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the armenian reporter arts & culture

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Worry beads meet wearable art

Sona Hamalian's playful venture offers handmade jewelry based on the *tesbeh*



interview
by Ishkhan
Jinbashian

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In 2006, when **Sona Hamalian** launched Zart Nouveau, her jewelry brand, in Yerevan, she simply wanted to have some fun designing original pieces for friends and relatives. Ever since she was a little girl, she had had a passion for unique jewelry, and now she was only too glad to cater to her appreciative circle.

Today Zart Nouveau has taken on a life of its own, with distribution in Europe and growing online sales. Hamalian's line stands out not only for its craftsmanship and sexy, daring designs, but because it caters to men and women alike. The company's offerings, conceived by Hamalian and handmade by artisans in Armenia, are all based on the *tesbeh*, or worry beads, and feature a large variety of semiprecious stones, metals, and wood. The idea has found devotees in countries throughout the world, encouraging Hamalian to continue playing on the timeless *tesbeh* theme and producing chic, distinct articles of personal adornment.

Q: The first thing I noticed about your jewelry pieces is that they give one a wink. They're cheeky. How do you achieve this effect with "inanimate" objects like precious stones and wood?

One day a high-ranking Armenian official noticed me play with my tesbeh, and, with brows raised high, asked, "Are you making fun of me?" And I answered, "Are you?"

A: That's because I always look for the unusual. Objects, much like human beings, stop being "inanimate" when you start flirting with them.

Q: You've made jewelry since you were eight years old. As a designer today, do you find that there a specific childhood drive or experience which you still feel



in the creative process?

A: I grew up in a Muslim neighborhood in Lebanon and always admired the Kurdish women who paraded the streets in their colorful clothes and gorgeous jewelry. Some of them, the richer ones, carried up to 100 gold bangles on their wrists, and long, elegant earrings full of turquoise pieces. I was fascinated by them and tried to imitate them whenever I played house with my twin sister, **Sossy**. One day, our church priest came to visit us at home just when we were playing, and when he saw me in my bangles and jingles, he said, "We're going to marry you to a Kurd." He never kept his promise.

The five-year-old, not the eight-year-old, is always in me. I have the spontaneity of a five-year-old. I have to buy what I like without giving it a second thought. I had fled to Montreal, Canada, during the Lebanese Civil War, with not a penny in my pocket. At that time I was staying with my older sister, **Arpi**, who was so very generous with me. One day, as we were strolling down Old Mon-

treal, I saw a ring and fell in love with it. It was a unique piece of silver that cost \$250. I could not afford it, so my sister bought it for me. Thirty years later, that ring is still in my treasure chest and among my treasured memories.

I have another piece of *faux bijou* by designer **Cecile Jeanne**, whose work I admire, for which I have paid \$450. I was drawn to this piece because of its inscription, which said, in French: "Behold, there comes the morning, and its light is its promise." This piece has been my good luck charm and the inscription on it my mantra for the past ten years.

So yes, perhaps there is a converging point in me, where the freewheeling nature of the child meets the grown-up quest for a measure of wisdom.

Q: Why have you chosen the *tesbeh* as the basic design element of your jewelry? Is it about just nostalgia?

A: It's more than nostalgia. Like stone carvings, the *tesbeh* is carved in my memory. All the men in our neighborhood "played" with their *tesbehs*. They had ingenious ways of wrapping it around



their finger, then hiding it in their palm, or hanging it from the thick, hand-woven belts of their traditional Arab pants. I

was particularly fascinated by men who played/prayed with their *tesbehs* while walking home in the evenings, with both hands in their back.

The colorful *tesbehs* in the gold market were always an eye-catcher. You would see hundreds of them hanging in display cases, most selling at a reasonable price. There were also those that cost a bundle. Such pieces were bought by wealthy men who, apart from enjoying the pieces, sported them as status symbols.

Q: The *tesbeh* has been traditionally and strictly associated with men. Some might read a feminist statement in your "subversion" of this male article into jewelry for women. Except that, of course, you also use the *tesbeh* theme to make jewelry for men and teenagers of both sexes. What's your take on such an interpretation?

A: I am a feminine-ist, not a feminist. Perhaps there is a touch of "a feminist statement" in the reason that pushed me to turn the *tesbeh* into a feminine toy. When I first came to Armenia, in 1991, I worked to help start the American University of Armenia. It was a joint venture of the University of California system and the Ministry of Education of Armenia. The partnership meant that I had to negotiate certain things with the Armenian government. Almost every single one of the officials I went to visit would pull out his *tesbeh* and conduct our discussions with *tesbeh* in hand. Something about that situation disturbed me. Here I was, trying to negotiate with them on a supposedly even playing field, yet they carried a "power" tool I did not possess. I finally bought myself a most feminine, jade-colored *tesbeh* from the Vernissage – the famous

Left: Sona Hamalian. Above and facing page: Some of Hamalian's jewelry designs. Photos: Zaven Khachikian.

On page C1: DerHova, a dance-music producer known for mixing Western sounds with Armenian melodies, tells the *Armenian Reporter* that he has found a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment in the homeland. Photo: Kamo Tovmasian. See story on page C5.

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poetry matters

Letters to a young, Armenian poet: Letter one



by Lory
Bedikian

The following letter, one among four, is inspired by the well-known published Letters to a Young Poet, written by Rainer Maria Rilke, the great German poet. Rilke was known to receive letters from young people and in the one set referred to above, from 1903 to 1908, he wrote a series of letters to a young, beginning poet answering questions about poetry and life. The idea of writing these letters has been borrowed as a starting point for discussion between a poet and beginning poets or artists who may need support in their callings.

Dear Poet,

Let me first say that I am deeply touched that you decided to write to me and send me your poem “My Homeland.” Your letter, kind and generous, reminded me of why I write: so that I may change something for the better in myself and hopefully in my readers.

You asked that I read your poem and give you an honest response regarding the “quality” of the writing. I can tell from your letter that you are quite seri-

ous about this endeavor of writing, of creating poems, so I will have to be honest in order to honor your dedication.

Your poem is full of fervor and passion for your culture. This is quite apparent. You write about being Armenian, missing your homeland, about a sorrowful history, and you end in a note of hope. While this is all wonderful in sentiment, what I want to call your attention to is your use of language. Your poem utilizes phrases such as “my soul feels,” “my heart calls,” “dreams have died,” or “we will live happily.” If I did not know glimpses of who you are, hints of your personality through your letter, and clues into your true desire to improve upon your writing, I must say I would have read a few lines of your poem and then set it aside. For example, this quatrain uses two of the generalities I mention above:

My heart calls for my homeland,
My being aches to be back on its roads,
Where I once played when I was young,
But now those dreams have died.

Now, you may be thinking that your words and thoughts are unique in the world and that the order of words you’ve chosen also commands attention, but unfortunately at this stage it does not. Let me explain. Everyone has a soul that feels, a heart that calls, dreams that have died and hopes to live happily. These are quite large generalities that apply to the universal being, the human who lives next to you and across the globe.

When we come to poetry, to art, we want to find symbols from the artist, the visionary who will guide us to some truth through that symbol. For instance, in your letter, you mentioned that your notebook has become so full of scraps of paper, and collected items, such as leaves and crushed petals, that you dreamt the notebook exploded one day only to scatter all over your yard as you rushed to find all the pieces. That to me is poetry. When you tell me of soul and dream, I ask you ‘what of it?’ Your audience is hoping you’ll say something new, and even if the topic is not new (and actually there really is no such thing as a new topic), your reader relies on you to present the subject in a new way. And how fortunate your reader would be if you wrote a poem entitled something like “The Dream of the Notebook,” or along that vein.

Do not be injured by my criticism because it does not come from my ego. I am not being a critic, but one who is constructively reading a very important attempt by you. I do not tell you these things with the fear that you may surpass the abilities of my own or of my equals. I don’t believe in one poet being “better” than the other, necessarily. I only believe there are artists who remain the same, and then there are those who challenge themselves and grow. Each poet, if they have to be judged, should be judged on the basis of whether or not their work has improved from one

poem to the next – not in comparison to others.

I usually comment on what works in a poem, in a piece of art before I tackle the challenges of a piece, but because of the tone of your letter, I had faith that you wanted my critique first and foremost. In your poem, you mention “the boughs of the apricot tree bending like my own full arms.” This is poetry and fine work. The simile is visual, memorable. Think of it this way. In cinema, what resonates most after the lights have come up and the credits roll are the visually stunning moments. People don’t merely laugh and cry, but the writer, director, or whoever it may be, decides to have a close-up on a hand fidgeting with a glass or to suddenly show a fleet of birds racing across clouds.

Since your poem had to do with homeland, let me just remind you of what you already know, that the soul there resembles a dove resting on the edge of a khatchkar, the heart calling sounds like the rushing waters of the Arax River, dreams that have died could be dried bread which lies in crumbs at the head of a table, and people don’t merely live happily, but they clap hands to the notes of the zourna.

This is all I can recommend for now. I hope my words were not too harsh. I write them with the care that you will look at your writing like the tree in your yard. If it is not pruned back in the right season, it will never properly blossom, bear fruit. ☞

Worry beads meet wearable art

Continued from page C2

weekend artisan fair in Yerevan. Thereafter I carried my *tesbeh* in my bag, and every time a government official pulled out his, I pulled out mine. One day a high-ranking official noticed me play with mine and, with brows raised high, asked, “Are you making fun of me?” And I answered, “Are you?” That was the moment when the seed was planted in my mind. I was finally “noticed.” Ever since then, I have wanted to turn this “male toy” into a female one as well.

Q: Two years ago, when you launched Zart Nouveau, you were an unknown in the world of jewelry. Today your company continues to make waves, and you’ve achieved this mostly through word of mouth. Who were your first customers, and who were those who encouraged you to go on?

A: I owe my success to my family and friends. They are all my cheerleaders and my models. My sisters and brothers, nephews and nieces, their friends and friends of their friends all carry and collect my pieces. Then there is my extended family of friends. I owe them all a big hug. My twin sister has the largest collection of my pieces so far. Her deep, abiding faith in me keeps me to go on creating. She carries and showcases my jewelry with such flirtatious elegance that she has turned all of her friends and neighbors into my best customers.



Q: There’s a certain functional and esthetic flexibility to your jewelry pieces. They’re sexy yet elegant, luxurious but also down-to-earth, even bohemian. As a designer, what is the effect you have in mind when you’re working on a piece?

A: I want my pieces to be eye-catchers, dream-catchers. There is a blessing I put in each piece for its wearer. A blessing of abundance. Abundance in life, in good health and happiness, and, above all, abundance in love.

Q: I’ve heard from several of your customers that they use your jewelry not only as personal adornments but also good-luck charms and tools for relaxation and meditation – just as they would have with a *tesbeh*. What is it that lends such “powers” to an article of jewelry?

A: My pieces are wearable, playable, displayable. Yes they bring good luck to

the owner because I instill love in every piece I make. I have made over a thousand pieces so far, yet I remember every single one of them. They are one-of-a-kind pieces, each with a story behind it, especially if it was conceived during my “witching hour,” a specific time at dawn when I suddenly wake up sometimes and experience a revelation.

Q: You work with quite a few artisans to produce your line. What qualities do you look for in an artisan-colleague?

A: I look for purity in the artisans that I work with. They also have to be creative and self-motivated. But, most of all, they have to be deadline-oriented. I consider myself to be lucky to have found kindred souls in each and every one of them. They are all very beautiful people.

Q: You’ve seen men, women, and teenagers wearing your jewelry. What have



been some of your reactions to how customers use your pieces?

A: I want them to give them back to me! That’s the five-year-old in me...

Q: How would you define your artistic stamp? What is it, ultimately, that goes straight from your life experiences into your designs?

A: Novelty and flirtatiousness. That’s why I called my line of jewelry Zart Nouveau, that is to say, “novel ornament.”

Q: There’s a rumor out there that so far you’ve refused to give TV interviews because you’ve promised **Oprah Winfrey** she’d be the first to interview you. Would you care to comment?

A: Yes. With a wink. It was the five-year-old in me who has spread the rumor. Oprah, who is my idol and whom I admire for the causes she champions, doesn’t even know about my existence. She will, one day, and I know she will not let me down. ☞

How basketball saved Tom Mooradian's life

The acclaimed sports writer recounts his odyssey of survival in the Soviet Union

by Mitch Kehetian

In 1946, **Tom Mooradian** was an academic all-star at Detroit Southwestern High School, and captain of the school's Public School League championship basketball team.

A year later, the All-State athlete was aboard a Soviet ocean vessel bound for the Black Sea. For the next 13 years, the Soviet authorities refused to grant Mooradian an exit visa, but he never gave up requesting permission to return to America.

When Mooradian boarded the "Rossia" at New York harbor, he was the youngest member of a group of 151 Armenian-Americans who willingly had renounced their American citizenship to "repatriate" to Soviet Armenia. By the time Mooradian regretted his decision, realizing that, like the others in the group, he had unwittingly relinquished his U.S. citizenship, the "Rossia" was already at sea, plying the waters of the Atlantic toward Batumi, Georgia.

Back home, Mooradian's friends were baffled by his move to Armenia. Why, they wondered, would the brilliant student and rising basketball star, whom *The Free Press* had named "Player of the Year," give up so much to relocate to a communist country?

Mooradian's decision to move to Armenia was in fact influenced by his father, a strike organizer at the Kelsey-Hayes company and a member of the Communist Party of America, who convinced young Tom that Soviet totalitarianism was nothing but a myth perpetuated by the West. Exposed to such rhetoric, Tom Mooradian dreamed of earning a college degree in Armenia and teaching Armenian kids American-style basketball.

Back in America

For decades after his return to the U.S. in 1960, Mooradian refrained from writing about his odyssey of survival behind the Iron Curtain, careful to protect those who had helped him through his 13 years of exile in the Soviet Union.

Now 79, the retired sports writer has finally opened his heart, with a 500-page autobiography appropriately titled *The Repatriate: Love, Basketball, and the KGB*.

When Mooradian was granted an exit visa in 1960, I was a reporter for the *Detroit Times*. A week after he was back with his family, I interviewed my old classmate – who had graduated in 1947, a year before I had – for my paper.

Somehow Mooradian survived beatings by the KGB and was able to live with the knowledge that he had only himself to blame for the self-imposed nightmare he had been forced to endure.

In our interview, Mooradian told me there was no freedom of speech in Soviet Armenia or any other Soviet republic. "You always cringed with fear when there was a knock on the door," he said. Even

during our interview, when he was in the safety of his family home in southwest Detroit, there was fear in his eyes. He never mentioned to me (or anyone else) the names of his old sports pals in Armenia and Russia, fearful of what the communists and the KGB would do to them. He didn't know why the Soviets had at last let him "fly the roost" to freedom.

A powerful memoir

Mooradian's stirring account of life in the Soviet Union is a study in state-sanctioned terror and stunning instances of survival despite oppression and extreme economic hardship. Mooradian tells us how Soviet citizens stood in long, unruly lines, "hoping to purchase a kilo of black, damp, saw grain-filled bread" and were always fearful of the knock on the door after the midnight hour.

His first encounter with the NKVD, the Soviet secret police, came shortly after his arrival in Yerevan. He survived a severe beating, and felt the barrel of a loaded revolver placed to his head, then released, as he was certain his life was about to end.

Mooradian was armed with a petition – written by him and signed by several Armenian-American repatriates who were also seeking the help of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow to get back to America.

That brush with death convinced him he had to accept his fate and fight for survival. Mooradian's salvation were his stellar basketball skills and willingness to teach young athletes how to play the game the American way.

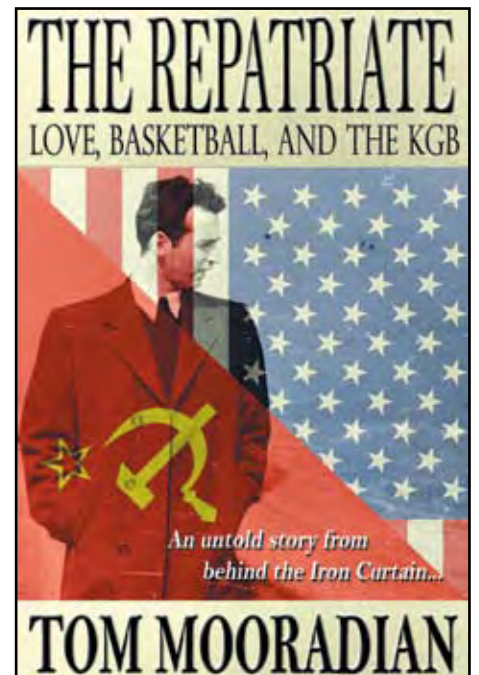
Soon Mooradian's basketball prowess captured hearts and also earned him a small measure of freedom, especially beginning in 1953, when he led an all-star Armenian basketball team to victory over a towering visiting team from China. "[Basketball] saved my life and gave me the strength to retain my sanity," he writes. "Basketball was not a part of my life: it was my life."

After defeating the Chinese team, Mooradian became a member of an all-star Soviet national team. Every time the team traveled to Moscow for a match, Mooradian took the opportunity to pop into the American Embassy. "They told me I could return to America [only] if the Soviets gave me an exit visa," he recalls.

But he needed help.

On September 5, 1957, while in Moscow, he was told **Eleanor Roosevelt** was in town, staying at the National Hotel. Through sheer miracle, as he was dining with a friend, Mooradian noticed the former first lady sitting at a table close by. He was unable to approach her, but took action the following morning, when he once again spotted Mrs. Roosevelt on a crowded stairway and lost no time to appeal for her help. As she took his name, the first lady noted that Mooradian was just a minor when he signed away his citizenship rights in 1947.

Though Soviet leaders thought highly of Mrs. Roosevelt, to this day Mooradian doesn't know whether she urged Soviet officials to grant "the young American" an exit visa.



Tom Mooradian, along with 151 Armenian-Americans, voluntarily renounced his American citizenship to repatriate to Soviet Armenia in 1946. In his autobiography (right) *The Repatriate*, Mr. Mooradian recounts life in the Soviet Union.



Two and a half years after the chance meeting with the first lady, with Mooradian's 32nd birthday approaching, a college professor told him, "The Soviets are letting you leave for America. Get ready."

The nightmare was about to end. On July 31, 1960, Mooradian was on his way to Sheremetyev International Airport. He cleared customs with an exit visa and a one-way ticket to the U.S. He would receive an American passport during a stopover in Copenhagen.

Soon after earning a journalism degree from Wayne State University, Mooradian became a celebrated sports writer, contributing pieces to various news-

papers in western Wayne County, and went on to earn several awards.

Today Mooradian and his wife, Jan, a retired school teacher, divide their time between homes in Oakland County and Hubbard Lake. They have two grown daughters, Jennifer and Bethany, and three grandchildren.

"The Soviets not only took away my youth, but they also made it impossible to sleep," Mooradian writes. "The worst part was the Soviet night. The nightmares. The midnight pounding on doors."

The nightmare is over.



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tommooradian.com

DerHova helps redefine Armenia's pop-music scene

Produced "Kami Pchi" and created "Qele Qele"



by Mary Nersessian Sagharian

TORONTO – In the six years since moving to Yerevan, **DerHova** has helped revolutionize the Armenian pop-music scene.

Born **Harout Der-Hovagimian** in Toronto, DerHova is a dance-music producer known for mixing Western sounds with Armenian melodies – a style that has redefined Armenian pop music and catapulted home-grown artists, such as **Sirusho** and **Sofi Mkheyan**, into international acclaim. His impact is audible as much on the streets as on the airwaves and top-ten charts.

Indeed, since DerHova stepped foot in the country, his work has eased the emergence of rap as a part of the mainstream, filling the need for a fresh form of expression in a market oversaturated by rabiz music – characterized by its base in Turkish music.

"It was pretty bad before," DerHova said. "Everyone sounded the same. There were just a few composers and producers – nothing that could compete on the international market. I wanted to bring [the scene] up to that level."

DerHova, 34, has noticed other artists replicating his unique sound. But he takes it all in stride, believing in the adage that imitation is the most sincere form of flattery. "Things are only going to progress," he said, referring to the competition. "Everyone I know is being more experimental."

Early success

DerHova signed his first contract, with an independent music label in Toronto, when he was 17.

As half of the two-member Temperance project and using the pseudonym **Mark Ryan**, he earned several top-ten hits in Canada and won four Juno Award nominations. By the time he was 19, Billboard had already recognized him as a top remixer. He was active with Temperance from 1994 to 1997. The project reached its pinnacle in 1996, with its Billboard-charting cover version of the Alphaville classic "Forever Young."

DerHova opened his own studio and continued to produce music for various artists in Canada as well as club remixes for artists abroad. His work earned him yet another Juno nomination. However, by 2002, DerHova's abiding desire to broaden his horizons led to his life-

Mary Nersessian Sagharian is a Toronto-based journalist who works for Canada's CTV news network. Her work has appeared in *The Globe and Mail*, *the Toronto Star*, *Quill & Quire*, *Wish Magazine*, and *Horizon Magazine*.



DerHova (Harout Der-Hovagimian). Photo: Kamo Tovmasian.

changing decision to move to Armenia.

"I was peaking in my career and what I expected over here. I had already reached what I expected to reach," he said recently in Toronto, where he returns to visit his family every year.

"I had some opportunities in the U.S., but decided to go to Armenia instead and thought I'd give it a try," he said, adding that the decision was easier to make because his aunt and uncle had moved there from Toronto years ago.

During his first three to four years in Armenia, he continued to produce remixes for record companies and clubs. But he was also quietly researching the music industry in his new homeland.

His first project was producing, mixing, and recording the single "Kami Pchi," in 2006, for the Armenian hip-hop group HAYQ. By the end of that year, the song had won the Hit of the Year Award at the annual Armenian National Music Awards and DerHova had cemented his status as a hitmaker to watch.

"After that, everything took off," he said.

His work on "Kami Pchi" was followed by HAYQ's second single, "Mi Patmutyun." DerHova went on to compose and produce songs for Armenian pop artists such as Sofi Mkheyan, including the song "Ore Yev Nerkan," which also won the Hit of the Year Award at the 2007 Music Awards.

"Since 'Kami Pchi,' a lot of things changed," DerHova said.

For one thing, his life is now in Armenia.

But DerHova doesn't wax poetic. "It's all our dreams, but I've always tried to be more grounded and not get too romantic about that," he noted.

Still, he recognizes that the most fulfilling experience of his musical career

thus far has been his work in Armenia – namely, "to see my people so excited about the music I've created, especially 'Qele, Qele,'" he said, adding that his work in the homeland has meant more to him than anything else he had done before, and that his musical development would have been stunted had he stayed in Canada.

"I wouldn't have grown this much. Every single [Armenian] artist I've worked with has actual musical education and... I've learned a lot," DerHova, who is self-taught, said.

The Eurovision milestone

This year, Europeans took notice of DerHova's behind-the-scenes brilliance after Sirusho sang and shimmied her way through "Qele, Qele," Armenia's selection for the Eurovision Song Contest.

DerHova wrote the song after being approached by the organizers in Armenia. "They had a national selection and the rest is history," he said. "I heard so many people from abroad say, 'Wow, what is this? It's different.'"

Following the success of "Qele, Qele," several artists from Belgium, Greece, Malta, and elsewhere have approached DerHova, asking him to collaborate, compose, and produce. "Some have actually proposed songs to take part in Eurovision next year," he said.

And he hopes to keep growing artistically. In ten years, DerHova said, he would like to compose film soundtracks.

"That's always been my long-term goal," he said, adding he would like to be best remembered as a trailblazer of Armenian pop music.

In the meantime, DerHova will continue his work with Armenian artists such as **Arsen Safaryan** and **Hasmik Karapetyan**. And there's no doubt that



DerHova's music is a fresh form of expression..

Photo: Eric Stephanian.

he will continue to call Armenia his home.

"There are quite a few opportunities for me in Europe, but I think Armenia will always be my base. I'll always go back there," he said.

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derhova.com

Sahan Arzruni to lead major concert in New York

Program will feature
U.S. debuts of several
Armenian compositions



by Florence
Avakian

NEW YORK CITY – Renowned pianist and ethnomusicologist **Sahan Arzruni** is never content to sit on his laurels. He is always searching for and creating new ventures for the enlightenment and enjoyment of music lovers in the United States and around the world.

On September 28, Arzruni will present a unique concert at Merkin Concert Hall in New York City, to mark the 175th anniversary of Istanbul's Surp Pergich Armenian National Hospital.

Surp Pergich was founded in 1832 by philanthropist **Kazaz Artin Amira Bezciyan**, who initially established the institution to provide free healthcare to seniors and the mentally handicapped. Today Surp Pergich is regarded as a major hospital, offering state-of-the-art equipment and world-class medical care. Surp Pergich is also one of two medical facilities in Istanbul with a center dedicated to autistic children.

Organized by Arzruni, the upcoming concert will be held under the auspices of Surp Pergich, with the participation of various Armenian organizations including CARS, Essayan-Getronagan Alumni, Hay Doun, Tbrevank, Knights and Daughters of Vartan, Tekeyan, and Hamazkayin.

Also a noted composer, producer, and teacher, Arzruni has given command performances at the White House as well as the British, Danish, Icelandic, and Swedish courts. In addition, he has performed with the famed Victor Borge and has been featured on many television and radio broadcasts.

In 1996, Arzruni received an encyclical and the Sts. Sahak and Mesrob Medal from Catholicos **Karekin I.** On the occasion of the **Aram Khachaturian** Centennial in 2003, he was appointed the representative of Armenia's Ministry of Culture in the Diaspora.

U.S. Premieres

In a recent interview, Arzruni revealed that the September 28 event will celebrate Armenian composers born in Asia Minor. The program debuted in May this year, with two sold-out performances at Istanbul's Bosphorus University, attended by Armenians and Turks alike. The performances were recorded and released on compact disc.

Dikran Tchouhadjian, Stepan Elmas, Harutiun Sinanian, Karol Mikuli, Edgar Manas, Harutyun Hanesyan, Sirvart Karamanuk, Kourken Alemshah, Parsegh Atmacayan, Koharik Gazarossian, Levon Eroyan.



Arzruni at the piano.

Since most of these composers are virtually unknown to Armenians in America and elsewhere, Arzruni conducted extensive research to introduce their works to audiences across the globe.

Arzruni's selections for the September 28 concert include works by classical composers who wrote in the Western idiom, such as Dikran Tchouhadjian – best-known for composing the first Armenian opera, Arshag II, as well as operettas like Leblebiji Hor Hor (The Chickpea Vendor). "Tchouhadjian, who also wrote for piano as well as for orchestra, worked for the Ottoman sultanate, which at the time was opening up to Western classical music," Arzruni pointed out.

Stepan Elmas, who was born in Smyrna and moved to Vienna, studied with Franz Liszt. "[He was] acclaimed as a composer and pianist," Arzruni said of Elmas. "[His] music was published by major publishing houses. However, he died in abject poverty in Geneva. Currently there is a revival of his music, with a special room dedicated to him in Yerevan's Charents State Museum of Literature and Arts."

A contemporary of Tchouhadjian was Harutiun Sinanian, who belonged to a musical dynasty. His father, Krikor Sinanian, was the first musician to organize a symphonic orchestra in Istanbul. His sons were famous composers, as was his great-nephew Kevork, who became a virtuoso violinist, performing all over Europe.

Born in Rumania, Karol Mikuli (Bez-dikian) moved to Poland at an early age and went on to become the most famous student and close associate of Frederic Chopin, Arzruni said. Mikuli eventually published the definitive edition of Chopin's works. He died in Lvov, Poland, and was buried in the courtyard of the Armenian church there.

Calling Edgar Manas, who studied at the Milan Conservatory, "among the most professional of Armenian composers," Arzruni pointed out that he



Sahan Arzruni.

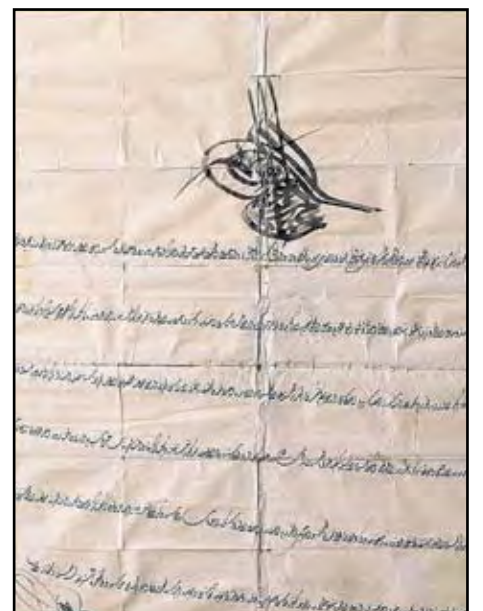
came from a distinguished family of artists, all connected with the Ottoman Palace. The Turkish government asked Manas to harmonize the Turkish National Anthem, which is still in use today.

Guest artists

Violinist **Renee Jolles** will premiere Manas' "Violin Sonata," composed in 1923, at the Merkin concert. It was first performed by **Kevork Sinanian**, with Manas on piano, at Paris' Salle Gaveau.

Jolles and Arzruni will perform "Andantino" by **Harutyun Hanesyan**. Another guest artist, soprano **Elisabeth Pehlivanian** of Los Angeles, will perform "Blessed Sky" – from **Sirvart Karamanuk's** Song Cycles, with text by **Zahrad**. Pehlivanian will also sing "Romances" by **Kourken Alemshah**.

Starting the Merkin program with "Invocation," his own interpretation of Yegmalian's "Hayr Mer" (Our Father), Arzruni will follow with his own three "Mentations" as well as two versions of a rarely performed work by **Komitas**, "Msho Shoror," a dance from the town of Mush. Arzruni will also perform five



Proclamation given by Sultan Mahmud II for the establishment of the Surp Pirgich Armenian National Hospital.

children's pieces by **Parsegh Atmacayan**, three "Etudes" by **Koharik Gazarossian**, and "Variations on an Anatolian Theme" by **Levon Eroyan**, based on "Nubar Nubar."

Asked why he decided to present the Merkin concert, Arzruni, who is writing detailed biographies of the above-mentioned composers for Wikipedia, answered without hesitation, in his inimitable manner: "If you don't appear every two or three years, your name becomes obsolete. Also it's a very challenging program. These musicians' contributions to Armenian culture should not be forgotten."

A reception will follow the concert.

Concert in celebration of the 175th anniversary of Surp Pergich Armenian National Hospital
Sunday, September 28, 3:00 p.m.
Merkin Concert Hall
129 West 67th Street, New York City

For tickets, call the box office at (212) 501-3330, Arto at (718) 937-7660, and Araxie at (201) 227-9615).

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He got heart, but no game

Float

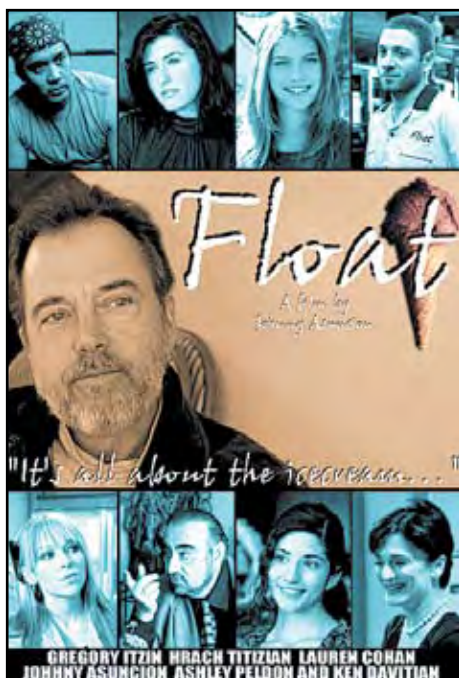
Written and directed by Johnny Asuncion

Produced by Hrach Titizian and Peter Basler

Cast: Johnny Asuncion, Gregory Itzin, Hrach Titizian, Lauren Cohan, Ashley Peldon, Anais Thomassian, Ken Davitian, and others



by Alexander Tavitian



Float also features *Borat* costar Ken Davitian.



Actor Hrach Titizian produced *Float* and established the Actor's Playpen acting school in Hollywood.

The titular scene of the film *Float* is perhaps its most revealing. In it, the character Ramone, played by the film's writer/director, **Johnny Asuncion**, approaches his Armenian beloved-to-be with the entreaty "close your eyes, lift up your hands." She follows his lead. "Now," he continues, "can you feel yourself floating?" Here Asuncion is demanding a great leap of faith, not only on the part of the quick-witted young Tami, played by **Anais Thomassian**, but the audience carefully observing this typically awkward "indie" moment. Somewhat redeeming is Tami's reaction, which instead of an emotionally overwhelmed "Yes!" is a slightly taken-aback "Maybe?" – thus indicating a brief awareness of the scene's contrivance.

Moments such as these are among the most frustrating in *Float*, when one detects the familiar, mainstream maneuvering that was attempted in Asuncion's writing and how it falls short of the bar. Often this is because emotional motivation and causality are simply not synchronized with cinematic buildup. In other words, the way a scene is constructed will suggest more emotional intensity than the characters could reasonably be expected to feel.

Such misfires do less to subvert the mainstream and provoke thought (the default argument in the case of any deviation from the norm) than they effectively puzzle the audience. Nevertheless, the film does deliver a fair amount of successfully translated sincerity, and much as Asuncion acknowledged in the Q&A following *Float*'s premier screening at Hollywood's Feel Good Film Festival, this is due mostly to the performances.

Float is an ensemble piece, its central characters – three males – bound together by their association with a Glendale ice-cream shop of the same name. There is Ray, the shop owner, played by **Gregory Itzin** (President Charles Logan on 24); Gevorg, the representative, alpha-male Armenian, played by **Hrach Titizian**; and the previously mentioned Ramone, who may be Asuncion's alter ego. A variety of hardships bring all three men under one roof (provided by proto-Armo **Ken Davitian**, who plays Gevorg's father), and together the three of them confront the trials and tribulations of male adulthood – albeit in a charmingly adolescent fashion.

One might view the patent character



Lauren Cohan and Hrach Titizian star in *Float*.

arcs of Ray, Gevorg, and Ramone as processes of masculine rehabilitation. Each of them has lost a necessary component of their masculinity that they are determined to regain. For Ray this becomes evident after his wife (**Cristine Rose**) leaves him. In some sense, he is forced to undergo a regression, to reconstruct a prenatal self: one that is capable of independence, youthful alcoholism, dancing and combat, and, most importantly, attracting women. This also allows Ray to reestablish direct communication with his collegiate daughter (**Lauren Cohan**) – they now speak the same language.

In the case of Gevorg, the need for masculinity may seem questionable. However, much in accordance with his age, Gevorg has not formed a complete masculine identity. While his skills as a seducer of women may be in top form,

he has no financial independence and feels restricted by his father's demanding expectations. Moreover, his hedonism is one step away from nihilism as he invests in nothing but pleasure. This becomes most apparent when a woman he is about to sleep with asks him to tell her one thing about himself. As his struggle to avoid an answer is met with unrelenting persistence, he finally lights up and exclaims, "Romance novels. I love romance novels." When this clearly seems like a laughable attempt to make an impression, Gevorg suddenly surprises us by saying, "No, really. Look," and indeed points to a shelf stacked with romance novels. Although a bit ungracefully, the point gets across: Gevorg has become a hollow cliché.

Ramone is undoubtedly the most severe case, and it is to the director's credit that he could at once conduct himself

as a leader and at the same time play the role of a broken man with no charisma to speak of and few victories to name. Ramone seeks to be defined by his abilities. Yet his exigent desire for these to quickly reveal themselves to him, coupled with a suspicion that they do not actually exist, puts him in a state of paralyzing anxiety and frustration, which continues to feed itself. Finally, all that is left of Ramone is his desire. And, thus, in an unsatisfying solution to his quest for self-discovery, Ray tells him: "You know what you have? You have heart."

So, much like Ramone, *Float* appears to have heart and the desire to be something. Nevertheless, for a film to work, these superlatives are hardly enough. 𐄂

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floatmovie.com

The journey is the thing

A duo of Armenian indie filmmakers is behind a string of lovingly crafted works



by Paul Chaderjian

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. – In a city where practically everyone has a movie idea to pitch, is an actor, a writer, or waiting to be discovered, and where almost everyone listens to the hand-picked soundtrack of their personal epics on their i-Pods and hears the invisible applause for their heroics in their own mind, not a lot of people do the legwork to create an actual motion picture.

The heroes of this story are **Edwin Avanes**, 37, and **Serj Minassians**, 41. They're filmmakers, and it's not just what they call themselves. With nearly two dozen shorts, documentaries, corporate videos, infomercials, and commercials, and one feature film under their belts, they are already shopping around the script for their next project, titled *Without Baggage*.

"We met in the late 90s through AFFMA [Arpa International Film Festival]," says Serj, who was a board member of the festival, which celebrated its tenth anniversary last year (*Armenian Reporter*, November 10, 2007). Serj and Edwin clicked, and the rest was lights, camera, and action.

"Both of us had background in film," says Edwin. "Serj studied film at Cal State, Northridge, and I studied film at UC, Santa Cruz, and received my master's from Northwestern University in Chicago. So, after graduating, I came to L.A. and met up with Serj, and we've been working together since."

Early beginnings

Serj grew up in Tehran until the revolution of 1979. His family moved to the United States when he was 13. Edwin was also born in Tehran but spent his formative years at the Melkonian School in Cyprus. He moved to the United States in 1991.

"I worked on low-budget movies 15 years ago," says Serj, "mostly T&A [soft porn] stuff that would go directly to video, and I didn't want to spend five-six years working on films that I would be embarrassed to show my parents." He soon realized he had to carve out his own career in Hollywood.

Serj's first documentary was for the Land and Culture Organization (LCO), which sends volunteers from around the world to historically Armenian locations and offers them an opportunity to meet locals and volunteer on reconstruction or renovation projects.

"I watched a slide show that a friend of mine presented after his trip," says Serj,

who has since served on the LCO board. Serj was so moved by the slide show that he decided he wanted to learn about LCO by making a documentary about the organization.

Serj set out to document the organization and its work by interviewing board members, active volunteers, former volunteers, and those from Europe and the United States working at architectural sites in Armenia. He shot more than 60 hours in the United States and the homeland. The result, a 14-minute documentary, has since been used to tell Armenians around the world about LCO and recruit volunteers.

"Everyone who goes to Armenia somehow changes the direction of their lives," Serj says. "Once you go to Armenia, it becomes real. You meet the locals, you connect with them, you end up caring about the people, and having a personal investment in Armenia's success and future."

The early exercises

Perhaps it's the connection with Armenia that led to Serj and Edwin's first feature, shot partly in Yerevan. To prepare themselves to shoot a full-length feature, the filmmakers planned a number of "small exercises," which the two went on to direct and produce. The first was a short film titled *Golden Rose*, based on a short story by **Aramais Hovsepian** and published by the AGBU.

"We shot this so we could see how we worked together," says Serj. "I got the rights to make a film of the story, and we made a film about an older, lonely man, who finds someone via e-mail, chickens out of meeting this person, and he regrets his decision for the rest of his life."

Golden Rose was shot with digital video cameras over the course of one week-end. Serj wrote the script and directed, and Edwin was the cinematographer and edited the 15-minute film in about 30-40 hours.

Their next film was *Absinthe*, another exercise, say Serj and Edwin. They were testing and honing their skills for their first feature.

"*Absinthe* is about four women, all friends, and they get together at a birthday party," Edwin says. "They're basically all talking about their significant other, their boyfriend, a guy they met over the weekend. At the end, they realize they all met the same guy."

The Journey

Edwin and Serj's preparations culminated in their first major work, *The Journey*, starring **Sona Tatoyan** (Arts and Culture, January 12, 2008). Serj co-produced the film and Edwin co-directed with filmmaker **Emy Hovanesyan**.

"I got to know Emy through AFFMA," Edwin says. "I was part of [AFFMA's] Executive Committee. At one of our meetings, Emy and **Angela Zohrabian** came looking for support. They wanted to make this film. Emy had written the original story and screenplay, and when she moved to L.A. from New York, she met Angela. They decided to work on it and they approached AFFMA."

Edwin says he was at a point in his career when he wanted to tackle a full-



Film posters.

The journey is the thing

length feature, so he and Serj partnered with Emy and Angela, making their collective dream of shooting a film in Armenia possible.

"*The Journey* is basically about a young Armenian who came to the U.S. and lived in New York with her parents," says Edwin. When the character, who is a photographer, decides to go back to her homeland in 1991, she discovers a country in the middle of historic change. She reconnects with her grandmother, her culture, meets a revolutionary, and falls in love."

Serj says they left the film's ending open for interpretation, because they didn't want to tell the audience how the story should end. They wanted each viewer to walk away with his or her interpretation about the Tatoyan character's destiny.

The Journey cost Edwin and Serj around half-a-million dollars, raised through private financing. Most of the people who worked on the film did it without pay, "as a labor of love," says Edwin.

Edwin and Serj shot *The Journey* with a Sony F900 high-definition camera, which they rented in Southern California and took on-board their flight in 15 suitcases.

"One of the reasons I didn't want to carry film with me to Armenia," says Edwin, "was that the closest place to process the film so I could watch the dailies was Moscow. So we went with high-definition."

Edwin shot the entire film in 16 days – ten in Armenia and six in the U.S. He thinks it's funny that whenever he goes to independent film festivals, he hears filmmakers boast about how they beat the odds and shot in a record 29 days with a budget of ten million dollars.

"I say, 'Wow, what a luxury,'" Edwin says.

Some of the highlights of making the film came with its promotion at various film festivals around the world, including two sold-out screenings at the Milan Film Festival. *The Journey* had two premieres in the United States and was privately distributed at movie theaters in Glendale and Pasadena. The film is now available at Armenian bookstores, CD/DVD shops, and through Netflix, Blockbuster, and Amazon.

Without baggage

A romantic comedy that takes place in Yerevan is Serj and Edwin's next feature. They've been working on the script for a few years and have had public readings at Glendale's Luna Playhouse to gauge public opinion about the story and characters.

"This one is about an Armenian doctor who calls off his engagement and decides to go to Armenia to relax," says Serj. "He falls in love with this French-Armenian girl there, and his ex-fiancée shows up in Armenia, and he has to decide what he has to do."

What Serj and Edwin have to do is look for financing, and they are not looking for help from Armenians in the entertainment industry. Not that they would refuse the help of Armenians who have had mainstream success, but



Producer Serj Minassians working on a TV commercial with Final Cut Studio 2 HD edit bay.

they have already been disappointed and say people recognized as Armenian-American success stories "live in their own universe."

"There are people who are in the industry, and they are not looking down to help," says Edwin. "I don't want to name names, but there are a lot of Armenian executives in the industry, and they're in their own universe."

Edwin recounts approaching Armenian-Americans inside Hollywood and mainstream cinema, not for a handout, but for a few words of advice, some insight.

"What was important for me was to hear about some of their experiences," Edwin says. "In a sense, they could have shared that experience with me, even if it was a 15-minute thing for them."

"Encouragement," Serj chimes in.

"What we got instead was the opposite – discouragement," Edwin continues. "There were a lot of people in power who could have done something but didn't. The bottom line in life is, at the end of the day, you only have what you did for others, whether they were Armenian or non-Armenian."

Hope for young filmmakers like Serj and Edwin comes from the next generation of filmmakers, their peers who are helping one another reach the next step in their careers.

"I feel like they are more open, and they feel like we're a community," says Edwin. "They don't act like somebody is trying to take advantage of them. I really feel like this new generation that's been coming up feels more like a community. We're not competing with each other, but we are helping each other rise to a higher level."

Future projects

Serj and Edwin say that they take on only feature films and documentaries with subject matters that interest them.

"Because you're going to spend two or three years on a project," says Serj, "and you have to do something that you're



Edwin Avanes (left) and Serj Minassians, founders of EOS Entertainment.

not just doing for the money. The film must be about something you are passionate about."

Both their wives aren't too far away from their creative endeavors. Serj says his wife is the first to read anything he writes, and she's always ready with feedback, positive or negative.

"When they see something that doesn't work for them," says Edwin, "they are very vocal about it."

As Serj and Edwin prepare for their next film, they have been keeping busy with a video recently shot for the Friends of Armenian Studies at UCLA. The video is a series of lectures by an authority on

Armenian mythology.

Another project they are preparing to distribute in the near future is a film they produced, titled *Tabriz: Images from the Forgotten World*. The film, shot by director **Mohammad Ehsani**, tells the story of a 75-year-old Armenian photographer who learned photography from his father and grandfather. The docu-drama, which was shot near the Armenian-Iranian border, will soon be available on DVD.

connect:
eosentertainment.com
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tabrizmovie.com

Program Grid

8 – 14 September

USArmenia

USArmenia is a 24-hour broadcasting station specializing in the full spectrum of HD-quality Armenian programming.

Located in Burbank’s famed media district, our headquarters comprise 15,000 square feet of studio space and production facilities, in addition to 40,000 square feet of offices.

Our programs are broadcast locally on Charter Cable’s Channel 286, and nationwide on Global Satellite 117 and through the Dish Network, to a viewership of over 100,000 households.

Our broadcast lineup consists of original programming produced both locally and in Armenia. It includes local, national, and international news, news feeds from Armenia four times a day, as well as a

broad range of proprietary talk shows, soap operas, reality shows, documentaries, and feature films.

USArmenia holds exclusive rights to the Hay Film Library, a collection of hundreds of Armenian- and Russian-language movies released since 1937. To date, more than 550 titles in the collection have been restored and upgraded to HD quality.

USArmenia works in conjunction with the *Armenian Reporter*, an independent English-language weekly newspaper with a circulation of 35,000 across the United States.

For timely and highest-standard local and national news coverage, USArmenia maintains a mobile HD-production unit in Southern California and a reporting team in Washington

		8 September	9 September	10 September	11 September	12 September	13 September	14 September
		MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
EST	PST	Bumerang	Bumerang	Drop Of Honey	Drop Of Honey	Discovery	Discovery	Dar
22:00	1:00	Armenian Wedding	Armenian Wedding	Armenian Wedding	PS Club	Cool Program	Cool Program	Cool Program
22:30	1:30	Blitz	Blitz	Blitz	Blitz	Blitz	Blitz	Blitz
23:00	2:00	CLONE	CLONE	CLONE	CLONE	CLONE	CLONE	CLONE
23:30	2:30	Snakes & Lizards	Snakes & Lizards	Snakes & Lizards	Snakes & Lizards	Snakes & Lizards	Snakes & Lizards	Snakes & Lizards
0:30	3:30	Armenian	Unlucky Happiness	Unlucky Happiness	Unlucky Happiness	Unlucky Happiness	Unlucky Happiness	Armenian
1:30	4:30	Movie	Harevaner	Harevaner	Harevaner	Harevaner	Harevaner	Movie
2:30	5:30	PS CLUB	Gyanki Keene	Gyanki Keene	Gyanki Keene	Jagadakri kerinere	Jagadakri kerinere	Jagadakri kerinere
3:30	6:30	Cool Program	Cool Program	Cool Program	Cool Program	Cool Program	Cool Program	Cool Program
4:00	7:00	Tele Kitchen	Tele Kitchen	Tele Kitchen	Tele Kitchen	Tele Kitchen	Express	Express
4:30	7:30	Bari Luys	Bari Luys	Bari Luys	Bari Luys	Bari Luys	The Armenian	The Armenian
5:00	8:00	Like A Wave	Like A Wave	Like A Wave	Like A Wave	Like A Wave	Like A Wave	Like A Wave
6:00	9:00	Snakes & Lizards	Snakes & Lizards	Snakes & Lizards	Snakes & Lizards	Snakes & Lizards	Snakes & Lizards	Snakes & Lizards
7:00	10:00	PS CLUB	Gyanki Keene	Gyanki Keene	Gyanki Keene	Jagadakri kerinere	Jagadakri kerinere	Jagadakri kerinere
8:00	11:00	Cool Program	Cool Program	Cool Program	Cool Program	Cool Program	Cool Program	Cool Program
8:30	11:30	Armenian Wedding	Armenian Wedding	Armenian Wedding	Boomerang	Boomerang	A Drop of Honey	A Drop of Honey
9:00	12:00	Weekend News	News	News	News	News	News	Weekend News
9:30	12:30	CLONE	CLONE	CLONE	CLONE	CLONE	CLONE	CLONE
10:00	13:00	Unlucky Happiness	Unlucky Happiness	Unlucky Happiness	Unlucky Happiness	Unlucky Happiness	Fathers & Sons	Fathers & Sons
11:00	14:00	Tele Kitchen	Tele Kitchen	Tele Kitchen	Tele Kitchen	Tele Kitchen	Express	Express
12:00	15:00	Like A Wave	Like A Wave	Like A Wave	Like A Wave	Like A Wave	Like A Wave	Like A Wave
12:30	15:30	YO YO	YO YO	YO YO	YO YO	YO YO	Bumerang	Bumerang
13:30	16:30	Snakes & Lizards	Snakes & Lizards	Snakes & Lizards	Snakes & Lizards	Snakes & Lizards	Snakes & Lizards	Snakes & Lizards
14:00	17:00	CLONE	CLONE	CLONE	CLONE	CLONE	CLONE	CLONE
15:00	18:00	Unlucky Happiness	Unlucky Happiness	Unlucky Happiness	Unlucky Happiness	Unlucky Happiness	Armenian	Dar
16:00	19:00						Movie	Discovery
16:30	19:30	Harevaner	Harevaner	Harevaner	Harevaner	Harevaner		A Drop Of Honey
17:00	20:00	News	News	News	News	News	News	Weekend News
18:00	21:00	Gyanki Keene	Gyanki Keene	Gyanki Keene	Jagadakri kerinere	Jagadakri kerinere	Jagadakri kerinere	PS Club
18:30	21:30	Cool Program	Cool Program	Cool Program	Cool Program	Cool Program	Cool Program	Armenian
19:15	22:15	Bernard Show	Bernard Show	Bernard Show	Bernard Show	Bernard Show	Bernard Show	Wedding
19:40	22:40	Bari Luys	Bari Luys	Bari Luys	Bari Luys	Bari Luys	The Armenian	The Armenian
20:30	23:30	News	News	News	News	News	News	Weekend News
21:30	24:30							

The Georgian-Armenians are coming

Tbilisi’s venerable
Petros Adamyan
Theater to tour the U.S.
and Canada

by Natalie Nahabet

In September and October, Georgia’s Petros Adamyan State Armenian Dramatic Theater will celebrate its 152nd anniversary with an unprecedented performance tour in the United States and Canada. The tour is sponsored by the Friends of Armenian Art, a newly-formed nonprofit organization based in Glendale, California.

Established in 1856, the Adamyan Theater is the oldest active theatrical company of the Caucasus and the “only cultural center in Tbilisi beside the Armenian church,” says **Fredrik Vartanian** of the Friends of Armenian Art. The company, which has four directors, 111 actors, and a staff of 100, adds up to six new plays a year to its repertoire of some 30 works, and stages close to 100 performances annually, according to Vartanian.

The Adamyan Theater’s North American tour will feature 21 members of the company, all of whom are recipients of top national and regional awards. The tour, which



Armen Bayandouryan, the director.

will include performances of seven different plays, will be headed by Artistic Director **Armen Bayandouryan**, a leader of the Georgian-Armenian community and a newly elected member of the Georgian Parliament.

Vartanian says the Friends of Armenian Art is delighted that Armenian life is still flourishing in Georgia, considering that “Armenians have given away almost all of their leading positions except for the theater, which absorbs all the love, care, attention, and support of the Armenian population of Tbilisi.”

Anahid Araxie Ajounian, a member of the Friends of Armenian Art, says a major reason that her organization invited the Adamyan



Friends of Armenian Art: (left to right): Akop Mkrtchyan, Sirvard Zakaryan (President), Anahid Araxie Ajounian, and Fredrik Vartanian.

Theater to perform in North America “is to help enhance the [artistic horizons] of the present generation.”

The California leg of the tour will include performances in Glendale, Orange County, Montebello, and Fresno. The plays that will be staged comprise **Gabriel Sundukyan’s** *Pepo*, Armen Bayandouryan’s *My Daughter’s Fiancés*, **Eugene O’Neill’s** *Love Under the Elms*, **Pierre Sheno’s** *Be Healthy*, **Gabriel Sundukyan’s** *Khataballa*, **Gurgen Khanjian’s** *The Guards of Ruins*, and **William Saroyan’s** *The Cave Dwellers*. The Armenian-language performance of the latter work, to take place in Fresno, Saroyan’s birthplace, will include English subtitles.

The Friends of Armenian Art will also hold a banquet – including a program of entertainment – in honor of the Adamyan Theater, on Saturday, September 13, at the Brandview Collection in Glendale.

The plays

One of the most beloved works of the Armenian theatrical canon, *Pepo* is a brilliant exploration of the interplay of pride, fairness, truth, and conscience in human relationships, seen through the contradictions that define the lives of the rich and the poor.

In *My Daughter’s Fiancés*, a mother wishes to see her daughter married to a rich young man whereas the daughter is already in love with

theater

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Satellite Broadcast Program Grid

8 – 14 September



8 September			9 September			10 September			11 September			12 September			13 September			14 September		
MONDAY			TUESDAY			WEDNESDAY			THURSDAY			FRIDAY			SATURDAY			SUNDAY		
EST	PST		EST	PST		EST	PST		EST	PST		EST	PST		EST	PST		EST	PST	
4:30	7:30	News in Armenian	4:30	7:30	News in Armenian	4:30	7:30	News in Armenian	4:30	7:30	News in Armenian	4:30	7:30	News in Armenian	4:30	7:30	News in Armenian	4:30	7:30	The Armenian Film
5:00	8:00	Good Morning, Armenians	5:00	8:00	Good Morning, Armenians	5:00	8:00	Good Morning, Armenians	5:00	8:00	Good Morning, Armenians	5:00	8:00	Good Morning, Armenians	5:00	8:00	Blitz	6:00	9:00	VOA(The Voice of America)
6:20	9:20	The Armenian Film	6:20	9:20	Neighbours-Serial	6:20	9:20	Neighbours-Serial	6:20	9:20	Neighbours-Serial	6:20	9:20	The Armenian Film	5:20	8:20	The Armenian Film	6:20	9:20	Fathers and Sons
6:40	9:40	A Drop of Honey	7:05	10:05	My Big, Fat Armenian Wedding	7:05	10:05	My Big, Fat Armenian Wedding	7:05	10:05	My Big, Fat Armenian Wedding	7:05	10:05	My Big, Fat Armenian Wedding	7:45	10:45	PS Club	7:20	10:20	Cool Program
7:05	10:05	PS Club	7:35	10:35	Blitz	7:35	10:35	Blitz	7:35	10:35	Blitz	7:35	10:35	Blitz	8:15	11:15	Seven Sins-Serial	7:45	10:45	Through the traces of past
7:35	10:35	Blitz	8:00	11:00	Bumerang	8:00	11:00	The Armenian Cartoon	8:00	11:00	The Armenian Cartoon	7:50	10:50	Yo-Yo	9:00	12:00	News in Armenian	8:15	11:15	Seven Sins-Serial
8:00	11:00	Bumerang	8:15	11:15	Seven Sins-Serial	8:15	11:15	Seven Sins-Serial	8:15	11:15	Seven Sins-Serial	8:15	11:15	Seven Sins-Serial	9:30	12:30	Captives of fate	9:00	12:00	VOA(The Voice of America)
8:30	11:30	Yere1	9:00	12:00	News in Armenian	9:00	12:00	News in Armenian	9:00	12:00	News in Armenian	9:00	12:00	News in Armenian	10:00	13:00	Neighbours-Serial	9:25	12:25	Captives of fate
9:00	12:00	News in Armenian	9:30	12:30	Through the traces of past	9:30	12:30	Yo-Yo	9:30	12:30	Yerevan Time	9:30	12:30	Captives of fate	10:45	13:45	Telekitchen	10:00	13:00	Neighbours-Serial
9:30	12:30	Cool Program	10:00	13:00	Unhappy Happiness - Serial	10:00	13:00	Unhappy Happiness - Serial	10:00	13:00	Unhappy Happiness - Serial	10:00	13:00	Unhappy Happiness - Serial	11:15	14:15	As a wave-Serial	10:45	13:45	Yerevan Time
10:00	13:00	Neighbours-Serial	10:45	13:45	Telekitchen	10:45	13:45	Telekitchen	10:45	13:45	Telekitchen	10:45	13:45	Telekitchen	12:00	15:00	VOA(The Voice of America)	11:15	14:15	As a wave-Serial
10:45	13:45	Telekitchen	11:15	14:15	As a wave-Serial	11:15	14:15	As a wave-Serial	11:15	14:15	As a wave-Serial	11:15	14:15	As a wave-Serial	12:25	15:25	More than a woman-Italian Serial	12:00	15:00	VOA(The Voice of America)
11:05	14:05	Fathers and Sons	12:00	15:00	News in Armenian	12:00	15:00	News in Armenian	12:00	15:00	News in Armenian	12:00	15:00	News in Armenian	13:20	16:20	Blitz	12:20	15:20	Health Program
11:05	14:05	Fathers and Sons	12:30	15:30	More than a woman-Italian Serial	12:30	15:30	More than a woman-Italian Serial	12:30	15:30	More than a woman-Italian Serial	12:30	15:30	More than a woman-Italian Serial	13:40	16:40	Yere1	13:00	16:00	My Big, Fat Armenian Wedding
12:00	15:00	News in Armenian	13:20	16:20	Blitz	13:20	16:20	Blitz	13:20	16:20	Blitz	13:20	16:20	Blitz	14:10	17:10	A Drop of Honey	14:15	17:15	Yere1
12:30	15:30	More than a woman-Italian Serial	13:40	16:40	Blif	13:40	16:40	Cool Program	13:40	16:40	In the World of Books	13:40	16:40	Blif	14:35	17:35	The Century	14:35	17:35	Yo-Yo
13:20	16:20	Blitz	14:25	17:25	In fact	14:05	17:05	Bumerang	14:25	17:25	In fact	14:25	17:25	Armenian Diaspora	15:00	18:00	VOA(The Voice of America)	14:35	17:35	Yo-Yo
13:40	16:40	In the World of Books	14:35	17:35	Armenian Diaspora	14:25	17:25	In fact	14:35	17:35	Armenian Diaspora	14:35	17:35	Armenian Diaspora	14:20	17:20	In fact	15:00	18:00	Unhappy Happiness - Serial
14:05	17:05	Bumerang	15:00	18:00	News in Armenian	14:35	17:35	The Century	15:00	18:00	News in Armenian	15:00	18:00	News in Armenian	14:30	17:30	Program	15:20	18:20	Through the traces of past
14:25	17:25	In fact	16:05	19:05	As a wave-Serial	15:00	18:00	News in Armenian	16:05	19:05	As a wave-Serial	16:05	19:05	As a wave-Serial	15:00	18:00	News in Armenian	15:45	18:45	Express
14:35	17:35	Through the traces of past	16:45	19:45	Seven Sins-Serial	16:05	19:05	As a wave-Serial	16:45	19:45	Seven Sins-Serial	16:45	19:45	Seven Sins-Serial	16:05	19:05	As a wave-Serial	16:05	19:05	As a wave-Serial
15:00	18:00	News in Armenian	17:30	20:30	My Big, Fat Armenian Wedding	16:45	19:45	Seven Sins-Serial	17:30	20:30	My Big, Fat Armenian Wedding	17:30	20:30	My Big, Fat Armenian Wedding	16:45	19:45	Seven Sins-Serial	18:20	21:20	Neighbours-Serial
15:30	18:30	Express	18:00	21:00	News in Armenian	17:30	20:30	My Big, Fat Armenian Wedding	18:00	21:00	News in Armenian	18:00	21:00	News in Armenian	17:35	20:35	Cool Program	19:10	22:10	Bumerang
16:05	19:05	As a wave-Serial	18:30	21:30	Unhappy Happiness - Serial	18:00	21:00	News in Armenian	18:30	21:30	Unhappy Happiness - Serial	18:30	21:30	Unhappy Happiness - Serial	18:00	21:00	News in Armenian	19:40	22:40	A Drop of Honey
16:45	19:45	Seven Sins-Serial	19:15	22:15	The Armenian Film	18:30	21:30	Unhappy Happiness - Serial	19:10	22:10	Captives of fate	17:30	20:30	Yere1	18:30	21:30	Neighbours-Serial	20:00	23:00	Fathers and Sons
17:30	20:30	My Big, Fat Armenian Wedding	20:20	23:20	A Drop of Honey	19:10	22:10	To night	19:45	22:45	A Drop of Honey	18:00	21:00	News in Armenian	18:30	21:30	Neighbours-Serial	21:00	0:00	News in Armenian
18:00	21:00	News in Armenian	21:00	0:00	News in Armenian	19:55	22:55	Fathers and sons	20:35	23:35	Health Program	17:30	20:30	Yere1	19:10	22:10	Captives of fate	21:30	0:30	Health Program
18:30	21:30	Unhappy Happiness - Serial	22:25	0:25	Fathers and Sons	20:20	23:20	A Drop of Honey	21:00	0:00	News in Armenian	18:30	21:30	Neighbours-Serial	19:45	22:45	The Armenian film	22:00	1:00	Yerevan Time
19:15	22:15	The Armenian Film	23:05	2:05	Express	21:00	0:00	News in Armenian	21:25	0:25	The Century	19:10	22:10	Captives of fate	22:00	1:00	News in Armenian	22:25	1:25	The Armenian Cartoon
21:00	0:00	News in Armenian	23:30	2:30	Telekitchen	21:25	0:25	The Armenian Film	22:40	1:40	Yo-Yo	19:45	22:45	Bumerang	22:25	1:25	Bumerang	23:00	2:00	Armenia-Diaspora
21:25	0:25	Fathers and Sons	0:05	3:05	Yerevan Time	22:35	1:35	Through the traces of past	23:05	2:05	Express	21:00	0:00	News in Armenian	23:05	2:05	Express	0:00	3:00	VOA(The Voice of America)
22:25	1:25	A Drop of Honey	0:35	3:35	In fact	23:05	2:05	Express	23:30	2:30	Telekitchen	22:25	0:25	Cool sketches	0:05	3:05	A Drop of Honey	0:20	3:20	The Century
23:05	2:05	Express	0:50	3:50	Armenian Diaspora	23:30	2:30	Telekitchen	0:05	3:05	VOA(The Voice of America)	23:05	2:05	Express	0:35	3:35	In fact	0:50	3:50	Yo-Yo
23:30	2:30	Telekitchen	1:15	4:15	Blif	0:00	3:00	VOA(The Voice of America)	0:35	3:35	In fact	23:30	2:30	Telekitchen	0:50	3:50	The Century	1:15	4:15	In the World of Books
0:00	3:00	VOA(The Voice of America)	1:40	4:40	Blitz	0:20	3:20	The Century	0:45	3:45	Through the traces of past	0:00	3:00	Teleduel	1:15	4:15	Cool sketches	1:40	4:40	Blitz
0:20	3:20	Cool sketches	2:00	5:00	More than a woman-Italian Serial	0:45	3:45	In fact	1:15	4:15	A Drop of Honey	0:40	3:40	Health Program	2:00	5:00	More than a woman-Italian Serial	2:00	5:00	Through the traces of past
0:35	3:35	In fact	2:50	5:50	Fathers and sons	1:15	4:15	PS Club	1:40	4:40	Blitz	0:40	3:40	Health Program	2:50	5:50	The Armenian Cartoon	2:30	5:30	Bumerang
0:50	3:50	Yo-Yo	3:55	6:55	Express	1:40	4:40	Blitz	2:00	5:00	More than a woman-Italian Serial	1:15	4:15	Yerevan Time	3:10	6:10	In the World of Books	3:00	6:00	Fathers and Sons
0:50	3:50	Yo-Yo				2:00	5:00	More than a woman-Italian Serial	2:50	5:50	Fathers and sons	2:00	5:00	More than a woman-Italian Serial	3:30	6:30	Yere1	4:00	7:00	Blif
1:15	4:15	Yere1				2:50	5:50	Fathers and sons	3:55	6:55	Express	2:50	5:50	Fathers and sons	3:55	6:55	Express			
1:40	4:40	Blif				3:55	6:55	Express				3:55	6:55	Express						
2:00	5:00	More than a woman-Italian Serial																		
2:50	5:50	In the World of Books																		
3:10	6:10	Bumerang																		
3:55	6:55	Express																		

The Georgian-Armenians are coming

someone else, a student. She goes on to collude with her father to play a trick on her mother.

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...In the play called "My Daughter's Fiances", by Armen Bayandouryan, the mother wishes to see her daughter married to a rich young man, while the daughter already loves a student; together with the father they decide to play a trick on the mother.

William Saroyan's 1957 drama The Cave Dwellers depicts life's losers, squatting in an abandoned theater.