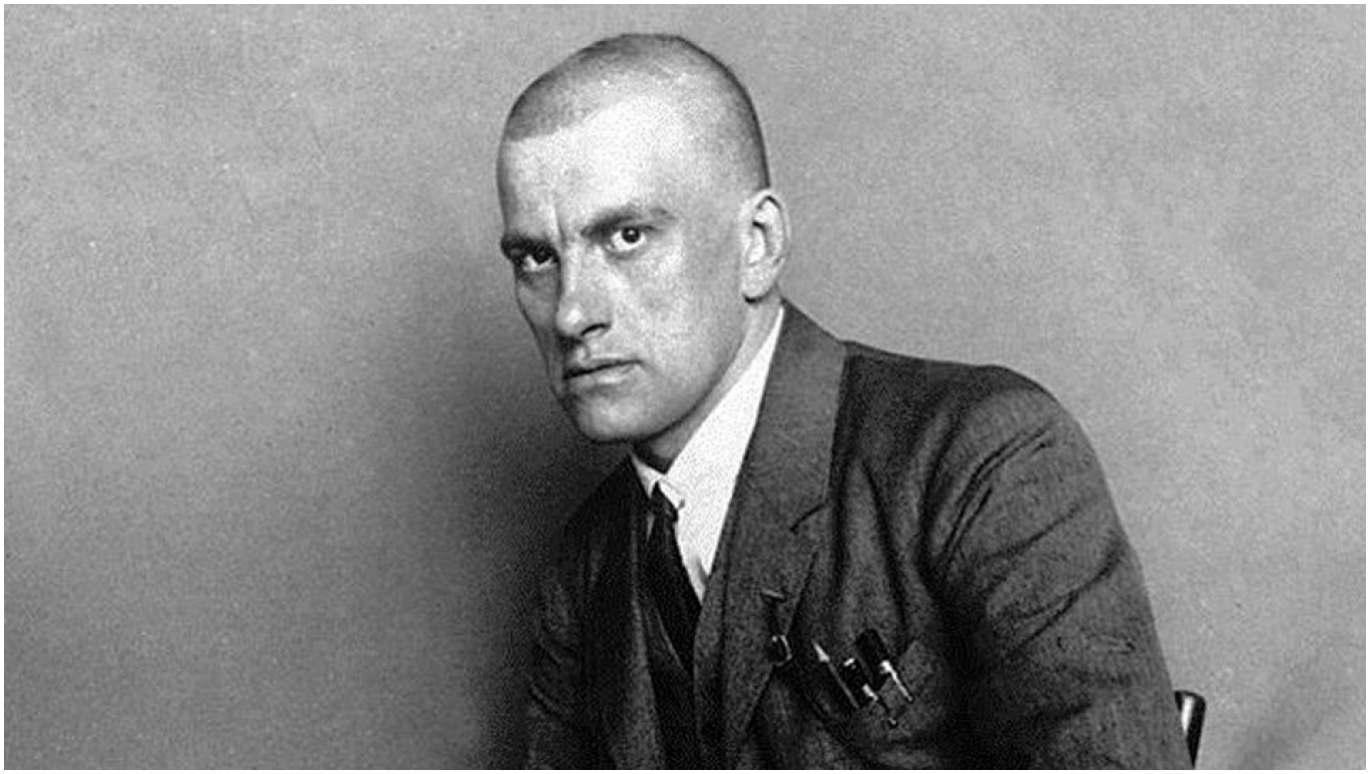
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Russian Poet Mayakovsky Was the First Rapper, Culture Minister Claims

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Vladimir Mayakovsky / mayakovsky.museum

Russia's outspoken culture minister has called the famed Soviet poet Vladimir Mayakovsky the original rapper.

Born 125 years ago, Mayakovsky was famous for satirical depictions of bourgeois life. He gained prominence as a leading avant-garde and Futurist poet in pre-revolutionary Russia and was lauded by Soviet authorities before becoming disillusioned in the new communist state, leading to his suicide in 1930.

Related article: Vladimir Mayakovsky's Voice Still Rings Out

"The modern urban youth's fascination with rap has long gotten on my nerves," Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky said at a Valdai Discussion Club session on Tuesday.

Having studied rap culture through his son, Medinsky said he has come to believe that "Mayakovsky was the first rapper."

"We'll soon be saying that rap is a Russian form of art. It may have originated in America, but it developed further here," the minister was cited as saying by Interfax.

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