



Béla Bartók / Igor Stravinsky

Béla Bartók

- ▶ Bartók was a Hungarian composer and pianist—he was also a music professor at the Budapest Academy of Music
- ▶ He conducted extensive research into East-European folk music, recording and transcribing over 9000 folk songs
- ▶ The characteristics of this folk music (irregular meters, unusual dissonances, and pentatonic and modal scales) found their way into his own compositions, including:
 - ▶ Piano music: *Mikrokosmos*, other works for piano and orchestra
 - ▶ Chamber music: six string quartets, concertos, sonatas
 - ▶ Orchestral music: *Concerto for Orchestra* and *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*, 2 ballets
 - ▶ An opera (*Bluebeard's Castle*), *Music for Children*, etc.

Characteristics of Bartók's music

- ▶ Use of scales and modes besides major and minor
- ▶ Irregular meters and changing meter
- ▶ Striking dissonances
- ▶ Non-tertian harmonies (quartal, quintal, secundal)
- ▶ Polytonality, polymodality, polymeter, polyrhythms
- ▶ Contrapuntal rigor
- ▶ Symmetry in design
- ▶ Melodic "mirroring"
- ▶ Transformation of a few germinal themes
- ▶ Elements of folk music

Igor Stravinsky

- ▶ A Russian composer who emigrated to the United States
- ▶ Widely considered one of the greatest composers of the 20th century—certainly one of the most influential
- ▶ His international fame was born when the premiere of his ballet *The Rite of Spring* caused a riot in Paris
- ▶ Two other early ballets were *The Firebird* and *Petrushka*
- ▶ Stravinsky composed much music in his 88 years:
 - ▶ Many orchestral works, including 7 concertos and 3 symphonies
 - ▶ Over 30 chamber works for voices and/or instruments
 - ▶ Operas, oratorios, and religious works
 - ▶ Various piano pieces and several songs

Characteristics of Stravinsky's music

- ▶ New rhythmic procedures, including irregular and changing meters and violent, unpredictable accents
- ▶ Motoric rhythmic figures and overlapping ostinati
- ▶ Brilliant, unique orchestration (unusual instrument ranges)
- ▶ A highly dissonant harmonic language
- ▶ Some bitonality (competing tonal centers)
- ▶ Frequent alteration between contrasting ideas
- ▶ Use of short, repeating melodic cells which are expanded, fragmented, developed, and superimposed
- ▶ Later styles involved neo-classicism (the distortion of classical models) and twelve-tone serialism