

Russian Composers

19th-20th centuries

Tchaikovsky

- Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, (1840-1893)
- Russian composer of late Romantic period
- 1812 Overture
- Russian Ballet:
 - Nutcracker Ballet
 - Swan Lake: Prince Siegfried hunting swan, Odette is under Rothbart's spell, virgin prince can save her
- Symphony 6, Pathétique (Beethoven has a Pathétique Sonata)



Question: This composer wrote an opera based on a Henrik Hertz play named Iolanta. Another of his operas features a "Letter aria" and centers on the daughters of Madame Larina. His final completed symphony references the Orthodox requiem and includes a limping waltz in 5/4. A more famous composition by this composer of Symphony (*) Pathétique ends with the hymn "God Save the Tsar" after suppressing the anthem "La Marseillaise," which represents Napoleon's attack on Russia. For ten points, name this Russian composer who showed the death of Lensky in his opera Eugene Onegin and used cannon fire in his 1812 Overture.

ANSWER: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Question: The finale of this composer's third symphony was marked Tempo di polacca [poe-LAH-kah]. One opera by this composer is based on Pushkin's poem about the Battle of Poltava, and another is based on Friedrich Schiller's poem about Joan of Arc. In addition to Mazeppa and The Maid of Orleans, this composer wrote a work in which the protagonist confuses the daughter of the sorcerer Von Rothbart with the princess Odette. Name this composer of the ballets Sleeping Beauty, Swan Lake, and The Nutcracker.

ANSWER: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Mussorgsky

- Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky (1839-1881)
- Russian composer, one of "The Five".
- romantic period
- Song of the Flea
- Opera: Boris Gudunov
 - Boris Gudunov the chief adviser of Ivan the Terrible, being pressured to assume the throne after Ivan's two children die.
- Orchestral tone poem: Night on Bald Mountain
- Piano suite: Pictures at an Exhibition (opens with Promenade, The Great Gate of Kiev, Baba Yaga)



Question: One movement in this suite is said to represent "French women quarrelling violently in the market," and the third movement depicts children at play in the Tuileries. Another movement portrays the flight of the witch Baba Yaga. That movement, "The Hut on Fowl's Legs," precedes the final movement of this suite, a two-part rondo commemorating a structure designed for Tsar Alexander II. This suite opens with a Promenade theme that is restated four times to represent a viewer walking between displays, and it concludes with "The Great Gate of Kiev." For 10 points, name this fifteen-movement piano suite composed by Modest Mussorgsky.

ANSWER: Pictures at an Exhibition

Rimsy-Korsakov

- Nikolai Andreyevich Rimsky-Korsakov (1884-1908)
- Russian composer, one of “The Five”
- Believed in nationalistic style of classical music:
 - Employed Russian folk song and lore in practice, musical orientalism
- His best-known orchestral compositions—*Capriccio Espagnol*, the *Russian Easter Festival Overture*, and the symphonic suite *Scheherazade*
 - Scheherazade’s character represented by violin
- *Flight of the Bumblebee*



Stravinsky

- Igor Stravinsky (1880-1971)
- Studied under Rimsky-Korsakov
- 2 Grand Ballets for Diaghilev: **The Firebird and Petrushka**
 - (The Infernal Dance) Ivan defeats Kashchei with help from Firebird
- **The Rite of Spring**: modern era
- Opens with bassoon solo
 - Shocking, caused riots
- Led him to pursue rational, “neoclassical” music: Symphony of Psalms



Question: In 1958, this composer completed his twelve-tone work using verses from the Book of Lamentations, Threni [THREH-nee]. One of this composer's operas, centering around a relationship between Anne Trulove and Tom Rakewell, is based on a series of pictures by William Hogarth. One of his ballets, which created a strong reaction at its 1913 premier, is The Rite of Spring. Name this composer who used Russian folklore in his ballets The Firebird and Petrushka [peh-TROOSH-kah].

ANSWER: Igor Stravinsky

Rachmaninoff

- Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)
- Highly skilled Russia pianist and conductor of late Romantic Period
- Unsuccessful with *C-Sharp Minor Prelude* (sold cheaply)
- Began productive period with *Second Piano Concerto*
- Variations on a Theme of Corelli off of a Corelli violin sonata
- Moved to the U.S. in 1917 after Bolshevik Revolution
- *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* (1934)
 - Nicolo Paganini was a virtuoso on violin
- Symphonic Dances
 - Influenced by Rimsky Korsakov



Shostakovich

- Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)
- Work was emblematic of Soviet Regime and his attempts to survive under its oppression
- Operas: *The Nose* (1928) and *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*
 - First well received, then criticized by Stalin in *Pravda*
- Conciliatory Pieces: Fifth, Seventh/*Leningrad*, and Twelfth Symphonies
 - To get out of trouble
- Thiteenth Symphony (*Babi Yar*)
 - Condemned antisemitism in Nazi Germany and USSR



Question: The first movement of this man's fifth symphony concludes with the celesta playing chromatic scales. That symphony, subtitled "An Artist's Creative Response to Just Criticism," was composed after an opera by this composer was criticized in a Pravda article. This composer of *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* set five Yevgeny Yevtushenko poems in a work commemorating the massacre of Ukrainian Jews. Another of this composer's symphonies mourns the deaths of Soviet citizens during a German offensive and includes the "Invasion" theme. For 10 points, name this Soviet composer of the *Babi Yar* and *Leningrad* symphonies.

Prokofiev

The Love for Three Oranges

- Peter and the Wolf!
 - Bassoon: grandfather
 - Oboe: duck
 - Flute: bird

Question: The third movement of this composer's first symphony is a type of French music called a gavotte [gah-VOT]. One of his ballets is The Prodigal Son, and another includes "Dance of the Knights." In one of this composer's operas, Truffaldino [troof-fahl-DEE-noe] knocks over Fata Morgana [FAH-tah mor-GAH-nah], causing the Prince to laugh. That prince, the son of the King of Clubs, becomes obsessed with some fruit. Another work by this composer features an argument between a bird and a duck. In that work, the bird has a theme performed on flute, and the duck has a theme performed on oboe. Name this composer of The Love for Three Oranges and Peter and the Wolf.

ANSWER: Sergei Prokofiev