

Sergei Rachmaninov

“Music is enough for a lifetime, but a lifetime is not enough for music.”

Born in 1873, Sergei Rachmaninov was a prominent Russian composer, conductor and one of the greatest pianists of his time. At age four, his mother, a proficient pianist, recognised her child's gift and began teaching him piano and music at home.

At age 10, Rachmaninov was first enrolled at the St. Petersburg Conservatory to further his musical education. He then transferred to the Moscow Conservatory in 1885, specifically to study piano under the direction of the renowned Russian pianist and teacher Nikolai Zverev. During this time, he also met the great composer and mentor Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, who had a significant influence on his work as a composer.

From 1909 onwards, Rachmaninov gained international acclaim and fame on several tours by performing and conducting in the United States and Europe. Following his success, he was offered the position of conductor for the Boston Symphony Orchestra but declined twice, in favour of returning to Russia.

Sergei Rachmaninov experimented with music, composing for a wide range of works such as piano concertos, symphonies, ballets, operas and much more. *Piano Concerto no.2* (1901) and *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* (1934), a composition for piano and orchestra, are two of his best-known pieces. His work is generally distinguished by unique melodies, rich harmonies and impressive orchestration, making him one of the most innovative and greatest composers of the 20th century and the last great figure of Russian Romanticism.



DID YOU KNOW?

At age 19, Rachmaninov completed his first piano concerto and won a gold medal for composing the one-act opera; *Aleko*.

FUN FACT

Rachmaninov had large hands which allowed him to cover all 12 major keys on the piano; making challenging compositions much easier for him to play.

MUSICAL TERM

Concerto: A long musical composition written for one or more solo instruments supported by an orchestra or other musical groups.

