

The History of Music

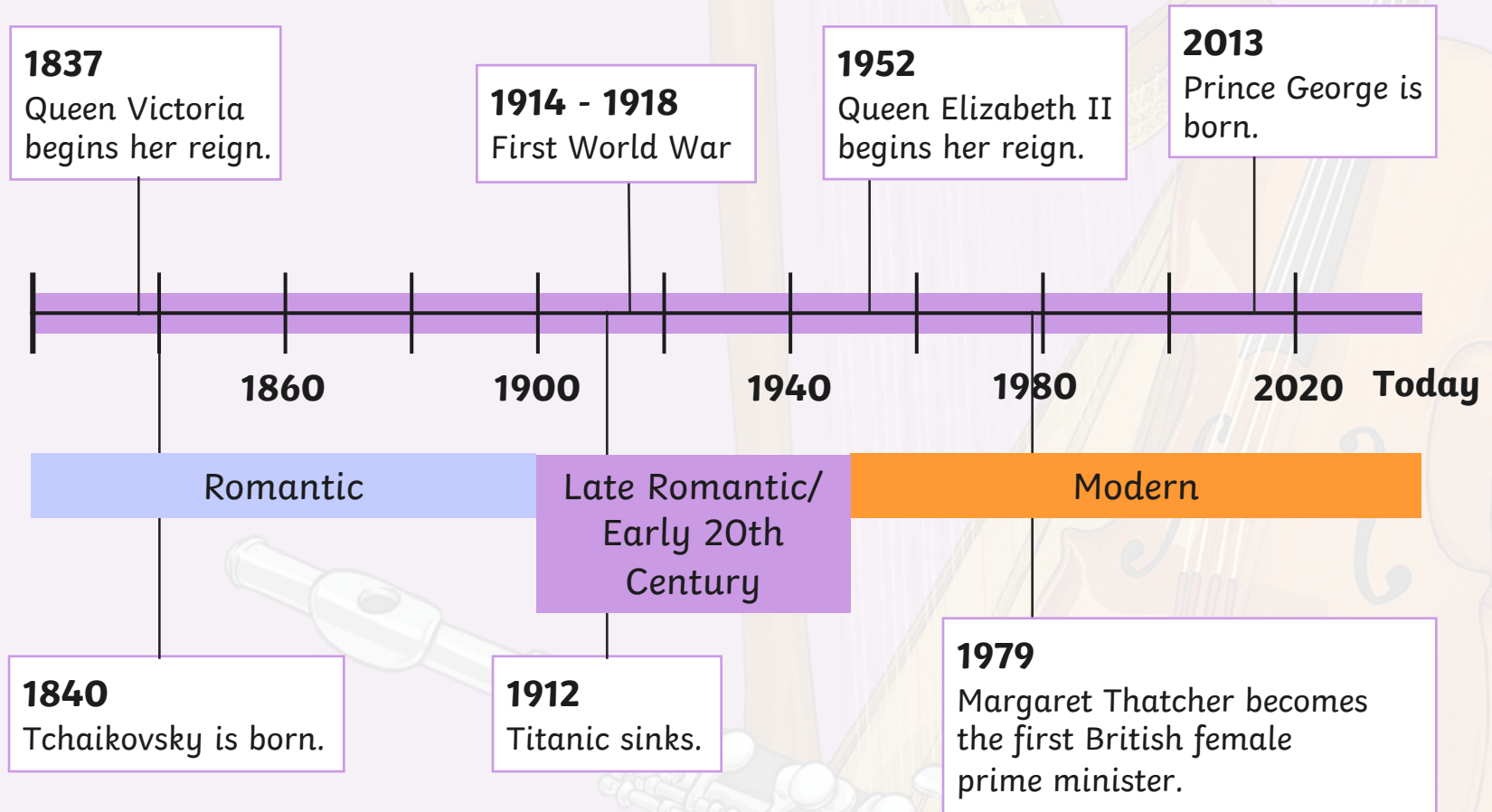
Music and Composers From
The Late Romantic and
Early 20th Century Period



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The Late Romantic/Early 20th Century Musical Period

This period of music refers to music and composers between roughly 1880 and 1950.



Late Romantic and Early 20th Century

Famous composers from this period include:

Amy Beach

Scott Joplin

Joseph-Maurice Ravel

Richard Strauss

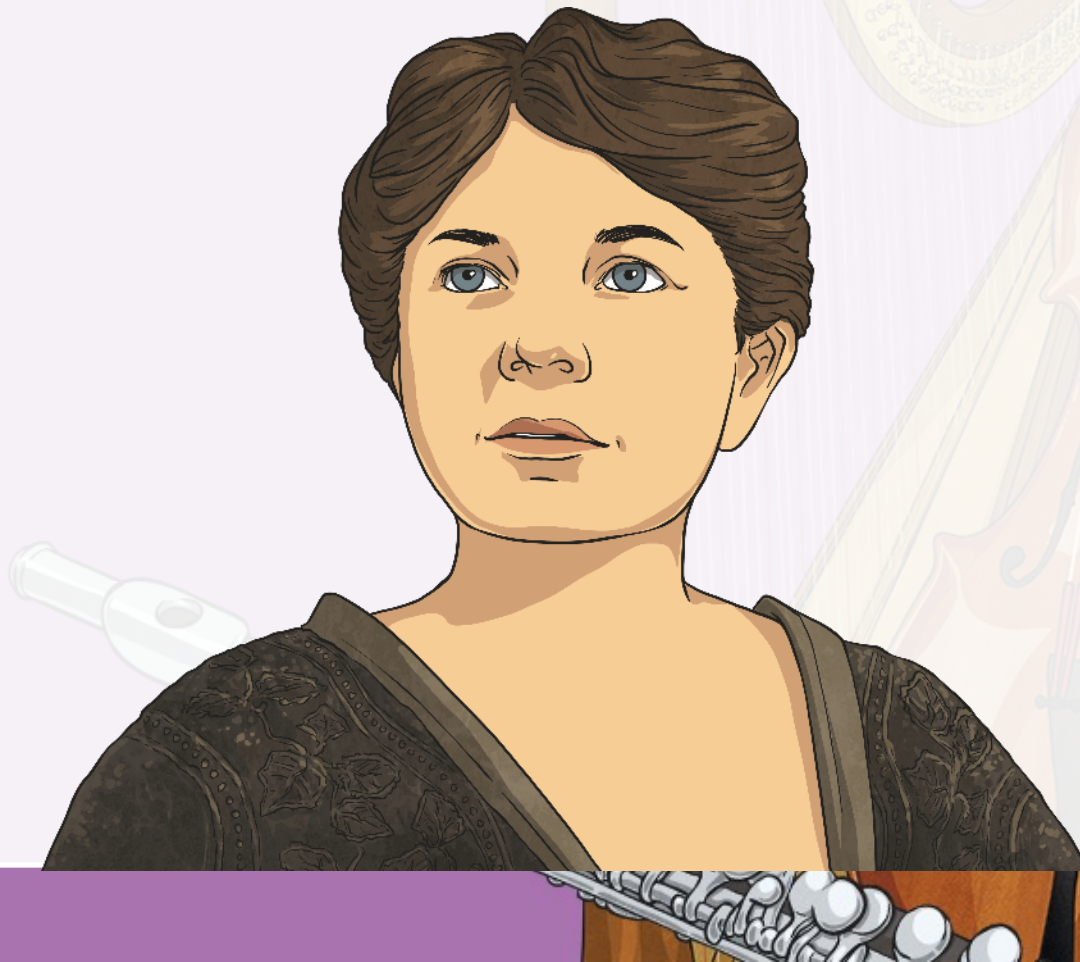
Edward Elgar



Amy Beach

Born: 5th September 1867

Died: 27th December 1944



Amy Beach

Amy Beach was the first American woman to be a successful pianist and composer.

It is said that, by the age of one, Amy could sing over 40 songs and that by two years old, she could harmonise when her mum sang. Harmonising is when you sing notes to complement a melody. By the age of four, Amy was composing her own music.

When Amy was 16 years old, she performed her first concert as a pianist. Amy's 'Gaelic Symphony' was performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1896. It was the first piece of music composed by an American woman to be published. Other compositions include 'Mass in E \flat ', 'Piano Concerto' and 'Romance.'

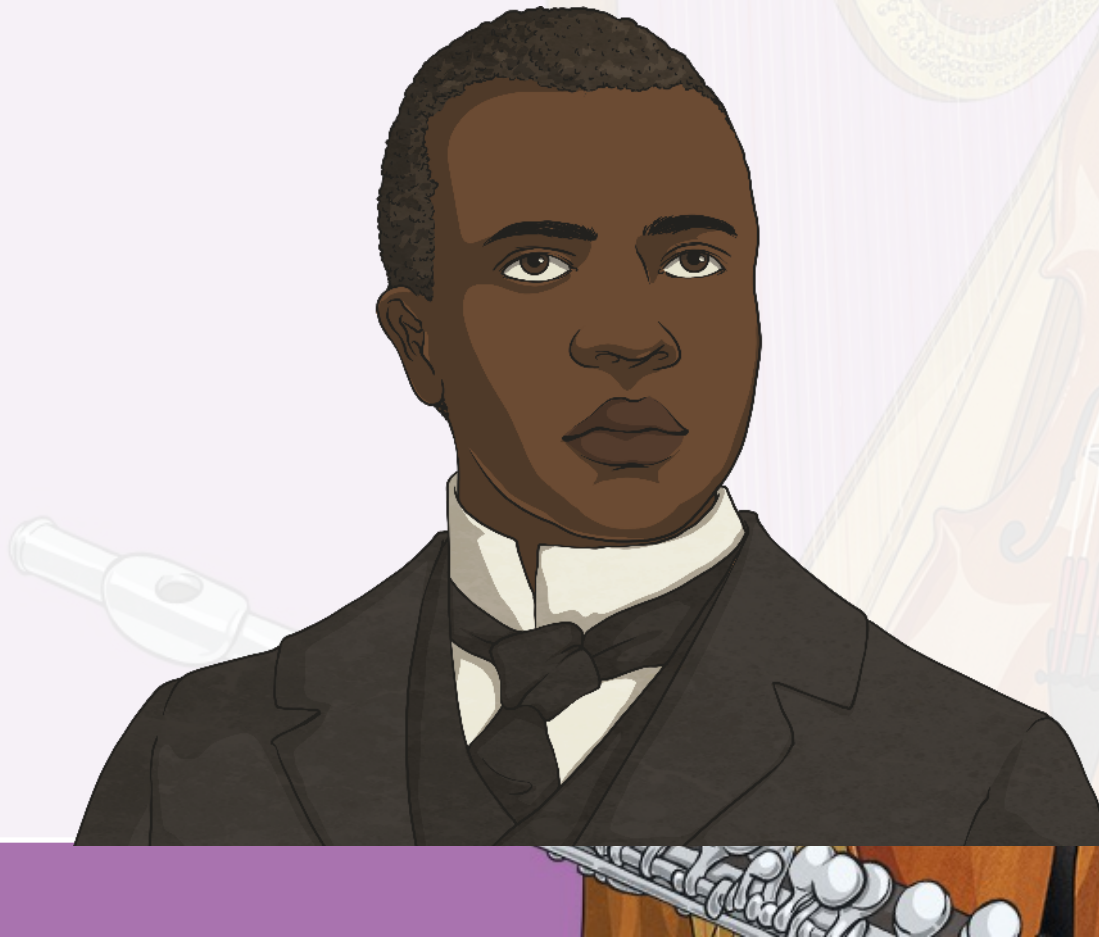
Amy's work remains relatively unknown, possibly because of the restrictions faced by women at the time. Amy herself said: "Music is the superlative expression of life experience and woman by the very nature of her position is denied many of the experiences that colour the life of man."



Scott Joplin

Born: Some time in 1867 or 1868

Died: 1st April 1917



Scott Joplin

Joplin was born in the, USA although the exact date and location of his birth is unclear. Joplin's father had played the violin at parties on the plantation where he was enslaved. His mother sang and played the banjo. Joplin showed an interest in music from a young age. When he was a teenager, Joplin left home and worked as a travelling musician, playing and singing in different venues.

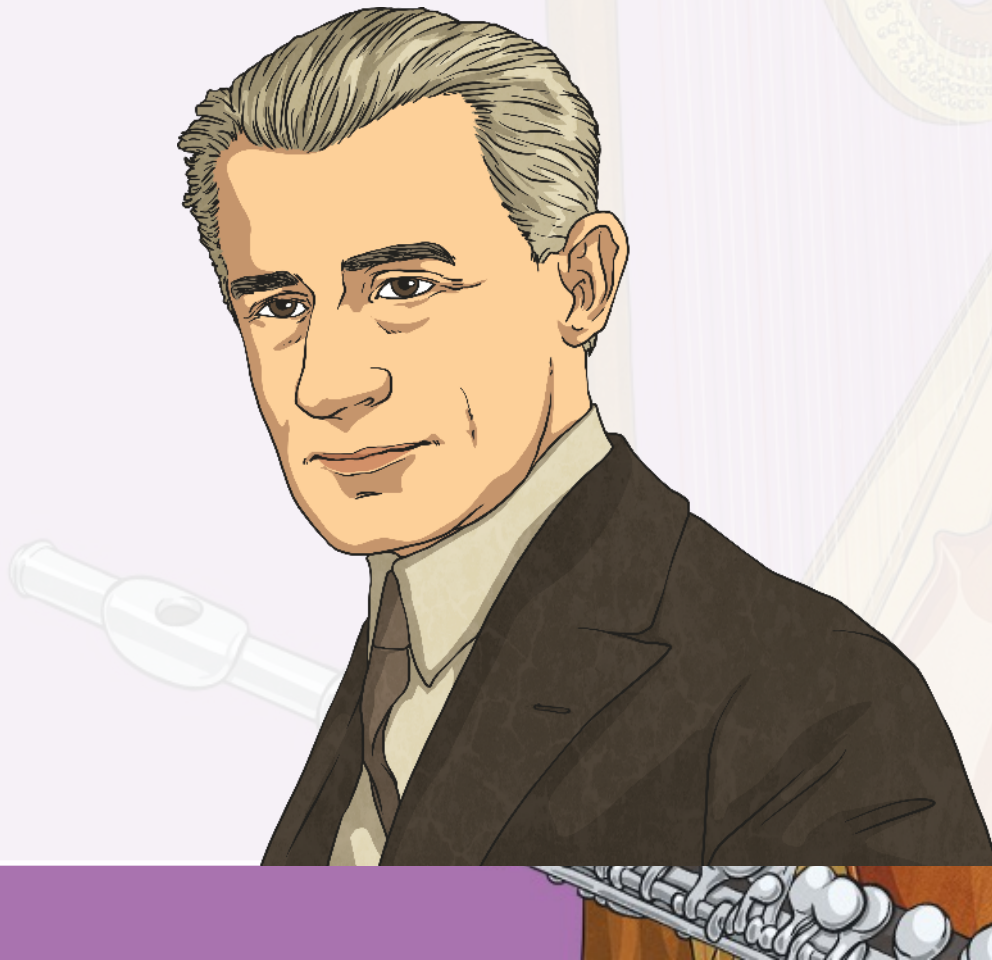
Joplin wrote two operas and a ballet but became famous for composing ragtime music. Ragtime music started off as piano music – the left hand would play a steady beat while the right hand would play offbeat tunes. Ragtime was later composed for whole orchestras.

For many years after his death in 1917, Joplin was largely forgotten. However, in 1974, one of his most famous compositions 'The Entertainer' was used in a film and his work became popular once more.



Joseph-Maurice Ravel

Born: 7th March 1875
Died: 28th December 1937



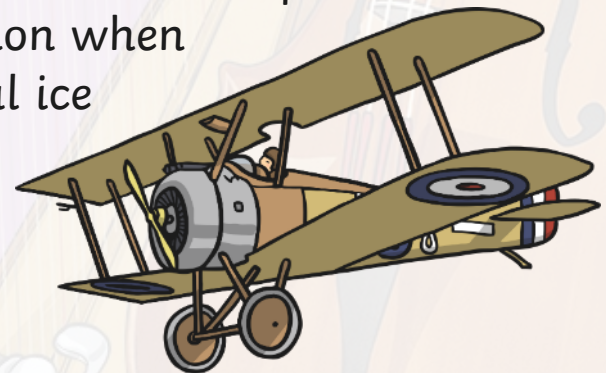
Joseph-Maurice Ravel

Joseph Maurice Ravel (known as Maurice) was a French composer. He started learning the piano when he was six years old and gave his first concert at the age of 14.

Ravel was an expert orchestrator (someone who prepares music to be performed by orchestras).

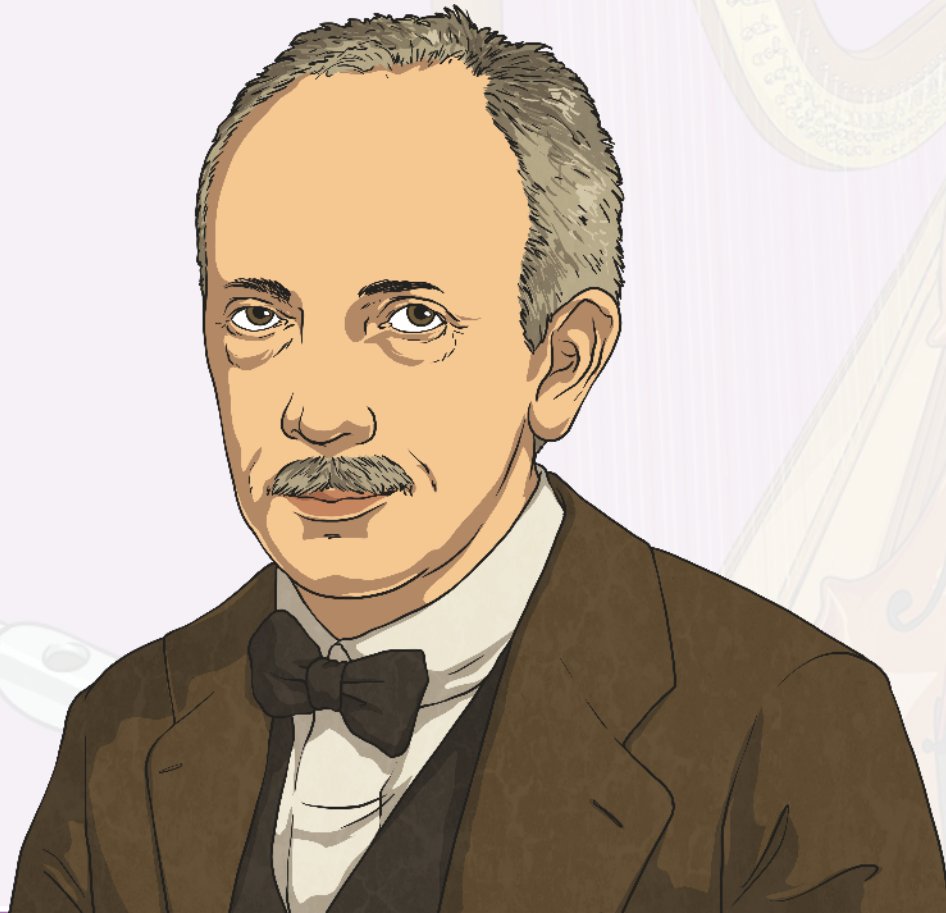
Ravel worked as a truck driver at Verdun during the First World War. He was so distressed by what he saw that he wasn't able to finish some of his musical projects.

Ravel's work included the ballet 'Daphnis et Chloé' and 'Piano Concerto in G' which was inspired by the jazz music he heard on a trip to the USA. Ravel's music was brought to a new generation when Torvill and Dean won an Olympic gold medal ice dancing to Ravel's 'Bolero'.



Richard Strauss

Born: 11th June 1864
Died: 8th September 1949



Richard Strauss

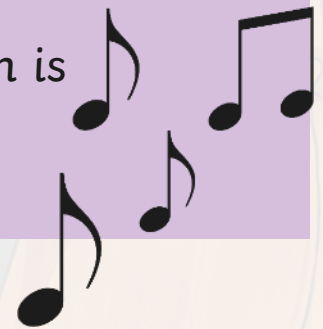
Richard Strauss was a German composer whose father was also a musician. By the time Richard was 18 years old, he had composed over 140 pieces of music.

Strauss wrote many types of music and was particularly well known for his operas and tone poems. A tone poem is a piece of orchestral music popular during the Romantic period that musically describes a poem or short story.

Some of Strauss' most popular operas include 'Salome', 'Elektra' and 'Arabella'.

Try It!

One of Strauss' compositions you will probably be familiar with is 'Also sprach Zarathustra'. Listen to it. Where have you heard it before? How would you use this piece of music?



Edward Elgar

Born: 2nd June 1857

Died: 23rd February 1934



Edward Elgar

Edward Elgar was born near Worcester. His father had a music shop and was a church organist. Edward's father began teaching him how to play the violin, piano and organ at a young age.

Elgar composed a series of music called 'The Enigma Variations'. Each piece of music in the series has a title which refers to people in Elgar's life. One is even about a dog!

Another of Elgar's most famous compositions is the 'Pomp and Circumstance Marches'. One of these marches is known as 'Land Of Hope and Glory', which has become an unofficial English national anthem.

Click on the headphones to listen and watch a performance of this piece (which took place at the Royal Albert Hall in London).

Elgar was knighted by King Edward VII in 1904.

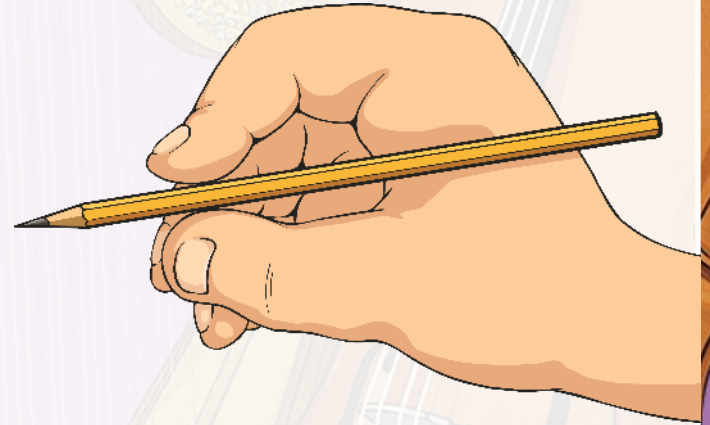


What have you learnt?

Write down 2 facts about each of the following four composers from this era:

- Strauss
- Beach
- Joplin
- Elgar
- Ravel

Be ready to share your knowledge with the class.





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