not a Ghost of a Chance!”, “Dirge for a Proud World,” and “Voice of Quiet Waters.” She also wrote film and radio music, educational works, light music, and theatrical scores. She was the first female British composer to score a feature film. Lutyens paid the bills by composing film scores for Hammer’s horror movies and for their rivals, Amicus Productions.

Unlike most of her contemporaries at this time who were writing tonal, lyrical, narrative, and folk or folk-inspired music, Lutyens is credited with bringing Schoenbergian serial technique to Britain. Her negative opinions of strict serialism caused an ideological rift between herself and her serialist colleagues. Elisabeth disapproved of the ‘overblown sound’ of Gustav Mahler and similar composers, preferring to work with sparse textures. She drew large inspiration from earlier British music, especially the music of Henry Purcell. She first used 12-note serialism in Chamber Concert No 1 (1939), but she didn’t always limit herself to it. Sometimes she used a self-created, 14-note technique.

Lutyens, the conductor Iris Lemare and the violinist Anne Macnaghten introduced composers such as Benjamin Britten, Elizabeth Maconchy, Grace Williams, Malcolm Williamson and Alan Rawsthorne to the public. In her later years, she
taught many private students, including a young Richard Rodney Bennett, an English composer and Jazz Pianist. She was a provocative and inspiring teacher who gave herself fully to her pupils.

Lutyens was known and respected as a creative artist for whom compromise was impossible. Her output was large and varied, and the importance of her contribution to the country's musical life was recognized in 1969, when she was made a Commander of the British Empire. Elisabeth Lutyens died in London in 1983, at the age of 76.

Quick Facts:
- She composed in complete isolation, a process greatly impeded by her drinking, partying, and the responsibilities of motherhood.
- She set the entire Book of Job from the bible to music in the style of Johannes Brahms.
- Elisabeth's favorite relative was her Aunt Constance, a suffragist active in British demonstrations. After her arrest for breaking windows, Constance went on a hunger strike and was treated roughly by the police which eventually led to her death. Elisabeth idolized her and set out to be as radical in music as her aunt had been in politics.

Selected Compositions for Listening:
Spotify Playlist URL: [https://tinyurl.com/lutyenslisten](https://tinyurl.com/lutyenslisten)
- Chamber Concerto, Op. 8 No, 1
  - I. Theme and Variations
  - III. Scherzo: Allegro scherzando
- 6 Tempi, Op. 42: No.1
- Motet, Op. 27 “Excerpta Tractatus Logico-Philosophici”
- Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis
  - Magnificat
  - Nunc Dimittis
- Verses of Love

Other Suggested Listening:

Learn More about Elisabeth Lutyens:
- The Lutyens Trust: Composer Elisabeth Lutyens, daughter of Edwin; [www.lutyenstrust.org.uk](http://www.lutyenstrust.org.uk)