

Composer

ELLIOT
CARTER

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f the Week

Compiled by
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Elliot Carter, in his home.

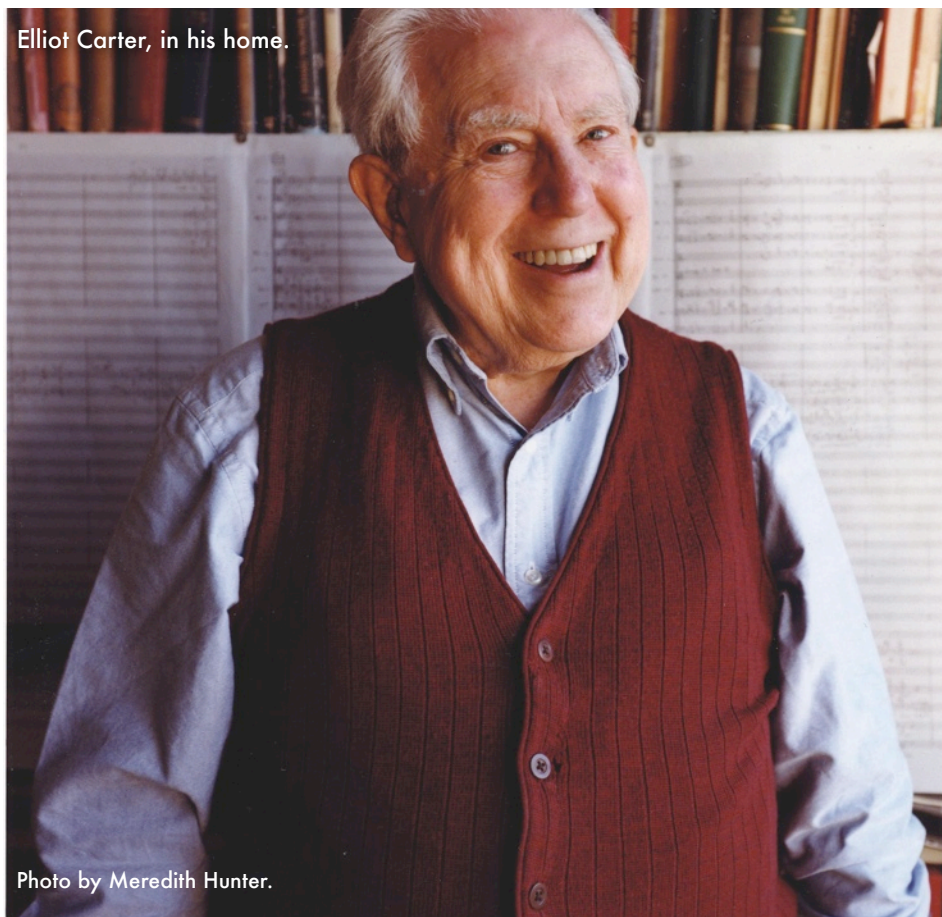


Photo by Meredith Hunter.

One of America's most beloved composers celebrates his centenary

A living legend, Elliot Carter still remembers when a former teacher took him to see the American premiere of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* in the early years of the last century.

Born in 1908 and raised in New York, Carter was influenced early on by the music of his family's insurance salesman: Charles Ives. He went on to study English at Harvard University, but continued to study music with such notable composers as Walter Piston. Following his years at Harvard, Carter traveled to Paris to study with the famed Nadia Boulanger.

Elliot Carter's style is anything but traditional, if you consider Beethoven and Mozart to represent what is traditional. In fact, in recent webcast Carter explained that he hadn't thought of Beethoven as bearable

until years after discovering the music of the great early twentieth-century composers. His own music continually challenges relationships of tempo and texture. One of his works for solo percussionist, *Eight Pieces for Four Timpani*, includes metric modulations, precise changes of tempo by means of changing the meter of the musical line.

Carter has been continually recognized for his contributions to music composition. He has won two Pulitzer Prizes, the Gold Medal for Music from the National Institute of Arts and Letters, membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

In honor of his centenary, there is a joint, year-long celebration in 2008 by numerous organizations including Carter's publishers, Boosey & Hawkes and G. Schirmer. The

celebration culminates on December 11, 2008 (Carter's birthday) with concerts in London and Birmingham, England, and New York City. More information on the centenary celebration can be found at carter100.org.

Notable Works:

Interventions (2007), for piano and orchestra, co-commissioned by The Carnegie Hall Corporation, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the Staatskapelle Berlin

Eight Pieces for Four Timpani (1950), for solo timpanist

Variations for Orchestra (1955), commissioned by the Louisville Orchestra

"I consider every piece of mine a musical adventure."

-Elliot Carter

"Carter's ongoing creative whirlwind has been one of the great joys of American music at the end of the twentieth century. As we get set to enter the twenty-first, we wish Elliot Carter many happy returns, and many new journeys."

-John F. Link,
William Patterson University
ISAM Newsletter, Spring 1999