



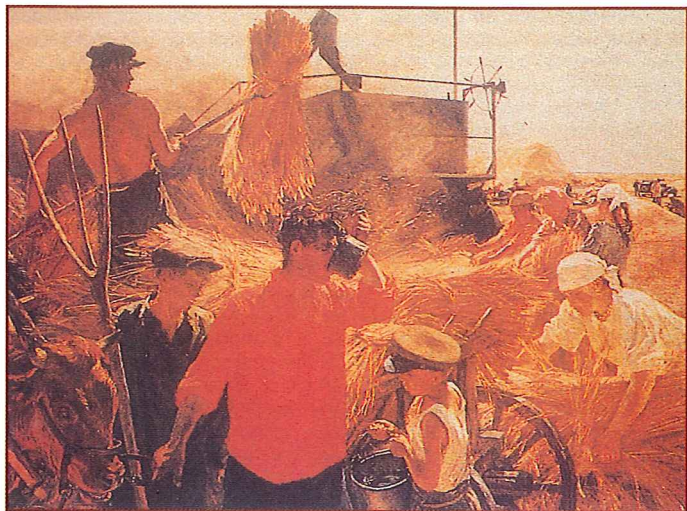
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KHACHATURIAN

Gayane

Suites Nos. 1 - 3

St. Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra
André Anichanov, Conductor



Aram Il'yich Khachaturian (1903 - 1978)

Gayane Suites Nos. 1 - 3

While exercising firm political control over the diverse regions of its vast empire, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics also followed a policy of encouraging arts that had their source in the culture of the people, harnessed to the ends of Socialist Realism. In spite of occasional brushes with the authorities, the music of Aram Khachaturian remained firmly rooted in the cultural traditions of Armenia and of the Caucasus. Born in Tbilisi in 1903 and of Armenian extraction, he enjoyed earlier study, from the age of nineteen, at the Gnesin Institute, followed, seven years later, by entry to the Moscow Conservatory, where his composition teacher was Miaskovsky in a protracted course of study that continued until 1937. He had by this time won very wide acclaim for his Piano Concerto and a first symphony celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of the foundation of the Soviet Armenian Republic. A specifically Armenian element remained of importance in his work, although there were occasions when, under the pressure of official condemnation, he excused perceived tendencies to formalism by claiming that critics had urged him to avoid what might have appeared a national limitation to his reputation and creativity. In 1948, together with Shostakovich, Prokofiev and others, he was criticized for deviation from the proper path for Soviet music. He had no need to take this official disapproval too seriously. Essentially his music had proved satisfactory in its use of Armenian material and in its popular appeal: formalism was not a charge that could be proved against him.

The Great Patriotic War had provided Khachaturian with an opportunity to prove his loyalty to the principles of communism chiefly in his ballet *Gayane* and a second symphony. It was the third symphony, a symphonic poem in garish celebration of victory, that misfired, to earn Zhdanov's official censure. Thereafter Khachaturian turned his immediate attention to film-scores, disregarding Khrennikov's warning that this was not to be used as a means of escape from justified Soviet criticism. After the death of Stalin in 1953, he was able to speak openly in favour of greater freedom for artists. His plea was controversial, condemning, as it did, the official direction of composition practised

under Stalin in recent years and the resulting mediocrity. It was in the years immediately following that he won some success with his score for the ballet Spartacus, based on the exploits of a hero who had appealed to Karl Marx as representative of the proletariat of the ancient Roman world. The score was awarded a Lenin Prize in 1959, but proved more generally acceptable on the stage in a revised version of 1968.

Khachaturian's career after the war was, after 1953, generally successful. He exploited his gifts as a conductor, particularly of his own compositions, and continued to write music that was imbued with the spirit of Armenia that he had inherited by birth, so that this element in his work becomes more than mere superficial exoticism. Whatever views he may have been compelled to express on "technicism" in the Composers' Union meetings of 1948, he possessed a technical command of musical resources, deft in orchestration and felicitous in melodic invention and in the use of melodies of ethnic origin. He continued composing even into his final years, during which he wrote unaccompanied sonatas for cello, for violin and for viola, completing the last of these in 1977, the year before his death.

Gayane was conceived as a ballet in four acts and six scenes. Based, in its original version, on a libretto by Konstantin Derzhavin, it was first staged in December 1942 in Perm, where the Kirov Ballet had been evacuated. Choreography was by Anasimova and decor by Natan Altman. It was restaged in Leningrad in 1945 by the Kirov and in 1957 in another version by the Moscow Bolshoy. The composer was awarded the Stalin Prize for his work in 1943. The ballet was based on an earlier work, Happiness, first produced in Yerevan in 1939, and Khachaturian re-used this music for his new score.

The action of Gayane takes place on a collective farm near Kolkhoz in Southern Armenia in the early days of the Great Patriotic War. Gayane, a cotton-picker, is married to the disreputable Giko, a drunkard and a coward. She denounces him, but he sets fire to bales of cotton and takes their child hostage. Gayane is injured by her husband but saved from his further threats by the arrival of the Red Army Border Patrol and its heroic leader. Giko is sent to imprisonment, leaving Gayane free to marry the leader of the Border Patrol,

with whom she has fallen in love. Their marriage gives an opportunity for celebratory dances from Armenia, Georgia and the Ukraine, with the famous Kurdish Sabre Dance. Other characters in the story include Armen, Gayane's brother, and the girl with whom he is in love, although both characters and events of the sub-plot differ in the various versions of the ballet.

St. Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra

The St. Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra was established in 1969 as the Russian State Concert Orchestra. Work with the conductor André Anichanov began in March 1991. In the following year the orchestra was awarded State Symphony status and changed its name, continuing its established and wide-ranging repertoire, with particular proficiency in the interpretation of Russian music. The orchestra performs in the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Hall, the Academic Capella and Smolny Cathedral and has undertaken successful tours abroad, from near-by Finland to as far afield as South Korea. Recordings for Naxos include the three symphonies of Rimsky-Korsakov and the Spartacus and Gayane ballet suites of Khachaturian.

André Anichanov

Born in St. Petersburg, André Anichanov studied orchestral and choral conducting at the St. Petersburg State Conservatory. After winning an award in 1986 at the State Conducting Competition, he worked with a number of St. Petersburg choirs and in 1989 began conducting the Mussorgsky Opera and Ballet Theatre, of which he was appointed Chief Conductor in 1992, winning success in a number of theatre tours, to Italy, America, Japan and France. In 1991 he was appointed Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the St. Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra.



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STEREO

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Playing
Time:
56'02"

Aram KHACHATURIAN

(1903 - 1978)

Gayane Suites Nos. 1 - 3

St. Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra
André Anichanov, Conductor

Suite No. 1

- 1** Introduction (1:30)
- 2** Gayane and Giko (2:51)
- 3** Armen's Solo (3:44)
- 4** Matsak and Armen (3:39)
- 5** Gayane's Solo (3:35)

Suite No. 2

- 6** Harvest Holiday (2:33)
- 7** Dance of the Girls (2:31)
- 8** Dance of the Boys (2:18)

- 9** Choosing the Bride (3:04)
- 10** Lullaby (5:16)
- 11** Sabre Dance (2:26)

Suite No. 3

- 12** The Hunt / Andante (5:01)
- 13** Dance of the Comrades (1:50)
- 14** Matsak's Solo (1:42)
- 15** Gayane's Adagio (4:56)
- 16** Solo / Love Duet (4:49)
- 17** Finale (4:17)

Recorded at Studio One, St. Petersburg Radio, Russia,
from 1st to 3rd August, 1993.
Producer: Andrew Wheeler
Engineer: Seymon Shougal
Music Notes: Keith Anderson

Cover Painting by Arkady Plastov



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