BEFORE

Romantic composers often evoked powerful narratives and emotions through their music.

19TH-CENTURY ROMANTICS
Symphonie fantastique, composed by **Hector Berlioz** **158** in 1830, described the story of an artist's life, while **Modest Mussorgsky's** **180–81** *Night on a Bare Mountain*, dating from 1867, is an orchestral portrayal of a terrifying witches' sabbath. **Edvard Grieg** **184** depicted landscape in his 1875 *Peer Gynt* suites, especially in the tranquil flute tune of "Morning" and the heavy rhythms of "In the Hall of the Mountain King".

FORESHADOWING IMPRESSIONISM
Gabriel Fauré's **165** interest in **modality** **31** and his use of mild discords anticipated the unusual **scales** used by Debussy, which were hallmarks of his music.

Impressionism

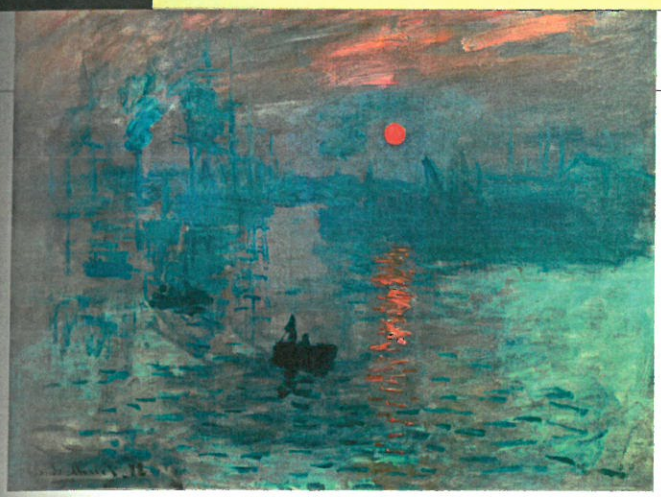
By the late 19th century, European music was at a crossroads. Traditions were crumbling, conventional harmony was dissolving, and old forms were being pushed to breaking point. From France, a completely new approach emerged.

The Impressionist movement of the late 19th century influenced music as well as art. Composers, like painters, became preoccupied with conjuring up an atmosphere through suggestion and allusion, rather than by objectively telling a story or directly conveying an emotion. Just as, decades earlier, painters had experimented with new techniques, composers began to depart from the harmonic system that had been in use since J.S. Bach.

> **"Music** is made up of **colours** and **barred rhythms**."
>
> DEBUSSY TO HIS PUBLISHER, AUGUSTE DURAND, 1907

The press were quick to label the Parisian composer Claude Debussy (see below right) an Impressionist, but he refuted it. In 1908, he wrote: "I am trying to do 'something different'... what the imbeciles call 'impressionism' is a term which is as poorly used as possible, particularly by arts critics." Debussy was naturally drawn to the piano. As an accomplished performer,

Music at Le Chat Noir
In 1874, Adolphe Willette painted *Parce, domine* (Spare, Lord, your people) for the Parisian cabaret-café Le Chat Noir. Frequented by Debussy, Satie, and many of their contemporaries in the arts, the café became a hub of Impressionism.



Naming a movement
When Claude Monet (1840–1926) named this 1872 painting of a sunrise at Le Havre, France, "*Impression, soleil levant*", critics seized upon the word "Impressionism" as a label for the emerging art form.

he was able to use the instrument to create in sound the textures, colours, and degrees of light and shade that artists could achieve using paint.

Revolutionary effect

As a composer, Debussy's unique approach to the fundamentals of melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, and colour changed music for ever. The mysterious parallel harmonies opening his 1910 piano prelude *La cathédrale engloutie* (The Sunken Cathedral) reflect his interest in medieval chanting, while the exotic-sounding pentatonic melodies (like the piano's five black notes) evoke the sounds of the Javanese gamelan (gong orchestra; see pp.302–03). The chimes of the submerged bells ring through the texture, while the ascending melodic figure suggests the cathedral's slow rise from the sea.

The orchestral palette offered Debussy great stimulus. The unusual combinations of instruments in his three symphonic sketches, *La mer* (The Sea, 1905), create new orchestral colours and are works of art in sound.

Fluttering moths

Debussy and his compatriot Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) were friends as well as rivals. Ravel wrote polished, sophisticated music with technical precision. In the first of his five *Miroirs* (Reflections) for piano (1904–05), he creates a dark, nocturnal atmosphere broken by the quietly intense fluttering of moths. The fourth movement, the Spanish-inspired *Alborada del gracioso* (The Jester's Morning Song), exploits the piano's extremes of pitch, tonal colour, dynamics, and touch, and demands staggering skill to perform.

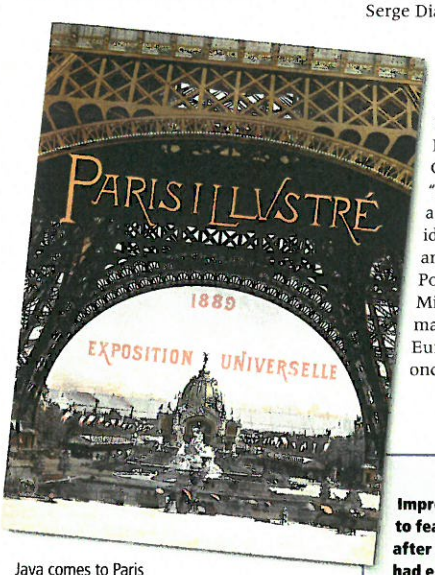
Satie and "Les Six"

Erik Satie (1866–1925) was a lone but fascinating voice. He played the piano in the Parisian cabaret-café Le Chat Noir, an important meeting place for artists, musicians, and writers. In 1888, he published his three piano compositions, entitled *Trois Gymnopédies*. The modal harmonies and repetitions of the first of the three pieces invokes a trance-like state in the listener. In 1917, Satie collaborated with artists Jean Cocteau (1889–1963) and Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) on the ballet *Parade* for the Ballets Russes, the innovative dance company run by Serge Diaghilev (1872–1929).

In 1920, Satie and Cocteau inspired a group of six composers, including Georges Auric, Louis Durey, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc, and Germaine Tailleferre, called "Les Six". They were united around the anti-Impressionist idea that music should be spare and "modern". Of the six, it was Poulenc (1899–1963) and Milhaud (1892–1974) who made the biggest impact on European composers who were, once again, going separate ways.

KEY WORKS

Claude Debussy *Clair de lune*; *Prélude à l'après-midi-d'un faune*; *La mer*
Maurice Ravel *Miroirs*; *Daphnis et Chloé*, Suites Nos. 1 and 2
Erik Satie *Parade*; *Trois Gymnopédies*
Darius Milhaud *Scaramouche Suite* for two pianos, Op. 165b



Java comes to Paris
In 1889, an *Exposition Universelle* (World Fair) was held in Paris. Here, Claude Debussy first heard Javanese musicians playing a gamelan. The influence of this experience can be heard in his later compositions.

COMPOSER (1862–1918)

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Claude Debussy's parents ran a china shop in a Paris suburb, but in 1871 his father was imprisoned for revolutionary activities. Despite an unconventional start in life, Debussy showed early promise as a concert pianist at the Conservatoire in Paris. In 1884, he won the Prix de Rome and studied in Italy. In 1888–89, he heard Wagnerian operas at the Bayreuth festival and was struck by their adventurous harmonies.

Debussy absorbed influences from all quarters: nature, art, and literature. He died of cancer in Paris while the city was under bombardment during World War I.

AFTER

Impressionistic colours continued to feature in musical composition after the Impressionist movement had ended.

ENGLISH ORCHESTRAL COLOURING

English composer **Frederick Delius** « 223–24, a superb orchestral colourist, used Impressionism in his 1912 **tone poem** *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*. A two-note **motif** on the clarinet imitates the song of a cuckoo, while sliding chromatic harmonies evoke an atmosphere of calm stillness. In 1933, Delius published two string pieces entitled *Aquarelles* (Watercolours).

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

In his orchestral work *Roman trilogy*, Italian composer **Ottorino Respighi** (1879–1936) created impressions using music to evoke the sights and sounds of Italy's capital city. Meanwhile, Polish composer **Karol Szymanowski** (1882–1937), inspired by Debussy, composed "Fountains of Arethusa", the second of his three chamber pieces, *Myths* (1915). The rippling piano part and yearning melody create an elegant impression of flowing water.

The **Shock** of the **New**

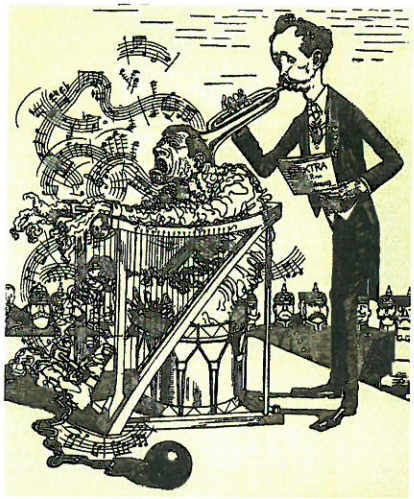
Modern music – or what still sounds like it to many of today's listeners more than a century later – did not appear overnight. But it felt like that to the first audiences of some of the early 20th-century masterworks that revolutionized music.

A process of musical evolution that had been under way for decades reached a tipping point in the early 20th century. A disturbing new world of sound seemed suddenly to open up, shocking and scandalizing those who heard it first.

Throughout the 19th century, modern-sounding moments in music had been happening more often: for example, in the compositions of Mahler, Liszt, and Wagner. However, they took place within a broadly traditional language whose basis would still have been familiar to Mozart and Beethoven. In that sense, the sounds that would soon be unleashed by Stravinsky and Schoenberg were not as unfamiliar as they seemed. What was new, however, was the context. The seemingly unstable (dissonant) modern harmony was no longer being deployed just at key moments to spice up a musical work. Now it was the musical work.

Crossing the threshold

Richard Strauss's operas *Salome* (1906) and *Elektra* (1909) confronted their first audiences with long passages of musical dissonance so extreme that melody and harmony, as traditionally understood, seemed to be disintegrating. However, the familiar boundaries were still there: for example, *Elektra* ends in the conventional key of C major. Sensing that modernism was about to go where he did not want to follow, Strauss went on to explore a personal brand of "rediscovered Romanticism" in his next opera, *Der Rosenkavalier* (The Knight of the Rose) of 1911.



Open to ridicule
This caricature from the German weekly magazine *Lustige Blätter* depicts Strauss inducing "electric" convulsions in his captive by blowing the music into the back of his head through a trumpet.

Schoenberg's sensation

Something more radical was afoot in Vienna. In the fourth movement of his Second String Quartet (1908), Arnold Schoenberg (see opposite) began writing in a style in which the orientation points of traditional harmony and melody – the bedrock of Western classical music for 1,000 years – could no longer be made out. Besides the usual four stringed instruments, a solo soprano voice sings words by the Austrian poet Stefan George, telling of distant regions from which the music seems to have arrived. Schoenberg's idiom, no longer anchored by familiar harmonies, floats free in a new world of sound.

> "I feel the **air** from **another planet.**"
>
> WORDS BY STEFAN GEORGE (1868–1933), SET IN SCHOENBERG'S STRING QUARTET NO. 2

The Quartet's premiere, in Vienna in 1908, polarized its audience into two groups – enthusiastic supporters and outraged opponents. The furious shouting of the latter camp almost halted the performance. Undaunted by this mixed reception, Schoenberg pushed further ahead into a new musical territory.

The same was true of two of his former pupils, both fellow Austrians. In his compositions, Anton Webern (1883–1945) searched out new extremes. His *Five Pieces for Orchestra* of 1911–13 (the "orchestra" is a medium-sized chamber ensemble) together last fewer than four minutes, one of them for a scant 19 seconds. In 1914–15, in his *Three Pieces for Orchestra*, Alban Berg (1885–1935) went to the opposite extreme. Composed on a larger scale, and for a huge symphony orchestra, the work takes up the late-Romantic idiom of Gustav Mahler (see p.193) and propels it into a new era of modernism.

Russian spring

Igor Stravinsky (see pp.212–13), a former pupil of Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov (see pp.180–81), was famous for his music for the Diaghilev ballets *The Firebird* and *Petrushka* when, in 1913, at Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, he unveiled his latest work,

KEY WORKS

Charles Ives *Central Park in the Dark*
Richard Strauss *Elektra*
Arnold Schoenberg String Quartet No. 2 in F sharp minor, Op. 10; *Pierrot Lunaire*, Op. 21
Anton Webern *Five Pieces for Orchestra*, Op. 10
Igor Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*
Alban Berg *Three Pieces for Orchestra*, Op. 6

BEFORE

The slow-burning fuse leading to the explosion of "modern music" had been lit by composers such as Liszt and Wagner.

COMMEMORATIVE ENGRAVING OF WAGNER'S *DIE WALKÜRE*

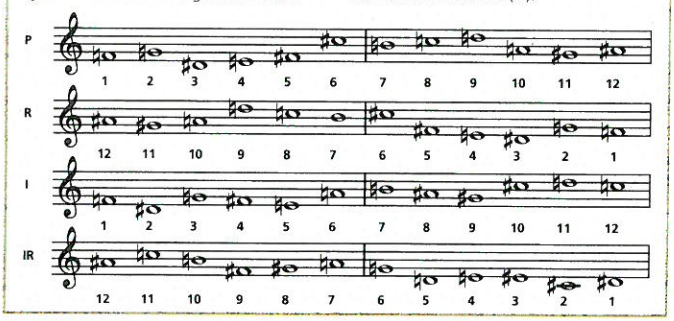
MOMENTS OF MODERNISM

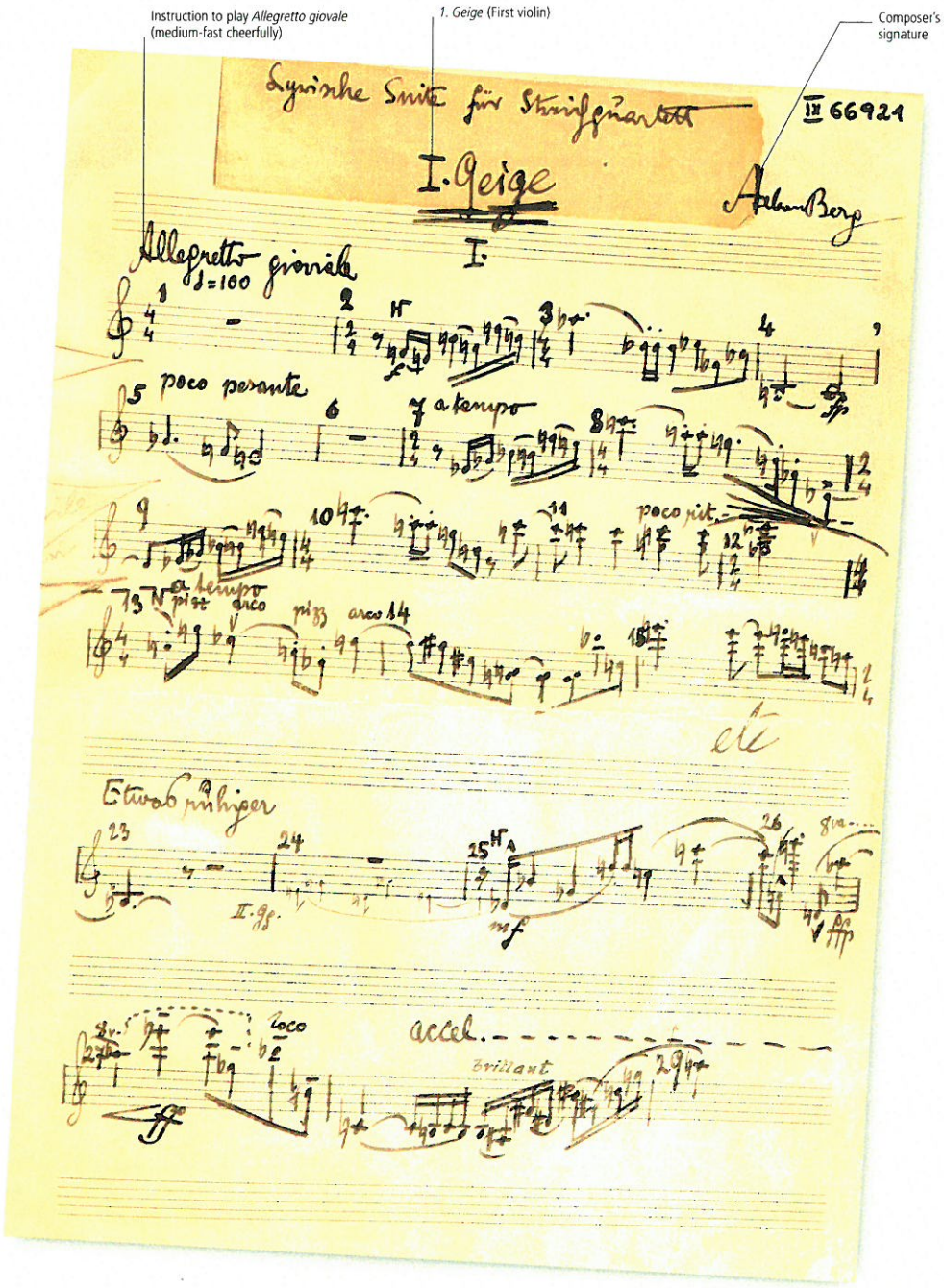
In the 19th century, **Franz Liszt << 162–63** explored ferocious-sounding modernism in his *Totentanz* (Dance of Death) for piano and orchestra. The emotional impact and incredible complexity of the music of **Wagner << 167** were a sign of things to come.

UNDERSTANDING MUSIC

TWELVE-NOTE COMPOSITION

As his style became more free-floating and complex, Schoenberg felt that the music he and his followers were composing risked falling apart, and that no existing technical procedure could solve the problem. So Schoenberg invented a new system. His idea was to generate music from a specific ordering of the 12 notes of Western music, making a "set" or "row". The row in prime form (P, in the example below) can then be manipulated: reversed, or played backwards (R); inverted, or set upside down (I); or both inverted and reversed (IR).





Berg's *Lyric Suite*
This is the manuscript of the first violin part of the *Lyric Suite* by Alban Berg. Completed in 1926, Berg's work was one of the first string quartets to use the 12-note method of composing.

AFTER

After Schoenberg and Stravinsky, music could never be the same again. Others would follow or reject their example, but few would ignore it.

NEW WAYS
Benjamin Britten 284 », **Leoš Janáček 214–15 »**, and **Dmitri Shostakovich** (1906–75) felt that Schoenbergian modernism offered little that related to their own music. But Schoenberg's 12-note method inspired Stravinsky **212–13 »** and **Aaron Copland 214 »** to write masterworks.


DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

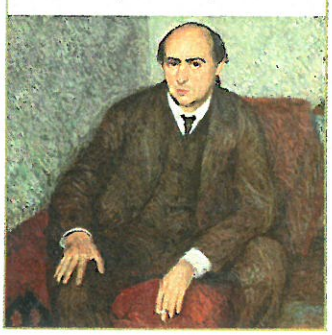
RADICAL DEVELOPMENTS
The rhythmic power of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* was a beacon for the French composer **Edgard Varèse**, whose *Ionisation* was the first work for an all-percussion orchestra.

COMPOSER (1874–1951)

ARNOLD SCHOENBERG

Born into a Jewish family in Vienna, and virtually self-taught as a composer, Schoenberg became a leading composer of his era and an influential teacher – his students included Anton Webern and Alban Berg.

Having lived in Vienna and Berlin, Schoenberg emigrated to the United States with his second wife and three children in 1933. He taught at the University of California, in Los Angeles, and pioneered a new technique of 12-tone composition (see p.210).



The Rite of Spring. The premiere generated the most notorious riot in the history of classical music. Outraged by the music's pounding dissonance, large parts of the audience protested so loudly that Stravinsky's score could hardly be heard at all. This meant that the dancers could not hear it either, so the performance was close to chaos. But the concert premiere (an orchestra performance of the piece without any dancers) of *The Rite of Spring* in Paris in 1914 was a triumph for Stravinsky. His masterwork had taken music to new levels of orchestral firepower and rhythmic invention.

American pioneer

The young Charles Ives (1874–1954) was isolated from the early modernist European scene, yet his compositions at this time were in some ways ahead of it. In Ives's 1906 chamber-orchestra piece *Central Park in the Dark*, different sections of the ensemble play various kinds of music independently of one another, and at different speeds. The string section (effectively a separate orchestra) quietly evokes the nocturnal scene, undisturbed by the surrounding noises of New York City nightlife, including tunes whistled by passersby, music played by a ragtime band, and a pianist playing in a bar. His music portrayed space, time, and memory in a way that had never been achieved before.

Stylish composer
This portrait of Stravinsky was painted by Jacques-Émile Blanche in 1915. A stylish figure, courteous, and urbane, Stravinsky was a radical in aesthetics but a social conservative.

COMPOSER Born 1882 Died 1971

Igor Stravinsky

> "**Music** [is] a form of **communion** with our fellow **man** and with the **Supreme Being.**"
>
> IGOR STRAVINSKY, "POETICS OF MUSIC", 1942

One of the great 20th-century modernists, Igor Stravinsky has been compared to the artist Pablo Picasso in his restless inventiveness and exploration of diverse styles. In his early ballet scores he restored complex rhythms to the forefront of Western music. Through 60 years of composition he was never predictable, and always attempted something new.

A chance meeting

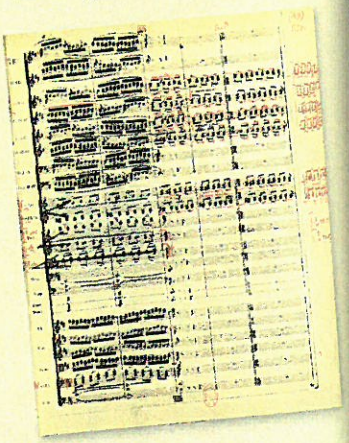
Born into the cultured elite of St Petersburg, the capital of tsarist Russia, Stravinsky had a passion for opera and ballet. But his father, an opera singer, was not keen to push his sickly third son into a musical career. Instead, Igor enrolled at university as a student of criminal law.

In 1902, however, on a family trip to a German spa, Igor met the prominent Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (see pp.180–81), who gave him lessons in composition.

Explosive talent

In the early 20th century, St Petersburg was a centre of modernist innovation in the arts, and Stravinsky was soon exploring ideas alien to the elderly Rimsky-Korsakov. The orchestral piece *Fireworks*, premiered in 1908, revealed a young man in touch with the latest trends in French music – Debussy and Ravel (see pp.204–05) – but with his own explosive feel for rhythm and timbres (qualities of sound). The Russian artistic impresario Serge Diaghilev attended the performance. Seeking to promote Russian talent in Paris, he commissioned Stravinsky to write the score for a ballet, *The Firebird*, to be performed by his new company, the Ballets Russes. Choreographed by Mikhail Fokine, this was a sensational success, making Diaghilev's company and Stravinsky the darlings of the Parisian cultural elite.

Stravinsky's next ballet score, *Petrushka*, was more innovative in its use of bitonal harmony – chords from contrasting scales played together. It was another popular and critical success. The music fitted Diaghilev's



Score for *Petrushka*
First performed in 1911, *Petrushka* was Stravinsky's second ballet. Like Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky wrote some of his greatest music for ballet, which occupies a fundamental place in Russian art.

KEY WORKS

- ***The Firebird***
- ***Petrushka***
- ***The Rite of Spring***
- ***Oedipus Rex***
- ***Symphony of Psalms***
- ***Symphony in Three Movements***
- ***The Rake's Progress***
- ***Agon***

Conductor at work
Stravinsky conducts his own music in rehearsal in 1958. He had strong views on conducting, rejecting the view that music was open to "interpretation" and insisting on rigorous adherence to the score.

winning formula of cutting-edge dance and colourful spectacle, exploiting French interest in Russian exoticism.

Two years later, the ballet *The Rite of Spring*, inspired by pagan Russian folk rituals, seemed set to continue the successful sequence. However, the score was more radical than *Petrushka* in its use of dissonance and dislocation of rhythm. The first performance in Paris in 1913 provoked disturbances in the audience, with a rain of missiles thrown from the crowd. Critical response was mixed, but the scandal confirmed Stravinsky's standing as a leader of the musical avant-garde.

Time of upheaval

In 1914, World War I broke out, and Stravinsky moved to Switzerland with his family. He suffered deep personal loss when his younger brother died on the Eastern Front in 1917. In the same year, the Russian Revolution erupted. Despite his move to Paris and then Switzerland, Stravinsky remained emotionally rooted in his homeland. The installation of a Communist government turned Russia into an alien country for him. He redefined himself as a "cosmopolitan" and did not return to Russia for half a century.

New turnings

The course that Stravinsky now charted disoriented many who had admired his pre-1914 masterpieces. Living in France through the 1920s and '30s, he became part of the trend known as Neoclassicism, governed by principles of order and emotional restraint.

Stravinsky's first postwar ballet score *Pulcinella*, was based on music by the 18th-century Italian composer Giovanni Pergolesi. Stravinsky's assertion that "music is... essentially powerless to express anything at all" seemed to justify critics who found his music formal and cold. Yet there was no decline in his musical originality. He experimented with jazz and explored the use of small ensembles, wrote the austerely monumental opera-oratorio *Oedipus Rex* (1927) and the faith-inspired *Symphony of Psalms* (1930).

> "My **music** is best **understood** by **children** and **animals.**"
>
> IGOR STRAVINSKY, INTERVIEW, 1961

The late 1930s were a difficult time for Stravinsky. One of his daughters, his wife, and his mother died in the space of six months, and he was ill with tuberculosis. In 1939, he moved to the US, becoming a resident of Hollywood. His *Symphony in Three Movements*, premiered in 1946, was a commentary on the horrors of World War II. Its brutal ostinatos (repetitions of equal sounds) recalled the shock of *The Rite of Spring*.

Losing the edge

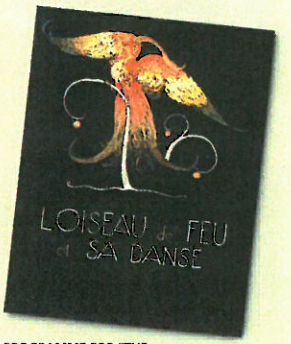
The opera *The Rake's Progress*, with a libretto by the poet W.H. Auden, exemplified Stravinsky's Neoclassical style. By the time it was premiered in 1951, Stravinsky was no longer regarded as a leader of modernism, which by then was dominated by the 12-tone serial technique (see pp. 210–211) of Arnold Schoenberg. Although cautious about its merits, Stravinsky used the 12-tone system in the ballet *Agon* and the choral piece *Threni*. This did not prevent new composers, alienated by his political conservatism as well as his musical style, from seeing him as outdated.

In 1962, Stravinsky received an invitation to visit Soviet Russia, where his work had been banned since the 1930s. This homecoming completed the arc of his life. He continued composing until his death in New York in April 1971.

The Rite of Spring
The Royal Ballet perform *The Rite of Spring* at London's Royal Opera House in 2011. The premiere in 1913 provoked outrage in some quarters.

TIMELINE

- **17 June 1882** Born at Oranienbaum, outside St Petersburg.
- **1901** Enters St Petersburg University to study law.
- **1902** His father dies. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov becomes his musical mentor.
- **24 January 1906** Marries his cousin, Katya Nossenko.
- **April 1907** His first orchestral work, Symphony in E flat, is performed.
- **1909** Serge Diaghilev commissions *The Firebird* for the Ballets Russes.
- **June 1910** *The Firebird* is performed in Paris.
- **June 1911** *Petrushka* is premiered.



PROGRAMME FOR "THE FIREBIRD", 1926

- **May 1913** The premiere of *The Rite of Spring* causes an uproar in Paris.
- **1915** Moves to Switzerland.
- **November 1917** Russian Revolution.
- **September 1918** *The Soldier's Tale* is performed in Lausanne, Switzerland.
- **1920** Moves to Paris. Premiere of *Pulcinella*.
- **May 1927** First performance of *Oedipus Rex*.
- **1928** *Apollon Musagète* is the last Stravinsky ballet produced by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.
- **December 1930** The *Symphony of Psalms* premieres in Brussels.
- **1934** Takes French citizenship.
- **March 1939** Wife dies of tuberculosis.
- **September 1939** Moves to America following the outbreak of World War II in Europe.
- **1940** Marries Vera de Bosset and settles in Los Angeles. A version of *The Rite of Spring* is used in the Disney film *Fantasia*.
- **1945** Becomes a US citizen.
- **24 January 1946** *Symphony in Three Movements* is premiered in New York.
- **11 September 1951** Conducts the first performance of *The Rake's Progress* in Venice.
- **1957** Premiere of the ballet *Agon*, which shows the influence of 12-tone technique.
- **March 1962** *The Flood*, his last dramatic work, is premiered in a television production.
- **September 1962** Visits the Soviet Union.
- **6 April 1971** Dies in New York and is buried on the island of San Michele, Venice.

National Flavours

At the start of the 20th century, the Austro-Hungarian empire extended from northern Italy and Czech Bohemia across to Romania and Serbia. The colourful folk music of these varied regions and cultures now became a major source of inspiration to their composers.

Folk music was a product of the countryside, where communities did not have opera houses, orchestras, or concert halls. There, people made their own music, with the few instruments that they had, and with their singing. They sang for pleasure, and to express deeper feelings in the only musical way they could.

To a new generation of composers sensing the rise of nationalist awareness, folk music had a refreshing directness and urgency. Classical music, they felt, was in danger of becoming an over-sophisticated, self-absorbed art form – perhaps folk music offered a means of renewal. If so, it had to be sought out and listened to, then collected and written down.

Finding national voices

The early works of Hungarian Béla Bartók (see right) were influenced first by German composer Richard Strauss (see pp.210–11), and later by France's Claude Debussy (see pp.204–05). Then, like his compatriot and fellow composer Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967), Bartók began to feel that these influences were not enough for the musical needs of a proud Hungarian. As a result, he and Kodály started visiting remote village communities for inspiration, making on-the-spot recordings of the local songs and dances on an early phonograph. Then they meticulously wrote these down, often also making vocal or piano arrangements of them.

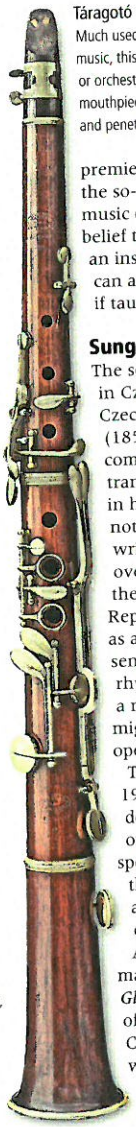
Classical music deals in large forms, such as the extended movements of symphonies or sonatas, or the different acts of an opera. A folk tune tends to be short, and is not designed to be extended and developed on a larger scale. So Bartók and his contemporaries started looking for a way of solving this musical conundrum. While a folk tune might not itself generate a whole musical movement, it could colour it, determine its atmosphere, and enrich its blend of ideas.

> "A nation **creates music**. The composer only **arranges** it."
>
> HUNGARIAN COMPOSER, BÉLA BARTÓK

Bartók's music had an uncompromising, modernist streak that seemed worlds apart from a simple folk song. However, he succeeded in bringing the two together in his darkly powerful 1911 opera *Bluebeard's Castle*.

Between World Wars I and II, from 1919 to 1939, Bartók's international career as a pianist flourished, and he composed two piano concertos to perform himself, both of which were strongly influenced by the driving rhythms of Hungarian folk dance.

Kodály's more benign musical style produced national masterpieces in both his 1923 choral work *Psalmus Hungaricus*, and his comic Hungarian folk opera *Háry János*, which was premiered in 1926. He also devised the so-called Kodály Method of music education, based on his belief that every child is born with an instinctive capacity to sing, and can achieve remarkable standards if taught early enough.



Táragotó

Much used in Hungarian and Romanian folk music, this instrument resembles the saxophone or orchestral clarinet with its single-reed mouthpiece, but has a much more forceful and penetrating sound.

Sung speech

The son of a village schoolteacher in Czech Moravia (modern-day Czech Republic), Leoš Janáček (1854–1928) was another composer who collected and transcribed local folk songs, in his case, simply using a notebook. He also took to writing down sentences overheard from passersby in the streets of Brno, in the Czech Republic, where he was working as a music teacher. Janáček sensed that the shapes and rhythms of these suggested a new way of singing, which might be effective in the opera house.

The triumphant result was his 1904 opera *Jenůfa*, brilliantly deploying this personal brand of folk-influenced "sung speech". *Jenůfa* eventually swept the operatic world off its feet, and triggered an astonishing creativity in Janáček's old age.

Among a torrent of late masterpieces was his 1927 *Glagolitic Mass*, a choral setting of the Mass written in Old Church Slavonic, which was the first literary Slavic language.

Like Bartók, in Hungary, Poland's Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937) was much influenced in his early music by the powerful examples of Richard Strauss and then Debussy. However, he differed from Bartók in that he was only drawn to his nation's folk music later in his career. His ballet-pantomime *Harnasie*, written between 1923–31, was based on songs and dances from the region of southern Poland's Tatra Mountains.

KEY WORKS

Leoš Janáček *Jenůfa*
Ralph Vaughan Williams *A Sea Symphony*
Béla Bartók *Bluebeard's Castle*, Piano Concertos Nos.1 and 2
Charles Ives *Holidays Symphony*
Zoltán Kodály *Psalmus Hungaricus*
Aaron Copland *Appalachian Spring*

English uprising

The arrival of a gifted new generation of English composers was announced in 1899 by an orchestral masterpiece, *Enigma Variations* by Edward Elgar (1857–1934). It was followed a year later by his choral work, *The Dream of Gerontius*. Elgar's distinctively English idiom had grown from a traditional, German-style musical training, and folk music did not much interest him.

However, it did interest Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958) and his friend Gustav Holst (1874–1934). Like Bartók and Kodály, they set about collecting and transcribing English folk songs before emigration from countryside to city led, as they feared, to their disappearance.

COMPOSER (1881–1945)

BÉLA BARTÓK

Bartók was born in a Magyar-speaking Hungarian community, in what is now Romania. Aged four, he could play 40 piano pieces, and he gave his first recital aged 11. He studied in Budapest and, by 1903, wrote his first major orchestral work. His ballet *The Miraculous Mandarin* was thought so violent it was banned after its 1926 premiere. In 1940, outraged that Hungary backed Nazi Germany, Bartók moved to the United States. Despite having leukaemia, he composed until he died.

BEFORE

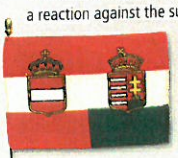
A sense of musical nationalism in Eastern Europe was already on the rise in the late 19th century.

NORWAY'S VOICE

Further north, Norway had found its own musical hero in **Edvard Grieg << 184.**

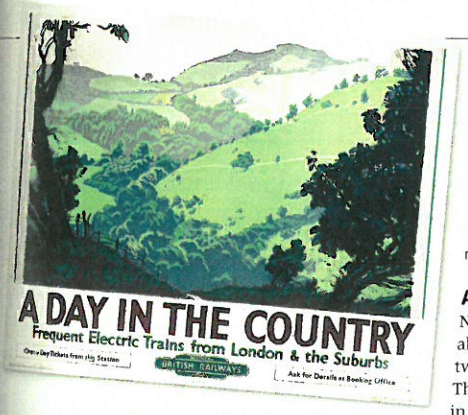
AUSTRO-GERMAN DOMINANCE

In Eastern Europe, in the 19th century, a reaction against the supremacy of **Wagner << 167** and **Brahms << 172–73** was growing.



The Austro-Hungarian Empire covered diverse regions and peoples. Czech-speaking Bohemia, for example, produced composers **Antonín Dvořák** and **Bedřich Smetana << 176–77.**

FLAG OF AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE (1867–1918)



Rural idyll
This 1948 British Railways poster plays upon the same kind of yearning invoked by pastoral images of the English countryside that played a part in English music's rebirth in the early 20th century.

In orchestral compositions such as Vaughan Williams's 1906 *Norfolk Rhapsody No. 1*, and his work for chorus and orchestra, *A Sea Symphony* (1903–09), the English folk song influenced his style. Holst also shows evidence of being under the same influence in his orchestral masterpiece *The Planets* (1914–16).

American influences

Non-classical music was also a valuable resource for two American composers. The son of a bandmaster in Danbury, Connecticut, Charles Ives (1874–1954) developed an extraordinary, collage-like idiom whose dissonant modernism was decades ahead of its time (see pp.210–11). Into his music's mix of elements went the revivalist hymns, military band tunes, and popular songs and dances of the New England scene he saw and heard around him.

Another American, Aaron Copland (1900–90) started out as a Paris-trained, mildly modernist composer, as heard in his *Piano Variations* of 1930. Then, reflecting on America's experience of the Great Depression (1929–33), and growing concerned about classical music's need for a wider audience and social relevance, Copland too turned to folk music. His ballet scores *Rodeo* (1940) and *Billy the Kid* (1941), with their folk-influenced idiom and occasional use of actual folk tunes, established an authentic American style. So did *Appalachian Spring* of 1944, which features the Shaker hymn tune "Simple Gifts", and Copland's opera *The Tender Land*, written in 1952–54.

AFTER

The years after World War II saw national styles wane, as an increasingly global world led to similar trends among composers.

20TH-CENTURY CLASSICS
National fingerprints can still be detected in the music of **Benjamin Britten 280–81 »**, who wrote several popular volumes of English folk-song arrangements. In the USSR, **Shostakovich** used traditional Jewish songs and tunes, identifying with Jews oppressed by the Soviets, and wrote the song-cycle *From Jewish Folk Poetry*.

EUROPEAN AVANT-GARDE
For French modernist **Pierre Boulez 266–67 »**, music based on folk song was an outdated irrelevance.

Appalachian Spring
Martha Graham (1894–1991), who commissioned and choreographed Aaron Copland's ballet, dances one of its lead roles. The story is set in a newly built farmhouse in 19th-century Pennsylvania.