**Dmitri Hvorostovsky**

"...the man is totally hot and, paradoxically, cold"

La Scena Musicale -

Vol. 3, No. 8 Juin / June 1998

Dmitri Hvorostovsky was born in 1962 in Krasnoyarsk, Siberian city. He describes it as "an ordinary Russian city", probably in a sense that all cities in Russia are similar to some degree, if they are not Moscow or St.Peterburg. Unfortunately, it is true due to economical inadequacy in country development over years. I've never been to Krasnoyarsk, though I am sure it has its own amenities and attractions, like Yenisey, one of the greatest Russian river, but I can certainly see his point. Anyway, Dmitri attended music school for children, as many Russian kids do, or at least did up to the beginning last years' uncertain economical situation. Then music high school - the usual way the music career can be established in Russia. Then Krasnoyarsk College of Arts where he started studding with Ekaterina Konstantinovna Iofel, who was his vocal teacher for 5 years. After graduation he became a soloist of Krasnoyarsk Opera Theater.

At the age of 25 Dmitri won the first prize in all-Russia round of Glinka Memorial singing competition, and then the first prize at USSR level. In 1988 he won the first prize at the Toulouse Singing Competition, but only his next victory, Cardiff, launched his western career. Irina Arkhipova, the chair of the Glinka competition jury encouraged him to enter the 1989 Cardiff "Singer of the World" Competition, by winning which Dmitri left Bryn Terfel behind with a second place. Bryn Terfel said after Cardiff: "I would never take anything away from Dmitri because he was absolutely fantastic".

"Absolutely fantastic" is what I first think every time I say something about him to my friends. But at the same time ambiguous feeling arises from somewhere inside. Let me now describe why. Not to take anything from Hvorostovsky's great talent and hard work, which results appear as wonderful recordings. But ambiguity arises from his overdramatizing. Listen to "Dark Eyes" CD and read the translations - I am not sure that translation can really tell the whole story, but for me, who grew up with those songs, and who actually like "drama from nowhere" his emotional interpretation is way too much. And here is the reason I added epigraph to this short review: Hvorostovsky sounds too Onegin-ish for folk songs and romances, in a sense of being too cold, detached, even insensible in them. And overdramatizing is of no help to hide this coldness. But listen to his Onegin - and you will find the perfect one ever lived and probably will ever live, not to say that Hvorostovsky is now just 38, well, will be in a week, on October 16th. I would be surprised if he, even having such a great voice and talent, will be given one day a great recognition for performing, say, Schubert lieder. By saying all this I do not want to diminish his great talent, just to point my humble opinion about one of my favorite singers. Add to it, that I would buy his recording over hundred others, as I really do.