



## COMPOSER BIOGRAPHY

**MODEST MUSSORGSKY**

BORN: March 21, 1839

ERA/STYLE: Romantic

DIED: March 28, 1881

HOMETOWN: Karevo, Russia

Modest Mussorgsky was born in Russia in 1839. He began studying the piano with his mother and later took lessons. He was a very talented pianist as a child and became interested in composing at an early age. Despite his musical talent, Mussorgsky went to military school and joined the army.

Mussorgsky was what we might call a “part-time” composer. He did not always have a lot of time to write music, because he was so busy working. He became an army general and later worked in the Russian civil service.

He is sometimes called a “nationalist” composer, because he tried very hard to make his music reflect the sights and sounds of his native land. Much of his music was based on Russian folk songs, history, and philosophy. Besides *Pictures at an Exhibition*, one of his finest compositions is a Russian opera called *Boris Godunov*, which is based on the life of a great Russian king.