The Life and Times of Igor Stravinsky

1882  Igor Stravinsky is born in Oranienbaum, near St. Petersburg, on June 17.

- Tchaikovsky composes the famous 1812 Overture.

1908  Stravinsky composes his orchestral piece Scherzo Fantastique which catches the attention of Ballet Russes artistic director, Sergei Diaghilev.

- Stravinsky’s teacher and mentor, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov dies.

- The Ford Motor Company produces the first Model “T” car.

- Anne of Avonlea makes her world debut in Lucy Maud Montgomery’s classic tale Anne of Green Gables.

1909  Stravinsky begins to collaborate with Sergei Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes.

- Elektra, by Richard Strauss, receives its first performance in Dresden.

- Construction begins on the RMS Titanic in Belfast.

1910  Stravinsky’s ballet The Firebird debuts in Paris.

- Gaston Leroux writes the novel The Phantom of the Opera.

- Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier creates a Canadian navy via the Naval Services Bill.

1911  Stravinsky writes another ballet score for Diaghilev: Petrouchka.

- Strauss’s Der Rosenkavalier receives its first performance in Dresden.

- Bartók completes Bluebeard’s Castle.

- Marie Curie is awarded the Nobel Prize for Chemistry.

- The world’s first national park service, the Dominion Parks Branch (now Parks Canada) is established.

1913  Stravinsky’s Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rite of Spring) premières in Paris, with choreography by Nijinsky, causing riots in the audience during its premiere.

- Canadian novelist, playwright, critic, journalist and professor, Robertson Davies, is born in Thamesville, Ontario.

- The modern zipper is invented.

1914  The Nightingale, Stravinsky’s first opera, based on a story by Hans Christian Andersen, receives its premier performance at Opéra national de Paris.

- World War I is precipitated by the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo.

- Canada is automatically drawn into the conflict when Britain declares war on Germany. Parliament passes the War Measures Act allowing the suspension of civil rights during periods of emergency.
The Royal Ontario Museum opens.

1922
The Fox and Mavra, two short Stravinsky operas based on Russian folk tales, are produced in Paris.

The world’s first insulin treatment is made at the Toronto General Hospital.

Sir Frederick Banting, Dr. Charles Best, Dr. J. J. R. MacLeod and J. B. Collip share the Nobel Prize for the discovery of insulin.

The women of Prince Edward Island win the right to vote.

The Union of Social Soviet Republics (U.S.S.R.) is founded.

1927
Oedipus Rex, Stravinsky’s opera-oratorio based on Jean Cocteau’s version of Sophocles’ Oedipus the King, is produced in Paris.

Charles Lindbergh flies The Spirit of St. Louis across the Atlantic. It is the first solo, transatlantic flight, direct from New York City to Paris.

Babe Ruth hits 60 home runs setting a major league record.

Showboat, written by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II, receives its first performance in New York.

1930
Stravinsky completes his Symphony of Psalms, a work for chorus and orchestra (without violins or violas).

The Mickey Mouse comic strip makes its first appearance.

Photoflash bulb comes into use.

Pluto is discovered by American astronomer Clyde Tombaugh.

Professional hockey defense man for the NHL, business man and co-founder of a popular restaurant chain, Tim Horton is born in Cochrane, Ontario.

1950
Canadian Opera Company is founded. Click here to discover the history of the company.

1951
Stravinsky’s opera The Rake’s Progress, one of the greatest post-war operas, is produced in Venice, with a libretto by W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman after engravings by the British artist, William Hogarth (1697 – 1764).

The new headquarters for the United Nations opens in New York City.

Italian composer Gian Carlo Menotti writes Amahl and the Night Visitors, an opera commissioned by NBC-TV in the United States.

American writer, J. D. Salinger, publishes his controversial novel, The Catcher in the Rye.

Colour television is first introduced in the United States.

The National Ballet of Canada gives its first performance in the Eaton Auditorium (now known as the Carlu), and its current Artistic Director and retired prima ballerina Karen Kain is born in Hamilton, Ontario.

1962
Stravinsky writes an opera for television, The Flood, using serial techniques. He visits Toronto and works with the CBC Orchestra for a CBC documentary.

American playwright Edward Albee writes Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

Trans-Canada Highway officially opens.

Saskatchewan NDP introduces Canada’s first Medicare Plan and is opposed by a doctors’ strike.

1971
Stravinsky dies in New York City.

Theme parks become the rage: Walt Disney World opens in Florida and Ontario Place opens in Toronto.