Remarkable features of Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring

Melody
1. Melodies are usually short, and have an ancient, folk-like character
2. Melodies often appear as fragments only – short groups of notes

Rhythm
1. **Meter** changes frequently (often odd numbers of beats)
2. Rhythmic groupings are often irregular
3. Use of **Ostinato**: a constantly recurring melodic/rhythmic fragment
4. Accents are displaced giving the sense of surprise, tension, and the unexpected
5. No lengthy section of music where the beat is steady or predictable
6. Use of **Polyrhythm**: The simultaneous combination of contrasting rhythms; rhythmic conflicts or cross-rhythms occurring within a single meter (example, groups of four against three)
7. **Rhythm** is the primary force of motion in the piece, rather than harmonic motion

Texture
1. Varies from **thin** to extremely **thick**, and back again at the spur of the moment
2. Stravinsky uses alternately **chordal harmony**, **homophonic**, **polyphonic**, and **monophonic** textures

Harmony
1. Stravinsky uses primarily **dissonant** harmony throughout the piece
2. Use of **Polychords**: two chords in two different keys being played at the same time
3. **Harmonic motion** is usually quite slow

Dynamics
1. Stravinsky uses the softest **ppp** to the loudest **fff** possible
2. Dynamic changes often come unexpectedly

Form
1. **Through-composed**, though fragments of melodies will be repeated
2. Stravinsky sets contrasting sections of music next to each other without any kind of preparation or transition – creating a “collage of music.”