



Composer Portfolios

STRAVINSKY



Name	Igor Stravinsky
Nationality	Russian
Born-Died	1882-1971
Quote	<p><i>'I haven't understood a bar of music in my life, but I have felt it'</i></p> <p><i>Art is the opposite of chaos'</i></p>

Interesting Stories

The Rite of Spring Premiere

The premiere of Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring is the most scandalous in the history of ballet. There have been many versions of what happened on the evening of 29 May 1913, with accounts differing as to the cause of the problem being the music or the choreography.

The conductor, Pierre Monteux remembered:

'The audience remained quiet for the first two minutes. Then came boos and cat-calls from the gallery, soon after from lower floors. Neighbors began to hit each other over the head with fists, canes or whatever came to hand. Soon this anger was concentrated against the dancers, and then, more particularly, against the orchestra, the direct perpetrator of the musical crime. Everything available was tossed in our direction, but we continued to play on. The end of the performance was greeted by the arrival of the gendarmes. Stravinsky had disappeared through a window backstage, to wander disconsolately along the streets of Paris.'

Stravinsky recalled:

'During the whole performance I was at Nijinsky's side in the wings. He was standing on a chair, screaming "sixteen, seventeen, eighteen" – they had their own method of counting to keep time. Naturally, the poor dancers could hear nothing by reason of the row in the auditorium and the sound of their own dance steps. I had to hold Nijinsky by his clothes, for he was furious, and ready to dash on to the stage at any moment and create a scandal. Diaghileff kept ordering the electricians to turn the lights on or off, hoping in that way to put a stop to the noise. That is all I can remember about the first performance.'

Facts:

- Igor Stravinsky was born at Oranienbaum near St. Petersburg on June 17, 1882.
- Stravinsky's father was singer with the Imperial Orchestra
- Stravinsky attended the University of St. Petersburg to study law before becoming a musician.
- He created some of his most famous works while working with the controversial Ballets Russes.
- The music from The Rite of Spring helped inspire Disney's Fantasia.
- Stravinsky delivered lectures at Harvard University in America.
- In 1945 Stravinsky became an American Citizen
- Stravinsky was one of the most controversial and boundary breaking composers of his time.
- Stravinsky died in Manhattan on March 6, 1971

Stravinsky's Music

Now we know more about the man, why not listen to some of his music!

- The Firebird
- Petrushka
- The Rite of Spring
- Agon
- Apollo
- Les Noces
- Oedipus Rex
- The Rake's Progress
- The Soldier's Tale
- Symphonies of Wind Instruments
- Tarantella
- The Owl and the Pussy Cat
- Circus Polka
- Three pieces for String Quartet
- Symphony in C