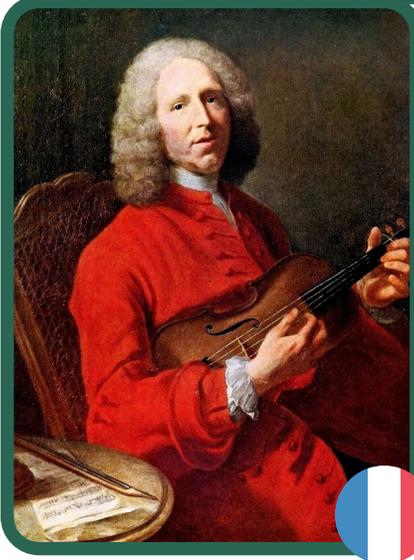




COMPOSER BIOGRAPHY

**JEAN-PHILIPPE RAMEAU**

BORN: September 25, 1683 ERA/STYLE: Baroque/early Classical

DIED: September 12, 1764 HOMETOWN: Dijon, France

Jean-Philippe Rameau was one of the most important French composers of the 18th century. He is best known for composing operas and many masterpieces for the harpsichord, the keyboard instrument most popular during his lifetime. Many of these works have since been adapted for the piano.

He was born in Dijon to humble beginnings, the seventh of eleven children. His father was a local church organist, and his mother was the daughter of a notary.

Jean-Philippe was taught music before he could read and write, but was not considered a good student. He disrupted classes with singing, having developed a passion for opera by age 12. After a short time studying law, Rameau decided he would rather be a musician, and his father sent him to Milan, Italy, to study. He returned to France and played violin in traveling bands for a time before eventually returning to Dijon to take his father's position as church organist.

In 1722, Jean-Philippe settled in Paris, where he would live the rest of his life. During this time, he became well-known as a music theorist, writing two major textbooks on the subject. He would also publish more works for the harpsichord before being encouraged by friends to pursue music for opera, his real passion. It was not until Rameau was nearly 50 years old that he began writing the operatic works for which he would eventually be best known and remembered. After receiving recognition for his talent at composing opera, he won many admirers and positions around Paris up to the end of his life.

Jean-Philippe Rameau is known for being completely consumed by his musical pursuits. He followed his passion obsessively, sometimes at the cost of his personal and professional relationships. However, he did marry a woman who was a fine singer and instrumentalist herself, and the marriage is said to have been a happy one. The couple had four children.