



COMPOSER BIOGRAPHY

**SERGEI RACHMANINOV**

BORN: April 1, 1873

ERA/STYLE: Romantic

DIED: March 28, 1943

HOMETOWN: Starorussky Uyezd, Russia

Sergei Rachmaninov was born in 1873 in Russia. His father was a wealthy retired army officer, and his mother was the daughter of a general. By the time Rachmaninov was 4 years old, he showed signs of exceptional musical ability. His cousin, a well-known concert pianist and conductor, suggested that his parents send Rachmaninov to the Moscow Conservatory to study piano.

After graduating from the Moscow Conservatory with honors and awards, Rachmaninov became known as an excellent concert pianist, conductor, and composer. It is rare for a musician to be outstanding in all three areas. However, his career did not always go well. His First Symphony in 1897 received negative reviews from audiences and critics, which made him stop composing for four years. In 1902, Rachmaninov finally started writing music again and completed his Second Piano Concerto, which was a great success. He featured the piano in many of his compositions because he was an exceptional pianist. Rachmaninov possibly had the largest hands of all classical music composers, which makes his pieces very difficult to play.

In 1902, Rachmaninov married Natalya Satina. They had one daughter, Irina. Following the Russian Revolution, he and his family left Russia and eventually moved to New York in 1918. For the next 25 years, he spent more time performing and conducting to make a living, composing only six works in that time. He moved to Beverly Hills, California in 1942, and was granted American citizenship one year before his death in 1943.