

# ARMENIAN BRILLIANCE

**Abramian • Arutiunian • Bagdasarian • Barkhudarian  
Bekarian • Khachaturian • Komitas • Mirzoian**

**Nikolay Madoyan, Violin  
Armine Grigoryan, Piano**

## ARMENIAN BRILLIANCE

- Komitas VARDAPET** (1869–1935)
- 1 **Tsirani Tsar ('The Apricot Tree')** (1905–06)  
(arr. Avet Gabrielian, 1899–1983, for violin and piano) 3:20
- 2 **Kagavik ('The Partridge')** (1908)  
(arr. A. Gabrielian for violin and piano) 1:26
- 3 **Vagharshapati Par ('Vagharshapat Dance')** (1891)  
(arr. Karp Dombaev, 1910–2000, for violin and piano) 1:40
- 4 **Keler, Tsoles ('He Walked, Shining')** (1902–06)  
(arr. K. Dombaev for violin and piano) 4:08
- 5 **Krounk ('The Crane')** (1911)  
(arr. Sergey Aslamazian, 1897–1978, for violin and piano) 3:36
- Sarkis BARKHUDARIAN** (1887–1972)
- 6 **Sirouhis ('To the Beloved')** (1936) 3:12
- Aram KHACHATURIAN** (1903–1978)
- 7 **Dance in B flat major, Op. 1** (1926) 4:02
- Eduard ABRAMIAN** (1923–1986)
- 8 **Concert Scherzo** (1954) 3:22
- Alexander ARUTIUNIAN** (1920–2012)
- 9 **Dance** (1947) 3:19
- Aram KHACHATURIAN**
- 10 **Gayane – Act III: Adagio** (1942)  
(arr. Abram Yampolsky, 1890–1956, for violin) 2:37
- Tsolak BEKARIAN** (1922–1980)
- 11 **Sonata for Solo Violin No. 2 – I. Grave** (1972) 3:26
- Aram KHACHATURIAN**
- 12 **Gayane – Act I: Uzundara** (1942)  
(arr. Mikhail Fichtenholz, 1920–1985, for violin) 2:03
- 13 **Spartacus – Act II: Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia** (1950–54) (arr. Henrik Smbatyan, 1934–2015, for violin and piano) 7:49
- Eduard BAGDASARIAN** (1922–1987)
- 14 **Nocturne in A major** (1957) 4:30
- Edvard MIRZOIAN** (1921–2012)
- 15 **Introduction and Perpetuum Mobile – Perpetuum Mobile** (1957)  
(version for violin and piano) 3:43

Komitas Vardapet (1869–1935) was an Armenian priest, composer and ethnomusicologist. He collected and transcribed thousands of Armenian folk songs during his extensive travels around the country, and wrote numerous choral and liturgical works. Renowned musicians of the day, such as Vincent d'Indy, Gabriel Fauré and Camille Saint-Saëns, were entranced by Komitas's music. The French composer Claude Debussy, following a concerto by Komitas, exclaimed, 'Brilliant father Komitas! I bow before your musical genius!'

A set of four songs imitating four instruments, *Tsirani Tsar* ('*The Apricot Tree*') exudes the aromas and vivid colours of the Armenian Highland. The violin starts with an outburst of appeal to the lonely silent tree. In the second song, the flageolets imitate a wind instrument, the *shvi*, and in the third, the *duduk*, another wind instrument, is heard. Curiously, both the *shvi* and *duduk* are made from apricot wood. With its rustle of the leaves in the wind, and its trembling *bloul* (another wind instrument), the last song expresses a restrained lamentation and is played in the tremolo style.

*Kagavik* ('*The Partridge*') is a jovial and caressing song. It is performed in one breath and the fluttering, airy flageolets are again reminiscent of a *shvi*.

The boisterous *Vagharshapat Dance* is bursting with plasticity and graciousness. It comes from the Ararat Valley and is a festive, feminine solo dance.

In the song *Keler, tsoler* ('*He Walked, Shining*') the girl praises her loved one, a fair-haired handsome man who mows the grass in the field. She sings of his walk, his manliness and his work. This beautiful image is compared with the landscape of a mountain meadow.

The longing song *Krounk* ('*The Crane*') has been a symbol of the Armenian diaspora scattered all over the world and their connection with the motherland. Komitas turns tribulation into an anthem for the lost and rediscovered Armenia.

There are masters of musical art who create pieces that are small in form yet full of artistic significance, delivering true aesthetic pleasure. Tbilisi-born composer and pianist Sarkis Barkhudarian (1887–1972) is among such masters of 'small forms'. At the age of twelve Barkhudarian was introduced to the eminent composer Komitas Vardapet, who had a great influence on him. After graduating from the Music Institute in Tbilisi, he continued his studies at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik and later at the St Petersburg Conservatory. Barkhudarian was awarded the title of People's Artist of the Armenian SSR in 1960.

In Barkhudarian's *Sirouhis* ('*To the Beloved*') the music flows as if an Armenian village girl painted in watercolours is gracefully dancing. The violin imitates a *kamancha*, a string folk instrument. In the recitative, the song fades away like a mysterious dream.

Aram Khachaturian (1903–1978) is widely known for his use of folk music in his compositions. Deeply attached to national cultures, he was inspired by the folklore of all the republics of the Soviet Union, especially Armenia.

At the age of 22 his musical training flourished as he joined the composition class at the Gnnessin Musical Institute. Khachaturian quickly stood out as a gifted student and one of the few admitted to the Moscow Conservatory, where he learned composition. UNESCO named Khachaturian as among the most renowned composers of the 20th century.

Elegant and enticing, *Dance in B flat major, Op. 1* for violin and piano was the composer's first work. David Oistrakh commented: 'Like all violinists, I am proud that Khachaturian's first serious work, his *Dance*, was written for the violin. The composer feels the violin like a true virtuoso master.'

With its immersive feelings of solitude and pensive melancholy, Khachaturian's *Adagio* from his ballet *Gayane* delves into the fundamental anguish found within the human condition. The music opens in lower registers, singing an exquisite melody. In the ballet, the *Adagio* embodies Gayane's torment by the fact that her husband is treasonous. The music has a powerful effect and potent sadness within its quiet dynamics and fluidity.

The lyrical *Uzundara* dance is traditionally performed by women as a part of the wedding rite. The composer skilfully intertwines the asymmetric constructions and the exceptional rhythmic acuteness and variations which are often found in Armenian folk music.

One of Khachaturian's outstanding works is the *Adagio* from his ballet *Spartacus*. The ballet follows the trials and tribulations faced by Spartacus as the leader of the slave uprising against the Romans. The *Adagio* appears in the second act when the slave women are set free, and Spartacus and Phrygia celebrate their reunion.

Eduard Abramian (1923–1986) was an Honoured Art Worker of the Armenian SSR and professor at the Yerevan State Conservatory. He graduated from the Tbilisi Conservatory after which he moved to Moscow for postgraduate studies. He wrote many compositions that are widely popular in Armenia.

Abramian's lively *Concert Scherzo* is ethnic to the core. It immediately creates a carefree mood and fills the room with innocent joy, laughter and sunshine.

Composer and pianist Alexander Arutiunian (1920–2012) is widely known for his popular *Trumpet Concerto*. The composer's creative style is based on the rich musical heritage of Armenia and on the principles of Classical and Romantic traditions. A professor at Yerevan State Conservatory, he received many awards for his work. Arutiunian's *Dance* for violin and piano is vivid and celebratory – it evokes nostalgia, and is lush with expression, sensuality and irony.

Composer Tsolak Bekarian (1922–1980) often turned to Armenian folk melodies, enriching his musical language with new expressions. He graduated from the violin and composition departments of the Yerevan State Conservatory. Bekarian played violin in the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra for over 20 years and taught at the Yerevan State Pedagogical Institute.

In *Sonata for Solo Violin No. 2 – I. Grave* the source musical material is close in tone to the medieval Armenian *sharakan* hymns. The composer reveals the expressive possibilities of the main melody by employing the unexpected modal 'shifts' with improvisational elements.

Honoured Art Worker of the Armenian SSR Eduard Bagdasarian (1922–1987) graduated from the Yerevan State Conservatory where he majored in both piano and composition. From 1951 to 1953 he studied in Moscow, at the House of Armenian Culture. Upon returning to Yerevan, he taught at the Conservatory. Being a virtuoso pianist, he performed his own music. Bagdasarian's works are distinguished by genre diversity, richness of figurative content and close connection with the traditions of Armenian folk music.

Bagdasarian's *Nocturne* continues the tradition of the Romantic genre of 'night poetry'. Full of charm, it is distinguished by the richness of its timbral shades and the subtlety of its nuances.

Prominent composer Edvard Mirzoian (1921–2012) created many works in different genres which have taken their rightful place in the music treasury of the world. A graduate of the Yerevan Conservatory, his style has been described as neo-Classical, with elements of Armenian folk song always present. A member of the group 'Armenia's Mighty Handful', in the late 1950s he was elected president of the Armenian Composers' Union, a position he held until 1991.

In his *Perpetuum Mobile* Mirzoian develops a virtuoso piece, incorporating in its dramaturgical outline the *Dies irae* medieval Catholic sequence which creates dramatic emotional density, accentuating the scope of the composer's meditations on life and death. The element of lyrical reflection and philosophical understanding of the surrounding world is accompanied by a lively, impulsive development of the theme.

**Jasmine Sargsyan**



## **Nikolay Madoyan**

Nikolay Madoyan is a renowned German-Armenian violinist and Guinness World Record recipient. Acclaimed by critics for his virtuosity and sheer brilliance, Madoyan has collaborated with the world's leading orchestras and conductors such as Richard Hickox, Kurt Masur, Claudio Abbado, Arnold Katz, Valery Gergiev, Leopold Hager, and many more. Madoyan's albums recorded for the Kontrapunkt label have been critically acclaimed by *The Strad* and *Gramophone*, including his releases featuring the works of Grieg and Prokofiev, which were praised as the best recordings of the year. Madoyan studied in Novosibirsk, Russia, and later in Germany under Professor Zakhar Bron. He holds a PhD degree in Violin Performance from the Berlin University of the Arts. Being a laureate of many international competitions, Madoyan is the winner of the First Prize at the All-Russian Competition and the Grand Prize at the International Kullenkampf Competition in Germany. He is also the Laureate and the Spectators and Journalists Special Prize winner at the IV International Karol Lipiński and Henryk Wieniawski Competition, and the Laureate and Special Prize winner for the Best Performer of a Japanese Work at the Tokyo International Competition. Madoyan is a Merited Artist of Armenia. He was awarded the Gold Medal of the Ministry of Culture and is the winner of the prestigious President Prize.

**[nikolaymadoyan.com](http://nikolaymadoyan.com)**

*Photo by Khandoot Papuyran*

## **Armine Grigoryan**

Armine Grigoryan is one of the brightest representatives of Armenian contemporary pianists. She is a postgraduate of and a professor at the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory. Grigoryan has been a laureate and recipient of awards in several international competitions, and was a double laureate and the winner of the special prize at the 2003 Roma International Piano Competition. She also won the prize of the International Competition, organised by the Fryderyk Chopin Association in Rome, including the special prize for best performance of pieces by Sergio Calligaris. Grigoryan has released several albums and toured in many countries. Her artistic originality is also demonstrated through her concert programming, and she has appeared at numerous prestigious venues as a pianist of the Aram Khachaturian Trio. Grigoryan has been awarded medals from the Ministries of Culture in Poland and Armenia. As the director of the Aram Khachaturian Museum, she works to popularise Khachaturian's music in his homeland and abroad.



*Photo by Vigen Mnoyan*

