

STORE GAZING

Impresario makes polished impression

Five years after leaving Russia, producer's style has evolved from Eastern European to chic and sophisticated

RITA ZEKAS
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Producer Svetlana Dvoretzkaia sails into Marc Laurent in Hazelton Lanes with a coffee and an apology for being a hair late. She is just back from New York where she was taking a meeting with Placido Domingo.

Dvoretzkaia is president of Show One Productions, responsible for bringing such productions as AGA-BOOM! and Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo to Toronto.

She is presenting Grammy-winning conductor and solo violist Yuri Bashmet and the Moscow Soloists Chamber Orchestra at Roy Thomson Hall on Feb. 17 and she is auditioning an outfit from regular haunt Marc Laurent for the occasion.

She prefers a tailored, classic look, accessorized by her take-no-prisoners Alberta Ferretti sling backs studded with Swarovski crystals or the pair of black patent Marc Jacob boots she is wearing, the ones with rocker-chick zippers up the back.

"Right before a concert in Montreal, I broke the heel of my shoe



KEITH BEATY / TORONTO STAR

Producer Svetlana Dvoretzkaia says she always finds the fashion she needs. Marc Laurent is her source for outfits befitting classical events.

at a music school graduate and has a master's degree in business and theatre management from the Academy of Culture in St. Petersburg.

She played piano but her mother didn't want her to be a performer because it was too hard a life.

"I grew up backstage, surrounded by musicians and artists," she recalls. "I wanted to be somewhat involved. It would have been easier to have stayed in Russia because of the connections."

However, she relocated to Toronto 11 years ago by herself.

"After *perestroika*, the country was falling apart. There was no communism; capitalism came in and people started to make money,

6 My roster is like the top, top, top

SVETLANA DVORETSKAIA

but there was a lot of crime, so you lived in a cage. It was dangerous. You were becoming a target for every person who couldn't make it and was living on the street."

For her first five years in Toronto, she worked as a salesperson in a succession of boutiques. Her style evolved from quaintly Eastern European, with scarves tied at the side, little hats and precious little handbags, to chic and sophisticated.

wanted to do was to get a job in the arts.

"People would laugh in my face," she recalls. "I worked for an event management company, standing at the door greeting guests. I realized I had to find myself; I'd been here for five years and I had to create a job for myself because no one was giving me one."

So she went to New York where friends from St. Petersburg were touring.

"I brought them here and it was a humongous success," she says. "It was all adrenalin and a huge desire to change everything in my life. I sold 1,300 seats in two weeks. I sold them and delivered them to houses overnight."

Her headliners were conductor/violinist Vladimir Spivakov and the Moscow Virtuosi Orchestra. She will bring the National Philharmonic of Russia with Spivakov to Roy Thomson Hall on April 28.

Dvoretzkaia's roster also includes internationally acclaimed baritone Dimitri Hvorostovsky.

"My roster is like the top, top, top," she says.

And it is a diva-free zone. "I deal with the classical world," she contends. "They say opera is the worst because they are the most capricious and demanding."

That said, she admits to having trepidations about the Trocks.

"I thought they would all be divas

and I ran into Brown's and bought the boots."

She tries on two suits, one from Alberta Ferretti and another from Narciso Rodriguez, both in the \$2,500 neighbourhood — a pricey 'hood but this is Hazelton Lanes. However, the store's winter march is on sale up to 80 per cent off. She scored a \$1,700 YSL dress there for \$300.

As befitting a producer, Dvoret-skaia likes to bargain shop. Her pale blue cashmere scarf is from Centu-

New York. Her fabulous glasses are Roberto Cavalli's that she also bought at Century 21 for something like \$30 three years ago and she is still getting compliments on them.

In Toronto, she also shops at Holts and at Speccio for shoes.

"Whenever I need something, I know exactly where to go to find what I'm looking for. I won't look for dressy merchandise at Banana Republic.

"I have two concerts at Roy Thomson Hall and I can get stuff I need

want something classic without being frumpy and it needs to be comfortable because I am running around all day. It's usually a suit or a dress I can wear with a jacket. I can't go all décolletage."

Manager Greg Madesker is her Marc Laurent stylist. He recently facilitated 30 wardrobe changes for Usher and is doing the series *Lion's Den*.

Dvoret-skaia was born and raised in St. Petersburg, Russia, daughter of Michael Dvoretzky, a doctor, and

back then in Russia, fashion was rigid; now it is gorgeous. Back then, it was difficult to buy anything high end because there was nothing. Once things became available, they would spend a month's salary to buy a bag — we all know what a Chanel bag costs — or they would borrow the money. I can still hear them saying, 'I have until May to repay the money I borrowed from a friend.'"

Dvoret-skaia moved from retail to the corporate world, doing business development for a human re-

but they were the least problematic. A producer deals with things like lost luggage, hotel rooms not being ready and they said, 'Svetlana, you do your thing. You have a million things to do.' They told me to go back to the hotel and they would deal with it. I was shocked."

What is she doing with Domingo?

"It's not just a concert production, it is involved with reality TV. I do music; that is my involvement in the project."

Sounds like an occasion for another new outfit.