

# Jean Sibelius Biography



Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) was a Finnish composer of the romantic time period. He was born to a Swedish-speaking family in Finland (Swedish is an official language in Finland as there is a minority that speaks it). As a child, his family called him "Janne", but in his late teens, he opted for the French version of his first name, "Jean," influenced by his seafaring uncle.

After finishing high school Sibelius first went to study law, because that is what his family insisted. However, Jean wasn't interested in law, and soon quit his studies in order to study music only. At first, he planned to become a violinist, but later he realized it was composing that he was better at (though he was also a good violinist). He studied composing and violin in music schools in Helsinki, Berlin, and Vienna. Sibelius composed a lot of his works for the orchestra.

He also wrote songs, violin music, piano music, and chamber music. The core of his works is his seven symphonies (just like Beethoven). Some of his other orchestral works include Karelia Suite, Finlandia, Lemminkäinen Suite, and Tapiola. Many of his works were inspired by Finnish patriotism and love of his homeland, and by the Finnish epic, Kalevala.



Sibelius married Aino Järnefelt in 1892 at the age of 27. The couple had six daughters: Eva, Ruth, Kirsti (who died at a very young age), Katarina, Margareta and Heidi. Their home, called Ainola, was located in a rural area in Jarvenpaa, north of Helsinki. Sibelius wanted to

live there to be able to compose in peace, out of the hustle of the capital. Ainola is located next to a beautiful lake, and the nature there was a big inspiration to Sibelius's music.

Sibelius did not compose any major works after 1926—the last 31 years of his life. He died in Ainola in 1957 from a brain hemorrhage, and was buried there. His wife Aino then lived at Ainola another 12 years until her death. Today, Ainola is owned by the State of Finland and is a museum open to visitors at summertime.