

Hey Kids, Meet Modest Mussorgsky

Russian Romantic Era Composer (1839-1881)



Modest Mussorgsky was born on March 9, 1839, in Karevo, a village near St. Petersburg, Russia. At six years old Modest began piano lessons with his mother, who encouraged his early efforts at composition. At the age of ten, Modest and his brother were taken to St. Petersburg to study piano at the elite Peterschule. Three years later Modest entered the Cadet School of the Guards. Music remained important to him, and at his father's expense he published his first piece, *Porte Enseigne Polka* for the piano.

In 1856, Mussorgsky joined the Preobrazhensky Imperial Guards Regiment. As a teenage officer, Mussorgsky met Alexander Borodin, a medical officer in the regiment. Several years later, along with Mily Balakirev, Cesar Cui, and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, they would form *The Five*, a group of composers united to create nationalistic music that was distinctly Russian.

Mussorgsky died on March 16, 1881. His musical compositions have been an inspiration for many Russian composers. Some of his greatest accomplishments include the orchestral work *Night on Bald Mountain*, made famous when it appeared in *Fantasia* in 1940, and *Pictures at an Exhibition*, a collection of piano pieces which describe a set of 10 drawings and watercolor paintings.

