

Stanzas *in* August

ARMENIAN MUSIC, NEW & REDISCOVERED

Artur Avanesov
Koharik Gazarossian
Aram Hovhannisyan

Aram Khachaturian
Tigran Mansurian
Vahram Sargsyan

Ghazaros Saryan
Komitas Vardapet
Ashot Zohrabyan



STANZAS IN AUGUST

Armenian Music, New & Rediscovered

Dear listener,

It is a true joy to be sharing the *Stanzas in August* collection of Armenian music with you. Following our previous five volumes of the *Modulation Necklace* series, these four new CDs aim not only to excite and inspire you with a sonic quilt of beautiful music, but also to pay off significant musical debts owed to the collective Armenian cultural memory.

The two homages at the heart of this collection are dedicated to Ashot Zohrabyan and Koharik Gazarossian, two consequential and hugely gifted artists who not only created masterpieces that deserve to be documented and shared with the world, but who also made invaluable and lasting contributions to their respective communities of students, followers, audiences, and society.

Honoring Ashot Zohrabyan is deeply personal for me. I was blessed with the privilege of calling him a friend, and, without exaggeration, enjoyed every minute of our musical and personal interactions over the years. A quiet man of the

most modest demeanor, he was a moral giant; his invariably spot-on critique was a true litmus test for generations of adoring students as well as his closest friend, Tigran Mansurian. Ashot's forceful, courageous, poetic music has every color and emotion in its vocabulary, except one: fear.

The Koharik Gazarossian tribute, conceived by Melissa Bilal and recorded with masterful care by Nare Karoyan, presents an astonishing collection of significance and relevance. These pieces offer us a fascinating window into the world of another fearless and exceptionally gifted artist, performer, and composer, who was often well ahead of her time.

The word "fear" is also absent from the three World Premiere works in this collection, by Vahram Sargsyan, Aram Hovhannisyan, and Artur Avanesov. These unique pieces are unified by their creators' unapologetic boldness, visionary sonic imagination, and willingness to push the boundaries of the current post-Soviet landscape of contemporary Armenian music. Joining them on the same disc is an older work, Ghazaros Saryan's String Quartet No. 2, which, in my opinion, shares the spirit of exploration and purposefully rebellious aesthetic with the abovementioned premieres. Like Zohrabyan, Saryan was another quiet man beloved and respected by everyone who was fortunate to know him, including myself in my student years at the Yerevan Komitas Conservatory.

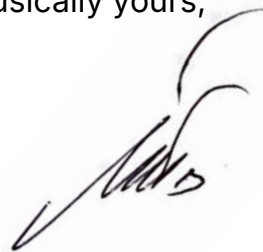
The last disc, *Soliloquy*, presents the lesser known and sparsely recorded works by the greats of Armenian music, Aram Khachaturian and Tigran Mansurian, as well as premieres of piano miniatures by Artur Avanesov in tributes to Komitas and Ashot Zohrabyan. Avanesov's *Cadenza* for solo violin pays homage to Aram Khachaturian, closing the arc of our musical feast with an exclamation point of sorts.

Two years ago, I concluded the foreword of the *Serenade with a Dandelion* collection with these words:

I am also deeply humbled and grateful for the cumulative creative and logistical efforts of everyone who participated in the making of this set: directly or indirectly, alive or no longer with us. I am already looking forward to the next installation in the Modulation Necklace Series, as there is so much beautiful Armenian music that deserves to be recorded and celebrated!

I still feel exactly the same. Enjoy listening, and until the next volume of *Modulation Necklace*.

Musically yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MP', with a large, sweeping flourish above it.

Movses Pogossian

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DISC 1

Vox Temporum



Vox Temporum

Vahram Sargsyan (b. 1981)

Vox Temporum

*for male voice, alto saxophone, & string quartet (2025)**

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|------|
| 1 | 1. Im Annmanin (To My Matchless One) | 7:34 |
| 2 | 2. Manook (Little One) | 5:06 |
| 3 | 3. Calmato e poco allungato - Coda | 4:51 |

Vahram Sargsyan, voice

Jan Berry Baker, alto saxophone

Varty Manouelian & Movses Pogossian, violins

Che-Yen Chen, viola • Ben Hong, cello

Aram Hovhannisyan (b. 1984)

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-------|
| 4 | String Quartet (2025)* | 13:11 |
|---|-------------------------------|-------|

Movses Pogossian & Adrienne Pope, violins

Andrew McIntosh, viola • Mia Barcia-Colombo, cello

Ghazaros (Lazarus) Saryan (1920-1998)

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|-------|
| 5 | String Quartet No. 2 (1986) | 10:07 |
|---|------------------------------------|-------|

VEM String Quartet

Movses Pogossian & Ally Cho, violins

Damon Zavala, viola • Niall Tarō Ferguson, cello

Artur Avanesov (b. 1980)

- | | | |
|---|------------------------|------|
| 6 | Unruhig (2024)* | 9:31 |
|---|------------------------|------|

Anoush Pogossian, clarinet • Edvard Pogossian, cello

Artur Avanesov, piano

Total Time: 50:22

**World premiere recording*

Recording Vahram Sargsyan's *Vox Temporum*, clockwise: Vahram Sargsyan (standing), Varty Manouelian, Movses Pogossian, Che-Yen Chen, Ben Hong, Jan Baker; May 31, 2025, Ostin Recording Studio, UCLA



MY *VOX TEMPORUM* UNITES THE melismatic contours of Armenian music with extended vocal techniques and subtly shifting microtonal harmonies. Structured in three movements and a coda, the work sets Armenian texts that I wrote myself.

At the core of the piece lies a vocal language I have been shaping — a polymorphic approach that treats the voice as a fluid, multi-timbral instrument. It is the result of years of exploration and practical experimentation, a process of expanding the idea of singing and developing new vocal sounds rooted in traditional techniques and the virtually limitless capacities of the most personal of instruments. In *Vox Temporum*, I treat the voice as a compositional medium in its own right, employing modified low-laryngeal phonation inspired by throat singing, bird-song imitation through whistling, simultaneous whistle-voice multiphonics, overtone singing, special tongue trills, and other unconventional gestures. At times, the voice serves as a natural timbral extension of the saxophone, intertwining with it so that their colors overlap and the distinction between voice and instrument becomes subtly blurred.



The **first movement**, *Im Annmanin*, unfolds in a micro-chromatic world of extremely slow glissandi, vocal drones, overtone singing, and descending harmonic slides. Its text uses only vowels and voiced sonorants and fricatives (*m, n, l, r, y, v*), giving the voice an “instrumental” feel through sustained pitches on consonants.

The **second movement**, *Manook*, is a lament for a lost child. Scored for voice and string quartet, it turns to diatonic modal harmony and transparent textures, while its precisely notated irregular rhythms evoke an improvisatory, breathing atmosphere.

The **third movement**, *Calmato e poco allungato*, approaches near-tonality with a subtle twist: over ninety seconds, a series of upward “incremental” glissandi — each roughly an eighth tone — gradually lift the “tonality” by a semitone. Above the strings, the saxophone and voice take turns presenting solos with nuanced ethno-jazz inflections.

A cold, mechanical coda alludes to *chronostasis*, the illusion that time momentarily freezes. The strings’ *col legno* ostinato underpins the saxophone’s and voice’s “void” multiphonics, suspending sound at the edge of temporal stasis.

English translation of the texts:

I

Gazing, I gaze at my matchless one, Is it the same? Not at all. It has come to resemble a lone ship without a helmsman. Weeping, let me wash the rock of existence, And with Noah’s ark, may all be renewed. Let me unite with my matchless one and be made whole.

II

You were just a child, my child,
When did you become spring?
You were just a child. How did you become fire?
My child, my tender one, my child.
How did you become stone?

— *Vahram Sargsyan*

After completion of *Vox Temporum* recording (l-r): Ben Hong, Sergey Parfenov, Jan Baker, Vahram Sargsyan, Varty Manouelian, Movses Pogossian, Irina Osetinskaya, Che-Yen Chen; May 31, 2025, UCLA Ostin Recording Studio



The **String Quartet**, written in memory of Ashot Zohrabyan, is structured as a series of interconnected episodes, each with its own distinct character, while maintaining an underlying sense of tension across the piece. The first episode is defined by dramatic intensity and shifting textures, creating an atmosphere of tension and anxiety. The motifs introduced here return in more expansive form, evolving and developing in the subsequent sections of the piece. A serene and suspended atmosphere emerges in the next episode, gently interrupted by occasional expressive gestures and subtle shifts. This state is followed by passages of vibrant energy, driven by fast, restless motion and a continuing sense of urgency. Gradually the music enters a slow, suspended space, shaped by harmonic transformations that unfold slowly and steadily toward a contemplative stillness. The epilogue concludes the piece with a symmetrical rhythmic structure and a gradual, stepwise harmonic progression, with a quiet, persistent strain.

— *Aram Hovhannisyan*

Ghazaros (Lazarus) Saryan (1920-1998) is among the most significant representatives of the generation of Soviet Armenian composers that immediately followed Aram Khachaturian. Son of the prominent painter Martiros Saryan, he had to interrupt his composition studies in Yerevan to actively serve in the military from 1941 until the end of World War Two. After the war, he briefly studied with Dmitry Shostakovich. However, during the years of Zhdanov's terror, Shostakovich was temporarily suspended from teaching, and Saryan concluded his studies under the guidance of Vissarion Shebalin. From 1960 to 1986, he held the position of the rector at Yerevan State Conservatory where, unlike many other officials, he warmly welcomed innovation and artistic experimentation. Tigran Mansurian is among his most notable disciples.



After Hovhanissyan String Quartet recording (l-r): Mia Barcia-Colombo, Adrienne Pope, Andrew McIntosh, Movses Pogossian; June 1, 2025, Ostin Recording Studio, UCLA

Better known for his orchestral compositions, such as *Symphonic Panel “Armenia”* (1966), *Violin Concerto* (1972) or *Symphony* (1980), Saryan left a significant number of chamber works. The laconic **String Quartet No. 2** (1986) is one of them. Commissioned by the Ministry of Culture of the German State of Hesse — back at the time, part of West Germany that had very little ties to the Soviet Union — the quartet was meant to be performed during the opening of the exhibition of Martiros Saryan’s paintings. Hence the uncharacteristically short duration of the piece, just over 10 minutes. Set in one movement, the quartet continuously alternates between somber twelve-tone chorale and dance-like fast section full of heterophonic syncopations and hemiolas, as well as polyphonic layers and polyrhythms.

— Artur Avanesov



VEM String Quartet. (l-r): Movses Pogossian, Ally Cho, Niall Tarō Ferguson, Damon Zavala

Unruhig for clarinet, cello, and piano was drafted back in 2020 and finalized in 2024, commissioned by UCLA’s Armenian Music Program. The title translates from German as “unquiet.” This work is an expression of existential dread of living in the world where democratic institutions erode at an astounding speed, and the capital is given priority over human life and dignity. The outer sections of the composition constitute a tangled web of polyphonically interwoven restless melodic shards punctuated by impetuous repetitions of separate pitches and chords. Towards the end of the piece, these repetitions shift to the uppermost register, becoming more strident and unsettling. The middle section opens with a moment of catatonic rigidity, where, according to the score, “the gestures of the performers must be extremely precise and tense, as if they played in front of a ticking mechanism,” and then proceeds with a passionate dialogue between the cello and the piano.

— Artur Avanesov




After recording Avanesov’s *Unruhig*. (l-r): Artur Avanesov, Anoush Pogossian, Edvard Pogossian, Movses Pogossian. January 9, 2025, UCLA Ostin Recording Studio

DISC 2

PIANO WORKS OF

Koharik Gazarossian



Koharik Gazarossian by the piano,
(Sona Bedrossian Family Archive, Paris)

MODULATION NECKLACE VOLUME 7

PIANO WORKS OF

Koharik Gazarossian

Nare Karoyan, piano

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 1 | Cantique* | 2:50 |
| | Huit Variations sur un thème populaire du Père Komitas (1938?) | |
| 2 | Thème – Vif et délicat | 0:32 |
| 3 | Variation No. 1 – Modéré et expressif | 0:40 |
| 4 | Variation No. 2 – Vif et vibrant | 0:34 |
| 5 | Variation No. 3 – Lent et expressif | 1:06 |
| 6 | Variation No. 4 – Lourd, avec humeur | 0:48 |
| 7 | Variation No. 5 – Lent et douloureux | 1:21 |
| 8 | Variation No. 6 – Vif et léger | 0:38 |
| 9 | Variation No. 7 – Miserere, Andante espressivo | 1:30 |
| 10 | Variation No. 8 – Vif et marqué | 1:55 |
| | Suite No. 1 (1934?) | |
| 11 | 1. Prélude* | 2:39 |
| 12 | 2. L'Oiseau à ma fenêtre | 1:05 |
| 13 | 3. Paresse* | 2:26 |
| 14 | 4. Dansons!* | 2:16 |
| | Préludes (1947) | |
| 15 | 1. Mon enfant, ta mère et morte | 2:31 |
| 16 | 2. Chérie, ton nom est Chouchan | 2:40 |
| 17 | 3. La lune de la nuit | 2:16 |
| 18 | 4. À travers les champs | 2:24 |

Cantiques de Noël (1957)*		
19	Du monde céleste, les voix arrivent	5:03
20	Réjouissons-nous de ta naissance	2:24
Album bien tempéré*		
21	1. Choral	1:17
22	3. Pièce populaire	1:34
23	5. Nocturne (Midi-Nocturne) (1951)	2:21
24	23. Courant d'air	1:09
Suite No. 2*		
25	1. Prélude	1:47
26	2. Au son du Davoul	1:50
27	3. Nocturne	2:52
Messe arménienne (O mystère profond)*		
28	1. Prélude	3:18
29	2. Fugue	3:32
Trois cantiques pour la main gauche (1946)*		
30	O Sainte Vierge agenouillons-nous devant Toi	1:18

Total Time: 58:36

**World premiere recording*



Koharik Gazarossian by the piano, date and place unknown
 Courtesy of Museum of Literature and Arts, Yerevan, Gazarossian archive

Sonic Recovery: Tracing Koharik Gazarossian's Life and Music

By Melissa Bilal

MY JOURNEY TO KOHARIK GAZAROSSIAN'S world began in Istanbul during the early 2000s with photographs and stories shared by the older members of my community. I met Koharik while researching her close-knit circle of friends, who were the public intellectuals, writers, artists, and feminist activists of the Istanbul-Armenian community. Then I met Nare Karoyan through Koharik. Equally fascinated by her story, kilometers away, Nare had recorded a CD dedicated to her *24 Études*. Our shared enthusiasm for bringing more of Gazarossian's work to public recognition led to this creative collaboration. In May 2025, we welcomed Nare Karoyan to UCLA. Her performance at the Lani Hall and the time we spent in the recording studio, hearing her breathe new life into Gazarossian's music, were both emotional and historic.

Composer, pianist, and music teacher Alis Koharik Gazarossian (Ալիս Գոհարիկ Դազարոսեան, Alis Koharig Ghazarosyan) was born in Constantinople on December 21, 1907, into the family of Eugénie Nazarian, from Constantinople, and Krikor Gazarossian,

Koharik Gazarossian by the piano, Cairo (?), 1967 (?) [Museum of Literature and Arts, Yerevan, Koharik Gazarossian archive]



originally from Garin/Erzurum. Her elementary education coincided with WWI and the Armenian Genocide. The community she grew up in witnessed the arrest and deportation of its intellectuals and received the news of death marches and massacres of Armenians across the empire. During these traumatic times, the Gazarossian family survived in the mainland city and on one of its islands, as did many other Armenians who could remain in the Ottoman capital. The Armenian *Bolis* (Istanbul) of Koharik's early youth was marked by collective relief efforts for genocide survivors from the provinces. Her graduation from Esayan Armenian school in 1923 was a few months before the massive exodus of Armenians from the city with the victorious entrance of the Turkish army.

Koharik's artistic career began in this environment. From an early age, she took private lessons from prominent local Armenian and European pianists and composers in Constantinople. She studied piano and harmony with Constantinople-based Hungarian pianist and composer Géza Hegyei, who was a student of Franz Liszt; composer and piano teacher Enrico Henri Furlani; and renowned Armenian composer and conductor Edgar Manas. During these years, she also sang in a choir directed by the famous *Gomidas Vartabedi Hink Saner* (Five Students of Gomidas Vartabed/Komitas Vardapet). In the summer of 1926, she left for Paris to attend the Conservatoire. She studied piano with Lazar Levy, theory and harmony with Paul Fauchet, and composition with Paul Dukas and Jean Roger-Ducasse. The latter was a student of Gabriel Fauré, and Gazarossian often included his works in her future concert repertoire.

In 1934, Koharik Gazarossian gave her debut recital as a concert pianist at the famous Salle Pleyel (Salle Chopin). She built a successful career as a soloist, accompanist, composer, and piano teacher in

Paris. It is around this time that her name first appeared in French music journals such as *L'Art Musical*. She worked as a pianist for the local Armenian choir, *Sipan Gomidas*, which soon incorporated her earliest compositions into its repertoire. Letters from that period attest to Gazarossian's active role in the Parisian Armenian cultural scene, working closely with prominent intellectuals, journalists, writers, and artists. She took voice lessons from acclaimed soprano, Marguerite Babaïan (Margarit Babayan), who had become a family friend of the Gazarossians. In 1930s Paris, Marguerite and Koharik visited each other regularly, sent students to each other, invited each other to their concerts, and attended the performances of the Paris Orchestra together. This lifelong friendship also manifested itself in Babaïan's articles in Istanbul's *Kulis* performing arts journal, covering Gazarossian's concerts in Europe in the 1950s, to inform Istanbul Armenians about the international recognition a member of their community enjoyed as a pianist and composer.

In the second half of the 1930s, Gazarossian spent her summer vacations in Istanbul, where she also gave concerts. In 1939, she moved back to Istanbul with her family at her mother's doctor's recommendation. She spent the WWII years there, performing at the then-famous venues of the city, including l'Union Française. When writer and researcher Toros Azadyan handed her two field notebooks that belonged to Gomidas Vartabed, which contained transcriptions of seventy folk songs, she found herself engaged in a "perspective-shifting learning process," as she put it. Gomidas had collected these songs during his 1913 trip to the villages of the Surmalu region in what was then the Yerevan province of the Russian Empire (Evjilar, Arazap, today in Armavir, Armenia, and Goghpa, in Igdir, Turkey today). Gazarossian spent several years deciphering these Hampartzum

notation transcriptions and studying the musical language they captured. In 1950, she published twenty of her arrangements of these songs. Later, she wrote a number of instrumental works, the main themes of which were taken from these melodies. One example is Աղջի, մէրրդ մեռել ա (Aghchi Mert Merel A) / Ta Mère N'est Plus for String Quartet composed in 1961 and recorded in 2024 by UCLA Armenian Music Program's VEM Ensemble in *Serenade with a Dandelion*. Similarly, *Préludes* for piano (1947) in this album [tracks 15-18] are based on this collection.

In 1957, Gazarossian visited the house where Gomidas Vartabed was born in Gudina/Kütahya, Turkey and met his relatives who still lived there. The article that she published in *Zhamanag* Armenian daily of Istanbul, depicting this historic trip, was reprinted in the global Armenian press. We also know that in the 1960s she located additional archival documents of Gomidas in Turkey and took the responsibility for safely sending them to Armenia.

In 1947, Koharik Gazarossian was invited to the United States for a concert tour. For about a year and a half, she stayed on the East Coast and performed in major concert venues, including the Times Hall (November 27, 1947) and the Carnegie Hall (January 29, 1948). It is during this tour that she implemented her J.S. Bach-inspired innovative idea: *Well-Tempered Program* (Programme Bien Tempéré). Planned as 24 different recital programs as “a musical history organized according to tonality,” these concerts showcased piano works by European classical composers, including Bach, Purcell, Scarlatti, Mozart, Beethoven, Verdi, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Chopin, Liszt, as well as Gomidas Vartabed. We don't have any documentation of Gazarossian ever performing works by women composers, yet

each concert featured at least one of her own compositions, which in and of itself was a revolutionary intervention in the canon.

In April 1948, Gazarossian gave another concert at the Brooklyn Museum, which was aired on WNYC radio in July 1948. During this trip, she also met and worked with pianist Edward Weiss, who had recently repatriated from Germany. On March 13, 1949, she performed as a guest artist at an annual concert organized by the Armenian Students Association of America's Washington Branch held at Chevy Chase Women's Club, Maryland. Her recitals in the United States were covered and reviewed in major newspapers such as *The New York Times* and, through these reports, also in *Cumhuriyet* daily in Turkey.

Upon her return from the United States tour, Gazarossian began touring Europe and Lebanon, performing on stages such as Salle Gaveau of Paris and Wigmore Hall of London; appearing on radio and TV across Europe; and playing with major orchestras under the batons of many renowned conductors. In the 1950s, she also appeared on various concert stages in Istanbul, such as Küçük Sahne and Galatasaray High School Conference Hall, while at the same time regularly performing at the alumni associations of the Armenian community. Among many concerts she held at her apartment/studio in Şişli, the one on July 6, 1957, was perhaps the most memorable as it featured her artistic collaboration with her close friend Hayganush Mark, a prominent feminist writer and activist. A few months earlier, in December 1956, she had registered her song settings of Mark's poems to *Société des auteurs, compositeurs et éditeurs de musique*. In 1954, Gazarossian was the co-chair of Mark's jubilee committee, which organized a public event and published a volume with Mark's memoir and collected works, including poems, which

were Gazarossian's inspirations for numerous compositional works. Gazarossian's musical engagement with Mark's poems dates back to the 1930s when she was a student of composition in Paris. Some of these songs also constitute the main themes of her instrumental works. For example, the character piece that constitutes the third movement of her *Piano Suite No.1* (1934?) [track 13] is based on “Ծուլութիւն (Dzulutyun) / Paresse (Laziness)” from Mark's 1921 poetry book *Dzulutyun Baheres* (From my Moments of Laziness).

Throughout her years in Istanbul, Gazarossian also chaired Armenian alumni associations' music committees, invited Armenian musicians from around the world, and organized concerts for them, often accompanying them on the piano. Among these are singers Armen Girag Sakizlian from Argentina and Gohar Gasparyan from Armenia, as well as violinist Jirayr Kantarjian from Beirut. She had the dream of forming an organization of Armenian musicians in the diaspora. She also wanted to visit Armenia, and although this dream never came true, she was introduced to the public through a Yerevan radio program in 1966 during which pianist Marjan Mkhitaryan performed her works and musicologist Robert Atayan read a lecture.

In May 1967, Gazarossian was in Egypt. Her appearances on the Cairo and Alexandria stages were covered in local newspapers with great admiration. A few months after her return to Istanbul, she moved to Paris for treatment. She passed away there on October 29, 1967.

An entry about Koharik Gazarossian in the 1957 edition of *Larousse De La Musique*, was perhaps a first solid step towards writing her into the canon. The fact that she was included in this



Koharik Gazarossian by the piano, Istanbul (?), 1956 (?).
At the back, a letter to Hayganush Mark
[Museum of Literature and Arts, Yerevan, Hayganush Mark archive]

international encyclopedia made it to the news in the Istanbul-Armenian press as well. Koharik Gazarossian's musical expression manifested itself in a variety of forms. Her oeuvre ranges from solo and choral vocal compositions to instrumental works for various combinations of violin, viola, cello, flute, oboe, organ, and piano. Her contributions to the piano repertoire feature etudes, preludes, two concertos, a sonata, two suites, among other pieces. In 1940, her *Trois chansons populaires Arméniennes* was published by Éditions Durand, Paris. In the 1940s and 50s, *Hasg* monthly and *Hasg* yearbook of Armenian Studies in Anthelias, Lebanon published her works based on Armenian liturgical repertoire, including the Christmas hymn Յնծուրեալք տօնեցուրք (Tsndzutyamb Donestsuk / We Celebrate with Joy) [track 20]. Her *Vingt Quatre Études Pour Piano* (Twenty-four Etudes) were originally published by Éditions Choudens in Paris in 1967. In the current recording of her piano works, our source was the critical edition published in Cairo in 2005, by musicologist and pianist Haig Avakian, based on the unpublished manuscripts the composer's niece, Sona Bedrossian, preserved in the family archive in Paris.

Some of Gazarossian's piano works were previously recorded. The earliest of these is her friend Magdi Rufer's (Magdalena Rufer Eyüboğlu) performance of six etudes in a 1966 LP released by Durium in Italy. An article in *Kulis* from 1967 informs us that Gazarossian herself performed all 24 etudes in Paris at a concert held in April, which was professionally recorded and planned to be released as an LP. As far as we know, that recording was never released, most probably due to the composer's worsening health. Şahan Arzruni's premiere recording of four *Préludes* (1947) was released in 1979 in *Anthology of Armenian Piano Music*, vol. II by

Musical Heritage Society. In 1997, a concert was held in Paris to mark the thirtieth anniversary of Gazarossian's passing. The concert was released as a CD featuring all four *Préludes* and the second piece ("Loiseau à ma fenêtre") from the four-part Suite No. 1 for Piano performed by Arzruni and the third movement of the 1956 *Sonata* and one etude by Arthur Aharonian. The CD also includes Gazarossian's 1954 live Radio Paris performance of her *Huit Variations sur un thème populaire du Père Komitas* (c. 1938). The first two preludes from 1947 also appear in Arzruni's recent CD *By Women* (Armenian General Benevolent Union, 2024). In 2010, pianist and activist Margot Dilmaghani recorded two etudes in her album titled *Celebration*, dedicated to music by Armenian women. This CD was produced to raise funds to benefit women's health in Armenia and to translate *Our Bodies Ourselves* into Armenian.

[Information provided in these notes are taken from primary sources preserved in Sona Bedrossian family archive in Paris; Museum of Literature and Arts named after Yeghishe Charents and Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (Matnadaran) in Yerevan; Hagop Ayvaz and Kulis archive housed in the Hrant Dink Foundation, Istanbul; Armenian Cultural Foundation in Arlington, MA; as well as periodical press in Armenian, English, and Turkish; Haig Avakian's annotated critical editions (2005-2018) published in the musical supplement of the Cairo-based Tchahagir journal; and the liner notes by Şahan Arzruni for the above-mentioned 1997 CD].

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→ Program Cover of Gazarossian's Wigmore Hall recital, 1950, signed for Margarit Babayan [Museum of Literature and Arts, Yerevan, Margarit Babayan archive]

Koharik Gazarossian's Piano Music

by Nare Karoyan

THE PERILOUS LAST CHORDS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE come in shape of the 1915 Genocide of its Armenian minority. Thus *The World of Yesterday* (Stefan Zweig) lays in ruins when a girl from Constantinople starts making music. And so in 1926 — the year in which Claude Monet closed his eyes forever and György Kurtág took his first breath — this young woman comes to Paris. *A Movable Feast*, as Hemingway calls the French capital, becomes a major cornerstone of the musical identity of the composer Koharik Gazarossian.

Gazarossian returned to her religious roots time and again when composing piano music. The range of expression of her interpretations of those sacred melodies is vast. While some of the pieces in this category are kept very plain and close to the original homophonic chants like the last composition of the CD *O sainte Vierge agenouillons-nous devant Toi / Անկանխիւնք անուշի Քն* (Ankanimq araji qo / We Fall Before You) composed by Movses Khorenatsi (5th century) for the left hand, others feel like a continuation of a certain improvisational gesture that the sacred tunes had when they got in touch with instrumental virtuosity of profane music. These types of melismatic lines seem to refuse any bowing to a “narrative line” that shapes Western classical music. On the contrary, those melodies seem to gush out of an endless natural source, to flow freely and to overgrow with time into a Regerian



thicket while rejecting formal restrictions. *Du monde celeste, les voix arrivent* / Որ դասուց երկնաւորաց (Vor dasuts yerknavorats / From the celestial world, the voices arrive) [track 19] out of the *Cantiques de Noël* / Ծննդեան շարականներ (Tsnndyan sharakaner / Christmas Hymns) [tracks 19-20] lies thus at the other extremity of this range and it could have been understood as closely linked to the improvisando tendencies of the Armenian liturgical chanting.

Between those two extremities lies another surprise in the shape of a *Fugue* [track 29] whose melody comes from the Armenian Holy Mass and a *Choral* / Հայր մեր (Hayr mer) [track 21] which is the sacred song of *Pater noster* (*Lord's prayer*). In those compositions, Gazarossian casts Armenian homophonic music into two different polyphonic shapes that have been pivotal in the development of classical music. The braiding of those two distinctly different aesthetics results in something unexpected. On the one hand, in the case of the *Choral*, a plainchant is being paraphrased by the added harmonic sequence which is later being used as the middle section of Gazarossian's piano *Étude no. 12*. The *Fugue* on the other hand is taming the melodies that have a certain spontaneity and are prone to meander through its strict structures of polyphony. And yet another way of rethinking her musical roots, Gazarossian has found in combining the sacred song Նայեաց Սիրով (Nayeats sirov / Look lovingly, compassionate Father) from the evening prayers of the Armenian Horarium (Book of Hours) composed by Nerses Shnorhali (12th century) and a folk dance melody into her composition *Cantique*, the opening track of the CD. Thus this piece merges two of her three musical pillars: sacred and folk music.

Those two musical directions while having met multiple times before reunite notably in one person at the end of the 19th century.

Next to several other key figures one man especially becomes crucial for the further development of a concert repertoire based on Armenian sacred and folk music. The musician-musicologist-priest Komitas (1869-1935) himself a survivor of the Genocide becomes the symbol of the fate of the Armenian nation. A nation strongly rooted in its religion and traditions while being aesthetically and philosophically in a dialogue with global currents. Komitas played a preeminent role in the cultural landscape of Constantinople at the beginning of the 20th century. His 300-person choir *Gusan* (Bard) was a leading musical body of the city. It was in this choir that one of Gazarossian's brothers used to sing and whose daughter Sona Bedrossian later on and for many decades became the angel keeper of the composer's archive. Gazarossian herself sadly never met Komitas, but despite that, her musical background seems to mirror Komitas' while producing a distinctly different result.

Next to several short pieces like *Pièce Populaire* [track 22] from *Album bien tempéré* [tracks 21-24] Koharik Gazarossian wrote two sets of piano pieces that have folk tunes at their base. Those are the *Huit variations sur un thème populaire de Père Komitas* / Ութ փոփոխակ Կոմիտաս Վարդապետի ժողովրդական եղանակի վրայ (*Ut popokhak Komitas Vardapeti zhoghovrdakan yeghanaki vra, Eight Variations on a Folk Theme by Komitas Vardapet*) [tracks 2-10] as well as four *Préludes* [tracks 15-18] on the themes of unpublished folk songs that were gathered by Komitas. The eight variations are based on one of the most famous folk dances that Komitas himself put for piano: *Shushiki*. Throughout the course of the cycle the theme is making a significant transformation from being playful and vibrant (no. 2) over to recitativo (no. 3), humorous (no. 4), mournful (no. 5), and light (no. 6). The variation no. 7 which is the only

one that has a separate title, “Miserere”, is undeniably the emotional highlight of the whole cycle while ironically being the only movement that rejects being a variation of *Shushiki* but instead uses an iconic sacred tune. This Armenian “Kyrie eleison” (Ter Voghormia / Lord, have Mercy) reminds us somewhat of what we would later encounter in the 7th movement of György Ligeti’s *Musica Ricercata*: two hands that are seemingly operating independently from one another. As in Ligeti’s piece, here too there is a long two voiced melodic line in the right hand that seems to take off of the mostly monotonous left hand which by itself creates the illusion of independence of meter between the hands despite being written down — unlike in Ligeti’s composition — in a very classical manner.

As in the case of many other compositions, Koharik Gazarossian used some of the unpublished folk tunes collected by Komitas in several compositions. Next to the songs for voice and piano that continue the aesthetics of Komitas with a very aquarellic and intimate accompaniment, there are the four *Préludes* and the *Pièce Populaire* for piano solo that, on the contrary, are more daring and paraphrase-like. Harmonically as well as instrumentally, Gazarossian goes beyond the simple melodies and gives them a more concertante dimension. The *Préludes* have these songs at their base: (1) Աղջի, մերընդ մեռել է ա (*Aghchi, merd merel a*) / *Mon enfant, ta mère est morte* / *Girl, your Mother is dead* (2) Աղջի, անունդ Շուշան (*Aghchi, anund Shushan*) / *Chérie, ton nom est Chouchan* / *Girl, your name is Shushan* (3) Գիշերուան լուսնեակը (*Gisheruan lusneake*) / *La lune de la nuit* / *Nocturnal moon* (4) Կալերի ճամբէն (*Kaleri Jampen*) / *À travers les champs* / *Through the Threshing Floors*. While three of the four *Préludes* are piano paraphrases of three folk tunes respectively, the second *Prélude* is an elaborate piece in which the composer

merges two more songs next to the title-song: Բաղջի պատը դրոմ ա (*Baghchi pate ddum a*) / *The Garden Fence is Covered with Gourds* as well as Ճոճան Գիւլ հա եարրս (*Jojan Giul ha yars*) / *Swinging Song — My Love is a Rose*. The *Pièce Populaire* on the other hand is a combination of three different tunes with similar texts and the same title Սարերը կրակ են արել (*Sarere krak em arel*) / *I lit fire on the mountains*.

The third pillar of Gazarossian’s oeuvre are the pieces without an explicit link to her Armenian heritage. The two Suites [tracks 11-14 and 25-27] while starting both with a *Prélude*, they don’t continue the traditional form of a Suite being a cycle of instrumental dances but they are rather cycles of contrasting character pieces. As such they are later being reorganized by tonality and used in the cycle *Album bien tempéré* while sending a little greeting to the great J. S. Bach. One of the other of *Album bien tempéré’s* particularities is that of “program music” or pieces that are having extramusical connotations. Thus feeling deeply connected to poetry and being befriended to poets throughout her lifetime, Gazarossian often takes poems from different cultural backgrounds as an inspiration for her piano music. The third movement of her *Suite no. 1 Paresse* is based on a poem titled Ծուլութիւն (*Dzulutyun*) / *Laziness* by Hayganush Mark while *Courant d’air* [track 24] is based on a poem by Armand Harpoutian.

Despite being a representative of “the lost generation” (Gertrude Stein) and a person who experienced *The Turning Point* (Klaus Mann), Koharik Gazarossian stayed, until the end, deeply rooted in her own cultural heritage as well as her heritage as a classically trained musician.



DISC 3

CHAMBER MUSIC OF

Ashot Zohrabyan



MODULATION NECKLACE VOLUME 8

CHAMBER MUSIC OF
Ashot Zohrabyan

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| 1 | String Quartet No. 1 (1994)*
VEM String Quartet
Moses Pogossian & Ally Cho, violins
Damon Zavala, viola • Niall Tarō Ferguson, cello | 11:37 |
| 2 | Piano Sonata (1979)
Artur Avanesov, piano | 11:07 |
| 3 | String Quartet No. 2 (1998)*
VEM String Quartet
Moses Pogossian & Ally Cho, violins
Damon Zavala, viola • Niall Tarō Ferguson, cello | 18:43 |
| 4 | Cello Sonata (1978)
Edvard Pogossian, cello • Artur Avanesov, piano | 15:53 |
| 5 | String Quartet No. 3 (2015)*
Varty Manouelian & Eva Aronian, violins
Cara Pogossian, viola • Edvard Pogossian, cello | 15:54 |

Total Time: 73:06**World premiere recording*

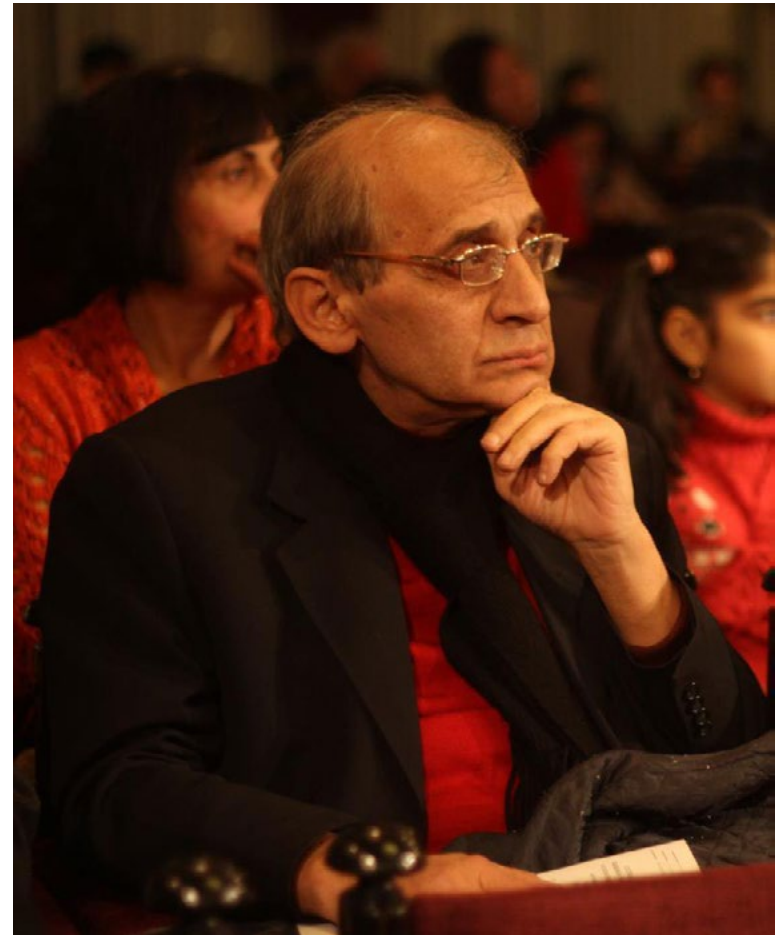
Ashot Zohrabyan and His Music

by Artur Avanesov

THE HISTORY OF ARMENIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC COINCIDED with the dramatic developments of Armenian history. Having originated in the late 19th century, it went through different phases conditioned by political circumstances, which often precluded its immediate heredity. Apart from a few early Soviet decades, consecutive generations of Armenian composers did not build upon each other's ideas but aligned with radically different ideologies and proposed divergent solutions.

By the end of the 1960s, amidst the loosening grip of state control over the arts, supported through diaspora-mediated contacts with the West, an Armenian musical avant-garde started to form. Like everywhere else, this movement was essentially anti-romantic. In the Soviet Union, however, it had to maintain a facade of alignment with the predominant ideology. Mixing recent developments of the “capitalist West” with the traits of national music became acceptable and even fashionable. This gave critics the opportunity to disregard Western influence and instead concentrate on safer ponderings about the noble connection of an artist to their roots.

Armenian avant-gardists were not alone in their attempt to fuse traits of traditional music with the latest achievements of universal musical thought. A precedent was set a few generations prior by the key figure of Armenian classical music: Komitas. He, too, distanced himself from the romantic tradition in favor of the non-pretentious, transparent writing closely related to





the most recent musical idioms and rooted in traditional music. The avant-gardists of the 1960-70s may be considered the first true heirs to Komitas' school of thought. Shunning the grandeur of post-Khachaturian music, they gave their works more intimate expression.

ASHOT ZOHRABYAN (1945-2023) is among the brightest minds of that generation. His output is not particularly large, mainly consisting of chamber and ensemble works, each approximately 10-20 minutes in duration. Yet, it is hard to overestimate the importance of his unique voice in Armenian music. Always balancing passion and

rationality, he was among the first who introduced many contemporary idioms and techniques, though never losing the classical feeling of the form, and caring for the emotional significance of each note he wrote.

Zohrabyan's perception of the avant-garde was rather of acoustic than scholastic nature; he was more interested in how the music sounds than how it is made. In that sense, he stands very close to many of his late-Soviet contemporaries. Yet, unlike them, he never turned to the nostalgic neo-tonal musical language. Instead, composers like Ligeti and Lutosławski remained his points of reference. He closely followed their stylistic transformations; like them, he outgrew the avant-garde not by renouncing it but by gradually cutting out all things superfluous and excessive, thus returning to the very principles on which all classical music is based.

One can call Zohrabyan's music "post-Webernian", only in a limited sense. Like Webern — and, for this purpose, also Komitas — he tended to get rid of all external virtuosity. More importantly, he cared deeply for two fundamental aspects formulated by Webern: comprehensibility and cohesion. The former ensures the overall integrity of the composition; the latter provides strong connections between its various constituents. From these two principles arise structural clarity and stylistic unity. It was not Zohrabyan's intention to make more "advanced" music, but to take full responsibility for each element.

The *Piano Sonata*, the earliest composition included in this collection, was written back in 1979. However, driven by incessant self-reflection, Zohrabyan later substantially edited this work, re-publishing the new version in the mid-1990s.

The sonata has three movements. It is best described as "mono-thematic." Lacking traditional subjects, subject groups, and sections,

it continuously shuffles the same thematic elements which appear under different guises. These elements include not only certain tone structures, but also recurrent tempos, interplay between registers, dynamic shifts, stops and caesuras—in a nutshell, expansions and contractions of the musical flow. Another important feature of Zohrabyan’s sonata is its predominantly heterophonic texture, and almost total avoidance of counterpoint.

The primary unit of the whole sonata is a tone preceded by a grace note. This model permeates all three movements. It is often irregularly repeated before taking a sudden dive into a new register. The grace notes sometimes merge with the main tones, forming layered structures—not chords in the traditional sense. During the climactic moments, the grace note aggregates move further away from the main



(l-r) Varty Manouelian, Ashot Zohrabyan, Antonio Lysy, Tigran Mansurian, Movses Pogossian; Yerevan, Armenia, June 2013

tone. Occasionally, the tones are interspersed with brief, percussive tone clusters.

The irregular heartbeat of aspiration-laden tones in Zohrabyan’s music is reminiscent of the traditional string instrument performance practice, particularly that of the *kamancha*. Unlike Komitas, Zohrabyan never sought to document folkloric samples. His music embeds his own vision of the tradition. Reconstructive rather than preservationist, his approach is to “inoculate” the classical instrumental technique with the mannerisms found in the popular practice, thus bridging the two divergent sonic worlds.

The ideas expressed in the *Piano Sonata* seamlessly overspill into its “sequel”—the *Cello Sonata* completed in 1980. Compared to the former, it is somewhat larger and set in one continuous movement, though featuring multiple fluctuations of speed and dynamics. When a soliloquy turns into a dialogue, one more property of Zohrabyan’s music comes forward, namely its connection with speech. All Zohrabyan’s works are, in fact, ardent rhapsodies where “speech,” “recitative,” and “singing” merge into one pyroclastic flow.

The instrumental parts in *Cello Sonata* are not differentiated by character and function. The cello is perceived as a piano with vibration and harmonics; the piano as a cello with wider sound range and pedal resonance. There is hardly any place for dry, anechoic sound; the sonic space, irrespective of the musical character, is always resonant, as if acoustically recreating the soundscape of a medieval temple. In the cello part, microtonal deviations occasionally occur. Far from systemically employing microtonal harmony, Zohrabyan treats quarter-tones as sporadic ornaments, akin to pitch fluctuations in folk practice.

The three **String Quartets** — written in 1994, 2004, and 2016, respectively — have been created as separate entities and not as one overarching cycle. Yet, in retrospect, common patterns between them are easily noticeable. The quartets appear as some sort of a time-lapse photograph taken from one single standpoint, or else as “radiographs” of the composer’s inner world performed at different stages of his life. Contributing to this feeling is the similarity of the musical form in all three of them. It further highlights the gradual metamorphosis of Zohrabyan’s style that knew no sudden radical change. Like waves rolling over pebbles year upon year, subtle linguistic details, minuscule stylistic self-indulgences smoothed out the angular, thorny edges, and gave Zohrabyan’s final works serenity and balance.

It is remarkable that the *First String Quartet (Narcissus)* was created quite late, at the brink of the sixth decade of the composer’s life. It materialized thanks to a commission. Pioneered by the Kronos Quartet, this work likely posed a significant challenge for the composer — mainly due to its own medium. As it was said above, resonant echo is among the most important traits of Zohrabyan’s music. Yet, string quartets have virtually none — at least, not the kind achievable with piano or with orchestra. Also, simultaneous combination of four melodic lines implies the presence of certain polyphonic elements, while most of Zohrabyan’s prior music had been markedly heterophonic. As a result, an interesting composition came to life. Dense and unstable, it features multiple melodic shards seemingly looking into their own reflection - sometimes clear, sometimes distorted through polyphonic ripples. Hence the subtitle.

Likewise, the *Second String Quartet*, subtitled *For Kronos*, was championed by the same renowned group. Generally, the inclusion of not one but two of Zohrabyan’s string quartets in Kronos’

repertoire is remarkable. Unlike many other works written for Kronos, Zohrabyan’s music is of rather abstract nature. He never gave his works any extramusical meaning; they are not meant to transmit urgent political or social messages, nor do they feature overtly ethnic sound.

I cannot help but recall a conversation I once had with Zohrabyan about Shostakovich’s and Bartók’s string quartets. He held an opinion that many prefer Shostakovich to Bartók mostly due to intimately knowing and understanding the historical context of the former’s music. But eventually, according to Zohrabyan, the time will come when the knowledge of the context will fade, thus affecting the perception. It is then that Bartók may gain more importance, for his music, being rather abstract, may prove more durable.

In Zohrabyan’s Second Quartet, one motive is of particular significance. Appearing in the first violin part, not long after the beginning, it is based on restless shuffling of one single interval — major third (G to B-natural), and concludes with a ninth (B to C). For a very long time, Zohrabyan intentionally avoided the thirds. For instance, the 1979 version of the Piano Sonata does not contain such intervals at all — harmonically or melodically. On the other hand, the major third has a special meaning in Armenian music. A local listener immediately associates it with a highly symbolic Komitas song - *Antuni (Exile Song)* — a milestone of the Armenian classical repertoire and a quintessence of “Armenian-ness” in music. The major third permeates all Zohrabyan’s late-period compositions, becoming a sort of personal signature.



After recording Ashot Zohrabyan's String Quartet No. 3 (l-r): Varty Manouelian, Eva Aronian, Edvard Pogossian, Movses Pogossian (producer), Cara Pogossian; January 10, 2025

Finally, the **Third String Quartet** commissioned by Movses Pogossian for the Los Angeles-based *Dilijan Chamber Music Series*, is given the most poetic subtitle — *Stanzas in August*.

August is perhaps the loveliest — at least, not the “cruellest” — month in Yerevan, the Armenian capital. In the evenings, the sultry heat is gone, and the wind picks up. Later, the crickets start chirping, and go on all night long, until dawn. For someone as actively involved in teaching as Zohrabyan used to be, composing in August would be the last opportunity to fully immerse in one’s own work before the beginning of the fall semester. According to the composer’s own note, the title was influenced by William Faulkner’s novel *Light in August* that “got its definitive title after a remark by his wife Estelle about the special quality of the light in August.”

And what about stanzas? It is no secret that avant-garde music often shunned all things periodic and predictable. In poetry, that would translate to the predilection for *vers libre*, as opposed to “packing” a poem into metrically predictable stanzas. The rhythmical patterns in this quartet are at times just as simple; big chunks of music move in equal quarter notes — something unthinkable for an avant-garde composer. In other places, purely polyphonic fragments appear and stay for quite some time — yet another tribute to classical string quartet writing.

Here is the composer’s own observation about the piece: “[the] Italian word *stanza* has a double meaning. It may refer both to a poetic strophe, as well as to a room — ‘a place to stay.’ My intention was to combine both these meanings. In terms of a strophe, it has an allusion to the poetry, notably to Joseph Brodsky (*Seven Strophes*). On the other hand, this work purposely lacks consistent development, and short passages of music are separated with suspended rests... My idea was to create poetic music broken down in “strophes,” and to shed such a tender August light over each of them.”

In a way, the Third Quartet has many things in common with the third, unfinished, book of Ligeti’s Piano Etudes. Some of these etudes — for example, “White on White” or “Pour Irina” — begin with a state of blankness; periodically shimmering intervals or chords lead to the sudden polyphonic whirlwind, yet much milder than in the previous books, merely a distant echo. Austere and reticent, *Stanzas in August* is a work of ultimate humility, created by an artist nearing the end of his journey, ready to embrace the starry night.

Tributes to Ashot Zohrabyan



Ashot Zohrabyan and Tigran Mansurian, March 23, 2016, Yerevan, Armenia

HE WAS EXTRAORDINARILY DEVOTED TO MUSIC; his musical quest never stopped. In the 1970s we fully immersed ourselves in the studies of modern Western music. Back then, finding new scores and recordings was next to impossible.

He was an outstanding pedagogue. Over the years, I witnessed mutual devotion between him and his students. He also was the first “judge” of my own compositions.

At the age of ten, his family was allowed to return home from the Stalin labor camps; his Siberian experience never ceased haunting him.

As a close friend of Ashot Zohrabyan, I am excited that his works, particularly his string quartets, are being published. His compositions, regardless of the conditions of their creation, are documentary evidences of his own life, and his personality shines through each of them.

— Tigran Mansurian

ZOHRABYAN'S MUSIC STANDS AS A LANDMARK OF CHAMBER

writing not only within the Armenian context but also in the broader landscape of contemporary classical music.

He became a bridge between Armenian modal traditions and European modern and avant-garde aesthetics. His three string quartets, in particular, will remain a vital part of Armenia's legacy in the genre and deserve their place among the world's exemplary chamber works. A gesture-based motivic poet, a singer of pain, desire, tension, and austere beauty, he created music as a process of purification through stern and uncompromising introspection.

As my professor of composition at the Yerevan State Conservatory, Zohrabyan's contribution to my artistic formation was immeasurable. He taught us to listen beneath the surface of sound, to perceive the value of even the tiniest musical gesture and to let our music breathe. He instilled in me his immense sense of responsibility and helped me grasp the ethical weight behind every artistic decision. More profoundly, he transformed my approach to composition, from an inspiration-driven, impulsive act into a devoted and conscious discipline of the art form. His method was not to impose but to awaken, to nurture the dormant creative forces within each student and guide them toward their own voice. I believe that his enduring legacy will continue to serve as a source of guidance, nourishment, and inspiration for generations to come.

—Vahram Sargsyan

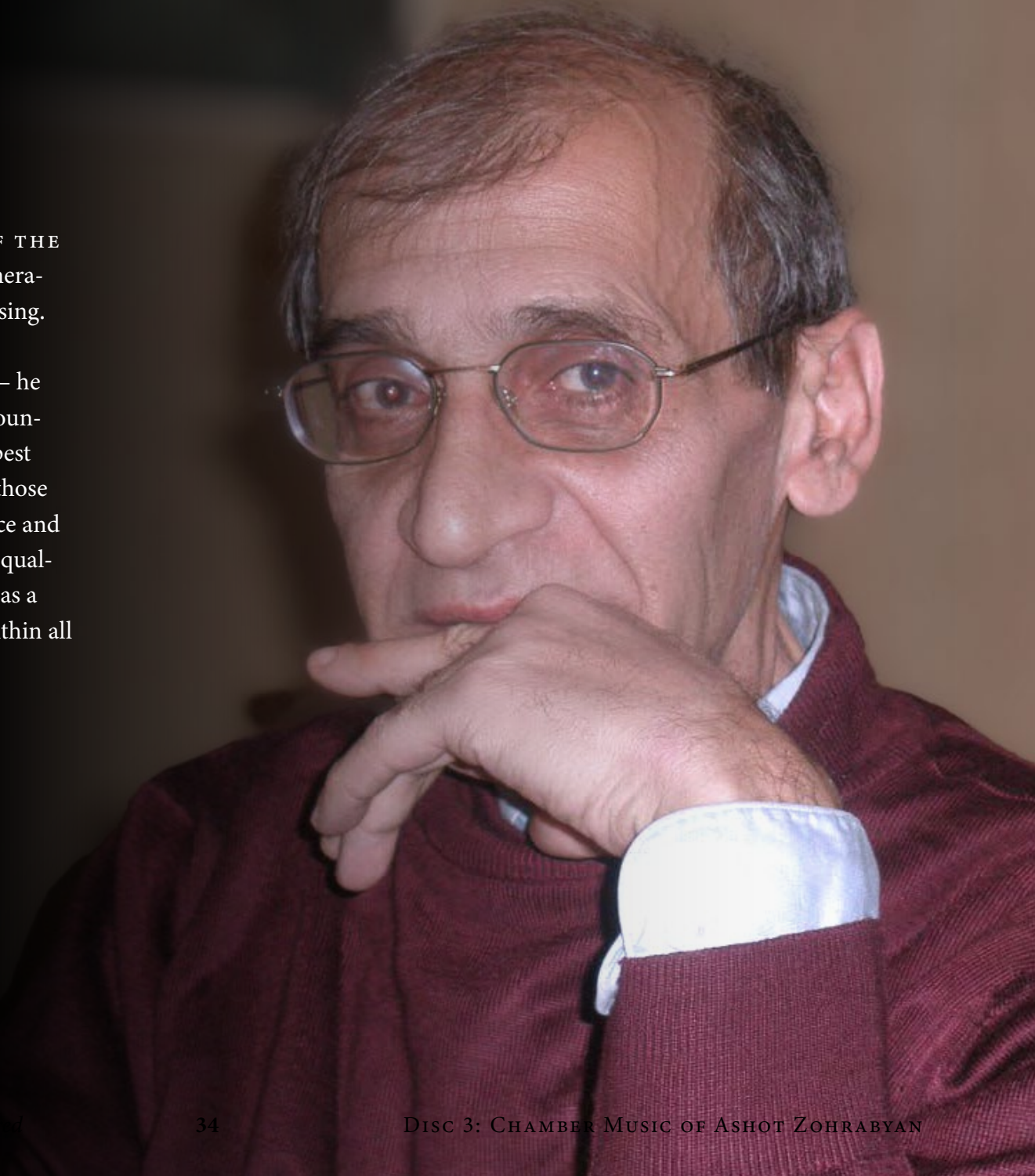


Composers Vahram Sargsyan (I) and Ashot Zohrabyan

KNOWING ASHOT ZOHRABYAN, ONE OF THE most eminent Armenian composers of his generation, was both a privilege and a profound blessing.

He was far more than a colleague or a friend — he was a rare spirit, capable of turning every encounter into a thoughtful journey into music’s deepest significance. In his presence, one could enter those wordless realms where music reveals its essence and silence shines with a luminous, almost sacred quality. His eternal presence, both as an artist and as a human being, continues to resonate deeply within all who were privileged to know him personally.

– Aram Hovhannisyan



Soliloquy



MODULATION NECKLACE VOLUME 9

Soliloquy

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| | Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978) | |
| 1 | Sonata-Song for viola solo (1976)
Cara Pogossian, viola | 12:15 |
| | Artur Avanesov (b. 1980) | |
| 2 | Chinar Es... (<i>for S.B.</i>)*
Artur Avanesov, piano | 4:53 |
| 3 | Dies ist ein Lied für dich allein (2003)
Edvard Pogossian, cello • Artur Avanesov, voice | 10:25 |
| 4 | Chinar Es II (<i>from Feux Follets cycle</i>)*
Artur Avanesov, piano | 6:48 |
| | Tigran Mansurian (b. 1939) | |
| 5 | Ode to the Lotus (2012)*
Cara Pogossian, viola | 9:33 |
| | Komitas (1869-1935) | |
| 6 | Chinar Es (arr. Villi Sargsyan)*
Artur Avanesov, piano | 3:29 |
| | Aram Khachaturian | |
| 7 | Sonata-Monologue for violin solo (1975)
Eva Aronian, violin | 16:01 |
| | Artur Avanesov | |
| 8 | Suonare, in memoriam Prof. Ashot Zohrabyan (2023)*
Artur Avanesov, piano | 4:27 |
| 9 | Cadenza (2011)**
Moses Pogossian, violin | 6:20 |

Total Time: 74:11

*World premiere recording

**World premiere recording of the concert version

Soliloquy

By Artur Avanesov

AMONG ARMENIAN COMPOSERS, **Aram Khachaturian** (1903-1978) is perhaps the only one who does not need a detailed introduction. Associated not with tiny Armenia, but with the whole Soviet Union, promoted all around the world as one of the most important faces of Soviet music, he is known as the author of grandiose, flashy, colorful, unabashedly optimistic compositions. Commonly associated with the era of Stalin's socialist realism, Khachaturian is often regarded as a composer who, complying with the state ideology, created works of universal importance. His oeuvre demonstrated that, given the enormous talent of the artist, ideological restrictions can be used as mere canvas for creation of vital, lasting masterpieces.

Of course, Khachaturian was not all about the Soviet ideology; his best works by far transcended its tenets. Consequently, he too wasn't immune to the harsh criticism unleashed by the Soviet state, as was the case with the other giants of Soviet music, including Shostakovich and Prokofiev. Nevertheless, Khachaturian's music is the most successful manifestation of the Soviet orientalist project — one intended to blend all nations of the Soviet South into one transethnic entity. The tropes of Rimsky-Korsakov's and Borodin's orientalist compositions, combined with his knowledge of Transcaucasian regional

musical culture, permeate Khachaturian's work. It is no coincidence that many aspiring composers from the Soviet South, as well as from developing countries influenced by the USSR, regarded his compositions as models and tirelessly emulated their forms and expressive means.

From Khachaturian's output, mostly large orchestral compositions are known — ballets, symphonies, and concertos. His chamber music — particularly works written during the last decades of his life — remains in the shadows. Meanwhile, these works manifest fascinating details of the composer's thought process, thus further contributing to our understanding of his creation.

Confident, imposing, self-willed, somewhat arrogant — this is how Khachaturian is often remembered among those who knew him. But was his confidence, indeed, so firm and unshaken? The 1960s brought a paradigm shift to Soviet music. Even in Armenia, where Khachaturian was regarded as an unquestionable authority, young composers started “flirting” with other role models — Shostakovich, Britten, even Boulez. It is impossible for a great artist to be devoid of self-reflection and criticism. Khachaturian likely continued questioning his own artistic choices and convictions. In a publicly available recording of his composition class at the Moscow Conservatory, he

is seen leafing through a presumably “modernist” score of a student; then, he candidly asks in a fatigued tone of voice, “Do you always like such music?”

All this can be clearly seen in the last series of Khachaturian’s compositions — one-movement sonatas for solo string instruments — cello, violin, and viola. As a side note, it is interesting that many composers, including Shostakovich, Bartók, Reger, and Bloch, wrote their last works for viola; perhaps, alongside the “curse of the Ninth,” a “viola curse” also existed... Though quite “moderate” in terms of innovation, these sonatas exhibit some new, puzzling tropes previously uncharacteristic of Khachaturian. Legend has it that after the Armenian premiere of the *Sonata-Monologue for violin solo* (1975), Khachaturian asked the opinion of a local musicologist. “I generally dislike music for solo strings,” was her response. Though awkward and clumsy, this answer is quite symptomatic. It was no longer the predictable, officially endorsed Khachaturian, and the change seemed so radical that the always-careful Soviet musicologists did not know yet what to say.

Sonata-Monologue is more precisely a soliloquy; in theatrical terminology, a monologue implies the silent stage presence of other characters, or a speech to the audience, while a soliloquy is uttered in real or perceived solitude. This work is of rather introverted nature. Moreover, the sonata form is treated quite freely and not in a straightforward, unambiguously classical manner typical for his earlier works. Like in a regular sonata allegro, a number of divergent thematic elements exist in this composition. However, the development rather resembles a complex variation form where not one, but several subjects are present simultaneously, and each variation elaborates on either one of them, and there is no real recapitulation.

The transitions between subjects and variations are not seamless; sometimes, the character of music changes drastically in a short period of time. A warmly lyrical beginning is contrasted with a consecutive “ticking” of high and low pitches; ascending triplets echoing Khachaturian’s own *Violin Concerto* neighbor the descending duplets reminiscent of Schubert’s *Barcarolle*; *Scheherazade*-like sensual cadences turn into matter-of-fact aggregations of major sevenths. In the middle, seemingly out of nowhere, a knocking percussive rhythm intrudes, created by the screw of the bow hitting the chin rest. Hardly a Lachenmann move, yet highly unusual for a composer previously never interested in extended techniques.

The most important detail is easy to overlook if one is not familiar with the context. One of the subjects fully appears only in the middle of the sonata, gradually forming from the scraps of motivic premonitions. It is a quote from a song by Sayat-Nova, the 18th century Armenian *ashugh* (troubadour) active in Khachaturian’s native city of Tbilisi, Georgia. Sayat-Nova, a highly symbolic artist with a bizarre life story, created songs in three languages: Armenian, Turkish, and Georgian. Quickly forgotten, he was rediscovered in the mid-19th century when a medical doctor found and published the collection of his poems. Yet, the melodies remained unknown. In 1913, when Khachaturian was 10, Armenian writer Hovhannes Tumanyan tasked some Armenian *ashugh*-s of Tbilisi with “finding” them. This is how some melodies came to exist. Their origin is spurious; in fact, the one quoted by Khachaturian also serves as a tune to a song by Paghtasar Dpir, Constantinople-based *ashugh* who predated Sayat-Nova. It seems that, by quoting this melody, Khachaturian does not aim to be Armenian or traditionalist; he seems to simply recall his childhood in a city where this tune was well-known and widely sung.

Many of the above-mentioned are equally applicable to the *Sonata-Song for viola solo* (1976)—Khachaturian’s last significant composition. In an obvious discrepancy with the title, it starts not with a “song,” but with a “constructivist,” rhythmically equal, modally uncertain search for one. The actual song appears much later, in the “Andante cantabile, poco sostenuto” section. And this time, too, it is a contentious one.

The folk song Khachaturian is quoting in this sonata is claimed by Armenians, Iranians, Azerbaijanis, and Turks as their own, and the debates are still ongoing. In the Armenian version, it is known as *Sari aghjik* (“*Mountain Girl*”); in the Azeri-Turkish version, as *Sari gelin* (“*Blond Bride*”). The similarity between the words *sari* and *sari* is most likely not coincidental; it suggests a possible borrowing of the song without indicating its origin. In either case, the song is about unhappy love and heartbreak. The Armenian version starts with the line, “I loved a rose, it turned to thorns.” The Azerbaijani one is based on a narrative of an impossible love between a Muslim young man and a Christian Armenian young woman. “What kind of love is this one? They won’t give you to me. What can I do? Alas, alas.”

The Sonata is more compact and more ascetic than its violin counterpart. It is absolutely devoid of the shiny virtuosity that characterizes most of Khachaturian compositions. Dark and introspective, this “song” seems to be sung to oneself, like Ophelia’s, who, in her terminal distress, kept chanting the “snatches of old lauds.” “But long it could not be.”

When Khachaturian was writing his solo sonatas, the much younger composer **Tigran Mansurian** (b. 1939) just started getting his national and international acclaim. Having initiated his journey in the 1960s with a series of neo-classical compositions, he quickly turned his attention to post-Webernian language, becoming the first Armenian composer to do so. Such developments could have been perceived as alarming by Khachaturian. However, it quickly became clear that Mansurian did not intend to emulate Boulez or Stockhausen. He made



Cara Pogossian and Tigran Mansurian, Nov. 19, 2024,
Yerevan, Armenia

numerous successful attempts to fuse the ideas of avant-garde with the sonorities stemming from Armenian traditional music. As opposed to Khachaturian, who was born in Tbilisi and spent most of his life in Moscow, Mansurian, a repatriated diaspora Armenian based in his ancestral homeland, was less connected with the Russian culture and its orientalist clichés, so he knew better how “to Armenian.”

Mansurian’s interest towards avant-garde music didn’t last long. Much in line with developments happening in the Soviet music of his generation — that of Pärt, Silvestrov, Kancheli and many others — he turned to neo-modal musical language laced with nostalgic references. By the beginning of the 21st century, Mansurian’s music took its ultimate shape. It is interesting to note that, when composing his *Ode to the Lotus* for viola solo (2012), Mansurian was of the same age (73) as Khachaturian when he worked on his *Sonata-Song*. The two works are eerily similar in terms of expression, musical form, and the employed means and techniques.

According to Mansurian’s own description, he was inspired, on the one hand, by the mystical powers ascribed to the lotus in the East, and, on the other hand, by the equally “mystical” sound of the viola. Speaking of the lotus petals as a series of subtle, wavy folds, Mansurian says that he “realized that this kind of abundance and singularity of folds is present in the modal structures and prosody forms of ancient Armenian sacred music.”

Of course, just as with Khachaturian, Mansurian’s music has its own recurrent motifs, ideas, and principles. Quoting pre-existing folk songs is something Mansurian always carefully avoided, preferring to create his own melodic material. Additionally, he has his own recurrent “motivic gestures” that keep emerging in multiple compositions. The ascending motif consisting of chained seconds and thirds (near

the beginning of *Ode to the Lotus*) is among such signatures of the composer’s handwriting.

The similarities between *Sonata-Song* and *Ode to the Lotus* include the motivic development, dissipation and thinning of the texture towards the end, combining the melodic voice with the left-hand pizzicatos. Most importantly, both composers tend to finish multiple musical phrases with a broken octave, as if clearing the “modal fog,” directing the listener’s attention to the singularity of the modal center.



The history of Western music saw a few archetypal songs that largely influenced its course — “La Folia”, “Amarillis”, “Dies Irae”, and others. Instantly recognizable, they inspired many to improvise and create, akin to jazz standards. Changing hands — or rather minds — these tunes survived through historical periods and styles. Such cases also exist in Armenian classical music, albeit within a narrower stylistic spectrum.

Nowadays, one method of musical creation appears to be of particular interest. It constitutes reimagining history through creating music that could or ought to have been written before, yet it never was. What if, for example, organum or Renaissance polyphony grew out of Armenian, and not Western European music? Though purely speculative, such questions may lead to some interesting reasoning and yield unexpected results.

The three transformations of the Armenian folk song *Chinar es* may be regarded as an attempt to address the question above. Komitas, the patriarch of Armenian music, wrote it down and subsequently arranged it for voice and piano. This simple tune is typical

for Armenian rural music. The anonymous narrator compares his beloved to a plane tree and begs to always stay by his side. Then he runs out of words, simply muttering his “nay-nay-nay.” It is at this point that the major mode changes to minor, and the music sinks back into silence.

The first version featured in this recording is a piano arrangement of Komitas’ song carried out by Villy Sargsyan (b. 1930), a highly regarded piano professor at Yerevan State Conservatory. Minimally intrusive and faithful to the original, it only adds a few modest echoes to Komitas’ serene, minimalistic writing.

The following two versions are my own renditions of the song.

Chinar es I (2015, from Book IV of *Feux follets*) was originally written as a choral work, and transcribed for the piano shortly thereafter. It is a chorale full of diatonic tone clusters and organum-like parallel fourths and fifths. Driven by the logic of the folk song with its major-to-minor transition, the piece features some “reverse Picardian” resolutions, where a minor third arrives instead of the expected major one. Just like the previous arrangement, it leaves the original choral texture largely unadorned, except for a few “beads” of ascending resonances.

Chinar es II (2022, from Book XI of the same collection) is larger and more complex. Conceived as late Renaissance-style variations, it draws upon the musical form of keyboard works by Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, notably his famous *Mein junges Leben hat ein End*. The piece is equally playable on the piano and on organ. The unfolding of the folk melody entails certain harmonic twists and unexpected chord progressions. *Chinar es II* includes five variations without a separate subject, each written in the key parallel to the relative of the previous one, thus closing the circle at the end (B flat - G - E - D flat - B flat). Reminiscent of Sweelinck, special notation of rhythms and ornaments, and even occasional C-clefs are introduced.

Suonare (2023, from Book XI of *Feux follets*) is dedicated to the memory of Ashot Zohrabyan. The Italian title of the piece is translated as “to sound,” “to ring,” or “to play.” The piece combines elements of Baroque, Armenian music, and jazz. Once, Zohrabyan had heard me practice the “unmeasured” preludes by Jean-Henri d’Anglebert and Louis Couperin. He got interested, and kept inquiring about my choices of interpreting “short” and “long” durations, or adding ornaments. In retrospect, it may have been indicative of his keen interest towards fixed and fluid elements in music, common among the three mentioned musical styles. Whether it was the case or not, for a musician, there is no better — and perhaps no other — way of celebrating one’s life than to “suonare” for them.



Edvard Pogossian and Artur Avanesov, during a recording session, January 2025

Dies ist ein Lied fur dich allein (“This is a song for you alone”) for singing male cellist is the earliest of my works included in this collection. Written in 2003, it uses separate lines from a poem by Stefan George (1868-1933), previously set to music by Anton Webern, Egon Wellesz, Theodor Adorno, and some others. The piece does not require professional singing; on the contrary, it calls for shaky, unskillful vocal production. Departing from the opening motif of Marin Marais’ *La Rêveuse*, it is written in a Baroque binary form with varied repeats featuring human voice instead of the traditional ornaments. The end of the piece, while the music is fading out, contains a loud click of the tuning pegs seemingly unable to hold the tension of the strings.

Years ago, I had heard an anecdote about Aram Khachaturian taking offence at Iannis Xenakis who had expressed his admiration for Khachaturian’s *Children’s Album* (presumably, in lieu of his larger, more “important” compositions). Though this story is most likely fictitious, having received the commission to write a new *Cadenza* (2011) for Khachaturian’s Violin Concerto, I sought to posthumously “reconcile” the two. Consequently, in this composition, the melodic patterns borrowed from Khachaturian and those reminiscent of broader Armenian music are intertwined with Xenakis’ idioms and spiced up with echoes of Luciano Berio’s violin *Sequenza*. The result is eclectic and somewhat ironic, though never ill-intentioned. Although the piece was originally performed as part of the concerto, the possibility of separate performance had been conceived at its creation. In either case, special adjustments and alternative cuts are introduced, inviting each performer to co-create the musical form of the composition.

Composer Bios

ARTUR AVANESOV (B. 1980)

Artur Avanesov is a composer, performer, and assistant professor of music at the American University of Armenia. He was the Chair of the Department of Musical Composition at the Yerevan State Conservatory where he previously studied piano and composition, and pursued postgraduate studies in composition. In 2005, he earned a Doctor of Arts degree with his research on Zen Buddhism in the music of the 20th century. Avanesov took piano master classes as a member of the Lucerne Festival Academy in Switzerland, and with Ensemble Recherche in Freiburg, Germany. He collaborated and performed with world-renowned musicians including Pierre Boulez, Krzysztof Penderecki, Rohan de Saram, Kim Kashkashian, Anja Lechner, Vladimir Chernov, Tony Arnold, Tigran Mansurian, Movses Pogossian. His chamber, vocal, choral and piano compositions have been performed internationally, and recorded on major labels such as Deutsche Grammophon, Brilliant Classics, New Focus, Albany Records, etc. As a composer and performer, Avanesov contributed to the foundation of a number of Armenian and international contemporary music ensembles, and as a musicologist, his scholarship has appeared in various publications.

KOHARIK GAZAROSSIAN (1907-1967)

Composer, pianist, and music educator Koharik Gazarossian (Koharig Ghazarosyan) was born in Constantinople/Istanbul in 1907. Graduating the Paris Conservatory, she toured Europe, the United States, Lebanon, and Egypt performing as a concert pianist in major concert venues including the Carnegie Hall, Salle Gaveaux, and the Wigmore Hall. She composed piano, chamber, and vocal works, a small part of which were published during her lifetime by Éditions Durand and Éditions Choudens in Paris and appeared in Armenian periodicals. Based in Turkey and France, Gazarossian became a liaison between musicians in her native community, Armenia, and the diaspora by organizing and hosting numerous concerts in Istanbul. She was an active member of a circle of Armenian feminist intellectuals, writers, and artists in Istanbul and one of the first woman composers of the Republic of Turkey. Her archive is now housed at Yerevan's Matenadaran, the Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, and the Museum of Literature and Arts named after Yeghishe Charents.

ARAM HOVHANNISYAN (B. 1984)

Born in Yerevan, Armenia, Aram Hovhannisyán studied composition with Levon Chaushyan and flute with Evgeni Noninyan at the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory (1999–2003). From 2003 to 2018 he lived in Switzerland, where he continued his studies at the Haute École de Musique de Genève, studying composition with Michael Jarrell and electroacoustic music with Rainer Boesch, and earned a Master of Arts in Composition. He also took part in masterclasses with Klaus Huber, Péter Eötvös and Tristan Murail. Hovhannisyán's music has received international recognition, including First Prizes at the Pre-Art Competition (2005), Musikfestival Bern (2011) and Mizmorim Festival (2018), as well as the Kiefer-Hablitzler Award (2011). His works have been commissioned by leading festivals and institutions such as Monte-Carlo Spring Arts, Lucerne Zu Ostern Festival, Norddeutscher Rundfunk, Dilijan Chamber Music Series, Swiss Chamber Music Festival and Mizmorim Festival. He has collaborated with prominent contemporary music ensembles including Collegium Novum Zürich, Klangforum Wien, L'Ensemble Orchestral Contemporain, Ensemble XX. Jahrhundert, Ensemble Reconsil, Aequator, Pre-Art Soloists, Ensemble Proton, Ensemble Paul Klee, Ensemble 24 and MCME. Since 2017 Hovhannisyán has served as Artistic Director of Ensemble Assonance and the Crossroads Festival in Yerevan. He has been Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs at the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory since 2018, where he also teaches composition.

ARAM KHACHATURIAN (1903-1978)

Aram Khachaturian was born on June 6, 1903 in Tiflis (now Tbilisi, Georgia) to an Armenian family immersed in folk music and dance. In 1921 he moved to Moscow, where he studied cello at the Gnessin Institute and later composition at the Moscow Conservatory with Nikolai Myaskovsky, graduating in 1936. His Piano Concerto (1936) established his reputation, followed by the Violin Concerto (1940) for David Oistrakh and the Cello Concerto (1946) for Sviatoslav Knushevitsky. These concertos, along with the *Masquerade Suite* (1944), reveal his hallmark rhythmic vitality, melodic clarity, and rich orchestral color. The ballets *Gayane* (1942) and *Spartacus* (1950–54, rev. 1968) brought him international fame; the *Sabre Dance* from *Gayane* became one of the most frequently performed pieces of the twentieth century. Khachaturian also wrote three symphonies, chamber and film music, and numerous works for theatre. He taught at both the Gnessin Institute and the Moscow Conservatory and, from 1957, served as Secretary of the Union of Soviet Composers. Though briefly censured in 1948 under the Zhdanov decree, his music remained central to Soviet and international concert life. Khachaturian's style combines energetic rhythm, modal inflection, and broad lyricism drawn from Armenian and Caucasian folk traditions. His vivid, direct musical voice secured his place as the most internationally renowned Armenian composer of all time. He died in Moscow on May 1, 1978 and is buried at the Komitas Pantheon in Yerevan.

TIGRAN MANSURIAN (B. 1939)

Tigran Mansurian was born on January 27, 1939 in Beirut (Lebanon). In 1947 he and his family returned to their homeland in Armenia. After having attended a special music school, Mansurian studied composition at the Yerevan Conservatory, where he subsequently taught music analysis with special emphasis on New Music. Within the space of only a few years he advanced to become one of Armenia's leading composers. As time went on he developed friendly artistic relationships with composers such as A. Schnittke, S. Gubaidulina and A. Pärt, and with performers such as N. Gutman, K. Kashkashian, A. Lyubimov, and others. In the 1990s, Mansurian served as director of the Yerevan Conservatory. Mansurian's extensive catalog includes orchestral works, seven concertos for string instruments and orchestra, sonatas for violoncello and piano, three string quartets, choral music, chamber music, and works for solo instruments. Mansurian has said that his models were the Armenian composer Komitas and Claude Debussy. Early in his career he became acquainted with the music of Pierre Boulez, and was soon able to make deft use of complicated modern compositional techniques. In the course of time he developed an increasingly simple and almost liturgical style. Mansurian's music reflects the heritage of the venerable musical tradition of Armenia, which dates back more than a thousand years. The composer's sensitivity and his understanding of the spirit of the age find expression in his attempt to rebuild the musical bridges that were destroyed in the final years of the twentieth century.

VAHRAM SARGSYAN (B. 1981)

Vahram Sargsyan (Sarkissian) is an Armenian-Canadian composer, conductor, and singer based in Montreal. His music bridges early Armenian chant and contemporary experimentation, spanning influences from fifth-century modal traditions to innovative extended vocal techniques. His works have been performed in more than thirty countries, including the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Japan, Canada, and the United States. Recipient of the 2023 Jules Léger Prize for New Chamber Music and named Artist of the Year 2024 in Laval by the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, Sargsyan is also active internationally as an experimental vocalist. He has cultivated a distinctive vocal language characterized by exceptional range, a wide palette of timbral colors, and a creative integration of both traditional and newly explored sound-production methods. He co-founded *Phth*, a Montréal-based experimental vocal ensemble that explores the boundaries between composition, improvisation, and extended voice. His *Great Mystery* appears in the Oxford University Press anthology *World Carols for Choirs* and has been recorded by the BBC Singers. His instrumental work *Hunting the Hunter* was premiered under his baton at Carnegie Hall in 2012. Sargsyan's *Epitaphios* was commissioned by Movses Pogossian and was premiered at the Dilijan Chamber Music Series, and his choral composition *Joyful Light* has been performed internationally more than a hundred times. Sargsyan lectures and gives workshops on extended vocal techniques at leading choral festivals and international symposia. Educated at the Yerevan State Conservatory and McGill University, he holds advanced degrees in composition and choral conducting. He is a member of the Composers' Union of Armenia and the Canadian League of Composers.

GHAZAROS (LAZARUS) SARYAN (1920-1998)

Ghazaros Saryan was born on September 30, 1920 in Rostov-on-Don into an artistically distinguished Armenian family. His father was the painter Martiros Saryan and his mother Lusik Aghayan, daughter of the writer Ghazaros Aghayan. After moving to Yerevan in childhood, he studied at the Komitas State Conservatory (1934–1938) with Vardges Talyan and Sargis Barkhudaryan, continued at Moscow's Gnessin College with Vissarion Shebalin, and completed his composition studies at the Moscow Conservatory in 1950 under Dmitri Kabalevsky, Dmitri Shostakovich, and Anatoly Alexandrov. After serving in the Red Army during World War II, Saryan returned to Yerevan and began teaching at the State Conservatory, where he was rector from 1960 to 1986 and later headed the composition department. Among his students were Tigran Mansurian, Ruben Altunyan, Ruben Sargsyan, Vardan Achemyan, and Armenuhi Karapetyan. Saryan's style is poised and introspective; his music balances formal objectivity with a quiet poetic sensibility. His harmonies often draw on Armenian modal elements, creating a sound world that is contemplative, finely textured, and vividly atmospheric. Among his most renowned works are the *Symphonic Images* (1955), the painterly cycle *Armenia: Symphonic Panels* (1966), and his *Symphony* (1980). These compositions, praised for their sense of proportion and atmosphere, earned him wide recognition, including the Armenian SSR State Prize in 1983 for his contributions to music. Widely respected as both composer and pedagogue, Saryan helped shape a generation of Armenian musicians. He died in Yerevan on May 27, 1998.





KOMITAS VARDAPET (1869-1935)

Komitas Vardapet (Father Komitas, née Soghomon Soghomonian) was born in Gudina/Kütahya (then Ottoman Empire, present-day Turkey) where he started his singing career as a church cantor. Orphaned at a young age, he was sent to the Gevorgian Theological Seminary of Holy Echmiadzin in Vagharshapat (then Russian Empire, present-day Armenia). Graduating in 1893 ordained as a celibate priest and well-versed in both Western classical and Armenian liturgical music, he left for Berlin in 1896 on a scholarship to study performance and composition at Richard Schmidt's private music school. During his time there, he also attended musicology and museum studies classes by Oskar Fleischer, Heinrich Bellermann, and Max Friedländer at the Friedrich Wilhelm University (Humboldt University of Berlin today) and attended the founding meetings of the International Musical Society (Internationale Musikgesellschaft, IMG). Upon his return to Echmiadzin in 1899, he worked as the music teacher of the seminary and the director of the cathedral choir. He continued his music research by collecting, transcribing, and analyzing poetic and melodic variants of folk songs and by studying the history, theory, and notation system of Armenian church music.

Throughout the next decade, he paid regular visits to various urban centers in the Caucasus and Europe, formed local choirs, and gave concerts of new music he wrote based on his collection of Armenian sacred and secular songs. He presented papers in IMG's annual conferences, contributed to its journal, and printed a series of his folk song arrangements through music publishers in Europe. Moving to Constantinople in 1910, he focused his strengths on training the younger generation as performers and educators of Armenian music. His efforts toward establishing a conservatory in the Ottoman capital were interrupted by the Armenian Genocide, during which he fell victim to the purge against Armenian intellectuals. As one of the eight survivors from the prison camp he was deported to, he suffered from deteriorating mental health and was eventually transferred to a clinic in a suburb of Paris, where he spent the rest of his life. Komitas Vardapet is celebrated today for his innovations in creating an Armenian musical language in Western classical forms, by his foundational work in Armenian, Kurdish, Turkish, and international music scholarship, and by his pedagogy of forming communal choirs to pass down the rich repertoire he created.

ASHOT ZOHRABYAN (1945-2023)

Ashot Zohrabyan was born in Yerevan on January 29, 1945. He studied composition at the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory (1967–1972) with Grigor Yeghiazaryan, later joining the faculty and eventually becoming Professor of Composition. From 1972 to 2008 he also taught at the Arno Babajanyan Music-Pedagogical College. His distinctions include Honored Artist of the Republic of Armenia (2012) and the RA Ministry of Culture Gold Medal (2017). An Armenian composer known for refined, contemporary chamber writing, Zohrabyan built a catalogue centered on compact instrumental and ensemble works. Representative compositions include *Serenade* and *Parable* for 13 soloists, *Elegy* for string ensemble, *Ritual* for three flutes, *Knots* for organ, a Violin Concerto for strings, sonatas for piano and for cello, and three String Quartets. Both *No. 1 “Narcissus”* (1994) and *No. 2 “For Kronos”* (2004) were commissioned by and written for the Kronos Quartet, while *No. 3 “Stanzas in August”* (2016) was commissioned by violinist Movses Pogossian for the Dilijan Chamber Music Series in Los Angeles. His works have been performed in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, France, Germany, Switzerland, the United States, and elsewhere. Zohrabyan’s music is noted for clarity of form, restraint of gesture, and finely wrought textures. Folk-derived intonations surface as subtle intervallic color rather than quotation, while occasional microtonal inflections act as expressive means. The result is a poetic yet taut musical voice, marked by inner tension, fluid motivic lines, and rich melismatic features, giving shape to some of the most distinctive Armenian chamber music of the late 20th and early 21st centuries.



Performer Bios

Violinist **Eva Aronian** has been praised as an artist “balancing emotional weight and technical virtuosity [...] conveying the music’s power with a persuasiveness matched by few” (*Culture Spot LA*). She enjoys a varied career across the UK, Europe and Canada, and has been a member of the Royal Northern Sinfonia since 2021. A passionate chamber musician, Eva joined the Navarra Quartet in 2024. She has also collaborated with ensembles and artists such as Kim Kashkashian, Roger Tapping, Anthony Marwood, the Doric String Quartet, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, and O/Modernt among others. She has performed at festivals including the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, ChamberFest Cleveland, Dilijan Chamber Music Series, Prussia Cove, Yellow Barn, Young Euro Classic, and the BBC Proms. She has also been featured on BBC Radio 3. Eva studied at the New England Conservatory in Boston with Donald Weilerstein, and at the Guildhall School for Music and Drama with David Takeno. Eva currently plays on a 1715 Domenico Montagnana violin, on generous loan from the Canada Council for the Arts.

Artur Avanesov (see among composers’ bios)

Canadian American saxophonist, **Jan Berry Baker**, is a passionate advocate for contemporary music, cross-disciplinary collaborations and community engagement. As co-artistic director of chamber ensemble, Bent Frequency, she and percussionist Stuart Gerber have commissioned over 60 new works and have given countless performances around the world. Jan also moves fluently in the orchestral world. She regularly performs with the LA Phil and spent nearly two decades as the principal saxophonist with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Grant Park Festival Orchestra, Chicago Philharmonic, Atlanta Ballet, and Atlanta Opera. Jan’s extensive discography includes chamber music recordings on Centaur, New Focus, Neuma, and Albany labels, as well as high-profile orchestral recordings, among them the Latin GRAMMY and three-time GRAMMY winning album, *Gabriela Ortiz: Revolución Diamantina* with the LA Phil. Jan has held residencies at the Summer Institute for Contemporary Performance Practice -SICPP (Colorado), Nürnberg Tage Aktueller Musik (Germany), American Saxophone Academy, Cervantino New Music Festival (Mexico), Charlotte New Music Festival, New Music on the Point (Vermont) and at numerous educational institutions across the US. Equally committed to education and mentorship, Jan is professor of saxophone and woodwind area head at The UCLA

Herb Alpert School of Music, where she also serves as vice chair of the Department of Music Performance, Education & Composition and associate dean for faculty mentoring. She is a founding member of the North American Saxophone Alliance's Committee on Gender Equity and creator of its mentoring program. She earned a Doctor of Music degree from Northwestern University and is a Selmer Paris, Vandoren, and Key Leaves performing artist.

Ally Cho is an Australian-born violinist currently pursuing her Doctor of Musical Arts at the University of California, Los Angeles. She began her formal music training in New York City, completing her Bachelor's degree in violin performance at the Manhattan School of Music, where she studied with Lucie Robert. Her time in New York introduced her deeply to chamber music, a discipline that became a central focus of her artistic development. At UCLA, Ally has been awarded a fellowship in Armenian Music and performs as a member of the VEM Quartet under the mentorship of Movses Pogossian and Varty Manouelian. Her work with the quartet includes performances, educational outreach, and engagement with repertoire spanning classical and contemporary music. Chamber collaboration continues to guide her artistic interests and informs her approach to performance and programming. In performance, Ally prioritizes clear musical communication and a collaborative approach to repertoire. Her current projects focus on chamber music and contemporary works, with an interest in programming that is informed by context and engages audiences through thoughtful presentation. As part of her doctoral studies, she continues to develop and perform works that reflect both her artistic interests and her ongoing research at UCLA.

Mia Barcia-Colombo is a Los Angeles based cellist whose eclectic performance career spans multiple music industries. As a champion of new music, Mia performs many contemporary and commissioned works as a member of the Grammy nominated ensemble Wild Up, as well as Brightwork New Music, and the LA Phil's Green Umbrella series. She also serves as a regular substitute cellist with the LA Philharmonic, where she has performed numerous concerts under the batons of renowned conductors such as Gustavo Dudamel, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Thomas Ades, John Adams, Michael Tilson Thomas, and Zubin Mehta. Mia enjoys a multifaceted career as a freelance orchestral, chamber, and studio cellist. She has recorded and performed with such notable artists as Bjork, The Beatles, Billie Eilish, Arianna Grande, and Bad Bunny, and can be found on soundtracks such as *Avatar: The Way of Water*, Disney's Oscar-winning animated feature *Encanto*, and the 2021 remake of *West Side Story*. Mia is also starting her tenth season performing as a principal cellist of the genre-bending group Nu Deco Ensemble in Miami, Florida. She currently resides in Silver Lake, and spends her remaining free time teaching cello, hiking, and adventuring with her dog sidekick, Tony.

Taiwanese-American violist **Che-Yen Chen** has established himself as an active performer and educator. Since winning First Prize in the 2003 Primrose International Viola Competition, he was described as a musician whose "most impressive aspect of his playing was his ability to find not just the subtle emotion, but the humanity hidden in the music." As the founding and former member of the Formosa Quartet, he won the first prize in the 2006 London International String Quartet Competition. Chen was the principal violist of the San Diego Symphony and Mainly Mozart Festival Orchestra for eight

years and has appeared as guest principal with other major orchestras in North America. A former Lincoln Center CMS Two member, Chen frequently performs and teaches at music festivals across North America and Asia. Professor at UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, Chen has previously served on the faculty of USC Thornton School of Music. Chen came to the US at age 14 to matriculate at Curtis under the mentorship of Michael Tree and Joseph de Pasquale and later at Juilliard studying viola performance and string quartet under Paul Neubauer and The Juilliard Quartet. Chen joined the renowned Ehnes Quartet in 2023.

Niall Tarō Ferguson is a Los Angeles-born cellist, composer, and orchestrator whose work spans the concert and commercial music industries. As a freelance musician, he records and orchestrates for major film and television soundtracks and performs throughout Los Angeles with organizations such as Wild Up, Monday Evening Concerts, Jacaranda, Laós Chamber Music, and the Hear Now Festival. He has performed or recorded with artists including David Foster, Cynthia Erivo, Yoshiki, Andrea Bocelli, Miley Cyrus, Olivia Rodrigo, Danny Elfman, Jennifer Hudson, Seth MacFarlane, and Shawn Mendes. As an orchestrator, his credits include *Bruised*, *Cat Burglar*, *American Factory* (2020 Oscar Winner for Best Documentary Feature), *Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw*, *Ni No Kuni*, and *Kruimeltje*. His string arrangements appear on commercial releases including Lukas Graham's 3 (*The Purple Album*), and in 2024 he served as head orchestrator for Miley Cyrus's *Something Beautiful*. Niall's concert works have been performed in venues such as the Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Palau de la Música Catalana, and the Aratani Theatre. He performs widely as an orchestral and chamber musician

across the U.S., Asia, and Europe. He is a member of the UCLA-based VEM String Quartet, the UCLA Armenian Music Ensemble. In 2025, he became a member of the Vitamin String Quartet. A member of the Asia / America New Music Institute (AANMI), he has participated in cultural exchange performances and lectures in Asia and the United States. Niall received his B.A. from the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music.

Ben Hong is Associate Principal Cello of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, a post he has held since 2015 after joining the orchestra in 1993 as Assistant Principal Cello at age 24. In addition to his orchestral duties, he performs as a soloist and chamber musician. Highlights include LA Phil premieres and notable collaborations: the U.S. premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Kai*, the LA Phil premiere of Tan Dun's *Crouching Tiger Concerto*, and the U.S. premiere of Bernd Alois Zimmermann's *Cello Concerto*. His festival and concert collaborations span artists such as Emanuel Ax, Yefim Bronfman, Lang Lang, Sir Simon Rattle, and Esa-Pekka Salonen. Hong's career also includes a foray into film, having been hired by DreamWorks Pictures in 2009 to train cast members for *The Soloist* and to be the soundtrack's featured soloist, with the recording released by Deutsche Grammophon. Born in Taipei, Hong began cello studies at age nine with WanLing Sun and won Taiwan's National Cello Competition three times before leaving at 13 to study at Juilliard. He later studied with Lynn Harrell at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music before joining the LA Phil. Educator and mentor, Hong has served on the faculties of the Colburn School, USC's Thornton School of Music, and has recently been appointed Professor of Cello at the UCLA's

Herb Alpert School of Music. He also conducts clinics and master-classes across the United States, Europe, and Asia.

Surrounded by contemporary art, dozens of vinyl records, and a piano, **Nare Karoyan** grew up in Armenia. This abundance of art continues to shape her life today and has given her many lasting experiences with actors, writers, visual artists, composers. Being blessed with fantastic chamber music partners such as cellists Ivan Karizna and Ira Givol as well as violinist Sylvia Huang on the one hand and singers Ruzan Mantashyan, Judith Hoffmann and Benjamin Hewat-Craw on the other has been enriching. Nare studied at the conservatories in Berlin, Cologne, and Karlsruhe in the classes of renowned musicians Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Pascal Devoyon, Peter Eicher as well as Anthony Spiri, one of the assistants of the late Nikolaus Harnoncourt. The influence of her teachers being full of curiosity for the new, unknown or forgotten left its deep mark on her CD recording *Shadowlines* (Quartziade, 2016) with music by Leoš Janáček, Federico Mompou, George Benjamin, and Robert Schumann. Two further recordings of the 24 Etudes (Piano Classics, 2022), as well as this album, with other works for solo piano by the Turkey-born Armenian composer Koharik Gazarossian, are the result of a search for cultural roots in a globalized world—a search that has occupied and driven Nare privately, artistically, and academically for several years.

Varty Manouelian made her American Debut in 1993 with the North Carolina Symphony as First Prize winner of the Bryan International Competition. She has also been a prize winner at a number of other competitions in Europe, including the Kotzian International

Competition and the Wieniawski International Violin Competition. Manouelian has recorded and appeared as a soloist with numerous orchestras in the United States, Bulgaria, Russia, Armenia, Poland, Spain and Italy. Her chamber music performances include Marlboro Music Festival, Apple Hill Festival, Sebago Festival, El Paso Festival, Olympic Music Festival, among others. She has collaborated as a chamber musician with such artists as Joshua Bell, Yuja Wang, Kim Kashkashian, Rohan de Saram, Garrick Ohlsson, Nobuko Imai, Thomas Adès, and members of the Juilliard, Guarneri, Tokyo, Brentano, Borromeo, and Mendelssohn string quartets. Dedicated teacher and educator, Varty Manouelian is a Lecturer of Violin at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, taught violin and chamber music at the Colburn Academy and CSPA, and spends summers coaching chamber music at the Apple Hill Festival in New Hampshire. She has been an active participant at LA Philharmonic's Music Outreach programs, having taught at YOLA since its inception, as well as at the Renaissance Arts Academy. Prior to joining the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 2004, Manouelian was a member of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. In Los Angeles, she frequently performs at the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Chamber Music Society and Green Umbrella new-music series, as well as at Camerata Pacifica, Monday Evening Concerts, and the Dilijan Series. Her recording credits include archival radio recordings for the Bulgarian State Radio, and CDs on Albany and Bridge Records labels. Her recent CD of *Complete Violin Works of Stefan Wolpe* (jointly with Movses Pogossian) made the 2015 Top Ten list in *Sunday Times* (UK). Varty Manouelian holds degrees from the State Music Academy in Bulgaria and the Cleveland Institute of Music, where she studied with Boyan Letchev and Donald Weilerstein.

Andrew McIntosh is a Grammy-nominated violinist, violist, baroque violinist, and composer who teaches at the California Institute of the Arts and is a member of Wild Up, Formalist Quartet, Red Koral Quartet, Tesserae, and Bach Collegium San Diego. He has served as guest concertmaster for baroque operas with LA Opera and Opera UCLA, and recently served as both music director and concertmaster of Long Beach Opera's all-Handel pastiche production *The Feast*, a collaboration with Martha Graham Dance Company. About a recent performance of the complete *Rosary Sonatas* of Heinrich Biber at the 92nd Street Y, the New York Times said "his playing had exceptional clarity and rhetorical verve". As a composer he was described by Alex Ross in the New Yorker as "a composer preternaturally attuned to the landscapes and soundscapes of the West", and recent commissions include works for the LA Philharmonic, Yarn/Wire, Miller Theatre at Columbia University, and violinist Ilya Gringolts.

Based in New York City, Armenian-American clarinetist **Anoush Pogossian** is especially dedicated to exploring contemporary works and chamber music in depth, as well as expanding the impact of music in educational communities. Anoush was recently named recipient of the 2025 Robert Sherman Award for Music Education and Community Outreach for *Komitas and Friends: Armenian Folk Music, Then and Now*, a cultural exchange project to commission, record, and perform five pieces for clarinet each based on a different Armenian folk song. A fellow in Carnegie Hall's Ensemble Connect, Anoush is an Artist Diploma candidate at The Juilliard School studying with Anthony McGill and Alan R. Kay. Named a 2020 U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts in 2020, Anoush is also a proud recipient of scholarships from the L.A. Music Center Spotlight Program, Armenian

General Benevolent Union, Armenian Educational Foundation, and the Ryoichi Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship. Through Juilliard's Office of Community Engagement, she worked with music classrooms across NYC public schools as a Morse Teaching Artist Fellow, and was the clarinet teaching fellow in the Music Advancement Program. She holds an M.M. from Juilliard and a B.A. in Psychology from Columbia University, where she studied cognitive science as it relates to music processing and education.

Armenian-American violist **Cara Pogossian** is an avid chamber musician having performed at numerous summer festivals, including the Marlboro Festival, Yellow Barn, Ravinia, Tippet Rise, and Taos School of Music. She has had the privilege of collaborating and performing with many of the leading figures in classical music, such as Mitsuko Uchida, Don Weilerstein, Ida Kavafian, Joseph Lin, Marcy Rosen, Peter Wiley, Kim Kashkashian, and the Borromeo String Quartet. Some of Cara's recent chamber music appearances have been with the Boston Chamber Music Society, Caramoor's Evnin Rising Stars, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and the Jupiter Symphony Chamber Players. Cara is the principal violist of the Portland Symphony Orchestra, and has been a guest musician with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic. She performed several high-profile concerts as an AGBU (Armenian General Benevolent Union) Scholarship recipient, and is a 2024 recipient of the St. Botolph Club Foundation Emerging Artist Award. Cara was the winner of the NEC Concerto Competition, culminating in a performance of Bartók's Viola Concerto with the NEC Philharmonia. She has toured with the Curtis Institute on multiple occasions, and has taken part in two Musicians from Marlboro tours. Cara completed her graduate studies

with Kim Kashkashian at the New England Conservatory of Music, as the recipient of the Abraham Skernick Memorial Presidential Scholarship. She had previously studied with Hsin-Yun Huang and Misha Amory at the Curtis Institute of Music.

Edvard Pogossian is the principal cello of the Royal Northern Sinfonia as well as a cello professor at the Royal Northern College of Music. He has guest led the cello sections of the Oslo Philharmonic, the Hallé, the Amsterdam Sinfonietta, and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. As the winner of the Juilliard Concerto Competition, Edvard performed the Tchaikovsky Rococo Variations at David Geffen Hall in New York and at the Harris Theater in Chicago with the Juilliard Orchestra under the direction of Itzhak Perlman. *The Chicago Tribune* praised Edvard's performance for his "astonishing musical and technical maturity," as well as his "winning lightness of touch to everything he played, combined with a velvety tone." He has also appeared as a soloist with the Boston Pops, Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, and the New Mexico Philharmonic. Edvard's debut album, *Journey through Armenia*, was released in 2022 with Linn Records, and includes a world premiere of Tigran Hamasyan's cello sonata. He has attended Yellow Barn and the Marlboro Festival, where he was from 2019 to 2022. Edvard is a member of Trio Isimsiz, as well as currently being on trial for Principal Cello with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

Movses Pogossian made his American debut performing the Tchaikovsky Concerto with the Boston Pops in 1990, about which *The Boston Globe* wrote: "There is freedom in his playing, but also taste and discipline. It was a fiery, centered, and highly musical performance..." Laureate of several competitions, including the Tchaikovsky International Competition, he extensively performs worldwide. A devoted chamber musician, Pogossian has performed with members of the Tokyo, Kronos, and Brentano string quartets, and with many internationally renowned artists. He frequently collaborates with the Apple Hill Chamber Players, teaching annually at their summer music festival in New Hampshire. A committed champion of new music, Pogossian has premiered over 100 works, and works closely with composers such as G. Kurtág, K. Saariaho, T. Mansurian, Gabriela Lena Frank, and many others. Pogossian's discography includes the *Complete Sonatas and Partitas by J. S. Bach*, solo CDs *Inspired by Bach*, *Blooming Sounds*, *In Nomine*, and, most recently, *Hommage à Kurtág*. The Bridge Records CD of *Complete Violin Works of Wolpe* made the 2015 Top Ten list in *Sunday Times* (UK), and the recent releases of Armenian contemporary music: *Serenade with a Dandelion*, *Modulation Necklace* (both on New Focus Recordings) and *Con Anima* (ECM) have garnered critical acclaim. Pogossian is Distinguished Professor of Violin at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music and Founding Director and Advisor of the UCLA Armenian Music Program. As co-director of the Los Angeles Chapter, he actively participates in the Music for Food project.

Adrienne Pope is a violinist and artist based in Los Angeles. As a chamber musician and promoter of new music, she is a member of the Grammy-nominated new music collective Wild Up and a founding member of Aperture Duo with violist Linnea Powell. Adrienne is a tenured member of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra and a member of the Pacific Jazz Orchestra. She is an active freelance musician and has recorded and performed with legendary artists including The Beatles, Diana Ross, Violent Femmes, Earth, Wind & Fire, Randy Newman, Kool & The Gang and Cyndi Lauper. She can be found on soundtracks such as *Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny*, *Avatar: The Way of Water*, *Moana 2* and *Encanto*. Adrienne holds a Bachelor's degree from the Boston Conservatory, and Master's degrees in Violin Performance and Chamber Music from the University of Michigan. Her primary teachers include Andrew Jennings of the Concord String Quartet, Yehonatan Berick of the Los Angeles Piano Quartet, and Sharan Leventhal of the Gramercy Trio. Besides performing, Adrienne enjoys ocean swimming, woodworking and growing vegetables in her garden.

Vahram Sargsyan (see among composers' bios)

Los Angeles-based violist, violinist, arts administrator, and contractor **Damon Zavala** is committed to cultivating musical spaces where young artists and underrepresented communities can thrive. He is currently pursuing his Doctor of Musical Arts in Viola Performance at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, studying with Professor Che-Yen Chen. Damon's work in arts administration began through a residency in Washington, D.C., where he developed a music education program serving Black and Brown communities. That project, centered on strengthening representation in the classical music landscape, continues to guide his mission today. Now back in Los Angeles, Damon serves as an Arts Coordinator for music education programs in Santa Monica. He oversees curriculum, mentorship structures, and program operations, working with young musicians to build skills, trust themselves, and recognize their own agency. His approach emphasizes access, visibility, and culturally responsive pedagogy. Alongside this work, Damon maintains an active performance career across Southern California, collaborating with ensembles, artists, and studios as both a violist and violinist. Outside the music sphere, Damon works in luxury bridal, a role that has refined his eye for design, detail, and client experience. The industry has shaped his understanding of aesthetics and the emotional landscape of milestone events, informing his musical projects and inspiring the development of his contracting business, where he blends aesthetic sensitivity with tailored musical experiences. His multifaceted career reflects a commitment to artistic excellence, entrepreneurial leadership, and the continued development of meaningful musical work across performance, contracting, and arts administration.

UCLA VEM String Quartet is the cornerstone of the Armenian Music Program at UCLA, which in its 13 years of existence has become an internationally renowned leader in celebrating the richness and diversity of the Armenian musical tradition. In residence at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, the VEM String Quartet has worked with musicians such as Tigran Mansurian, Kim Kashkashian, David Starobin, Armen Hyusnunts, Artur Avanesov, Seth Knopp, and many others. The VEM Ensemble has performed at various venues in Los Angeles including Zipper Hall, Bing Theater, Schoenberg Hall, and the Hammer Museum, as well as in Boston, Montreal, Detroit, New Mexico, Colorado, and the Incontri in Terra di Siena Festival in Italy. In his review of their performance in Italy, critic Laurence Vittes wrote, “The evening’s most memorable music was made by the VEM Quartet... who laid out Eduard Mirzoyan’s String Quartet with a feline, subtle grace that touched hearts with its gentle melodic content and long-lined eloquence.” The VEM is featured in *Modulation Necklace* and *Serenade with a Dandelion*, the critically acclaimed CDs of Armenian Music by the Naxos-distributed label, New Focus Recordings.



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May 18, 2024 (*Avanesov Cadenza*, Saryan Quartet No. 2)

December 16, 2024 (Zohrabyan String Quartet No. 1)

January 4-9, 2025

Avanesov: Unruhig, Dies ist ein Lied für dich allein, Chinar Es...,

Chinar Es II, Suonare

Khachaturian: Sonata-Monologue

Komitas: Chinar Es

Mansurian: Ode to the Lotus

Zohrabyan: String Quartet No. 3, Piano Sonata, Cello Sonata

March 11, 2025 (*Khachaturian Sonata-Song*)

April 29, 2025 (Zohrabyan String Quartet No.2)

April 30-May 5, 2025 (Piano Works of Gazarossian)

May 30, 2025 (*Sargsyan Vox Temporum*)

June 1, 2025 (Hovhannisyan String Quartet)

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Melissa Bilal, Director, UCLA Armenian Music Program



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(Avanesov *Dies ist ein Lied für dich allein; Unruhig; Suonare; Chinar Es...; Chinar Es II; Komitas Chinar Es; Zohrabyan Cello Sonata, Piano Sonata*)

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UCLA Armenian Music Program

Artur Avanesov *Unruhig* (2024)

Aram Hovhannisyan String Quartet (2025)

Vahram Sargsyan *Vox Temporum* (2025)

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