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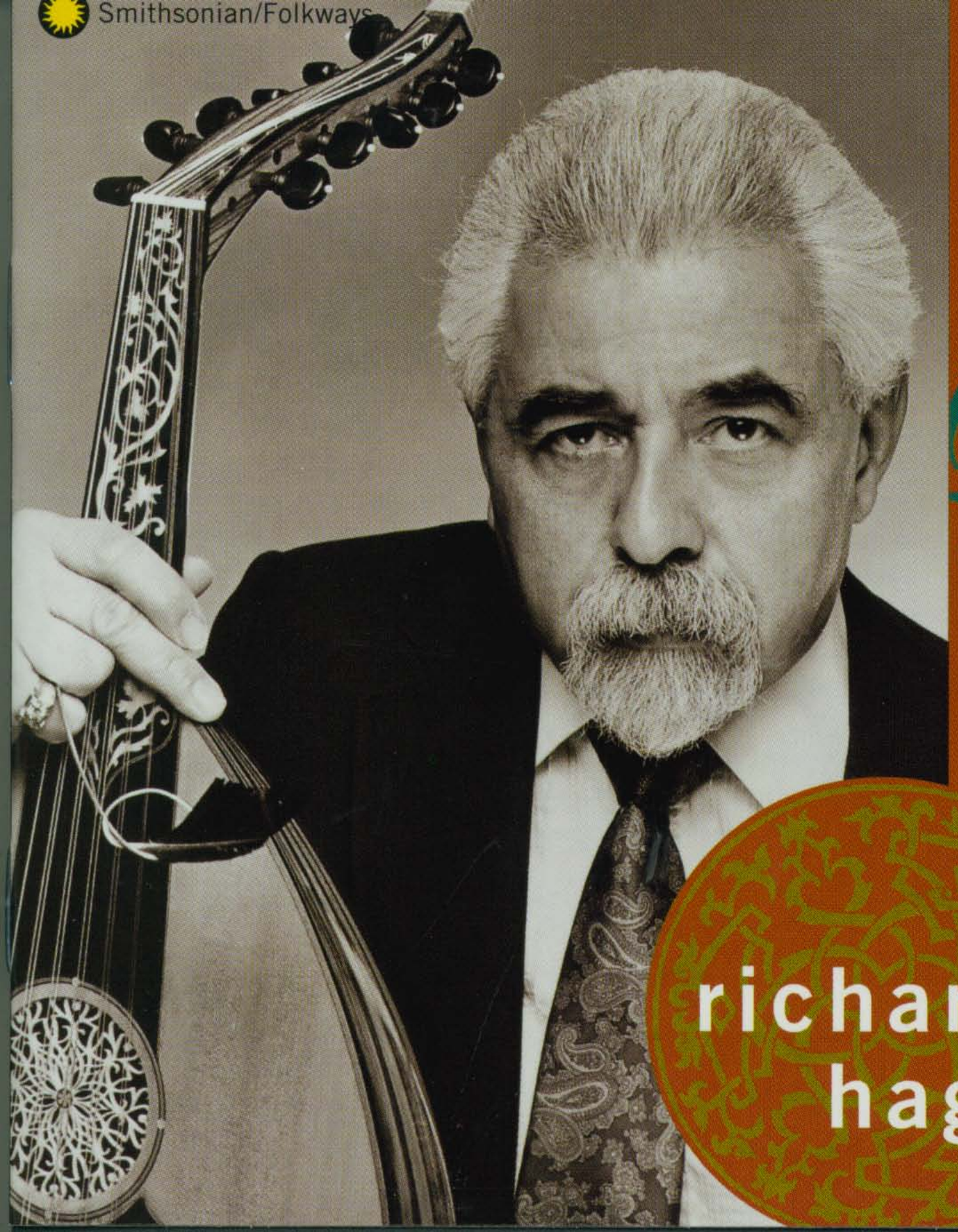

armenian music through the ages

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2. Dzagh e poonch 3:51 (Traditional)
3. Siroon aghcheek 4:20 (Udi Hrant Kenkulian)
4. Shalako 2:53 (Traditional)
5. Maro jon 3:17 (Traditional)
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8. Rast saz-semai 5:02 (Kemani Tateyos)
9. Hele hele 4:45 (Traditional)
10. Kürdili hicazkiar longa 5:49 (Kemani Sebuh)
11. Traditional Wedding Dance 4:27
12. Tamzara 4:00 (Traditional)
13. Seghane e arad 3:29 (Traditional)

Richard A. Hagopian, 'ud and vocals
Harold G. Hagopian, kanun and violin
Hagop Jack Zarzatian, dumbeg
Annotated by Harold G. Hagopian

Richard Hagopian is a virtuoso on the *'ud*, a principal instrument of Armenian, Turkish and Arabic musical traditions. Recipient of a National Heritage Award in 1986, Hagopian includes in his repertory both Armenian classical and folk styles. Although these traditions receive little exposure outside of the Armenian community in the United States, we hope these recordings will broaden the audience for this compelling music.

Smithsonian Folkways
Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings
Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies
955 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 2600
Smithsonian Institution
Washington DC 20560

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A Country of Many Traditions

A wonderful variety of musical and cultural traditions coexist in the United States and often flourish side-by-side, little known outside their own communities. Many musicians born in this country, like Richard Hagopian, learn the traditions of their parents' homeland. They perform before audiences within their communities. Many of them, like Mr. Hagopian, learn from master musicians and do discographic research on the traditions of their homeland, and bring a thoughtful and often original combination of musical styles to their performances. Harold Hagopian's notes on the following pages make this clear.

Birthdays, weddings, funerals and holiday celebrations are frequently the occasions for the rededication of communities to their valued traditions. Yet in the context of the United States, the occasions often subtly alter, and the music performed at them changes as well. The performances by Richard Hagopian, like those of many United States-born performing artists, reflect a complex interaction of homeland traditions, artistic development within an immigrant community, and performance within the musical contexts of the United States.

These performances should not simply be compared with the parent traditions, but should be enjoyed for themselves. Respected by the Armenian-American immigrants, recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Folk Arts Section National Heritage Award, Richard Hagopian is at once unique and part of large social, cultural, and musical processes.

Anthony Seeger
Curator, The Folkways Collection
Director, Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings

Armenian Music through the Ages: Introduction and Notes to the Selections by Harold G. Hagopian

With the emergence of the new Armenian Republic from within the former Soviet Union, Armenians once again have a free and independent country—a place toward which Armenians throughout the world may look for the preservation of their ancient heritage. Yet the reverse seems to be happening. Historians and artists from the homeland, sheltered by communism for the last seventy years, are looking toward diaspora Armenians, those whose parents survived the 1915 Turkish Genocide and fled to form new communities outside the homeland. It is here, in the suburbs of Paris, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Detroit and California's San Joaquin Valley, that first, second and third generation Armenians have preserved the traditions of old Armenia. The folk songs and dances of Van, Sepastia, Sassoon, Moosh, Erzurum, Dikranagerd and dozens of other Anatolian villages have been handed down by those who brought them from Armenia.

Armenians have lived on the Anatolian plateau for over twenty-five hundred years, flourishing under Kings Artashes, Tigran and Trdat and the Mamikonian, Artzruni and Bagratuni dynasties. The arrival of the Seljuk Turks in 1071 marked the fall of the last Armenian kingdom in Cilicia. Though the Armenians remained on their native land, they became subjects of the Ottoman, Persian and Russian Empires. As an ethnic minority spread throughout many countries, much of their contribution in the areas of art, architecture, music, etc. has simply been categorized as "Persian Art" or "Ottoman Architecture." Deciphering the Armenian element within these contexts is sometimes difficult.

As Armenians became integrated into the larger society under their new rulers, they began to develop new customs unique to their region. Distinct dialects, for example, developed within the eastern (Russian) and western (Turkish) regions. The same sort of regional differentiation followed in other aspects of the culture such as cuisine, garments and trades—for example, Armenians acquired reputations as rug merchants from the many involved in the Persian silk industry. Music was no exception; strong musical traditions developed within the Anatolian and Caucasian regions. Thus, from Istanbul to Tbilisi, Armenians produced music with a wide degree of diversity, the three main forms being liturgical music, folk music and various classical styles.

Armenian liturgical music developed out of earlier, pre-Christian ritual. After the state-wide conversion to Christianity around A.D. 301, many pagan chants were retained with superimposed Christian texts. Armenian folk music borrows from the elaborate modal system established by the church. There are several styles of secular music, and each region has its own indigenous songs and dances. Gomidas Vartabed (1869-1935) spent much of his life collecting and notating many of them. He divided folk music into five categories: plowing and threshing songs of the peasant; epic songs; songs of village life; love songs; and dance tunes.

The *'ud* (a lute), *kanun* (a zither) and *dumbeg* (a drum) are musical instruments commonly used throughout the Middle East. Though their exact origin is not known, Armenians adopted them long ago, developing a distinct nationalistic style. Several writers, historians and artists recorded information about Armenian music as it was encountered in everyday life. Recent excavations near the ancient Armenian temple at Garni revealed stone carvings dated as early as the first century B.C. depicting minstrels with the *kanun*, various lute-type instruments (including the *saz*), reed instruments, horns and a host of percussive instruments. Krikor Narekatsi, the tenth-century philosopher, mentions the use of the violin in his writings. A glass vessel depicting a musician playing the violin was found near Armenia's capital city, Yerevan. Foreign travelers frequently reflected upon Armenia's musical traditions. The tenth-century Arab historian, Abu Dulaf, noted: *Their voices while studying the gospel and the rhythm of their tunes is more pleasant and clearer than the voices of other Christian doctrines. Their singing is more disposed to the crying of the aggrieved, inclined by their nature to grief and moaning, than the wailing of Arabs over graves, and their spiritual melodies are more pleasant to the ear of a sensible and susceptible man, since both joy and happiness spring from their singing repetitions. And it is said that the pitch of their singing to string accompaniment is pleasant and true.* (Karakhanian, p. 2)

Perhaps the clearest references we have are within the illuminated manuscripts. One of the

oldest musical representations is found in a manuscript from A.D. 1211 that depicts a man holding an *'ud*. The *kanun*, too, must have been one of the most popular medieval Armenian instruments; it appears on more than one hundred reliefs. These instruments, among others, were used throughout the region to accompany Armenians in their musical endeavors. Music seems to have been an integral part of medieval Armenian culture. So popular were musicians that in a list of most important trades, they occupied second place. Traditional festivals and both religious and domestic ceremonies were always accompanied by music and singing.

Love songs were the most common genre. Armenian troubadours, called *gusans*, like Persian *ashiks*, frequently sang about current events or about love. The song *Maro jon* (track 5) expresses a common Armenian theme—a mix of love and politics. A man tells his sweetheart not to settle yet as there is trouble in Tiflis (Tbilisi).

O Maro, my Sweetheart, don't plant a lot of cotton,/ I will go to Tiflis and protest./ Burning, burning, I will die for your height and beauty.

Chorus: For your red blouse, I will die./ For your long blouse, I will die./ I shall die for the blouse that only you sew.

O Maro, you are like the snow on Massis (Ararat)/ My sweetness, you are the only one I love./ Burning, burning, I will die for your height and beauty.

Mount Ararat has inspired Armenian artists, poets and musicians for nearly two thousand years. The Bible says that Ararat is the resting place of Noah's Ark. For Armenians, who Movses Khorenatsi says are the descendants of Noah's son Haik, Ararat is the symbol of their homeland. Movses Khorenatsi recorded the first history of the Armenians around the eighth century. (See **References** at the end of these notes.) He notes the many songs about Armenian wine made from the grapes of Ararat's valleys. Eastern Armenians especially are known for their extravagant toasting ceremonies. *Seghane e arad* (the table is bountiful) (track 13) is a toasting song. Its melody is one of the oldest and most popular traditions giving thanks to Mother Earth for Ararat's rich soils.

The table is bountiful./ In the horizon is Ararat, echoing songs happy and bright.

Chorus: Fill O Comrades, your cups./ Let the wine of Armenians be sweet for us.

Let us give thanks to our Motherland,/ To the sun and mist for the wine we made, from Armenian grapes.

Armenians have specific songs to accompany every occasion—songs for toasting, songs of harvest time, summer and plowing. Each ceremony or festival is associated with a traditional tune. The *Wedding Song* (track 11) is one of the oldest traditions still practiced by Armenian-Americans. When guests hear this tune, it signals that the celebration is beginning. The bride and groom enter, usually stepping on a plate, which is similar to the Jewish custom of breaking a glass. In Armenia, this ceremony could have lasted hours as the musicians and crowd danced in the streets, making their way from the church to the celebration site. The repetition of a short phrase, common in Armenian folk music, creates a steady pulse around which the dancers can move subtly—a practice Armenians call *shorshoral*. The 10/8 meter is especially associated with this style of dancing characteristic of Armenians from Eastern Anatolia.

The *Tamzara* (track 12) is one of the most popular Armenian group or line dances. Three villages were especially known for their renditions. Though the basic 9/8 meter (2 + 2 + 2 + 3) remained the same, each region had its own melody and, perhaps, a slightly different dance step. The medley presented here ties together the Tamzaras from Kughi, Erzinga and Kharpert. Solo dances, too, are often performed at Armenian celebrations. *Shalako* (track 4) and *Dzagh e poonch* (track 2) are two examples from Eastern Armenia. *Shalako* is a duet performed by a man and woman. The flirtatious nature of the dance is acted out as the man tries to win the girl over. Alas, the girl is shy and dances away. The fast 6/8 meter is characteristic of music from the Caucasus Mountains, and is frequently encountered in Azerbaijan and Georgia as well. *Dzagh e poonch* reflects a different nature. It is a dance of grace and purity and is performed by a single woman. The graceful hand and arm movements of Armenian maidens are reflected by the longer,

more flowing phrases of this piece.

The city of Diyarbakir, located in southeastern Turkey, was once an important Armenian cultural center. The city was once called Dikranagerd after King Dikran, who established it as his capital in the first century B.C. The walls of his fortress still stand today. The Armenians of this region spoke a unique vernacular dialect that was reflected in their music, which reveals traces of neighboring Kurdish and Persian influence as well. *Hele hele* (track 9) is a well-known folk song of Dikranagerd. Sometimes a folk singer will *ad lib* a verse to make this joyous song even more humorous. The refrain "There's going to be a celebration" is repeated after every line.

Tonight is the night of resurrection,/ Ask the beauties for favors and questions./ If every girl should give a kiss,/ The whole world is topsy-turvy.

We were sleeping and dreaming,/ I awoke from my sweet sleep,/ If you weren't going to marry me,/ Why did you tell the whole world?

What is a farm? And what is a garden?/ O girl, what is your desire? / A tall tree with sweet fruit,/ I can't seem to reach the fruit, so what good is it!

By the early 1700s, Armenians were well established in Istanbul and Tiflis, two major eastern cultural centers. Turkish-Armenians regarded Istanbul as the main intellectual, artistic and political center while Russian-Armenian intellects gathered in Tiflis. The dominant musical genres of the two cities differed drastically. Istanbul's composers produced classical Ottoman music, while in Tiflis, European classical music imported via Moscow and St. Petersburg influenced the musical scene. Turkey, too, was exposed to European classical music. By 1850, Dikran Chookajian had returned from his studies in Milan and was composing the first European-style operas in Turkey. Franz Liszt, Donizetti and Arturo Stravolo performed in Istanbul. Classical Ottoman music was nevertheless considered the height of domestic culture. Many prominent Armenian composers served as catalysts in the development of the classical music that flourished within the Ottoman Empire. Names such as Kemani Agopos Ayvazyan, Udi Krikor Berberian, Karnik Garmiryan, Leon Hanciyan, Hamparsoom Limonciyan (also Hambardzum Limondjian), Krikor Culhayan, Bimen Sen (Der Khazarian), Udi Arsak Çömlekciyan, Kemani Sebuh, Andon Nizamian, Apet Misirliyan, Kanuni Artaki Candan (Terzian), and Kemani Tateyos Ekserjian have been recorded as significant composers of Ottoman Turkey. Musicians such as Kemani Nubar Çömlekciyan Tekyay, Kanuni Artaki Candan-Terzian and Udi Hrant Kenkulian remain legendary for their virtuosity that shaped the popular instrumental styles of the early 1900s.

Kemani Tateyos Ekserjian (1855-1913) is regarded as preeminent in the development of the classical forms known as *pesrev* and *saz-semai*. His compositions, along with those of Tanburi Cemil Bey, are considered cornerstones of the literature and are examples of exemplary phrase structure and motivic development. Tateyos attended the Ortakoy Armenian school. His early interest in music was encouraged by his uncle, Movses Papazian, a well-known actor, writer and composer. Many feel that Tateyos' familiarity with Armenian church music also influenced his compositional style. Tateyos was decorated by the Turkish Sultan Abdul Hammid II and served as court composer. Originally a *kanun* player, he later switched to violin and became one of the most accepted musicians of the day. He died at the early age of fifty-eight from yellow jaundice and was buried at the Armenian cemetery in Kadikoy, Istanbul.

Since the 1915 Genocide, many Armenians have refrained from listening to music from Ottoman Turkey, even though mainstream Armenian composers played an important role in the development of that art form. Thus the more than forty songs composed by Tateyos and set to Turkish prose are largely unknown to Armenians living in the diaspora. Richard Hagopian has made an effort to preserve Tateyos' works, having studied them with Kanuni Garbis Bakirjian, a friend and colleague of Tateyos.

The *saz-semai* is an instrumental rondo form made up of a recurring theme and two development sections. The meter is 10/8 with a faster 6/8 section occurring before the final statement of the theme. The *Rast saz-semai* (track 8) presented here is considered to be one of Tateyos' instrumental masterpieces.

Kemani Sebuh Sominian was one of the select singers serving the court of the thirty-second Sultan, Abdulaziz, who reigned from 1830 to 1876. Sebuh was also a noted composer and violinist, most famous for his *Kürdili hicazkiar longa* (track 10). Because *longas* are dancelike in nature, they are also played in relatively informal settings. Based on gypsy dances, they often are fiery and include virtuosic improvisations. This *longa* in the mode *kürdili hicazkiar*, by the blind Armenian violinist, remains one of the most popular.

The two love songs, *Siroon aghcheek* (track 3) and *Vart kaghelen kookas yar* (track 1), were made popular by Udi Hrant Kenkulian and Udi Bogos Kirechian, both blind artists and, interestingly enough, related as brother-in-laws. Udi Hrant (1901-1978) became a legendary figure for his mastery of the art form known as *taksim* (Middle Eastern improvisation). His virtuosity and sensitive approach revolutionized *'ud* playing. As a composer, Hrant wrote more than twenty-five songs, many of which have become standards in the classical literature. He composed songs set to both Armenian and Turkish texts. Hrant's Armenian songs are often written in a folk style and autobiographical in nature, expressing the tragedy of his condition or songs of love's bittersweetness. The song *Siroon aghcheek* (sweet girl) was written in 1936 for his bride-to-be, Aghavni.

Sweet girl, sweet love, come, come take my soul./ I can't do without you./ Wherever you go, take me with you.

You will take me, my sweet one, don't be shy./ You are like sugar, my sweetness./ Let me be shoes for your feet.

If I were close to you, I would put a ring on your finger./ I would give you a kiss,/ Then surrender my life to you.

Udi Hrant's greatest talent was revealed in his *taksims* (improvisations). The *taksim* remains the ultimate way that performers display their knowledge of the modal system. *Mode* is often incorrectly understood as *scale*. Though modes, or *makam*, as they are called in the Middle East, involve specific groups of notes, proper treatment of a mode may involve characteristic melody types, cadences, modulations, phrase groupings, and temperament. By the ninth century, the Armenian church had established an elaborate system of notation referred to as *khaz*. Many other attempts to notate the modes were made by Abdülkadir, Prince Korkut, Nayi Dede and Kantemiroğlu. However, the only notation to be accepted and used extensively was the revised *khaz* notation introduced by the Armenian musicologist Hamparsoom Limonjian (1768-1839). His letterlike notation, intended for use in the Armenian church, was later adopted by Turkish, Greek, Armenian and Jewish composers throughout the Ottoman Empire. The classical *taksim* is structured in three parts. The first section establishes the mode while the second part serves as a development section with the artist climbing higher and higher, traveling through related modes. In the closing section, the performer gradually finds his way back to the tonic mode via skillful transitions that relate closely to the total structure. The *taksim* recorded here (track 6) is in the mode *hicaz*, which correlates to the fifth Armenian church mode, *keem tza*.

Vart kaghelen kookas yar (by picking roses, you come my love) (track 1) is a traditional Armenian tune made famous by Udi Bogos Kirechian. Bogos' style was patterned after Hrant, with whom he studied for many years. Born in Istanbul, he was well known in musical circles there, having recorded several 78 r.p.m. records for Balkan Records. The 6/8 meter, organized in phrases of two measures, is a common structure of eastern Armenian folk music.

By picking roses, you come my love./ But a naughty thorn has pricked your hand./ I will pull the thorn out, Naughty./ And I will accept your pain, my sweetness.

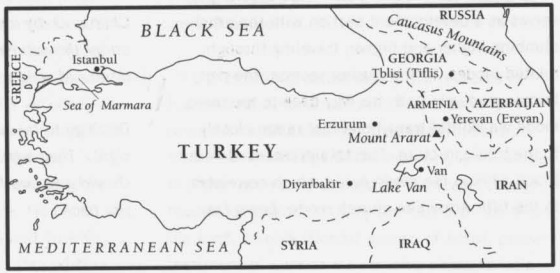
Chorus: O my love, my sweet love, don't stand under the sun./ When you cast your shadow down,/ My heart cannot stand it.

Don't go to far-away places, Don't leave my sight./ They admire you in the daylight./ If I should give you to the world,/ they won't give you back.

If you give me all the roses that you pick,/ It won't fill my aching heart./ Even if my soul passes through Heaven,/ Besides you, and only you, nothing else would matter.

By 1920, Armenians from the Soviet Caucasian republics had traveled to Moscow to study music. Names such as Aram Khachaturian and Alexander Spendiaryan gained international attention as composers of the new Soviet school. A strong nationalistic style emerged, drawing from Armenian folk music idioms. Epic operas such as *Anush* (by Armen Tigranyan, 1912) and *David Beg*, based on Armenian folklore, incorporated a unique blend of folk styles. These works were preceded by lighter, comic operettas popular in the 1800s. *Arshin mal alan* (track 7), the story of a rag merchant, was one of the most popular of these productions. The music, by Haci Beg, exemplifies the mixture of Persian, Georgian, Azeri and Armenian influences. This tune, in 6/8 meter, is one of the most famous melodies from the operetta.

Over two million Armenians perished during the Genocide of 1915, while survivors fled to other parts of the Middle East, Europe or America. Today, the Armenian population numbers around five million with approximately three and a half million living in the newly established Republic of Armenia. Virtually no Armenians live on the Anatolian plateau where their ancient churches and fortresses still stand. The music presented here represents folk traditions of the areas where Armenians once lived, as well as classical pieces composed by Armenians from Istanbul to Tiflis.



Richard A. Hagopian was born in 1937 of Armenian parents near Fresno, in the central San Joaquin Valley of California. He demonstrated his musical interests early, beginning to study the violin and clarinet at age nine. A year later, he took up the *'ud*, studying with the renowned Armenian artist, Kanuni Garbis Bakirgian. Interested in both classical and folk styles, he collected phonograph recordings from the old country, but always went to the older singers and dancers, watching and listening and trying it out for himself. The *'ud* has been called the "queen of Near Eastern instruments," and is considered a principal part of the Arabic, Turkish and Armenian orchestras. Known as the grandfather of the baroque lute, the pear-shaped instrument is fretless and tuned in fourths. Mr. Hagopian has issued four dance albums known as the *Kef Time* series and recorded an album of Armenian composers published by ARC Music in Europe. As artist in residence, he has taught at California State University, Fresno, and performed throughout the country, recently presenting a master class at the Manhattan School of Music. Among other honors, Hagopian has been a recipient of a "Meet the Composer" grant from the New York State Council of the Arts and was awarded the National Endowment for the Arts' National Heritage Fellowship, the nation's highest honor awarded in the traditional folk arts. Hagopian has passed along his art to his son, Harold, who learned to play both the *'ud* and the *kanun,* the seventy-two-stringed zither of the Near East. Harold's own interests later turned toward European classical music and the violin, and he is a graduate of the Julliard School as well as an audio engineer. Together, father and son often perform at folk festivals and various Armenian events throughout the country.

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