

Benjamin Yusupov

- Biography -

Benjamin Yusupov's compositions apply musical traditions of both the West and the East, whereby he particularly has recourse to musical legacies of various Jewish ethnic communities with the aim of creating a new style of Israeli music. Yusupov's interest in different musical cultures extends from Eastern Europe in the north to Ethiopia in the south, and from Central Asia in the east to Morocco in the west. Thus Yusupov has developed an individual, unique musical language in his works. On the one hand, his style shows specific cultural identities of different ethnic groups and, on the other hand, combines the particular rules of these traditions with western compositional methods. Moreover, timbre and tone colour are very important structural elements for Yusupov. A further compositional aspect to be emphasised is both the use of original ethnic instruments and the rapprochement to this sound-world with instruments of the western symphony orchestra.

Benjamin Yusupov was born on 22 November 1962 in Duschanbe, Tajikistan. From 1981 until 1990 he studied piano, composition, music theory and conducting under Yuri Fortunatov, Yuri Cholopov and the renowned conductor Dmitri Kitayenko at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow. He received his Ph.D. from Bar-Ilan University in Israel in 2001.

In 1987 Yusupov was appointed music director of the Duschanbe Philharmonic Orchestra, where he performed works from all musical epochs, with special emphasis on Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Mahler, Rachmaninov, Shostakovich and Prokofiev. During the course of his numerous tours through the former Soviet Union, he conducted such well-known ensembles as the Moscow Radio Orchestra and the Gorki Philharmonic Orchestra. Since Yusupov has relocated to the West, a continuous cooperation with the most important Israeli orchestras has developed, including the Israel Philharmonic, Jerusalem Symphony, Haifa Symphony, Israel Chamber Orchestra and the Tel-Aviv Soloists. Yusupov was recently invited to conduct the Amsterdam Sinfonietta at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw and the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra.

His works have been performed at numerous festivals in Russia, at the International Composers' Festival Rostrum in Paris (1990), the Almeida Festival in London (1994), the Zagreb Biennale (2001), the Ludwigsburg Castle Festival (2004) and at numerous festivals in Israel. Orchestras and ensembles such as the New World Symphony (Miami), the Zürich Chamber Orchestra, Lancaster Symphony (Pennsylvania), Imperior Quartet (London), London Philharmonic Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, Lucerne Symphony Orchestra, Dresden Symphony, Lisbon Symphony, Brandenburg Symphony, Anhalt Philharmonic Dessau and Teatro Comunale di Bologna have interpreted his works. Broadcasting companies in Israel, Germany, Spain, Italy, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Holland, Hungary, Australia and the USA have broadcast Yusupov's works. Meanwhile, his oeuvre has been documented on five CDs.

Yusupov has been honoured with numerous prizes and awards: these include an award of the Soviet Composers' Union in 1989, one year prior to his emigration to Israel, in 1993 the renowned "Clone Prize of the Israeli Composers' League", and in the same year the first prize in a competition during the opening of Gabriel House in the Jordan Valley for his composition "Gabriel." In 1999 he was awarded the prize of the Israeli Prime Minister. His Violin Concerto received the ACUM Prize for the best Israeli composition of the 2001/2002 season. The same prize was awarded to his Concerto for Viola and Orchestra as the best Israeli composition of the 2003/2004 season. The world premiere took place with the world-renowned instrumentalist Maxim Vengerov and the NDR Radio Philharmonic Hannover under the direction of Eiji Oue in May 2005. In 2007 he received the Landau Award for the Performing Arts.