

Yuri Simonov

Conductor



“ The renowned conductor Yuri Simonov gave a masterclass with his baton...”

Diana Díaz, La Nueva Espana

Yuri Simonov was born in Saratov, USSR, into a family of opera singers. He first took up the baton at the age of 12, conducting his school orchestra performing Mozart's *Symphony No. 40*. He studied at Leningrad Conservatoire with Nikolai Rabinovich and was Evgeny Mravinsky's assistant at the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra.

In 1968 Yuri Simonov was the first Russian conductor ever to win a Western conducting competition when he triumphed at the Santa Cecilia Competition in Rome. After making his Bolshoi Opera debut in 1969 with *Aida*, the company appointed him Chief Conductor – the youngest in the Bolshoi's history. He then became their longest serving Chief Conductor, holding the post until 1985. Highlights of this period with the Bolshoi Opera were the re-introduction of Wagner to the repertoire after a forty-year absence and several memorable tours which he led to Paris, Japan, Vienna, New York, Milan and Washington. Also, he conducted many new productions there, including Glinka's *Ruslan and Ludmilla* (recorded by *Chant du Monde*), Shchedrin's *Anna Karenina* (recently released in Japan), Mozart's *Così fan Tutti*, Shostakovich's *The Golden Age*, Bartok's *Bluebeard Castle* and *The Wooden Prince*.

In 1982 he made his British debuts, at the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden conducting *Eugene Onegin*, and with the London Symphony Orchestra. Since then he has conducted all the leading British orchestras. In 1986 he opened the Royal Opera's season at Covent Garden with Verdi's *La Traviata*.

Yuri Simonov made his American concert debut with the Boston Symphony and Los Angeles Philharmonic orchestras in 1989. The following year he made his American operatic debut in Los Angeles (Verdi's *Don Carlos* with Plácido Domingo), followed by Mussorgsky's *Khovanshina* for San Francisco Opera with Nikolai Ghiurarov in 1990 and *Eugene Onegin* with Renee Fleming in 1993. He conducted the Boston Symphony Orchestra both in Boston and at

the Tanglewood Festival in 1994. His debut with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra was in 1997.

During the last two decades Mo. Simonov has also continued his long-lasting contact with

Budapest Opera, conducting a Wagner opera every year, including the complete Ring cycle.

From 1994 to 2002 Mo. Simonov was the Music Director of the Belgian National Orchestra and since September 2002 he became their honorary conductor, leading their tours to Germany, England, Spain, Austria and Switzerland. Since 1998 he has been the Chief Conductor of the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, with whom he tours extensively all over the world, and since 2001 he has been the Musical Director of the Liszt-Wagner Orchestra in Budapest.

In recent seasons he toured the USA, UK, France, Germany, Spain, Japan, Hong Kong and Korea with the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra. He made debuts with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Mumbai Symphony, Warsaw National Philharmonic, Brabant Orchestras, Budapest and Polish Philharmonic Orchestras.

He has recorded with the Bolshoi company for Melodia, Collins Classics and Onyx Classics; with the London Symphony Orchestra, the London Philharmonic the Philharmonia and the Royal Philharmonic for Tring; and with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra for EMI.

Mo. Simonov has received many awards for his outstanding contribution to music including: Honored Artist of the Russian Federation (1971), People's Artist of the Russian Federation (1976), Lenin's Komsomol Prize (1977), People's Artist of the USSR (1981), Professor of the Moscow Conservatoire (1985), Order for Merits in Culture for the Polish Republic (1988), Russian Order of Honour, (2001), Order of

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Merit of the Republic of Hungary: Officer's Cross (2001), Order of the Star: Commander (Romania, 2003).

In 2011, Yuri Simonov marked his 70th birthday with a two-programme celebration in Moscow and tours of Spain.

He returned to Italy in 2018, conducting concerts at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples. The engagement celebrated fifty years since winning the Santa Cecilia Conductor Prize in 1968. [↻](#)

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