

MODERN MUSIC

Towards the end of the 19th century composers started breaking away from the mainstream of Romanticism and new, experimental music forms began to emerge: impressionism, the surrealism and the irregular rhythms of **I. Stravinsky** (1882-1971) and **B. Bartók** (1881-1945). It is generally agreed that the breakdown of tonality commenced in 1857 with **Wagner's** (1813 – 1883) *Tristan & Isold* (written in 1859).

In England, the beginning of the new century saw the re-birth of a truly national British style with the works of **Edward Elgar** (1857- 1934), **Charles Villers Stanford** (1852-1924) and **Fritz Theodor Albert Delius** (1862-1934)

The most important composers of the period were:

- **Ruth Crawford Seeger's** (1901 –1953) who extended serialism;
- **Gustav Holst** (1874-1934), who embraced different styles
- **Ralph Vaughan Williams** (1872-1958) who worked mainly on folksong, Tudor music, and associated his compositions with Blake (in the ballet *Job*) and Bunyan (in the opera *The Pilgrim's Progress*).

In America **Milton Babbitt's** (1916 -), found an ideal instrument for colour control and **Charles Ives** (1874-1954), used the vernacular of hymns, popular and patriotic songs, marches and dances formed his conception of music as an "open" art form capable of encompassing all types of music and fusing them into a higher synthesis.

During the mid 20th century different kinds of music evolved such as *jazz*.

Improvisation attracted many artistes who manipulated sounds and noises recorded on tape (electronic music or *musique concrète*).

Always in America **John Cage** experimented in 1939 the *chance*" music in which multiple performers are asked to perform on multiple record players, changing the variable speed settings. He showed what one could do with silence, the only sounds in some pieces are those produce by the audience.

George Gershwin added modern harmonies and rhythms to forms and techniques of the Baroque period who reached fame for his *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924) and *Piano Concert in F* (1925), the operas *Porgy and Bess* (1935) and *American in Paris* (1938).

In England **Gerald Hugh Tyrwhitt-Wilson**, **Baron Berners** produced a great number of compositions among which the most famous are his, particularly *The Triumph of Neptune* (1926) and *Luna Park* (1930), both choreographed by Russian dancer **George Balanchine** (1904 – 1983).



