

# KHACHATURIAN

Ode of Joy

Music from  
Spartacus

Ode in Memory  
of Lenin

CONSTANTINE  
ORBELIAN

Philharmonia of Russia

Marina Domashenko • Spiritual Revival Choir of Russia



DE 3328

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# KHACHATURIAN

## CENTENNIAL ALBUM

ARAM KHACHATURIAN (1903–1978)

### MUSIC FROM *SPARTACUS*

- 1 Introduction and Dance of the Nymphs (5:25)
- 2 Introduction, Adagio of Aegina and Harmodius (6:50)
- 3 Variation of Aegina and Bacchanale (3:29)
- 4 Scene and Dance with Crotala (3:57)
- 5 Dance of the Gaditanian Maidens —  
Victory of Spartacus (6:30)
- 6 Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia (8:50)
- 7 Dance of an Egyptian Girl (2:59)

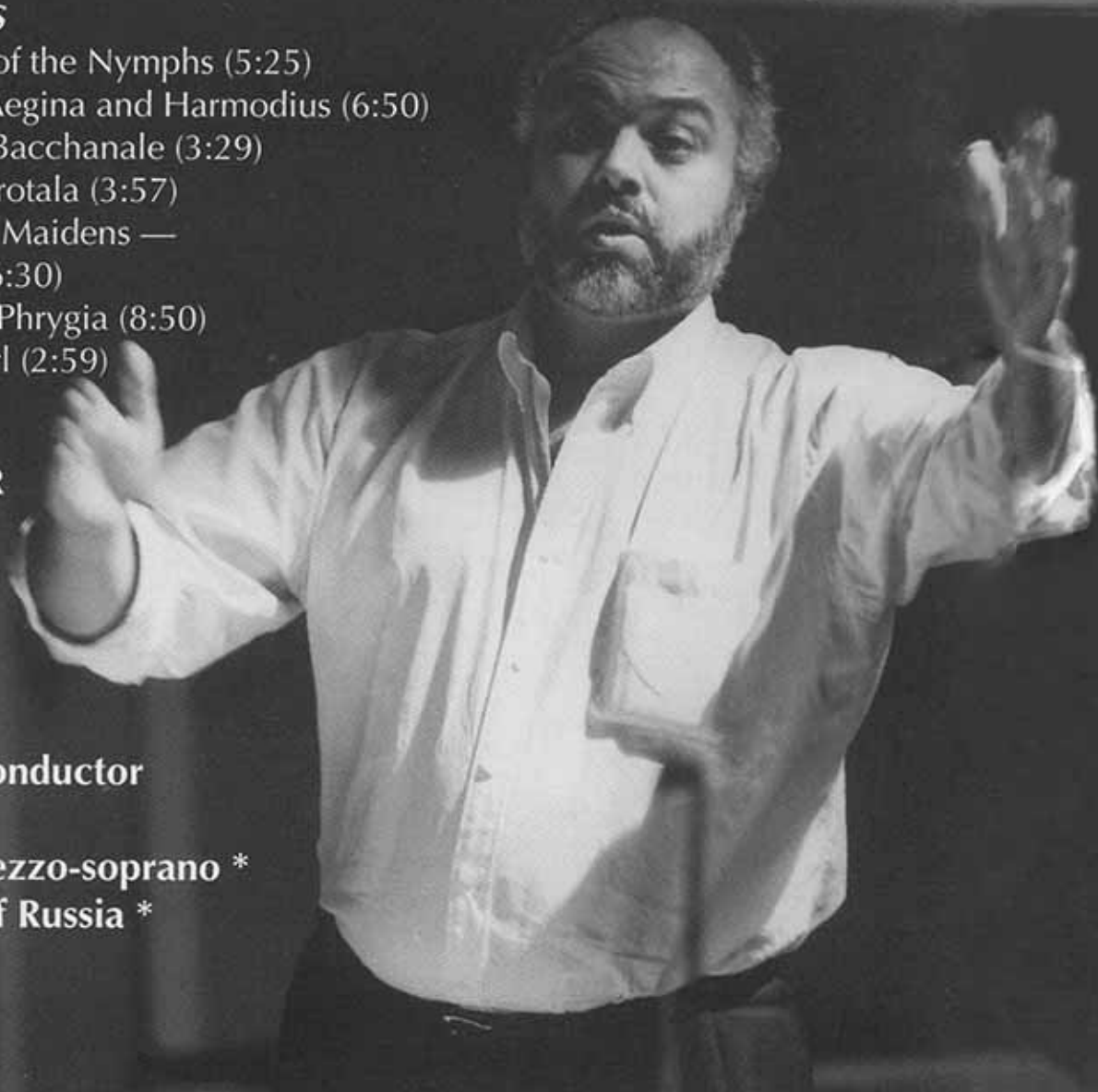
- 8 FUNERAL ODE IN  
MEMORY OF VLADIMIR  
ILYICH LENIN (8:35)

- 9 ODE OF JOY (11:39) \*

Constantine Orbelian, conductor  
Philharmonia of Russia  
Marina Domashenko, mezzo-soprano \*  
Spiritual Revival Choir of Russia \*

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 58:13

DE 3328





I believe that every composer writes a work during his career that represents his own life, and even his own death. I wanted to include the **Funeral Ode in Memory of Lenin** on this CD not because of its connection with Lenin, but because I hear it as an Ode in Memory of Khachaturian, as Khachaturian's funeral dirge for himself. If one were to watch film footage of Khachaturian's funeral (as I did recently in Peter Rosen's moving new documentary about Khachaturian's life), one would see masses of people gathering around the Moscow Conservatory, weeping, feeling the loss of something great and irreplaceable. This is what happened in Moscow. Armenia received the devastating news of Khachaturian's death with even more sorrow; literally tens of thousands of people were there to pay their respects to this favorite son of the Armenian people.

The music of **Spartacus** is so full of life and the elation of achieving ultimate victory that I couldn't pass up an opportunity to bring my personal ideas of interpreting this music to fruition. Khachaturian wrote this ballet after what must have been the most difficult years of his life. He was devastated by the Soviet hierarchy's 1948 public denouncement of Prokofiev, Shostakovich and himself. The idea of writing about an uprising of slaves in ancient times was the only subject that captured his imagination and brought him out of a musical depression. It inspired him to new heights and gave him the strength to write possibly his greatest and most popular work. His colorful and ingenious harmonies intertwined with passionate musical depictions of love and sorrow, life and death, make this work a favorite not only of ballet lovers but of the concert going public as well.

Finally, I chose the **Ode of Joy** to close this CD because of its luminosity, happiness and grandeur. The USSR did have a hugeness to it that most people these days cannot fathom. The Ode of Joy is filled with this grand Soviet idea: the large picture of a multinational country without borders. This work embraces all of it and praises the people, along with the sun, wind, rivers and lakes, of a great nation.

**- CONSTANTINE ORBELIAN**

## *A Man for his Time*

**Aram Khachaturian** (1903-1978) appeared to be a lucky man. In addition to a great musical talent and a wonderful family with artistic inclinations, he had the advantage of being in the right place at the right time. Aram lived with his family and had his first musical experiences - playing in a school brass band and improvising on an old piano - on the outskirts of Tiflis (now Tbilisi), arguably the most colorful, energetic and cheerful city in the Russian Empire. This capital of Georgia was a truly multinational city, a unique place where traditions and cultures of every Caucasian nation mingled with those of Russia and Europe. Sounds of music permeated the air with such diverse strains as Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani folk tunes, often performed on such Eastern instruments as *kemancha*, *duduk*, *saz*, *tar*; sacred chants; Italian operatic arias; military marches and Russian art songs. It was truly a "singing city."

Aram's parents loved to sing and knew numerous Armenian and Azerbaijani songs. His father played the *tar*. Though they were almost illiterate and did not have the means to give all of their four sons an expensive education (Elia Khachaturian was a bookbinder), they instilled in their sons a thirst for knowledge and culture. They did not anticipate, however, that three sons would choose artistic

careers: Aram was to become a world famous composer; Levon, a professional singer, and Suren, a theater director and important cultural figure. Suren, fourteen years older than Aram, studied at Moscow University and worked at Studio One of the Moscow Art Theater, becoming a founder of the Armenian Cultural Center and Armenian Theater Studio in Moscow. In 1921 he brought Aram and Levon to Moscow, introducing them to Russian culture and to Moscow's artistic circles.

Moscow of the 1920s was no less unique than Tiflis of the beginning of the century and no less important for Khachaturian's artistic development. By then the Civil War had ended and the Bolshevik government was in power. There was still relative freedom of artistic expression. The idea of a new and just society, being built for the first time in history, encouraged creativity everywhere. Avant-garde music, art and especially theater flourished. It was a time for the young and adventuresome.

It was also a time for nations that came under the rule of the Russian Empire - through treaties or conquest - and stayed under Soviet rule, to develop their own economies and cultures. One of the key goals of Soviet policy was to promote the Soviet Union as a "family of nations," where a smaller nation was protected, educated and helped by its great brother, Russia. Armenians, who as recently as 1915



went through Turkish massacres and still were dispersed around the world, were able to benefit from this policy, probably more than anyone else.

No money was spared to send the best professors and artists to the Soviet Republics to establish drama, opera and dance companies, schools and conservatories. This was especially true for Middle Asian and Caucasian nations, which had had very little exposure to European culture. Later, in the 1930s, the "Decades of National Literature and Arts in Moscow" were regularly produced with great pomp; they included concerts, exhibitions, theater productions, etc. to show the achievements of the new cultural policy.

Such were the circumstances supporting Khachaturian's meteoric rise as a composer. Not only was he exceptionally gifted, but he was an authentic representative of one of the Soviet republics; and the very originality and freshness of his music was a result of his deep and natural connection with his national roots. That is why when he finally decided (at the age of 20!) to begin his serious music education and entered Moscow's Gnessin Music School, he was met there with special attention and care. The same thing happened at the Moscow Conservatory, where, a few years later, he studied composition with the legendary teacher and composer Nikolay Miaskovsky. And when his diploma composition, the *First*

*Symphony*, was written, the best orchestras in Moscow and Leningrad performed it - not just once, but a number of times. Three years later, when he composed the *Piano Concerto*, it attracted national attention and soon was promoted both in the Soviet Union and abroad as the first "national" concerto (based on elements of Armenian music).

Like his *Violin Concerto*, written in 1940, it seemed like a perfect example of Soviet art. Both concertos were monumental and relatively complex in form, yet very accessible, emotionally open, melodically generous, and thus rightly responsive to an ideological demand of the times to create "music for the masses." Both showed an organic blend of European classical traditions with eastern tunes and rhythms, thus charting new territory. Both sounded thoughtful yet full of energy, vivacity and joy. These qualities in Khachaturian's music enhanced its value to the arbiters of Soviet culture, since the music could be used to represent an appealing image of Soviet life. The music also had the unmistakably Khachaturianian mark of sincerity and spontaneity (he admitted that improvisation was always an important part of his creative process, especially in his early years); and its colorful virtuosity was impressive.

The *Ode of Joy*, written much later, is a different example of Khachaturian's sunny and celebratory music: here openly, with the help of typical official verses, glorifying Soviet



power. Classical form (cantata) and idiom (baroque allusions in the instrumental introduction and conclusion) are combined with elements of Armenian melody. The *Ode* is at heart a song, a genre that Khachaturian was urged to explore, as was almost every other Soviet composer. Khachaturian also wrote the Armenian national anthem in 1944.

In many ways Khachaturian was sheltered from the harsh side of Soviet reality. As an Armenian he appreciated the official respect and fast economic and cultural growth that his nation enjoyed. His fellow Armenians showered him with enormous admiration, even electing him to the Armenian Parliament, which made him proud and happy.

He was not personally touched by the atrocities and injustices of Stalin's regime except for one major shakeup. This took place in February 1948, when the Central Committee of the Communist Party came up with the infamous "Resolution on the opera *Great Friendship* by Vano Muradeli."

Khachaturian had to endure a double dose of Party criticism: as one of the so-called formalists (the list included among others Shostakovich, Prokofiev and Miaskovsky) and as an executive of the Union of Soviet Composers. He had to attend all official meetings, listen to the nonsense spoken there and participate in discussions. Though feeling, by his

own admission, crushed by the events that resulted in an illness and a long hospital stay, he tried to shield his colleagues any way he could - above all his beloved teacher, Nikolay Miaskovsky.

At the end of this difficult year, the *Funeral Ode in Memory of Vladimir Ilych Lenin* was performed for the first time. One cannot mistake the sincerity of this music. It evokes an image of a funeral procession: a slow march rhythm together with a beautiful melodic lament. The tension accumulates toward a highly emotional climax, with touches of nobility and triumph. A remarkable characteristic of Khachaturian's art is his ability to create powerful, heartbreakingly tragic images, notably in his Second Symphony, one of the best Symphonies of the war years. Here in the Funeral Ode, such images are present in a compact but no less gripping form. He also used such images brilliantly in his ballet *Spartacus*.

The story of the leader of a slaves' uprising in ancient Rome was in perfect accordance with Soviet ideology. The idea attracted librettist Nikolay Volkov, who was responsible for a number of other Soviet ballets, mostly on heroic-revolutionary themes. At that time, companies were required to produce new works of Soviet authors regularly, and were actively seeking such works. Considering the beautiful music written by Khachaturian for his ballets *Happiness and Gayaneh*, it is little wonder



that the Kirov (Mariinsky) company, which produced both, was eager to get a new score from the composer. Nevertheless, it took ten years for Khachaturian actually to start writing down the music (in 1950) and another four to complete the ballet. The following year the composer put together four Suites from the ballet. This practice was widespread among Soviet composers because of the orchestras' hunger for contemporary symphonic works and the official demand for popular symphonic music. The ballet has had a complicated fate as a theater work; it was restaged several times and now its fame is linked with the 1968 Bolshoi Theater production by Yuri Grigorovich. Despite its production history, *Spartacus* can be considered the most successful of Khachaturian's works. It was also his last masterpiece.

During the 60s and the 70s Khachaturian wrote less and less; and overall his creative output is much smaller than that of Shostakovich or Prokofiev. What were the reasons behind this modest productivity? That he started too late and did not develop enough facility? That he loved his comfortable life and its pleasures too much? That he took his public responsibilities too close to heart? That he was exhausted by his teaching and conducting obligations, by his numerous trips around the country and abroad, or by his weak health - often a reason for his dark moods? Or maybe

that he just did not have the kind of creative urge that Shostakovich had? Or that he did not feel the need to write to make money (unlike Prokofiev, who held no official post and did not teach)?

However, much of the music Khachaturian did write continues to have a fascinating emotional impact on its listeners. Its authorship is instantly recognizable, no matter how much influence one can find there of Debussy or Ravel or Russian classical "music of the East" (from Glinka to Rimsky-Korsakov). This orchestral "feast of sounds" and "Rubenesque fullness" (Asafiev); this enormous melodic breadth and unique diversity of rhythms, rooted in the colors, dances, songs, folk instruments, customs and passions of the Caucasus and its people; was, through Khachaturian's classical education, transformed into a universal language. And from Khachaturian's vast experience in theater and cinema came his ability to depict, to recreate, in musical emotion, landscapes and the human condition with precision and convincing power.

As for the remarkable optimism of his music. ... Let's think about it as a document of a utopian world where the belief that "we are born to make a fairy tale a truth" was eagerly accepted by millions. Khachaturian's magnificent music reflected this utopia and at the same time helped to create it.

**- Maya Pritsker**



*Aram Khachaturian (at center) with his family*



# Ode of Joy

## *mezzo-soprano*

Vesénneje sóntse nad zemlóju fstajót.  
Straná majá, zemljá majá tsvetjót.  
Sijáet nad zemljoí galubóí nebosvót.  
A sértse pesnju radasti pajot, pajot.

Sijáet nébo, zemljá majá tsvetjót, slóvna sat.  
Sértse pesnju radasti pajót, pajót.

My a nébe, a sóntse pésnju pajóm.  
I éto nèbo, eto sóntse – f sértse majóm.

Náshi róshchi, réki góry i náshi paljá, -  
Sértso mílyje prastóry, násha mat – zemljá.

Pust zvenját i rastsvetájut sady i paljá.  
Náshi stépi, náshi góry, náshi mat– zemljá.

K vershínam i k sóntsu nas daróga vedjót.  
Kto s námi, tot cehtú svaju naikjót  
Stranú svaíkh ofsóf berszhót nash narót.  
I na zemljé on shchástju sazdayót, sazdayót.

Vyshe i fperiót na pódvik idjót nash narót.  
I na zemlje on shchástje sazdayót, sazdayót.  
My a rádasti i shchástju pésnju pajóm.  
I éta rádist, i sto shchástje - f sértse majóm.

Náshi stépi, réki, góry, i náshi marjá -  
Sértso mílyje prastóry, násha mat - zemljá.  
Náshi stépi, náshi góry, náshi mat– zemljá.

## *mezzo-soprano*

The spring sun is rising over the Earth.  
My country, my land is blossoming.  
The blue sky is shining over the Earth.  
And the song of joy my heart is singing, is singing.

The sun is shining, my land is in blossom, like an orchard.  
The song of joy my heart is singing, is singing.

We are singing a song about sky and sun  
And this sun and sky are in my heart.

Our woods, rivers, mountains, our fields,  
The spaces dear to the heart, our motherland.

Let the orchards and fields sing and blossom,  
Our steppes, our mountains, our motherland.

The road is leading us to the heights and to the sun.  
He who is with us will find his dream,  
Our people are guarding the country of their fathers.  
They are building happiness on the Earth.

Our people are moving forward and upward, to do a heroic deed.  
And they are building happiness on the Earth.  
We are singing a song of joy and happiness.  
And this joy, and this happiness are there in my heart.

Our steppes, rivers, mountains, and our seas,  
The spaces dear to the heart, our motherland.  
Our steppes, our mountains, our motherland.

### *chorus*

Pust trúby truját nad radnói zemljói  
a drúzhbe náshei svétloi, vikavói.  
A brástve nafsigdá, nafsigdá, nafsigdá.  
O, sóntse nat krasávitsei Maskvói, Maskvói!  
Fstavái, fstavái, nóvyi den,

I sóntse nad krasávitsei Maskvói, Maskvói!  
Radnyje krajá I radnoi narót!  
Atchizna majá - trudovói apiót.  
Zemljá pajót tebé, narót!  
Sláva ljudiam! Sláva drúshbe!  
Sláva sóntsu! Sláva zhíni!  
Atchíznye - sláva, sláva, sláva na gadiá,  
I nafsigdá!

### *chorus*

Let trumpets blow over our native land  
About our bright age-old friendship.  
About our brotherhood forever, forever, forever.  
Oh, the sun over beautiful Moscow!  
Rise, rise, new day.

And the sun over beautiful Moscow!  
Native lands, and native people.  
My motherland - a bulwark of labor.  
The country is extolling you people!  
Long live the people! Long live friendship!  
Long live the sun! Long live life!  
Long live our motherland, long live for many years  
And forever!



*Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Khachaturian*





The brilliant pianist and conductor **Constantine Orbelian** is the first American ever to become music director of an ensemble in Russia. His appointment in 1991 as Music Director of the celebrated Moscow Cham-

ber Orchestra was a breakthrough event, and came in the midst of Orbelian's successful career as a concert pianist. In September, 2000, Orbelian was named Permanent Guest Conductor of the Moscow Philharmonic, putting him in a unique leadership position with not only Moscow's outstanding chamber orchestra but also its most illustrious symphony orchestra. As founding Music Director of the Philharmonia of Russia, Maestro Orbelian has brought together Russia's outstanding players to form the "creme de la creme" ensemble heard on a number of his recordings.

Maestro Orbelian's ambitious new series of recordings on Delos includes, as of this writing, 17 recordings with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra and nine with the Philharmonia of Russia. The acclaimed series, ranging in repertoire from Handel to Schnittke, inspires comments such as *The Audio Critic's*: "Orbelian has star quality, and his orchestra plays with passion and precision." In addition to orchestral

music, Maestro Orbelian has been creating a remarkable collection of new operatic recordings with some of the most brilliant opera stars of our time. *Opera News* calls him "the singer's dream collaborator," and has commented that he conducts vocal repertoire "with the sensitivity of a lieder pianist." Among Maestro Orbelian's recent concert appearances are collaborations with Ewa Podleś, Roberto Alagna, Galina Gorchakova, Marina Domashenko, and Dmitri Hvorostovsky.

Born in San Francisco to Russian and Armenian emigré parents, Constantine Orbelian made his debut as a pianist with the San Francisco Symphony at the age of 11, and in his early teens went to the Soviet Union on a music scholarship. After graduating from Juilliard in New York, Orbelian embarked on a career as a piano virtuoso that included appearances with the Symphony Orchestras of Boston, Detroit, San Francisco, and St. Petersburg, the Moscow Philharmonic, Scottish National and Russian State Symphony Orchestras, the Moscow Virtuosi, the Budapest Chamber Orchestra among many others. His recording of the Khachaturian piano concerto won "Best Concerto Recording of the Year" award in the United Kingdom.

Since the blossoming of his conducting career, Constantine Orbelian has conducted in the most prestigious concert halls of Europe and America, including the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Frankfurter "Alte Oper," the Schauspielhaus



in Berlin, Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, the Salle Pleyel and Theatre Champs Elysees in Paris, Carnegie Hall and Avery Fisher Hall in New York, Suntory Hall in Tokyo, and the Kremlin Palace in Moscow. Maestro Orbelian's extensive international tours as conductor include concerts in France, Germany, Italy, Holland, Finland, Sweden, Korea, Japan, South Africa, South America, Canada and the United States. He conducts 40 concerts each season in Russia, including a 10-concert sold-out subscription series with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra in the Great Hall of Moscow's renowned Tchaikovsky Conservatory.

Beginning in the 2003 - 04 season, Orbelian and the MCO play a series of concerts in the new Moscow Music Center. International tours in the 2003 - 04 season include concerts in Munich; Prague; Istanbul; London's Barbican; two concerts at New York's Carnegie Hall, one with Ewa Podleś; and thirty concerts throughout the U.S., some with Dmitri Hvorostovsky. Constantine Orbelian is Founder and Music Director of the annual Palaces of St. Petersburg International Music Festival, a three-week event featuring concerts in many of St. Petersburg's magnificent, lavishly restored palaces. He also founded Moscow's unique concert series, "Musical Treasures at the Museums of the Kremlin." He is in charge of the Music Program for the Stanford University Overseas Campus in Moscow.

In December, 2000, Orbelian was inducted into the Academy of Arts and Sciences of St. Petersburg, an honor he shares with only one other conductor - Valery Gergiev. In May, 2001, he was awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, an award given to immigrants, or children of immigrants, who have made outstanding contributions to the United States.

**The Spiritual Revival Choir of Russia**, based at Moscow's Schnittke Institute of Music, was founded by Lev Kontorovich in 1992, at the end of the Soviet era. This was a time when freedom of religious expression, long forbidden in Russia, was once again permitted. The Choir takes its name from the inspiration of Russia's new-found spiritual revival. The Spiritual Revival Choir's repertoire is centered around religious subjects and the spiritual exaltation that accompanies religious celebration.

The Choir's repertoire includes not only the music of Russia and its composers, but music of the Renaissance and Baroque, Viennese classics, the 18th- and 19th-century Romantic masterpieces, and music of the last century.

Since 1997 the ensemble has been the chamber choir of the Moscow Schnittke Institute of Music. Under Mr. Kontorovich's direction, it performs frequently in the various halls of the Moscow Conservatory, at the Tchaikovsky Philharmonic and at the Glinka Museum Concert Hall,



and has toured in Germany.

The Spiritual Revival Choir has two recent choral releases on Delos: *Sounds on My Spirit* (DE 3301), and *Serene Ecstasy - The Light and Sorrow of Orthodox Russia* (DE 3264), and also appears on *Queen of Spades - great scenes* (DE 3289). and *Where are You, my Brothers?* (DE 3315).

Although not yet 30, mezzo soprano

**Marina Domashenko** is already in demand at major opera houses and concert series around the world. Petite, vivacious, with a large, creamy voice of remarkable flexibility, she is at home on the stage in a wide range of music and characterizations.



In June, 2000 Domashenko made her American debut at the San Francisco Opera - singing Dalila at a gala concert with Placido Domingo. She returns to the San Francisco Opera in June/July, 2002 as Carmen, and later at the Philadelphia Opera and the San Diego Opera.

Other appearances have included Orlovsky in *Die Fledermaus* and Pauline in *Queen of Spades* at the Opera Bastille in Paris, *Suor Angelica* at the Concertgebouw, *Alexander Nevsky* at the Megaron in Athens and Teatro La Fenice in Venice, Fenena in *Nabucco* at the Vienna

Staatsoper and the Berlin Deutsche Oper and Olga in *Eugene Onegin* with the Moscow New Opera. Among many concert appearances a highlight was the Janacek *Glagolitic Mass* with the London Symphony conducted by Sir Colin Davis both in London and New York. Other concert engagements include the Montpelier Festival in 2001 singing Russian romances with Constantine Orbelian and the Moscow Chamber Orchestra. Also in July 2001 she appeared with Placido Domingo in a gala concert in Moscow's Cathedral Square of the Kremlin.

Marina Domashenko was born in Siberia, graduated with honors from the Kemerovo Arts Institute and the Ekaterinburg Conservatoue.

Before graduation in 1998 she won first prize in the International Antonin Dvorak Vocal Competition and made her European professional debut soon after in Prague singing Olga in *Eugene Onegin*. She went on to sing Pauline in *Queen of Spades*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, and Carmen both in Prague and during the Prague National Theater's tour of Japan in 1999.

Future engagements include Fenena in *Nabucco* at the Metropolitan Opera, Olga in *Eugene Onegin* at the Paris Opera, Pauline at the Gran Teatro del Liceu, Barcelona, Meg Page in *Falstaff* in concerts with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Colin Davis and Maddalena in *Rigoletto* at tje Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

**Marina Domashenko** appears on two recent releases on Delos: *MaraDomashenko - Mezzo-soprano Opera Arias* (DE3285), and *Tchaikovsky: Queens of Spades ~ great scenes* (DE3289).

***Also Available with Constantine Orbelian conducting the Philharmonia of Russia***

- **Tchaikovsky: Queen of Spades ~ great scenes** • Larin, Prokina, Gerello, Hvorostovsky, Obraztsova, Domashenko, Spiritual Revival Choir of Russia (DE 3289)
- **Vodka & Caviar** — The Ultimate Russian Spectacular (DE 3288)
- **Passione di Napoli ~ Neapolitan Songs** • Dmitri Hvorostovsky, baritone (DE 3290)
- **Russian Arias** • Ewa Podles', contralto (DE 3298)
- **My Soul Enraptured** — Olga Guryakova, soprano • arias by Verdi, Puccini, Charpentier, Gounod (DE 3291)
- **Bloch, Bruch, Kotova: Concertos for Cello and Orchestra** • Nina Kotova, cello (DE 3305)
- **Mezzo-soprano Opera Arias** • Marina Domashenko, mezzo-soprano (DE 3285)
- **Italian Opera Arias** • Galina Gorchakova, soprano (DE 3286)

***Also Available with Constantine Orbelian conducting the Moscow Chamber Orchestra***

- **Where are You, my Love? - Songs of the War Years** • Dmitri Hvorostovsky, baritone  
Style of Five • Spiritual Revival Choir of Russia (DE 3315)
- **Rachmaninov: Aleko** • One-act opera: Gerello, Guryakova, Grivnov, Kit, Yurlov Capella;  
Disc Two: The Gypsies (Pushkin) read by Michael York and Vassily Lanovoy (DE 3269)



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- **Stars of the Moscow Chamber Orchestra** (DE 3327)
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- ***I Met You, My Love*** – Old Russian Romances • Dmitri Hvorostovsky, baritone; Style of Five (DE 3293)
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*A chronology of Khachaturian's life and major works is available on the Delos Website*

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Recording Engineer: *Andrés Villalta*  
Associate Recording Engineer: *Alexey Pogarsky*  
Editing: *Ruslana Oreshnikova, Chris Landen*  
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