

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Comprehension

Sergei Rachmaninoff was born April 1st 1873 and is classed as a composer from the Romantic period. He was one of the most important Russian composers of the early 20th century but was also a wonderful pianist. Throughout his school life, Rachmaninoff constantly impressed his teachers with his talents for composition and piano playing. At 18, he composed his First Piano Concerto, which really showcased his abilities.

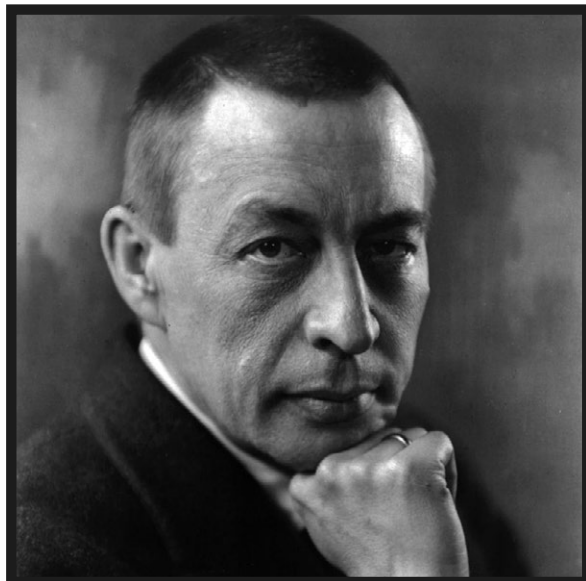
Despite excellent training and guidance from Tchaikovsky, Russia's most famous composer at the time, Rachmaninoff's career was slow to get started. When his first symphony was performed, people really didn't like it, therefore he lost confidence and found himself unable to compose. To solve this problem he visited a hypnotist who repeated the phrase, "You will write your Concerto. You will write your Concerto....", and he did! Rachmaninoff produced his most famous work, 'Piano Concerto in C minor.' His confidence grew and he went on to compose many other pieces.

After the Russian Revolution in 1917, Rachmaninoff left Russia to move to Switzerland. He then travelled to America where he was offered many positions as a conductor. He toured regularly, both conducting and performing.

Rachmaninoff had a phenomenal memory and could hear a piece of music and play it back without sheet music.

In 2014, his original 'Symphony No. 2 Manuscript' was the highest priced item in an auction, selling for over one million pounds, and double the price of a signed score by Mozart.

After a successful career, he died in California at the age of 69.



Sergei Rachmaninoff Comprehension Questions

1. Which period of musical history does Rachmaninoff come under?

2. What were his talents?

3. What did Rachmaninoff compose at 18? Was it well received?

4. Who did Rachmaninoff receive encouragement from?

5. What was Rachmaninoff's reaction when people disliked his first symphony?

6. Name Rachmaninoff's most famous musical composition.

