



COMPOSER BIOGRAPHY

**CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS**

BORN: October 9, 1835

ERA/STYLE: 19th Century Romantic

DIED: December 16, 1921

HOMETOWN: Paris, France

Camille Saint-Saëns is one of the most famous French composers. He was also an organist, pianist, and conductor. He was born in Paris, France and began his piano studies when he was just 3 years old. He gave his first public piano performance at the age of 5. By the age of 7, he had already begun composing his own music. At 13, Saint-Saëns became an organ student at the Paris Conservatoire, and he wrote his first symphony at age 16. He remained an active composer throughout his long life, composing over 300 works, including 13 operas, and he was the first major composer to write music specifically for the cinema.

Saint-Saëns was very fond of animals and wrote a book about them. One year while he was on holiday, he composed a set of orchestral character pieces called *Carnival of the Animals*, which consists of 14 movements. Each movement in *Carnival of the Animals* describes a particular animal, usually by mimicking the sounds that animal makes or characterizing the way it moves or carries itself. Saint-Saëns only allowed the piece to be performed twice during his lifetime, likely because he was afraid the work would hurt his reputation as a serious composer. However, he allowed the piece to be published after his death, and it has since become one of his most popular works.