

Hearts Filled with Music

By Irina Antonova

(Music Review translated from Boston newspaper, *Russian Media Boston*)

The 200th birthday of Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka, perhaps the most Russian of all Russian composers, was celebrated in a unique concert in Boston. It is well known that Russian classical music has very high ratings in the United States. Concerts at Carnegie Hall, the New York City Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera, to name a few venues, speak for themselves. Nevertheless, what the audience experienced at the New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall on February 29 of this year was unprecedented. That night, Jordan Hall heard numerous of Glinka's masterpieces, but the selection was far from limited to traditional repertoire.

The concert opened with the *Fantasia* on themes from the opera *Ruslan and Ludmilla* for two pianos and eight hands played by Tatiana Dudochkin, Jeffrey Goldberg, Roberto Poli, and Sergei Schepkin with inspired energy. The composer, Jeffrey Goldberg, dedicated the piece to Tatiana Dudochkin, the artistic director and organizer of the concert.

Jakov Jakoulov presented the audience with several surprises. *Stylistic Reminiscences on Glinka's Waltz-Fantasy* filled the hall with sounds of Glinka's masterpiece in Jakov Jakoulov's transcription, beautifully performed by Michael Zaretsky (viola) and Ya-Fei Chung (piano).

Glinka's song *Doubt* was heard twice during the evening. First, it was superbly sung by Michael Svetlov (bass), soloist of the Bolshoi and La Scala, then in a brilliant contemporary piano variation played by Jakov Jakoulov himself. Both performances elicited thunderous ovations from the listeners.

Mr. Svetlov's singing was truly a treasured gift to the audience at the concert. The wide range and beauty of his voice were both enriched and complemented by his dramatic artistry, especially evident in his performance of Falstaff's Rondo. The audience warmly welcomed soprano Yelena Dudochkin's charming rendition of *Alla Cetra*, rarely included by vocalists in their repertoire. Tatyana Dudochkin demonstrated her sensitivity to the color of sound of both bass and soprano. Her mastery of style was also heard in Goldberg's *Fantasia*. This marked Tatyana's 14th annual festival at NEC celebrating composer's anniversaries. Like in all preceding years, it enjoyed great success — the concert was sold out within hours.

Glinka's sextet for piano, string quartet, and bass concluded the first part of the evening. The piece, performed by the Parker String Quartet and Adam Anello (bass), together with amazing piano virtuoso Roberto Poli, left the audience with the feeling of ease and of slight sadness.

The second half was lead by superb hands of the music director of Symphony Pro Musica, Mark Churchill. His interpretation of *Jota Aragonese* and *Overture to Ruslan and Ludmila* was inspiring and very Russian. The chorus from the *Life for the Tsar* electrified the audience. The stage was filled with 160 musicians including three choirs (*The Conservatory Camerata*, Lorna Cooke de Varon, director; *The Boston Russian Chorus*, Irina Shachneva, director; *The Stow Festival Chorus*, Barbara Jones, director.)

Glinka's score required sounds of true bells in the final "Glory..." and thanks to the organizer Tatiana Dudochkin, the bells were kindly provided for the concert by the Russian Orthodox Church of Saint Epiphany. The Gala concert finished on a highest emotional note with the encore of *Glory Glory to the Nation*. In the audience there were many musicians, both trained and experienced at conservatories of Kiev, Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and Boston. The applause, — that of qualified and demanding professionals — suggested that the highest standards in organizing and in performing Glinka's music were met this evening at Jordan Hall.

The concert turned into a celebration of Russian music and the Russian spirit. Mr. Mark Churchill expressed it very clearly, "We all became Russians for an hour." In her greeting the audience, the artistic director and organizer of the event, Tatiana Dudochkin, expressed appreciation to all who came to commemorate the great composer's works on his 200th birthday.

Mr. Viacheslav Slavkin, the Assistant General of Russian Consul, who was present in Jordan Hall that evening, conveyed his warm gratitude to Tatiana Dudochkin and to her colleagues and invited them to repeat the concert at the Russian Consulate in New York City.