

## Topic Page: [Carter, Elliott, 1908–2012](#)

Summary Article: **Carter, Elliott (Cook)**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

US composer. He created intricately structured works in Schoenbergian serial idiom, incorporating 'metrical modulation', an adaptation of standard notation allowing different instruments or groups to remain synchronized while playing at changing speeds. This practice was first employed in his *String Quartet No. 1* (1950–51), and to dense effect in *Double Concerto* (1961) for harpsichord and piano. His late music showed a new tautness and vitality, as in *Three Occasions for Orchestra* (1986–89). Carter won the Pulitzer Prize for Music twice, in 1960 and 1973.

Carter was educated at Harvard University, where he studied music with Walter Piston; later he was a pupil of Nadia Boulanger in Paris, France. From 1960 to 1962 he was professor of composition at Yale University. From 1972 he taught at the Juilliard School, New York. Carter's music is many layered and of extreme rhythmic complexity, sometimes recalling Charles Ives, with cross-rhythms and different rhythms played simultaneously.

**WorksBallet** *Pocahontas* (1939), *The Minotaur* (1947).

**Orchestral** symphony no. 1 (1942; first performance 1944), *Holiday Overture* (1944; first performance 1948), *Variations* (1953–55; first performance 1956), piano concerto (1965; first performance 1967), *Concerto for Orchestra* (1969; first performance 1970), *A Symphony of Three Orchestras* (1976; first performance 1977), *Penthode* for chamber orchestra (1985), *Partita* (1993), *Adagio tenebroso* (1995).

**Instrumental** piano sonata (1946), cello sonata (1948), five string quartets (1951, 1959, 1971, 1986, 1995), *Night Fantasies* for piano (1980), *Triple Duo* for paired instruments: flute/clarinet, violin/cello, piano/percussion (1982), quintet for piano and wind (1992).

**Solo vocal** *A Mirror on Which to Dwell* for soprano and 9 players (6 settings of Elizabeth Bishop, 1975), *In Sleep, in Thunder*, song cycle for tenor and 14 players (texts by Robert Lowell, 1981).

**Opera** *What Next?* (1997).

### **APA**

Chicago

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## APA

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## Chicago

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## Harvard

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## MLA

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