



# Igor STRAVINSKY

## *Fireworks*

**Igor Fyodorovich Stravinsky** (17 June 1882 – 6 April 1971) was a Russian composer, pianist and conductor, later of French (from 1934) and American (from 1945) citizenship. He is widely considered one of the most important and influential composers of the 20th century and a pivotal figure in modernist music. 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 first performed in Paris by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes: *The Firebird* (1910), *Petrushka* (1911), and *The Rite of Spring* (1913). The last transformed the way in which subsequent composers thought about rhythmic structure and was largely responsible for Stravinsky's enduring reputation as a revolutionary who pushed the boundaries of musical design. His "Russian phase", which continued with works such as *Renard*, *L'Histoire du soldat*, and *Les noces*, was followed in the 1920s by a period in which he turned to neoclassicism. The works from this period tended to make use of traditional musical forms (concerto grosso, fugue, and symphony) and drew from earlier styles, especially those of the 18th century. In the 1950s, Stravinsky adopted serial procedures. His compositions of this period shared 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 and instrumentation. Stravinsky was born on 17 June 1882 in the town of Oranienbaum on the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland, 25 miles west of Saint Petersburg. His father, Fyodor Ignatievich Stravinsky (1843–1902), was an established bass opera singer in the Kiev Opera and the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg and his mother, Anna Kirillovna Stravinskaya (née Kholodovskaya; 1854–1939), a native of Kiev, was one of four daughters of a high-ranking official in the Kiev Ministry of Estates. Igor was the third of their four sons; his brothers were Roman, Yury, and Gury. The Stravinsky family was of Polish and Russian heritage, descended "from a long line of Polish grandees, senators and landowners". It is traceable to the 17th and 18th centuries to the bearers of the Sulima and Strawiński coat of arms. The original family surname was Sulima-Strawiński; the name "Stravinsky" originated from the word "Strava", one of the variants of the Streva River in Lithuania.

**Feu d'artifice, Op. 4 (Fireworks)** is a composition by Igor Stravinsky, written in 1908 and described by the composer as a "short orchestral fantasy". It usually takes less than four minutes to perform. Stravinsky composed *Feu d'artifice* as a wedding present for Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's daughter Nadezhda and Maximilian Steinberg, who had married a few days before her father's death. *Feu d'artifice* helped develop Stravinsky's reputation as a composer, although it is not considered representative of his mature work. The work has some hints of bi-tonality but is for the most part similar in style to that of Rimsky-Korsakov who, at the time, was his teacher and mentor. It has the form of a scherzo but is still labeled "orchestral fantasy" because of its short length. Alexander Siloti conducted the premiere on 6 February 1909. The accepted story is that Stravinsky got the commission from Sergei Diaghilev to write *The Firebird* (1910) in part because Diaghilev heard this piece of music, and was impressed with its orchestration. However, Diaghilev had already commissioned Stravinsky to orchestrate two pieces of Chopin (the *Grande valse brillante* and *Nocturne in A flat*) for the ballet *Les Sylphides*. The work is scored for piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes (2nd doubling cor anglais), 3 clarinets (3rd doubling bass clarinet), 2 bassoons, 6 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, 2 percussionists (cymbals, bass drum, triangle, and glockenspiel), 2 harps, celesta, and strings