

Dmitri Smirnov

- Biography -

Dmitri Smirnov was born in Minsk in 2 November 1948, where his parents were active as opera singers. His family later moved to Central Asia, first to Ulan-Ude in the Burjati Autonomous Republic, then to Frunse, the capital city of Kirghiz Republic, where Smirnov spent most of his childhood.

He studied composition at the Moscow Conservatory from 1967 until 1972 with Nikolai Sedelnikov, instrumentation with Edison Denissov and analysis with Yuri Cholopov. During this time, in 1970, he first made contact with the Webern pupil Philip Hershkovitz, who had moved from Vienna to Moscow and whose private teaching had a great influence on Soviet composers. From 1973 until 1980 Smirnow worked as an editor at the publishers "Sovietski Kompositor."

He was active as a freelance composer from 1981 until 1993. After winning first prize at a competition of the International Harp Week in Maastricht with his Solo for Harp in 1976, his music began to gain increased international recognition. Thus his opera "Tiriel" received its premiere in 1989 in Freiburg, and the chamber opera "Thel's Complaint" at the Almeida Festival in London. The world premiere of his First Symphony "The Seasons" also took place in 1989 at the Tanglewood Festival, and the oratorio "A Song of Liberty" was premiered in Leeds by the BBC Philharmonic in 1993.

Smirnov has made his permanent residence in Great Britain since 1991. In 1992 he received a stipend from St. John College Cambridge and from 1993 to 1997 held the position of Guest Professor and Composer in Residence at the University of Keele, together with his wife, the composer Elena Firsova.

Since 1998 Smirnov has been living in St. Albans near London and is again active as a freelance composer.