



Igor Fyodorovich Stravinsky (17 June 1882 – 6 April 1971) was a Russian-born, naturalized French, later naturalized American composer, pianist, and conductor. He is widely acknowledged as one of the most important and influential composers of 20th century music. He was a quintessentially cosmopolitan Russian who was named by *Time* magazine as one of the 100 most influential people of the century. He became a naturalized French citizen in 1934 and a naturalized US citizen in 1945. In addition to the recognition he received for his compositions, he also achieved fame as a pianist and a conductor, often at the premieres of his works. Stravinsky's compositional career was notable for its stylistic diversity. He first achieved international fame with three ballets commissioned by the impresario Sergei Diaghilev and performed by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes (Russian Ballets): *The Firebird* (1910),

Petrushka (1911/1947), and *The Rite of Spring* (1913). The *Rite*, whose premiere provoked a riot, transformed the way in which subsequent composers thought about rhythmic structure, and was largely responsible for Stravinsky's enduring reputation as a musical revolutionary, pushing the boundaries of musical design. After this first Russian phase Stravinsky turned to neoclassicism in the 1920s. The works from this period tended to make use of traditional musical forms (concerto grosso, fugue, symphony), frequently concealed a vein of intense emotion beneath a surface appearance of detachment or austerity, and often paid tribute to the music of earlier masters, for example J.S. Bach and Tchaikovsky. In the 1950s he adopted serial procedures, using the new techniques over his last twenty years. Stravinsky's compositions of this period share traits with examples of his earlier output: rhythmic energy, the construction of extended melodic ideas out of a few two- or three-note cells, and clarity of form, of instrumentation, and of utterance. He also published a number of books throughout his career, almost always with the aid of a collaborator, sometimes uncredited. In his 1936 autobiography, *Chronicles of My Life*, written with the help of Walter Nouvel, Stravinsky included his well-known statement that "music is, by its very nature, essentially powerless to express anything at all." With Alexis Roland-Manuel and Pierre Souvtchinsky he wrote his 1939–40 Harvard University Charles Eliot Norton Lectures, which were delivered in French and later collected under the title *Poétique musicale* in 1942 (translated in 1947 as *Poetics of Music*). Several interviews in which the composer spoke to Robert Craft were published as *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky*. They collaborated on five further volumes over the following decade.

Concerto in E-flat (Dumbarton Oaks), is a chamber concerto by Igor Stravinsky, named for the Dumbarton Oaks estate of Robert Woods Bliss in Washington, DC, who commissioned it for his thirtieth wedding anniversary. Composed in Stravinsky's neo-classical period, the piece is one of Stravinsky's two chamber concertos (the other being the Concerto in D, for strings, 1946), and is scored for a chamber orchestra of flute, clarinet, bassoon, two horns, three violins, three violas, two cellos, and two double basses. The three movements, *Tempo giusto*, *Allegretto*, and *Con moto*, performed without a break, total roughly twelve minutes. The concerto was the last work Stravinsky completed in Europe, written in Annemasse, near Geneva, Switzerland. Stravinsky drew his inspiration from J.S. Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos* for its baroque concerto grosso form, particularly the third; the scoring for trios of higher strings is a nod to these as well. Each of the instruments functions as both ensemble member and soloist throughout the course of the piece. It is contrapuntal in nature, the outer movements particularly so, while the second, comparatively relaxed and built on melodic fragments, provides relief from the complex, motivically-driven fugal writing that frames it. Noted composer and composition teacher Nadia Boulanger, who admired Stravinsky's works, conducted the May 8, 1938 premiere in Washington, DC, at Stravinsky's invitation; the composer was recovering from tuberculosis and thus unable to attend. The manuscript is currently in the Rare Book Collection of the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library, Washington, D.C. Stravinsky himself created a reduction for two pianos; Leif Thybo's 1952 transcription for organ began his study of the possibilities of the modern form of the instrument. A ballet was premiered by the New York City Ballet on June 23, 1972, calling for one principal and six corps dancers.