



**Peter Tchaikovsky, Composer**

**Born: May 7, 1880**

**Died: November 6, 1893**

**Nationality: Russian**

**Style/Period: Romantic Era**

**Famous Works: 1812 Overture, March Slav, The Nutcracker**

**Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born in 1840 in present-day Udmurtia, Russia. His father was a Ukrainian mining engineer. Peter began piano lessons at the age of five, and within three years he could read music as well as his teacher.**

**In 1850, Peter's father was appointed as the Director of the St. Petersburg Technological Institute. The only music instruction he received were piano lessons from a piano manufacturer who occasionally made visits to the school. He also attended the opera and theater with his classmates. It was the works of Rossini, Bellini, Verdi and Mozart that he enjoyed the most.**

**Peter's mother died in 1854, which brought him much sorrow. He responded by turning to music. It was at this time that he made his first serious efforts as a composer, writing a waltz in her memory.**

**In 1861, Tchaikovsky heard about classes being offered by the Russian Musical Society. He promptly began his studies. In the following year, Tchaikovsky followed his teacher to the St. Petersburg Conservatory where he accepted a post.**

**In 1869 Tchaikovsky composed his first recognized masterpiece, the Overture-Fantasy *Romeo and Juliet*. Shakespeare's writing deeply inspired Tchaikovsky, and in later years composed other works for *The Tempest* and *Hamlet*.**

**On November 6, 1893 Tchaikovsky died in St. Petersburg from cholera.**

