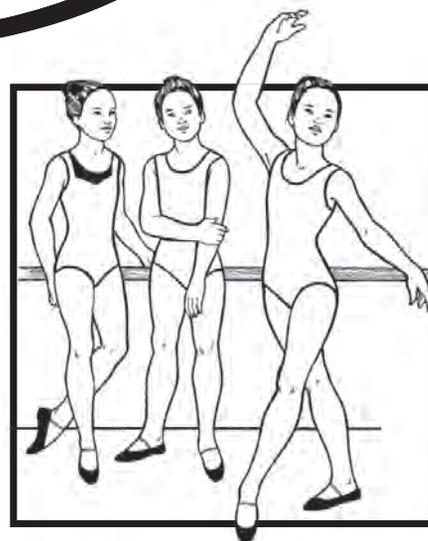
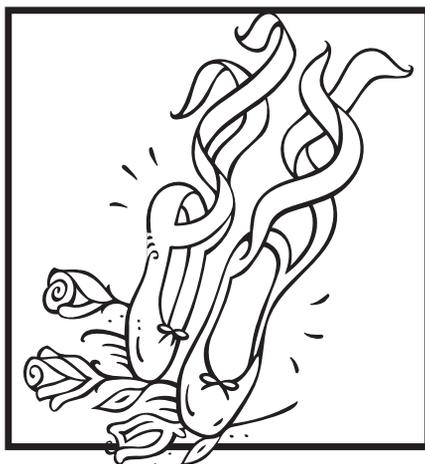




# Listen and Color

## The Firebird

Ask your teacher or another adult to play a recording of Igor Stravinsky's *The Firebird* as you color the picture below. Write a few sentences about the story or music on the back of this page.



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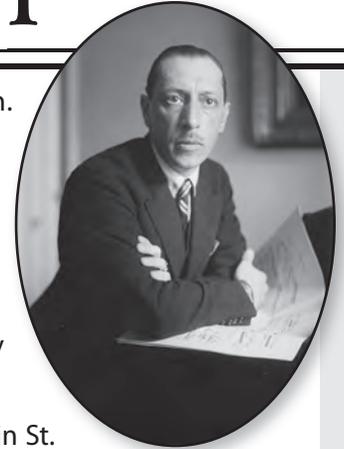
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# Spotlight on Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

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Perhaps more than any time that preceded it, the twentieth century was an age of invention. This period saw the creation of the first automobiles and airplanes, as well as telephones, radio, and television. So many changes made people think about the world in different ways, and allowed people to share information and ideas more easily. In music, new approaches to rhythms, harmonies, forms, styles, and ways to create sound all emerged. Igor Stravinsky is among the most famous composers of twentieth-century musical experimentation, and it is fitting that he considered himself an “inventor of music.” During his nearly seventy years as a composer, his style continuously evolved and transformed to incorporate a wide variety of influences from his ever-changing world.

Igor was born June 17, 1882, in a Russian town alongside the Gulf of Finland. He grew up in St. Petersburg, where his father was a famous bass singer with the Imperial Opera. Attending Fyodor Stravinsky’s performances was a highlight of Igor’s youth. With such a strong musical influence in his life, it is not surprising that Igor began studying piano before he was ten years old and quickly developed an aptitude for improvisation. But in spite of his talent, his parents wanted him to become a lawyer rather than a musician.

In 1901, Igor enrolled at the University of St. Petersburg as a law student. He continued to be more enthusiastic about music than about law, and a happy accident helped to set him on the path to becoming a professional composer. One of his classmates in law school was Vladimir Rimsky-Korsakov, who was the son of the famous Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. The two students became close friends, and Vladimir introduced Igor to his father in 1902. From 1905 until his death in 1908, the elder Rimsky-Korsakov gave Igor private composition lessons twice each week.

On February 6, 1909, Igor’s pieces *Fireworks* and *Scherzo Fantastique* premiered in St. Petersburg. Sergei Diaghilev was in the audience, and he was so impressed with what he heard that he asked Igor to orchestrate two Chopin pieces for a performance by his famous Ballet Russes. The success of that endeavor led to their continued collaboration on three of Igor’s most famous pieces: *The Firebird* (1910), *Petrouchka* (1911), and *The Rite of Spring* (1913). These pieces show the evolution of Igor’s musical style from the classical influence of Rimsky-Korsakov to increased experimentation with intense rhythms and dissonance. In the premiere of *The Rite of Spring* on May 29, 1913, it shocked the audience so much that there was a riot in the concert hall!

Igor’s work earned him a reputation as a musical innovator and an important place in music history. He continued to explore Russian themes up through 1919, in spite of having to relocate his family to Switzerland during World War I. The Stravinsky family moved to Paris in 1920. During the years from 1920 to 1954, he wrote pieces including *Oedipus Rex*, *Symphony of Psalms*, and *The Rake’s Progress* that borrow musical ideas from the classical period and combine them with more modern musical experiments. By the beginning the 1950s, Igor had become a citizen of the United States. He lived in Hollywood, and his friendships with some of the most prominent musicians, artists (including Pablo Picasso), and writers of the time led him to incorporate the new serial or twelve-tone writing style into his music.

Igor characterized himself as an “inventor of music,” who “learned throughout my life as a composer chiefly through my mistakes and pursuits of false assumptions, not by my exposure to founts of wisdom and knowledge.”

## Want to learn more? Take a WebVisit!

You can learn more about Igor Stravinsky and the famous premiere performance of his ballet *The Rite of Spring* by visiting <http://www.keepingscore.org/sites/default/files/swf/stravinsky/full>.

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