

Anastasia's Violin

The Newsletter of Violinist Anastasia Khitruk

Summer 2006

Volume 1, Number 1

NEW NAXOS CD FROM ANASTASIA KHITRUK GARNERS INTERNATIONAL CRITICAL PRAISE



Internationally renowned violinist Anastasia Khitruk is being lauded internationally for the new Naxos release, CD **8.570028** of her performances of the solo violin music

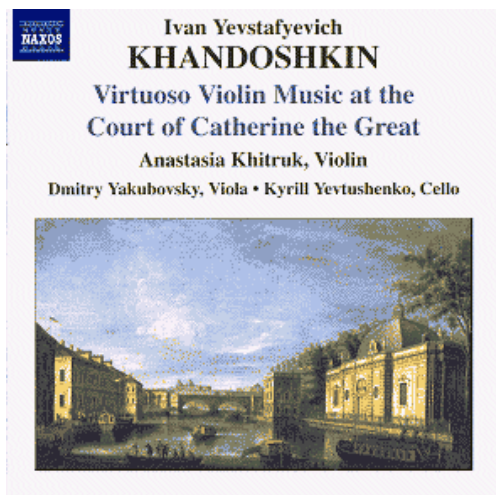
of Ivan Khandoshkin (1747-1804), who was not only the first great Russian violin virtuoso but was also, as Anne Mischakoff Heiles points out in her liner notes to this CD, "one of the most remarkable composers in the first century of Russia's secular musical life."

The selections on this disk are Khandoshkin's **Violin Sonata** in G minor, Op. 3, No. 1, **Violin Sonata** in E flat major, Op. 3, No. 2, **Violin Sonata** in D major, Op. 3, No. 3 and **6 Old Russian Songs**. Many of Khandoshkin's lovely works, employ folk themes that have inspired generations of Russian composers.

International critics have been unanimous in their praise of the recording. Geoffrey Norris of The Daily Telegraph in London, England, wrote. "The music actually written by Russian composers in the 18th century, as opposed to the vast quantities imported

from Italy, France and elsewhere, is not an area frequently explored on disc (or in the concert hall, for that matter), so this programme of works by Russia's iconic virtuoso violinist Ivan Khandoshkin (1747-1804) makes an unusually constructive contribution."

"Khandoshkin learned his craft from Italian masters, and, although of a generation before Paganini, wrote music that exploited bravura in terms of technique and explored the violin's capacity for varied tonal colour and lyricism. Sometimes that lyricism derives from folk song, as in the finale of his G minor Sonata Op 3 No 1 or in the arrangements of old Russian tunes; at others, as in the opening andante of the E flat Sonata Op 3 No 2, it has simple classical contours."



"Anastasia Khitruk, with accompanying viola or cello in the 6 Old Russian Songs, has full command of Khandoshkin's demands, not just in the athletics but in the tenderness of expression that was also a fundamental characteristic of his writing."

The Toronto Star's John Terauds wrote, "Anyone who saw the Catherine the Great show at the Art Gallery of Ontario last year knows that the 18th-century Russian monarch liked everything big, ornate and conceptually simple. The same applied to music such as this collection of the violin sonatas and six arrangements of Russian folk songs by her Kapellmeister Ivan Yevstafyevich Khandoshkin (1747-1804). The three sonatas offer finger and bowing gymnastics for unaccompanied violin."

"Young Russian émigré Anastasia Khitruk does a fabulous job of capturing the music's spirit..."

Jonathan Woolf of Music Web International wrote, "Khandoshkin usually receives a respectful paragraph in standard violin histories...In the G minor solo sonata the level of accomplishment is decidedly high and the technical demands incessant. He was particularly fond of arpeggiated writing which, accompanied by a battery of ostinati and quadruple stopping (unnecessarily complicated one would have thought unless it was to parade his own command), gives the sonata a dramatic and tensile quality. The quality one is left with, above these and other features, is however the ornamental one..."

The E flat major sonata is less of a show-piece, though the decorative writing is again a constant feature. The most consistently impressive of the movements is the finale with its bluntly accented rhythms, which generate a fine Russian dance drive. In the Minuet of the D major we find a rather vocalised kind of melodic line, very attractive, and some fine noble phrasing amidst the virtuosic flair that informs it. He certainly had a flair for dramatic characterisation as the finale of this sonata demonstrates. Soloist Anastasia Khitruk varies her dynamics here to fine effect.

"For the **6 Old Russian Songs** she is joined in the first by the viola and for the remainder by the cello. They're strongly tinged by folk

influence and are simple in melodic outline. As ever Khandoshkin gives vent to his penchant for over-decorative gilding but the ebullience and feeling can't be denied. I was most taken by the melancholy of the third song *Little dove why do you sit so sadly?* which brings out the best in the composer, forcing him to limit excessive ornamentation."

"The performances are excellent. Khitruk has the measure of this demanding music and plays it with panache."

**ANASTASIA KHITRUK
ON THE WEB –
VISIT HER NEW WEBSITE**

For more information about Anastasia Khitruk, including a bio, discography and more, please her new website at <http://www.anastasiakhitruk.com/>.

You can also contact Jeffrey James Arts Consulting at 516-586-3433 or jamesarts@worldnet.att.net.

