

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

“Orchestration
is part of the
very soul of
the work.”

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov was a Russian composer born in 1844 in Tikhvin, Russia. At age six, his mother began teaching him piano and, aged 10, he had already written his first composition. When he was 12 years old, Rimsky-Korsakov's family moved to St. Petersburg where he followed in his family's footsteps at the naval academy.

Although his formal career was in the navy, Rimsky-Korsakov passionately devoted time towards writing musical compositions while at sea. Aged 18, he became a member of The Five - a group of five eminent Russian composers whose collaborations created a truly national school of Russian music.

In 1865, Rimsky-Korsakov completed and premiered his first symphonic piece, *Symphony No. 1 in E minor*. Its success grew his reputation as a musician and, despite no formal music education, Rimsky-Korsakov was appointed a professor at the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1871, where he inspired and taught some of Russia's most celebrated composers such as Igor Stravinsky.

Rimsky-Korsakov's oeuvre consists of musical works in all genres including orchestrations and operas, many of which are based on Russian history or folklore. Some of his best-known works include *The Flight of the Bumblebee* and *Scheherazade*. He is regarded as one of the most influential composers of the Romantic period, and a founding father of the Russian nationalist music movement.



DID YOU KNOW?

Rimsky-Korsakov worked under the guidance and mentorship of composers Mily Balakirev and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky.

FUN FACT

Rimsky-Korsakov claimed to have the neurological condition synaesthesia, which caused him to associate musical notes with colours.

MUSICAL TERM

Orchestration: The arrangement or scoring of music for orchestral performance.

