

Essential Igor Stravinsky – online playlist copy for featured composer

Stravinsky's riotous 'Rite of Spring' ballet scandalised the classical music world with its premiere in 1913, pushing the boundaries of rhythm, tonality and instrumental capability in a way that was totally unprecedented. The uncompromising musical vision and the notoriety of the work laid down the gauntlet for a new generation of 20th-century composers to break away from convention and experiment with form.

Stravinsky's style evolved constantly throughout the course of his career and during the interwar years he became a leading proponent of neoclassical style, (fusing his modernist flair with the retrospective Baroque and Classical models), and towards the end of his life, employed Schoenberg's twelve-tone serialism technique, with similarly idiosyncratic finesse.

A rebel, self-proclaimed "inventor of music", and a true icon of modernism, Stravinsky's palpable influence extends beyond the realm of classical music and can be heard in jazz, contemporary music and film scores to this day. His prolific 60-year career over 3 stylistic periods produced operas, ballets, orchestral masterworks and intimate song settings, as well as compositions for circus elephants, player piano and a film score. The profound creativity and daring innovation of Stravinsky's contribution to the classical canon are perhaps best summarised in a quip from his contemporary, Sergei Prokofiev – "Bach on the wrong notes".