


MUSIC OF GREAT BRITAIN



Ancient Times







English music dates back to the culture of Celtic tribes who inhabited the British Isles in the 4th century.

The Celts played the pipe, the flute, the primitive violin, the drum.

Popular dances at that time were jig, counterdance and bornpipe.






The most popular musical instruments were
the harp, the lyre, the pipe.

In the 6th century BC the British were converted to Christianity. Church music dominated at that period. Thanks to this professional music came into being.








In the 11th century the Normans who came from the North of France began to invade the British Isles. French culture influenced the development of music in Britain.

New forms of folk music appeared at that time: epic, romantic, satirical songs.





Bards and minstrels sang them and played the harp, the lyre, the lute, the violin, the bagpipe, wooden and percussion instruments.



In the 12th – 13th centuries various forms of vocal and instrumental performances spread all over the country.

Church and secular music, all kinds of folk art coexisted.





Renaissance

In the 15th century the Renaissance came to Great Britain. At that time professional musicians began to play their music.

English music had a great influence on the development of the Continental style.






The first famous composer of that period was John Dunstable (1390 – 1453).




“Golden Age” (the 16th -17th centuries)

William Shakespeare created his immortal tragedies and comedies, and music was of great importance in the theatre.





At that time England gave the world the music of William Byrd (1542 – 1623), Orlando Gibbons (1583 – 1625), John Bull (1562 – 1628).



Though religious music wasn't as dominating as it had been before, still it was represented by the masterpieces of Byrd, Gibbons, Morley, Weelkes, Tomkins and Philips.




Unfortunately, Puritan Commonwealth of the middle of the 17th century greatly disrupted English musical tradition.

However, at the end of the 17th century several distinguished composers created their works.




Henry Purcell (1659 – 1695) was one of the greatest composers who is called “the British Orpheus”. He created music of all genres, but his greatest achievements are connected with music for theatre.

His most famous opera is “Dido and Aeneas”.




A Low Point in English Native Music (the 18th-19th centuries)

A lot of foreign musicians were attracted by the country's wealth and large public. Among them was George Frederick Handel (1685-1759) who was German by origin, settled in London in 1712 and remained there till his death.

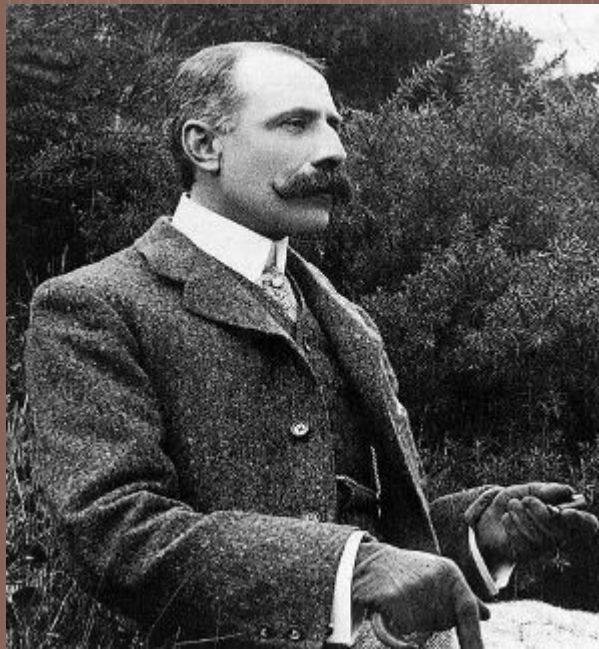




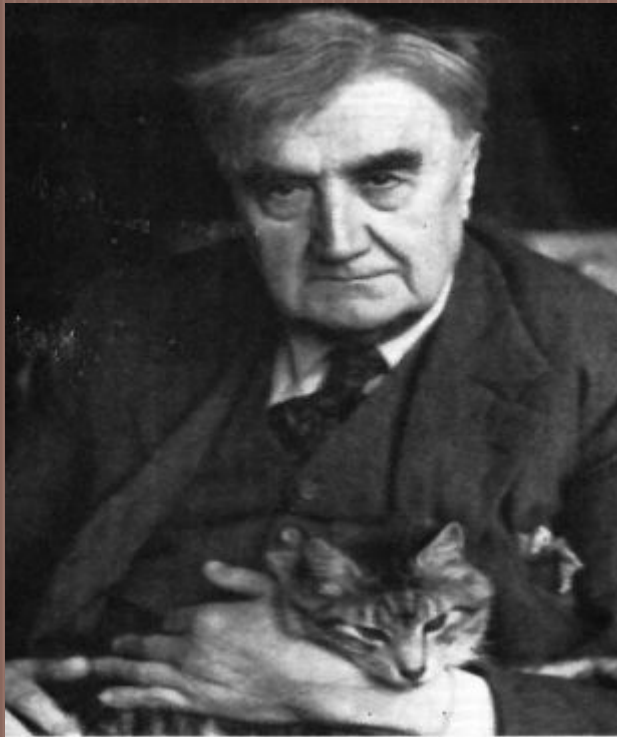
Handel created a great number of outstanding organ concertos, operas, oratorios which were the most original contribution both to English and the world music.



The native musical tradition survived in church music and in local genres, such as the catch, the glee, the ballad opera. Later it developed into the English comic opera and in the 19th century to the operettas of Gilbert O'Sullivan.

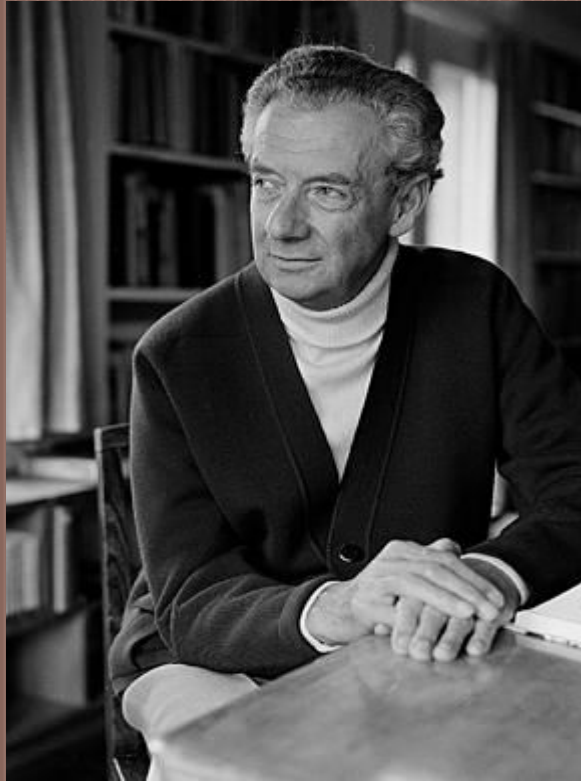


In the 19th century Edward Elgar became an outstanding national composer. He created his own original style and was a great authority as the head of a new school of music. He composed symphonies, concertos and oratorios.



In the early 20th century English music was represented by
Ralph Vaughm Williams (1872 -1958),
Gustav Holst (1874 – 1934).

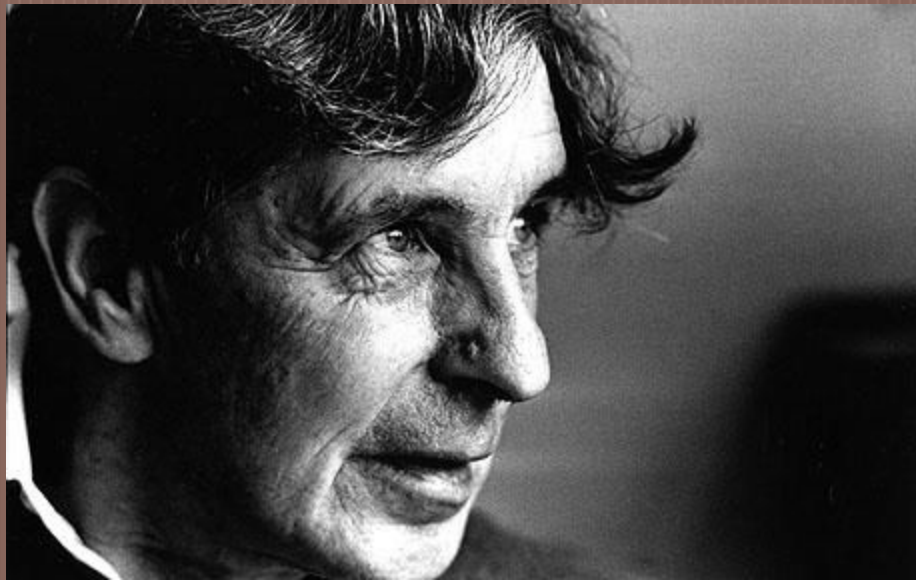
The most prominent composers of the 20th century



Benjamin Britten (1913 -1976)



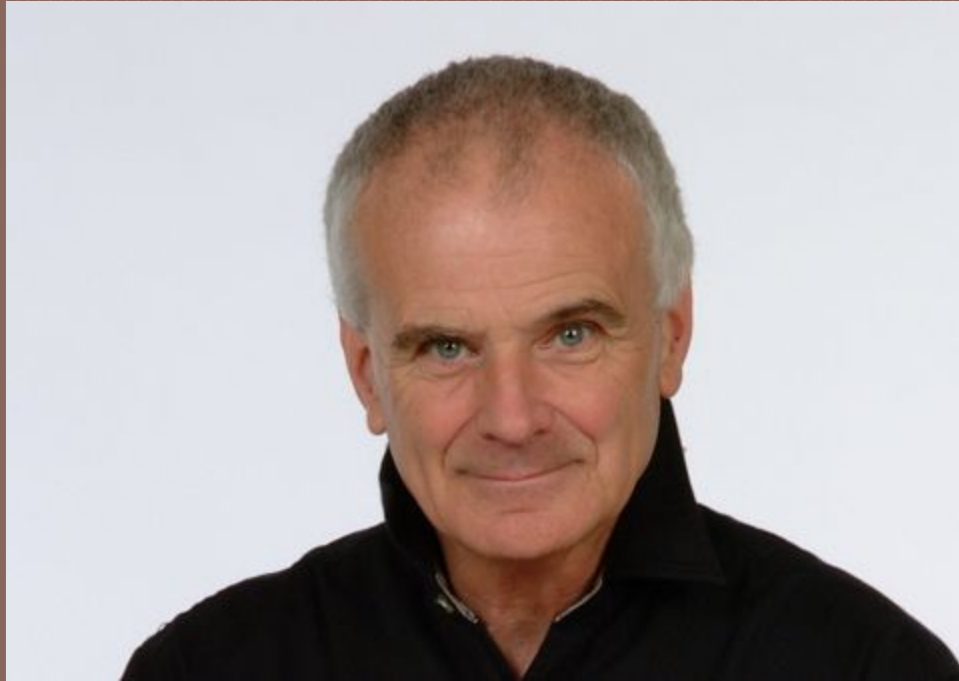
William Walton (1902 -1983),



Michael Tippett (b. 1905)



Richard Rodney Bennett (b. 1936)



Peter Maxwell Davies (b. 1934)



Harrison Birtwhistle (b. 1934)



Rock and Pop Music

Rock and pop music have been very popular in Britain for the last 30 years.

They have become an important part of Britain's youthful pop-culture.

British pop and rock groups have a great appeal to audiences all over the world and often set new trends in music.

In the 1960s and 1970s several groups achieved international success.



The Beatles



The Rolling Stones



The Who



Led Zeppelin



The Animals



Genesis



The Queen




Pink Floyd



MUSICAL LIFE OF GREAT BRITAIN

Musical life in Great Britain have always played a great role. London is one of the musical capitals of the world. A lot of exciting musical events take place there. It is the home of the Royal Opera at Covent Garden, the English National Opera at the London Coliseum Theatre, the Royal Ballet, the Festival Ballet .



Covent Garden





London has 4 symphony orchestras famous all over the world:

The London Symphony Orchestra (founded in 1904),

The London Philharmonic Orchestra (f. 1932),

Philharmonia (f. 1945),

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (f. 1946).



Admirers of music can enjoy
musical life in
The Royal Festival Hall,
Barbican Hall,
The Royal Albert Hall.






The Royal Albert Hall is famous for the Summer Promenade Concerts, held from the end of July to the mid-September.

These concerts are given by top English and foreign orchestras with distinguished soloists and conductors.


They are sponsored by the BBC.





Besides, musical festivals are very popular in Great Britain.

The Edinburgh Festival of Music and Drama takes place every August and September. It has been held since 1947.



The Festival includes opera, ballet, music of all kinds, painting, folk-dancing, film and drama.

Its popularity is great. It attracts crowds of visitors every year.



10 August - 2 September 2007




EDINBURGH
INTERNATIONAL
FESTIVAL





The Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod is held in North Wales for six days every July. Choirs, musicians, folk singers and dancers from every corner of the world perform at this festival.

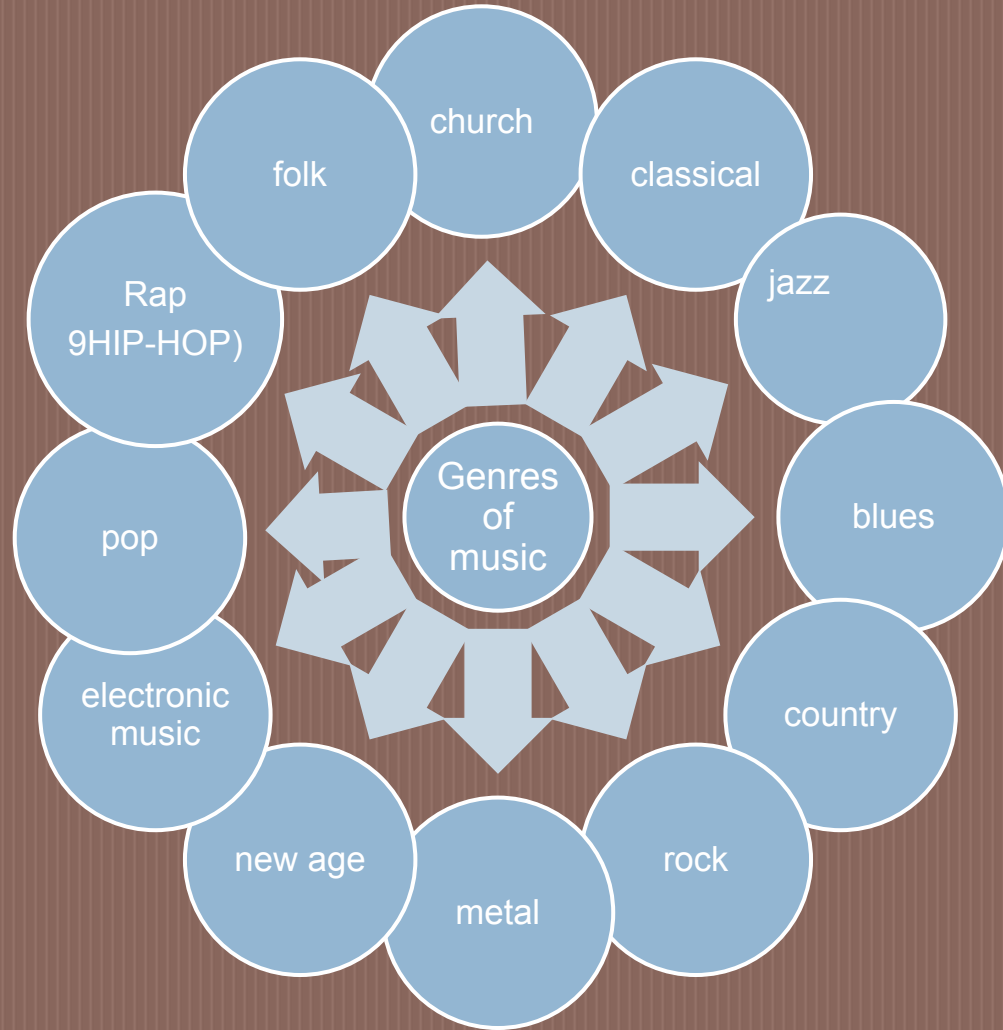



Choral singing is particularly associated with Wales. The Welsh are a nation of singers.





Great Britain has a strong tradition of choral singing both by choirs at churches and by local choral societies. Some choirs of Oxford and Cambridge colleges are famous all over the world.





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