

STRAVINSKY CONNECTIONS

A guide for performers and programmers by Jonathan Cross



Interface/Alamy

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Stravinsky Today



Stravinsky art on house in Moscow

Gennady Gachev/Wikimedia Commons

But these few examples give scant indication of the extraordinary range of the 120 or so works he composed across his long creative life. From the early *Funeral Song*, recently rediscovered, written in the stylistic shadows of Rimsky-Korsakov and Wagner, via such works as *Les Noces*, deeply embedded in the culture of his native Russia, and the so-called neoclassical works of the interwar years like *Mavra*, *Oedipus Rex* and the *Symphony in C*, to his late, great American achievements such as *Orpheus*, *Agon* and the *Requiem Canticles*, Stravinsky changed his stylistic mask as often as he crossed borders and took on new nationalities. He was born a Russian, he lived in Switzerland during the First World War, he eventually took French citizenship, he died a US citizen, and is buried in Italy, on Venice's cemetery island. He lived through the most tumultuous times of war, revolutions, migration, and cultural and political change. Stravinsky's music subtly registers these shifts and crises like that of no other composer of the century.

Who, then, is the 'real' Igor Stravinsky? Neonationalist, primitivist, ultra-modernist, neoclassicist, serialist? All these labels have been attached to his music at different times. It is often hard to believe that the composer who produced the violent Russian ritual of *The Rite of Spring* could also have written the playful *Pulcinella* just seven years later. Or that the chic French lines of *Apollo*, written in inter-war Paris, could have been produced by the same composer who in America adopted the pointillist style of the young avant-garde in his *Movements* for piano and orchestra. Yet this could also be said of Stravinsky's great contemporary Picasso, whose work similarly documents the turbulence of the twentieth century in passing from fauvism through cubism and a kind of neoclassicism towards a refined late style. Beyond the surface, Picasso is always identifiably Picasso. Stravinsky, too, always remains indomitably Stravinsky. He once described himself as suffering from a rare form of kleptomania, taking musical ideas from wherever he encountered them, whether this was from Russian folksong, or from jazz, or from across the entire history of music. But whatever the materials, he always made them his own, reshaping them in his own image, bestowing on them his particular sensibility for form, rhythm, colour and drama. He constantly invites the listener to rehear the familiar with fresh ears.

Igor Stravinsky died on 6 April 1971 aged 88 in his apartment on Fifth Avenue, New York. The quietness of his passing stood in stark contrast to the hullabaloo that quickly ensued. He was hailed as 'the towering figure in twentieth century music' (*Guardian*), 'one of the great, original creative geniuses in the entire history of music' (*Washington Post*), 'the most modern of the moderns' (*New York Times*). Tributes poured in from the international greats of the music and dance worlds who knew and had worked with him: Klemperer, Stokowski, Bernstein, Copland, Ashton and Balanchine among them. As composer and conductor, as well as an instantly recognisable personality, Stravinsky was at the time of his death already an international commodity, his music known and performed the world over.

In the fifty years since his death, Stravinsky's principal works have become even more widely played and recorded. But how well do we actually know him and his music? His first great success, *The Firebird*, is certainly frequently performed as both ballet and concert score. *The Rite of Spring* excites audiences today as much as it did when its 1913 Paris premiere caused a commotion. Choirs on all five continents regularly sing his powerful *Symphony of Psalms*, while *The Rake's Progress*, his only full-length opera, is never out of the repertoire.

During his own lifetime, Stravinsky worked hard to control his own image. He (or his carefully chosen spokespeople) would tell different stories about his music according to circumstance. *The Rite of Spring*, for instance, is subtitled 'pictures from pagan Russia' and we now know from studies of the sketches that it is littered with references to Eastern European folk melodies; yet Stravinsky claimed there was only one folk tune in the work, namely that which is heard at the very beginning on a high bassoon. Why did he lie? Perhaps because he wanted to remake the work as a concert piece, to wrest it away from his original collaborators on the ballet, and to give the impression the work was more universal than Russian. It suited Stravinsky's reputation to allow myths of the 'riot' at the first performance of *The Rite* to circulate – even if true (which is doubtful) they had little to do with the music. In the 1920s and '30s Stravinsky was arguing that music was essentially incapable of expressing anything at all, aligning himself with a post-war anti-Romantic aesthetic of 'art for art's sake', producing abstract sonatas, concertos and symphonies. Yet what could be more touching than the chorus 'Sur ce lit elle repose' from the melodrama *Perséphone*, a disarmingly simple setting of André Gide's text, but which the composer later confessed he had originally set to his own Russian words as a lullaby for his lover and future wife Vera. And having once damned the inventor of serial music Arnold Schoenberg as 'a chemist of music more than an artistic creator', in his seventies Stravinsky went on to adopt and adapt his arch-rival's method.

With a large dose of hindsight, it is now possible for us to distance ourselves from Stravinsky's own words and attempt to evaluate his output as a whole. The differences between pieces seem today less marked than they once did. Scholars have shown just how far the spirit of Russia seems to permeate all of the music of this son of St Petersburg. Listen closely to the endings of *Firebird* (1909–10), the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1920) and the *Requiem Canticles* (1965–6) and you will hear essentially the same voice speaking, a melancholic, lamenting voice infused with the sound of Russian bells. After all, despite keeping up with the latest Western fashions and becoming the darling of cosmopolitan inter-war Paris, despite not setting foot on his native soil for almost half a century, Stravinsky's domestic language remained Russian, he lived mainly among Russian émigré communities, and he reconverted to the Orthodox faith. The opening Latin 'Laudate Dominum' of the *Symphony of Psalms* began life in ancient Slavonic as a setting of 'Gospodi pomiluy', a prayer to the Russian image of the infant Christ

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Street musicians in Place Igor-Stravinsky in Paris

with orb and sceptre. *Canticum Sacrum* (1956) and *Threni* (1958) are both serial works and were written for premieres in Venice, yet they are also among the most ritualised of his late pieces; in their chanting, their processions and their repetitions, they echo the laments and rituals of so many of Stravinsky's earlier Russian works. To hear the Russianness in all of Stravinsky's music is to acknowledge a life lived in exile. When Stravinsky finally returned to Russia in 1962, he was deeply moved. His long-time assistant Robert Craft wrote that Stravinsky regretted 'his uprooting and exile more than anything else in his life'. The alienation felt by Stravinsky was an experience common to so many in the twentieth century; beyond its playful surfaces, his music speaks of that exile.

Igor Stravinsky bestrode the twentieth century like a colossus. With his roots deep in the nineteenth century, and with his influence extending to composers well into the twenty-first century, his music continues to demand our attention as one of the largest pieces in the jigsaw of modern art. His work is continually inventive, taking the recognisable and turning it into something new. His music dances: it is dynamic and colourful, often playful, but can also be poignant and contemplative, lamenting the losses of his time. His music is always beautifully crafted, never a note out of place. Stravinsky's music can make one laugh; it can make one weep; it can overwhelm. His music achieves meaning by standing back from a tormented, changing world, and reflecting on it, commenting on it. A half century since the composer's death, the music of Igor Stravinsky remains as powerful and as necessary as it has always been.

Stravinsky Connected

- ▶ Dance
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Petrushka set design by Alexandre Benois for the Ballets Russes premiere, 1911

Aside from the many musicians Stravinsky knew and with whom he collaborated across much of the 20th century, his broader artistic and cultural connections are a veritable roll-call of the great and the good of the 20th century. Among them numbered Auden, Bakst, Balanchine, Isaiah Berlin, Chanel, Cocteau, Diaghilev, Disney, T S Eliot, Gide, Goncharova, Aldous Huxley, Isherwood, Joyce, Karsavina, Massine, Nijinska, Nijinsky, Picasso, Proust, Ramuz, Ida Rubinstein and Dylan Thomas. His written correspondence with many of these is fascinating (usually on the topic of money!) but also reveals how his understanding of dance, theatre, art, design, poetry and even film was profound, and to which he so often responded musically. Stravinsky stood at the nexus of 20th-century art.

▶ Stravinsky and Dance

It is not an exaggeration to state that Stravinsky reinvented dance for the 20th century, turning the conventionalised 19th-century forms of classical ballet he inherited into something utterly modern. This was at first accidental in that the impresario Diaghilev had invited Stravinsky to write the music for *The Firebird* out of desperation after a string of more senior figures had declined. Even though Stravinsky had to adapt to a scenario that had already been developed by the choreographer Fokine, the result revealed his innate sense of the dramatic. *Petrushka* followed a year later. Both works united music, dance and design in ways not seen before in ballet. Stravinsky's radical new music and Nijinsky's controversial new dance style for *The Rite of Spring* shook



Stravinsky with Vaslav Nijinsky as *Petrushka*, c1911

the world in 1913 and it continues to challenge audiences and choreographers even today. Other ballets based on Russian material followed during and after the First World War, including *Renard* and *Les Noces*. *Pulcinella*, whose music is derived from 18th-century Italian sources, marked a new 'neoclassical' departure for Stravinsky, an idea he continued to explore for the remainder of his life. His most powerful and productive association was with the dancer and choreographer George Balanchine, with whom he made such important works as *Apollon musagète* (*Apollo*), *Jeu de cartes*, *Orpheus* and *Agon*. Having established the New York City Ballet, Balanchine went on successfully to choreograph other Stravinsky works not originally intended as ballets, such as the *Scherzo à la russe*, the *Violin Concerto* and *Movements*. The ritualistic and the rhythmic in so much of Stravinsky's music means it is strongly predisposed to dance interpretation.

Stravinsky also produced many arrangements of his ballet music, bringing life to it in the concert hall as well as on the stage. He made a lucrative career conducting *The Firebird Suite* around the world; his very last podium appearance took place in May 1967 in Toronto with a performance of the *Pulcinella Suite*.

"I love ballet and am more interested in it than in anything else... For the only form of scenic art that sets itself, as its cornerstone, the tasks of beauty, and nothing else, is ballet."

Igor Stravinsky



Stravinsky and George Balanchine at rehearsals for *Agon*, 1957

The love affair between Stravinsky and choreographers is ongoing and continues to straddle the worlds of classical and contemporary dance. From Massine to Béjart, MacMillan, Pina Bausch and Akram Khan, *The Rite of Spring* has certainly inspired an extraordinary renewal in contemporary dance. Beyond the generation of Balanchine, Ashton and Robbins, other choreographers who have re-interpreted Stravinsky include Richard Alston, Jiří Kylián, Hans van Manen, Peter Martins, Wayne McGregor, John Neumeier, Heinz Spoerli, Paul Taylor, Sasha Waltz and Christopher Wheeldon.

▶ Stravinsky and the Stage

While Stravinsky's music for the ballet punctuated his entire creative life, it was not the only kind of dramatic music with which he engaged. Indeed, one might go so far as to say that nearly all his works have some sort of ritualistic or theatrical dimension. His music is never 'incidental'; rather, it is always fully integrated, such that the theatre springs from the music as much as the other way around. This should be of little surprise, since he grew up surrounded by theatre music. His father Fyodor was a famed principal bass at the Imperial (now Mariinsky) Opera in St Petersburg, where he sang all the major Russian and non-Russian roles. The young Stravinsky spent much time studying these scores in his father's extensive library. One might argue that this early

exposure eventually culminated in the opera *The Rake's Progress*, which seems to play with the entirety of operatic history. It is a playful piece of theatre that critiques the forms and gestures of the past while remaining accessible in its espousal of simple forms, arching melodies and compelling drama.

Stravinsky explored opera of all shapes and sizes: from the early *Nightingale*, based on a Hans Christian Andersen tale, via his comic one-act opera *Mavra*, a joyful story of love and deception after Pushkin, to his late experiment in TV opera, *The Flood*, derived from medieval English mystery plays. *Oedipus Rex*, a powerful re-telling of Sophocles, is a formalised work that defines its hybrid nature as an 'opera-oratorio'. And through Stravinsky's engagement with Russian folklore he was able to create a new kind of small-scale music theatre that has proved highly influential on post-Second World War composers, Birtwistle, Kagel, Ligeti, Maxwell Davies and Weir among them. *The Soldier's Tale* incorporates the protagonist's violin into the very heart of the piece, while in *Renard* the singers are seated amidst the instrumentalists.

Elsewhere, even in works that have no obvious theatrical motivation, Stravinsky's sense of the dramatic and the ritualistic is evident. The juxtaposition of starkly contrasting musical ideas in the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* takes on a ceremonial aspect. Such rituals find later echoes in the contemplative *Mass* and the austere beautiful *A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer*.

► Stravinsky's Memorials

Stravinsky's output is bookended by powerful memorials. The recently rediscovered *Funeral Song* – thought lost for over a century – is a moving tribute to his teacher Rimsky-Korsakov, whom he considered a second father. His final major composition is the *Requiem Canticles*, commissioned in memory of a Princeton University benefactress, though as Vera Stravinsky later said, 'he and we knew he was writing it for himself'. In between, poignant rituals of lament punctuate his output, in memory of particular individuals (such as the chorale in memoriam Debussy that closes the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*) or sounded by the mythical Orpheus for Eurydice at the start and end of the ballet that bears his name. In later years Stravinsky wrote a series of memorials for his lost friends and acquaintances, including an *Elegy for JFK* and *Variations Aldous Huxley in Memoriam*. More generally a lamenting character can be heard to colour many of his works.

"Lesser artists borrow,
great artists steal."

Igor Stravinsky

► Stravinsky the Magpie

Stravinsky 'stole' from wherever he felt he needed to. His music is full of others' ideas that he takes over and turns into his own. Folk tunes make a frequent appearance in his earlier music, most famously the bassoon solo at the start of *The Rite of Spring*. The opening tableau of *Petrushka* is a kind of collage of not only Russian materials but also a popular French chansonette and Joseph Lanner waltzes. Later, Stravinsky took the whole of European art music as his resource. *Pulcinella* was, as he described it, his post-war 'epiphany', and it began as an arrangement of the music of Pergolesi and Italian contemporaries. He continued to arrange music to the end of his life, in part a tribute to composers who were important to him, in part a way of getting under the skin of music he was discovering. Tchaikovsky makes a number of appearances in arrangements from *The Sleeping Beauty* and in *The Fairy's Kiss*, as does Mussorgsky in transcriptions of parts of *Boris Godunov* and *Khovanshchina*. Other composers so treated include Bach, Chopin, Gesualdo, Sibelius and Wolf. In 1919 he made a solo violin transcription of the *Marseillaise* but got into trouble when, in 1941, he did the same for the *Star-Spangled Banner*, which the authorities in the US state of Massachusetts thought (erroneously) was illegal.

► Stravinsky and America

Stravinsky left Bordeaux on 25 September 1939 on board the Manhattan bound for New York. He was there just to give a series of lectures at Harvard University, but war in Europe, the death of his first wife Catherine, and the arrival in America of Vera, whom he soon married, gave him little incentive to return. He would not in fact set foot on European soil again until 1951. Igor and Vera settled in Los Angeles where he lived longer than anywhere else in his life. He quickly took US citizenship, he slowly learnt to speak English, and he gradually became accustomed to American ways. The *Symphony in Three Movements* was the first major work he wrote entirely on American soil, and its often glitzy character and Hollywood-style final chord show Stravinsky assimilating the culture of his hosts. 'My *Symphony in Three Movements* celebrated my arrival in the United States of America', he later stated.

One of his fellow LA residents was Arnold Schoenberg, who, as an Austrian Jew, had taken refuge there from the

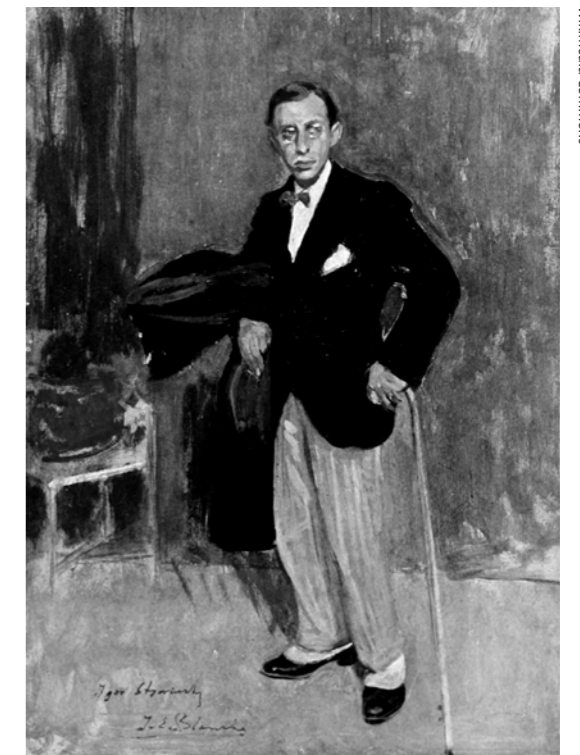


Stravinsky, Seattle Airport, 1952

Nazis. Though the two had met in Europe, there was little love lost between them, and they never once encountered each other in their adopted city. Nonetheless, after Schoenberg's death in 1951, Stravinsky turned to Schoenberg's serial method in order, once again, to renew his own musical ideas, to put his own stamp on it. The last decade and a half of his life was spent exploring serial possibilities in refined and beautiful compositions from the *Cantata* and *In Memoriam Dylan Thomas* to *Agon*, *Abraham and Isaac* and the *Requiem Canticles*.

► Stravinsky and Art

The sets and costumes for the first production of *Pulcinella* were designed by Picasso. *The Firebird* was revived in 1926 for the Ballets Russes with a spectacular backcloth by the Futurist artist Goncharova. The Russian decorative artist Benois designed the premieres of both *Petrushka* and *The Nightingale*. *Orpheus* was designed by abstract American sculptor Noguchi. Stravinsky's music had always aligned itself with the artwork of his great contemporaries. But even when not directly collaborating, Stravinsky seems to have been well tuned to current trends in art that are refracted in his work: the symbolism of *The Firebird*, the cinematic structure of *Petrushka*, the quasi-cubism of the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*, the self-declared 'collage' techniques of *Oedipus Rex*, the classicised art deco chic of *Apollo*.



Portrait of Stravinsky by Jacques-Émile Blanche, 1916

► Stravinsky and Faith

Stravinsky was brought up in Russia in the Orthodox faith but drifted away as a young man to explore, instead, a different kind of primitive Russian paganism, culminating in works such as *The Rite of Spring* and *Les Noces*. But in the 1920s he returned to his faith, in part encouraged by the re-conversion (to Catholicism) of Cocteau and others, in part finding himself amidst émigré Russian communities in France. In 1926, while composing *Oedipus Rex*, he wrote to Diaghilev: 'I have not been a Communicant in twenty years, and it is because of an extreme spiritual need that I am going to take communion now.' The first major statement of his

"Music praises God. Music is well or better able to praise him than the building of the church and all its decoration; it is the Church's greatest ornament."

Igor Stravinsky



renewal of faith was the *Symphony of Psalms*, dedicated 'to the glory of God', and setting the seemingly personal verse, 'I waited patiently for the Lord: and he inclined to me and heard my cry'. The remainder of his creative life was punctuated by sacred pieces, both articulating his Orthodox/Catholic faith, such as the *Mass* (for liturgical use) and the *Requiem Canticles*, as well engaging with the Hebrew Old Testament in *Abraham and Isaac*, *Threni* and *The Flood*.

► Stravinsky and Jazz

Stravinsky was never a jazz musician. But there is often a close affinity between his music and jazz with its energetic rhythms, extended harmonies, and predilection for wind and brass instruments. Occasionally, though, he did embrace popular music. Around the time of the First World War, when American ragtime was at the peak of its popularity in Europe, he composed a number of rags: *Ragtime* for 11 instruments, *Piano-Rag-Music* for solo piano, and the ragtime music in *The Soldier's Tale*, preceded by a tango and waltz. During the Second World War, newly landed in the USA and in difficult financial circumstances, Stravinsky looked once again to popular music in order to try to earn a quick buck: a *Tango* for piano (later transcribed for orchestra), a humorous *Circus Polka* 'for a young elephant' written for

"Fingers are not to be despised: they are great inspirers, and, in contact with a musical instrument, often give birth to subconscious ideas which might otherwise never come to life."

Stravinsky on Piano-Rag-Music



Picasso's cover for Stravinsky's *Ragtime*, 1919

the Barnum & Bailey Circus, and the exuberant *Ebony Concerto* inspired by and written for the Woody Herman Band. This clarinet concerto shows a deep understanding of the jazz idiom and yet, as always, its composer turns the language of jazz into something uniquely his own. Strong jazz echoes can also be heard in the *Symphony in Three Movements*, composed at the same time as the *Ebony Concerto*.

► Stravinsky and Fantasia

What do Bach, Tchaikovsky, Dukas, Stravinsky, Beethoven, Ponchielli and Mussorgsky all have in common? Simple! Their music all appears in Walt Disney's landmark 1940 animated film *Fantasia*. In Stravinsky's case it is the music of *The Rite of Spring* accompanied by striking images of prehistoric animal life on earth. It is the film that brought Stravinsky's music to wide international attention. But the music is not quite *The Rite*. For the sum of just \$6000, Stravinsky signed away all royalties and control, so that Disney was free to cut and reorder the score as he pleased. Stravinsky was publicly critical of the way his music had been adapted, but one wonders if in private he might have been rather pleased with the fame that followed in its wake. Having just arrived penniless in the USA from a Europe plunged once again into war, Stravinsky could not have asked for a better kick-start to his career on a new continent.

► Stravinsky's Legacy

'Everyone, after all, has been influenced by Stravinsky', wrote the Dutch composer Louis Andriessen, whose own music is heavily indebted to that of his Russian forebear. There are echoes of Stravinsky in music as early as that of Debussy (*Jeux*) and Ravel (*Trois poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé*), in Antheil (*Ballet mécanique*), Prokofieff (*Scythian Suite*) and Varèse (*Amérique*). There is a cool, classical French Stravinskianism led by Poulenc (*Gloria*), followed by the other members of Les Six. Boston after the Second World War was home to a gathering of neoclassicists, named the 'Stravinsky School' by Copland, himself a member, and including Berger, Bernstein, Fine and Shapero.

Many composers have taken the primitive and ritualistic, the mythic and dramatic in Stravinsky and turned it to their own purposes, including Messiaen (*Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum*), Carter (*Double Concerto*) and Birtwistle (*Earth Dances*). A Stravinskian harmonic world, a love of repeating short fragments as ostinatos, a fondness for pedal points, dancing rhythms and bright orchestration can also be found in music as diverse as that of minimalists like Reich (*City Life*), Andriessen (*De Staat*) and Adams (*Short Ride in a Fast Machine*), or Torke (*Adjustable Wrench*), Gordon (*Trance*) and Nyman (*Musique à grande vitesse*), who fuse Stravinsky with a street sound of jazz, rock and pop. Stravinsky's 'fantasy' worlds in *Firebird*, *Nightingale* and elsewhere find later echoes in the music of Kats-Chernin and Knussen. And then there are the sounds of Stravinsky that echo across countless film scores. For young composers today, Stravinsky is still impossible to ignore.



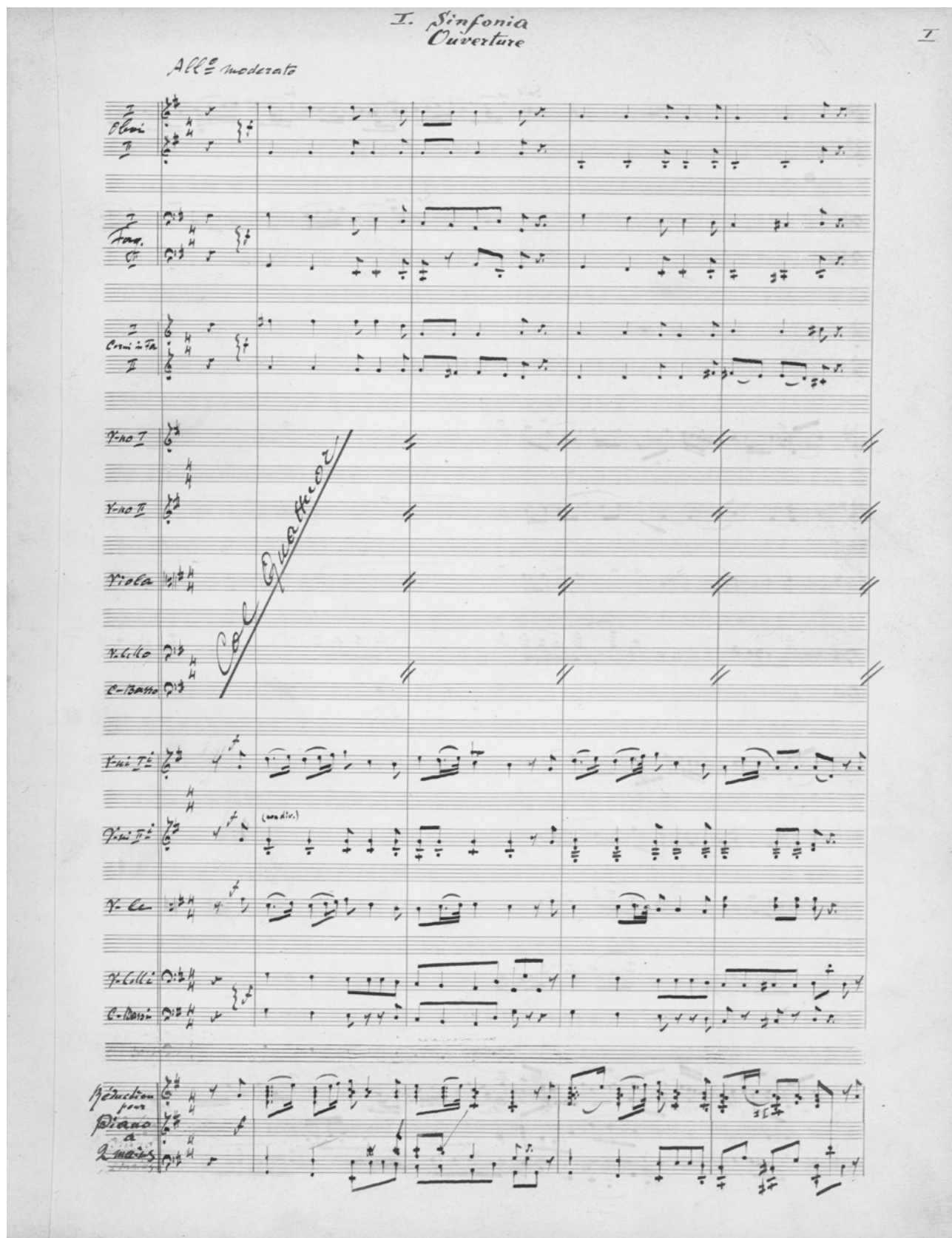
Stravinsky with Leonard Bernstein and Glenn Gould, 1960

"...one never tires of his sonorities... Stravinsky's variety is a treasure, and a conductor's boon."

Leonard Bernstein



Stravinsky with Elliott Carter at Galerie International in New York, 1962



Opening of autograph full score of *Pulcinella*, 1920

Stravinsky and...

- ... Bach
- ... Beethoven
- ... Tchaikovsky
- ... Rimsky-Korsakov
- ... Mussorgsky
- ... Debussy
- ... Bartók
- ... Prokofieff
- ... Orff
- ... Boulanger
- ... Messiaen
- ... Boulez
- ... Britten



... **Bach.** The neoclassical 'call to order' led by Jean Cocteau in France in the years following the First World War was, in musical circles, dubbed a 'Back to Bach' movement. This is a crude description, but nonetheless J S Bach's music became an important model for the order, objectivity and purity of form that Stravinsky sought in his music. Strong echoes of Bach, especially a rethinking of his contrapuntal manner, can be heard in such works as the *Octet*, the *Sonata for piano*, the central fugal movement of the *Symphony of Psalms*, the 'Dumbarton Oaks' Concerto and the *Septet*. It is touching that the very last notes Stravinsky wrote in 1969 are a transcription of two Bach preludes and fugues.



... **Beethoven.** Stravinsky once declared to Proust that he detested Beethoven. Whether he was being serious or not, it was clear that for any composer of symphonies Beethoven was unavoidable. Outwardly, Stravinsky's four-movement *Symphony in C*, with its intense thematic working, looks for all the world like a Beethoven symphony; but Stravinsky seems to turn his model inside out so that it becomes a commentary on the Beethovenian heritage. In what sense, one wonders, is this work really either 'symphonic' or 'in C'?



... **Tchaikovsky.** Stravinsky records in his (ghost-written) autobiography that, in 1892 at the age of nine, he attended with his singer father the 50th anniversary performance of Glinka's *Ruslan and Lyudmila* at the Imperial (Mariinsky) Theatre in St Petersburg, where he caught sight of Tchaikovsky. Tchaikovsky clearly influenced Stravinsky's first works (his early *Symphony in E-flat*; *The Faun and the Shepherdess*). He later made a number of loving tributes to his famous Russian predecessor: *Mavra* is dedicated to the memory of Pushkin, Glinka and Tchaikovsky; *The Fairy's Kiss* borrows extensively from the songs and piano pieces of Tchaikovsky and turns them into a delightful ballet score.



Stravinsky with Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and family, 1908



... **Rimsky-Korsakov.** Stravinsky's teacher left an indelible mark on the music of his most famous pupil. His early work is saturated with the techniques of Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov's music (*Scherzo fantastique*; *Fireworks*). Even *The Firebird* contains little that could not have been written by his teacher – Stravinsky's brilliance, in this case, was to transfer what he had learnt from Rimsky's operas to the domain of ballet. The touching commemorative *Funeral Song* is infused with the sounds of his teacher. The earliest performances of Stravinsky's music took place at the Wednesday evening soirées held at the Rimsky-Korsakov apartment on Zagorodniy Prospekt in St Petersburg.

"A composer is not only an architect but also an inventor, and he should not build houses in which he cannot live."

Igor Stravinsky



Debussy and Stravinsky photographed by Erik Satie, 1910

“He felt more free to fulfil his destiny in the climate of Debussy and Ravel than in a St Petersburg haunted by Wagner. But this much is clear. Though he chose to live, from then on, among foreign musicians, it was to create in a fashion unlike theirs.”

Ernest Ansermet



... **Mussorgsky.** Of all the great 19th-century Russian composers, the one for whom Stravinsky had most respect, aside from his teacher, was Modest Mussorgsky. From Mussorgsky he took certain harmonic ways of thinking as well as a sense of the dramatic, first encountered through his father Fyodor, who created the role of Varlaam in *Boris Godunov*.



... **Debussy.** The early part of Stravinsky's career was closely intertwined with that of Claude Debussy, twenty years his senior, not least through their shared involvement with the Ballets Russes. The young Debussy had been deeply impressed by Russian music, especially that of Mussorgsky. The young Stravinsky first encountered Debussy's music at the Evenings of Contemporary Music in St Petersburg. The two composers met at the premiere of *Firebird*, and Debussy expressed his admiration for both *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring* – the French composer played the latter with Stravinsky in a run-through of its four-hand piano version ('it haunts me like a beautiful nightmare'). The ballet *Jeux* (1913), choreographed and danced by Nijinsky, shows evidence of the influence of *Petrushka* in its innovative, mosaic-like structure, while the shadow of Stravinsky has also been cast on Debussy's radical use of forms and scales in the second book of piano *Préludes*.



... **Bartók.** Béla Bartók and Stravinsky make an ideal pairing as they were almost exact contemporaries and shared similar early influences. Both came under the spell, to differing degrees, of late-romantic German music (Strauss for Bartók, Wagner for Stravinsky) and Debussy. Both were fascinated by their respective native folk cultures and incorporated this into their music. But whereas Stravinsky quickly turned in other directions, Bartók continued to study Eastern European folk song methodically, and this understanding informed deeply his compositional thinking.

The rhythmic language of Bartók's music has much in common with Stravinsky's, even though it developed independently. Nonetheless, *The Rite of Spring* impressed Bartók, and echoes can be heard in the ballet *The Miraculous Mandarin*, whose exotic and violent subject matter occupies similar territory. The Hungarian composer's music of the 1920s, notably the *Piano Sonata* and the *Piano Concerto No. 1* betray a fascination with Stravinsky's *Sonata* and *Concerto for piano* of the same period.



... **Prokofieff.** Serge Prokofieff first met Stravinsky in 1910 in St Petersburg at the Evenings of Modern Music and, from then on, his creative reputation was forever entwined with that of Stravinsky, nine years his senior. In his *Scythian Suite* and *Le Pas d'acier* (both originally Diaghilev commissions for the Ballets Russes) Prokofieff managed to capture the two faces of Stravinsky's modernism, namely the primitive, ancient rite and the proto-futurist representation of the mechanical. His first ballet, *Chout*, was originally suggested to Diaghilev as a possible subject by Stravinsky, who wrote that it was the single piece of modern music he could listen to with pleasure.

Prokofieff left Russia for America after the October Revolution; unlike Stravinsky, however, he tolerated the Bolsheviks, and returned to live and work in the Soviet Union after 1936. Having had a serious falling-out followed by a later reconciliation, Stravinsky described Prokofieff as the greatest Russian composer of his day, after himself!



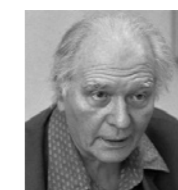
... **Orff.** Carl Orff's most famous work is undoubtedly *Carmina Burana*, a setting of texts from a medieval German manuscript, whose sounds can today be heard everywhere in films, TV shows and commercials. As elsewhere in Orff, the music is highly 'Stravinskian' in its ritualistic use of refrain structures, ostinatos, driven rhythms and fifth-based harmonies, though far less complex than the structures found in, say, *Les Noces*, from which it would appear to borrow extensively. Its raw directness treads a fine line between the popular and the primal, attracting the Nazis to embrace *Carmina*, as have audiences from the post-war period to the present day.



... **Boulanger.** Nadia Boulanger, composer, conductor, teacher and friend of Stravinsky, first met him after the premiere of *Firebird*. She taught composition at the *École normale de musique* in Paris from its founding in 1919; Stravinsky joined her there as co-professor in 1935. Like Stravinsky, she left Paris for the USA at the outbreak of the Second World War, though returned to France in 1945. She was an unofficial agent, indefatigable champion and conductor of Stravinsky's music in America, a fact he rarely acknowledged. Her own music bears more the hallmark of Debussy than Stravinsky. She stopped composing in 1920 but continued teaching until her death in 1979.

“Stravinsky has bequeathed us a totally unified treasury of rhythm that traces a perfect arc from his first to his most recent work...”

Olivier Messiaen



... **Messiaen.** Olivier Messiaen spent much of his life teaching at the Paris Conservatoire. *The Rite of Spring* was an infinite spring of ideas for Messiaen, and he encouraged his students to analyse it over and over. It should hardly be surprising, then, that while Messiaen's sound world is uniquely his own, its rhythmic structures, forms and melodic organisation can be seen in many ways to be derived from Stravinsky. The so-called 'rhythmic characters' he uses in many of his works are derived from practices he found in *The Rite*.



Stravinsky with Nadia Boulanger on a transatlantic steamer, 1937

“Composers combine notes,
that’s all.”

Stravinsky in Dialogues



... **Boulez.** In the years immediately following the Second World War, Pierre Boulez led noisy student protests against Stravinsky’s neoclassical music in Paris. It was far too conventional for the young avant-garde. Later, however, Boulez the conductor became one of the great interpreters of Stravinsky’s works, and at his death paid powerful tribute to his senior forebear: ‘The glory of Stravinsky was to have belonged to this extremely gifted generation and to be one of the most creative of them all.’ It was Boulez who lobbied successfully for the square outside his Paris research centre (IRCAM) to be named Place Igor-Stravinsky. In his own music, too, it is clear Boulez was inspired by Stravinsky, notably in ritualised concert music such as *Rituel* and ...*explosante-fixe*...



... **Britten.** Benjamin Britten and Stravinsky met only once in 1949. Of that occasion, Stravinsky wrote, cuttingly, that Britten ‘undoubtedly has a talent as a performer, especially at the piano’, making no mention of his compositions. When they were jointly awarded the Erasmus Prize in 1965, Stravinsky declined, describing the decision as ‘tactless’. Britten, in like fashion, said of *The Rake’s Progress*, ‘I liked the opera very much. Everything but the music.’ Nonetheless, Stravinsky’s neoclassical music left its mark on Britten’s formal and harmonic thinking: *Apollo* was a key influence on Britten’s emerging voice in the 1930s.

For his part, Stravinsky followed Britten’s progress with interest, expressing admiration for the opera *Gloriana*. We can detect Stravinsky’s kleptomaniac tendency still at work in writing *Abraham and Isaac* just a decade after Britten wrote a canticle with the same title in 1952. And where, one wonders, did Stravinsky find the idea of giving the voice of God in *The Flood* to two singers simultaneously? The only other composer to have done this was Britten in his *Abraham and Isaac*!



© Sony Classical/Richard Avedon

Stravinsky, 1958

“If, as is nearly always the case,
music appears to express
something, this is only an
illusion and not a reality.”

Stravinsky in An Autobiography



© Fondation Igor Stravinsky

Stravinsky, 1963



© Lotte Wehner-Graf

Stravinsky at rehearsals with Ernst Roth of Boosey & Hawkes, 1950s

Britten/Bartók © Boosey & Hawkes, others Wikimedia Commons

© Boosey & Hawkes

MOVEMENTS
for Piano and Orchestra
to
Margrit Weber

IGOR STRAVINSKY
1958-59

I

* sounds octave lower

Stravinsky's Works

with programming tips

A chronological survey of selected pieces published by Boosey & Hawkes

© Fondation Igor Stravinsky



Stravinsky in Paris, 1907

Funeral Song (Pogrebal'naya Pesnya) op.5 (1908) 12'
for orchestra
3(III=picc).2.corA.3(III=bcl).3(III=dbn)-4.3.3.1-timp.perc.cym/BD
tam-t-2harp-strings(16.14.12.10.8)

Until very recently this work had only received one performance, at a memorial event in 1909 for Stravinsky's beloved teacher Rimsky-Korsakov, and was then presumed lost. But a chance discovery of a set of parts during the refurbishment of the St Petersburg Conservatoire resulted in the work's first modern performance at the Mariinsky Theatre in December 2016, conducted by Valery Gergiev.

The influence of both Rimsky and Wagner is clear on the young Stravinsky, and it forms the missing link between his early work and *The Firebird*. But what is most striking is how expressive this processional work is, as its mournful theme is passed between the instruments of the orchestra, each player in turn, as it were, laying a wreath at the tomb of the master. *Funeral Song* makes a contemplative concert opener.

Two Melodies op.6 (1907-08) 8'
for mezzo-soprano and piano
Text: Sergey Gorodetsky (R)

A setting of two poems by the contemporary Russian poet Sergey Gorodetsky.

Nocturne in A flat (orch.1909) 8'
for orchestra
2.2.2.2-4.0.0.0-perc:BD-harp-cel-strings

Grande valse brillante in E flat (orch.1909) 5'
for orchestra
2.picc.2.3.3-4.2.3.1-timp-perc:tgl/cyms/SD/BD/handbells-harp-cel-strings

These two orchestral arrangements of Chopin's piano music were commissioned from Stravinsky by Diaghilev as part of *Les Sylphides* for performances by the Ballets Russes at the spectacular first *saison russe* of opera and ballet at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, 1909. This was the first collaboration between the young Russian composer and the formidable impresario. They revealed Stravinsky's talent for transcription and orchestration and could fit happily into a programme of ballet music.

Two Songs op.9 (1910/14, arr.1910/51) 5'
for baritone and orchestra
Text: Paul Verlaine (F)
2.0.2.0-2.0.0.0-strings

A setting of two poems by Paul Verlaine, dedicated to Stravinsky's brother Gury.

Petrushka (Petrouchka) (1910-11, rev.1946-47) 35'
Burlesque in four scenes
Scenario by Igor Stravinsky and Alexandre Benois
Original 1911 version: 4(III,IV=picc).4(IV=corA).4(IV=bcl).4(IV=dbn)-4.2.2crt.3.1-timp.perc(7):xyl/tam-t/tamb/tambourin/BD/gisp/tgl/cyms/SD-cel-pft-2harps-strings
Revised 1947 version: 3(III=picc).2.corA.3(III=bcl).2.dbn-4.3.3.1-timp.perc(4):xyl/cyms/tam-t/tgl/BD/SD/tamb-harp-cel-pft-strings

© Ballets Russes/Wikimedia Commons



Vaslav Nijinsky as Petrushka, 1911

This was Stravinsky's second complete score for the Ballets Russes, following the success of *The Firebird*, premiered at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris in 1911, and arguably his first truly original and forward-looking work. His initial idea was for a concert piece for piano representing 'a puppet suddenly endowed with life, exasperating the patience of the orchestra with diabolical cascades of arpeggios'. The piano is still present in the orchestra. The ballet tells the old Russian tale of three puppets who are brought to life. It opens with a magical representation of the bustling Shrovetide fair in St Petersburg, a lively collage of folk tunes and popular songs. The glittering sequence of Russian dances displays Stravinsky at his most exuberant. *Petrushka* could form a striking centrepiece to a programme of works by Stravinsky's Russian and French contemporaries, such as Debussy and Ravel, Prokofieff and Rachmaninoff, or even works that have been inspired by puppetry and masks.

Two Poems of Balmont (1911, arr.1954) 3'
for high voice and ensemble
Text: Konstantin Balmont (R,F,E,G)
2fl.2cl-pft-string quartet

Two short poems by the Russian symbolist poet Konstantin Balmont are set here. In both songs can be heard the combination of 'diatonic' and 'octatonic' procedures typical of Stravinsky at this time, which he learned from Rimsky-Korsakov but made his own.

Three Japanese Lyrics (1912-13) 4'
for high voice and ensemble
Text: Yamabe no Akahito, Masazumi Miyamoto, Ki no Tsurayuki (R,F,E,G)
2(II=picc).2(II=bcl)-pft-string quartet

Stravinsky selected the texts for these short songs from an anthology of Japanese poems in Russian translation, and each simply bears the name of its author: Akahito, Mazatsumi and Tsaraiuki. The scoring, however, comes from quite a different source, namely Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*. Stravinsky claimed he was attempting to capture in this music 'the unique linear perspective of Japanese declamation'. But there are also echoes here of *The Rite of Spring*, on which he was working at the same time. The songs could be programmed alongside Japanese composers Takemitsu and Kondo, or others influenced by Japanese culture, including Debussy, Cage, Britten and Saariaho.

The Rite of Spring (Le Sacre du printemps) (1911-13, rev.1947) 33'
Pictures from pagan Russia in two parts
3(III=picc).picc.af.4(IV=corA).corA.3(III=bcl).Dcl(=Ebcl).bcl.4(IV=dbn).dbn-8(VII,VIII=ttuba).4(IV=btpt).piccpt.3.2-timp(2).perc(4):crot/cyms/tam-t/tgl/guio/BD/tamb-strings

Stravinsky claimed that the vision of a young girl dancing herself to death first came to him in a dream. More likely is that the idea for the ballet originated with Nicolas Roerich, Russian painter, archaeologist and folklorist, who crafted the scenario with Stravinsky and who made the designs for the original production. It was probably Nijinsky's radical, awkward choreography that prompted disquiet amongst the conservative quarters of the first-night audience in Paris in 1913, but the music too is some of Stravinsky's most innovative. From its opening, high plaintive solo evoking the Slavic folk spirit, to its final, violent sacrificial dance, *The Rite of Spring* as ballet or concert piece still has an extraordinary elemental power. 'There is music whenever there is rhythm, as there is life wherever a pulse beats', Stravinsky inscribed in Russian onto a sketch page. The life force of *The Rite of Spring* is its rhythm. *The Rite* sits equally well in a programme of the Russian music that preceded it (Mussorgsky, Borodin) as it does with the music it inspired, from Varèse to Birtwistle, from Prokofieff to Reich.

"...a solemn pagan rite: wise elders, seated in a circle, watching a young girl dance herself to death. They were sacrificing her to propitiate the god of spring."

Stravinsky on *The Rite of Spring*

Autograph full score of *The Rite of Spring* with conductor markings, 1913

Autograph full score of *The Rite of Spring* with conductor markings, 1913



Dancers in recreated costumes from Nijinsky's choreography of *The Rite of Spring*

Le Rossignol (The Nightingale)
(1908-14, rev.1962)

45'

A musical fairy tale in three acts

Text: Libretto by the composer and Stepan Mitusov (R,E,F,G)
colS,S,A,T,lyrT,Bar,2B; chorus

2.picc.2.corA.3(II=Eb,III=bcl).3(III=dbn)-4.4(III=picc.tpt).3.1-timp.
perc(5):cym/s/ant.cym/tgl/SD/BD/2gls/p/tamb/tam-t-2harp-cel-pft-gtr-
mandolin-strings

Stravinsky began work on this opera, based on the Hans Christian Anderson story, as early as 1908, but put it to one side when Diaghilev's commission for *The Firebird* came along. By the time he picked it up again just four years later, he was a very different kind of composer, and an international celebrity. The modernist musical style of Acts 2 and 3, containing all sorts of magical effects, is quite different from the glistening

Rimsky-influenced music of the first act; nonetheless, the two 'parts' fit together effectively. Memorable productions include that of Robert Lepage for Canadian Opera and the staging with David Hockney's designs for the Metropolitan Opera. The work lasts only around 45 minutes in total so needs to be programmed with a one-act theatre work to make a full evening. It would work well with Stravinsky's own *Renard*, for example. Other pairings might include staged versions of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* or *Oedipus Rex*, Ravel's *L'Heure espagnole* or Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta*.

Three Pieces for string quartet (1914 rev.1918) 8'

Three short, quirky pieces that make a nice contrast to longer quartets in a programme, and would certainly complement the quartets of Bartók, Shostakovich, Britten, Ravel, Debussy, Fauré, Ives, Janáček or even Haydn. The first piece layers Russian folk fragments and drones, the second was inspired by a performance Stravinsky saw in London by the clown Little Tich, and the third is punctuated with a hymn or chorale. He later transcribed the pieces for orchestra with the titles 'Dance', 'Eccentric' and 'Canticle', to which he added a fourth piece, 'Madrid', an arrangement of the *Étude for pianola*.

Le Chant du Rossignol (The Song of the Nightingale) (1917) 20'
[2\(II=picc\).2\(II=corA\).2\(II=Eb\).2-4.3.3.1-timp.perc\(5\):cyms/tam-t/tgl/BD/SD/tamb-2harps-cel-pft-strings](#)

Derived from the opera *The Nightingale*, this symphonic poem follows closely the opera's later acts, but reworks material rather than merely arranges it. Diaghilev presented it as a ballet with the Ballets Russes in Paris in 1920, choreographed by Massine, designed by Matisse. Five years later, George Balanchine choreographed a new version, which prompted the start of a long and rich collaboration between him and Stravinsky. It makes an engaging concert piece programmed with other fairy-tale-inspired pieces, such as Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, Ravel's *Scheherazade*, the overture to Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, Zemlinsky's *Die Seejungfrau* or Kats-Chernin's *Wild Swans Suite*.

Étude for pianola (1917) 2'

Before the wide availability of records, the pianola (player piano) was the only means by which the public could access recorded sounds in their own homes. The Pleyel Company manufactured such instruments and signed up Stravinsky as a 'house' composer, even providing him with a flat in Paris above their workshops. Stravinsky 'recorded' a number of his works onto pianola rolls. This is his only completed original work for the instrument, which he later arranged under the title 'Madrid' as one of the *Quatre Études* for orchestra.

"In order to create there must be a dynamic force, and what force is more potent than love?"

Igor Stravinsky

Pulcinella (1919-20, rev.1965) 37'

Ballet in one act after Pergolesi for soprano, tenor, and bass soloists, and orchestra
Text: traditional (I)
[S,T,B](#)
[2.2.0.2-2.1.1.0-string quintet\(1.1.1.1.1\)-strings\(4.4.4.3.3\)](#)

Pulcinella - Suite (1919-20, rev.1949) 22'
for orchestra
[2\(II=picc\).2.0.2-2.1.1.0-string quintet\(1.1.1.1.1\)-strings\(4.4.4.3.3\)](#)

'I looked, and I fell in love', was Stravinsky's later recollection after first being presented by Diaghilev with the music he thought was by Pergolesi (but was in fact a mix of 18th-century Italian composers), and which was the source material for his *commedia dell'arte* ballet. It was his first new work presented by the Ballets Russes on the Paris stage after World War I, and it was an instant hit. It represents Stravinsky's decisive turn towards the West and away from Russia in order to renew his musical language. The score has an irresistible playfulness and *joie de vivre*, both in its original ballet form (with voices) and in the orchestral suite, and has become a mainstay for chamber orchestras. Why not programme it alongside Mendelssohn's 'Italian' Symphony or Respighi's musical pictures of Italy, or Prokofiev's suite from *The Love for Three Oranges*, also based on the *commedia dell'arte*? It could be coupled with a variety of other works for chamber orchestra from the 18th century to the present day, from a witty Haydn symphony such as the 'Surprise' Symphony to Prokofiev's 'Classical' Symphony modelled on Haydn.

Symphonies of Wind Instruments (1920, rev.1947) 10'
Original version: [3\(III=picc\).af1.2.corA.2.Fcl.3\(III=dbn\)-4.3.3.1](#)
Revised version: [3.2.corA.3.3\(III=dbn\)-4.3.3.1](#)

The *Symphonies* began as a memorial tribute to Debussy, who died in 1918, and took the form of a piano chorale – that is, a slow, simple and solemn sequence of chords – published in a commemorative issue of a French journal. Later Stravinsky decided to turn this tribute into a longer instrumental piece, for which the chorale would provide the ending, as if concluding a liturgical work. The abstract title uses the word 'symphony' in the plural simply to signify a 'sounding together' – it is certainly not symphonic in the Beethovenian sense of the word. Its most striking aspect is its innovative, block structure, where each short musical section has its own distinct identity (harmony, rhythm, tempo), like a coloured tile in a mosaic. Its form has served as a model for so many radical composers since, from Varèse to Messiaen, from Tippett to Birtwistle.

Mavra (1921-22, rev.1947) 25'

Opera buffa in one act
Text: Libretto by Boris Kochno after Pushkin's story 'The Little House in Kolomna' (R,E,F,G,I,S)
[S,M,A,T](#)
[3\(III=picc\).2.corA.2.Ebcl.2-4.4.3.1-timp-strings\(2vln.1vla.full complement of vlc and db\)](#)

The premiere in Paris in 1922 of *Mavra* was Stravinsky's first great flop. Even today *Mavra* remains among the less frequently played works of Stravinsky, which is a shame, because not only is it his first genuinely neoclassical work, but it is also a gem of witty story-telling. This short *opera buffa*, to a libretto by Boris Kochno after a narrative poem of Pushkin, is dedicated to the memory of Pushkin, Glinka and Tchaikovsky. Stravinsky joyfully evokes the spirit of Tchaikovsky, in his directness and spontaneity, as well as his melodic fluency. The story of the opera is frivolous but is in essence a satire of petit-bourgeois manners. A handsome hussar Vasili disguises himself as a female cook in order to have an assignation with his young lover Parasha, but he is caught out when Parasha's mother finds 'her' shaving. Stravinsky's music for *Mavra* is an extraordinary mix of styles, including loving parodies of Glinka and Tchaikovsky, alongside a popular polka and waltz and echoes of jazz. *Mavra* would form an attractive double-bill with another one-act comic opera, such as Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* or Ravel's *L'Heure espagnole*, or perhaps a short comic opera by Offenbach.

Octet (1922-23, rev.1952) 16'
[1.0.1.2-0.2.2.0](#)

The *Octet* is Stravinsky's glorious reinvention of the classical style in the shape of a divertissement for wind and brass instruments. The first movement is a sonata form, the second a set of variations, while the finale fizzles with a syncopated energy well-suited to the new 'jazz age'. The *Octet* should be in the repertoire of all wind ensembles and would happily sit alongside Mozart's *Gran Partita* or the octets of Mozart and Beethoven.

Concerto for piano and wind instruments (1923-24) 18'
[2.picc.2.corA.2.2\(II=dbn\)-4.4.3.1-timp-db](#)

Stravinsky wrote the concerto for himself to play. His love for woodwind and brass was already clear in the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* and the *Octet*, so he here decided to omit the strings and play with the attack of the wind instruments that matches the percussive effect of the hammer on the piano strings. The outer movements are full of rhythmic energy while the central movement makes a feature of a long, legato melody. He later wrote the *Capriccio* as a kind of companion piece. A wind band programme of jazz-inspired music might well also include this lively concerto.

Sonata for piano (1924) 10'

The influence of the counterpoint of J S Bach is inescapable in this three-movement piano work, even while maintaining its unmistakably Stravinskian identity. But the shadow of Beethoven and other classical composers can also be felt. In a piano recital containing, say, a Beethoven sonata and a Busoni arrangement of Bach, this sonata would add a distinctive perspective.

Serenade in A (1925) 12'

A delightful suite for piano, where each movement was originally intended to fit on one side of a '78' record.

Otche Nash' (Pater Noster) (1926) 1'
for SATB chorus

Stravinsky's *a cappella* setting of the 'Our Father' in the Slavonic tongue. He later made a revised version using the Latin text. See also *Credo* and *Ave Maria*.

Oedipus Rex (1926-27, rev.1948) 53'
Opera-oratorio after Sophocles
Text: Libretto by Cocteau based on Sophocles (L-F,L-E,L-G)
[M,2T,Bar,3\(or 2\)B,narrator; male chorus](#)
[3\(III=picc\).2.corA.3\(III=Ebcl\).2.dbn-4.4.3.1-timp-perc\(2\):tamb/ t.mil/BD/cyms-harp-pft-strings](#)

Based on the play by Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* explores the idea of the formal and the stylised in theatre (as opposed to the expressive and the romantic, which, after the First World War, was decidedly out of favour in France). Central to the work is the Narrator, who describes events before they are presented on the stage. His words, spoken in the audience's vernacular, are by Jean Cocteau; the sung text is also by Cocteau, but translated into Latin to bring a sense of distance and monumentality to the drama. Even the staging Stravinsky envisaged as being minimal, with the soloist wearing masks – hence his designation of the work as a hybrid opera-oratorio. The music, too, wears masks, adopting for example the style of Handel for Creon's aria, or of Verdi for Jocasta's aria, but always viewed through Stravinsky's lens. The audience thus remains at a distance, in keeping with the contemporary ideas of Bertolt Brecht, watching the unfolding of fate with horror. But the work also has a 'serenity' and a 'purity' (to use the words of an early reviewer), which lends to it an almost religious character. Thus, a concert pairing with the *Symphony of Psalms* makes for a fascinating comparison. Common stage couplings include other works by Stravinsky such as *Les Noces*, *The Nightingale* or *Perséphone*, Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*, Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero*, Poulenc's *La Voix humaine* or Weir's *Blond Eckbert*, strongly influenced by Stravinsky.

“What is important for the lucid ordering of the work – for its crystallisation – is that all the Dionysian elements which set the imagination of the artist in motion and make the life-sap rise must be properly subjugated before they intoxicate us, and must finally be made to submit to the law: Apollo demands it.”

Stravinsky in Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons

Apollon musagète (1927-28, rev.1947) 30'
Ballet in two scenes
[strings\(8.8.6.8.4\)](#)

Apollon musagète (or more simply *Apollo*, as it became known) was Stravinsky's first collaboration proper with dancer and choreographer George Balanchine. Theirs became a successful and enduring partnership. The scenario is basic, stripped of any particularly meaningful narrative. What remains is a kind of abstract meditation on classical themes, figures and dances. Following the 'Prologue' depicting the Birth of Apollo, the three Muses Calliope, Polyhymnia and Terpsichore are introduced, before the work proceeds through a series of conventional variations entirely in keeping with the traditions of the classical ballet. A 'Coda' is reached for all four dancers before the final triumphal yet melancholic 'Apotheosis' in which Apollo leads the three muses towards Parnassus. Its scoring for strings alone means that, as a concert work, it can fit well into a programme of chamber orchestra or string repertoire, classical as well as contemporary.

Quatre Études (Four Studies) (1914-29, rev.1952) 12'
for orchestra
[3\(III=picc\).3\(III=corA\).2.Ebcl.bcl.2-4.4.3.1-timp-harp-pft-strings](#)

See *Three Pieces for string quartet* and *Étude for pianola*

Le Baiser de la fée (The Fairy's Kiss) (1928, rev.1950) 45'
Ballet in four scenes
[3\(III=picc\).2.corA.3\(III=bcl\).2-4.3.3.1-timp.perc:BD-harp-strings](#)

Written for the Ida Rubinstein ballet company in Paris and first choreographed by Nijinska, Stravinsky here arranges a sequence of piano pieces and songs by Tchaikovsky in loving tribute to the great Russian composer who was such a strong early influence. The ballet tells the bitter-sweet tale, based on Hans Christian Andersen's *The Ice-Maiden*, of an abandoned child kissed by a fairy whom the fairy later reclaims on his wedding day. For Stravinsky, the fairy represented Tchaikovsky's muse. He later adapted the music into the *Divertimento* concert suite. It is a touching, nostalgic evocation of a Russia that, in the 1920s, had been lost to Stravinsky.

Capriccio (1928-29, rev.1949) 17'
for piano and orchestra
[3\(III=picc\).2.corA.3\(II=Ebcl,III=bcl\).2-4.2.3.1-timp-string quartet-strings](#)

The *Concerto for piano and winds* was such a success that Stravinsky composed a second concerto for himself to perform, this time with orchestra. It is a highly playful work, with a virtuosic yet graceful solo part. A programme containing both piano concertos makes for an effective contrast.

Symphony of Psalms (1930, rev.1948) 23'
for chorus and orchestra
Text: Vulgate (L)
[5\(V=picc\).4.corA.0.3.dbn-4.5.3.1-timp.perc:BD-2\(1\)harps-2pft-strings\(vlc.db\)](#); NB: chorus should contain children's voices if possible

Commissioned by the conductor Serge Koussevitzky to write an 'abstract' symphony for the Boston Symphony Orchestra's 50th anniversary, it was clear that Stravinsky had a sacred piece in mind from the moment he started composing. It became for him an act of spiritual renewal, a personal testimony, having returned to the Russian Orthodox faith in 1926 after a long period of absence. He sets three Latin texts from the book of Psalms, the last of these (Psalm 150) being a song of praise full of the noises of trumpets, pipes and cymbals, prompting the work's unusual scoring for woodwind and brass, two pianos and harp but no violins or violas. From the arresting opening E-minor chords, via the spectacular double fugue of the central movement, to the meditative Alleluias of the finale, it is a powerful articulation of Stravinsky's spiritual vision. It remains a popular concert work with choruses. It could also be coupled with violinless works such as Brahms's *Serenade No. 2*, Lindberg's *Sculpture* or Turnage's *Remembering*.

Duo concertant (1932) 16'
for violin and piano

The *Duo concertant* was written for Stravinsky to play on tour with violinist Samuel Dushkin. It represented for Stravinsky a working out of what he saw as the 'problem' of two very different kinds of string instruments (violin and piano) working together. Its inspiration comes in part from Greek lyrical poetry, whose forms (eclogue, two dithyrambs) as well as a cantilena and a gigue give the five movements their titles and their characters. It would make an effective programme companion to, for example, the sonatas for violin and piano of Debussy and Bartók.

Simbol'vyeri (Credo) (1932) 3'
for SATB chorus

Stravinsky's Slavonic *a cappella* setting of the Mass's central statement of faith ('I believe'). He later made a revised version using the Latin text. See also *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria*.

Perséphone (1933-34, rev.1949) 56'
Melodrama for tenor solo, female narrator, chorus, children's chorus, and orchestra
Text: André Gide (F)
[3\(III=picc\).3\(III=corA\).3\(III=bcl\).3\(III=dbn\)-4.3.3.1-timp.perc:xy/BD/SD-2harps-pft-strings](#)

Like *Oedipus Rex* before it, *Perséphone* is a presentation of a classical myth, a setting of French writer André Gide's retelling of the 7th century BC Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*. The original idea came from the Russian dancer and actor Ida Rubinstein, an early member of the Ballets Russes, whose own ballet company was to stage the premiere at the Paris Opéra in 1934, and who danced and spoke the title role herself. The three scenes of the drama follow the course of seasons. Like a 'classical' retelling of *The Rite of Spring*, it presents a myth of the arrival of spring. Perséphone, daughter of Demeter, goddess of fertility, plucks the narcissus, despite being warned not to by the Nymphs. She descends into the eternal winter of the underworld, from where she is rescued by Demeter, but it is her destiny continually to return to the world of shadows and suffering. The music has a sacred, ritualistic air, achieved by means of a lyrical and harmonic simplicity. 'It will be just like the Mass', Stravinsky observed at an early stage in the work's gestation. With its prominent role for female chorus voices, *Perséphone* makes an ideal coupling for *Oedipus Rex* with male chorus.

Bogoroditse D'vo (Ave Maria) (1934) 1'
for SATB chorus

Stravinsky's *a cappella* setting of the 'Hail Mary' in Slavonic. He later made a revised version using the Latin text. See also *Pater Noster* and *Credo*.

Divertimento (1928, rev.1950) 24'
Symphonic Suite from the ballet *Le Baiser de la fée* (*The Fairy's Kiss*)
[3\(III=picc\).2.corA.3\(III=bcl\).2-4.3.3.1-timp.perc:BD-harp-strings](#)

See *Le Baiser de la fée*

Ebony Concerto (1945) 11'
for solo clarinet and jazz ensemble
[2asax.2tsax.barsax.bcl-hn.5tpt.3trbn-pft-harp-guitar-perc-db](#)

Inspired by and written for Woody Herman and his band, this vivacious clarinet concerto, written during Stravinsky's early years in America, evokes the spirit of jazz in Stravinsky own rhythmically charged manner. It will sit well in a programme of other jazz-inspired works of the 20th-century, such as Gershwin's *An American in Paris*, Milhaud's *La Création du monde* or the concert pieces of Bernstein. In similar ways, many recent composers have explored the sounds and instruments of jazz, including Birtwistle's *Panic* and Turnage's *Your Rockaby*.

Concerto in D (1946) 12'
for string orchestra

Not to be confused with the earlier *Concerto in D* for violin and orchestra, this work was one of many commissions from Swiss conductor Paul Sacher for his chamber orchestra in Basle. It makes a lively addition to the string orchestra repertoire and could be programmed alongside the popular string-only works of Grieg, Tchaikovsky and Elgar. It would also fit well with Baroque and Classical string repertoire, as well as Bartók's *Divertimento*, Barber's famous *Adagio*, Britten's *Simple Symphony*, Tippett's *Concerto for Double String Orchestra*, Pärt's *Cantus*, Adams's *Shaker Loops* or Clyne's *Within Her Arms*.

“The more constraints one imposes, the more one frees one's self of the chains that shackle the spirit. And the arbitrariness of the constraint serves only to obtain precision of execution.”

Stravinsky in Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons

Orpheus (1947) 30'
Ballet in three scenes
[2.picc.2\(II=corA\).2.2-4.2.2.0-timp-harp-strings](#)

In 1946, in the wake of the Second World War, Stravinsky and Balanchine, now both resident in the USA, turned to Apollo's son Orpheus for their next balletic collaboration. It is the lamenting Orpheus who is encountered at the start of this ballet, almost as if picking up the melancholic mood left suspended two decades earlier at the end of their *Apollo*. 'Orpheus weeps for Eurydice. He stands motionless, with his back to the audience.' We hear his lyre at the beginning and end of the score, represented by the sounds of the harp, playing falling lines of lament. It is as if Stravinsky is speaking personally here, lamenting the death of his daughter and first wife as well his mother just before he left for America. Balanchine and Stravinsky worked side-by-side on the scenario. Music and choreography emerged simultaneously. The scenario starts with Orpheus weeping at Eurydice's funeral and ends with an apotheosis where Apollo appears, 'wrests the lyre from Orpheus and raises his son heavenwards.' The music throughout is restrained, distanced, formal, with a predilection for counterpoint. The designer chosen for the premiere production was Isamu Noguchi, a sculptor whose abstract geometric sets, costumes and masks perfectly matched the distilled, ritualistic purity of Stravinsky's music and Balanchine's dances. *Orpheus* can be paired effectively in concert performances with other Stravinsky works on classical themes.



Stravinsky with the score of *Orpheus*, 1948

Mass (1944, 1947-48) 17'
for mixed chorus and double wind quintet
Text: Mass (L)

The Mass was prompted by Stravinsky's discovery of some Mozart masses in a Los Angeles bookshop. It sets the Catholic Latin text and was intended for liturgical use. Though he claimed he was writing 'very cold music', its central 'Credo' ('I believe') must surely be read as the profound and personal reaffirmation of faith from an émigré. Its scoring for ten ceremonial woodwind and brass instruments recalls the *Symphony of Psalms*. The 'Gloria' and 'Sanctus' give cantilenas to solo voices, which sound distinctly Russian. The closing 'Agnus Dei' separates three *a cappella* verses with contemplative instrumental refrains, anticipating the ritual formality of his late music. The Mass is still in use liturgically today, but would also grace any concert programme of 20th-century sacred choral music

The Rake's Progress (1948-51) 150'
Opera in three acts
Text: Libretto by W H Auden and Chester Kallman (E,Cz,F,G,I)
Major roles: lyrS,dramM,hT,Bar; minor roles: A,T,2B; chorus
[2\(II=picc\).2\(II=corA\).2.2-2.2.0.0-timp.perc.offstage bell/cuckoo-hpd\(or pft\)-strings](#)

Stravinsky's largest work, his only full-length work for the theatre, and his first major work in English. It also represents the culmination of his neoclassical years, after which he started to rethink his musical language. The idea was prompted by seeing an exhibition in Chicago in 1947 of a series of Hogarth prints and he instantly recognized their operatic potential. The depiction of the ironic progress of the spendthrift heir of a miser from wealth via debt to madness and death is, in essence, retained in the opera. Stravinsky's Hollywood neighbour Aldous Huxley suggested he contact the English poet W H Auden, resident in New York, to write the scenario and libretto, which Auden did with the assistance of his lover and opera buff Chester Kallman. The text wittily grafts onto Hogarth's quest narrative aspects of, among other sources, Classical pastoral, the Faust legend, fairy tale, circus, the Bible and opera in many different manifestations. This is brilliantly matched by Stravinsky's music, which takes as its source the whole of operatic history from Monteverdi to Verdi via Rossini and Donizetti and large doses of Mozart. Yet it is neither parody nor pastiche; rather, in remaking all of opera into this one new opera, Stravinsky and Auden create a fable appropriate to their modern world: its kaleidoscope of sources speaks of the dislocated, alienated times in which they lived ... even if, in a marvellous take on the ending of *Don Giovanni*, the final epilogue tells us it's really only a piece of theatre! *The Rake's Progress* can be appreciated on many levels, which might explain why it is still one of only a handful of 20th-century operas never to have been out of the repertoire.



The Rake's Progress in the Glyndebourne Festival production designed by David Hockney and staged by John Cox

Cantata (1951-52) 30'
for soprano and tenor soloists, female chorus, and ensemble
Text: Anon 15th and 16th century English lyrics (E)
[2fl.2ob\(II=corA\)-vlc](#)

This work grew directly out of Stravinsky's collaboration with Auden on *The Rake's Progress*, setting texts he chose from Auden's recently published five-volume anthology of the *Poets of the English Language*, which the poet had given Stravinsky as a present. The simple setting of 'The maidens came' shows Stravinsky's growing familiarity at this time with Renaissance and Baroque music. 'Westron winde' has a melancholy air with an urgent cello accompaniment, perhaps reflecting Stravinsky's compositional crisis at this time. The breakthrough came with the setting for tenor of 'Tomorrow shall be my dancing day', the large, central panel of the *Cantata*. It is called a 'Ricecar', whose canons are built from a melody that is treated serially, his first essay in this musical technique (derived from the practices of Schoenberg, who had just died). These movements are separated by the four verses of 'A lyke-wake dirge'. The *Cantata* was a transitional work for Stravinsky, and it is perhaps this that provides its powerful, expressive impact in performance. It would make an excellent companion to other works engaging with English texts, such as Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*, which also sets the 'Lyke-wake dirge'.

Septet (1952-53) 11'
for mixed ensemble
[0.0.1.1-1.0.0.0-pft-vln.vla.vlc](#)

In Stravinsky's next work after the *Cantata* he enters more directly into the sphere of Schoenberg, whose *Septet-Suite* he had recently encountered. It corresponds with the Schoenberg work, not only in instrumentation but also in the choice of the Baroque dance of the gigue for the last movement, and continues to engage in each of its three movements with basic aspects of the serial method. But there are also echoes of Stravinsky's earlier neoclassical practices: in the counterpoint of the first movement, in the modelling of the second movement on Bach's *Passacaglia in C Minor*, and in the fugal-serial treatment of the theme in the gigue. It is a music of a great energy that could form a lively close to a concert of chamber music, or a programme with the Schoenberg and Stravinsky works as bookends.

Praeludium (1936/37, rev.1953) 2'
for jazz ensemble
[0.0.0.2asax.tsax.barsax.0-0.3.2.0-perc:timp/SD-cel-guitar-strings\(3.0.1.1.1\)](#)

A short, jazzy curtain-raiser that would nicely open a programme of jazz-inspired works by Stravinsky as well as by such figures as Gershwin, Copland, Weill, Milhaud, Bernstein, Tippett or Turnage.

Three Songs from William Shakespeare (1953) 6'
for mezzo-soprano, flute, clarinet and viola
Text: William Shakespeare (E)

Serial settings for mezzo-soprano and three instruments of a Shakespeare sonnet, and of famous verses from *The Tempest* and *Love's Labour's Lost*.

In Memoriam Dylan Thomas (1954) 6'
Dirge-canon and song for tenor, string quartet, and four trombones
Text: Dylan Thomas (E)

Stravinsky met the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas just the once, on 22 May 1953 in Boston. He was hoping they could collaborate on an opera. Stravinsky had invited Thomas to his Hollywood home to discuss the project, but he never arrived. Thomas died in New York on 9 November 1953. 'All I could do was cry', recalled Stravinsky. His response was this poignant, melancholic setting for tenor and string quartet of the villanelle 'Do not go gentle into that good night', a memorial text for Thomas's own father, with its powerful refrain, 'Rage, rage against the dying of the light'. It is framed by two 'dirge-canons' for string quartet and a quartet of trombones. Though it is Stravinsky's first genuinely serial work, the music's lamenting character reaches back deep into Stravinsky's musical past.

Greeting Prelude (1955) 1'
'For the 80th birthday of Pierre Monteux'
[2.picc.2.2.2.dbn-4.2.3.1-timp.perc:BD-pft-strings](#)

A witty, serial version of 'Happy Birthday' written to mark conductor Pierre Monteux's 80th birthday.

Stage premiere of *Agon* by New York City Ballet with choreography by Balanchine, 1957



Canticum Sacrum (1955) 17'
ad honorem Sancti Marci nominis
for tenor and bass soloists, chorus, and orchestra
Text: Vulgate (L)
[1.2.corA.0.2dbn-0.4.4.0-harp-organ-strings\(vla.db\)](#)

Commissioned by the Venice Biennale, the work was premiered in St Mark's Basilica, and the bulk of the Latin text is taken from the Vulgate version of St Mark's gospel, along with other biblical excerpts. Its carefully constructed architecture in five movements is certainly in keeping with the balance and proportions of the building for which it was written. It contains music that is, by turns, monumental, lyrical and dramatic. It also exploits the possibilities for antiphony familiar from much earlier music written for St Mark's. Its somewhat austere musical language reflects both Stravinsky's recent contact with the music of Webern and his looking back much further to reflect St Mark's Byzantine splendour.

Agon (1953-57) 23'
Ballet for twelve dancers
[3\(III=picc\).2.corA.2.bcl.2.dbn-4.4.3.0-timp.perc:xyl/3tom-t/cast-harp-mandolin-pft-strings](#)

Agon joined *Apollo* and *Orpheus* as the final work in a trilogy of Greek-inspired ballets Stravinsky made in close collaboration with Balanchine. *Agon*, however, has no scenario: it is entirely abstract. Its stylised structure and formal language are more a meditation on the idea of dance, and on the idea of Greek myth as contest, game or struggle (the meaning of the Greek title). It plays with the number 12: there are 12 dancers; there are essentially 12 dances (excluding the instrumental Prelude and Interludes, which punctuate the structure); and it also contains aspects of Stravinsky's own interpretation of the 12-note (serial) compositional method. If this all sounds coldly mathematical, then the exuberant playfulness of the music will come as a great surprise! It works equally well in the concert hall as on the ballet stage. Pierre Boulez would often conduct *Agon* as part of programmes of later 20th-century modernist music. It could be coupled with such works as Birtwistle's *In Broken Images* or Andriessen's *Agamemnon*, or even Boulez's own *Le Marteau sans maître*.

Threni: id est Lamentationes Jeremiae Prophetiae (1958) 35'
for soprano, alto, 2 tenor and 2 bass soloists, chorus, and orchestra
Text: from the Vulgate (L)
[2.2.corA.2.bcl.0.sarrusophone-4.0.bugle.3.1-timp.perc:tam-t-harp-cel-pft-strings](#)

A setting for soloists, chorus and orchestra of the Old Testament Lamentations of Jeremiah. Like the *Canticum Sacrum*, it was written for and premiered in Venice. It is Stravinsky's longest serial work containing intense contrapuntal writing. The structure is punctuated by settings of the Hebrew alphabet, described by one commentator as like illuminated initials embellishing a manuscript. Despite being scored for large orchestra, Stravinsky's frequent use of chamber scoring gives the music a striking transparency. It could be effectively programmed with much earlier settings of the Lamentations, such as by Tallis, but equally with a more recent *a cappella* version such as that by Ginastera. Bernstein's *Symphony No. 1 'Jeremiah'* follows the Biblical story programmatically and, in the third movement, a mezzo-soprano sings settings of texts from the Lamentations.

Movements (1958-59) 10'
for piano and orchestra
[2\(II=picc\).1.corA.1.bcl.1-0.2.3.0-harp-cel-strings\(6.6.4.5.2\)](#)



Premiere of *Movements* with choreography by Balanchine, 1963

A concerto for piano and orchestra, in five short movements, connected by four short 'interludes' for orchestra only. It is perhaps Stravinsky's most unexpected work, offering a version of the severe, pointillist soundworld of his much younger contemporaries in post-Second World War Europe. The shadow of Austrian serialist Anton Webern is cast over the music, but as heard through avant-garde ears such as those of Pierre Boulez or Karlheinz Stockhausen. But you can still spot Stravinskian thumbprints, such as the voicing of chords and the use of block structures. It is a unique moment in Stravinsky's output, a late flowering of his ever-youthful spirit of reinvention. Try programming it with Schoenberg, Berg or Webern, or with Boulez, Berio, Ligeti or Chin.

Or perhaps pair it with other Stravinsky works where the piano has a significant role within the orchestra, such as *Petrushka* or the *Symphony in Three Movements*. Balanchine later turned its 'movements' into a ballet.

Epitaphium (1959) 2'
for flute, clarinet and harp

A short memorial tribute to Prince Max Egon zu Fürstenberg. Stravinsky saw it as 'a kind of hymn, like Purcell's *Funeral Music for Queen Mary*'.

Tres sacrae cantiones (Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa) (1959) 10'
for mixed chorus a cappella
Text: Da Pacem Domine, Assumpta est Maria, Illumina nos (L)

Three motets from Gesualdo's *Sacrae Cantiones* completed by Stravinsky and published by Boosey & Hawkes to mark the 400th anniversary of the composer's birth.

Double Canon (1959) 1'
for string quartet

Written in memory of the painter Raoul Dufy.

Monumentum pro Gesualdo di Venosa ad CD annum (1960) 7'
Three madrigals recomposed for instruments
[0.2.0.2-4.2.3.0-strings\(senza db\)](#)

Three Gesualdo madrigals recomposed for instruments and premiered in Venice in 1960. It is a companion to the *Tres sacrae cantiones*. *Monumentum* was later choreographed for the New York City Ballet where Balanchine would always pair it with *Movements*.

A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer (1960-61) 16'
Cantata for alto and tenor soloists, speaker, chorus, and orchestra
Text: New Testament, Thomas Dekker (E)
[1.af.2.1.bcl.2-4.3.3.1-perc:3tam-t-harp-pft-strings](#)

A short cantata dedicated (like the *Concerto in D*) to conductor Paul Sacher and premiered by him with the Basle Chamber Orchestra. The text is taken from the English New Testament and a prayer by Thomas Dekker. It is a rarely performed work, but in its austere, serial beauty it would make a striking contribution to a programme of sacred choral music. Its contemplative closing Alleluias recall the setting of the same word in the final movement of the *Symphony of Psalms*.



First production of *The Flood* on CBS TV, 1962

Anthem 'The dove descending breaks the air' (1962) 2'
for SATB chorus a cappella
Text: T S Eliot (E)

An a cappella setting of Part IV of 'Little Gidding' from T S Eliot's *Four Quartets*.

The Flood (1961-62) 24'
A musical play for solo voices, chorus, speakers and orchestra
Text: Book of Genesis, York and Chester Miracle plays (L-E, L-F, L-G)
T, 2B, 7speakers; SAT chorus
3(III=picc).af1.0.0.2-4.2.3.0-timp(2).perc(2):t.bells/vib/xyl-harp-cel-pft-strings(6.5.4.3.2)

The Flood was commissioned as a 'musical play' for television, with speaking, singing and instrumental parts. His assistant Robert Craft devised the text from the book of Genesis plus the York and Chester miracle plays. Stravinsky was very taken with the idea of working in the relatively new medium

of television, and it inspired from him an intricate serial structure. It did not come across well on the television, however, not helped by being bookended by shampoo commercials, and it has had precious few stage productions. It is therefore ripe for a serious modern production, perhaps paired with a church parable by Britten, or with another of Stravinsky's Old Testament pieces. The American director Peter Sellars has staged a collection of these sacred works under the title *Biblical Pieces*.

"I haven't understood a bar of music in my life, but I have felt it."

Igor Stravinsky

Abraham and Isaac (1962-63) 12'
for baritone and orchestra
Text: from Genesis (Heb,E)
2.af1.1.corA.1.bcl.2-1.2.2.1-strings

Dedicated to the people of Israel, this 'sacred ballad' sets a text taken from Genesis in Hebrew, a language Stravinsky did not know, but he took inspiration, he wrote, 'from the attractions of the Hebrew language as sound'. Thus, in this austere work, the syllables of the words 'both as accentuation and timbre' are the principal element. Stravinsky's attitude to language – Russian, French, Latin, English or Hebrew – had always been the same.

Elegy for JFK (1964) 2'
for baritone or mezzo-soprano and three clarinets
Text: W H Auden (E)
clarinets 1 & 2 in B flat, clarinet 3 alto in E flat

On 18 January 1962, the celebrity couple Igor and Vera Stravinsky were invited by US President John F Kennedy and First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy to a gala dinner at the White House. Less than two years later, Kennedy was assassinated. Stravinsky wrote this brief elegy for baritone and three clarinets to specially commissioned lyrics from W H Auden: five short verses, each a 17-syllable haiku. Its serial construction gives the music a stark intensity. The three clarinets seem to act almost like a Greek chorus.

Variations 'Aldous Huxley in Memoriam' (1963-64) 5'
for orchestra
2.af1.2.corA.2.bcl.2-4.3.3.0-harp-pft-strings

A very short set of orchestral variations written in memory of his Hollywood neighbour and friend, the English writer Aldous Huxley.

Introitus T S Eliot in Memoriam (1965) 4'
for male chorus and ensemble
Text: from Missa pro Defunctis (L)
timp(2).perc(2):2tam-t-harp-pft-vla.db soli

Over a period of more than ten years Stravinsky and the great modernist poet T S Eliot had mooted a collaboration, including a ballet based on Eliot's *Samson Agonistes*, and a dramatic work based on the story of Noah. They came to nothing, but in 1962 Stravinsky did make a short choral setting of part of 'Little Gidding' under the title *Anthem 'The dove descending breaks the air'* (see above). The death of Eliot three years later prompted this beautiful, sparse tribute, a setting of the opening words of the Latin mass for the dead, to which he would soon return for the *Requiem Canticles*. Like so many of his late works, the *Introitus* has a verse structure, punctuated by instrumental responses.

Requiem Canticles (1966) 15'
for alto and bass soloists, chorus, and orchestra
Text: from Missa pro Defunctis (L)
3(III=picc).af1.0.0.2-4.2.3.0-timp(2).perc(2):t.bells/vib/xyl-harp-cel-pft-strings(6.5.4.3.2)

Stravinsky's last major work. It was initially commissioned as an instrumental work in memory of a benefactress of Princeton University. But Stravinsky soon decided to include a chorus and soloists. His choice of fragments of the Latin requiem mass text must surely have been motivated, in part at least, by the knowledge that his own life was entering its final phase. The work has a stripped-back character but there is nothing morbid about it; rather, it is elegiac, serene, sometimes even mocking, as if the composer were thumbing his nose at death. It is scored for relatively large forces, but which are mainly used in an intimate, chamber manner. The slowly chiming sounds of the closing 'Postlude' are both funeral bells, and also a distant memory of the church bells of Stravinsky's childhood in St Petersburg. The *Canticles* were first performed in 1966 at Princeton University and again on 15 April 1971 in Venice at Stravinsky's own funeral service.

The Owl and the Pussy-cat (1966) 3'
for voice and piano
Text: Edward Lear (E)

Stravinsky's last completed original composition, and fittingly it seems to be just a little bit of fun. It sets the first English poem Vera learnt by heart. The voice and a single line on the piano weave in and out of one other.



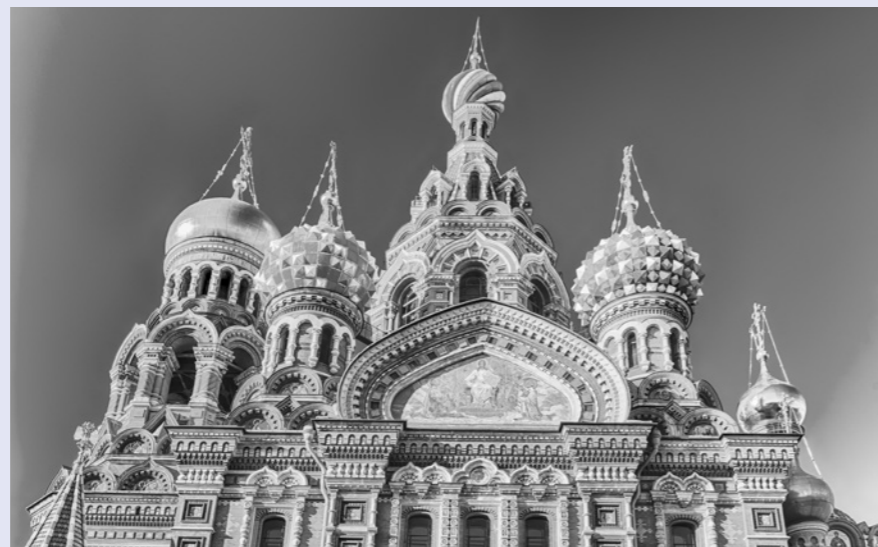
Stravinsky, 1965

Stravinsky Timelines with world timelines

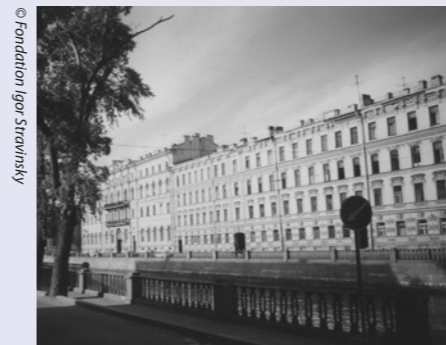
1882	1883	1888	1890	1892	1894	1898	1900	1901	1903	1904
Igor Fyodorovich Stravinsky born (5 June, Old Style Julian Calendar) to Fyodor Ignat'yevich Stravinsky and Anna Kirilliovna Stravinskaya in Oranienbaum (now Lomonosov), west of St Petersburg <i>Wagner's Parsifal</i> premiered in Bayreuth Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra formed	<i>Wagner dies in Venice</i> Anton Webern born 1885 Alban Berg born Karl Benz produces first petrol-powered motor car 1887 Nadia Boulanger born	Vera de Bosset, Stravinsky's future mistress and second wife, born in St Petersburg 1889 Vaslav Nijinsky born, dancer and choreographer with the Ballets Russes <i>Exposition universelle</i> , Paris, and inauguration of Eiffel Tower	Stravinsky meets his cousin Yekaterina (Katya, Catherine) Nossenko, his future first wife <i>Tchaikovsky's opera The Queen of Spades</i> premiered at Mariinsky Theatre <i>Tchaikovsky's 'Pathétique' Symphony and Nutcracker</i> ballet both premiered in St Petersburg 1893 Tchaikovsky dies	Stravinsky attends the 50th anniversary performance of Glinka's <i>Ruslan and Lyudmila</i> at the Mariinsky Theatre, where he catches sight of Tchaikovsky <i>Tchaikovsky's 'Pathétique' Symphony and Nutcracker</i> ballet both premiered in St Petersburg 1893 Tchaikovsky dies	Tsar Alexander III dies <i>Dreyfus trial</i> in Paris 1896 Athens hosts first modern Olympic Games 1897 Roman, Stravinsky's oldest brother, dies Sergey Diaghilev opens his first art exhibition in St Petersburg Brahms dies	Composes earliest surviving piece, <i>Tarantella</i> for piano 1899 Scott Joplin's <i>Maple Leaf Rag</i> published Publication of inaugural issue of <i>Mir iskusstva (The World of Art)</i> (dated January 1899), founded by Diaghilev in St Petersburg	<i>Exposition universelle et internationale de Paris</i> takes place, attended by Diaghilev First Paris Métro line opens Freud's <i>The Interpretation of Dreams</i> published	Stravinsky enters St Petersburg University to begin law studies First transatlantic radio transmission Queen Victoria dies 1902 Stravinsky's father Fyodor, principal bass at the Imperial Opera, St Petersburg, dies <i>Debussy's Pelléas et Mélisande</i> premiered in Paris	Stravinsky begins composition of his first major work, Piano Sonata in F-sharp minor (privately premiered by Nicolas Richter to the Rimsky-Korsakov circle in 1905) <i>Wright brothers</i> achieve first manned flight Marie Curie, Pierre Curie and Henri Becquerel receive the Nobel Prize for their work on radiation	<i>Cantata</i> premiered for Rimsky-Korsakov's 60th birthday <i>Russo-Japanese War</i> begins 1905 Stravinsky begins lessons with Rimsky-Korsakov Workers massacred at St Petersburg Winter Palace on Bloody Sunday, leading to Russian Revolution Mutiny on battleship <i>Potemkin</i> 1906 Igor and Catherine Stravinsky married Diaghilev mounts his first exhibition of Russian art at the <i>Paris Salon d'Automne</i> First <i>duma</i> (Russian legislative assembly) opens Dmitri Shostakovich born



Stravinsky's parents, Odessa, 1874



St Petersburg provided the young composer with his formative musical experiences



Apartment on Kryukov Canal, the Stravinsky family home in St Petersburg for more than 80 years



Stravinsky, aged 16 in St Petersburg apartment, 1898



Photo and note in Igor Stravinsky's hand announcing his engagement to Catherine Nossenko, 1905

1907	1908	1909	1911	1912	1913	1914	
Stravinsky's first child Fyodor (Fedik, Theodore) born <i>Diaghilev mounts first series of concerts of Russian music at Paris Opéra</i> <i>Picasso completes Les Femmes d'Alger</i> W H Auden born	First public performances of <i>The Faun and the Shepherdess</i> and <i>Symphony in E-flat</i> in St Petersburg <i>Funeral Song (Pogreb'al'naya Pesnya)</i> premiered in memory of Rimsky-Korsakov, assumed lost until parts rediscovered in St Petersburg in 2015 Stravinsky's first daughter Lyudmila (Mika, Mikushka) born Rimsky-Korsakov dies	<i>Diaghilev mounts Mussorgsky's Boris Godunov at Paris Opéra, with Chaliapin in title role</i> <i>Elliott Carter and Olivier Messiaen</i> born <i>Ford Model T motor car</i> first produced Siloti conducts premiere of <i>Scherzo fantastique</i> ; Diaghilev is in audience <i>Fireworks</i> premiered in both piano and orchestral versions in St Petersburg; again, Diaghilev is present Diaghilev mounts the inaugural 'saison russe' of Russian operas and ballets at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, including <i>Les Sylphides</i> (first seen as <i>Chopiniana</i> in	St Petersburg, 1907), with a Chopin nocturne and waltz newly orchestrated by Stravinsky 1910 Diaghilev's company renamed Ballets Russes Stravinsky arrives in Paris for first time for premiere on 25 June of <i>The Firebird</i> by Ballets Russes at Paris Opéra	Stravinsky meets Debussy and Ravel Stravinsky moves his family from Russia, first to Clarens, Switzerland, then to Beaulieu, France Stravinsky's son Sviatoslav (Soulima) born <i>Mahler's Symphony No.8</i> premiered in Munich	<i>Petrushka</i> premiered by Ballets Russes at Théâtre du Châtelet with Nijinsky in lead role, designs by Alexandre Benois Stravinsky meets Satie <i>Mahler dies</i> <i>First exhibition of Cubist art at Salon des Indépendants, Paris</i> <i>Titanic</i> sinks <i>Strauss's Der Rosenkavalier</i> premiered in Dresden	Inauguration of new Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris <i>Noisy premiere of The Rite of Spring</i> at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, choreographed by Nijinsky, designs by Nicholas Roerich <i>Benjamin Britten and Witold Lutoslawski</i> born 1913 First volume of Proust's <i>À la recherche du temps perdu</i> published	First concert performance of <i>The Rite of Spring</i> in Paris Begins composition of <i>Les Noces</i> Stravinsky and family move to Switzerland; daughter Milena (Milène) born Stravinsky makes his conducting début in Montreux Premiere of <i>The Nightingale</i> at Paris Opéra

"There is music wherever there is rhythm, as there is life wherever there beats a pulse."
Igor Stravinsky

Stravinsky Timelines with world timelines

1914

Three Pieces for String Quartet premiered in Chicago by Flonzaley Quartet

Stravinsky makes last ever visit to his family summer home in Ustilug (in present-day Ukraine)

Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo and outbreak of First World War

Panama Canal opens

1915

Einstein's *General Theory of Relativity* published

1916
Milton Babbitt born
Easter Rising in Dublin

1917

Gury, Stravinsky's youngest brother, dies of typhus while serving with Red Cross in Romania

Stravinsky meets Picasso in Rome
Stravinsky completes first version of *Les Noces*

1918

The Soldier's Tale premiered in Lausanne

Debussy dies

Cocteau's *Le Coq et l'Arlequin* published

Premiere in Budapest of Bartók's *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*

Tsar Nicholas II executed

Signing of Armistice to mark end of First World War

Representation of the People Act gives British women over 30 the vote

Nelson Mandela born
Leonard Bernstein born

1919
Pribaoutki premiered in Paris

Three Pieces for clarinet premiered in Lausanne

Treaty of Versailles signed at Paris Peace Conference

1920

Stravinsky and his family relocate from Switzerland to Brittany

Pulcinella premiered at Paris Opéra

Ragtime premiered in London

Concertino for string quartet premiered in New York by Flonzaley Quartet

Stravinsky meets Gabrielle 'Coco' Chanel; he and his family move into her house in Garches, west of Paris

The Rite of Spring revived in Paris with new choreography by Massine

League of Nations founded

1921

Composes *Les Cinq doigts* at Garches

Stravinsky and his family move to Biarritz

Full score of *The Rite of Spring* published by Édition Russe de Musique

Stravinsky meets and begins affair with Vera de Bosset Sudeykina

Symphonies of Wind Instruments premiered in London

Stravinsky signs contract with Pleyel company to make piano rolls of his music; he is given Paris studio by Pleyel
Chanel No.5 perfume launched

1922

Renard and Mavra premiered in Paris

Stravinsky, Diaghilev, Picasso, Joyce and Proust dine together at Hôtel Majestic, Paris

Stravinsky attends Cocteau's version of Sophocles' *Antigone* at Théâtre de l'Atelier, Paris, music by Honneger, sets by Picasso, costumes by Chanel

Proust dies

Iannis Xenakis born

Mussolini rises to power

Eliot's *The Waste Land* and first parts of Joyce's *Ulysses* published

BBC founded and begins music radio broadcasts

Irish Free State established

Formation of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics



Stravinsky with members of the Ballets Russes, including Nijinsky, Benois and Diaghilev, c1912



Igor and Catherine Stravinsky, Switzerland, 1913



Stravinsky and family, Switzerland, 1915



Portrait of Stravinsky by Picasso, 1920



Ballets Russes poster with works by Stravinsky including *Pulcinella*, 1920



Stravinsky in Antibes with Jean Cocteau, and Pablo and Olga Picasso, 1926



Stravinsky with Serge Diaghilev, 1921

1923

Les Noces premiered by Ballets Russes in Paris, choreographed by Nijinska

Octet premiered in Paris

Stravinsky conducts an entire programme of his own music for first time

György Ligeti born

Schoenberg's first entirely twelve-note composition, the *Suite for Piano*, Op.25

1924

Concerto for piano and wind instruments premiered in Paris with Stravinsky as soloist

Stravinsky's first concert tours around Europe

Stravinsky and his family move to Nice

Puccini dies

Lenin dies

Ramsay MacDonald becomes first Labour Prime Minister

1925

George Balanchine choreographs revival of *The Song of the Nightingale* with Ballets Russes to original designs by Matisse

Stravinsky meets Gershwin

Sonata for piano premiered

Stravinsky makes first concert tour of USA

Stravinsky signs first recording contract

Luciano Berio and Pierre Boulez born

1926

Stravinsky reconverts to Orthodox faith

Stravinsky conducts *The Rite of Spring* for first time

John Logie Baird gives first public demonstration of television

Chanel launches her 'little black dress'

Cocteau's *Le rappel à l'ordre* ('Call to Order') published

British General Strike

Puccini's *Turandot* premiered posthumously at La Scala Milan

Hirohito becomes Emperor of Japan

Satie dies
Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes ('art deco'), Paris

F Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* published

Eisenstein's film *Battleship Potemkin* released

Berg's *Wozzeck* premiered in Berlin

First volume of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* published

1927

Oedipus Rex premiered (as oratorio) in Paris

Salle Pleyel opens in Paris; Stravinsky conducts the *Firebird* Suite at the inaugural concert

Charles Lindberg makes first solo non-stop flight from New York to Paris

First feature-length 'talkie' film *The Jazz Singer* released

1928

Apollon musagète (*Apollo*) premiered in Washington, DC, followed by European premiere given by Ballets Russes in Paris, choreographed by Balanchine

Oedipus Rex stage premiere in Vienna and Berlin (conducted by Klemperer)

The Fairy's Kiss premiered in Paris

1929

Diaghilev dies

Stravinsky records *The Rite of Spring* for first time for Columbia; Monteux records rival version for HMV

Capriccio for piano and orchestra premiered in Paris with Stravinsky as soloist

Wall Street Crash and start of Great Depression

1930

Symphony of Psalms premiered in Brussels

Stravinsky meets violinist Samuel Dushkin

Construction begins of Empire State Building, New York

1931
Stravinsky and family move to Voreppe, France

Stravinsky conducts *Violin Concerto* with Dushkin in Berlin

1932

First concert tour with Dushkin

Duo concertant for violin and piano premiered in Berlin

1933
Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany

Stravinsky Timelines with world timelines

“...every work has its weight, its deep resounding in our soul. Each time different problems are involved, and each time their solutions are achieved in masterly fashion.”

Darius Milhaud



Painting of Vera de Bosset by Serge Sudeykin



Paris was the centre of Stravinsky's musical life for 30 years and his home between 1934 and 1939



Alexandrova Danilova and Serge Lifar in the Ballets Russes premiere of *Apollo*, 1928



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Stravinsky on cover of *Time* magazine, 1948



© New York City Ballet/Gene Fenn

Premiere of *Orpheus* in New York with choreography by Balanchine, 1948



© Elio Piccajanni, courtesy Paul Sacher Stiftung

The premiere of *The Rake's Progress* at La Fenice in Venice, 1951

1934

Perséphone premiered in Paris
Stravinsky takes French citizenship
Stravinsky meets Berg in Venice
Stravinsky and family move to an apartment in Paris on rue Faubourg Saint-Honoré
Harrison Birtwistle and Peter Maxwell Davies born; Edward Elgar and Gustav Holst die

Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* premiered in Leningrad

1935
Stravinsky and Nadia Boulanger appointed professors of composition at the École normale de musique, Paris
Stravinsky's autobiography published in French (*Chroniques de ma vie*), ghost-written by Walter Nouvel

1936

Concerto for two pianos premiered by Stravinsky with son Soulima
Stravinsky makes his second US tour (with Dushkin)
Stravinsky meets Mussolini in Rome
Gershwin's Porgy and Bess premiered in New York
Berg dies
Nuremberg Laws passed
Italy invades Ethiopia

Stravinsky tours South America
Spanish Civil War begins
Germany occupies the Rhineland
Abdication of Edward VIII
Steve Reich born
BBC begins television broadcasts

1937

Stravinsky makes his third US tour
Jeu de cartes premiered in New York, choreographed by Balanchine
Gershwin and Ravel die
1938
Stravinsky's daughter Lyudmila dies
Dumbarton Oaks concerto premiered in Washington DC, conducted by Nadia Boulanger

Nazi annexation of Austria (the 'Anschluss')
Kristallnacht in Germany and Austria
1939
Catherine (wife) and Anna (mother) die
Zvezdoliki (composed 1911/12) premiered in Brussels
Stravinsky leaves for United States from Bordeaux aboard *SS Manhattan*

1940

Stravinsky begins delivery of Charles Eliot Norton lectures at Harvard University (subsequently published in French, and later in English as *Poetics of Music*)
Britain and France declare war on Germany
Freud dies
Gone with the Wind film released

Vera joins Stravinsky in USA; they marry in Bedford, MA, and settle in Los Angeles, eventually at 1260 North Wetherly Drive, Beverly Hills
Symphony in C premiered in Chicago
Disney's *Fantasia* released, including a scene using reworked music from *The Rite of Spring*

Occupation of Paris by Nazis and surrender of Marshal Pétain; General Charles de Gaulle establishes Free French Government in London
Churchill becomes British Prime Minister

1941

Stravinsky's brother Yury dies in Leningrad
Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and US entry into Second World War
Siege of Leningrad begins (finally lifted 872 days later)
James Joyce and Virginia Woolf die
Premiere of Tippett's *A Child of our Time*
Premiere of Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* while composer a prisoner of war

1942

Stravinsky listens to radio broadcast of Shostakovich's 'Leningrad' *Symphony*
Dances concertantes premiered in Los Angeles
Aretha Franklin born
Magnetic tape invented
1943
Ode premiered in Boston

1944

Circus Polka 'for a young elephant' premiered in Cambridge, MA
Four Norwegian Moods premiered in Cambridge, MA
Scènes de Ballet first stage performance in Philadelphia
Sonata for two pianos premiered in Madison, WI
Allied invasion of Europe on Normandy beaches; liberation of Paris

1945

Igor and Vera Stravinsky granted US citizenship
Festival of Stravinsky's music mounted in Paris (Boulez and fellow students of Messiaen at the Paris Conservatoire disrupt a performance of *Four Norwegian Moods*)
Meets Ralph Hawkes, director of London music publisher Boosey & Hawkes, with whom Stravinsky signs a contract the following year

Bartók and Webern die
USA drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki
End of Second World War
United Nations founded
Britten's *Peter Grimes* premiered at Sadler's Wells Theatre, London

“Only Stravinsky manages to mix his elements, including even the familiar ones, in such a way that no one can predict just where he will be taking us next.”

Aaron Copland

1946

Symphony in Three Movements and *Ebony Concerto* premiered in New York
Scherzo à la Russe premiered in San Francisco
Darmstadt International Summer Course for New Music initiated. Future attendees include Babbitt, Berio, Boulez, Cage, Ligeti, Messiaen, Nono, Stockhausen, Varèse and Xenakis

1947

Concerto in D premiered in Basle
Partition of India and formation of Pakistan
1948
Orpheus premiered in New York by the Ballet Society (precursor to New York City Ballet), choreographed by Balanchine, designed by Isamu Noguchi
Mass premiered in Milan

1949

Messiaen's *Turangalila Symphony* premiered in Boston, MA
Formation of German Democratic Republic
Mao Zedong proclaims the People's Republic of China
Richard Strauss dies

1950

Nijinsky dies
Cocteau's film *Orphée* released
Korean War begins; China invades Tibet
Group Areas Act passed in South Africa, the principal instrument of Apartheid

1951

Stravinsky returns to Europe for first time since 1939
Conducts *The Rake's Progress* premiere in Venice
Schoenberg dies
André Gide dies
Festival of Britain

Stravinsky Timelines with world timelines

1952

Stravinsky attends performance in Paris of Boulez's *Structures* for two pianos, performed by Boulez and Messiaen

Cantata premiered in Los Angeles

Nicolas Nabokov mounts *L'Oeuvre du XXe siècle* festival in Paris, covertly funded by the CIA; programmes include Stravinsky's *Symphony in C*

John Cage's *4'33"* premiered

Accession of Elizabeth II

1953

Stravinsky meets Dylan Thomas; they plan an opera together, but Thomas dies later that year

Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* premiered in French in Paris

Stalin dies

Malenkova becomes, briefly, leader of the Soviet communist party, followed swiftly by Krushchev

1954

In Memoriam Dylan Thomas premiered in Los Angeles

Septet premiered in Washington, DC

Charles Ives dies

Rock around the Clock released by Bill Haley and the Comets

"To listen is an effort, and just to hear is no merit. A duck hears also."

Igor Stravinsky

1955

St Petersburg Metro opens

Boulez's *Le Marteau sans maître* premiered

Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat on a segregated bus in Alabama, a symbolic gesture leading ultimately to the dismantling of US race discrimination laws

Communist countries sign Warsaw Pact

1956

Stravinsky conducts *Canticum Sacrum* in St Mark's Venice

Stravinsky suffers a stroke in Berlin while conducting *Symphony in C*

John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* premiered in London

Stockhausen completes *Gesang der Jünglinge* for electronic tape

Suez Crisis

Hungarian Revolution and Soviet invasion

1957

Agon premiered by New York City Ballet, choreographed by Balanchine

Stravinsky visits Dartington Summer School in Devon

Stravinsky begins his *Conversations with Craft*, to be published in multiple volumes

Soviet Union launches Sputnik

Bernstein's *West Side Story* premiered

1958

Threni premiered in Venice

World Fair in Brussels at which Varèse's *Poème électronique* is installed in the Philips Pavilion (designed by Le Corbusier and Xenakis)

1959

Double Canon for string quartet 'Raoul Dufy in memoriam' premiered in New York

Vietnam War begins
Miles Davis's album *Kind of Blue* recorded and released

1960

Movements for piano and orchestra premiered in New York

The Beatles formed in Liverpool

1961

Stravinsky makes his most extensive world tour, including Europe, east Asia, Australia and New Zealand

Yury Gagarin is first man in space

Construction of Berlin Wall

© Angelo Cordeschi/Dreamstime



Venice was the scene for the premieres of *The Rake's Progress*, *Canticum Sacrum* and *Threni*

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Stravinsky arrives at Moscow Airport, 1962

© Fondation Igor Stravinsky



Stravinsky in Mexico, 1966

© Claudio Spies



Stravinsky with Vera, 1964

© AP Wire Photo



Stravinsky's funeral in Venice, 1971

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Stravinsky's grave on San Michele

1962

The Stravinskys dine with the Kennedys at the White House

Stravinsky tours to South Africa, Europe and Israel

Stravinsky returns to Russia (now Soviet Union) for first time in nearly 50 years; a dinner is held in his honour by Soviet Ministry of Culture

A Sermon, a Narrative, and a Prayer premiered in Basle

The Flood first broadcast on CBS television

Kenneth MacMillan choreographs *The Rite of Spring* for the Royal Ballet, with Monica Mason in the role of the Chosen One

Cuban Missile Crisis

Algeria achieves independence from France

1963

Cocteau dies
President John F Kennedy assassinated

1964
Abraham and Isaac premiered in Jerusalem

Elegy for JFK premiered in Los Angeles

Fanfare for a New Theatre premiered in New York

Civil Rights Act passed in the USA, banning discrimination on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex or national origin

Mandela sentenced to life imprisonment (until 1982)

1965

Variations (Aldous Huxley in memoriam) and *Introitus (T S Eliot in memoriam)* premiered in Chicago
T S Eliot dies

1966
Requiem Canticles, Stravinsky's last major work, premiered at Princeton University

Stravinsky completes his final original work, *The Owl and the Pussy-cat*, for voice and piano

Indira Gandhi elected Prime Minister of India

1967
Stravinsky makes his final recording (Los Angeles) and concert appearance (Toronto) as a conductor

The Beatles' *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* released

Sexual Offences Act passed, part-decriminalising homosexuality in England and Wales

"I have learned throughout my life as a composer chiefly through my mistakes and pursuits of false assumptions, not by my exposure to founts of wisdom and knowledge."

Igor Stravinsky

1968

Stravinsky arranges Hugo Wolf's *Two Sacred Songs*

Student uprisings in Paris and elsewhere

Assassination of Martin Luther King

Prague Spring

Berio's *Sinfonia* premiered

Birtwistle's *Punch and Judy* premiered

1969

Igor and Vera Stravinsky move to New York

Stravinsky arranges a number of Bach *Preludes and Fugues*

First manned moon landing

1970

Expo '70 takes place in Osaka, Japan;
Stockhausen's music featured in spherical concert hall of West German pavilion

1971

Stravinsky dies (6 April) in his apartment in New York. Preliminary funeral rites take place in New York. The funeral is in Venice at the church of Santi Giovanni e Paulo. He is buried on the cemetery island of San Michele, in the Orthodox section, close to Diaghilev.

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"To continue in one path is to go backward."

Igor Stravinsky

Stravinsky

Reading, Listening and Viewing

Reading

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Chester Music: www.musicalesclassical.com/composer/short-bio/Igor-Stravinsky
Schott Music: <https://en.schott-music.com/shop/autoren/igor-strawinsky>
Fondation Igor Stravinsky: <https://fondation-igor-stravinsky.org>
Grove Music Online: www.oxfordmusiconline.com (subscription required) – see Stephen Walsh, 'Stravinsky, Igor', for a biographical article plus worklist and a full bibliography (up to 1998)
Philharmonia Orchestra *Stravinsky: Myths & Rituals* interactive website with full timeline, links to short films and other resources: www.philharmonia.co.uk/stravinsky

Films

A Conversation with Igor Stravinsky ('The Wisdom Series', NBC, 1957), www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJIXobO94Jo – rare footage of Stravinsky (apparently) composing at the piano
Stravinsky: Once at a Border, Tony Palmer (director) (first released 1982), Tony Palmer Films DVD Video TPDVD126, 2008. Also at www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKCUOYw9yuc
Stravinsky's Journeys, Philharmonia Orchestra documentary, www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIAtoxbt7LQ
The Rite of Spring, recorded by Arte at the centenary performance of the work on 29 May 2013 at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées with Nijinsky's choreography as reconstructed by Millicent Hodson and Kenneth Archer, www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOZmlYgZG4

Selected Landmark Recordings

'Boulez Conducts Stravinsky' (6 CD set), DG 4778730, 2010
Firebird Suite, The Rite of Spring (historic first recordings conducted by Stravinsky in the late 1920s), Pristine Audio Pasc387, 2013
Le Sacre du printemps, Petrushka (original versions on 'period' instruments), Les Siècles, François-Xavier Roth, Actes Sud ASM15, 2014
'Stravinsky: Complete Edition' (30 CD set), DG 4794650, 2015
'Stravinsky Plays Stravinsky: Masters of the Piano Roll', including Piano Sonata, Dal Segno DSPRCD007, 2005
'Works of Igor Stravinsky' (22 CD set, a re-issue of 'The Recorded Legacy'), Sony 88697103112, 2007

To listen to music by Stravinsky including Spotify playlists visit: www.boosey.com/listenstravinsky

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Boosey & Hawkes Inc
35 East 21st Street
New York
NY 10010 6212
USA
Tel: +1 (212) 358 5300
Email: composers.us@boosey.com

UK (and rest of world)

Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd
Aldwych House
71-91 Aldwych
London
WC2B 4HN
UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 7054 7200
Email: composers.uk@boosey.com

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Germany
Tel: +49 (030) 2500 1300
Email: composers.germany@boosey.com

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Photos opposite clockwise from top left: Stravinsky with Aram Khachaturian on his return to Moscow, 1962 (Khachaturian Estate); Stravinsky on US postage stamp, 1982 (Wikimedia Commons); Stravinsky conducting, 1965 (Dutch National Archives/Wikimedia Commons); Stravinsky on Ukraine postage stamp, 2007 (Wikimedia Commons); Stravinsky conducting, 1962 (Brazilian National Archive/Wikimedia Commons) and Stravinsky's signature.



Jonathan Cross

Jonathan Cross is Professor of Musicology at the University of Oxford. His acclaimed volume *The Stravinsky Legacy* was published in 1998, he is editor of and contributor to the *Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky* (2003), and author of a critical biography of Stravinsky for Reaktion Press (2015). He was Series Consultant to the Philharmonia Orchestra for the 2016 series *Stravinsky: Myths and Rituals*, which won the Sky Arts Classical Music Award 2017. He is also a Research Associate at IRCAM, Paris, and an elected Member of the Academy of Europe.

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