yerevan

WINTER, 2010 ISSUE (7)

MAGAZINE WITH AN ACCENT



038 **TOUGH DECISIONS** OF TARK, THE SHARK

054 **INTERVIEW WITH** THE FIRST MINISTER OF DIASPORA

092 **SHAVO:** LIFE AFTER SOAD

136 **THE GENERAL** WHO SAVED ARMENIA

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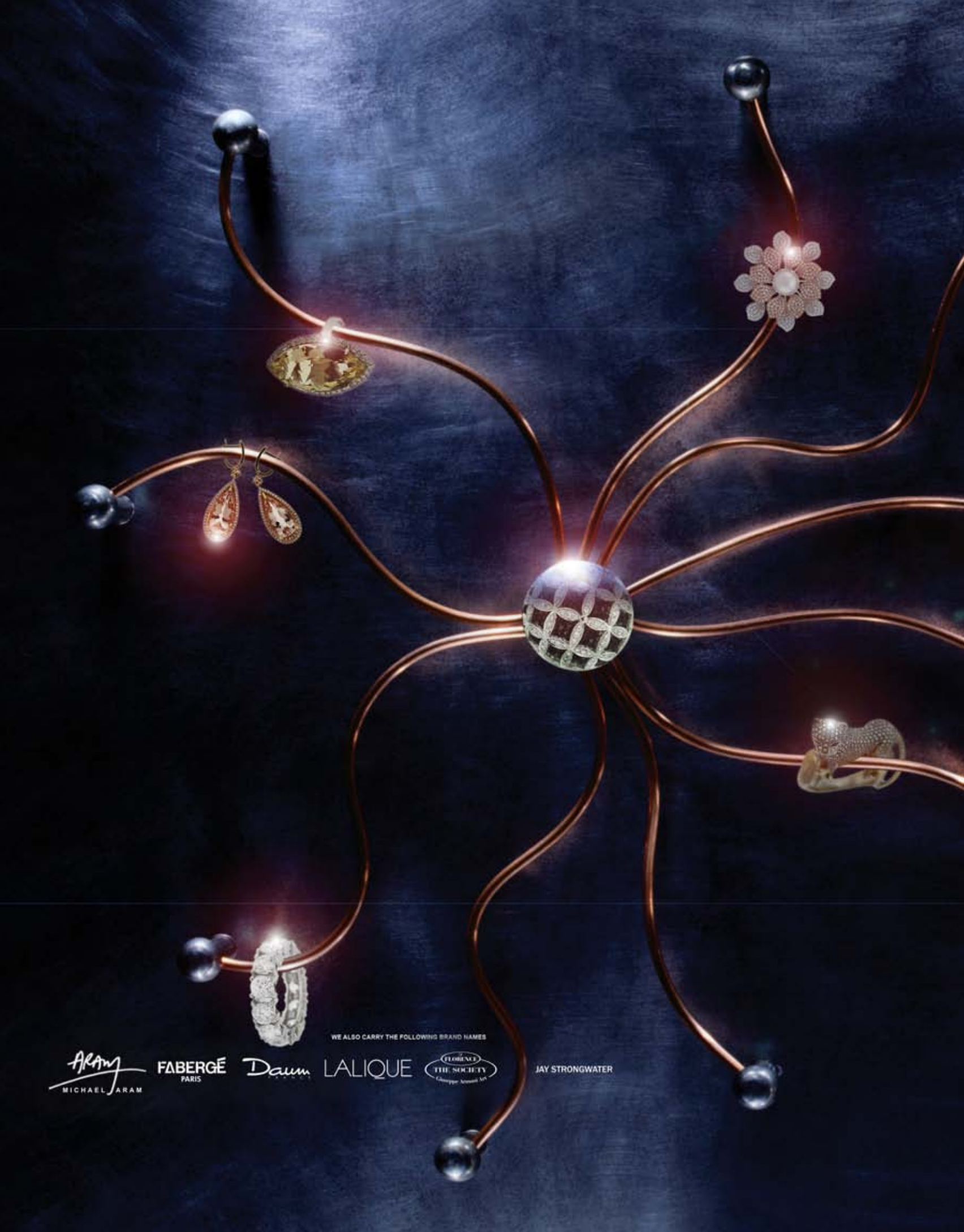
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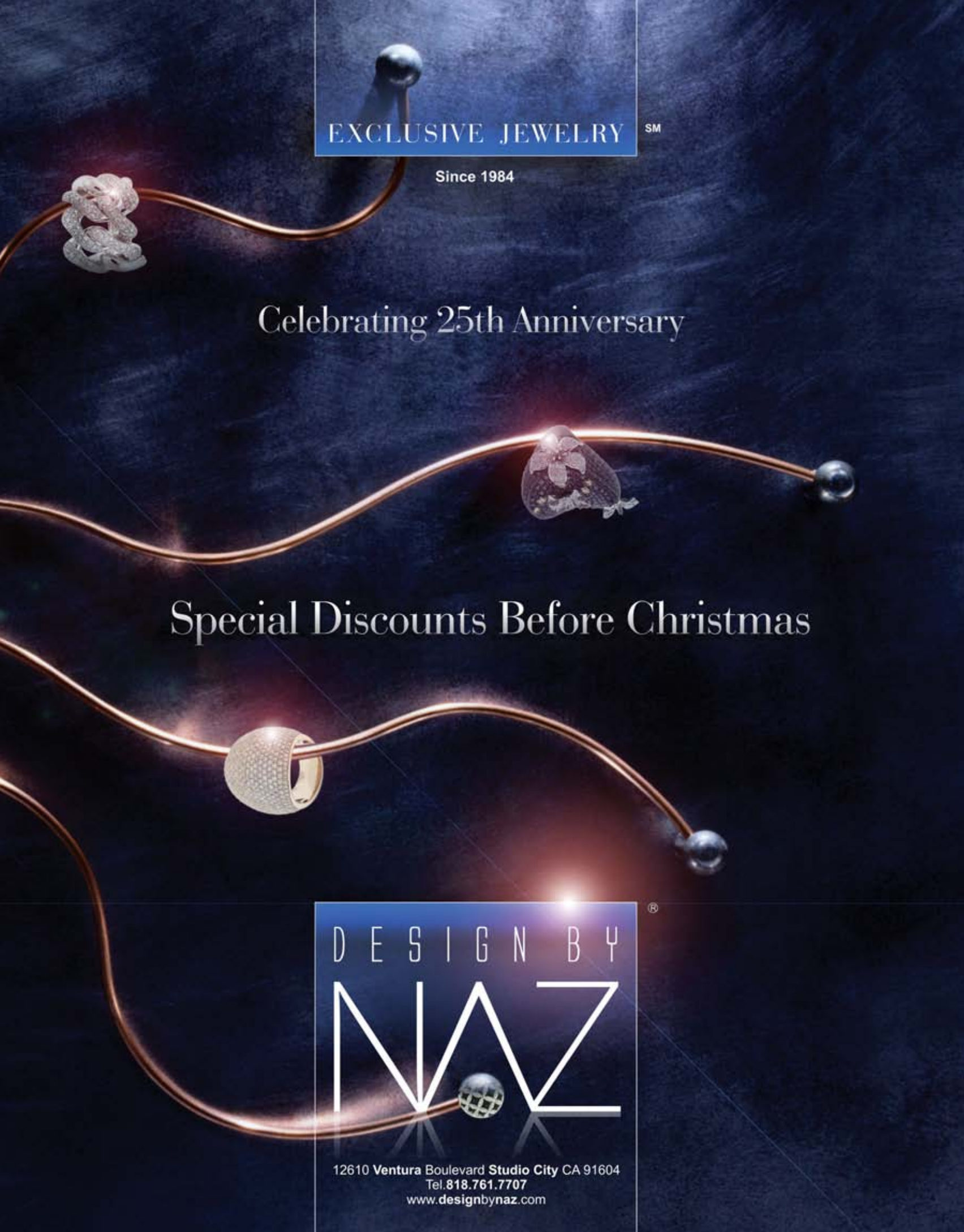
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Content



12 FORUM
Time is Money... or is it Not?
Opposing opinions as usual.

14 INFO

16 ALPHABET
Da
Open the door with the 4th letter of the Armenian alphabet.

18 BRIDGES
Captivating Beauty
Many Armenians choose Barcelona as their favorite place to stay... for life.

26 OUR FOLK
The Flamenco Kid
Talent and devotion to music made Vahagn Turgutyan into one of the most promising musicians of the Flamenco genre.

28 PERSON
Kirk Kerkorian's Incredible Journey
In his first interview in many years, the Armenian legend opens up about the past, the present, and the future.

32 VIEW
The Horizon of Eternity
Sundials adorn the ancient, Armenian architecture.

36 TREASURES OF ECHMIADZIN
Holy Geghard

38 SPORTS
Basketball's Armenian Rebel
Jerry Tarkanian opens up about his career and all things Armenian.

42 BUSINESS
The Value of Sport
Michael Ozanian builds his career as the National Editor of Forbes.

44 INFO

46 EXPERT
inDulge in a Dose of media Diversity
Mantashoff productions - the fresh, sexy appeal of ethnic media.

48 FASHION
The Essence of Femininity
Tamara Pogosyan's enchanting fairy tale collection at the NYC's fashion week.

52 NATION
More than one Armenia
Stepan Partamian's journey in search of everything Armenian in the U.S.

54 EXCLUSIVE
We are of One Blood
Interview with Hranoush Hakobyan, Minister of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia.

60 CAREER
Reaching the Universe
Is is possible to develop high energy gamma-ray astrophysics in Armenia?

62 PHOTO-PROJECT

68 INFO

70 PATRONS
Ambassador of Opportunity
Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana symbolizes the essence of the diverse culture.

72 TOP LIST
Armenian Capitals

74 DE FACTO
The Dungeon of Bacchus
A unique collection of wines in the catacombs of Yerevan.

78 YEREVAN VIRTUAL CITY
The Center of the Pan-Armenian Games
A new home for Armenian athletes.

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Content

80 GALLERY
Dreams on Canvas
Experience Surrealism. Ponder what it means to be a true artist.

84 ART
Unconventional Creations
Gain a new perspective on skulls.

86 AUTOGRAPH
A Politician of the Ballet
When one Legend stages another Legend's work, we get *Spartacus* in Yerevan.

92 NAMES
A Perfect Day for...
Shavo Odajian, the legendary bass guitarist of System of a Down shares his philosophy of art, life, and love.

96 CINEMA
Bridging Cultures
The annual ARPA film festival creates a forum for internatioanal film projects.

98 DEBUT
Working for a Dream
Haik Gazarian's love story with a political undertone.

102 AMBIANCE
Faces of the Century
The history of the 20th century through the lens of Yousuf Karsh.

110 EVENT
Women on Top
Recipe for success for Business Women.

112 HYPOTHESES AND DISCOVERIES
The Gorgeos Gorgs
The history of Armenian carpets.

118 JOURNEY
Aragats: The Language of High Praise
The highest mountain range in Armenia.

124 EXCURSION
The First Queen of Jerusalem
Can a throne of Jerusalem bring happiness to a free-spirited Armenian woman?

130 ARCHIVE
The Flight of The Bat
Before Jay Leno and David Letterman, there was Nikita Balieff.

134 YEREVAN PERSPECTIVE
Republic Square

136 RETRO
With the Shield and on the Shield
When the very existence of the Armenian nation was under threat, General Movses Silikov led the Armenian corps in the decisive Battle of Sardarapat.

144 POST SCRIPTUM
YEREVAN is closer than you think
Rich Armenian heritage is celebrated with festivals throughout California.



Arman Pogosyan

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Photo Editor ARMEN POGOSYAN
Design SEVADA, SONYA AKOPYAN
Website SARO MANOUKIAN, VANAG DUDUKJIAN
Translations ALEXEY MIRONOV, KHACHATUR MELEKYAN
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Design ARSEN KIRAKOSYAN, NONNA ISAJANYAN
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Page Layout VAHAGN POGHOSYAN, ARTAK SARGSYAN
Copy Editor MARIANNA NIKOGHOSYAN
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Public Relations NAIRA ZURABYAN
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Editorial Director IGOR ZOTOV
Brand Manager NADEZHDA YEGOROVA

Project initiated by IDA MARTIROSYAN

Contributing photographers: SUREN MANVELYAN, KRIS KAN, HAYK MELKONYAN, ARNOS MARTIROSYAN, NADEGHDA CHEBIKINA, DAVID BURNETT, CHRISTOPHER GAYOMALI, C. STEPHEN HURST, STEPAN PARTAMIAN, YERVAND KHACHERYAN, TIGRAN TOVMASYAN, ARMEN POGOSYAN, ZAVEN BAGHDALIAN, SERGEY SIMAVORYAN, YEGHIA NERSISIAN, PEJ BEHDARVAND, ANNA AVAKYAN

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Contact:

USA
ETHNOPRESS USA, LLC
135 S. Jackson Street, Suite 204 Glendale, CA 91205
Phone: +1 (818) 507-7057, Fax: +1 (818) 507-9015
e-mail: info@yerevanmagazine.com

ARMENIA
E-PRODUCTIONS
Vazgen Sargsyan Street 2, Yerevan, 0010
Phone: +374 (10) 56 52 55, +374 (10) 56 58 73, +7 (495) 627 78 46,
Subscription and Distribution: +374 (10) 56 58 73
Advertising Department: +374 (10) 56 52 55
Fax: +374 (10) 58 68 52
e-mail: info@e-productions.am

RUSSIA
ETHNOPRESS RUSSIA
Nizhnyaya Krasnoselskaya, 40/12, Building, Moscow, 105066
Phone: +7 (495) 987 46 65
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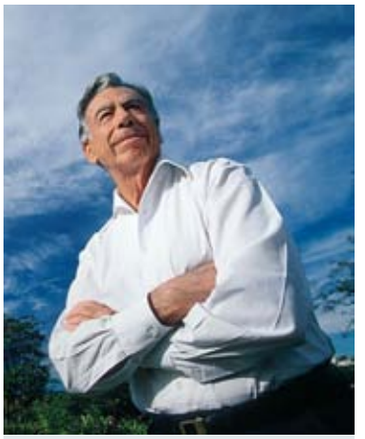

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Pacific Time for Armenia



Recently I traveled to our 49th state, Alaska. First, I headed to the State Capitol in Juneau, where I respectfully asked the charming and businesslike manager of the Governor's office, "Would you be kind enough to show me Sarah Palin's legendary window overlooking Russia?"

The assistant laughed as she handed me a pin bearing the flag of Alaska, suggesting that the political metaphor of the former governor might not reflect reality. As a matter of fact, a metaphorical approach can be applied to geography as well as politics in the case of Alaska. Few among us can name the largest capital city in the world. Is it Mexico City with its teeming millions? Or Moscow because of its ever-expanding boundaries? Pause and think for a moment.

If Juneau came to your mind, you are absolutely right!

The largest capital city in the world is the capital of Alaska – Juneau. Though the population of this fascinating city only slightly exceeds 30,000; the land area measures 2,715.7 sq mi (7,036.1 km2).

Imagine - that is twice the area of the Los Angeles County with a population of approximately 15 million souls and 30 times greater than that of the Armenian capital with its one million residents. It seems however, that our Yerevan Magazine might just beat Juneau's record. In the past year, the creative forces of our "magazine with an accent" have stretched across the continents, from Armenia to the United States. As hard as we try to link hands tightly across borders, the fact remains that the Armenian-Russian accent of our magazine is different than that of the Armenian-American version. Therefore, we decided to departmentalize our large "editorial continent" into the Russian and American editorial offices. We did it to 'hear' the American accent more clearly and to avoid metaphors, which to a certain degree, no matter how slightly, defy translation and thereby bend the truths we address.

Most importantly: the English-speaking readers' interest in Yerevan magazine has increased to such a degree, that we are forced to check our journalistic clocks by the Pacific, rather than by the Yerevan, time zone.

Now it is up to you, our dear readers, to judge the precision of our chronometer!

RAPHAEL HAKOPJANIAN, Editor-in-Chief (English version)

Armen Pogosyan



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fall 2009



DEAR READERS,

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I visited Armenia last year and took hundreds of pictures next to Botero's Roman Warrior because I think it's one of the most fantastic statues. I was amazed to learn that similar statues are placed all over the world: USA, Spain, Colombia... anywhere else? I assume that Cafesjian is the man who brought the statue to Armenia - the article about him followed the Botero piece. If this is true, I'd like to thank Mr. Cafesjian for raising the cultural standards in Yerevan. It would be nice to know about the state of Armenian Art museums. Will you write about them?

RITA ALANI, *Vancouver, Canada*

I was so surprised to learn that Patricia Field is Armenian. But after I read your article, everything sort of fell into place. Of course, only a descendant from the warm Mediterranean region, would come up with such an amazing amalgam of style and kaleidoscope of colors. Her influence on the world-wide sense of fashion is immense and so close to our own sense of style. Excellent choice of subject!

KARINA MURADYAN, *New York, New York*

The "Unknown Soldiers" article is a great reference piece as to how Armenians served in one of the darkest times in modern history. I was shocked and fascinated by the number of people we, a small Armenian nation, lost in the past century! First, the Genocide, then so many lost in the Second World War. It is sad, but a fact, that in modern times, and modern weapons, or modern political schemes, we - humans - still question and try to manipulate the reality in order to please some political agenda. Please publish my letter, it is not political, it is emotional!

LUCIANA GAMBARYAN, *Los Angeles, California*

Yerevan is the capital of Armenia, and Yerevan magazine is the Armenian accent in the United States. My continuous interest in reading the magazine shows your well rounded outreach toward non-Armenian readers, but... (there is always a but). For many of your articles you assume that your reader knows the story behind it or the basic cultural terminology. However, I, and one of my other friends who also reads Yerevan magazine, am not Armenian and it is sometimes difficult to stay on the topic while still being able to feel it. I know most of your readers are Armenian and giving background info everytime could make the stories dull, but please don't be reader-racist (no offense, just a term I made up) and give some space for non-Armenians to evolve and I promise to show the magazine to the rest of my Irish friends.

WILLIAM MURRAY, *Washington, DC*

Hello my dear friends of Yerevan. I am an American born Armenian and reading the magazine makes me want to go to Armenia every four months (after each issue comes out). Although I am not really interested in sports or the history of Armenia, the travel, art and "everyday-Armenian" sections of the magazine fill my void of the Armenian accent. After reading each issue I walk with my chin up for at least a month, because Yerevan magazine gives me stories that make me proud and happy. They give me a chance to be Armenian. I didn't have Armenian experiences, thus everytime my non-Armenian friends ask me what is or who is Armenian, I tell them stories from Yerevan magazine, as if they are my own stories. Thank you Yerevan for giving me my own capital of Armenia. xoxo.

TALAR MAHSEREJIAN*, Saint Petersburg, Florida*

Even though I share a genuine love/adoration for Yerevan magazine's wide-range selection of topics and fields I am also a bit upset about something.
It is the third issue in a row (I've read them all) that I notice a total lack of politics in Your Retro section. Yes, I do appreciate You bringing up only the interesting aspects of the history, but You have to remember that history is not a set of facts but a mass of opinions. I am craving to see some political positioning by Yerevan magazine to the historical events. Once again, Your Retro is the best!!!

GRIGOR ANANIKYAN, *Van Nuys, CA*

The recent article about Gerard Cafesjian opened a new perspective on the life of the famous entrepreneur. It reminded us about the difficult path of people such as Cafesjian towards wealth and success. Now their contributions to our Motherland seem even more generous. It's one thing to inherit a fortune and give it away, and a completely different story to work a lifetime and spend it on your native land. It's so much more rewarding to build a garden of art to the center of Yerevan rather than raising tasteless coffee shops and restaurants all over the city. Many Armenians often raise a toast to the Nation of Armenia, but only a few (and I mean those who can afford it) prove their patriotism with their deeds. We should really value people like Gerard Cafesjian.

MARDIG BOGHOSIAN, *Boston, MA*


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Vahram Muradyan

TIME IS MONEY… OR IS IT NOT?

We have come to understand the value of money in so many ways, especially in our current economic state. "Time is money" is a maxim we all understand today, yet, the expression dates back centuries to the ancient Greeks. Antiphon, an orator who wrote speeches for defendants in court cases, recorded the earliest known version of the saying in 'Maxim' (circa 430 BCE) as "The most costly outlay is time."
One of the Founding Fathers, Benjamin Franklin, was the first to use the exact wording of "Time is Money." He used this expression in his 'Advice to a Young Tradesman' more than 250 years ago, back in 1748.
Money can buy us possessions, but can it buy us time and precious things such as youth, inner beauty, serenity, love, wisdom and health? YEREVAN wishes you a very prosperous year, so that you may enjoy all the things that money can buy, with a greater appreciation for all the things which money can't.
In this forum we present different views of the past and present to the question, "TIME IS MONEY, BUT CAN MONEY BUY US TIME?" You be the judge.

YES

MARIA MEHRANIAN
Managing Partner and C.F.O of Cordoba Corporation

Of course, money can buy you time. The more resources you have, the more things you can do. You can 'squeeze' so much more in a little bit of time if you have a lot of money. Every age has very special things to offer. When you get wisdom you lose your youth, but it is very hard to put it on a balance scale and say which one is more valuable. I don't regret anything. I think whatever you made out of what you've got is great. So, yes money can buy us time.

ANI ESMAILIAN
Hollyscoop Girl, Host

Absolutely, money can buy us almost anything but happiness. So why can't it buy time? Money can buy you time in different ways, be it a surgery to prolong your life or other things.

DIANA MADISON
Hollyscoop Girl, Host

It depends. If you are too busy working to make money, you are wasting a lot of time. But if you want to do something sentimental, such as hang out with your relatives, then it's a different story. Lately, I've been working too much and haven't really had time to see my family, so I don't really know whether money can buy you time.

KATHERINE FUNDUKIAN THOROSSIAN
Assistant Superintendent, of the Educational Services USD

It probably can, because money accelerates time as well. We could use a little bit of money to get us more time, be more efficient in terms of how we address problems as a country and as a community. Sometimes money inspires people to work a bit differently. So yes, it's a motivator and can buy us time.

OSCAR WILDE
Writer

Time is waste of money.

GEORGE GISSING
English novelist

Time is money says the proverb, but turn it around and you get a precious truth. Money is time.

VAHRAM HAKOBYAN
Director of Power Poison

When the word time is referred to as the countdown of a period of time from the present moment to a certain event in the future, then yes, money can buy us time. It can help push that very expected event, the deadline so to speak, further in the future and buy us time, for example a gift or a dinner. A more sensitive example would be the case of a cancer patient, who uses money to buy chemotherapy and postpone the deterioration of the body cells as much as possible.

NO

ANNETTE SAHAKIAN DAVIS
Producer on FOX's "Til' Death" and CBS's "Two and Half Men" TV Series

Money cannot buy us time. Money can get you material, money can give you a comfortable life, money can give you access to things, and it's a valuable commodity. But at the end of the day, being honest with yourself and the people around you is the most wonderful thing in life. It's not money, but feeling good about who you are, being happy about what you're doing in your life that matters.

NORA GASPARIAN
Hollyscoop Girl, Host

I'm neutral; I'm Switzerland…The more money you have, the less time you have. That's what it feels like - so technically 'no', money cannot buy you time.

MIKE SHAYBEKYAN
Founder of the "Project 850" Financial Consulting Company

Nowadays, even though most of the things have a price tag, time is the one of the few things that money can't buy. Money can buy you a new heart transplant and plastic surgery might make you look like you're 25 years old, but money will not take you back to live a life when you were 25. So time is going on and on, you just need to catch up with it and not try to go back. So, I believe time is priceless.

ELIZABETH MANASSERIAN
NGO President, Woman of the Year by L.A. County Commission for Women

Time is priceless, so there is no price on time. Money can never buy us time.

JIM ROHN
Motivational Speaker

Time is more valuable than money. You can get more money, but you cannot get more time.

ANDRE ABOOLIAN, M.D.
Plastic & Reconstructive Surgeon

No, money can't buy us time. The only way to buy time is doing so in the future by planning it. For instance, the reason I can afford to take Mondays off is because I have the money now for it. However, money can't buy me the time I spent without my family in order to get where I am now. Time is in the past, in the present and in the future and you need to make a smart decision as to how you want to spend it.

KEV ORKIAN
Award Winning Comedian

Time is more than just money. Time is a countdown to one's life. It's about the chance to learn as much as we can before our time comes to an end. Whether we are given the gift of long life or not, we are all dying the moment we are born, it's about what we chose to do with that time that separates us from others. Can money buy us time? NO! It can only provide us with the freedom to choose what we do with that time.

Armenia-Turkey Protocols signed

The Armenia-Turkey Protocols were signed in Zurich, Switzerland on October 10, 2009 by Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian and his Turkish counterpart Ahmet Davutoglu, but the reaction of the diaspora as well as the signing did not take place without drama. The signing ceremony took place in the presence of world leaders, including Swiss Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, Russia's top diplomat Sergey Lavrov and the EU's foreign policy chief Javier Solana.



Fotolur

Be Counted!

The U.S. Government allocates funding according to the US Census, so it is vital for Armenians to be counted as Armenian. When you receive your Census form, take these steps to ensure that you are counted. On question eight, "Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin" check the box that says "No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin." Then, on question nine, "What is Person 1's race?" check, "Some other race" on the bottom and write "ARMENIAN" in the space. Look out for your U.S. 2010 Census to arrive between February to March 2010.

Paris' business district in Sarkozy's hands?

Patrick Devedjian is stepping down as the chair of the board of La Defense, a business distinct in Paris. Jean Sarkozy, the French president's second eldest son has a bid to run for the top spot of the board. Perhaps we will find Paris full of skyscrapers in the near future.

Armenia at sea

The ship "Armenia" has been at sea since May 28, 2009. Its journey began in Spain, navigated through the Panama Canal from Barbados and recently docked in California. Armenia's voyage will take her to New Zealand, Australia, Indonesia, Singapore, India, and to its final stop in Beirut. The ship docks in places with Armenian Diasporas. The head of the excursion, Zori Balayan, hopes that this journey will create a stronger connection between Armenia and its Diasporan communities.



Sergey Simavoryan

President Obama's Noble Prize

The 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize "for his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples." In total, there were 205 nominations for the prize, making this year's number of nominations the highest to date. Peace is currently missing from the world… How the Nobel Peace Prize winner will fix this, remains to be seen.

From Pasadena Police to the U.S. Department of Justice

After 13 years as Pasadena's police chief, and a combination of over 40 years of service as a police officer, Bernard Melekian will now serve as the Director of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program in Washington DC under the US Department of Justice.

Hollyscoop goes international

Hollyscoop TV will be going international after being signed by Reveille Productions (Universal) which also produces shows like Ugly Betty, the Office and the Biggest Loser. Hollyscoop was founded by three young Armenian women, Diana Magpapian, Nora Gasparian and Ani Esmailian.



Precious documents

The unique documents related to the activities of Armenian national heroes Andranik Ozanian and Garegin Nzhde during the First Balkan War between the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan Union (Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro) in 1912-1913, were turned over by the Bulgarian Ambassador in Armenia, Todor Staikov, to the History Museum and National Archive of the Republic of Armenia. In the beginning of the last century, Armenian cadets boarded along with the locals at a Bulgarian military officer school. Nzhde fought in the detachment of volunteers that had been formed from some of them. The Armenian counterpart also received copies of the documents about Nzhde's work over the period of 1921-1944 when he organized shelters for Armenian refugees in Bulgaria. There is some evidence that the Bulgarian archives may have documents with an account of how Nzhde helped the Armenian prisoners of war during the WWII. The archivists continue their search.

Treasure Hunting in Nina Hovnanian's Romantic Armenia

Most people would say Nina Hovnanian's life is like an ongoing fairytale. While on a relief mission at the Nagorno Karabakh warfront, New York society girl, couturier and accessories designer Nina met her husband (a legendary freedom fighter /field commander) while she was picking wildflowers in a field planted with hidden land mines. Even amid the terrifying chaos and cross fire of war, Nina found love while smelling the wild roses!

Nina later relocated her NYC based, globetrotting life to Armenia to start up and run (ATDA) the Armenian Tourism Development Agency, make a family, and to later establish NINA HOVNANIAN COUTURE TREASURES in an effort to help develop, market, and sell Armenia's fun, brilliant talent to the world.

Regardless where she is, no matter the circumstances, Nina always manages to pepper her life with her inimitable sense of joy and voilà ~ her fairy tale continues. She always finds the rarest luxuries and sources of beauty and infuses her special sense of serenity, romance, and whimsy in everything she personally creates. From her coveted handmade women's accessories and leather goods, to her delightful children's lines, from her home accessories to her new Gourmet Treasures, Nina makes sure everything is of the best quality and will stand the test of time in their designs. All that Nina creates is charming, warm, and captivating –enchantment at its very best.

At a time when the world has reduced the concept of luxury to only the rarest indulgences and the most inaccessible splendors, Nina Hovnanian has a true commitment to putting together a most exceptional cache of true luxury bursting with handiworks of Armenia's finest artisans. The awesome handmade stone carvings and ceramics, stunning jewelry, marvelous leather goods, and lace and embroideries, the exceptional hand woven carpets and tapestries that Nina collects for her TREASURES gallery spectacularly highlight the versatility, creative ingenuity, and expertise of the fabled "golden hands" of Armenia's artisans. With locations in Yerevan, Dilijan, and Zvartnots Airport, a new online shop www.ninacouture.com, traveling trunk shows in the USA, Europe and Russia, and plans for a shop in Jermuk, Nina aims to beguile anyone and everyone who longs to be swept up into her romantic vision of Armenia's past and her fantasy filled vision of its future!



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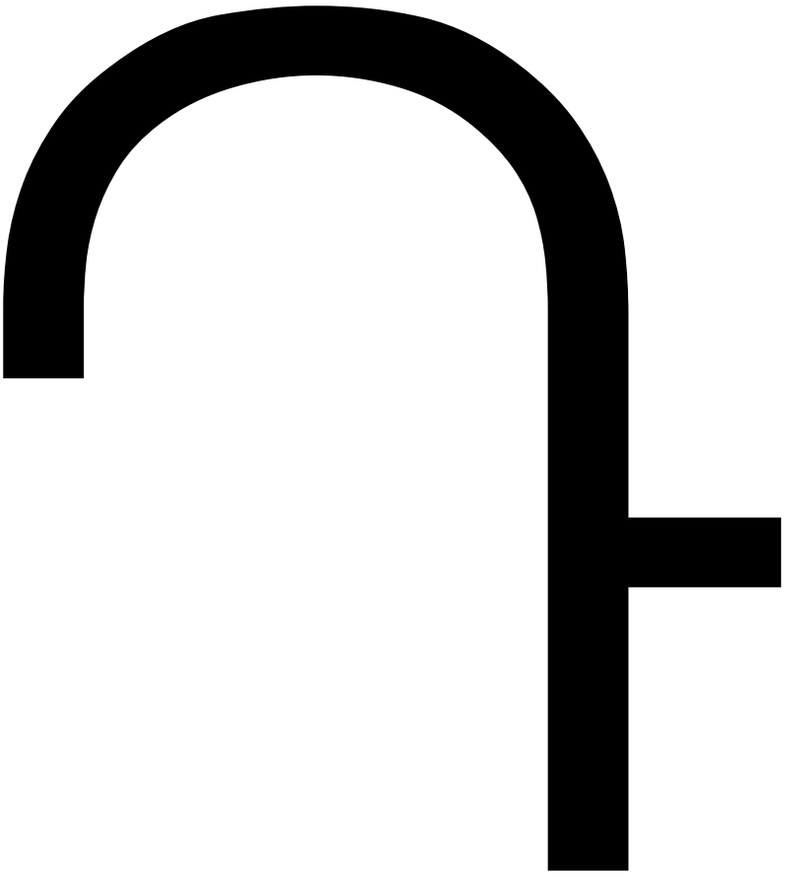
MAGAZINE WITH ACCENT

Da

Դ դ is the fourth letter in the Armenian alphabet. It is worth mentioning that in the majority of the alphabets (Greek, Latin, Hebrew, etc.), the letter denotating this sound (d) occupies 4th place, but in the Cyrrilic and Arabic languages it is on the 5th and 8th places, correspondingly.



text **ARAM KHACHATURIAN**

A number of scientists claims that the origin of the graphic form of the letter **Դ** is a variation of the Greek letter "delta," yet a number of researchers claim **Դ** to be a modification of the preceeding Armenian letter **Գ**. The second version seems to be more probable since the similarity between **Դ** and **Գ** is obvious.
The Hebrew letter "dalet," the Arabic "daal" and the Greek "delta" signify the Semitic word "dalt," which means "door." Hypothetically, the ancient Egyptian hieroglyph denotating "door" stands at the origin of the letter in the above languages.
Դ has an alveolar, ringing, explosive, and clear sound. In the middle and at the end of the words with Eastern Armenian pronunciation, it is slightly muted and sounds like **թ** (tʰ) as in **մարդ** (marth). In Western Armenian it always has a muted sound as in **դաչտ** (thasht). The numeric meaning of letter **Դ** is 4. Interestingly, the Greek letter Δ (delta), aside from its conventional numeric meaning 4, also denotates 10 because the Greek Δεκα (deka) begins with the letter "delta."
Դ symbolizes the 4th day of Creation, when God "made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also." (Genesis 1:16). In the Armenian alphabet created by Mesrop Mashtots, **Դ** coincides with **Դատաւոր** (datavor — Judge). In the Bible, it is frequently used as an epithet connotating God, "… for the Lord is our judge." (Genesis 33:22), "… God is a just judge," (Ps. 7:12). Give back to Ceasar what is Ceasar's and to God what is God's; the graphic sign of the Armenian monetary symbol — the dram — is the letter **Դ** with two horizontal lines.



Suren Manvelyan

Graphic representations of the letter "da" in manuscripts from various centuries



862 981 1202 1281 1700 1767

Names of the Armenian Letters

According to Koryun, the author of "The Life of Mashtots," Mashtots himself created the phonetics of the Armenian alphabet despite the fact that certain letters bear the influence of Greek and Semitic alphabets. The coincidence is merely partial. The names of the Armenian letters are based on the following two principles.
First, they are monosyllabic (as opposed to Greek and Semitic languages, where letters consist of two syllable sounds).
Second, the graphic representations of the Armenian letters do not carry external meanings.



Silver coin commemorating the 15th year of implementation of the national currency

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CAPTIVATING BEAUTY

Barcelona attracts people from across like a magnet. What is it: a call from one's soul, an escape from problems, or a quest for happiness? Why, leaving hearth and home, do they go to this particular city? The answer is simple: freedom. Nobody here pays attention to what you wear, or do, or to which God you pray. Barcelona values you as you are. Seventeen hundred years of history - the rule of the Romans, Muslims, Castilians, French, plus revolutions and the anti-Catalonian dictatorship - have taught its citizens to value freedom. It is this that inspires many newcomers to stay here for life.

text **NADEZHDA TCHEBYKINA**





BACK TO THE USSR

To the casual tourist, Barcelona looks like a contemporary fairyland where the main feature, of course, is the fantastical architecture of Antonio Gaudi. In addition to el Gaudi there is the legendary Las Ramblas promenade, a local den of iniquity — the Gothic Quarter (Barri Gotic), Joan Miro's sculptures, the paintings of Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dali, the Columbus monument and the sea, the sea, always the deep blue sea. The boom in tourism, particularly following the Olympic Games, has transformed Barcelona into a city lifted from a postcard, which you want to take home, or send to a friend, but may soon enough forget after a return to the workday routine. However, when you look at Barcelona from inside, after having lived here for a year, three years or five, this city opens for you like a flower. Only then, it seems, as if all your dreams can come true — but only here. This is what happened with the dreams of my new friends, Barcelona's Armenians.

The denizens of the Nou Barris district call it the New USSR. You can meet people here from practically all the republics of the former Soviet Union including, of course, Armenia. When I, armed with a long list of numbers for people with names ending in — ian, started making appointments, they all turned out to be in the same neighborhood. Nou Barris clings to the hillside and, unlike central Barcelona, is not laid out in regular squares. It reminded me of Armenian cities: narrow, but quiet and cozy streets winding their way up and down the hill. You won't find historical monuments here, but you also won't find bothersome tourists.

Hayk Eghizarian likes to visit Passeig Fabra i Puig, a small pedestrian street that is located ten minutes from his home on foot. On a sunny day he takes a seat at the terrace café, orders a strong coffee and chats with his friends. After his break at the café, he breathes more easily and dances more freely. Hayk is a professional teacher of Latin American dances. He gives lessons in rumba and pasa doble to all comers and in his spare time leads the Hayk ensemble of Armenian folk dance.

The Catalonian capital knows Artak by his nickname, 'the Hairdresser'. When he left his native city of Gyumri, the local residents were saddened by his departure. But Barcelona was rejoicing at the news of getting such a skillful master hairdresser. When some important changes happened in my life, I decided to change my haircut too. My Armenian friend took a cell phone out of her purse. "Take down the number," she told me, "You will never find anyone better!" Artak lives in Barcelona just for half of the year, but the appointment log of the 'Master of Golden Scissors' is filled for weeks ahead. ▸

There is a house in the "New USSR" known to every Barcelona Armenian. It bears no commemorative plaque and doesn't have ornate balconies or pillars, but for many, this is the most important place in the city. It is the only place where they bake real Armenian lavash. The bakery is run by Mary Abramian and a small staff of relatives and neighbors — a typical Armenian business. Mary set up her enterprise on the roof of the house. Her apartment occupies the whole upper floor, and the round terrace is the envy of all her friends — the entire sprawl of Barcelona is laid out before your eyes. She points to a favorite church and a shred of sea in the view behind the strange, egg-shaped edifice known as the Akbar Tower. Over there is Tibidabo: the highest hill in Barcelona. There is a church on its top and its main dome is crowned with a statue of Christ with arms outstretched — a twin of the famous statue atop Sugarloaf in Rio de Janeiro. As we were taking it all in, an urgent intercom call interrupted my visit, declaring that someone needs fresh lavash…

DIASPORA IS GAYANE

Another attraction of the New USSR is Lluc-major Square. Here you can find a monument of Soviet style: a statue of a woman with strong muscles with a high spire behind her. If it were not for the shop signs in Catalonian and polite drivers giving way to pedestrians, you would feel like you had gone back 20 years to the "unbreakable" USSR! Although impressive, Armenians do not come here because of a sense of nostalgia. Close to the square, one can find the headquarters of the Armenian National Society. The petite and dynamic Gayane Asilbekian is the founder and head of the Society. She knows literally everything about the Armenian Diaspora in Spain. If you need to find someone, she is the first person to ask. The Society has been in operation for 15 years and during this time, with Gayane's efforts, the traditional infrastructure of an Armenian immigrant community has been created: a school, a dance ensemble, a folk instrument orchestra and a data bank. The only task that remains to be accomplished is the construction of an Armenian Church. The main holidays





Many great buildings are erected on the 'gravestones of history' and the Barcelona Cathedral is no exception. It was built on the site of two medieval temples that were demolished one after another.

are celebrated at the Society by the whole community, which sometimes manages to invite stars, even from Yerevan. But her main achievement, Gayane believes, was the participation of several hundred people from Barcelona in the grandiose action in Madrid on April 24, 2007 – Genocide Remembrance Day. The performance of students from her school electrified the whole community. Five thousand Armenians gathered on that day for a demonstration — about one-tenth of the Armenian population in Spain (about fifty thousand Armenians live in Spain, twenty thousand in Catalonia).

"Barcelona is a very cosmopolitan city, but a very integrated one at the same time," Gayane said. "It has everything one can think of: museums, parks, beautiful buildings, the sea, the mountains, concert halls, exhibitions, festivals… You don't have to leave the city in search of a place for peaceful rest — just walk across a couple of streets and you will find



any environment you need." Of course on workdays, Gayane stays in her home district Nou Barris, but on weekends her Armenian disposition demands physical activity and fun. Along with many of her compatriots she ventures to the center of Barcelona, all the streets of which lead to the famous Plaza Catalunya.

THE PLACE TO MEET

Virtually every city has a special favorite meeting place, such as Pushkin Square in Moscow or Times Square in New York. Well, if you get lost in Barcelona, go straight to Plaza Catalunya. If your companion is delayed and you need to pass some time, visit El Corte Ingles or FNAC — two huge department stores facing the square. The complex of Plaza Catalunya is a wonder of architectural design, especially its underground portion where two subway stations coexist with two mini train stations. On the square's North side, Spain's National bank rises between the shopping centers and opposite it, the beginning of legendary Ramblas runs to the sea and of the side-street Portal de l'Angel leading to the Cathedral. The Cathedral's altar was consecrated in 1337, when the Cathedral was rightly considered to be the construction of the century, although the work continued even longer, about a century and a half. Many great buildings are erected on the 'gravestones of history' and the Barcelona Cathedral is no exception. It was built on the site of two medieval temples demolished one after another and one of the largest amphitheatres of the Roman time that was comparable to the Coliseum itself. Ancient ruins still surround the Cathedral and add a romantic flavor to the Gothic Quarter.

One cannot say that Catalonians are fanatical Catholics: even on Easter they don't organize religious processions as in Seville. Although any temple is sacred for Catalonians, it is first of all a historic place, then a religious one. Generally speaking, the whole area between the Gothic Quarter and Columbus Avenue (down to the port), with its mansions, churches and museums, is a part of Spain's National treasure of architecture. Centered on the earlier, high-Gothic Cathedral Santa Mari Del Mar, the Gothic Quarter terminates, as all of Barcelona it seems, at the sea.

SACRED ELEMENT

The word sea is sacred to local residents. There is an important feature in their conversations: Barcelonans go for swimming and sunbathing at the 'beach', but walk and rest at the 'sea'. They have a perception that one can only admire the sea, the same way the Japanese admire their stone gardens. At one time, Armenia stretched between the Caspian and Black Seas, and perhaps, an awed respect for the sea has remained in Armenian genes since then. Not without reasons do Barcelona Armenians pronounce the word 'sea' with a dreamy smile. Take Shushanik



La Corrida

Spain is a Catholic country with strict religious customs. With such a background their passion for bullfighting seems somewhat inexplicable to the outsider. This national pastime, alien to the very spirit of Christianity, has endured from Pagan times. Thus I became more curious to learn what the representatives of a nation that had made Christianity their state religion long before the Spaniards, think about la corrida. Here is what our friends, the Barcelona Armenians, had to say.

Greta Harutyunian (bioenergy therapist)
La Corrida is a very ancient Spanish tradition. You cannot disregard the fact that it has become a part of the culture and history of this country. What lies behind Spaniards' deep love of this show may not even be fully understood by outsiders, as every nation has its own mentality. There should be some meaning in the fact that it has been with the Spaniards for centuries. I don't consider it just a killing of animals; it is more of a ritual. Similar traditions probably exist in other cultures as well. But in Spain it became an art form.

Tigran Grigorian (economist)
Whenever Spain is mentioned, la corrida is the first thing that comes to your mind. Personally, I like it; I don't see anything wrong in it. I am not a bloodthirsty individual, but I like to watch these fights — there is so much extraordinary energy, passion and emotion in them. The only thing I don't like is that they let the bulls out in the streets before la corrida, right into the crowd. So many people get harmed every time!

Armine Arakelian (interpreter)
Even if la corrida was a Pagan ritual in the past, I think that today the Spaniards themselves see it differently, never mind the foreigners. To tell you the truth I don't understand why they have to kill the poor bulls so brutally. I agree that nowadays it is hard to imagine Spain without la corrida — it became a real industry. There are families that have several generations of toreadors. They are respected celebrities. But when it comes to the sacred meaning of this ritual — it has been lost long ago. Now it's just a show.

Vahe Oganesian (programmer)
Once we went with our Spanish friends. The first fight is always an exciting and interesting spectacle. The second one becomes a bit boring, because everything is the same. And after the third one you feel like you are in a slaughterhouse. I was surprised that our friends had enjoyed it so much. I never noticed cruelty in the Spaniards. They are always tactful and cheerful; they have much nicer traditions and their celebrations are often quite unusual. I prefer this other Spain to la corrida.

Oganesian: she cannot tolerate winter and when it is cold she cannot enjoy contemplating the element from which she draws her inspiration — the Mediterranean Sea. Shushanik had begun studying opera singing back in Yerevan and went to the Barcelona Conservatory to seek her fortune. “After the auditions they just said, please come to the classroom.” Her story follows, “It’s in my plans, of course, to perform on the best stages of the world, including the Yerevan Opera.”

DIAGONALLY FROM THE SEA

There is a lot of sea in Barcelona and every citizen selects his favorite spot on the coast — provocative Barcelonetta or the prim Olympic Village with its avant-garde monuments or the new business district Forum near the estuary of the River Besos. Where the business district ends, the mecca of local glamour begins: Diagonal Avenue (Avinguda Diagonal). Boutiques of the world’s best couturiers are located here and, among them, is the rug store that has been owned by the Paladjian family for many years. As for the Mont Juic Mountain, Armenians are rare guests. They may bring visiting relatives, curious enough to gape at the local museums, fortresses, parks, palaces, fountains and stadiums, and then joke “Big trip, little sense.” But they love Garcia Avenue. This prestigious and expensive district is perhaps second only to the posh area on the slopes of the Pedralbes Mountain. Since the end of the 19th century, the Catalonian aristocracy of patrimony or money has settled here. Their mansions were built by the best architects of the Catalonian



Natalchia Chekhina

Barcelonans go for swimming and sunbathing to the ‘beach’, but walk and rest at the ‘sea’. They have a perception that one can only admire the sea, the same way as the Japanese admire their stone gardens.







modernism era: the Bassegoda brothers, Puig i Cadafalch, Domenech i Montaner and, of course, the brilliant Gaudi. A rare tourist does not dream to take in the city through the quaint window-masks of Casa Batllo or hang out near the stone warriors of La Pedrera.

Gracia Avenue was planned at the time as an arterial road connecting the mountains and the sea and the famous Ramblas became its continuation. Literally every house, street lamp or even cobblestone, is something worth seeing. We can easily discover the Armenian traces in the lower part of the street where the crush of flower kiosks ends and the crowd of contemporary Picassos and Dalis with their painter cases begin.

Alec Bayndurian-Levasgani is one of the five Armenian artists working on Ramblas. Being an artist is as difficult in Barcelona as in any other big city of the world: life is expensive and at first it's not easy to make a living with artwork. But these difficulties do not seem insurmountable when you do what you love in such a remarkably beautiful place. Alec came here from Poland for a two-week vacation and has been "on vacation" for six years now.

A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

This place has inspired absolutely everyone for more than a century. There is no similar temple anywhere in the world and it is unlikely anyone will build anything like it in the future. This is the architectural icon of Barcelona — the Temple of the Holy Family (la Sagrada Familia) of great Antonio Gaudi. The unfinished cathedral attracts the eye from everywhere in the city, but the secret of its magnetism cannot be explained. It must be experienced to be understood. It may be that the la Sagrada Familia is the material incarnation of Barcelona's spirit of freedom. Its towers look like gigantic, erupting geysers suddenly turned into stone. Gaudi began his masterwork in 1882, but did not have enough time to finish it. More than a century later the Catalonian authorities decided to complete the construction but, despite the incredible work schedule, the contractors predict that only their children will be able to see the masterpiece in its finished glory.

Yet Zara Arsenian — an artist, fashion designer and gallery owner — doesn't have to wait that long: her favorite part is the one built by Gaudi himself. It has become Zara's tradition to visit the la Sagrada Familia whenever she comes back to Barcelona. It is like saying hello to your best friend. "Barcelona is a city of indescribable beauty," Zara admiringly shares. "Even after you leave and it becomes just a memory, its lines are blurry and you don't remember anything concrete; the sense of beauty always stays with you. For an artist it is sheer paradise. Just step out into the street, stand in front of any building for ten minutes and go back to your studio. On that day you won't need to look at anything any more — all you need to do is work. You pass the same building every day and each time it reveals something new about itself to you." Zara's treasury of beauty holds another masterpiece: the house on Knot Street with its high ceilings, openwork banisters and multicolored moldings, in which she lives. Any contemporary art museum would envy this interior. So, it is not a surprise that Zara converted its staircases into showrooms to exhibit the works of contemporary Armenian artists.



DREAMS COME TRUE

There are some cities you fall in love with at first sight and remain in love with for the rest of your life. Barcelona is one of them. As my Armenian friend says, if Yerevan is a heavenly fairyland, then the Catalonian capital is the earthly one. Barcelona cures people of their ailments, both spiritual and physical. Greta Harutyunian has a rare profession: she is a bio energy therapist, so she knows everything about cosmic and earthly energy, about illnesses of body and soul. She sensed this city from the first sight and, after having traveled half the globe, decided to stay here. Every person has a place on this planet where he or she feels most comfortable and carefree, like a baby in the cradle. For Greta, Barcelona has become such a place. "Once, in my childhood, I put a dream on paper — I want to live under the palm trees. There were no palm trees in Armenia where I was born, or in Poland, where I lived for many years. But they are so beautiful here, in Barcelona! It turns out that my Armenian dream has come true here, in Barcelona."



The Flamenco Kid

Young professional guitarist trained in Spain and created music incorporating his Armenian culture with Flamenco.

text **PAUL CHADERJIAN**
photo **KRIS KAN**

The uninhibited truth of human emotions, of honest expression, of accented, accentuated, purposeful movements, interactions and moments define flamenco guitarist Vahagn Turgutyan's life. Born into a family of artists in Yerevan, it's no coincidence that he was named after the ancient Armenian deity of flames, lightening, and the sun. The son of a professional guitarist, Vahagn studied the instrument with his father from a young age — except when Dad was off to foreign lands performing as the solo guitarist of the National Philharmonic of Armenia. When Dad was out, Vahagn was home practicing, composing and performing for his mother — a professional actress.

Never much into academics, Vahagn says he dedicated his time after school to perfecting his skills, listening to the muses, playing with bands, and putting to paper those melodies and memories that haunt him until they're released from the mind into the universe.

Google this prolific professional guitar player and find his reviews and his music. The stories on-line are of a driven, dedicated, single-mindedly focused artist whose parents sent him to Andalusia at the age of 18 to study with the masters, the legends of Flamenco. The experts of this genre — a complex musical, dance, and cultural tradition — accepted him and said he was different than all those who had came to them before.

Always modest, humble, and sweet, Vahagn credits his ethnicity, his roots and his culture to why the world of Flamenco embraced him as unique and special. This Flamenco Kid says he brings to his art the genetic and spiritual influences of Komitas, Sayat Nova, and the vast cannon of his people's ancient music which his uncle, an ethnomusicologist, introduced to him.

With one album under his belt, Vahagn can easily drop the names of the dozens of world-class and renowned stages on which he's performed. He has played with the masters. He now teaches guitar at College of the Canyons and he does not limit his music to Flamenco but has lived, breathed, and soaked up the soul of Malaga and Seville. He has watched and learned from the gypsies who brought this 19th century movement to the world. He can be coaxed into naming his awards, and reciting his reviews, but he's too modest for that.

The barista at the Toluca Lake, California, cafe where he meets YEREVAN magazine says the tea he orders is on the house. "Don't you guys know who this is," she screams under her breath, announcing the arrival of the virtuoso guitarist to those sipping coffee and clicking on their laptops nearby.

Vahagn, however, would rather point out actor Armand Assante when he walks by. He would rather talk about the pigeons fighting over the remnants of a scone. He would rather acknowledge Turtle from HBO's Entourage, who walks into the cafe during our interview.

Vahagn, the Flamenco Kid, just wants to compose and play. That's his passion. That's his love. That's his mission in the world at age 24.

As the year comes to end, he's putting his melodies, orchestrations and compositions out into the world via his website, vahagni.com, offering his soul to humanity. His plans to allow his fans to set the price of the downloads, be it a dollar, 20, 50 or more, and they will.

The universe gifted Vahagn with music, seeded him with a love for Flamenco, and the universe will see that he is financially supported. This modern god of the guitar will continue to illuminate the world through his eyes of fire.

Vahagn will receive more invitations to perform. He will have more concerts. His music will download via bits and bytes, as O's and 1's through his website. He will continue to bring honesty, truth, and raw humanity — the Flamenco Way — into this world and his bliss will be the world's.

Dossier

Vahagn "Vahagni" Turgutyan was born in Yerevan, Armenia in 1985. Was brought up in a family of artists: father, Sarkis Turgutyan, guitar soloist for the National Philharmonic of Armenia, mother, Satenik ShahNazaryan, a theatrical actress, and uncle, Artur Shahnazaryan, an Ethno- Musicologist. Started playing guitar under the instruction of his father, showing a great interest in Flamenco music. Conducted numerous trips to Andalusia, Spain, where he spent over two years mastering his craft under the guidance of world famous Flamenco guitarist Paco Serrano. During the "Cursos Superior del Guitarra Flamenca" held in Malaga, Vahagni performed for his childhood idol, the legendary Flamenco guitarist, Manolo Sanlucar. Vahagni's original sound impressed the Maestro, which led to an offer to study as a disciple of Sanlucar. Upon returning to the United States, Vahagni recorded his first self-produced album "Short Stories." The album features notable musicians, such as Jimmy Branly, Carlitos del Puerto and Luis Conte. He has conducted several World Tours and had frequent appearances on TV and radio shows.

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KIRK KERKORIAN'S INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

This fall, as the world was engulfed in questioning the economic model that had seemingly plunged the American financial system into a desperate downward spiral, YEREVAN had the opportunity to interview Kirk Kerkorian, the iconic business financier whose financial success is rooted and driven by that same economic model.

interview **AZZIE MEKHITARIAN**




David Bonner

Kirk Kerkorian is an allusive figure who rarely grants interviews. In fact, the last time a reporter interviewed him was over two decades ago. So my excitement at having locked in this interview was undeniably great, but so too was my expectation that this would be a rushed interview. I was sure that he would only allow a few quick minutes and hastily answer only some of my questions. To my surprise all my anxieties where quickly put to rest when Kirk Kerkorian walked out of his luxurious Beverly Hills office to greet me. He graciously granted me more than enough time and created a calming, casual ambiance. What struck me most about him was his humble, gentle demeanor. In an era when financial success is usually reserved for flamboyant showy media-hungry people, Kirk Kerkorian is an anomaly. Often considered a recluse who doesn't publicize his personal successes, he has been one of the most influential and important American business men of the past fifty years. A self-made man, Kerkorian has invested in numerous high profile business ventures from charter planes to movie studios to automobile manufacturers. However, he is best known for his successes in the hotel development business.

While he is one of the richest men in the world, there was a time when Kirk Kerkorian, son of Armenian immigrants, had only a few thousand dollars to his name. Born in 1917, Kerkorian's childhood was full of the turbulence typical of immigrant families trying to succeed in their adoptive country. The youngest of four children, he was already bringing money home at the age of nine to contribute his share to the family's welfare. By 16 years old his focus had shifted away from school and toward the greater world. His frequent streets fights parlayed into training as an amateur boxer but he soon found a more inspiring hobby, one that would be full of great risks and even greater rewards.

His love of flying would change the course of his life. Not having the sufficient funds to take flying lessons he took a job at a farm doing heavy barn labor in exchange for flying lessons. Having earned his flying license, he began working as a flight instructor. During World War II, Kerkorian became a civilian pilot flying an extremely dangerous route over the North Atlantic. By 1945 he had bought his first plane and began charter flights between Los Angeles and Las Vegas.

With a $5000 charter plane business, Kerkorian established the foundation for building one of the world's greatest fortunes. By 1962 Kerkorian had made his first million. His catapult from successful business man to tycoon occurred when he purchased 80 acres of land near the growing Las Vegas strip. Subsequently, he quickly became involved in the hotel development business. He understood that attracting loyal vacationers meant that Sin City had to be marketed to a wider audience and rebranded as a family-friendly location rather than as an exclusive adult playground. Since those early Las Vegas developments, Kerkorian has invested in various businesses expanding his fortune.

Today at 92 years of age, Kirk Kerkorian is still on fire. In fact, he is embarking on one of his most ambitious business ventures yet, CityCenter, a multi-building, multi-faceted urban center in the heart of Las Vegas that is slated to open this December. With an eight billion dollar price tag, it is the largest privately funded development in the United States. Being the gambling man that he is, Kerkorian is betting on Las Vegas again. This time he is hoping to rebrand Las Vegas as one of the most sophisticated urban centers in the world. Once again Kirk Kerkorian is changing the Las Vegas skyline.

Often mistakenly stereotyped as a man driven by the desire only to make a profit, it is estimated that Kerkorian has given away over 20 percent of his fortune to mostly Armenian causes. For someone who takes such flamboyant investment risks he is very modest when it comes to receiving accolades for his charity. He has done a great deal for Armenia yet has always insisted that his name not be placed on any structure, school or road that he has funded. Most notable about Kirk Kerkorian's phenomenal success is its longevity. For over 50 years he has ridden the tides of economic booms and busts. Today, when many entrepreneurs suffered the loss of great fortunes, Kirk Kerkorian has maintained his investments, to a great degree, above the financial crisis. In fact, he is still rigorously investing and betting that the world economy will not only recover, but thrive.

e You are known for being a very successful business man and for being very charitable. How would you like to be remembered?

It doesn't even cross my mind really. I came here with my parents as an immigrant and just worked hard. I don't really dwell on those kinds of things.

e You were born to an immigrant family who struggled for financial stability. What do you think are the most important characteristics or traits needed to be successful in business and in life?

Well that's a pretty tough one to just answer short because really all I can say is what has worked for me. I've always worked hard. I've dealt very honestly with people and it's up to everybody with their own intelligence to work things out. I've been pretty lucky.

e You've accomplished a lot. But most notably, you have had a very long and successful career.

I've been in a lot of different businesses. My main business that got me started was airplanes. I became a licensed pilot so when the war broke out I was already a professional pilot. And I flew for the U.S. Air Force with the RAF (Royal Air Force) and they paid me big money for those years to take airplanes and fly them across the North Atlantic, which wasn't flyable.

e It was a very dangerous job. One out of four pilots died flying that route.

Yeah, something like that. After the war I bought myself an airplane. I had $10,000 to my name, a car, no home, a wife and that's all I had. I was 28 years old so I took the airplane and flew charters to Las Vegas and from there I got interested in the hotel business. I built a hotel. It was called the International; and then I built Caesars. I've built a number of hotels since then. And now we are building a place called CityCenter which has never been done. And I'm very excited about it!

e There is some controversy around CityCenter regarding your Dubai World investor. Are they still investing in this ambitious project?

Well, Dubai owns 50 percent of CityCenter itself, and there's a parent company that holds all the hotels we own. There's no controversy. At one time there was a controversy but that was straightened out.

e Was flying your first love?

Absolutely!

e Why?

I don't know. Everything went really fast for me. All my life it's been that way. I learned to fly, and after I learned to fly I started teaching people how to fly. Then I started teaching instructors how to teach others how to fly. And I did that for the U.S. Air Force. So then I went and got a job with the British flying airplanes over the Atlantic at a very important time during the war. And after that I started hotels in Vegas, bought movie studios.

e Do you fly still?

I stopped flying a while back. I used to fly my own private airplane. My mind is too occupied to be a pilot anymore.

e You have been a very busy man. What inspires you to stay so motivated and involved?

I don't know. Something drives me I guess. I enjoy being busy and I enjoy moving.

e You are very active. I hear you are a big fan of tennis. Do you still play?

Yes I do. I play on weekends. I like to stay busy and I stay in pretty good shape.

e A lot of young entrepreneurs, especially young Armenians, admire you as a great inspiration and as an example of the complete embodiment of success. What might be a message that you want to send?

You know, I have been asked that one question so many times and it's very hard for me to answer that because, first of all I'm basically a really shy guy. I don't like to get up and say 'if you do this or that you'll make it. I am shy and



MGM MIRAGE CityCenter

I don't say much about how to be successful; I could be wrong. I don't want to tell anybody wrong things.

That's something very intriguing about you. You have been almost flamboyant in your business life, taking on so many grand projects and the great risk that entails, yet in your personal life you have been very reserved. How do you consolidate those two very different characteristics?

Well, I guess I know what I want and the other side knows what they want and you put your cards on the table. Fortunately I've been successful at almost every area I went into. Probably a lot of luck. I don't claim to have any mystique at all. I've been lucky and I work hard.

The Lincy foundation has made very generous contributions, many to Armenian causes.

My mother and father came as Armenian immigrants. They were married, they were on this boat, 19 years old from Armenia and I figure America has really been good to us. I like to give back. You know I believe we have given over a 100 million dollars and I am happy to be doing it.

Do you follow Armenian political issues? How do you foresee the future of Armenia?

I follow generally. I don't get involved in great depth because I don't think I would be helpful. I don't think I am involved in that field enough to make any significant comments.

Many see the current financial crisis as a sign of the demise of the American business model. What is your take on this? How do you see the future of American business?

I hate to think of it as demise. I'd like to think we are in a stalled position and that we will come out of it. Especially since we are growing in the middle of it. We have a vision! We're building this particular hotel and urban center called CityCenter which has never been done before and we are continuing our progress. We will open December 16 of this year. And I think we'll do alright.

So you have faith in the American economy if you're still investing here?

Yes.

Are you also investing outside of the United States?

Yes we have, in Macau, in Singapore. And in Malaysia I believe we are getting close. We've done something in Dubai, in Abu Dhabi…we are building a hotel.

Do you find that by investing outside of the U.S. you are securing a more viable return?

No, I think we try and look at balance more than anything. It's hard investing outside of your country. It is for us, anyway.

You have the Tracinda and the Lincy Foundation. Do you split your time among the two interests?

I am involved in both areas. Tracinda is our investment company and Lincy is strictly to pass the money out wherever we can help. I think we have given a few 100 million towards Armenia.

What are you most proud of?

Info

CityCenter Las Vegas is Kirk Kerkorian's latest and most ambitious investment project. Attempting to reshape Las Vegas as an urban mecca, MGM and CityCenter anticipate that Las Vegas will be the premiere international destination for all things metropolitan- combing entertainment, dining, nightlife, retail, art, and design with residential real-estate. With 67 acres and the participation of renowned architects, it is one of the most magnificent development projects in the world. It is virtually a mini-city with its own fire station, power plant and tram. It is aiming to be sustainable by working within the guidelines of the U.S. Green Building Council. With a price tag of over $8 billion, it is the largest privately funded development in U.S. history. At a time when most real-estate developers are suffering, Mr. Kerkorian is banking on CityCenter's urban appeal to attract people yearning for a more cosmopolitan lifestyle. It has large open walking spaces and an open art gallery appeal. CityCenter has commissioned $40 million worth of modern sculptures by a number of renowned artists such as Maya Lin, Frank Stella, Richard Long, Jenny Holzer and others. Currently it includes the 61 story, 4000 room central building ARIA Resort & Casino, Mandarin Oriental Hotel/Residences, The Harmon Hotel/Residences, Vdara Condo/Hotel towers, Veera 337 unit luxury condo tower and The Crystals Mall retail and entertainment space. It is expected that CityCenter will create jobs for 12,000 new, permanent employees. Although it has had a few setbacks and controversies, CityCenter is scheduled to open this December.

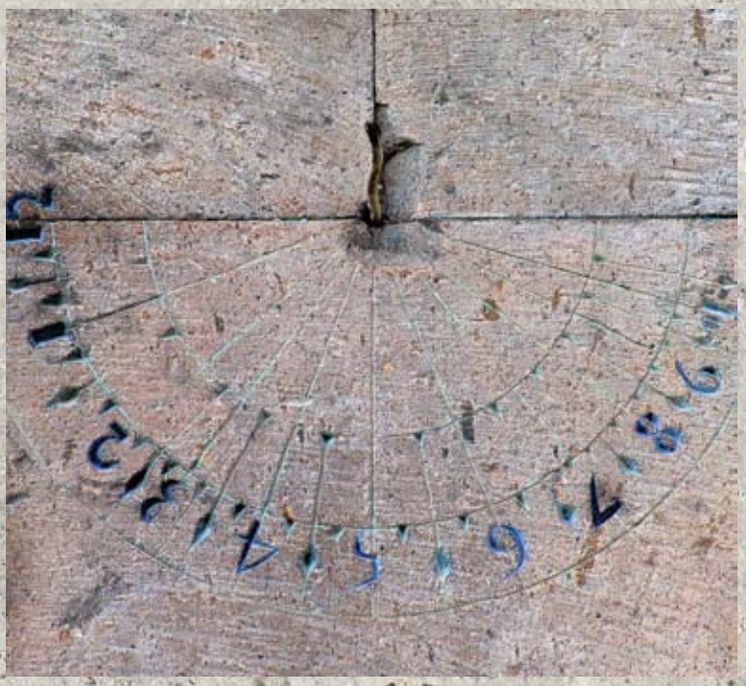
You know, I was born here but when I first went to school here I couldn't speak English because we only spoke Armenian at home. So when I hit the streets at four or five years old I didn't know English. But I tell you one thing, there's never been a minute of my life that I wasn't proud to say 'I'm Armenian'. I'm most proud of that. I'm pretty lucky and I have accomplished a lot.

Our interview ended with an uplifting sense of accomplishment and pride in recalling his life's journey as an individual and as a business tycoon. Our conversation continued, and I found an incredible value in being reminded by Kirk Kerkorian that being passionate, humble and gracious is not incompatible with monetary success.

The Horizon of Eternity

The facades of churches carry a line segment of eternity. These clocks are not moving, but they reflect time with impeccable accuracy.

photo **YEGHIA NERSISIAN**





Sourb Hakob,
Yerevan, Kanaker,
17th century

Sourb Astvatsatsin,
Aragotsn Region,
7th century

Gandzasar,
Artsakh, Martouni Region,
8th century

Sourb Stepanos
(Akhchots),
Ararat Region,
8th century









Haghartsin,
Tavoush Region,
10th-13th century

Haghpat,
Lori Region,
10th-13th century

Mankanots,
Aragatsotn Region
5th-7th century

Sourb Katoghike,
Aragatsotn Region,
7th century

Odzoun,
Lori Region
6th century

Goshavank,
Tavoush Region
12th-13th century









Holy Geghard

Project is executed in association with HOLY ECHMIADZIN

Geghard, the Holy Spear, is the lance that was used by a Roman soldier to pierce the lungs of the crucified Jesus Christ according to biblical lore. Believers are convinced that the lance has miraculous qualities, particularly an ability to stop epidemics. Interestingly enough, its power to stop plagues of all types is mentioned in medieval manuscripts as well as later works of the 18th and 19th centuries. On several occasions, in 1797, 1811 and again in 1814, it was transported to Tiflis to fight the epidemics of bubonic plague that raged in that city. Many foreign travelers, including the English painter, historian and traveler Sir Robert Ker Porter who visited the Transcaucasian region in 1817- 1820, wrote in their travel journals about the Holy Spear. Listing the relics of Echmiadzin, Sir Porter particularly emphasized Geghard, noting that it was respected more than all the other sacred relics. He also added that he didn't have a chance to see Geghard himself because during his visit the spear had been taken to the capital city "to fight the fever which posed a horrible threat to the residents of Erevan." It's not a secret that there are several sacred spears in the world – in Vatican City, in Vienna, Austria and in Krakow, Poland. But according to the legend of the Apostles, the authentic spear can be found in Armenia having been brought there by the Apostle Thaddeus in the 1st century. Since the 13th century, Geghard has been kept in the Airivank-Geghard Monastery. In his book, *Ashkharatsoujts*, Vartan Areveltsi (13th century) refers to it: "Airivank, where the God-piercing Geghard is stored." The fact that the Holy Spear was found in Armenia is also mentioned in earlier manuscripts but without the identification of its exact location. In the 18th century the sacred relic was transported to Holy Echmiadzin where it remains still. It is one of the three holy relics used during the blessing of the Holy Myro, the sacred oil, by the Catholicos.





From the archives of Holy Echmiadzin





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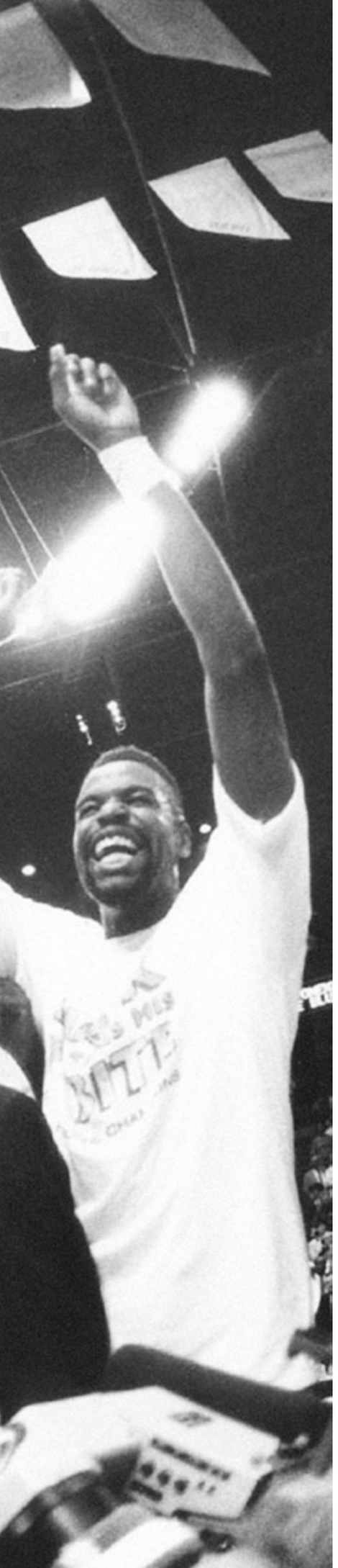
BASKETBALL'S ARMENIAN REEL

The story of basketball icon Jerry Tarkanian cannot be told without also speaking of his Armenian heritage.

text **MANOUK AKOPYAN**
photo **COURTESY OF UNLV ATHLETICS**





In 1977, college basketball icon, Jerry Tarkanian, came to the proverbial fork in the road when the Los Angeles Lakers offered him the team's head coaching job. For an Armenian-American who spent his adolescence just up the freeway in Pasadena, seven years in the Los Angeles Community College District's coaching ranks and an unprecedented run with California State University, Long Beach, the honor of coaching the city's premier franchise could have been the defining pinnacle of a career.

When I asked Tarkanian this very question, he said, "It was certainly one of the toughest decisions I've ever made in my life," as he recounted the day he declined the chance of coaching the pre-Showtime Lakers after having committed verbally.

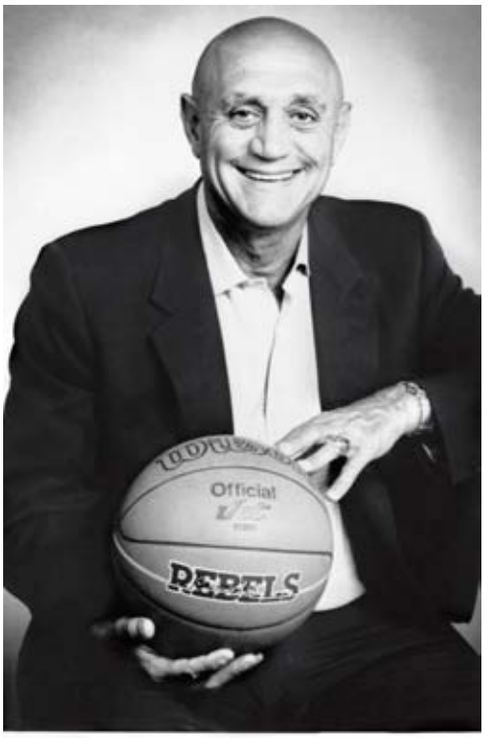
So how does a man like Tarkanian, who was steering the ship with the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV Rebels) and executing decisions effortlessly on the hardwood come to the verdict of refusing one of the most prestigious honors a coach can ask for — twice? "Loyalty," he said, a trait that Tarkanian credits to his Armenian roots.

"Through the years, I've realized that the most loyal people are your Armenian people," Tarkanian said as he spoke from the same city he chose almost 32 years later. "I had a strong loyalty with the Las Vegas people because they stood by me. I always tried to be a good person and a good coach and I worked real hard at it."

The loyalty he talks about kicked in two years later when the newly-minted owner of the LA Lakers, Jerry Buss, offered Tarkanian the coaching job yet again, along with a point guard they had just drafted by the name of Magic Johnson to compliment Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

After receiving a two hundred thousand dollar a year offer, which was virtually unheard of at the time, Tarkanian was close to accepting the deal and braving the next venture in his professional basketball career. However, the final and decisive straw was drawn when Vic Weiss, his longtime friend and acting agent, was found in the trunk of his own Rolls-Royce murdered; an incident that the LAPD would later call an organized crime hit.

And with that, a devastated Tarkanian passed on "Showtime" and the road of purple and gold and proceeded to be a "Runnin' Rebel," a place where 509 wins, four Final Four appearances and the 1990 NCAA championship later, he would etch his name into college basketball history and, as has been well documented — controversy.



RUNNIN' REBEL
HEAD COACH JERRY TARKANIAN

UNLV Rebels
Jerry Tarkanian

Dossier:

Born August 30, 1930, Jerry Tarkanian is best known for his coaching success during his tenure for college basketball's UNLV Rebels. In 19 years at the helm, he compiled 509 victories, including the national championship in 1990, the only title in school history. Unfortunately, his battles with the NCAA are always a footnote on his resume as he was forced to resign from UNLV in 1992 for a series of events.

He was given the nickname "Tark the Shark" by a Los Angeles-based sports writer. He developed his well-known and superstitious habit of biting on a towel one day while coaching for Redlands High School in 1960. The gym was so hot, he drenched his towel with water and sucked on it for hydration instead of going back and forth to the fountain. After winning the league championship, he never dropped the habit.

THE ARMENIAN ROOTS

As the 79 year-old Tarkanian sat in his Las Vegas home recovering from a recent spinal surgery, he reminisced not only his action-packed basketball career, but his Armenian heritage, his first trip to Armenia and all of his dedicated Armenian fans, as well. ▸

"I have always been very proud to say that I am Armenian," acknowledged the man who was born and raised in Euclid, Ohio until the age of 14 by his Armenian parents.

Four years ago, Jerry joined his son George and his family along with a church group from Fresno for a 16-day trek to Yerevan featuring a heavy dose of sightseeing of the country's most significant landmarks. His trip included visits to Echmiadzin, Khor Virap, Gyumri and Lake Sevan, among others, but the most touching was his visit to the Armenian Genocide Memorial, Tarkanian said. It was at the museum in Yerevan where he saw where his mother Haigouhie was raised, Malatia, before she and her brother escaped to Lebanon because of the massacres.

"That was very moving for him," Mary-Kay Tarkanian, Jerry's daughter-in-law, said. "It was really an important stop for him and all of us to see all of the different parts of the museum and understand the history of the people." When Tarkanian witnessed areas of the country that were still ravaged by the earthquake of 1988, he somberly said, "It was very heartbreaking to see that. It was tough. All in all though, it was great to see Armenia."

Although Jerry had never been to Armenia until 2005, he always lived and made headlines amongst his compatriots, whether it was in Los Angeles, Las Vegas or Fresno, a city with dense Armenian population. "I stay involved with Armenians of Fresno to this day," he said, noting that when he retreats to Fresno, his fix for feasting on everything Armenian is satisfied. "I love Armenian food. All of it," he said, mentioning various lamb dishes.

It was at Fresno State where Tarkanian played collegiate basketball for the Bulldogs until 1955 — the same school where he met his wife Lois and 40 years later, revamped the basketball program when he was signed for the head coaching position in 1995. Undoubtedly, he was welcomed with open arms by the faithful Armenian supporters.



"My Armenian fans have been wonderful," he said as he reflected back on all the years and countless occasions when they were at his side. "They have supported me in every way they could and they've been a real inspiration to me."

Jerry Tarkanian passed on L.A. Lakers and proceeded to be a "Runnin' Rebel," a place where 509 wins and four Final Four appearances later, he would etch his name into basketball history.



SLEEPLESS IN LAS VEGAS

Before coaching at Fresno State, the boisterous and affably nicknamed "Tark the Shark" was at UNLV, a place where the entire sports and Armenian world got to know the towel-biting Jerry Tarkanian on a broader stage, one known for abundant achievement and inconsiderable controversy related to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

Although he compiled an impressive 509-105 record in a 19-year stretch that included a run capped off with UNLV beating Duke to win the national title and going 34-0 the next season before losing the championship game, his success could not hold off the NCAA's scrutiny outside the court as he was met with constant criticism for recruiting violations.

Always watched under a microscope, Tarkanian's undoing came after three players from his 1990 championship team were photographed in a hot tub with a convicted sports fixer who was suspected of having ties with the mafia. Although Tark had amassed the highest Division I winning percentage of all time, the Shark was forced to resign.



There are schools and streets named after him. Tarkanian Way is just across from the home arena for UNLV, and Jerry Tarkanian Way is located on the West side of the city of Las Vegas.

Tarkanian would eventually go on to sue the NCAA for harassment and settle for $2.5 million. When asked if the NCAA had a personal vendetta against him, he replied, "There is no question about it. It was just a battle with them. They were unjust and wrong, but in the end, they were never once able to get anything against me that was a major violation against my program."

Shortly after his resignation from UNLV, Tarkanian came full circle and capitalized on a call that was first made 15 years earlier — he accepted a job coaching in the NBA, although it wasn't for the Lakers. After accepting a three-year offer from the San Antonio Spurs in 1992, Tarkanian's career in basketball proved to be short lived as just 20 games into the season, he was dismissed from his coaching duties. Disagreements with the ownership regarding the team's personnel along with difficulties acclimating to the professional style of play proved to be his undoing. Tarkanian said he always believed he would have done a better job had he been presented with the opportunity.

Although his marriage with UNLV ended sourly despite the loyalty he showed to the city and university over the span of 20 years, Tarkanian still calls Las Vegas home and the family surname is as prominent as ever. His wife currently holds a seat on the Las Vegas City Council, their son Danny announced his candidacy in August for next year's U.S. Senate race in Nevada and their other son George and his wife Mary-Kay are manning the Tarkanian Basketball Academy located just off the strip.

There are even schools and streets named after him. Tarkanian Way is just across from the Thomas & Mack Center — the home arena for UNLV, and Jerry Tarkanian Way is located on the West side of the city. He and his wife also have a school named in their honor, the Lois & Jerry Tarkanian Middle School.

With that, the Tarkanian name is just as known inside Nevadan circles for shaping up Las Vegas as Kirk Kerkorian's is, a strange coincidence when one considers that two Armenian-Americans from Fresno found their niche and each other to inscribe their names in the story of one of the world's most renowned cities. But it is Vegas, where some get lucky and hit it big and others find their place and each other, which is exactly what Tarkanian and Kerkorian have done over the years. Tarkanian went as far as calling him a "really good friend." As they shared a bond of their Fresno roots and held the limelight as Armenians making it big in Vegas, they also developed a great relationship. Although the two never conducted business with one another, that didn't stop them from building a friendship.

Nowadays, Tarkanian is often surrounded by his four children and ten grandchildren who live within a few miles of him and provide around-the-clock support and care whenever needed. Although his family, as is proper, attends to his needs, one shouldn't forget that the bond between Las Vegas and Jerry Tarkanian is so well established, that the entire city would be waiting to render aid should he so much as scrape his finger — a fitting tribute in light of the loyalty he has shown them.

THE VALUE OF SPORT

Michael Ozanian traces his bloodline to a great family of Armenian freedom fighters. With the fierce fighting streak of his great-uncle, the legendary General Andranik Ozanian, he is as combative in his opinions on politics as he is impassioned in his views on the world of sports. You can't afford to be indecisive as the National Editor of Forbes, the magazine well-recognized as the publication of record for the business world. In his career Ozanian has combined his two obsessions, of economics and sports. Today, the sale of franchises routinely breaks the billion dollar mark. The sum total of revenue generated by sports businesses runs into the tens of billions of dollars annually. In other words, sports franchises are very big business and Ozanian's role as one of the pioneers of sports valuation — helping to bring it into the spotlight of the business community — has been no small achievement.

interview **XERXES MALKI**
photo **CHRISTOPHER GAYOMALI**



Ozanian, perhaps more than any other figure in the financial press and sports media, is responsible for developing the art and discipline of sports valuation, which uses statistical estimates to assess the overall value of sports teams and franchises. He arrives at his figures with the help of his talented team of analysts at Forbes' Department of Statistics and Special Projects.

What is the role of your family and its role in Armenian history?

My father's family is from Sebinkarahisar in Eastern Anatolia. My grandfather was not General Andranik. He and General Andranik were cousins, sons of brothers. My grandfather was a fighter himself. I learned a lot about him, although my grandfather passed away when I was about three years old. He was married and had a family who were all killed by the Turks. Later, he met my grandmother and re-married. He was a survivor, as was my grandmother — her whole family was wiped out. In fact, all four of my grandparents were survivors.

How did your family come to the US?

My father's father had to flee because he had a price on his head in Turkey. He came through Belgium and first settled in Troy, near Albany in upstate New York. A lot of Armenians settled there. Today you can still see furniture and drug stores there with signs in Armenian.

Did your family continue to speak Armenian in the US?

Both my parents do, although my parents were born here. Up until the time I was three, we lived with my paternal grandmother. She spoke Armenian to me and I spoke it when I was young. I went to Sunday school at St. Thomas Church which is in Tenafly, New Jersey. But after that I didn't keep it up, unfortunately.

Do you get a chance to visit Armenia?

I have never gone, but I would like to go. I've been married for two and a half years, and my wife and I have a daughter who is 22 months old. When my daughter gets a little older it would be a good thing to do.

Is your wife Armenian?

Yes, Brigitte is Armenian. Her parents are from Lebanon and Egypt and they came here when they were in their twenties. We live in Glen Rock, New Jersey. Brigitte speaks Armenian very well, and she speaks Armenian to our daughter. I couldn't pass the language on to my daughter, but she can.

What got you interested in sports writing and journalism generally?

My entrance to journalism itself was a complete accident. I went to a small college called Sienna College in Loudonville, outside of Albany, New York. After graduating college in 1981, I moved back in with my parents who live in Orangeburg, New York, in Rockland County. Then I went to graduate school part-time and got an MBA from Long Island University. I wanted to get a job on Wall Street as an analyst, but couldn't get any job offers. At that time the Chairperson of the Graduate Program at Long Island University said that Forbes Magazine was looking for someone to work in the Statistics Department. I took a job there, worked there for almost three years, loved it, but an opportunity opened up at a publication called Financial World. It was a much smaller publication that doesn't exist anymore but it was an opportunity that would give me more creative license and leeway to do my own type of writing and research. I started there in January 1988, then, around 1991, the publisher of Financial World proposed the idea of valuing sports franchises. I had always been interested in sports — both in playing them and in following the teams. Our team did valuations on an annual basis until I came back to Forbes in October 1997. Sports valuations took on a life of its own. I think the timing was fortunate. If you go back fifteen years, the mix of sports and business wasn't big news at all. The most you would hear about money in sports was how much athletes were earning. That has evolved into a whole field where we talk about how much teams and franchises are making and how much they are worth. As the general mix of entertainment and Hollywood with sports grew, we were the key brand on sports valuation.

So it's a happy marriage of your interests in sports and finance and business?

Exactly. It blends economics and sports which are my two passions. It's also important to remember that my division is not just involved in sports valuations. My statistics group is also in charge of the annual ranking on business schools, the best small companies, the best cities for business, and the best states for business. We also do a regular series called "Beyond the Balance Sheet" which values public companies using metrics that are not taken into account in their balance sheets, such as brand valuation. We also do all the statistics that the other writers use in their articles. We are the Statistics and Special Projects team.

Did you have to work extraordinarily hard in order to rise to the post you now hold at Forbes as a National Editor?

My belief is that any person's success is part effort and part luck. I have been very fortunate in that the opportunity to do the two things that I am most interested in, economics and sports, were open to me. Of all the major media companies Forbes is the most entrepreneurial, so I have been given a lot of freedom to use my creativity. I've also been fortunate to have a team of people in the Statistics and Special Projects department that is as passionate about our work as I am. If you are leading any team, and you're with people who don't share your passion and desire, it's difficult to achieve the best. I've been in the right place at the right time. I am doing something that I love. My job is basically an extension of who I am, and this makes me incredibly lucky. I'm also lucky that I've got a wife that puts up with that.

Have you looked at any coverage of the World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) or other types of alternative sports?

On the Yes Network we've done stories on Professional Bull Riding, we've done WWE, and we've done Ultimate Fighting. We've done a segment on Tap Out, a company that makes the apparel for the mixed martial arts. As a journalist you've got to keep your fingers on the pulse of the latest trends. My sister Joyce has two sons, one who's 13 and one who is 10. I get great tip-offs from them. They're both into sports and, when I go and visit them, I see what they're watching. I had the attitude that professional poker would never make it as a big 'sport' on TV. I went over to my sister's house one day and one of my nephews was watching it! I knew right then and there that this was something in the making. You shouldn't dismiss anything out of hand for being lowbrow. To be a good journalist you have to follow your hunches. When I first came back to Forbes my immediate supervisor didn't want me to work on sports business, but I did it secretly for a year. I superseded my boss and went directly to the editor of the magazine with the work that I had done. He was interested in it, ran it, and that picked up the popularity of sports business. That was probably the biggest risk that I took. I gambled and I won. I tell this story to young journalists to show them that they shouldn't be too reliant on what other people are telling them to do. Part of the job of being a journalist is to be investigative and to find out things firsthand.

Did you ever experience prejudice as an Armenian-American?

No, almost the opposite. Growing up I had a great mix of friends — Jewish, Irish and Italian. Wherever I went, and when I met other Armenian families, I was always treated exceptionally well because of who my grandfather was and because who my great uncle was. So, for me, being an Armenian youth was always something that made me feel proud. I credit this, partially, for my success. In my career I have found that Armenians are very well regarded and well thought of, not only for their work ethic, but also for their personal integrity. I was fortunate to be born to my family. I do believe that I have a responsibility to behave in such a fashion so that I can pass along what my family has given me. I want the next generation to regard me highly. I think that this is far more important than what title I have or how much money I make. Do people think of you as someone they can trust? I believe that if you live in this country this is where your loyalties must lie, but you shouldn't forget your heritage, because without that you wouldn't be here and you won't be who you are. It is possible to do both, but you have to contribute to what others before you have contributed, culturally and personally. That's my goal.



Gorky on the road

In a letter addressed to his nephew Karlen, Gorky wrote, “Karlen dear, the history of our Armenian people has shown us the secret of creativity.” The creativity of Armenian-American artist Arshile Gorky will be exhibited on a large scale at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in Philadelphia from October 21, 2009 to January 10, 2010. The art will then be exhibited at the Tate Modern Museum in London from February 10 to May 3, 2010 and then at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles from June 6 to September 20, 2010.

Armenians win Adobe Photo Competition

Hovnan Baghdasaryan, 13, of Armenia and Katherine Goudsouzian, 17, of Australia were among the ten winners of the first Adobe Youth Voices International Photo Competition.

Introducing harvest

The Western Diocese of the Armenian Church hosted their first annual Harvest Festival on November 14. The event introduced festival goers to the new cathedral in Burbank and the significance of harvests. The occasion was full of vendors selling goods in time for Christmas.

Dilijan in the heart of Los Angeles

On November first, The Dilijan Chamber Music Series hosted its 5th Dilijan Series at the Zipper Hall in Downtown Los Angeles. Performers at the event included L.A. Philharmonic Principal Musicians Peter Stumpf and Carrie Dennis, and Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra’s Principal Horn Richard Todd. The Dilijan Series is founded and organized by the Lark Musical Society, and is dedicated to promoting Armenian chamber music, as well as showcasing masterpieces of Western classical music. The program featured the West Coast premiere of Vache Sharafyan’s Piano Trio No. 1, Brahms’ Horn Trio, and Beethoven’s String Quartet Op. 130.

Komitas recited on Komitas’ piano

Pianist Armen Manassyan, 21, performed two concerts at the Holy Cross cathedral in Paris in tribute to Komitas’ 140th birthday. On the day of the concert, the priest revealed to Manassyan that the piano he played on was the same as the one Komitas performed on in 1912. Manassyan performed music by Komitas, Liszt, Sayat Nova and Debussy.

Kinoshock

Harutyun Khachaturyan’s documentary *Border*, which tells a story about the bull – a regular transgressor of the Armenia and Azerbaijan border, continues its victorious march through the world’s film festivals. In addition to the awards in Houston and Syracuse, the film was awarded the prize for Best Director at the 18th annual film festival of the CIS and Baltic nations “Kinoshock” that took place in Anapa, Russia. *Border* was called the Best Film of the year by the Kinoatelie Association whose members include the leading film critics from Italy and Slovenia. The award ceremony will take place in the beginning of December in the Italian city of Gorizia. On another note, there was a retrospective show of eight of Khachaturyan’s films at the Uruguay’s National Film Archive in Montevideo last September.



Music unites Armenians, Kurds and Turks

Oud player Ara Dinkjian and his father, singer Onnik Dinkjian, were invited to perform in Turkey. Concerts were held in Istanbul and in the Dinkjian’s ancestral town of Tigranagert (Diyarbekir) attracting thousands. Father and son were accompanied by a 20-member Kurdish children’s chorus who sang in Kurdish and Armenian. Ara stated that “We have enough forces teaching us how we are different. Music reminds us what we have in common.”



Armenian Weddings 411

Harsanik.com hosted a bridal event on November 8 at the historic Langham Huntington Hotel and Spa in Pasadena, California. The event featured live entertainment, a couture fashion show and wedding cake design demonstrations. The event took the spectators and especially brides-to-be through the details of Armenian wedding planning and introduced them to Armenian wedding experts.



Armenian in charge of the Daily Bruin

Alene Tchekmedyian is the new and first Armenian Editor-in-Chief of UCLA’s award winning paper, the Daily Bruin.

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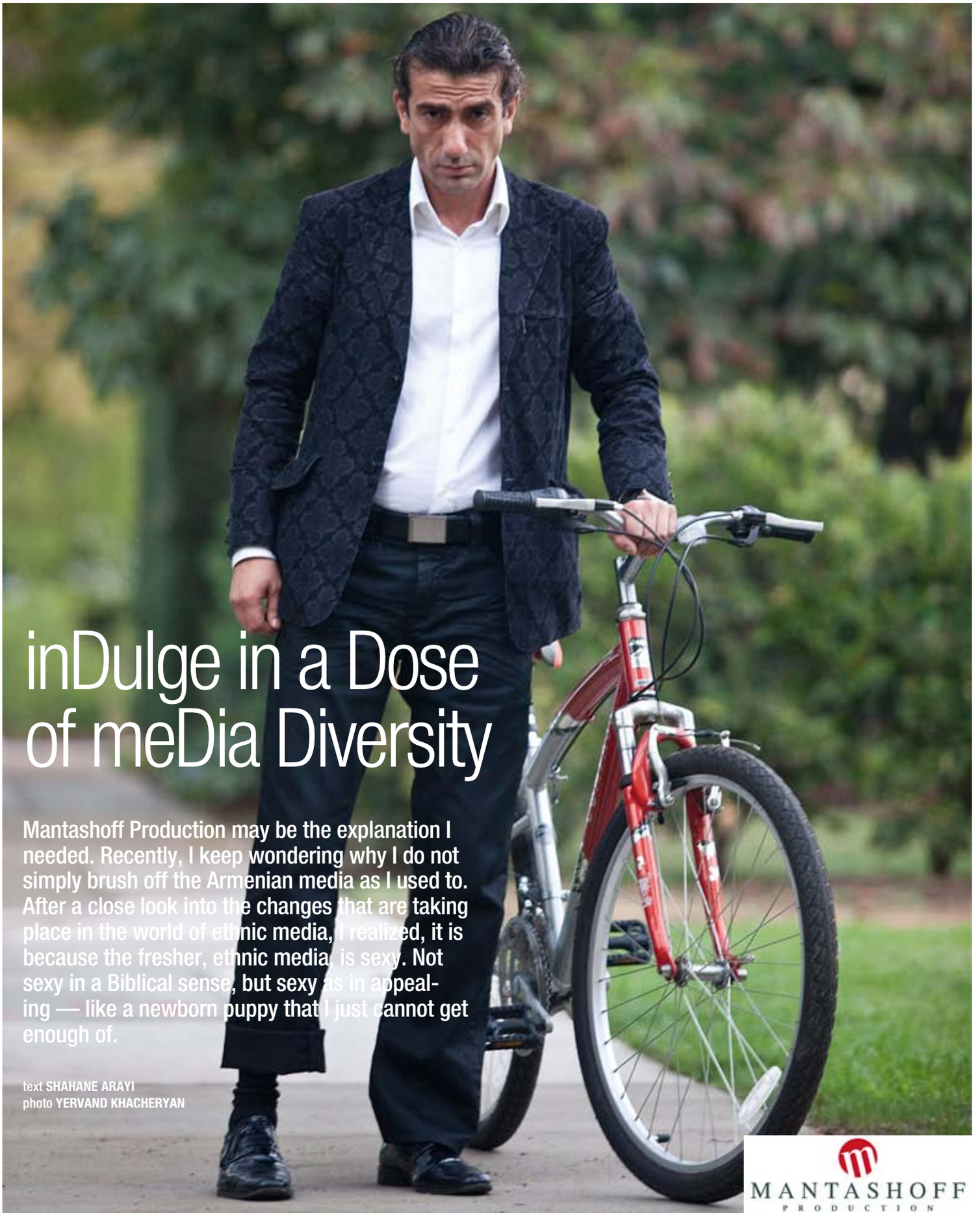


inDulge in a Dose of meDia Diversity

Mantashoff Production may be the explanation I needed. Recently, I keep wondering why I do not simply brush off the Armenian media as I used to. After a close look into the changes that are taking place in the world of ethnic media, I realized, it is because the fresher, ethnic media, is sexy. Not sexy in a Biblical sense, but sexy as in appealing — like a newborn puppy that I just cannot get enough of.

text **SHAHANE ARAYI**
photo **YERVAND KHACHERYAN**



Notes

— The number of adults reached by ethnic media has increased by approximately 16 percent in the last four years in the United States according to New America Media statistics.
— The popularity of Chinese and Korean newspapers continues to increase and have now reached 70 percent and 64 percent, respectively, of their adult populations in the United States.
— Dish Network offers 27 different language channels to its subscribers, one of them being Armenian. Armenian channels can also be found on basic cable, TimeWarner and DirecTV.
— You can watch Mantashoff Production commercials on YouTube.com by simply searching Mantashoff Productions. Judge the *Change* yourself!

In France, Muslim television is booming. In the States, Hispanic television and newspapers, as well as the Asian media, are experiencing a renaissance. The Armenian media in the greater Armenian diaspora is experiencing a never before seen metamorphosis on its own. There are roughly four major Armenian broadcasting channels in the Republic of Armenia (one of which is state owned and operated). Within Los Angeles, where the Armenian population is about one sixth of the population of Armenia, there are just as many, if not more, broadcasting channels. This boom in Los Angeles media outlets could be a manifestation of the Armenian ego, or perhaps just a literal utilization of the First Amendment.

Nonetheless, the change is intriguing.

What makes these ethnic media outlets so appealing? Programs produced are at a higher quality- a distinct change from those produced primarily for the so-called "fresh-off-the-boat" masses. Today, because the quality of the programs is at a level that matches mainstream media and has content more relatable to the ethnic communities, ethnic media is receiving widespread notice everywhere. My desire to get a better look inside the world of the newly developing ethnic media led me to write this article. That is exactly how and why I met Garen Mantashyan.

The founder of Mantashoff Production, Garen Mantashyan, lived a roller-coaster life of creativity prior to his immigration to the United States. Mantashyan spent years making newer, fresher advertising and marketing campaigns for a variety of businesses in post-Soviet Russia and Armenia. Eight years ago, Mantashyan decided to visit Los Angeles, where "magic" happened on a daily basis, or so he imagined. Growing up in Soviet Armenia, the newly independent Republic of Armenia, as well as the newly independent Russia, Mantashyan found the ideology of the West to be an inspiration. The relative freedom of business practices and the support for being as creative as possible held a deep appeal for Mantashyan. He thought that in the West, Armenians were far more advanced in show business, in Armenian language television programs and advertising, than anywhere else in the world. He was in for a big surprise!

When he moved to the States, he was astonished at the sorry state of Armenian television in Los Angeles. He could not believe the poor quality of everything made in the U.S. He was even more caught off guard by the fact that the Armenian community, who always demanded higher standards for everything in other countries, accepted what was on the television at the time. When I asked Mantashyan why he stayed in the States after such a disappointment, he looked at me and said, "I still can't figure out why I stayed here." But speaking with him over coffee in Burbank, I found the answer to my question.

Mantashyan, just as many others who have made ethnic media an important aspect of all media in a place like LA, noticed that he can easily contribute to the Armenian media. This is where Mantashoff Production enters the scene. He founded the firm couple of years ago and began generating television commercials that aired in Los Angeles as well as abroad. After all, if there is a country in any part of the world, there is at least one Armenian living in it. Using his years of experience from Armenia and Russia, he put together a team of professionals, which includes make-up artists, set designers, and editors, that do not simply shoot a video of a product. The team works for days to come up with an effective advertisement for the business or product in question. Next, the production work begins and the firm does not believe in saving money when it comes to putting together a commercial, because in the end, the results demonstrate that you get what you put in.

After the director calls cut and the post-production work is done, Mantashyan knows that there is still much to do before he can deliver the commercial to the client. He usually assembles a focus group — 40-45 randomly chosen people from different backgrounds — who watch the commercials and provide feedback. Depending on the outcomes of the focus group, Mantashoff shows the final product to the client. The company's motto is: quality should always override quantity, which is why special attention is given to each detail in every commercial. Only when the client is financially happy is when Mantashoff has done its job.

The ethnic media in France and United States has been able to divert an audience away from the mainstream to its smaller outlets. The primary reason for their success has been their higher standards and accessibility through the Internet. And since the Internet is the principal medium used for attracting a specific audience, Mantashoff Production parallels the growth of other ethnic outlets, thereby setting a higher bar and new standards for the rest of the media in the Armenian Diaspora.

THE ESSENCE OF FEMININITY



As fashion week comes to an end in New York City, there is quite a buzz around the recent collection of Tamara Pogosian. Blue, green, and gold charmeuse gowns with plunging décolleté flowed down the runway of her Spring/Summer 2010 collection, creating a scene from an enchanting fairytale.

text **MARI GEZALYAN**
photo **C. STEPHEN HURST**
makeup **DIANA MANZANARES**
hair **SARAH KIM**


Ready to Wear
Fall / Winter


Runway Collection
Fall / Winter

Born in Yerevan, raised in Moscow and trained in New York, Pogosian's designs embody the essence of the female form. There is no denying the fact that feminine elegance is the signature of the young designer. For the past two years Tamara has been nominated for the Fashion Group International's Rising Star Award in ready-to-wear. After another successful show with rave reviews, I was able to sit down with the designer to discuss her success and rise in the industry.

There is always something that sparks one's creative interest, something that inspires them. When did you know you wanted to get into the world of fashion?
When I was growing up in Moscow, for a couple of hours a day they had American shows on TV. One of them was a fashion show with Jeanne Beker as the host. I would be glued to the TV every time she was on. A couple of years ago I met her after the Oscar's tents show. It was surreal meeting one of the people who inspired me.

Where did you get your training for design and what was that experience like?


Tamara Pogosian
backstage at
N.Y. Fashion week.

I started my training at Parson's, then later moved to the Fashion Institute of Technology. After finishing my degree I started to do freelance design for Ralph Lauren, Liz Claiborne, Coach, and Calvin Klein. But I always wanted to do my own thing. After September 11, I decided to work on my own line. I remember going to a fashion show of a friend and seeing that if I put myself to it, I too can have my own collection.

What was the process for starting your own line?
I worked on designing my collection for about two years, and then finally in August of 2003 I had my first show in the Hamptons with a group of designers. The following year I did another show a few weeks before fashion week in New York City. But what I didn't like about doing those group shows was that I wasn't able to show my entire collection. That pushed me to do my solo show during fashion week the following year.

With each collection that you create, what is it that inspires you?
When I start a new collection, I go into it with an open mind. I don't limit myself to the possibilities. When I start designing, I allow myself

"WHEN I START DESIGNING I ALLOW MYSELF TO DEVELOP; IT'S AN ORGANIC EXPERIENCE, WHERE I LET MY CREATIVITY RUN FREE."



Runway Collection
Fall / Winter



Tamara Pogosian

to develop; it's an organic experience, where I let my creativity run free. I look at my designs and fabrics as if seeing them for the first time. I think about the woman who feels young, confident in her own skin, and exudes a sense of sexiness. I see this woman on the red carpet or at a black tie dinner.

Speaking of red carpet, have you dressed anyone for an event?

I recently dressed Leven Rambin from "All My Children" who was nominated for an Emmy. I also dressed Katherine Robertson, Brittny Gastineau, and Michelle Krusiec. I am also the stylist for the 2007 TV miniseries, Tin Man and the stylist for singer/song writer Rob Murat's music videos.

What has been your most challenging task thus far as a designer?

I would say designing for other labels. They have their set look, so I don't have the freedom to explore. It is very limiting. Also, during Olympus fashion week September 2006, I was informed two weeks before the show that I was invited to showcase my Spring/Summer collection.

Does being Armenian influence what you produce?

I always try to project my background in my designs. But it's not a visual projection so much as it is a feeling. I try to find a happy balance of Armenian and American culture. My logo is taken from an ancient Armenian coin, representing love and unity. The image that I use is an insignia of who I am. Along with living in Yerevan and spending most of my summers there as a child, I was always fascinated by the way women dressed. Particularly my grandmother and mother - they always wore dresses and heels. It didn't matter what social circles or class they

"WOMEN IN YEREVAN HAVE ALWAYS HAD A WAY OF DEMONSTRATING THEIR FEMININITY REGARDLESS OF THEIR SOCIAL CIRCLES."

"STYLE IS YOUR PERSONAL IDENTITY. MORE THAN FASHION, EVERY PIECE OF CLOTHING IS AN INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE; IT IS AN ART FORM."



Runway Collection
Fall / Winter

were from, women in Yerevan have always had a way of demonstrating their femininity.

What do style and fashion mean to you?

Style is more personal whereas fashion is more than what is shown. Style is the way you want to be seen and a message you want to project to people. What and how you wear clothing represents the person that you are. Style is your personal identity. Every piece of clothing is an individual experience; it is an art form. Unlike fashion, everyone has his or her own sense of style.

What do you believe every woman should have in her closet?

A dress! Women out there no matter what shape, size, height, social background, should own a dress that fits her like a glove. There is nothing more stylish than a woman in a dress. It doesn't matter if the dress is long or short; each individual has a particular style of dress that is flattering to her own body type.

What advice do you have for women when it comes deciding what to wear?

The most important thing about knowing what to wear is to accentuate your best feature. This doesn't mean to bare it all, but rather to wear something that enhances her most attractive features. Be body conscious and work with what you have. Don't dress the way you want your body to be, but how your body is.

What is your favorite process of designing?

I love draping. It is amazing how far you can come from that process when you are all done. I drape all of my dresses. It is a blueprint of where I may end up. I love picking out the fabrics for what I am creating. For my Spring 2006 collection I had printed my own artwork on the fabrics, which was an experience in its own. I tend to work with silk fabrics since they have a flow and movement on their own.

What are some current projects that you are working on?

One of my goals is to open up boutiques in Los Angeles and Miami. I am also working on a jewelry line for my Spring 2010 collection. The main design is going to be my logo, which will be incorporated into bracelets and necklaces. I am always expanding myself and living in New York has given me that fundamental drive. The City pushes me to strive for more. Living in a city like this, the possibilities are endless.

For the past ten years, Tamara has made quite an impression with her signature feminine elegance in the collections of American designers Ralph Lauren and Calvin Klein. With the success of launching her own line, Tamara is taking the fashion world by storm, one catwalk at a time.

More than one Armenia!

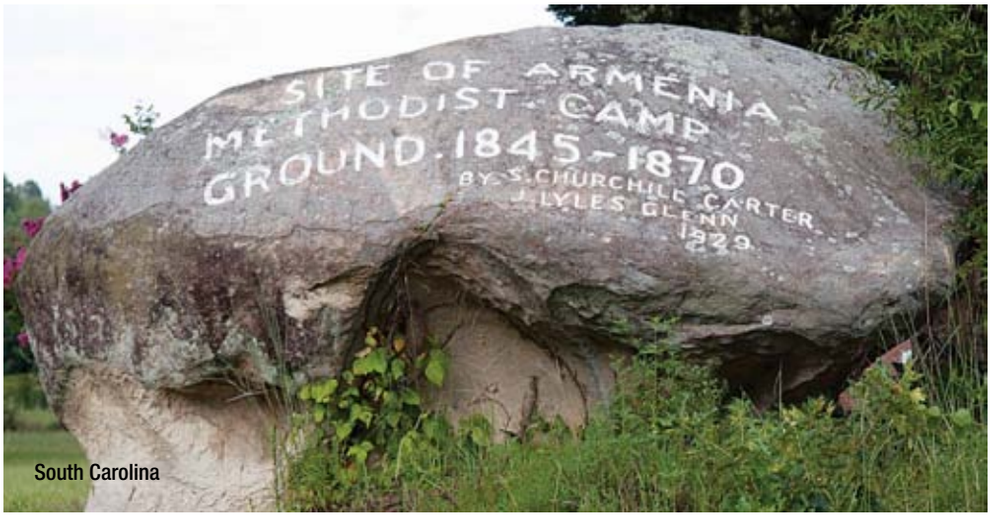
You might think there is only one Armenia, which is far away geographically, but still close to our hearts. However, surprisingly enough, there are three "Armenia" cities in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina.

text **NANE AVAGYAN**
photo **STEPAN PARTAMIAN**





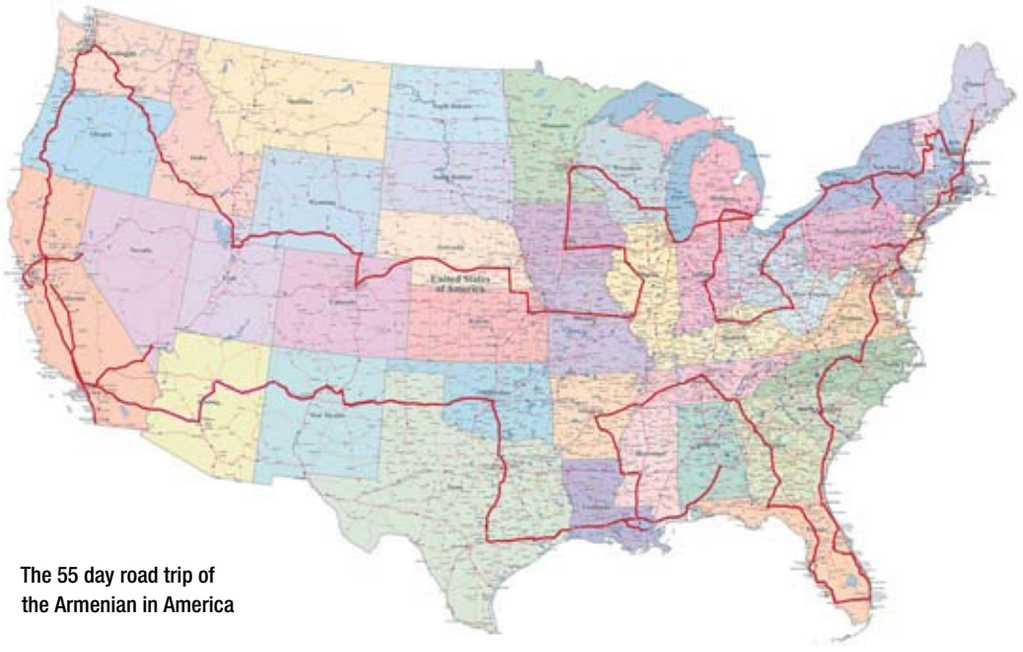
Two Armenian Apostolic churches, Holy Cross (right) and St. Sarkis (left), next to each other in Ocala, Florida.



South Carolina



Pennsylvania



The 55 day road trip of the Armenian in America

Stepan Partamian, who calls himself "the Armenian," documented Armenian landmarks while traveling all over the USA. He spent 55 days on the road in search of "The Armenia in America." The journey took him to 45 U.S. states and more than 400 locations.

He was looking for Armenian landmarks in the U.S including streets with Armenian names, churches, businesses, and community structures. The goal was to document all that has relevance to Armenian identity and culture. Among these locations Stepan Partamian, the Armenian, found three cities named Armenia.

Stepan says, "the Armenian in America" is an ongoing theme in his life. He wants to document the concept of 'Armenian-ness' in the United States, as it is presently perceived by all Americans.

In 2010, Stepan will present his findings in a large-format, high-quality photographic album.

Stepan Partamian, the Armenian, says this journey was made possible through proceeds from the sale of *Yes, We Have: Contributions of American-Armenians to the United States of America*.

Stepan will continue this project throughout the seven continents of the world.

The photos on these pages convey some of the unforgettable experiences, which he had in his road trip.



WE ARE OF ONE BLOOD

The word *Akhpar*, meaning brother in Western Armenian, is a well established word in everyday conversation; it replaces the longer and more etymologically correct word *spyurkahye*, which means "an Armenian from the Diaspora." As the saying goes, it's nothing personal, just a matter of convenience. It would be fair to acknowledge that the relationship between the Armenians who live in the Motherland and representatives of the Diaspora has varied at different periods. During the Soviet era, with the first wave of repatriation, an initial euphoria of a reunion quickly subsided as awareness that the mindsets of each group were quite distinct. It is tempting to assume that we wouldn't have a similar problem in today's context. The term "Armenian Diaspora" is included in the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia as a judicial norm, and that the country has implemented the institution of "dual citizenship." In addition, Armenia is developing along a "free world" model, one easily understood by former residents of the developed world. This assumption, however, would be incorrect in light of the continuing complexities of the relationship between the Diaspora and long-standing residents of the Republic of Armenia (RA). This relationship and its directions is the topic of our conversation with Hranoush Hakobyan, the head of the newly created Ministry of the Diaspora in the Republic of Armenia.

interview **DAVID GRIGORYAN**
photo **SUREN MANVELYAN**

Dossier

Hranoush Hakobyan was born on April 12, 1954.
Ms. Hakobyan graduated from the Department of Applied Mathematics at Yerevan State University in 1975. In 1989 she graduated from the Academy of Social Sciences under the SUCP Central Committee and in 1994 from the Law Department of Yerevan State University.
She is a mathematician, political scientist and Doctor of Jurisprudence.
1983-1985 — Secretary of the LCYU Central Committee.
1985-1990 — First Secretary of the LCYU Central Committee.
1986-1990 — Deputy and member of All-Union LCYU Central Committee Bureau.
1990-1995 — Deputy of the Supreme Council, Deputy Chairman of Standing Committee on Social Security, Ecology and Health Care of the RA.
1995-1996 — Deputy of the Supreme Council, Chairman of Standing Committee on Social, Health Care and Environmental Protection Affairs of the Republic of Armenia.
1995-1997 — Deputy Chairperson of the Supreme Council Standing Committee on Health Care and Social Affairs of the Inter-parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth States.
Since 1996 — Member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union delegation.
1996-1998 — Minister of Social Security of the RA.
1999-2003 — Deputy of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, Member of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs.
2003-2007 — Deputy of the National Assembly, Chairperson of the NA Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture and Youth Affairs.
2007-2008 — Deputy of the National Assembly, Chairperson of the NA Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture and Youth Affairs.
June 2007 — September 2008 — Chairman of the Governmental Committee of Diaspora affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia.
Since October 1, 2008 — Minister of Diaspora.
Awarded the "Order of Friendship among People" and the French "Order of Merit," as well as numerous other awards, certificates of appreciation, honoraria and medals.

"…first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

(Matthew 7:5)

Ms. Hakobyan, when and where did you first encounter the *akhpars*?

I would like to recommend that all Armenian speakers stop using the word *akhpar*, because in certain situations it sounds offensive. The repatriation of Western Armenians to Soviet Armenia, which started in the 1940s, resulted in great contributions to our country. Armenians of the Diaspora enriched our culture, including the fields of science and education; they brought in new approaches, a new outlook, and, most importantly, a new social atmosphere. Long ago in my youth, I had no idea about this categorization of our compatriots. In Gavar, where I was born, there simply were not any Armenians from abroad. I met repatriated members of the Diaspora for the first time at the age of sixteen at Yerevan State University. We had students from abroad in our classes. Pretty soon it became obvious that although we belong to the same nation, we were different in our mentality, principles, and cultural norms.

What was the main difference between the two groups as you encountered them?

As a rule, the Armenian students from abroad were more focused and hard-working; they diligently studied long hours and, as a result, had less free time. We told them, "Why do you spend your days at your desks studying all day long? Let's meet more often, enjoy life a little." But even at that young age our attitude towards life did not fit into their value system — they always had and still maintain a clear order of priorities. In their opinion, it was reasonable to spend most of their time studying, because that was the reason they had come to Armenia. We, on the other hand, had different priorities. We also had different lifestyles; even our culinary preferences were different. Ishly kyufta, a dish that nowadays is a very usual meal for Armenia, was an exotic thing back then, and I tried it for the first time in my college years. My classmates — Armenians from the Diaspora — offered it to me. There is so much to remember… In any case, we, Hayastantsy, Armenians that lived in Armenia, were trying to help them because while they were in their historic Motherland, they were still far from their families and their usual lifestyle. We, the girls in particular, tried to be helpful.

After so many years, did the value system shift, or has it remained the same?

Unfortunately, the majority of Hayastantsies undervalue the importance of studies even now. I think the reason is that we grew up in different social systems. Those who were born in capitalist societies are perfectly aware that they will advance both professionally and socially by acquiring an education, improving their professionalism, and developing their talents. A lot of us here, on the other hand, still have the old Soviet notion that a diploma is more important than the knowledge it represents.

Thanks to the new policies of our government, there is a shift in priorities — education and highly educated individuals are taking the lead positions in society. Moreover, students from Armenia who study in foreign universities become more disciplined, make effective use of their time and rise in their social status upon their return.

How can you explain the fact that in Armenia many people don't seem to pay as much attention to the rule of law?

In other countries with well-established legal systems, citizens are well aware that every instance of infringement upon the law will have consequences. Here in the RA, some people think that there is always a way to avoid punishment. There are many reasons for this phenomenon in my opinion. First, in the recent past, the judicial base of the country was in a rudimentary state. Additionally, there were psychological and attitudinal problems that stemmed from being an occupied land. Because we were deprived of our own government for 700 years, the Armenians acquired a trait of trying to find any and all possible means of avoiding payment to an "outside master." Also, during the Soviet period, our citizens were not in habit of paying taxes, because the taxes were automatically deducted from their salaries. Metaphorically speaking, the taxpayers' imperative was absent in the Armenian blood, because of the need to pay a "foreign uncle." Now the mentality of our people is gradually changing, and we are moving quickly to becoming a more fully developed, lawful state, and our citizens will become as law-abiding as they are abroad.

There is a juicy word: *mounnat*, which means a mixture of chronic dissatisfaction and constant grievances. How would you formulate the main complaint of Diaspora towards Hayastantsies?

For Armenians of the Diaspora, Armenia has always been the land of their dreams. Without seeing it, living here, and witnessing all of the everyday worries, difficulties, and problems, they imagined an ideal country. After we gained independence in the early 1990s, thousands of our compatriots were given the opportunity to visit Armenia. That's when their euphoria clashed with the sometimes cruel realities of everyday life, many not so different than the lives they led abroad. As a result, many of them, unfortunately, became disenchanted. ▸



SOME HAVE A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TO THE FACT THAT THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DIASPORA PURCHASE REAL ESTATE, INVEST IN OTHER TYPES OF PROPERTY, AND OPEN BUSINESSES IN ARMENIA. PERHAPS, IT IS BASED ON A FEAR OF COMPETITION FROM BETTER-TRAINED SPECIALISTS. I ABSOLUTELY DISAGREE WITH SUCH AN OPINION. WE SHOULD DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY FEEL LOVED, WELCOMED AND TAKEN CARE OF.

Didn't they take the transitional period, the earthquake, the war and the blockade into consideration?

Probably not because of their long-anticipated reunion with their Motherland. They thought the moment the USSR collapses, everything will immediately be perfect. Many Armenians from abroad started buying property here and investing in various enterprises. But because it was happening spontaneously, without any regulatory laws in place, many of their aspirations failed. However, there were a significant number of representatives of the Diaspora who were able to achieve great success in Armenia — in business, politics, and sciences. Unfortunately, that is a poorly publicized topic in the Diaspora. This is justifiable. For several generations our foreign compatriots lived in different conditions. The vast majority of them lived in developed democratic societies with well-established rules and traditions, with orderly norms, freedoms of speech and persuasion. Yet in Armenia, they come across a reality that is far from what they were used to. Generations change, but slowly; new people with a new mentality and a new value system must be in place for things to change. Therefore, the claims of the Armenians of the Diaspora toward us are objective and explicable, because a difference in values and expectations is obvious, and a reflection of each group's unique history during long decades of separation.

What features of their mentality do not seem very appealing to you?

You know, one trend I have encountered among our compatriots from abroad, particularly among people who arrive from developed countries, is a sense of being exceptional. For unknown reasons they think that in Armenia they have special privileges allowing them to evade commonly accepted norms and regulations. For example, on some occasions when bringing multiple cars to the Republic from abroad, there were individuals who refused to pay legally established custom fees. Their refusal could have been partially a result of not knowing the rules and regulations. At the same time, the same individuals are law-abiding citizens in the countries of their former residence, where they are perfectly aware that it is unacceptable to bypass the law. Yes, in the initial stages of the formation of our state, when there were few laws and regulations in place, a certain degree of disorder and unregulated relationship could have been understandable. But today, in an era of lawful governance, when the dream of return of our compatriots from all corners of the world is strengthening, the desire of some individuals to be above the law is perplexing. The Hyestantsies quite reasonably object to such attitudes saying that the RA is not just a resort for our compatriots from abroad, where everything should be accessible and easy. I think, soon "both sides" will realize that the law is the same for everyone. Together we should make sure that laws are enforced, and by doing this we will foster progress in our shared Motherland.

It is not a secret that Hayastantsies also have their own grievances against their counterparts abroad — what are these based upon?

The intellectual, spiritual, and material potential of the Armenians abroad is immense. We should do everything in our power to make sure that it is used for the benefit of our Motherland. However, many Hayastantsies think that the purpose of our counterparts abroad is limited to financial assistance, and by no means the activities in Armenia itself. Some have a negative attitude to the fact that the representatives of the Diaspora purchase real estate, invest in other types of property, open businesses, and create workplaces in Armenia. Perhaps it is based on a fear of competition from better-trained specialists. I absolutely disagree with such an opinion. The majority of Armenians, who became the citizens of other countries, were scattered around the world against their will as a result of our harsh, historic past. We should, therefore, understand that Armenia is their Motherland as well. We should do everything in our power to make sure that they feel loved, welcomed and taken care of when they come here. Particularly in light of the fact that many of them come here not to rest and have fun, but to do something useful for Armenia. It goes without saying that they are not obliged to do so. They could have spent their time and money to benefit only their own families and themselves somewhere else, but they were driven by a sense of patriotism and understanding that their Motherland needs them. Therefore, the Hayastantsies should understand this and appreciate their many contributions to our society.

"So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so unto them."

Matthew 7:7-12

Do you suppose there is a possibility of getting rid of mutual distrust?

Definitely. The Ministry of the Diaspora has much to offer in this regard. First, we have to create a friendly working atmosphere in society, and the management of the Ministry of Public Relations. The mass media should help us accomplish this goal. Our ideological leaders and the industry of public relations should join their efforts to work in one direction: that we are one nation and, as an independent state, we should solve all the problems and tasks facing us together.

This can't be an easy task considering that the Diaspora itself is quite diverse.

True, and it requires a differentiated approach. First of all, it represents 7 million people, each of them established individualists by the way. Secondly, it consists of communities in 120 countries, each of which abide by the laws of these countries. Third, it is represented by 33 thousand Armenian organizations. In fact, 79 percent of the Armenians of the Diaspora are not involved in any of those organizations. And finally, the Diaspora itself is a multifaceted, multi-charactered, multiprofessional, multi-partied, multilingual part of our nation with various needs and requirements. I proudly call them ambassadors of Armenia in the countries of their citizenship.

How should we handle this melting pot?

We have decided to implement a differentiated approach to various regions and have created corresponding departments in our Ministry for the Armenian communities of Europe, the Commonwealth countries, the Middle East, the Americas, repatriation, all-Armenian and so on. We did it with the understanding that we cannot use one formula for all circumstances, that each region of the Diaspora has its own needs, interests, and specifics.

Speaking of "the formula," for a long time, Jewish people had a very clear motto: "Next year — in Jerusalem!" It worked! And they are no less individualistic and just as scattered around the globe. Maybe we just don't have a comprehensive formula?

The difference in perception of the idea of homeland between Jewish people and Armenians is obvious. Jews did not have their state for a very long time, so they were driven by one aspiration — to unite, to consolidate their efforts in order to create such a state. In contrast, an organized Armenian Diaspora appeared almost simultaneously with the creation of our state. In 1915, as a result of the Genocide, we were forced to abandon our land en masse, and in 1918 the Independent State of Armenia was declared. So the number one task for Armenians living abroad was the preservation of their national identity. Of course, the problems of survival and adaptation to the new surroundings, integration into a new society were taken care of first, but the most important task was the preservation of our national identity. For almost 100 years, Armenians of the Diaspora created schools, churches, newspapers, cultural centers — in other words, they created an organized structure... and built "bridges" with the Motherland. The Ministry of the Diaspora was founded to coordinate, strengthen and widen those "bridges." In fact, we have found something concrete upon which we will build new "bridges" — the program "Come Home." That is our formula and our ideology. ▸

Face Control

Sergey Lavrov was born in 1950 into an Armenian family from Tbilisi, Georgia, and is presently one of the key figures in the Russian government. He is the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Permanent Member of the Security Council of Russia. He has the rank of Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Russian Federation.



Anastas Mikoyan (1895 - 1978) was born in the small Armenian village of Sanahin and became one of the key political figures of Soviet history. As early as 1919, he was elected in All-Union Central Executive Committee of the Russian Soviet Federation of Socialist Republics. Then, until 1974, he was a Member of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR and the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR. Thus, Mikoyan was an elite member of the organs of Soviet Government for 55 years. In addition, for 54 consecutive years he was a member of the Central Committee of Communist Party. For 40 years he worked as member of Politburo of the Central Committee. Mikoyan started his political career under Vladimir Lenin and retired after Leonid Brezhnev ascended to power.





Boghos Nubar Pasha (1825 - 1899), son of an Armenian merchant from Western Armenia, was born and raised in Smyrna, Turkey, and became one of the prominent socio-political figures of Egypt becoming a three-time Prime Minister (1878-1879, 1884-1888, and 1894-1895). Noubar Pasha also actively participated in the life of the Armenian community of Egypt and the entire Diaspora, helping Armenian refugees who escaped from the Ottoman Empire during the Genocide. For his services to Egypt he was distinguished with the highest honors, awards and honorary titles. Two streets are named after him in largest cities of Egypt, Cairo and Alexandria.



Ara Darzi (Terzian) was born in 1960 into an Armenian family in Iraq, but was raised in Ireland, where he studied medicine at the Royal College of Surgeons, and subsequently obtained the postgraduate degree of MD at Trinity College in Dublin. He later moved to England. In 2007 the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Gordon Braun, appointed Sir Darzi, a prominent practicing surgeon, as the Minister of Health Care in Great Britain.

IN MY CONVERSATIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES THEY SAY THAT ARMENIANS ARE BETTER ORGANIZED, HAVE MORE MEANS AND A BETTER SUPPORT SYSTEM. SO AS THE SAYING GOES, "THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE."
IN HIS SHORT ESSAY, DERENIK DEMERCHIAN LISTED THE PRECISE CHARACTER TRAITS OF OUR NATION, EMPHASIZING THAT WE ARE THE MOST FORGIVING AND GENEROUS NATION.



Not "return," but "come." Why?
We need to have certain conditions and economic prerequisites in place for repatriation. We cannot encourage people by telling them to "come back" and then leave them on the streets. That is why for the time being we say: "Come home, look around, spend your vacation time, think, and then come to a decision." We developed a special program, which we will implement starting this year. We invited approximately 500 young people from the Diaspora (ages 14 to 25) to live here for a while, to feel their native land, to see Sis and Masis from the Khor Virap Hill, to plunge into Sevan Lake, to light candles in the temples of Echmiadzin, and to place flowers around the eternal fire at the Genocide Memorial. I am sure that, after all of this, they will be captivated by Armenia. If every Armenian boy and girl visits Armenia at least once, they will be "baptized" by Armenia. This would solve the problem of preservation of national identity in lands scattered around the world. There is a good slogan: the present of an Armenian from the Diaspora is abroad and his/her past and future is in Armenia!

So the emphasis is on young people and finally, it is not "they owe us," but "we are of the same blood"?
Yes, that's exactly so. For that reason, young people who come here for two-three weeks through the "Come Home" Program, will live with Armenian families. We want them to experience our reality, get a feel of it. The second component of our program is courses in Armenian. Unfortunately, we don't have the capacity presently to support daily Armenian schools in the Diaspora, the number of which exceeds 400, and the number of weekly schools, 700. Sadly, every year, the number of their students decreases — due to the tuition increases many parents simply cannot afford it. Thus, approximately 10 percent of our children abroad go to Armenian schools and 90 percent attend public schools. Considering this state of affairs, we are launching a program of organizing Sunday schools. Rudyard Kipling's famous phrase from the *Jungle Book*: "We are of one blood," is also being implemented in one other program. We have decided to consolidate the Diaspora in groups by professional affiliation, to organize people not in gigantic open forums, but in more focused, professional ones. Their participants can easily find a common language and come to a common set of cultural understandings. For example, after my invitation to the Armenian Architects of the World to participate in a professional forum, we received hundreds of responses in the course of two months. One hundred and forty specialists came from abroad and joined 250 architects from Armenia and Artsakh who also participated in the events. The results were incredible!

"Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow."

Matthew 5:42

While the world is moving towards globalization, perhaps we should not waste our efforts on preservation of our national identity, but conform and assimilate…
In the history of the human race, many nations disappeared from the arena of history, while many other nations preserved their uniqueness. Today, the pressing task is not the assimilation, but the preservation of the identity of ethnic groups, no matter how small in number they may be. This is apparent considering the fact that various organizations participate in numerous international conventions on preservation and protection of national minorities — their rights, language, culture and history. In whichever direction the world may develop and globalize, people are longing for spiritual and cultural differentiation, for pluralism; and small nations in particular resist the idea of assimilation. When it comes to the ideology of our government in regard to Armenian residents of foreign countries, the following is true: our compatriots should be the most law-abiding and loyal citizens of their host country, they should be fully integrated into the economic, political, scientific, and social life of the given society, and at the same time they should not abandon their roots. In fact, during the forum of the Armenian architects, the all-Armenian Association of the Armenian Architects and the All-Armenian Portal of Armenian Architects were created. An example of such a collaboration is the project "City of the World" assigned by the Prime Minister of Armenia for the 2010 Shanghai World Expo.

It seems that in Jewish communities around the world, there are well-developed formal and informal support systems for members of the community. Does the Armenian Diaspora have similar systems in place?
You know, in my conversations with representatives of Jewish communities, they claim the opposite — they say that Armenians are better organized, have more means and a better support system. So as the saying goes, "The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence." But the ability to help each other is not even the most prevalent of our qualities. In his short essay, "The Armenian," author Derenik listed the precise character traits of our nation, emphasizing that we are the most forgiving and generous nation. When it comes to our relationship toward each other and to our homeland, I can say that the more powerful and influential Armenia becomes, the prouder and more enthusiastic we will be to preserve our national identity. During the earthquake in Spitak and the war in Karabakh the organized response of our nation amazed the world. Remember the sense of pride and joy for our nation, the sense of belonging to it, the

victory of our National Chess team in the Chess Olympiad brought? A good role model is contagious; it stimulates others with a desire to become just as good, even better. That's why we want to create a global society of renowned Armenians, so that all Armenians and the world will learn of and admire the success of our people.

If you could change one quality in each group, representatives of the Diaspora and the Hayastantsies, what would that be?

In Hayastantsies I would change their attitude towards the law, allowing them to respect and follow the spirit and letter of the law. In our counterparts abroad I would try to strengthen their confidence towards the work of the government of the RA.

Did you change your attitude towards *Spyurkahies* since becoming the Minister of Diaspora?

Yes, of course! I have become their greatest advocate, and not simply because of my title. By visiting Armenian communities abroad and researching problems that the Diaspora faces, I realized that no one represents their interests in Armenia. That creates a sense of insecurity among diasporan Armenians. I use all my authority and power as a member of the government to resolve problems that are addressed to me. I represent the government and Diasporan Armenians have the right to expect help because the government has a moral and legal obligation to assist them. In fact, the concept of the "Armenia-Diaspora" partnership was developed in collaboration with representatives of the Armenian communities of Spyurk. Much is being accomplished with the consolidation of our efforts and capabilities.

Do you think your stepping into this position will change the attitude towards the Diaspora as 'the goose that laid the golden egg'?

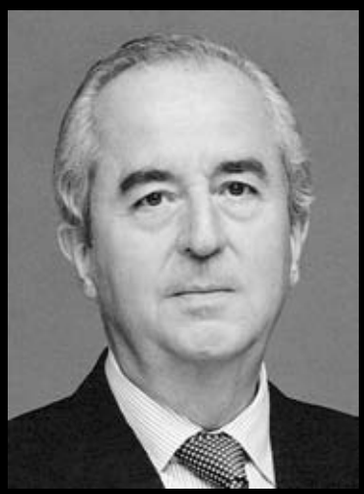
Yes, because we are interested in the intellectual capacities, spiritual potential, the experience and knowledge of Diaspora. It was not a coincidence that during a youth forum in Jermouk last year, the President of Armenia stated in his speech that diasporan Armenians are not obliged to give us "charity" money, but they can invest it in the economy of Armenia and make a profit. He also stressed another attribute of the changed policies of our government — we, too, will help Diasporan Armenians and do everything in our power to defend their interests.

Lawrence of Arabia said, "They [Armenians] know in their blood that it is no use working for wages, even high wages, if you want to get on and be rich…"

I think this opinion is outdated, because it can be applied to all other nations as well. The notion of "wages" has significance for only 20 percent of the population in Armenia, mostly for government employees. The remaining 80 percent have to come up with solutions of how to use their potential, talents, and education and acquire profit. The whole world lives that way!

Face Control

Edouard Balladur was born in 1929 in Smyrna, Turkey into an Armenian family with long-standing ties to France. From 1986-1988, he was the Minister of Economy and Finance of France in the cabinet of Jacques Chirac, who was his political ally. Later he served as Prime Minister under the last cabinet led by Francois Mitterrand (1993-1995). As a candidate for the presidency of France in 1995, he came in third and was defeated in the first round by his former ally, Chirac. Soon thereafter he retired from politics.





Patrick Devedjian (born in 1944) was a close adviser of Nicolas Sarkozy since the 1990s. In 1976 he took part in the foundation of the Rally for the Republic (RPR) party. In 1983, Devedjian was elected Mayor of Antony, a position he would hold until 2002 with re-elections in 1989, 1995, and 2001. In 1986, he also became a Deputy in the National Assembly from the Hauts-de-Seine department and was re-elected four times in 1988, 1993, 1997 and 2002. Presently Devedjian is the Leader of France's governing party Union for a Popular Movement. He also has close ties with the Armenian community and is an active proponent of rights of the representatives of the Armenian Diaspora and for the Acceptance of the Armenian Genocide.

Benon Vahe Sevan was born in 1937 in Cypress, and educated at the prestigious Melkonian Educational Institute in Nicosia. He moved to the U.S. in 1966, where he found employment at the United Nations, reaching the position of Deputy General Secretary of the United Nations in 1991. In 1996 Sevan was the head of the United Nations' Oil-for-Food Program. He retired in 2005, after accusations of bribery in exchange for oil contracts in Iraq in the mid-1990s. Presently, he resides in Cypress.





Edward P. Djerejian was born in 1939. He is one of the United States' most distinguished diplomats, whose career has spanned the administrations of eight U.S. presidents from John F. Kennedy to William J. Clinton. He is the Founding Director of the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University and Managing Partner of Djerejian Global Consultancies.

Reaching the Universe

preparation of the material
LIANNA ZAKHARIAN



Reference

Felix Aharonian
Professor, Dublin University; Head of High Energy Astrophysics Theory Group at Max Plank Institute (Heidelberg, Germany); Head of French-German Laboratory of High Energy Cosmic Gamma Ray Astronomy; member of the Scientific Advisory Council of Oxford University. His monograph *Very High Energy Cosmic Gamma Radiation* is the first textbook written on a new scientific discipline – Gamma-ray Astronomy. The scope of his research includes exploring the origins of Galactic Cosmic Rays; non-thermal processes in the Galactic Center; processes of acceleration and radiation of electrons and protons in pulsar winds and micro-quasars; gamma-ray and neutrino production mechanisms in different astrophysical environments and a range of other observations conducted in the context of high energy gamma-ray phenomena at the HESS project in Namibia. The list of articles and reports presented by Prof. Aharonian in the course of the last five years alone takes several pages and includes the world's top scientific centers and universities, including Harvard, MIT, the University of Chicago, Stanford, Caltech, and many more. His group received the prestigious European Science Descartes Award for collaboration in the HESS experiment.

Suren Manvelyan

I was born, raised and graduated from high school in Yerevan. I received my Bachelors of Science degree and my Ph.D. from the Moscow Institute for Engineering and Physics (MEPI). It was a unique institute, founded right after the World War II for the purpose of creating a new generation of nuclear physicists. By the time I graduated in 1975, it was an "open" institute, which mainly prepared specialists who could conduct research in all fields of physics in the most extreme conditions. Although I am a theoretical physicist, the training we received at the Institute was different from most academic universities. It included a wide range of practical knowledge such as a variety of hands-on manual and technical skills, even carpentry. It was very difficult to study there, but I later realized all the advantages of such an education.
Around that same time, when I was working on my Ph.D. dissertation, a new discipline was developing at the Department of Nuclear Physics at MEPI– they started registering gamma-radiation and high energy particles that were reaching the Earth's atmosphere from space. They took me on as a theoretical physicist to conduct the quantitative parts of the experiments. I started working with them but at the same time I was quite envious of the work happening in other departments at MEPI. It was a time of new findings in physics; so much was going on around me. Every year there were new discoveries in nuclear physics, in optical physics, in lasers…and yet, our department was working on something that was of ambiguous importance. Nowadays this discipline is called Astro-Particles Physics and it's one of the most fashionable and fast-developing directions of physics in Europe and America. I was fortunate that I happened to be in the right place at the right time, at the very source of the field of astro-particles physics. The results of 30 years of our work paved a path for today's generations of astro-physicists.
In 1987, I returned to Armenia and gathered a group of scientists at the Yerevan Institute of Physics with a goal of developing systems of gamma-rays detectors based on principles of Cherenkov telescopes. It was decided that we would place our equipment on top of Mount Aragats, near Burakan Observatory. However, as a result of the socio-political changes and the break-up of the Soviet Union, all the funding and work had come to halt. The only way we could continue our work was by relocating our research abroad. Part of the equipment was transported first to Germany and then to La Palma, Canary Islands, one of the best locations for astronomical observations. Upon the completion of the project HEGRA in La Palma, we got involved in a new international experiment called HESS. Our task was to make new large Cherenkov telescopes in Namibia to conduct our observations. As a result of the collaboration, our group received the prestigious European Science Descartes Award.
Later on in 1991, the Nobel Prize recipient, James Kronin, invited me to join him at the University of Chicago. Afterwards I headed the Astro-Particle Physics Group at Max Plank Institute in Heidelberg, Germany and simultaneously continued my work at the University of Dublin, Ireland.

THE VERY-HIGH-ENERGY GAMMA-RAY SKY

The current interest toward high-energy particle astrophysics has several causes. First of all, the fundamental principles of our discipline are represented by the theory of two disciplines - the astrophysics and high-energy physics. In the past, scientists hypothesized that there are gamma-quants in space, but they could not imagine that there will be such effective accelerators of particles in cosmos. That is when our research came to play - we detect high-energy particles with a great efficiency, which allows us to have a basis for understanding of the processes that take place in space. We can detect sources representing different galactic and super-galactic populations – supernova remnants, pulsar wind nebulae, giant molecular clouds, star formation regions and much more. One should have knowledge in many other disciplines of physics: thermodynamics, quantum mechanics, and plasma physics, in order to comprehend our findings to the fullest extent. If one likes physics, it is extremely interesting. The fact that we can detect gamma-rays from space and observe them is a great discovery in itself. They represent the last window into cosmic electromagnetic radiation.
Then there is the psychological aspect to our field of physics. One of the specifics of our research is that it can be conducted by a relatively small group of scientists. In contrast, the institutions that study high-energy processes must have very large number of people: hundreds in the past, thousands of scientists in the current context, all working together to ensure the success of these vast, expensive projects. Each individual works for ten to fifteen years on a small task. In a sense the human factor is lost; people lose their individuality in such large groups; they become cogs in a gigantic machine. As a result, the work becomes less interesting to them. When I first met Nobel Prize Winner James Kronin, he shared with me, "When I was very young we worked in a group of three or four physicists. We were full of enthusiasm in conducting our own research. Now it has all turned into sort of a gigantic industrial machine. And it doesn't matter whether one is a new graduate student or a Nobel-winning physicist. So I switched to astrophysics." That explains the popularity of our field among physicists; many new physics graduates prefer to come to us and work in our relatively small groups because of this sense of importance of each individual in our research.
Another important factor is money. Gamma-ray astronomy research can be conducted with relatively small funds, as opposed to high-energy physics experiments which require funding in the billions of dollars. Big experiments, such as the giant accelerators or the Supercollider in Europe, are a result of collaboration between many countries and huge spending. That could pose great obstacles in current situation of the global economy. In contrast, the astro-particle field does not require such big capital investments: so more and more institutions gear their research towards the very-high energy gamma-ray research with its relatively small budgetary requirements.

ARMENIA

This final factor brings us to the possibility of developing high-energy gamma-ray astrophysics in Armenia. With the present state of funding of fundamental fields of science it would be impossible to conduct large-scale research projects in Armenia. It is clear that we have to select fields that were, first of all, traditionally developed in Armenia to ensure that we have specialists in that field. Secondly, these science disciplines should be financially viable for our country. I think that specialization presents a unique opportunity for our small nation. First of all, it doesn't require huge spending. We also have the intellectual resources - the astrophysicists who live and work in Armenia. Now we need a new way of thinking; we should see ourselves in the broader framework of the global scientific community. We should get rid of the Soviet era mentality when it comes to scientific advancement. One example: we had an accelerator in Armenia, naturally, it was financed by the central Soviet government. A similar accelerator existed in Germany. The Germans shut theirs down long ago because it was clear that even such an advanced economy as Germany could not independently finance its operation. They joined in the global efforts in the Super-Collider experiment. But in Armenia there are these nostalgic notions of advancing fundamental fields of science locally. I think we should choose a smaller scale approach. We should choose a field that we were traditionally good at and incorporate our country in contemporary scientific research, becoming maybe a small, but essential part of it. The astro-particles physics is an ideal field in that sense because Armenia was traditionally famous for astrophysics.
Even with my busy schedule, I always try to make time to visit Armenia. Someday I am planning to return permanently to Yerevan where my mother, brother and relatives live.

fragile

What else, other than porcelain and women's bodies can reflect the fragile nature of a dream? Caution! The future depends on which dreams are shattered today. Remember that our reality and everything in this world is someone else's dream come true.

photo **ARNOS MARTIROSYAN**
makeup **CHRISTINA VARDANYAN**
model **LUSINE SAHAKYAN**
collection **"ARMENIAN ORIGINAL PLATE"**
by **RUBEN ANGALADYAN**

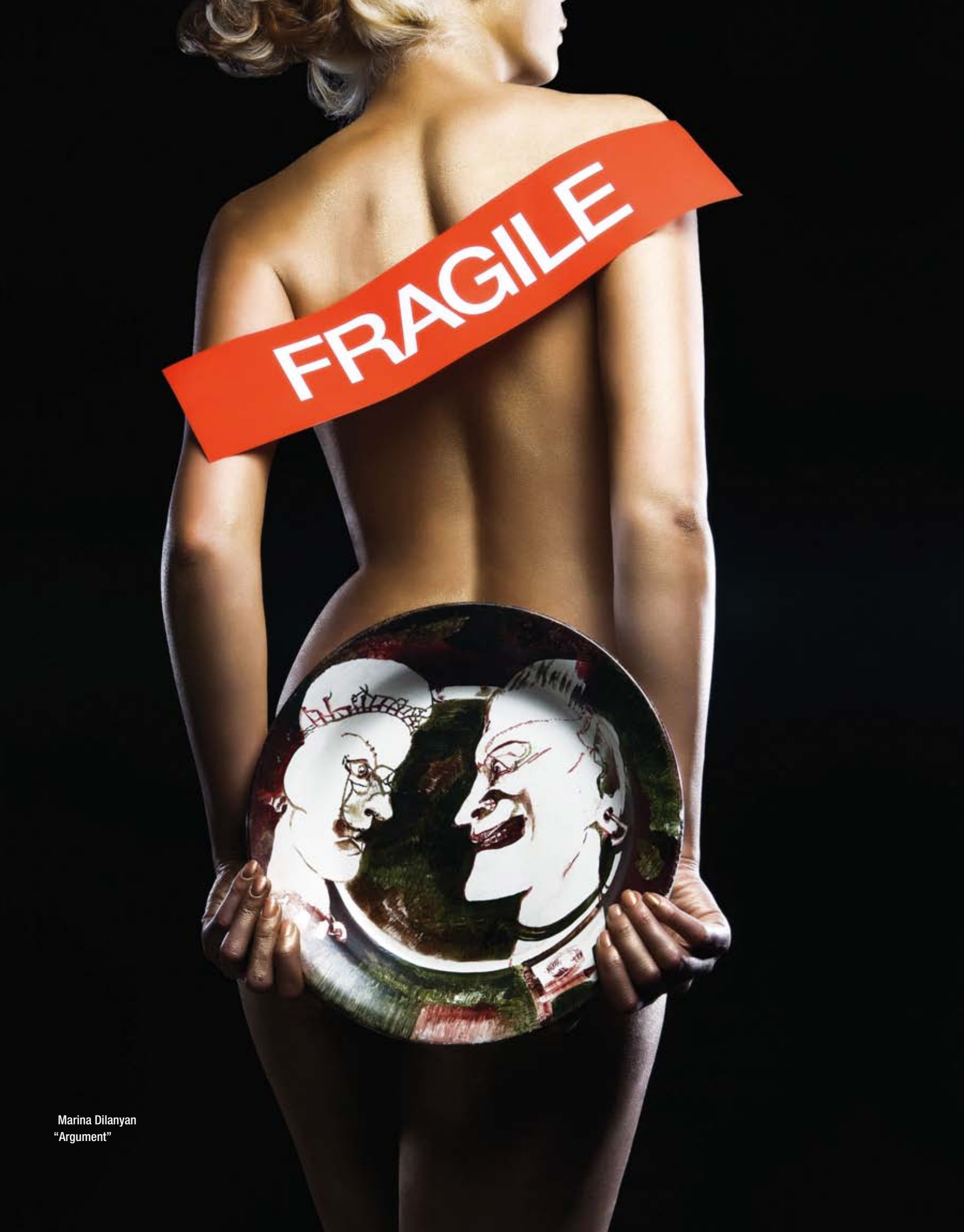


Edward Kharazyan
"The Apple"



Manvel Madoyan
"Our Models"





Marina Dilanyan
"Argument"



Samvel Hambartzumyan
"Flirting"



A Time of Revelation

Yerevan hosted yet another rock event: the legendary band Uriah Heep performed its first concert in Armenia for fans of classic rock. The visit of the British group, which was formed in 1969, to the nation's capital is part of the world tour marking their 40th anniversary. In its lifetime, Uriah Heep has recorded 34 albums (out of which 12 are live) and sold 30 million records worldwide. The most recognizable of the band's songs, including "July Morning" sounded under the roof of the Sports and Concerts Center.

Opportunities for Glendale's youth

As the largest Armenian community outside of Armenia, it is vital to create opportunities for its youth. The Unified Young Armenians (UYA) offers free Armenian language classes to Armenian students, in addition to classes on Armenian history and culture. It is also essential to have a building, an *agoumb* (a club) for Armenian youth to feel comfortable and safe. Such a building has been built to cater to the needs of Armenian youth and is located adjacent to the Saint Mary's church on Chestnut in Glendale, CA and includes a gym, classrooms, a conference room, reception hall and a youth room.

Postcards from the Past

The exhibition named My Dear Brother: Armenians in Turkey 100 Years Ago opened in Yerevan's Moscow theatre. It put on a display of 500 postcards from 1900-1910, depicting Armenian churches, schools, hotels, restaurants and factories owned by our compatriots, showing once again how entrepreneurially successful the Armenians living in Turkey were. The cards were printed in the beginning of the last century in the Ottoman Empire and represent a small part of the collection of 4,000 postcards owned by Italian Orlando Columeno (whose mother was Armenian). Due to the efforts of Turkish journalist Osman Koker, this exhibition was shown in Turkey in 2006 for 12 days. The event drew in the largest number of visitors registered, in comparison with other similar events in Istanbul.



Church Nacional

The first Armenian Church in Spain was sanctified in the city that was home to Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dali, Antonio Gaudi, Jose Carreras and Montserrat Caballe. One of the city's Catholic chapels in a Barcelona suburb was leased for 30 years by the Armenian Apostolic Church from the City Council. And in Barcelona proper, near the Royal Palace, an Armenian stone-cross was installed to mark the Armenian-Catalonian friendship. Now, 500 Barcelona Armenians can pray or baptize and wed their children in their own Armenian Church.

60th annual Artists' Ball

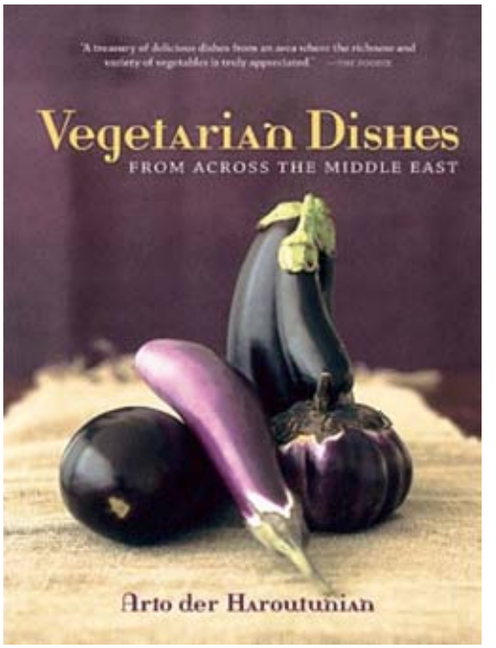
On September 26, 2009, the New York Armenian Students' Association held their annual art exhibit followed by the 60th annual Artists' Ball the next day. Each year, the event allows up and coming Armenian artists to showcase their work while a growing number of attendees enjoy the art, drinks and dancing.

And the award goes to…

Eric Nazarian was awarded the $10,000 Lillian & Varnum Paul Screenwriting Award for his screenplay, "Music for Strangers."

Behind IT Mirrors

From now on, all the educational materials of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) will be available on-line: the presentation of a mirror site of the MIT's OpenCourseWare (OCW) took place in Yerevan. MIT granted the right to maintain the mirror site to the educational fund, Aib. The server is connected to the local network of the Yerevan State University and to the network ARENA, which is used by 32 Armenian schools and universities. The project was presented by Aib's director David Saakian. After the presentation there was a lecture by David Yan, PhD in physics and mathematics, a winner of the Russian Government's prize for the Achievements in Science and Technology, the Chairman of Aib, the Chairman and Founder of the famous ABBY (known for its widely popular electronic dictionary Lingvo). The theme of his lecture was 'From Education to Success - Entrepreneurship in the 21st century'. Today ABBY has more than 30 million customers in 130 countries.

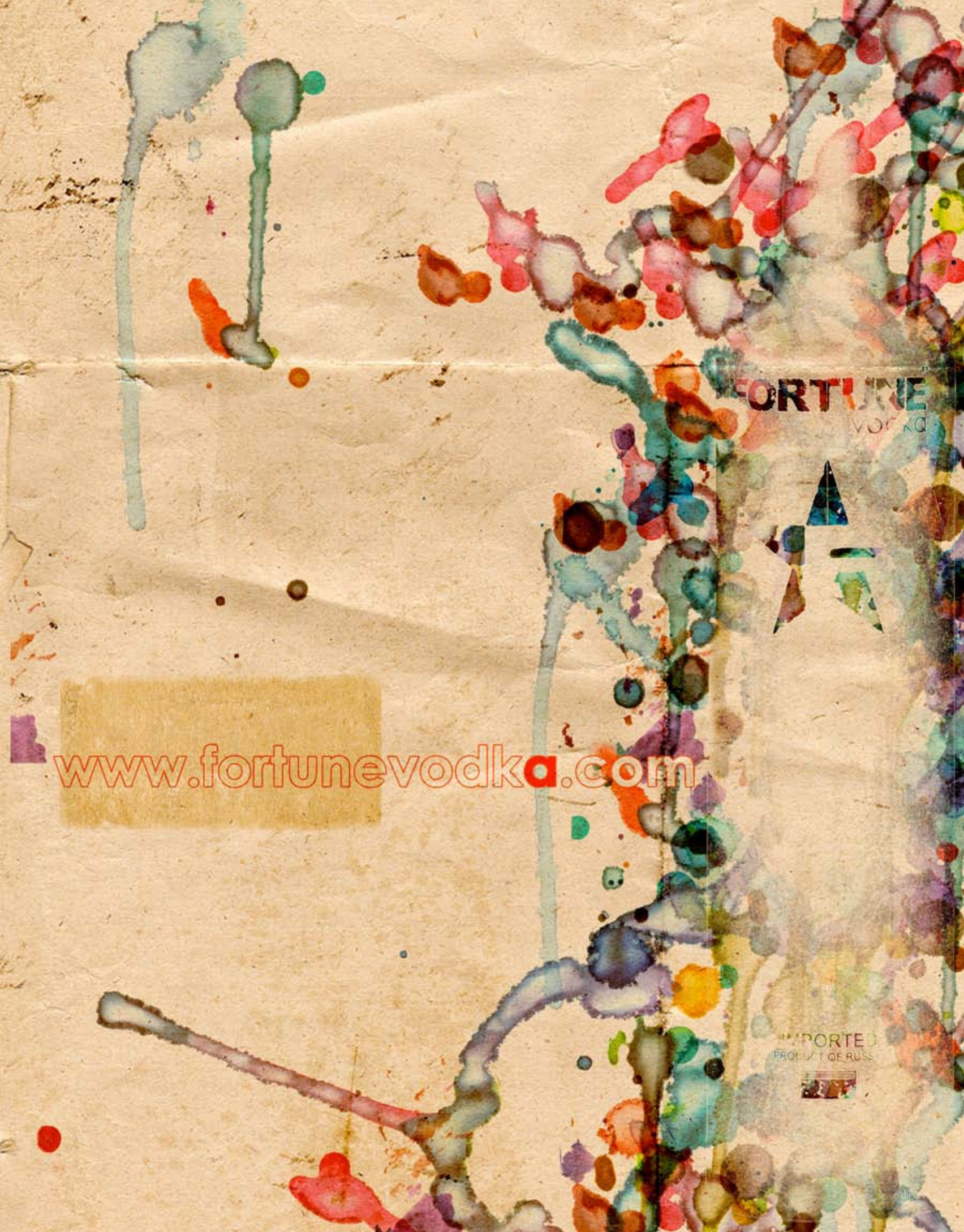


Vegetarian is in!

Due to popular demand for vegetarian and Middle Eastern food, a cookbook of 250 recipes, *Vegetarian Dishes from Across the Middle East*, written by Arto der Haroutunian was republished and released on October 1, 2009.

Free money for Armenian students

Students and parents, there are thousands of dollars available in educational grants, including money for being born an Armenian. For instance, the Barkey and Satenie Aranosian Education Merit Award is a monetary award given to students with good grades. The Virginia and Henry Apelian Scholarship on the other hand, is granted to students who not only do well in their studies, but are also involved in their communities. Then, there is the Nanor Krikorian Memorial Scholarship that is awarded to students who are involved in the Armenian community and are ready to make use of their degree and assist Armenia in the future. Type in Armenian scholarships into a search engine and go to school for less.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Ambassador of Opportunity

Can one person represent a nation? Probably not; particularly if we are talking about a nation as large and diverse as Mexico. However, one person can symbolize the concepts that highlight the essence of that nation, and be the incarnation of the ideas that make all of its diversity somewhat coherent. Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana, Ambassador of Mexico to the U.S., is just such a person. He is a testimony to Mexico as the land of opportunity and of hope and a representative of a people of extraordinary generosity and talent.

interview **EUGENE BALAYAN**
photo **COURTESY OF THE EMBASSY OF MEXICO IN THE US**



A great speaker and master of rhetoric, the Ambassador is never equivocal or overly "diplomatic" in his speech. He is open and frank about his views and passions. An athlete as well as an intellectual, a man of cosmopolitan thought, he is also assertive in his patriotism and reverence for all that Mexico means to him and his family.

How and why did a second-generation immigrant, a descendant of refugees, become his country's representative to its principal diplomatic counterpart? Yerevan learned the answers from His Excellency himself.

Tell us about the story of your family and how it came to be in Mexico.

I am the son of refugees on both sides. My paternal grandfather fled from the Bolsheviks in Russia and my grandmother escaped the genocide. They ended up, separately, in Italy and met in Venice. When Mussolini came to power, my grandfather felt that he had already seen the same sights in Russia, where he was an aid to Kerensky and a functionary of the Provisional government, and in Turkey. Educated at the Armenian seminary in Venice he spoke nine languages, including English. At the time he was considering moving to Canada, but he had also read a lot about Mexico. He told my grandmother to stay behind and wait for him to travel ahead and explore if it would be suitable for them to relocate. When he arrived in Veracruz, he immediately fell in love with Mexico. He wrote to my grandmother telling her to join him. When she caught up with him, they were still planning to eventually travel to Canada. But since she felt the same way as he did, they decided to stay in Mexico.

My mother is a Spanish Civil War refugee from Catalonia, her family fled from Franco's regime. On both sides my families arrived to Mexico with nothing, and Mexico gave them the opportunity to rebuild their lives from scratch.

Mexico — the promised land?

Very few people realize the importance that Mexico had as a safe haven for people fleeing from revolutions, wars, coups and other disasters. It happened to both of my families — genocide survivors and political refugees. What is even less known in this country is the fact that when Jews began fleeing Central Europe in the late 30s, the U.S. did not allow them to enter, but Mexico granted them asylum. Hence, the noticeably large Ashkenazi Jewish community that we have in Mexico City. Many years later during the era of military coups, dirty wars and purges in South America, from the 60s to the 80s, large numbers of Argentines, Brazilians, Chileans and Uruguayans arrived in Mexico. More recently, there was a new wave of Guatemalan refugees fleeing from the civil war at home. Today, they are all full-fledged citizens.

Was it because of political agenda of the Mexican government of the day, or the sheer hospitality and good will of the people?

This was something that transcended those in power and their political goals or ideology. There has always been a very broadly based consensus on how important the refugee and asylum policies were to our nation. It did not matter what the refugees were fleeing from and what their political allegiances were — Mexicans would always welcome them with open arms and open hearts. They never discriminated between the Spanish anarchists, South American liberals, Lebanese entrepreneurs or genocide survivors.

Thus you are the perfect ambassador for Mexico, its perfect representative…

Ever since I took the post I have been extremely honored and proud to serve my country. This is the most important bilateral relationship that Mexico has, and it's not an easy job. Some days I feel like I am a mix between a psychiatrist, firefighter, a football referee and a mayor. I sometimes joke that it would have been a lot easier if we were on the other side of the ocean. With the exception of the Bureau of Veteran Affairs, we have an agenda with every single department and agency of the United States administration, as well as local and state governments throughout America. If you ask me why I have dedicated 15 years of my life to serving in the diplomatic corps, I think, it has to do with my roots. The reasons why my parents had to leave their respective countries and where I come from and where I was born compelled me to give back to Mexico through public service, while reflecting profoundly on my personal and professional credo. I am a strong believer that the world community should be guided by a-rules-based international system, the responsibility to protect is paramount among them. No matter the circumstances, we always have to step in when violations of human rights are taking place.

How are Armenians and Armenia reflected in the public mind of an average Mexican?

Mexicans are generally very aware of what is happening in the world, and they tend to be geographically savvy. They might not be able to point out Armenia on the map straight away, but they would know where it is approximately. At least you are not going to get anything like: "What? Albanian?" There have always been aspects of daily interaction that would keep Mexicans aware of Armenia. For example, there was a toy store in Mexico City called "Ara". I don't think there is a single child in my generation who has not been there at least once in their life. And everybody knew that the owner of the shop, Mr. Arakelian, was an Armenian.

What would you recommend someone who is planning to visit Mexico?

First of all, Mexico is not just pretty beaches and margaritas. Certainly, we have stunning resorts, and the ones on the Pacific coast are very different from those on the Caribbean. But there is a vast country between our coastlines. It is full of fascinating sites from the pre-Colombian era, as well as very colorful and exquisite colonial towns, of which Oaxaca is one of my personal favorites. There are few places on the face on the Earth with the kind of people, art, traditions, gastronomy that make every corner of Mexico, high or low, a magical experience. At the same time, Mexico is recognized for its booming cosmopolitan centers, with a very vibrant cultural and social life. Mind you, Mexico City is home to the oldest university in the Americas — UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico), of which my father was the president. I also played in the Pumas second division team, UNAM's professional soccer team, so I have a very strong bond to this institution.

So is Mexico a major contributor to world culture?

Mexico is very interesting because it has one of most vibrant, cutting-edge contemporary cultures, but also because of its impressive past and rich history. Here you encounter everything, from the Aztecs and the Olmecs to one of the most fascinating periods of the human history — the 1930s — when the most notable personalities from all over the world seemed to converge on Mexico. Everyone from Trotsky to Dali, from Malreaux to Edward Weston, to Tina Modotti and Luis Bunuel, were all part of Mexico's intellectual and artistic elite society. It was such a milieu of cultural effervescence, that it left a permanent mark on world culture as we know it. Even today, it would be impossible to imagine any form of art or self-expression, from fine arts to cinema, from popular music and architecture, without Mexican names. I think that Mexico will always be one of the world's cultural powerhouses.

Interests?

I am a soccer junkie. I'm still playing in a Montgomery County League, which is actually very diverse — we have Americans, and we also have a Jamaican, a Colombian, a Bolivian, a Nigerian and two or three Mexicans. I also follow my two teams, Barcelona and Pumas. Other than that, I love music, and I cook. I can boast that I make one of the meanest risottos in Washington, DC. But of course, with any free time I have, the priority goes to the light of my life — our two small daughters, one-year old, Ani (an Armenian name), a Washingtonian, and our 4-year old Laia (a Catalonian name), a New Yorker.

Any plans to visit Armenia?

The last time I went there was in 1990, and it was still part of the Soviet Union. I was impressed by the natural beauty of the country, the tenacity of the people and the importance of and the reverence toward its national history. I would like to see the new independent Armenia, and I am looking forward to such opportunity.



Armenian Capitals

In the third millenium BCE a centralized kingdom had risen and was known in the Sumerian inscriptions (circa 2,800 BCE) as the Armenian Kingdom Aratta (an early Mesopotamian variant of the name Ararat or Urartu). Many scholars believe that the metallurgical smelting center of Metsamor, near Yerevan, Armenia, was the capital of the kingdom of Aratta. The name Armenia was recorded in the Akkadian cuneiform inscriptions around 2,300 BCE by King Naram-Sin as Armani or Armanum. Ancient Armenian Kingdoms, spreading between the Caspian, Black and Mediterranean Seas, have played an important role in the cultural, political, social and economic history of the world. At the forefront of these prominent Armenian states were the prosperous Armenian capitals. The capital of present-day Armenia has a special place in our hearts as we have adopted the name for our magazine, but we do recognize that the Armenian history contains thousands of years of rich, cultural centers besides Yerevan.

Van/Tushpa

The word "van" in Armenian means "a place of living." This ancient Armenian capital was established in the beginning of the 9th century BCE. It was known as Tushpa or Tosp in the ancient records while it served as the capital of the Armenian Kingdom of Van, also known as Urartu, from the 9th through 7th centuries BCE. Located on a hilltop to the West of Lake Van, the city is currently in Turkey. Van had 12 Armenian churches.



Armavir

According to Urartuan inscription, Armavir was built by King Argishti in 776 BCE. Known as Sardarabad up until 1932 when it came to be called Hoktemberian. After the fall of the Achaemenid Empire in 330 BCE, the ruler of the region, Yervand Orontid, proclaimed himself king of Armenia and established the city as the capital. Ancient artifacts have been discovered including obsidian instruments, bronze objects and pottery as well as Greek inscriptions documenting the political situation in the first century BCE.



Yervandashat

Yervandashat was founded in the 3rd century BCE by kind Yervand/Orontes after the Arax river shifted its course leaving the old capital Armavir dry. Yervandashat was destroyed by the Persian army circa 360 ACE. Remains of the old gardens and palaces of the capital have been discovered during the archaelogocal excavations. Some of the ancient traces of the city such as walls, streets and buildings have been preserved.



Artashat

Still a modern city in the Ararat Province of Armenia, it was founded as the capital in the 2nd century BCE by King Artashes/Artaxias I the Kind, remaining interchangeably until the 5th century ACE. This city served as a commercial and cultural center, containing one of the first Armenian theatres. Plutarch and Strago referred to Artashat as Armenian Carthage, deeming it a large and beautiful city.





Tigranakert

As the Armenian Empire expanded under King Tigran the Great, the capital shifted towards its new center in the Alznik province of Greater Armenia, located in present-day Turkey. Built in the 1st century BCE, the city was named Tigranakert (literally Tigran's built) and had a population of 100,000 inhabitants. Like its predecessor, this capital served as an important commercial and cultural center, described as rich, beautiful, and admired by all. Tigranakert remained a significant city until the 12th century ACE.



Vagharshapat

Funded by Vardkes Manuk circa 570 BCE, it was renamed and declared capital by King Vagharsh in the 2nd century ACE. It is currently known as Echmiadzin (The Only Begotten One in Armenian). After Armenia became the first nation to adopt Christianity in 301 ACE, the city became a significant spiritual center. The Cathedral of Echmiadzin presently serves as the seat of the Catholicos and Supreme Patriarch of the Armenian Church.

Dvin
Dvin is one of the ancient cities, founded by Khosrov II in the 4th century ACE and served as the Armenian capital during the Arsacid Dynasty. After the fall of the Arsacid Dynasty in the 5th century, it continued to serve as the capital of the Armenian province under the Armenian nobles and, after 7th century, under Arab rule. It was referred to as Dabil by the Arabs and "the Great Capital" in other sources.

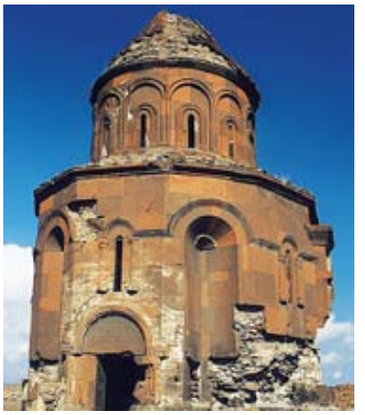


Bagaran
Located in the Armavir Province of present-day Armenia, Bagaran translates to "God's Place." It was founded in the third century ACE by King Yervand IV, but lost its importance soon after the fall of the Yervanduni/Orontid Dynasty in the 2nd century ACE. Bagaran later served as a spiritual center in Bagratid Armenia in the 9th century and was destroyed in the 14th century.



Yerevan
Formerly known as Erebuni, Yerevan serves as the current capital of Armenia. In 782 BCE, King Argishti I erected the fortress-city of Erebuni as one of the strategic centers for the Armenian Kingdom of Van/Urartu. The city has served as a commercial and cultural center throughout history. Yerevan became the capital of Armenia in 1918, when Armenia established its first Democratic Republic, continuing to serve as the capital throughout Soviet Armenia and present-day Armenia. Yerevan is now 2791 years old, making it one of the oldest existing cities in the modern world, with over one million in population.





Ani
The city of Ani is also known as the city of 1001 churches and at one point home to the Armenian Catholicos housing over 500 priests. Bagratid ruler Ashot III declared Ani the Armenian capital in the 10th century, going from a small fortress to a large, medieval city. Ani's strategic location placed the city in control of trade routes between the Far East and Western Europe. Modern excavations have found ancient churches as well as the royal palace of the Bagratids. It was surrendered to the Byzantines in the 11th century.



Kars
Kars served as the Armenian capital of the Bagratid territory in the 10th century for a short period of time. Though the capital later shifted to Ani, Kars became a capital of the smaller kingdom of Vanand in the 11th century. Due to its strategic location atop a hill, the citadel served defensive purposes until the 19th century. In 1921, in accordance to the Turkish-Russian Treaty, this historic Armenian city was given to Turkey.



Yerazgavors
Also known as Shirakavan, the city is currently located in the Shirak Marz (province) of the Republic of Armenia. King Smbat I was crowned in Yerazgavors during the 9th century, and the city has also served as a fortress in its past.

Arshakavan
This short-lived capital of Armenia was founded by King Arshak II in the 4th century ACE. Arshak II Arsacid attempted to strengthen the monarchy by bolstering the royal army and creating a population of 150,000 in order to remain strong against the Persians. But disagreements with the nobles of Armenia led to the city's demise.



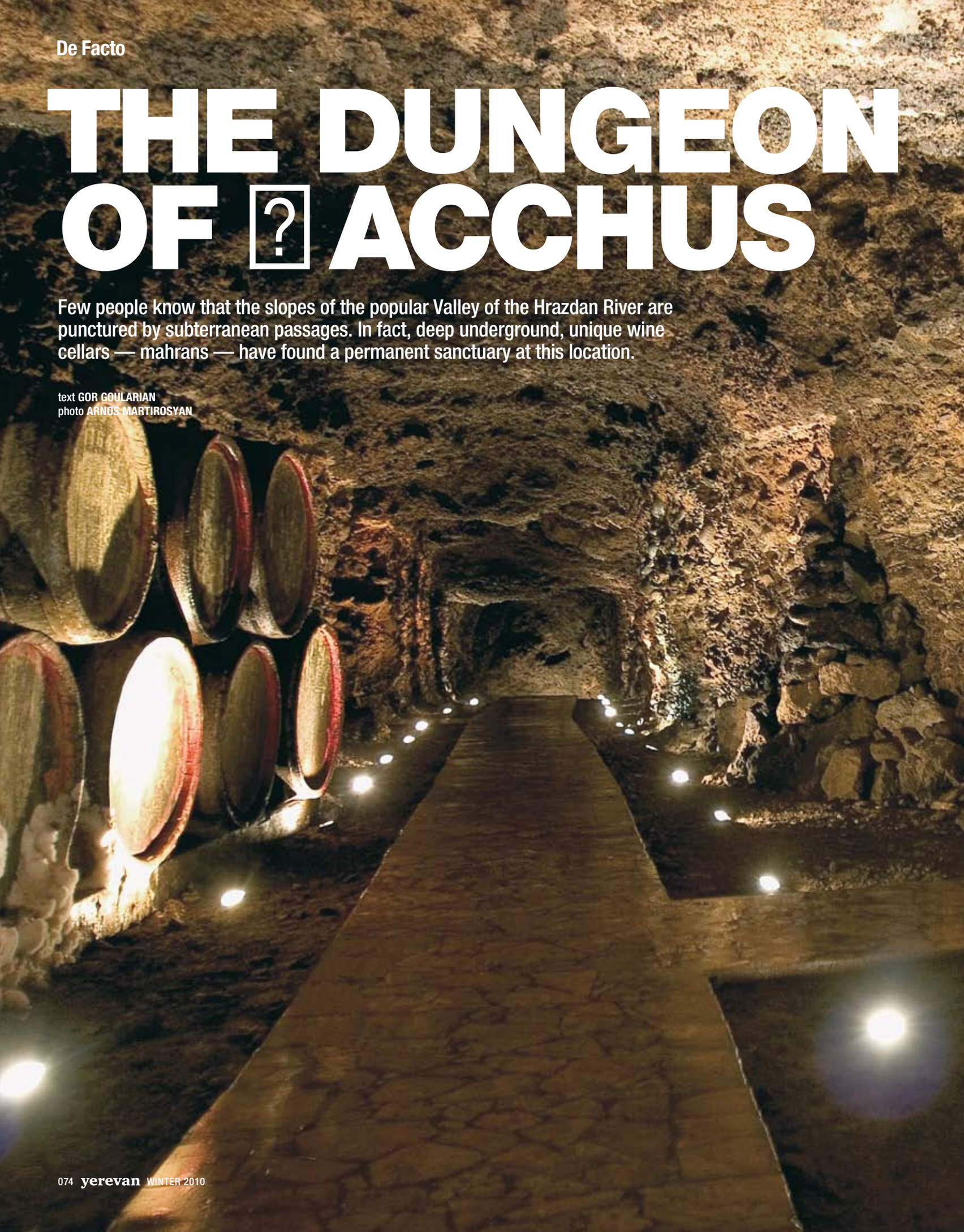
Sis, Cilician Armenia
The impregnable fortress-city of Vakha was the first capital of the Kingdom of Armenian Cilicia (1078-1375). As the Kingdom expanded, the capital was moved to Sis, which became one of the most strategic cities during the Crusades and one of the flourishing and artistic centers of the Renaissance. The city of Sis boasted a royal palace, churches, libraries, schools and was the seat to the Holy See of the Catholicosate in the 13th century. Cilicia was eventually destroyed by the Mamluks of Egypt in 1375.

The capitals shifted with the different dynasties of Armenia, marking prosperous times in history. This Top List does not take into account other capitals of the ancient Armenian kingdoms such as Hayasa, Commagene, Pokr Hayk (Armenia Minor), Sophene, Syunik, Vaspurakan/Artsrunid and other Armenian states spread out across historic Armenian lands. It is also worth noting Stepanakert, capital of the not-yet recognized Armenian Republic of Nagorno-Karabagh (Artsakh). The ancient name of Stepanakert is Vararakn which literally means "rapid creek" in Armenian. *Mayraqaghak* (capital in Armenian) literally means the Mother City, and Yerevan now serves as a strong center for all Armenians worldwide regardless of their spoken dialect or place of birth. And all Armenians can always call themselves Yerevantsi (Yerevanians).

THE DUNGEON OF ? ACCHUS

Few people know that the slopes of the popular Valley of the Hrazdan River are punctured by subterranean passages. In fact, deep underground, unique wine cellars — mahrans — have found a permanent sanctuary at this location.

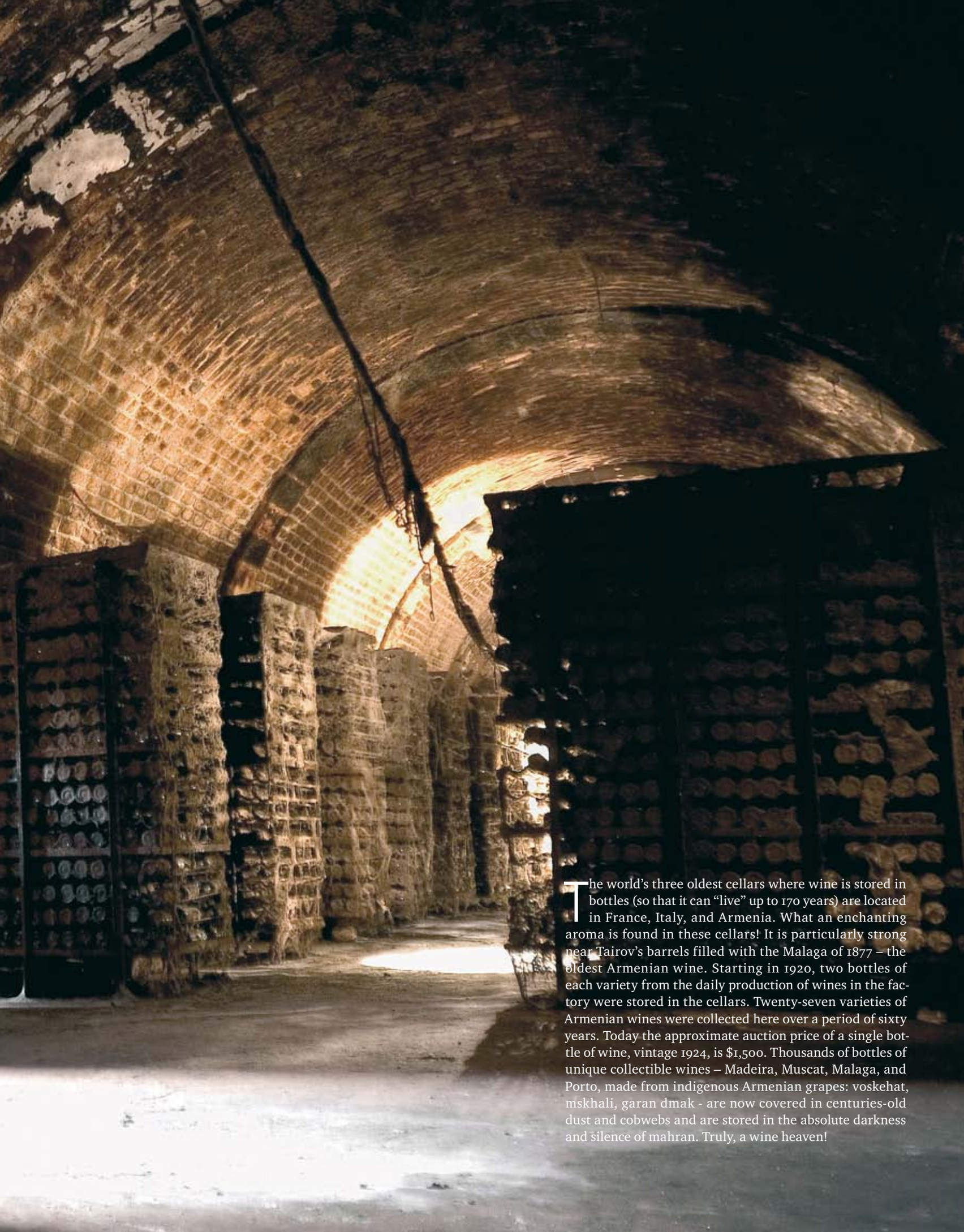
text **GOR GOULARIAN**
photo **ARNOS MARTIROSYAN**





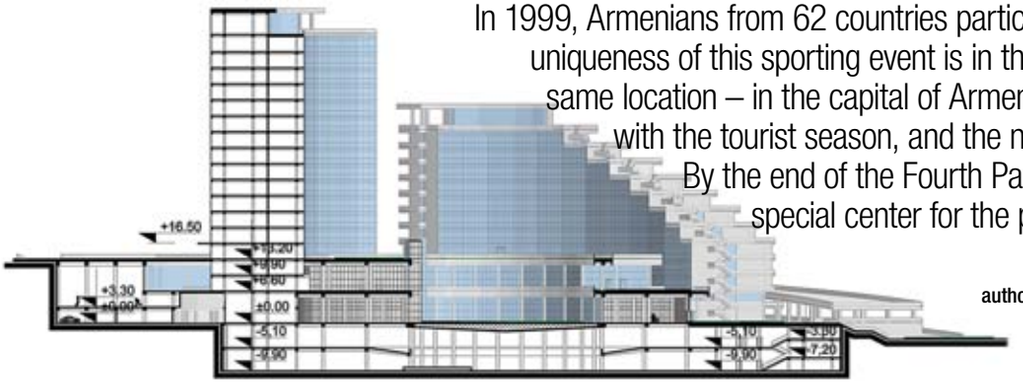
The wine cellars are located in the underground caves of the Erivan Fort, which was destroyed by the terrible earthquake of 1858. On the fourth subterranean level, Madeira from 1902 was stored in old Shoustov barrels from France. The visitor will find that it is hard to breathe in the extremely moist air. Although humid, the stable atmospheric conditions are one of the prerequisites of storing wine – a sensitive and capricious beverage. The first barrels of wine were placed in this cellar in 1863 by the merchant Nerses Tairyants. These look quite miniscule next to the gigantic 15-ton wine barrels made of oak. Emptied out long ago, they are lined up in a stone hall with intermittently leaking walls, thirty meters below ground. Although far underneath the earth, this damp hall is the entrance to a complex of underground passages – "catacombs" of Erivan. Long ago they were used to deliver food and water to the fort during times of siege. Later, the grapes harvested in the vineyards of Dalma were delivered through the tunnels.





The world's three oldest cellars where wine is stored in bottles (so that it can "live" up to 170 years) are located in France, Italy, and Armenia. What an enchanting aroma is found in these cellars! It is particularly strong near Tairov's barrels filled with the Malaga of 1877 – the oldest Armenian wine. Starting in 1920, two bottles of each variety from the daily production of wines in the factory were stored in the cellars. Twenty-seven varieties of Armenian wines were collected here over a period of sixty years. Today the approximate auction price of a single bottle of wine, vintage 1924, is $1,500. Thousands of bottles of unique collectible wines – Madeira, Muscat, Malaga, and Porto, made from indigenous Armenian grapes: voskehat, mskhali, garan dmak - are now covered in centuries-old dust and cobwebs and are stored in the absolute darkness and silence of mahran. Truly, a wine heaven!

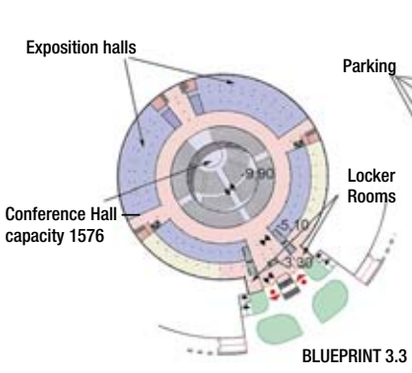
Center of the Pan-Armenian Games



In 1999, Armenians from 62 countries participated in the First Pan-Armenian Games. The uniqueness of this sporting event is in the fact that each time it takes place at the same location – in the capital of Armenia, Yerevan. Traditionally, the Games coincide with the tourist season, and the number of participants continuously grows. By the end of the Fourth Pan-Armenian Games in 2007, the need for a special center for the participants had become apparent.

author of the project **ASHOT KAZARIAN**





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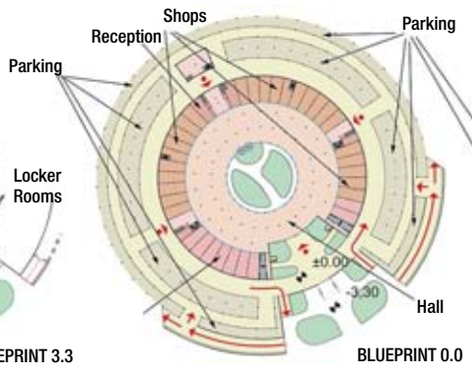

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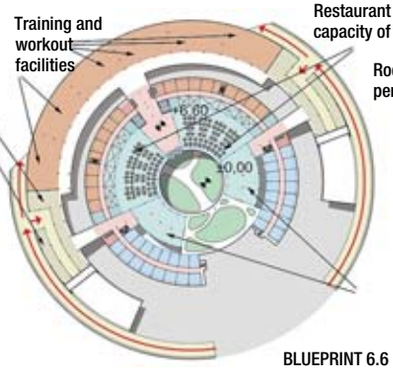

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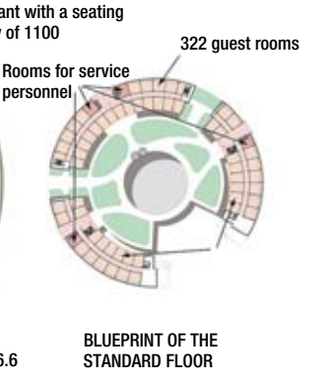

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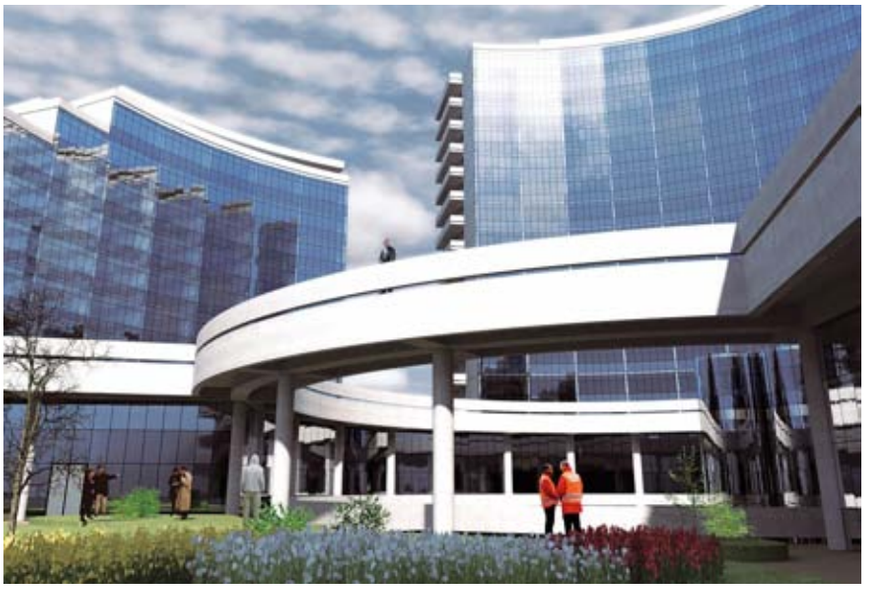
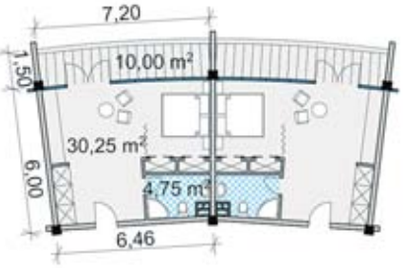












The construction site of the sports complex for the Pan-Armenian Games is on the land adjacent to Brasilia Square, which is the site of several sport facilities, including Hrazdan Stadium. The project consists of two main components, administrative/hotel and residential. The first component includes a business center, grand hall, conference hall, restaurant with a seating capacity for 1100 people, and parking for 800 vehicles. The hotel has 18 floors, with 322 guest rooms, and will accommodate the participants during the games. The living quarters of the center include three structures with 1412 guest rooms, accommodating three thousand people. In contrast with the formal style of the administrative/hotel complex, the designs for the living quarters are more dynamic. Both parts of the sports complex are connected by a large park, with an amphitheatre in its center and adjacent sport courts. The dominant design feature is a circle symbolizing eternity and the Olympic spirit. The project received the First Prize of the International Competition of Diploma Projects IPOPAE in Samara, Russia.

Dreams on canvas

text **NARE GARIBYAN**
photo **TIGRAN TOVMASYAN**

Rays of light stream into the studio through large, vertical windows and skylights nestled in the high ceiling, into an open space with lots of breathing room. An easel stands in a corner, upon which sits a horizontal painting of variegated color with free flowing shapes, paired with the artist's palette surrounded by brushes and paint tubes. In juxtaposition to this artist's space is a meditation room with a mat placed in the center facing a prayer nook. This is the studio of artist Edward Zakarian; a space not just for sculpting and painting, but for creating a higher version of one's self.



At the studio's threshold is a sculpture of a woman adorned in plum and dark mahogany coloration in fluid motion with a meditative visage. It is entitled "To the Century of Aquarius." The inspiration behind this sculpture comes down to Zakarian's essence as he adamantly states that "meditation and creating art are my two main focuses in life." Both of these aspects are found in this sculpture. Astrological experts explain that we are entering the century of Aquarius, which means that a renewal of life is on its way because the process of self-realization has become more active. He excitedly exclaims that "in a certain portion of mankind, the quality of the person is changing based on the impulse towards sophistication."



Further inside the studio is a large painting at center stage of a grandiose masculine face surrounded by his grayish white hair like the mane of a lion. But the strands of hair also look like waves of energy protruding out and actively "Searching for the Truth," the title of the painting. Zakarian elaborates on this piece stating, "I believe the purpose in life is to search for the truth, which is a journey that is not encompassed by one moment, but takes lifetimes to find."



Note

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, Surrealism is "a twentieth century movement in art and literature, which sought to release the creativity of the unconscious mind, often by combining unrelated images in a strange way."
Surrealism was officially heralded to begin by the publication of *The Surrealist Manifesto* in 1924 by French poet Andre Breton. According to the manifesto, surrealism is "Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express — verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner — the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by the thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern."
Renowned surrealist artists: Salvador Dali, Rene Magritte, Yves Tanguy, Joan Miro, Max Ernst, and Giorgio de Chirico.

A truly evolved and open-minded artist must dig deep inside to find meaningful expression. A great responsibility for an artist is to develop an aesthetic that is both philosophical and integreated.

The concept of how a painting can affect the viewer's inner psyche based upon the spirit the painting imbues is a valid one. As I viewed the painting "Searching the Truth," a sense of calmness seeped in, which lead us to discuss the idea that if the inner world is negative, then the negative is expressed and if the inner world is positive, the positive is expressed. He states that "artists, such as a painter, a sculptor, or a musician, express their essence in the work created." Painting is not just about stringing together a composition of color on canvas, but poses a "great responsibility for the artist to create a philosophical and integrated piece of work." This aesthetic is not only evident in his work, but holds true for the artists he admires, such as Dali, Leonardo Da Vinci, Bosch, Kochar, and Saryan.

The personal style of this meditative artist revolves around surrealism and the concept that "a piece of art must have a high purpose, a spirit, craftsmanship, and technique." This is fitting for Zakarian as his themes revolve around the inner world and his inner search is the catalyst to create art. In his mind's eye "a serious artist can only be a serious artist in the subconscious and anything outside this perspective is outdated." ▸

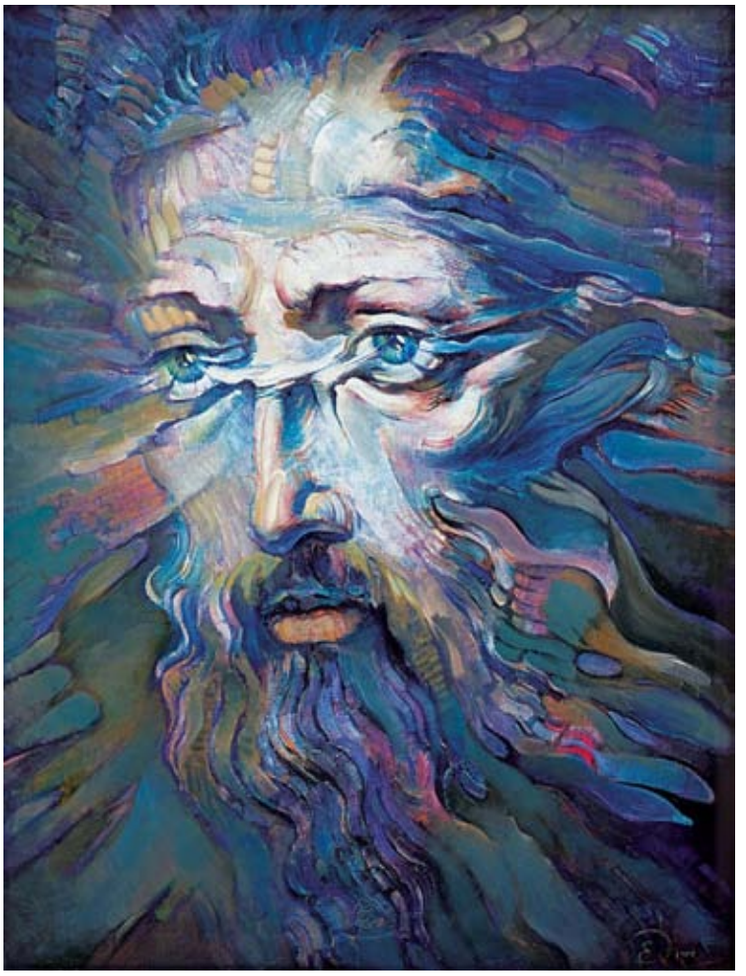
“Meditation and creating art are my two main focuses in life. Each one of my pieces has a high purpose, a spirit, a craftmanship, and a technique. If I do not paint, sculpt, or meditate, then I am sick.”



Edward Zakarian is a sculptor, a painter, a meditative thinker, and a yoga and karate enthusiast. All of these manifestations have come to fruition from his inner struggles during early adulthood and from his experiences as a child in Armenia under Soviet rule. In his pre-teen years, Zakarian began sketching what he saw in his sleep inspired by his grandfather’s stories from Kars. He attended the Terlemezyan Art College and continued his studies at the Yerevan Art Institute’s sculpture department. After receiving his diploma in 1971, he served a year in the Soviet Army. It was this life altering experience as a solider that intensified his inner search to find his true self. “I saw corruption and irregularity and came to the conclusion that the system was completely built on a shaky foundation based on false pretenses.” Due to this disillusionment, young Edward turned to a world of vice but when he started studying karate, which was just beginning to develop in Armenia, he drastically changed his lifestyle and began to further delve into explorations of eastern philosophies, including Raja Yoga.

This led him to attract like-minded individuals from all walks of life with varying ages, which included students, professors and artists. Inevitably, in 1977, these individuals became active members of the Anthroposophy movement and began a local grouping in Armenia. The movement, based out of Switzerland, is a philosophy of spirituality based upon the teachings of Rudolf Steiner. The group would often meet at Edward’s studio and





"Searching for the Truth"
Oil on canvas, 24x30 inches



"Blessing"
Bronze, 27 inches

"Hot Summer"
Bronze, 25 inches

"To the Century of Aquarius"
Bronze, 25 inches

"Mystery of the Moon"
Mixed media, 24x30 inches



participate in conferences to discuss the teachings. On occasion, until 1990, they went on extensive camping trips to meditate and search for their true selves, both individually and collectively.

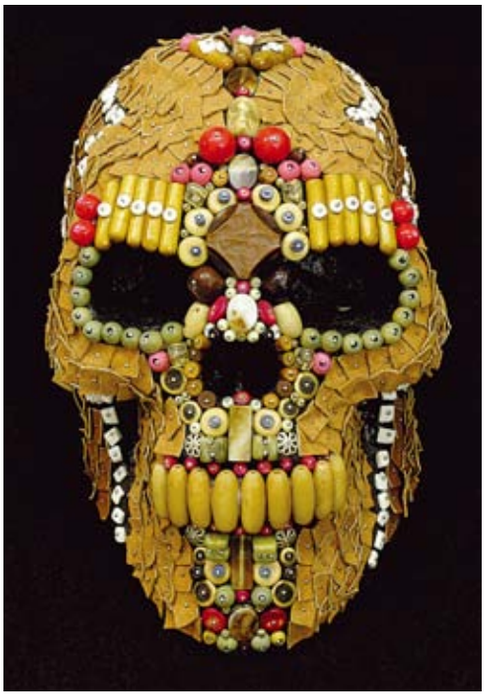
It is clear how these experiences shaped this formative artist and have become the building blocks on which he constructed his personal style. Edward Zakarian continues to create art and his work has been presented in art expos. The most notable was the 2005 Regency Club Art Expo in Los Angeles. He has also participated in art expos in San Francisco and Las Vegas. Currently, he is working on new pieces that are further embedded in his inner world as he continues to make new discoveries in his psyche that fuel his art.

A true artist balances his or her energies to create a piece of art and at the same time maintain and enhance their inner spirit. This process is challenging in a world when art market trends are in fashion. When it comes down to it, to be a truly evolved and open-minded artist, one must dig deep inside to find meaningful expression. Zakarian does this by simultaneously creating art and reinventing his being to reach a higher level of inner peace because, as he puts it, "if I do not paint, sculpt, or meditate then I am sick."

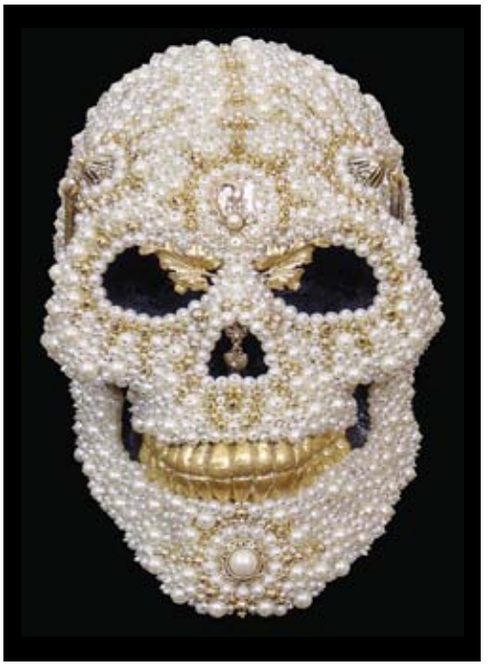
UNCONVENTIONAL CREATIONS

text **NARE GARIBYAN**
photo **PEJ BEHDARVAND AND COURTESY OF GALERIE CARLOS CARDENAS**













Los Angeles, Portland, Miami, New York, Milan, Paris, London, Oslo, Stockholm, Brussels and Frankfurt are all places that tourists list on their travel itineraries. All of these renowned cities are not just linked together because travelers flock there to see the sights; all of these destinations have something else in common. At one time or another, these cities have showcased the work of Amy Sarkisian in solo or group exhibitions.

Sarkisian's jeweled skulls are inspired by cultures that celebrate the dead by decorating skulls and bones in honor of loved ones. The skull series features jewelry she inherited from her grandmother. Ink portrait drawings with exaggerated facial features are given birth by her experiment to use one of the most traditional mediums: ink on paper. Personas carved into apples dried in the sun feature her quirky and whimsical side. All of these are part of Amy Sarkisian's art repertoire. She comments that "when I look at my work in retrospect, the theme that resurfaces in my work is taking something that is dark, or monstrous, or grotesque and then trying to lighten it or neutralize it with humor or beauty." She does not have a set medium and each time a new idea is in the works, she decides upon the means to best express the idea. Sarkisian states that she loves "working with beads, decorative, intricate, and repetitive."

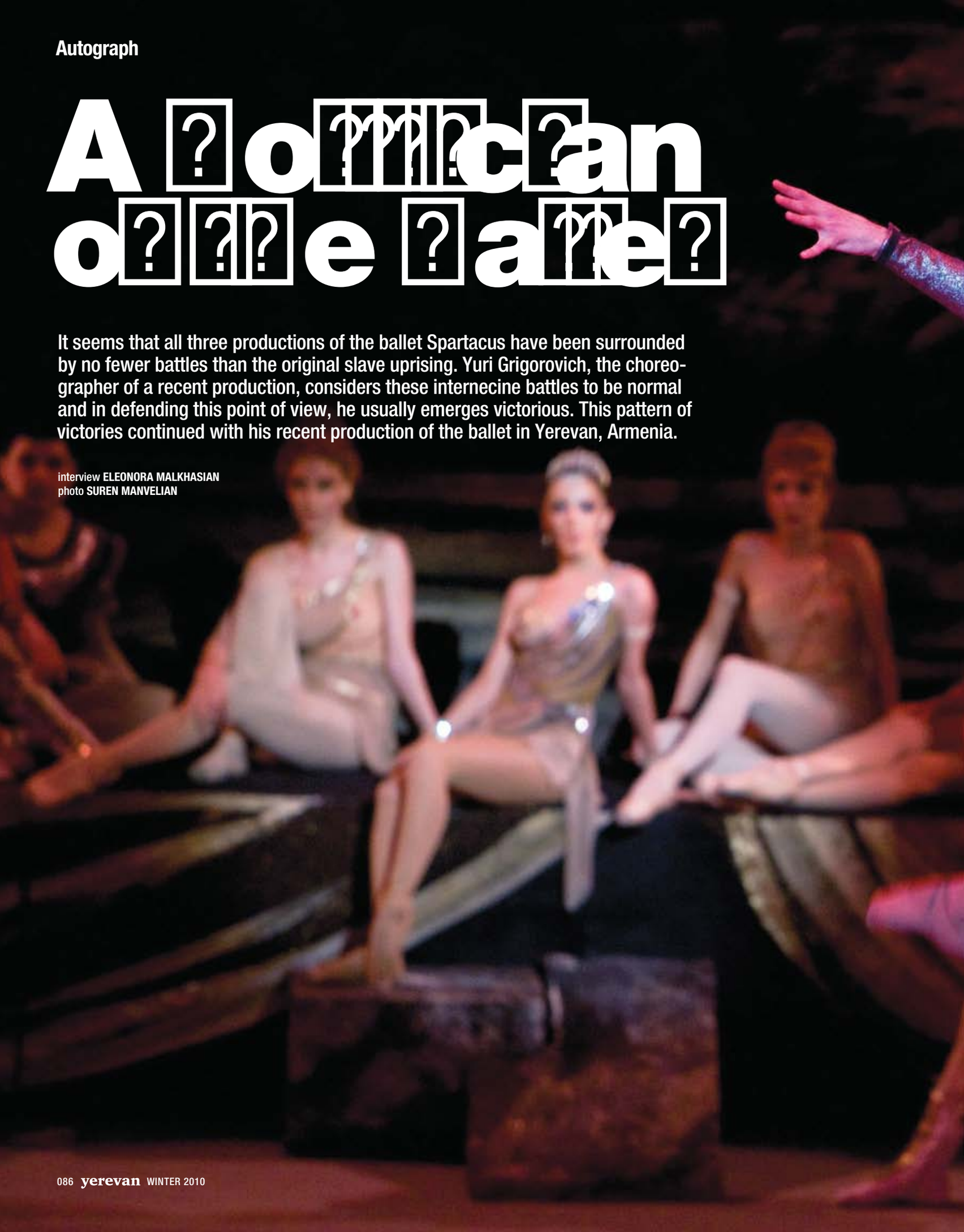
The trigger behind her creative zeal that has produced such varied work stems from an experience in the sixth grade when Amy was assigned to write a paper about an artist. During her research she came across the artwork of Jackson Pollack and from that point on became fascinated by avant-garde and contemporary art.

Amy Sarkisian is part Armenian on her father's side and Irish-German on her mother's. Growing up in Cleveland, Ohio, she came to Los Angeles to pursue an MFA degree at UCLA and continues to create in the Los Angeles area.

A ?o??c?an o??e ?a??e?

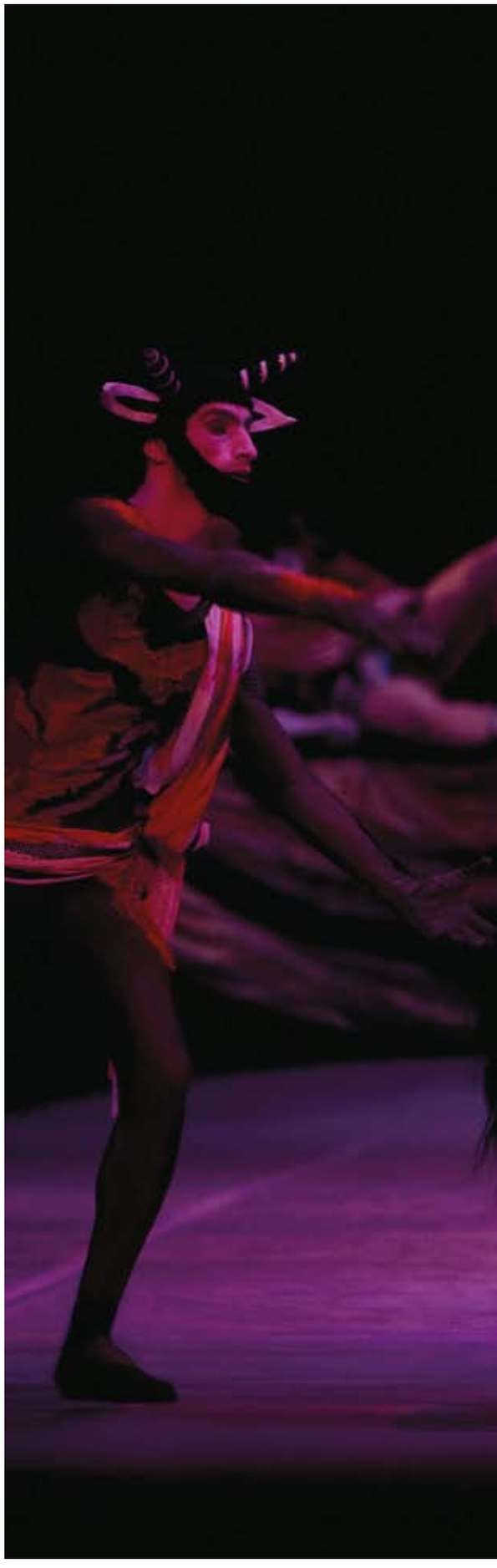
It seems that all three productions of the ballet Spartacus have been surrounded by no fewer battles than the original slave uprising. Yuri Grigorovich, the choreographer of a recent production, considers these internecine battles to be normal and in defending this point of view, he usually emerges victorious. This pattern of victories continued with his recent production of the ballet in Yerevan, Armenia.

interview **ELEONORA MALKHASIAN**
photo **SUREN MANVELIAN**









What made you decide to go to Yerevan for the staging of Spartacus?

The fact is, I am a big fan of Aram Khachatourian's work and have been from the first time I came across it when I was a student of the Leningrad School of Choreography. It happened in the city of Molotov (now Perm) where Aram Khachatourian was working on a version of the ballet Gayane. After I listened to the music, full of light and warmth, I was certain that there would be a day when I would return to it professionally. It wasn't until I was working at the Bolshoi Theater that I could finally realize my dream. We started working with the composer on the third version of the ballet Spartacus. It had been previously choreographed by Igor Moiseev and Leonid Yakobson. We traveled throughout the world with this ballet and Khachatourian once confessed that it was always his dream to see Spartacus on an Armenian stage.

Armenians live in the nation of dancers, but our ballet situation is far from good…

Who said that? Before the war there was excellent ballet in Armenia. Then, for some reason, it just moved to the background, giving way to other forms of stagecraft. I've looked through your repertoire. There are only three ballets in it! Sometimes months pass and neither of them is on. But new productions are necessary for ballet to take root on any stage.

Rumor has it, that what really distinguishes Yuri Grigorovich is how demanding and thorough he is in the selection of the principal dancers. What can you say about contemporary Armenian dancers?

I don't like to praise or give summary evaluations of performers. I can only say that Ruben Muradian and Sevak Avetisian (Spartacus), Zhaklin Divanian and Susan Pirumian (Phrygia), Maria Divanian and Mary Oganesian (Aegina), Narek Martirosian and Armen Gevorkian (Crassus) who danced in the legendary ballet are very impressive. The corps de ballet's performance seemed to be successful as well. I had thought that the male dancers would be nervous, but they passed the baptism of fire with dignity. They have something, it seems to me, our generation lacked — boldness and an ability to get through the task at hand.

You had big problems with the corps de ballet, didn't you?

Yes, but it was about quantity, not quality. Well, just imagine that in this ballet, in addition to the principal dancers, 250 more people should be dancing, while the theater's ballet troupe consisted of only 80 individuals in total. We had to engage dancers from the Friendship ensemble (an excellent one, by the way), senior students of the Yerevan Choreographic School and ask the Ministry of Defense of Armenia to allow some dancers, who were currently in active military service, to participate in the production.

There was a talk that you had vandalized Khachatourian music by heavily reworking the score…

Those are the words of renowned ballet master Leonid Yakobson, and he was not the only one who felt this way; many people supported his point of view. I remember that after the opening night of my Spartacus, Composer Alexander Arutyunian approached Aram Khachatourian and blurted out, "You have destroyed your own house (it sounded especially cool in Armenian), shuffled all its floors…" But Khachatourian remained completely unruffled. "Please, don't spoil my celebration. The victorious are not to be judged!"

It was not just work that connected you to Aram Khachatourian, was it?

We had very warm and friendly relations. Aram Khachatourian was like a big child. Every time we tried to make changes in his score, he took offense in a very serious way. Sometimes he would sulk and remain silent, would not talk to anyone. But later he could walk up to you, like nothing had happened, and say, "You know, I like your version." We met almost every day and whenever I visited him at home



Information

In Yerevan, Spartacus was staged for the first time in 1961 by Yevgeniy Changa. In 1978, dancer and ballet master Vilen Galstian offered his version of Aram Khachatourian's ballet to the public. In 2009, the Armenian stage hosted a new production by Yuri Grigorovich, which was made possible by the support of the First Ladies of Russia and Armenia — Svetlana Medvedeva and Rita Sargsian.

Also, the production was supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia,
VivaCell-MTS the general sponsor,
RosGosStrakh-Armenia Insurance company, the official sponsor,
and by sponsors:
CSC Electrical Grids of Armenia,
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hotel complex Golden Palace,
SHARM Holding.





Dossier

Yuri Grigorovich was born on January 2, 1927 in Leningrad.
In 1946 he graduated from the Leningrad Choreographic School (now the Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet in Saint Petersburg).
1946 to 1961: he danced as a soloist in the Kirov State Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet.
1964 to 1964: he worked there as a ballet master.
1964 to 1995: he was the Chief Ballet Master of the Bolshoi Theater.
1996 to present: he has been the Artistic Director of the Grigorovich Ballet Theater in Krasnodar.
In the Bolshoi Theater he authored a number of original stagings and revised many classical ballets. There are film versions of his ballets Spartacus and Ivan the Terrible. For the Spartacus production he was awarded with a Lenin Prize and Dyagilev Prize from the Paris Dance Academy. He has been the recipient of numerous prestigious awards and chaired judge panels of international ballet contests.



he would immediately offer mulberry vodka supplied to him from Armenia. Aram Khachatourian would pour a glass himself. “Have a drink, this stuff is wholesome: you won’t get a buzz from it, because it’s pure and high quality. It is impossible to become really drunk. And this is a heavenly liquor, to be savored and enjoyed.”

Did he offer you a round or two in Nardi (backgammon)?

I am a lousy player.

And, I would guess that you wouldn’t tolerate a defeat from anyone, even from Khachatourian himself…

Well, you don’t have victories or losses between comrades in arms, do you? Simply put, if you play this game, you do it passionately, boisterously with a degree of self-oblivion. Not what I can do.

Had you not become a dancer, what profession would you have chosen?

It is difficult to imagine my life outside of the ballet now. We had a certain predisposition to arts in our family, and it was not only about the dance. There were circus artists among our relatives. My mother, Klavdia Korzai, took classes from legendary Agrippina Vaganova in the ballet school. Her brother graduated from the Saint Petersburg ballet school and performed in Paris with Sergey Dyiaglev. So, in all likelihood, my life in ballet was predetermined.

One of the legends sprouting up around your name has it that you had not been a member of the Communist party when you became the head of the Bolshoi’s ballet troupe. Was that even possible back then?

I never liked politics and tried not to get into it. I always tried to be myself and because of this, I did not do what I did not want to or was not interested in. Ballet has been my politics and always will be.

Are you a man without compromises?

Let it be another legend sprouting around my person! In general, although I occasionally have serious disagreements with people, our life consists of continuous and endless compromises.

Do you agree with the statement that in the modern world the art of ballet has lost its position?

If you mean classical ballet, it has become a little overshadowed by other modern trends. Yet I believe it is just a temporary tendency and in the foundation of any ballet lays its academic form, which has been proven over time.

You worked with beautiful, world-class ballerinas. Who, in your opinion, is the model of femininity and high professionalism?

To me, at all times, such a model was my wife, ballerina Natalia Bessmertnova.

How do you manage to stay in such an excellent shape? Is it a special diet, morning jog or a strict regimen?

Neither. I work with young people and try to spend more time with them. During rehearsals I don’t give orders from the hall, but jump and leap with everybody on the stage.

With what feeling are you leaving the Armenian capital?

Am I leaving it? I think the sense of celebration your city is full of will stay with me for a long time. It seemed that all your festivals are improvised. Staying in Yerevan, you never know what will happen next, where you will find yourself, whom you will meet. It is the city of the unexpected. I’ve been staying in one of the most fashionable hotels. Once I came from the rehearsal and was trying to get some rest when suddenly there was music coming from outside. Dressed in my bathrobe I opened the door and stepped onto the inside balcony. In front of my eyes, at the level of my floor was a hovering… mermaid. At first I thought I had lost my marbles, but later it all became clear. The hotel was hosting some festive occasion and invited an acrobat. You have a very appreciative audience and very talented artists. But the main paradox and distinguishing feature of your nation is that even a crowd here has individuality.



A PERFECT DAY FOR BEING

Before our interview with Shavo Odadjian, the bass guitarist of the band System of a Down, we anticipated spending our time asking questions and getting answers, but our long interaction became a learning experience with a Zen twist.

interview **LIANNA ZAKHARIAN**
photo **TIGRAN TOVMASYAN**

He said that this interview would be very special because of his current state of mind: deeply in love. He also said that there are several emotional or spiritual states of mind and body that we absolutely need to discuss over the course of our interview, because if one wants to understand him as a person, that is the direction to take. That reminded us of *Nine Stories* of J.D. Salinger, in which each story represents an emotional state with its own Zen symbols. As we moved from room to room at his Woodland Hills home, he carefully staged each step of our interaction, organizing and designing the set with light, color, various symbolic objects, and even scents. All of these details were absolutely essential for bringing up the dominant theme of the discussion. Every part of our conversation had its own emotional undertone and characters involved. This was not a regular interview, but something more interesting, as well as more fun — with role reversals, creating art, listening to and contemplating music, interacting with rock bands online, taking photos and posing for pictures, cracking jokes, reciting poetry and talking on the phone. Protocol was forgotten, because what is an interview after all, if it isn't a process of recognizing another, and by extension, yourself? This was a perfect way and day to get acquainted. Shavo greeted us like he would greet old friends. Perhaps it's the way he approaches people and life in general — without artifice, with an open heart.

"I have put a lot of thought to this, and I think you guys have class, so it is you who needs to introduce me," he began and led us upstairs to his recording studio.

So what should we talk about?

I haven't spoken out too much. I have a lot of things to say and share. I waited to be the last to speak out, and there was a major reason for it. So, let's go...

I call this place my 'church' because miracles happened here. I will tell you what I have done without taking credit from anybody. I was sad when the System broke up, I was the saddest. I thought my life is going to change. I was in my twenties. At first it was really bad, but now I have done my new album, *Achozen*, and I have HER.

You are an artist. Is love important for you?

I am engaged, she is a smart, genius writer. I asked her to marry me on 08.08.08 when we were overseas. It was love at first sight, and it had never happened before in my life. We were drawn to each other. I have never done that — I lived hard. Recently, for the first time in two years, she let me read her stuff. When I read it… I cried, I swear to God. I want to write music for her. We have set up the wedding date — May 22.

Do you believe in change?

I have learned things in my life. I believe in paradigm shifts; when something changes in four or five years within our souls and bodies. If you don't take care of your physical well being, your soul will go with it. So I gave a lot of thought and took off where I started. I multiplied it, and now I am the happiest person. I had a lot of pain in me for three years, I was putting myself down. I wrote all these songs while working with System of a Down: "Sugar," "Toxicity," "The Devil," "Jet Pilot," "You Think," "Dreaming," and many others. At times I worked for 12 hours a day, but didn't always take credit for my work. For me, the System was always about us, not me. Then people targeted me, because I 'shined', and I wasn't aware of that 'shine' at the time. Now I understand that it was simple jealousy that made them act that way. I felt hurt and depressed, but soon I started working again and signed up with Funk Master George Clinton for the album, *George Clinton and His Gangsters of Love*. I wrote many songs right here in this room. My friend, RZA [Robert Diggs] helped me and played a major role for these changes to take place.

Info

Robert Fitzgerald Diggs, better known by his stage name RZA – Grammy winning music producer, author, rapper, actor, director, and screenwriter. A prominent figure in hip-hop music, he is the de facto leader of the Wu-Tang Clan. In 2009 he released *The Tao of Wu*, a book detailing the philosophy of the Wu Tang and his worldview. In September 2009, it was announced that Shavo Odadjian will be performing live as DecompozeR in Europe in October. He will be accompanying RZA.



You overcame you dark moments. Do you have a positive attitude on life?

Of course, I am positive. I have so much positivism in me, that I can share that with the whole world. I believe in passion, in the importance of being righteous. THAT'S IT! Don't hurt anybody to get to where you're going, go get where you're going. Leave everyone else alone, because everyone has his own spark. I am a SPARK, we are all sparks. I am trade-marking this word.

Your latest album with RZA, leader of the Wu-Tang Clan, is called *Achozen*. Can you expand on its name?

We are sparks, and we travel in time and space. These sparks have an important role — they possess experience, but they are not physical, because they don't have consciousness or heart. Some people carry these sparks, others are empty. Then there are 15 percent of people who carry the light of knowledge, but some of them are using it to acquire power, manipulate others for evil purposes. And then, there is the 5 percent, who are called Achozen. Jesus Christ was Achozen. It would not be blasphemy if I say that he was a special person. I think they crucified him to show everybody else to shut their mouths, not to talk. Why do you think they did that presentation — it was really a presentation, a parade — the crucifixion, and the whole ascent to Golgotha?

It was a parade, and they scared everyone, particularly people who 'shine.' He was Achosen, and he used his light to help people in need not because he was naive. Sadly, kind people are a minority. Why is it not cool for everybody to help others and show the best human qualities? Yet I believe in being positive now, in spite of seeing so much negativism around. So Achozen stands for the future, and my reference to Achozen in this album was more about the society that we live in, not to religion.

Please, tell us about your friendship and collaboration with RZA.

This has happened eight years ago. RZA and I were just getting to know each other, and once the conversation turned to the Armenian Genocide. He realized that we had such a horrible past. RZA felt our bond, which comes from the past of our people, from the genocide to slavery. We decided then that we would do music together, no matter what.

Shavo put on his new song recorded with RZA. The melody started with the familiar sound of Armenian folk motif accompanied by rap, talking about the Armenian Genocide and oppression of one group of people by another. This was a powerful, touching piece. Our camera crew froze in silence, affected by the combination of music and lyrics, which gripped our hearts and would not let go.

Did you hear? RZA says: 'We/They could never stop the light we bring/They could never stop the songs we sing.' RZA is talking about our nations. Every week he challenges me to read a new important book. No one else has done that for me. He comes to congratulate my mom on Mother's Day, and he calls her Mama O. He is my brother and like family.

You were recently honored for being a role model in the community.



This year we did the UNITED MINDS concert at the Key Club in Los Angeles in Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. I invited all my musician friends; the idea was to honor the gathering of cultures. Then, I am the mentor of the group Chameleon Conductor, the group where my cousin and my brother play. I am driving their careers; I have many ideas for them. In a sense, I am their mentor in life too. I even had them sign a contract, which includes several essential points about respect and codes of conduct, and other important things. They are the future and, I am sure, I can show them how to succeed in the modern world of rock music.

What is the most important quality for an artist and musician?

The number one thing is to be original, be inspired, not to steal. There is nothing wrong with inspiration, I love it. We have a song called "Science" that reminds me of another song, which I realized years later. The other biggest thing is inspiration. I paint to music — my art is just brush strokes and color. I directed a video clip, thinking, 'How do I make this happen?' But once I put on the track, and I have all these colors. I had the remote control in my hand with a camera set on the scene. Then I placed the Plexiglas, played my bass guitar part, painted with the brushstrokes and recorded. Then I took another sheet of Plexiglas and did the same thing with the drum part and so on. Finally, I put all these layers of glass together and the video and the painting was ready.

You took a step ahead of the game with urSESSION. How did the Internet change the music industry and how did you come up with the idea?

The Internet changed everything, it's officially done. I had a best friend from the first grade. You know friendships at that time — we are best friends, we are not talking to each other, then we are best friends again, then we don't talk again. Then we met again as adults and came up with the idea of the urSESSION. The first year he was in charge, now I am in charge. urSESSION is an on-line musicians' networking destination. The site is the first ever to allow for video networked auditioning. The members vote for their favorite casts and thus create a fan-driven, open market for independent artists and musicians of all genres worldwide.

How has being an Armenian affected your career in music?

It affected me in every way. When we started we didn't say, "We are going to be the band." It just happened. We, Armenians, have a lot of cultural wisdom, knowledge. I don't want to judge anybody, and I believe in goodness of all people. I accept people and their opinions. I belong to a group of "understanders" — or an Armenian version — "haskatsank-ers." That sounds good, doesn't it? To understand and accept people regardless of their race, age, or beliefs is the way of the future.

What did you learn from this experience of being a member of one of the best rock groups in the world?

I learned first and foremost about myself. I am still a kid inside. I love when people smile, and I want to make them smile, because that changes everything, it gives people energy, and I am ready to give that energy to everyone, but now to my future family and kids. That is the most important thing for me.

The interview was over, but we were far from saying goodbye — our photographers played chess, Frukwan [The Gatekeeper] from Gravediggaz improvised some rap lines at Shavo's request. In the meantime, Shavo was videotaping all of us, and Kevin, his assistant, was communicating through the urSESSION with some musicians. The sun was setting, and the general feeling was that this was a perfect day for…just being.



BRIDGING CULTURES

text **LIANNA ZAKHARIAN**
photo **ARMEN POGOSYAN**

Almost every woman has her own 'Carrie Bradshaw' dream of a magnificent Red Carpet moment. If you share this dream, then the annual ARPA Film Festival in Los Angeles is *the* event to attend.

The Arpa Foundation for Film, Music and Art (AFFMA) was founded in 1995 for the purpose of enhancing our community's artistic environment and supporting artists who seek to bridge cultures. The activities of the foundation include the Arpa International Film Festival and Gala, lectures, art exhibits and concerts. The Arpa International Festival creates a forum for international film projects that address many important issues. More than 20 nations including Armenia, Venezuela, Turkey, Brazil, France, Peru, Canada, Mexico, Malawi, Israel, Spain, China, Bhutan, India, and Iran were represented during the three days of this year's festival. "Our programming department tracked the global film market over the last year and singled out the exemplary films relating to Arpa's mission to present the works of filmmakers exploring issues such as war, exile, genocide, and environmentalism," said Arpa Festival Director Alex Kalognomos.





In the documentary lineup, this year's official selection included the work of such acclaimed figures as Sting (*Battle for the Xingu*), Academy Award-winning actor Jeremy Irons (*Power of the Powerless*) and the star of *24*, Kiefer Sutherland, who narrated *Return to Mexico City*. *Autumn of the Magician*, a tribute to legendary Italian screenwriter Tonino Guerra was Armenia's official selection in the Best Foreign Language Film category for the 2010 Academy Awards; *Anjar: Flowers, Goats and Heroes*, a film about the history of the people of Musa Dagh by Canadian-Armenian filmmaker Noura Kevorkian; *Husher*, a film which documents the testimony of Armenian Genocide survivors who settled in Italy; and, from Turkish filmmakers Mehmet Binay and M. Caner Alper, *Whispering Memories*, the story of a community of Armenians in Turkey who stayed behind during the genocide and silently converted to Islam.

The Best Documentary Film Award was awarded to the film *Return to Mexico City*, a

documentary that told the story of Olympic medalists Tommie Smith and John Carlos who returned to Mexico City 40 years after stirring controversy by raising their gloved fists in the air during their medal ceremony.

Screening in the Feature Film category was Turkish filmmaker Ozcan Alper's acclaimed *Sonbahar* (Autumn).

Jorg Hiller and Valentina Rendon shared the Best Screenwriter award for the script of *Venezzia*, which premiered at the opening night.

This year's recipient of Arpa International Film Festival's Armin T. Wegner Award, which is awarded annually to a motion picture that contributes to the fight for social conscience and human rights, was *Voices from Inside: Israelis Speak*.

Armenian Educational Foundation (AEF) received this year's Arpa Foundation Award. Over its 60 year history, AEF has been committed to youth and the pursuit of higher learning. A short film directed by Sevag Vrej documenting AEF's educational endeavors. "The legacy of AEF will be eternal for as long as children have schools in which to learn and advance," said AFFMA founder, Sylvia Minassian.









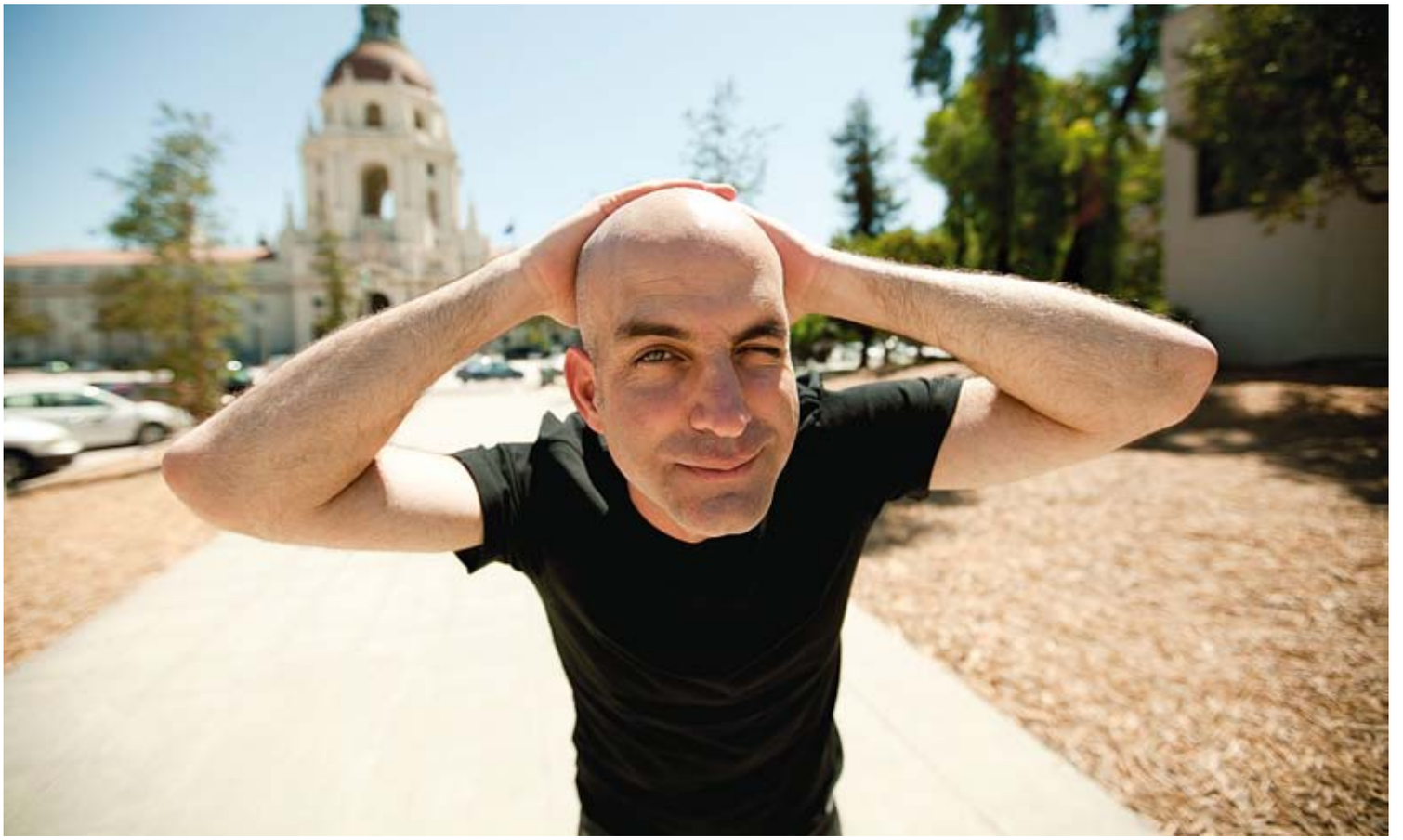
Finally, AT&T presented an award for Environmental Conservation and Stewardship. The award went to the *Battle for the Xingu*, tributory of the Amazon, home to over 10,000 indigenous people who rely on the river for survival. The plan of the Brazilian government to build the world's third largest hydroelectric dam, threatens to destroy the biodiversity of the region and deprive these people of their right to a sustainable future.

There is growing public interest in the work of the AFFMA and the Arpa Film Festival. The 2009 festival's success attested to this by drawing larger crowds than ever before, both in participants and audience members.

WORKING FOR A DREAM

Imagine a young director who wants to start his career with a romantic story. Imagine he wants the story to be about his country. Imagine the director is Armenian. Now imagine that the movie is not about Armenia. Meet Haig Gazarian, a Venezuelan of Armenian descent, whose *Venezzia* opened this year's ARPA International Film Fesival in Los Angeles.

interview **LIANNA ZAKHARIAN**
photo **TIGRAN TOVMASYAN**



The glitz and glamour of LA's Armenian society surrounded the premiere of the feature film *Venezzia*, which was Haig Gazarian's directorial debut on opening night. Take an enthusiastic and talented young director, two of the best looking actors in Latin America, a suspense-filled conflict based on historical events, and add a tropical setting on Venezuela's Caribbean Coast and you get a romantic love story for a perfect movie night. It was no coincidence that *Venezzia's* quality was rewarded with the Best Feature Film award. Haik Gazarian shared his insights in an exclusive interview with **yerevan**.

Haik, what drew you to pursue a career of filmmaking?

My father always allowed me to help make his films, so one way or the other, while being involved in the entertainment industry, I always dreamed of working on my own film. When that moment came in 2007, I decided to write my own story, develop a script and make a film, and that is how *Venezzia* came about.

Your family helped build the Armenian Church in Caracas.

When my family came to Venezuela, they were actually on their way to Argentina. That happened during the war. My family lived in Athens, Greece at the time of their emigration. They were thinking about moving to Buenos Aires and discussing the living conditions in that country. One thought led to another and there was discussion about the cost of living in Venezuela. That caught the attention of my grandfather, who saw an opportunity of doing business there. So they stopped in Venezuela and stayed there. There were only about three or four Armenian families there at that time. My grandparents, uncles and parents, the Zarikian family and all other Armenian families came together and decided that they needed an Armenian Center and a church– a place where they could bring all their children together. Collectively, they bought a small house and that became the first Armenian Church.

The premiere of *Venezzia* took place on September 25, 2009 in Columbia and, then on October 23, in Los Angeles, and December 16 in Caracas, Venezuela. It seems like a big event for Venezuelan cinema.

In the 23 years of my work in talent management I established many contacts in entertainment circles throughout South America. Our leading actress, Ruddy Rodriguez, is a first-rate star in Latin America. The executive producer is Edgar Ramirez, who worked on big Hollywood blockbusters, such as the *Bourne Ultimatum*, *Vantage Point*, *Domino*, and in 2008 the Steven Sullivan film, *Che*.

Your project is a result of international collaboration. Alfonso Herrera is from Mexico, Edgar Ramirez– from Venezuela. Is it a frequent practice in Latin American cinema to join creative forces?

Actually, I can't say that it is. It is a unique instance with *Venezzia* that we are opening the film in two countries simultaneously. Jorg Hiller and Valentina Rendon are two of the best writers in Colombia. And Alfonso, who is a teen idol in Hispanic communities in the United States and around the world, is a huge star in Mexico. Alfonso came to this project through my good friend Edgar Ramirez, who is one of the executive producers of the film. When I sent Alfonso the screenplay, he loved the story from the very beginning. Shortly after he received the script, I got a call from his agents. I immediately flew to Los Angeles where he was performing at the Universal Amphitheatre. It was his farewell tour with the teen pop group RBD. We met in the lobby of the Universal Amphitheatre to discuss the project. He saw the potential of the story and the plot. That helped in bringing the Hispanic market in the U.S. and Mexico to promote our film.

Dossier

Haig Gazarian, born and raised in Venezuela, lived in Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Argentina, New York, Los Angeles and Paris. He worked in one of the major talent agencies for 22 years, providing actors for telenovelas.

Alfonso "Poncho" Herrera born on August 28, 1983, he is a Mexican actor and ex-member of the music group RBD.

Ruddy Rosario Rodriguez de Lucia born March 20, 1967, she is a Venezuelan actress, model, and businesswoman.



Your main heroine, Venezzia, is an embodiment of femininity. Please tell us about actress Ruddy Rodriguez.

Ruddy is well-known in Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. She is a big supporter of the Armenian community in Venezuela. She even knows how to cook Armenian food and knows a lot of Armenian words. I was her manager for many years. We traveled around the world- she has a lot of fans in Eastern Europe. In Latin American countries she is famous mainly because of her participation in telenovelas (soap operas). Ruddy is a very talented actress and a beautiful woman. My experience in the industry over almost 22 years allowed me to maintain very good relationships with star actors, who trusted me with their career. For me it is a true privilege.

Tell us about the challenges and setbacks that you experienced in the process of making this film.

The process of filmmaking in Latin America is an adventure and making a full feature film– it is an odyssey. It's a gargantuan task, because it's not an industry where you can easily get things. We worked very hard to get authentic visuals, because I wanted the film to be as close to the reality of the time as possible. For example, in the kitchen scene, it was really hard to get all the appliances that were needed. Every challenge involved time and budget constrains, in addition, the locations were very difficult to get. We had a crew of over 150 people. The locations where we filmed did not have accommodations for 150 people. We needed to manage to get houses that could host our crew. It wasn't an easy task, but not an impossible one, because we had a lot of

passionate crew members, who put their best effort into this project from the very beginning. So yes, we had a lot of obstacles to overcome to reach this point.

Your story is based on the incidents of World War II that involved Venezuela. How closely did you follow the actual historical events?

Venezzia is framed around an actual event that happened — the story involves the first attack of German U-boats [submarines] that took place on February 16, 1942. We build the story on those days. The character is inspired by the actual people involved in these events. On February 16, 1942, a convoy of oil tankers and ships left Maracaibo Bar. The first ships in line were the 'Monagas', which sailed under the Venezuelan flag, followed by the 'Tia Juana' and 'Pedernales' both belonging to the Lago Petroleum Corporation. These tankers were followed by the 'Rafaela' belonging to Shell, and the 'San Nicolas' and 'Orangestad,' belonging to Lago Oil and Transport Co, based in Aruba. A number of other tankers joined the column. The German U-boat torpedoed the 'Monagas', which sank immediately. The rest of the seven tankers were also hit and sustained casualties. The first attack took place around six or seven in the morning. We had to be very close to what really happened to the point that the day that we shot the scene of the attack was exactly 67 years after the actual attack. When we first started filming in January, I told my producer that it would be nice if we could shoot the scene on the same location and the same day. And because she dealt with the logistics, my wish came true. That afternoon we had a very special moment. I wanted it to be very accurate and bring to life this forgotten part of our history. The film had to emphasize the importance of Venezuela in the Caribbean region and for the allies in the World War II.

Are you referring to a WWII Nazi operation "Roll of Drums?" Wasn't it a turning point in the modern history of Venezuela?

The Venezuelan government's decision to sell oil to the allies in the beginning of the war resulted in Nazi counter measures. In 1941, Hitler approved the "Roll of Drums," a U-boat operation in Western Atlantic/Caribbean waters. The Nazis were chiefly concerned with the Dutch islands of Curacao and Aruba, Dutch colonies where U.S. forces had set up defensive fortifications in order to protect refineries processing Venezuelan crude from Maracaibo. In February of 1942, German submarines plied the Caribbean, sinking 25 tankers in one month. The Venezuelan people responded with angry street protests on the streets of Caracas, denouncing German aggression. As a result of the lost tankers, production in the Lake Maracaibo Basin had to be cut back by nearly 100,000 tons of crude oil daily. Venezuela suffered tremendous economic losses. German attacks on the Aruba refinery marked the beginning of the Battle of the Caribbean. Later, after the war, Venezuela continued its partnership with the U.S. and other allied governments. Venezuelan oil, I think, helped to rebuild Europe after World War II. Naturally, I based my original story on well-known historic events, and later the screenplay was developed by Jorg Hiller and Valentina Rendon.



The film seems to be a costly project. Did the government of Venezuela help you in the production?

It is not easy to do a film in any country, because when you go into an independent filmmaking, financially it is a very difficult task. I started working on this film in 1996. It took me knocking on a lot of doors to get the funding. It was all about being at the right place at the right time. One way or the other, I never let this project go. I was always selling my story- that I wanted to do a film like this. As the years passed by, I lived in Los Angeles for a while, and being in the center of the industry, I started looking for sponsors. Then I went back to Venezuela and continued to manage actors. *Venezzia* in part is financed by a private group, and then a year and a half ago I applied for the grant and won a contest of the Film Commission of Venezuela, which every year subsidizes movies. At first, they chose 21 movies out of 85, and then out of these 21, they select four. And my project was among them.

But first and foremost Venezzia is a tragic love story. You have decided to dedicate your first film to love. Are you a romantic man?

I am surrounded by beautiful women. My mother, my girlfriend, Valentina Rendon, who is the screenwriter and the singer of the theme song, my dear friend Ruddy, were such great inspirations to me. To create a romantic love story was a natural choice.

The screening ended. Guests filled the courtyard of the Egyptian Theatre where the romantic guitar music of Venezuelan-born Ernesto Ferro and complimentary wine and hors d'oeuvres filled the atmosphere of the enchanted evening, enriching the love story told on the screen.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FACES OF THE CENTURY

ousu arsh *1— 2 2 , an Armenian-Canadian, is one of the masters of 2 th century photography. He managed to immortalize some of the most celebrated figures by creating memorable and psychologically insightful images. arsh's magic lens was able to capture the distinct looks by which these individuals were remembered in history.*

Look closely into the following portraits. Politicians the elderly Winston Churchill and John F. ennedy with his young wife, Jac ueline the great scientist Albert instein, who proved with his Theory of Relativity that everything is relative film director Alfred Hitchcock, who changed cinematography so drastically, that horror itself became an aesthetic category actress Audrey Hepburn, who broke the Gordian knot of Hollywood stereotypes Baptist minister Martin Luther ing Jr., whose I have a Dream speech awakened the whole world Catholic nun, Mother Theresa, who founded the order of The Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, a city distant from her native Albania, in order to make our world a better place. But arsh's portraits reflect something beyond their actual deeds their unfulfilled intentions...



CAMERAPRESS

SIR WINSTON LEONARD SPENCER CHURCHILL (1874-1965)
Second World War and Anglo-American unity



CAMERAPRESS

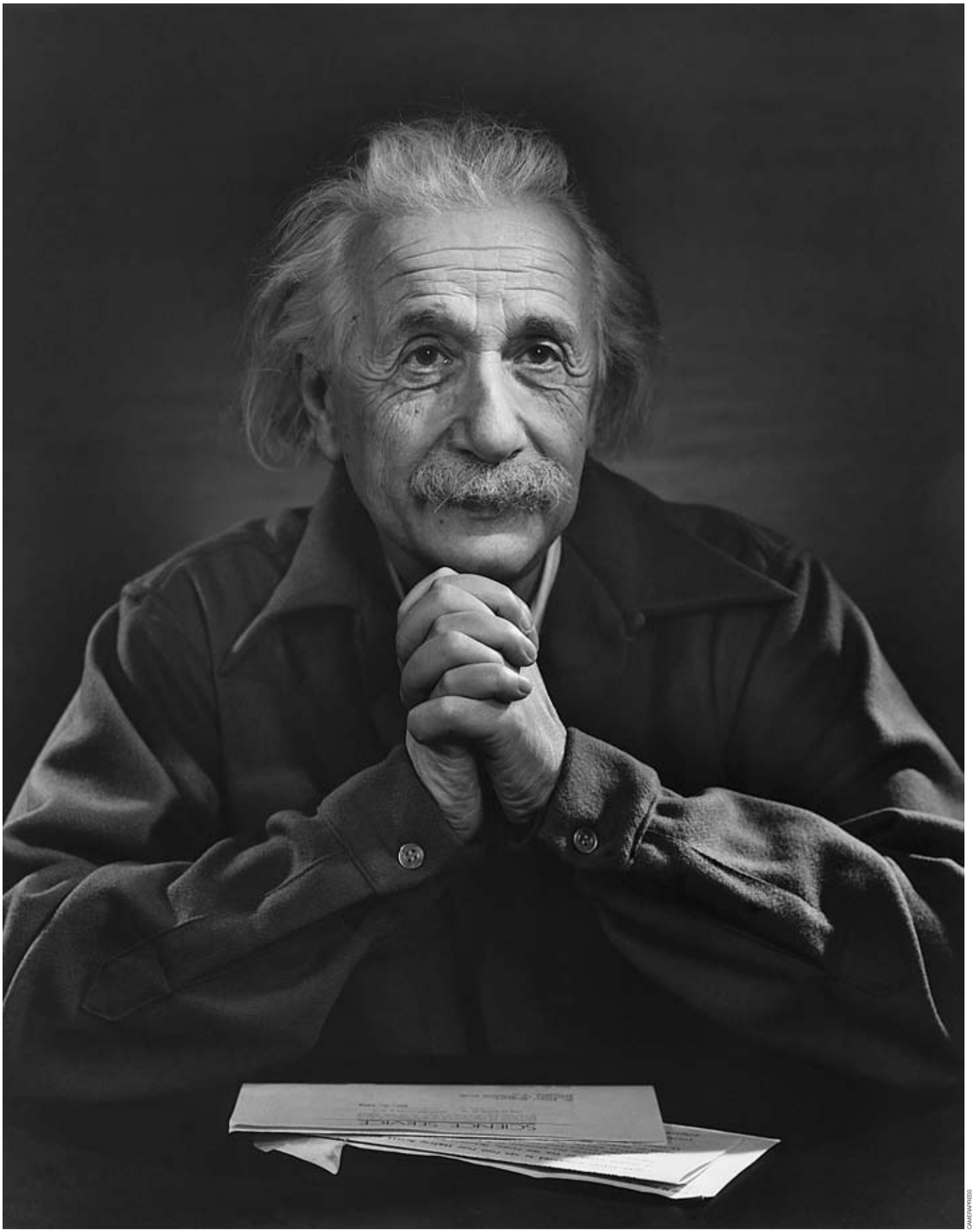
JOHN FITZGERALD "JACK" KENNEDY (1917-1963) WITH WIFE, JACQUELINE (1929-1994)
Diplomacy and Class



AUDREY HEPBURN (1929-1993)
Timeless Beauty and Style

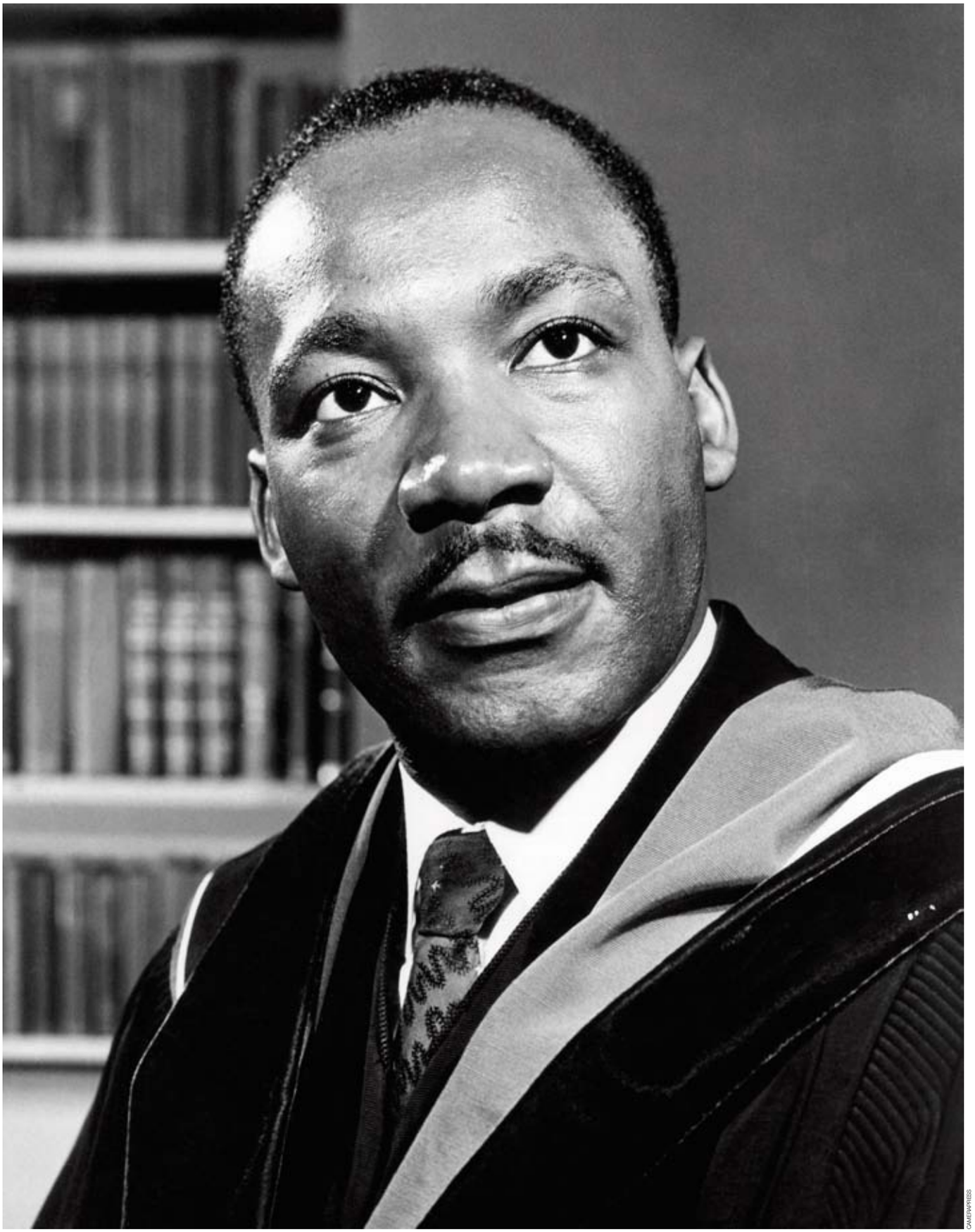


SIR ALFRED JOSEPH HITCHCOCK (1899-198□)
□ orror movies



CAMERAPRESS

ALBERT EINSTEIN (1879-1955)
Thought at its highest



CAMERAPRESS

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. (1929-1968)
Civil Rights Movement



MOTHER THERESA (191□-1997)
Charity and Compassion





WOMEN ON TOP



The Armenian American Chamber of Commerce (AACC) held its third Women in Business Excellence Luncheon on October 10th at the Glendale Hilton Hotel. With over 400 attendees, mostly women, it was a great example of strength in numbers.

Without exception, all the honorees have reached the pinnacle of success while balancing career, family, and cultural identity. This year's award recipients were: Jackie Speier for Woman in Government, Annette Sahakian Davis for Woman in Entertainment, Nectar Kalajian for Corporate Woman, Naz Atikian for Woman in Small Business, Diana Cabraloff for Woman in Service, Dr. Kathy Fundukian Torossian for Woman in Education, Salpy Akaragian for Woman in Science, and Diana Magpapian, Nora Gasparian and Ani Esmailian of Hollyscoop, Partners for Junior Businesswomen.

As the largest Armenian business organization in the United States, the AACC helps to promote economic growth and prosperity in the community with value added resources and services. The organization assists business by extending a helping hand, sharing resources, wisdom and expertise.







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THE GORGEOUS GORGS

King Henry VIII — a famous English collector of wives and carpets — didn't hesitate to behead his Lord Chancellor, Cardinal Wolsey, to enrich his collections. After the monarch's passing, his collection of eight hundred carpets — and among them numerous Armenian rugs — were left to rot on the damp stone floors of the Palace at Hampton Court. Fortunately, the carpets, which did not fall into the hands of the King, were spared from destruction and can be seen on the floors and walls of museums and noble houses throughout Europe.

text **ERNA REVAZOVA**
consultant **VAHRAM TATIKIAN**
illustrations **ARTHUR AKOPIAN**



Many legends, puzzles and mysteries are woven into Armenian carpets. If you look closely you might imagine the imprint of the famous form of Cleopatra. The shapely Egyptian Queen ordered herself wrapped in a scarlet carpet and delivered to Julius Caesar while he was stationed on the Island of Pharos; a worthy container for such a royal gift!

According to the accounts of historians, "Armenian red carpets" were much in demand on the markets of Cairo. Further, the fuchsia-colored carpets from the Egyptian town of Assuit were highly prized because of their similarity to the Armenian carpets. Even on the broader market of Persian rugs, those that equaled the quality of the Armenian carpets were considered the most desirable. In those ancient days, the carpets made in the Iranian province of Esfahan were ranked as being of the most supreme quality, the standard against which all others were compared. These too were created by Armenian weavers, who had been forcefully relocated by Shah Abbas to Persia from the historic Armenian town of Jugha (also known as Julfa), presently a village in the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic. Although the Esfahan rugs and the Armenian reds were seen as representatives of distinct weaving traditions of the time, at the level of the knots themselves, both were Armenian in origin, which may explain why Esfahan's rugs resembled those from Armenia.



Info

Gorg, Carpet, Khali

According the Arabian geographer of the 9th century, Abu-Avna, the word "khali," which means "carpet" in Armenian, Arabic, and Turkish, originated from the name of the city Karin (Western Armenia, presently Erzerum), which, according to the Arabic interpretation, sounds as Kalikala — the "city of carpets".

In fact, in medieval Armenian poetry, another synonym for the word "carpet" is used — "bazmakan" from Bazmel — which means to recline, to sit.

The wool from Armenia (Geghm — fleece, "asr" — white combed sheep wool, "asrapail" — same, additionally treated in milk serum for special shine, "asrakerp" — foamy, "gzats" — beaten, "kazn" — lustrous, "choor" — fine nap of the angora sheep wool, "dftyk" — soft goat hair) was highly prized in the international markets.

The Arabian geographer of the 13th century, As-Saalibi ranks it second after the Egyptian, (the Persian wool took an honorable third place).

Mortality caught up with the great Alexander of Macedon on one of the scarlet, long-napped carpets from Armenia. There could be no other choice for floor covering in the luxurious halls of the Babylonian palace, as the "gorgs" (the original name of the scarlet Armenian carpets) were prized throughout Eurasia and even in Arab territories that had their own unique weaving traditions. These carpets covered the Umayyad Palaces, serving as an incomparable decor on the walls of the Castles in the deserts.

Only the first wife of the legendary Caliph Harun al-Rashid — the ruler of the Abbasid caliphate and the hero of the "Thousand and One Nights" — was allowed to sit on the Armenian carpet. His other wives had to suffice with "Armenian pillows," which were made from smaller scraps of the famous rugs.

In 921, envoys of the Caliph of Baghdad arrived in Volga-Kama Bolghar. The noble royalty, the second official in the delegation of Ibn Fadlan, was astonished: the Khan's huge tent, which easily accommodated a thousand warriors, was entirely covered by Armenian carpets.

Emperor Nero also bought a gorgeous carpet, costing him four million sestertii (Roman coins). Nero, dressed in a scarlet toga with a bay-leaf wreath on his head and a gold lira in his hand, rushed to and fro on this excessively expensive carpet, watching Rome being devoured by the raging fire.

Only a royal foot had the right to step on the carpets woven by the Armenian masters of Persia, which decorated the palace of Croesus, King of Lydia (the king whose wealth originated the proverb "rich as Croesus") and the enormous temple of the Phrygian goddess Cybele in the capital city, Sardis.

To present an Armenian carpet as a gift was considered a sign of great respect. This custom was familiar to Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi, ruler of the Ghaznavid Empire, who presented one to the Khan of Kashgar, Kadir, and to the vizier Abu Fazin Suri Maragi, who sent a "gorg" to his master — Sultan Masud of Ghazni. The devoted vassal of the Caliph, Emir al-Muqtadir Abu Hasan, paid his dues with "seven Armenian carpets, one of which was 60 cubits long and had the same width" (about 1000 square meters).

The story of Armenian carpets is not just a collection of legends and numerous historic accounts, but also a mixture of terms and names. The carpets made in Armenia and by the Armenian weavers in other countries were called "Persian", "Turkish", and "Seljuk" — either after the country that exported them, the



national origin of the previous owner, or the person who commissioned them. But the far-sighted Armenian carpet weavers used special tricks that allow modern scholars to reveal the true identity of their creators to subsequent generations.

It is the intertwined designs of the Armenian letters on the "Seljuk" carpets, stored in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art (Istanbul), the National Museum of Sweden (Stockholm), the Mevlana Museum (Konya, Turkey), and the eagles on the carpets with "bird ornaments," which the prominent Soviet orientalist Joseph Orbeli named "the talking national coat of arms " of the medieval Armenian heraldry that allow us to understand the international scope of Armenian weaving in the ancient world.

Weavers also inserted the "vishap" (dragon), a character of Armenian folklore, into the patterns. And of course, the Armenian cross, which would have been unknown in an Islamic artifact due to Islamic prohibitions against figurative decoration.

The ancient Armenian carpets are undeniably unique: "There are few such carpets in other countries," wrote the Arabian geographers and explorers Al Estakhri, Ibn Hawqal, and al-Muqaddasi.

Only the senior wife of the legendary Caliph Harun al-Rashid — the ruler of the Abbasid caliphate and the hero of the "Thousand and One Nights" — was allowed to sit on the Armenian carpet.

In Armenia, these carpets were intended for rituals, but were later used for secular purposes. They were hung on the walls, or covered floors, sofas, beds, seats, and chests. In the temples, they separated the sacristies and altars. They were hung in doorways and used as dividers to separate rooms for growing families. There were many things made of the tapestry — horse-cloths, bags, sacks for salt and for bedding. The carpets gradually became an expensive form of status-indicating decor for the grey stone walls of the royal palaces and feudal castles. From carpets they transformed into paintings. Various fairy-tale images were depicted on the impressive 'canvasses' of the early dragon carpets — vishaps (dragons), phoenix-birds, and other mythological and existing animals — camels, lions, deer, and horses.

Marco Polo, the 13th century Venetian explorer who traveled to many lands, wrote in his journals, "Armenians weave the most exquisite and beautiful carpets in the world." But even earlier than Marco Polo's time, in the beginning of the 11th century, the warrant for the trade in Armenian carpets was granted on the highest governmental level, an indication of their importance in commerce. A brisk trade took place on the square in front of the St. Donat Church in the Belgian city Bruges and at St. Mark's Basilica in Venice. The representatives of an Armenian trade company from Esfahan exported carpets to snow-covered Moscow and Holland, the port of Marseille, and the capital of canals, Venice.

Asia Minor was the main supplier of carpets in the medieval European market, but the Armenian "gorg" was distinguished by the originality of the ornaments and meaningful symbols. It was not surprising that they were highly valued. Armenian traders had special



In old days, carpets were also used to cover tables as depicted by Hans Golbein Jr. in his "Portrait of the Merchant George Gize," 1532 Museum Staatliche, Berlin



privileges in Poland by decree of King Stephen Batory (May 24, 1585): "the exclusive right of the carpet manufacturing and trade in Poland" for a period of twenty years was given to an Armenian, Murad Jakoubovich from Kaffa (Feodosia, Crimea). In the spring of 1601, King Sigismund III Vasa of Poland commissioned an Armenian merchant, Sefer Mouradovich, to provide carpets from Persia for his palace. The Armenian rug weavers at the royal court of Shah Abbas took the tastes of the Polish aristocracy into consideration. They brilliantly combined the baroque style with oriental colors. Thus, the world-famous gold-wrapped, silken Polonaise carpets were born.

Wonderful Armenian carpets were also woven in Austria. The Alpine landscape was keen to the souls of the descendants from Ani — the capital of medieval Armenia, the city of "A thousand and one churches." Spain and later France gave refuge to Armenian rug-weavers. A prominent Armenologist, Hrachya Ajarian, asserts that it was the Armenian kapert (kap — means a 'knot' in Armenian), which was mentioned in the 5th century translation of the Bible and later changed into "carpet," that has generated a word meaning carpet in many European languages. Medieval Europe did not experience any shortage in carpet supplies, not only because of the efforts of the Armenian traders, who had exclusive rights on the rug trade in the international market, but also because of the Crusades. The Crusaders brought back carpets from their Middle Eastern campaigns. These rugs were an irreplaceable commodity for the poorly-heated medieval castles: the warm, wool rugs provided excellent protection from the cold. A fashionable design of medieval interiors — Armenian carpets: brightly-colored accents on the otherwise colorless background were depicted on the canvasses of many famous artists. The great painters of medieval Europe — the Italians Giotto, Andrea Mantegna, Pintoricchio, Bellini, Jacopo Bassano, Caravaggio, the Flemish artists Rubens and Van Dyke, Dutch — Rembrandt, Vermeer, Gerard ter Borch, Jan van Eyck, Hans Memling, French painter Eugene Delacroix, and many others — immortalized Armenian carpets in their works.

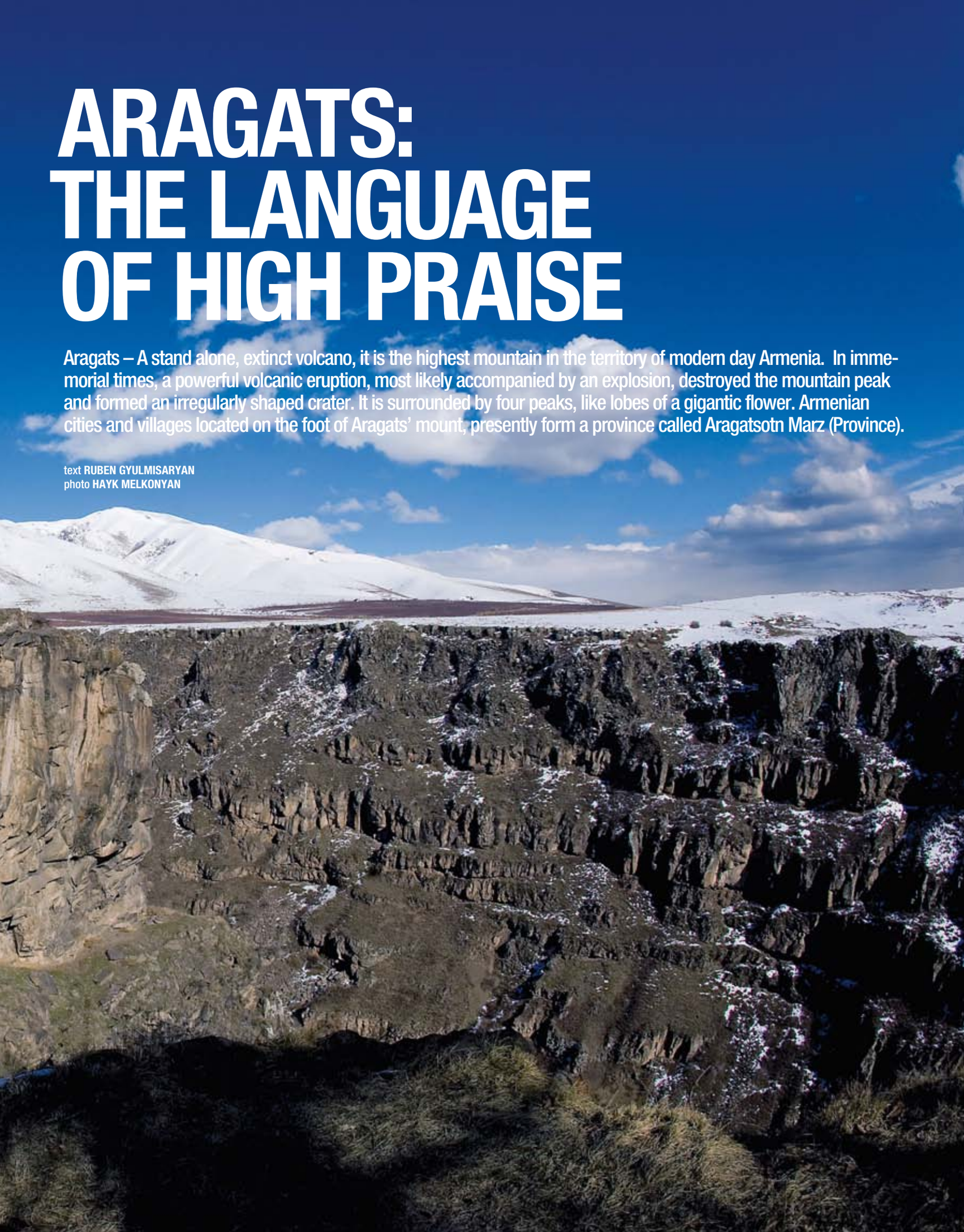
Marco Polo, the 13th century Venetian explorer who traveled to many lands, wrote in his journals that "Armenians weave the most exquisite and beautiful carpets in the world."



ARAGATS: THE LANGUAGE OF HIGH PRAISE

Aragats – A stand alone, extinct volcano, it is the highest mountain in the territory of modern day Armenia. In immemorial times, a powerful volcanic eruption, most likely accompanied by an explosion, destroyed the mountain peak and formed an irregularly shaped crater. It is surrounded by four peaks, like lobes of a gigantic flower. Armenian cities and villages located on the foot of Aragats' mount, presently form a province called Aragatsotn Marz (Province).

text **RUBEN GYULMISARYAN**
photo **HAYK MELKONYAN**



Legend states that Gregory the Illuminator himself ascended to the top of Aragats, and at night, an unquenchable icon-lamp lit his way. Even now, this icon-lamp shines, but can only be seen by the devout.









AND THE SISTERS QUARRELED…

We left Yerevan behind, already in full spring, and headed North towards heavy snow clouds. Upon our arrival, Aragats stayed true to its name and the weather made a turn for the worse. After all, the mountainous region of Aragatsotn is famous for its cold climate. Once we took a turn toward Ashtarak, from where the road to the Hovhannavan and Saghmosavan villages begin, we found ourselves not in the spring season, but in late autumn. As we drove further, the season quickly changed to winter. Once Aragatsotn appears, you disregard the cold, harsh climate and become mesmerized by its beauty. The picture before us was of Alpine-like meadows, with blue, purple and white flowers, and massive hills that descend to the misty valley below.

Among many Armenian myths, is the one of the summits of Masis and Aragats: sisters who had great adoration for each other. The affection quickly subsided when the sisters began to argue about who was taller, more beautiful and slender. The dispute ended rather lamentably, as they quarreled to death and since then, no man was able to set foot on the peak of Masis. To this day, Aragats continuously sheds tears, which have accumulated to form a lake atop its peak. Another legend states that Gregory the Illuminator himself ascended to the top of Aragats for prayer, and at night, an unquenchable icon-lamp lit his way. Even now, this icon-lamp shines, but can only be seen by the devout.

Info

Mount Aragats — the highest mountain in Armenia. The mountain consists of four peaks, the highest — its northern peak — 4094 m (2.5 miles). Between the peaks is a volcanic crater 350 m (1.6 miles) in depth and 2.5 km (1.5 miles) in width. In the southeast flank of the mountain is the Byurakan Observatory, and higher up at 2300 m (1.3 miles) — the fortress of Amberd.

SAGHMOSAVANK

The village of Saghmosavank greeted us with a blizzard amid piercing cold winds, an imperturbable horse, and a young villager, who was feeding it from time to time with hay from a large basket. We went to Saghmosavank Church, stumbling every now and then over the slippery snow, polished by the winds. Father Garegin, the senior priest of the church, told us (and his words are confirmed by the inscription on the church wall) that Gregory Illuminator established a monastery in this particular location and named it "the monastery of psalms," because the primary occupation of monastic fraternity was exactly that — singing psalms. In 1215, by order of the local Prince, Vache Vachutyan, the Temple of Zion was built in its vicinity. Later, in 1235, a small church of Surb Astvatsatsin (Holy Mother) was built adjacent to the temple, and then, approximately in 1255, the monastery complex was complemented with a large vestibule and a library. The latter, perhaps, deserves special recognition.

The library of Saghmosavank is ranked among a few rare and architecturally unique religious structures in Armenia. It is a rather large



Saghmosavank is built virtually on the cliff of the Kasakh River gorge — a natural formation so formidable that even we (and we are not afraid of heights) approached the precipice cautiously... and for good reason.

building with a two-storied addition, which leads us to the conclusion that books were not only stored, but also copied in the scriptorium. According to Father Garegin, the church once stored expensive church utensils — the altar apse and doors with locks leading to the vestibule provide evidence for this claim — the reconstruction of the Surb Astvatsatsin Church was carried out in a way to ensure full protection of the library. The library is as high as the temple and the vestibule, but its austere and modest walls differ from the rich colorful and fretwork interiors of the temple and entrance. There is a circular light opening in the dome of the ceiling decorated by geometric and vine patterns. Above the altar, frescoes depict a rising sun, a flying angel, and the coat of arms of the House of Vachutyans: an eagle with a lamb in its talons.

The interior facilities of the Saghmosavank Church are unlike those of traditionally ascetic Armenian churches, because certain parts of the interior walls are covered by red and black stones, and some are painted white, yellow and red.

Once you exit the temple and turn around the corner — the view takes your breath away! It is because the complex is built virtually on the cliff of the Kasakh River gorge — a natural formation so formidable that even we (and we are not afraid of heights) approached the precipice with great caution...and for a good reason! There are few places in Armenia where one can observe the gradual transformation of the mountains into valleys. This is one of them — Aragatsotn's gradual descent becomes Ararat Valley.

THE HOUSE OF DREAMS

Residents of Saghmosavank lead simple lives: the main crops are walnuts, apples, apples and more apples...apples of all sorts and colors. The local apple trees bear fruit almost year round — the roadside stands display an abundance of it. This is a favorite destination for those tired of the noise and commotion of urban cities. The serenity and landscape are calming. Armen Kolozian, a member of the Artists' Union of Armenia, enjoys taking a breather in Aragatsotn's peacefull stillness. It took him a decade and a half to build the house of his dreams. In the frontyard, he grew a well-groomed apple orchard, as if picked from the pages of a landscape journal. He also has a staggering view of the gorge; and if the weather permits, Yerevan is visible in plain sight. What can be better than this farm if there was no necessity to drive to the city every day to work?



Info

Area — 2753 km² (1700 miles²)
Population — 139 500 people
Center — Town of Ashtarak
Saghmosavank — 59 km from Yerevan (37 miles)

Aragatsotn is a province (marz) in Armenia and borders Turkey. Its administrative center is Ashtarak. Other towns include the Marz of Aparan and Talin. The word for word translation of its name is "a foot of Aragats." The province was once one of the provinces of the historical Ayrarat region.
In 1502, the province was passed under the realm of Safavid Iran, and in 1639 it formed a part of the Khanate of Yerevan, together with which it joined the Russian Empire in 1828. During the Soviet era, in the territory of the province, the following regions were formed: Hoktemberian, Echmiadzin, Ashtarak, Talin and Nairi. After the administrative reforms of 1990, the regions of Ashtarak, Aragats and Talin joined the Aragatsotn Marz.





It was difficult to look at the glistening Aragats without a pair of sunglasses, and now it seems we witness the complete and unconditional surrender of winter, since spring disembarks upon Aragatsotn.

HOVHANNAVANK

It stops snowing and the sun's peeping rays melt the ice, creating streamlets under your feet. Five kilometers (three miles) from Saghmosavan stands another monastery; the weather, incomparable.

Historians have not yet found the reasons why these two monasteries were built in such close proximity. On the site of the contemporary Hovhannavank was an ancient church dating to the fourth century — its remainders preserved to this day. Father Garegin assumed that it was inhabited by hermit monks, who established the monastery. The oldest of the preserved structures of Hovhannavank is the basilica from the 5th century BCE, and the main temple of Surb Karapet (Saint Karapet) built in 1216-1221. The temple is uniquely decorated. For example, instead of the usual construction inscription in the tympanum, there is a bas-relief with the image of Christ and the wise and unreasonable virgins. With his right hand, Christ blesses those looking at him, most likely, the "wise." At the same time, with an accusing gesture of his left hand, he seems to repulse the "unreasonable," depicted as those turning away from him. The vestibule of the monastery, including the western facade, date back to 1250. The practice of building vestibules was in particular applied in Armenia in the 12th and 13th centuries, and had never been used before that time. In outward appearance, these are rather secular constructions, and as to functionality — they serve both religious and civil purposes. Typically, parishioners would meet there to discuss different church and secular matters. Vestibules, generally, were located from the western side of the temples (since meetings were held close to the days-end) and were rectangular or square constructions, with four widely arranged columns holding flat coverings. The vestibule of Hovhannavank is fascinating because of its large in diameter tower that rests on twelve columns: according to specialists, this is the largest among analogical constructions in Armenia. As was explained to us, the tower was built after the building of the vestibule, in approximately 1270.

CAPTURING THE MOMENT

We walked out of Hovhannavank Church and could not believe our eyes: the sun shone brightly, and the heavy black clouds were clustered far off, somewhere above Downtown Yerevan. Our photographer Hayk, in oblivion, rushed to take pictures of Aragats glistening from afar (it was difficult to look straight at it without sunglasses). In mid-September of last year, on our way back from Lake Sevan, we were lucky to capture the moment when summer changed into autumn irreversibly; and now, at the feet of Aragats, it seems we witness the complete and unconditional surrender of winter: as in that hour of unrestrained solar uproar, spring disembarks upon Aragatsotn, unaltered.

The First Queen of Jerusalem

The singing of minstrels was occasionally interrupted by dueling knights at the tournament grounds in Edessa. The wedding of princess Arda and Baldwin of Boulogne – one of the commanders of the First Crusade – was a lavish celebration at the estate of Armenian Prince Thoros, east of the Euphrates. Two years later, the free-spirited Armenian would become the first Queen of Jerusalem, but her high title did not bring her happiness. Given in marriage as a sacrifice to a larger political agenda, she was destined to endure a terrible ordeal.



text by **ERNA REVASOVA**
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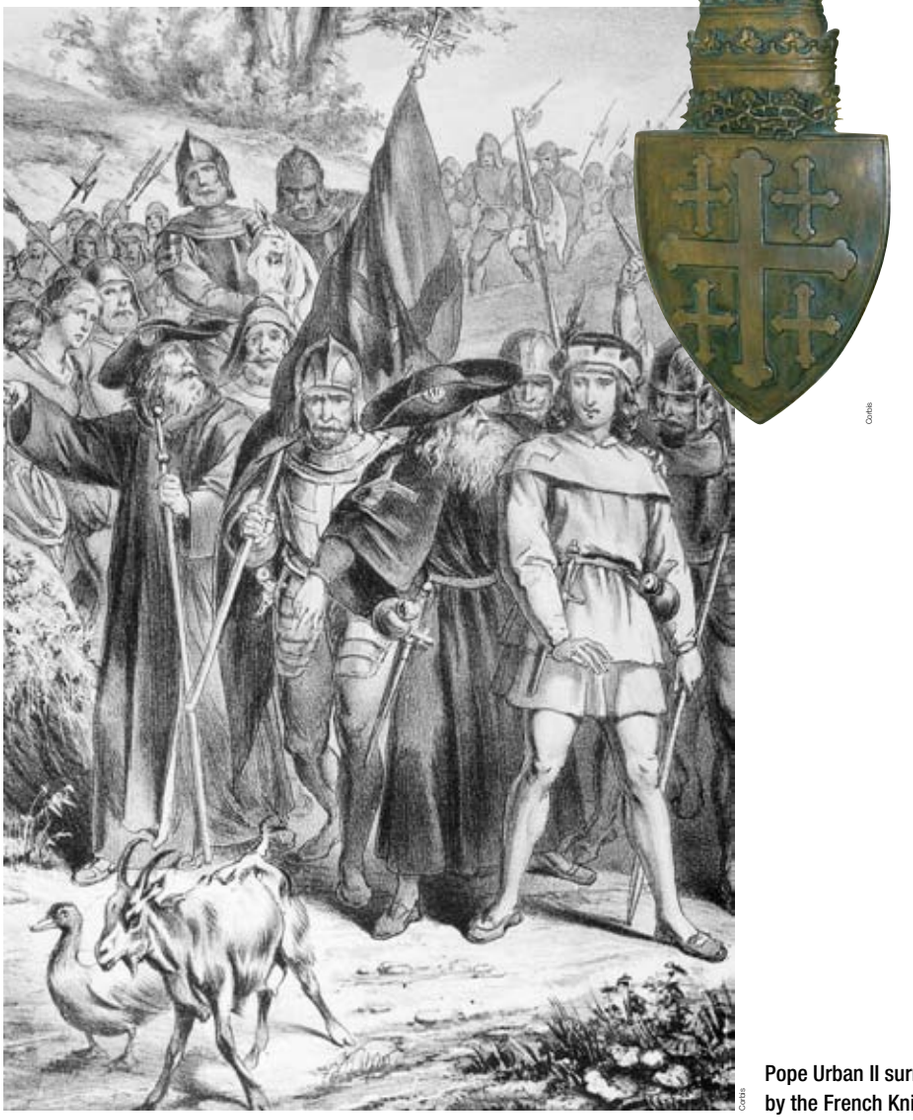

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Pope Urban II surrounded by the French Knights

"Using entreaties and exhortations [the Pope] urged to restore the power of faith, to bravely overcome Satan's designs, to restore the Holy Church's distinguished standing brutally violated by the infidels…"
Fulcher of Chartres, History of Jerusalem, 12th century

In November of 1095, Pope Urban II arrived in France. At the Council of Claremont he vowed to help the Eastern Christians suffering under the Muslim yoke of oppression. The call was taken up and he promised to win back the Holy Land and Holy Sepulcher. The crusades were attractive to many young men of wealth because a victory in the Near East would assure eternal rewards in heaven, and appreciable benefits on Earth. The Pope's words traveled through the grapevine among the too numerous and mostly poor European knights. Jerusalem is the center of the world surrounded by incredibly rich land — in short, a second Paradise. The first campaign against the infidels started from the walls of Constantinople, where four armies had gathered initially. One of them, a big company of feudal volunteers from Lorraine and the Right Bank of Rhine, was led by the Duke of Lower Lorraine Godfrey of Bouillon (Godefroi de Bouillon) and his brothers, Eustace and Baldwin. In the fall of 1097, Baldwin of Boulogne broke away from the main body of the crusaders and marched into Cilicia, fighting along the way. Here, he heeded the recommendations

The Pope's words traveled through the grapevine among the numerous European knights. Jerusalem is the center of the world surrounded by incredibly rich land — a second Paradise.



from the archive of Claude Mutafian

of his Armenian adviser Bagrat (Pancras) and continued advancing further East. Truth be told, Baldwin did not have any significant properties at home and his yearning to become a land owner had been the major stimulus for him to join the Holy War. Even after the crusaders had conquered Antioch — one of the most important cities of the Eastern Mediterranean Basin — and taken 'the path of the Holy Sepulcher' (as the pilgrims' route was called), Baldwin kept east of the Euphrates. He decided to establish his rule over the territory divided among Armenian feudal lords. At that time, the Edessan prince Thoros called the knight for help. He sent the city's bishop and twelve elders asking Baldwin to come to Edessa and protect the city from Turkish raids. The Lorrainian helped the prince, who then gratefully adopted him. Marrying a girl from Armenian nobility was a clever political move by the ambitious knight (the first crusader's wife had died a month before the Edessa wedding). As his ultimate goal was to rule the County of Edessa, which had already become one of the four fiefdoms in the Near East controlled by Europeans, Baldwin's status as an adopted Armenian improved his standing among the local population. Interestingly enough, there is no reference to this marriage in any Armenian manuscripts — only French sources account for it, but none of them mention the bride's name. Only in 1733 did it suddenly show up in the work of Sebastiono Pauli Codice diplomat ico del sacro mi l itare ordine Gerosolimitano oggi di Malta. In order to marry the Armenian princess, the crusader had to grow a beard. In the Christian East, a beard was always considered an attribute of manliness and solidity. As indicated by historian Gevond Alishan, who had discovered this fact in Latin sources, the condition was laid down by the father of the bride. At the same time he promised to pay the 60,000 bezant dowry, 17,000 of which he paid on the wedding day. One curious detail — a year later, when Baldwin had already squandered the money, he started blackmailing the father-in-law, threatening to shave off his own beard. To save the daughter's dignity, Thoros paid the insatiable relative another 33,000. ▸



from the archives of Claude Mutafian

Baldwin of Boulogne enters Edessa Versailles, Hall of the Crusades

Death of Thoros Miniature

Duke of Lower Lorraine Godfrey de Bouillon

Info

Death of Thoros of Edessa

"The council and citizens [of Edessa] <…> deliberated on how to get rid off their Duke [Thoros] and make Baldwin their Prince and Lord; as they <…> believed that under his rule, the city and fortress would be saved and protected in the best way. <…> While they were conferring, the whole city, young and old, took the arms, put on their armors and went to Baldwin asking him take their side. <…> Baldwin, however, decidedly refused to commit such a criminal deed. <…> He said, "It would be a great sin before the eyes of God, if I lifted a hand against this man, whom I consider my father, to whom I pledged my allegiance. I ask you not to stain my honor with his blood and death and not to disgrace my name before the nobles of the Christian army." <…> He exhorted the crowd's leaders to spare their Duke's life and instead divide among themselves his enormous treasure which he [Baldwin] had beheld himself. However, neither council nor people wanted to listen to his exhortations <…> -- they shouted that they would not allow the Duke to escape. <…> The Duke descended by a rope out of a window [in the tower, intending to flee]. In the blink of an eye he was pierced by thousands of arrows. His head was cut off his [dead] body and carried on a spear through the streets of the city. The next day they [citizens] elected Baldwin Duke and Prince of the city <…> and took an oath as his subjects and vassals."

Albert of Aachen,
Historia Hieroslymitanae expeditions



Marrying the Armenian princess was a clever political move: Baldwin planned to establish his rule over the County of Edessa and most of its inhabitants were Armenians.

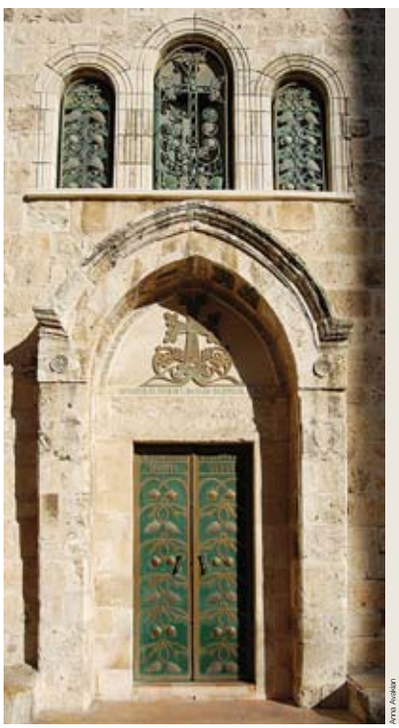


Corbis

"Support the Church and its rules and watch for the tithes from all lands to be paid regularly and not stolen or sold"
Fulcher of Chartres, History of Jerusalem

Baldwin of Boulogne became the sovereign ruler of Edessa in March of 1098 after Thoros had been murdered as a result of the citizens' conspiracy. Two years later, the Lorrainian ascended to the throne as the King of Jerusalem. After handing the County's reigns of government to his cousin Baldwin of Bourg, Arda's spouse set out for the Holy City. He intended to enter the succession rights after the death of Godfrey, who was the uncrowned ruler of Jerusalem since 1099. On Friday, July 15, 1099, three years into the campaign, the crusaders took Jerusalem by storm. By the 12th century account of French historian William, the archbishop of Tyre (Guillaume de Tyr), they entered Jerusalem with a massive force of cavalry and infantry and, without sparing anyone, stabbed all the residents with their swords flooding the city with blood.

"It thus happened by the just order of the Lord so those, who had defiled the sacred place by their Pagan rites and made it strange to its true



Anna Arakian

Info

Armenian Jerusalem

The history of Armenian Jerusalem and the relations between the Armenians and the crusaders was reassembled using every little grain of information by Gevond Alishan, Levon Ter-Petrosian, Gerar Dedeyan, Michael Stone, Clode-Armen Mutafian, Gevorg Khindlian and others. The Armenians came to the Holy City a very long time ago – the community's distant past was confirmed by the mosaics with Armenian writing that, in all likelihood, date back to the 5th century. They were uncovered at the end of the 19th century in the northern (near the Damascus Gate) and eastern (on Mount Olive) parts of Jerusalem. They happen to be the oldest of all Armenian inscriptions known today. Around the same area, a record in Greek about an Armenian monastery was found. This inscription is currently kept at the Louvre, in France.

According to Ananstas Vardaper (the beginning of the 8th century) and other sources, there were 77 Armenian churches in the Holy Land. The Latin text De casis Dei vel Monasteris indicates that in 808 the St. John monastery in Jerusalem was governed by six representatives of the Armenian clergy. The description of the lives of Armenians in Jerusalem can be found in the manuscripts of a certain John 'the Doctor', dated 880, that also contain a hagiography of St Dionisio Areopagita (Denys l'Are'opagite).

The Armenian Quarter is now one of the four quarters of the Old City of Jerusalem covering the south-eastern part of Mount Zion. A large Armenian cemetery with the St Savior monastery (St. Sauveur) is still situated south of David's Gate. According to the accounts of Italian Marino Sanudo (1320), Armenian Jacques de Veron and two Russian travelers (at the end of the 14th century), the house of Armenian Kayfa was located near the Last Supper room. From the Early Middle Ages, the St. Jacob Armenian Cathedral housed the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, whose authority in the Holy City has been documented throughout many centuries and confirmed by all the world rulers.

Jaffa: the Palestinian port where Arda stayed during the coronation of her spouse

Abdication of Arda Miniature, National Library of France

Portrait of Baldwin I, Versailles, the Crusades rooms



from the archives of Claude Mouteian



from the archives of Claude Mouteian

Although she was Baldwin's spouse, the first Queen of Jerusalem had not ever returned to the Holy City. Armenian presence on the throne did not last.

people, would clean it with their own blood and expiate their crime by their deaths." (Fulcher of Chartres, History of Jerusalem, 12th century). Eight days later Godfrey of Bouillon accepted the title "Defender of the Holy Sepulcher," (Advocatus Sancti Sepulchri). He chose to be called baron and refused to be crowned in the city where Jesus had been crowned with thorns. Baldwin of Boulogne was not as conscientious, and in November 1100 had himself crowned King of Jerusalem in the Basilica of Bethlehem.

However, his lawful wife was not present at the ceremony — the first Queen of Jerusalem was staying in Jaffa at the time, one of the major Palestinian ports (where the ships with pilgrims heading for Jerusalem arrived). Arda resided in Jaffa for at least two more years. Here she learned about the dire circumstances of the Franks during the first battle at Ramla (1101). This fortress on the road from Jerusalem to Ascalon served as an outpost for the Egyptians who periodically attacked the Kingdom. Although the crusaders managed to defeat the Arabs, sustaining heavy losses, Baldwin's troops lost a subsequent battle in 1102. Arda even heard a rumor about her spouse's death, but this turned out to be an exaggeration.

"How can the one, who tramples peace, pacify [others]? And when his hands are dirty, how can he clean others from the filth?"

Fulcher of Chartres, History of Jerusalem

The relations of the royal couple grew increasingly tense and somewhere between 1102 and 1108 Baldwin I annulled the marriage with his Armenian wife. According to historians, there are two possible explanations: it was either the urge to replenish the treasury with a rich dowry from another victim, or the Queen's sullied reputation. One day, Arda's ship was carried by wind to an island 'populated by barbarians'. After the Queen escaped their hands, Baldwin not only held her away from their regal nuptial bed, but also forced her to enter the St. Anne monastery, north of the Temple of God. He suspected his wife's virtue had been violated. Arda did not stay long in the Catholic cloister, however. Her regal spouse issued a royal assent for a move to her relatives in Constantinople, where, by an official account, she led a 'dissolute life'. On the other hand, there is a curious statement in the work of English historian of the time - William of Malmesbury- that allows other historians to speculate about the King's sexual orientation. It seems Baldwin I of Jerusalem "was terrified of his wife embrace." However, it did not prevent him from marrying for a third time in 1113. Yet the relationship between Baldwin and the rich and influential Countess Adelaida of Sicily — the widow of the Norman Count of Sicily, Roger I, and mother of Roger II — was eventually called adultery. The fact of the matter was that the divorce of Baldwin and Arda had not been legally valid: 'until parted by death' the Armenian would remain the King's only lawful wife. Besides, the Frank barons did not welcome the prospect of becoming a Sicily protectorate — there was a provision in the marriage contract stating that if the union did not result in the birth of an heir, the Kingdom of Jerusalem would eventually be ruled by Adelaida's son. In 1117, seriously ill Baldwin yielded to the demands of his subjects and, after ousting Adelaida, reconciled with Arda. Within a year he passed away leaving no heirs behind. Although his wife, the first Queen of Jerusalem — Arda, a daughter of Thoros — had not ever returned to the Holy City, an Armenian presence on the throne was not interrupted. Another Armenian replaced Arda by the name of Morphia, a daughter of Gabriel — the powerful prince of Melitene — who became the next Queen.

FLIGHT OF *THE BAT*

Exactly six months after Time magazine featured the portrait of an Armenian, Michael Arlen, on the cover, its editorial board presented another Armenian individual on the cover of the October 17, 1927, issue — Nikita Balieff. Who was he, the long-forgotten Balieff? An interesting question considering that he was honored with this all-American mark of distinction. (I would like to remind our readers that Time was created in 1923 becoming the first mass-market weekly magazine).

text **RAPHAEL HAKOPJANIAN**
photo **JOHAN HAGEMEYER, COURTESY OF BANCROFT LIBRARY**





Nikita Balieff was born Mkrtych Balian in 1877 in Erzerum, the ancient Armenian city of Karyn. At the age of twelve he moved with his parents to a suburb of Rostov-na-Donu, Nor Nakhichevan, founded by Armenians at the command of Tsarina Yekaterina II on March 9, 1778. By the beginning of the 20th century the Balian family had settled in Moscow, and Mkrtych enrolled in the Moscow Commercial Institute. Thanks to his jolly disposition, the chubby, good-natured young man with a face as "round as a moon" immediately became the darling of Moscow's Armenian diaspora. The bright Mkrtych, a perpetual joker and buffoon, befriended Nikolai Tarasov, the heir of a vast fortune, a society lion, a highly desired eligible bachelor, and an avid car collector (it was rare, particularly in pre-revolutionary Moscow to own several automobiles). Although Tarasov was "favored by fortune," there was something unusually tragic in his aristocratic appearance. Perhaps because of this feature, society mavens gossiped that the young millionaire resembled Oscar Wilde's eccentric heroes. Incidentally, the French writer Henry Troyat was from the same family of Torossians (Tarasovs in Russian), who descended from Armavir village.

Like a new incarnation of Castor and Pollux, the two inseparable and restless young men discovered that the Moscow Art Theatre was going on tour abroad. Tarasov suggested to his friend, also an avid fan, "Let's go! We should be where the Art Theatre is!"

In Berlin, as soon as heard about Art Theatre's financial problems, Tarasov commissioned Balieff to meet with Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, the famous director of the theatre, on his behalf as a potential patron. (Even before becoming an actor, just as many other Armenians in Moscow, Balieff changed his first and last names to resemble Russian names by spelling and phonetics). During the meeting Balieff got straight to the point by offering 30,000 rubles, with no strings attached or percent-

ages of future profits claimed. He told Nemirovich-Danchenko, "If you mismanage them, you'll lose it, if not — they'll support your work!"

In this way, the Armenian millionaire Nikolai Tarasov supported the legendary theatre. "This wasn't a tip from the son of a merchant from Yekaterinodar, it was the generous gesture of a man who valued and appreciated the arts," wrote Moscow newspapers about Tarasov's philanthropy. "The man who loved and valued arts" became one of the main stockholders and a member of the board of directors of the Theatre. Stanislavsky once called the Moscow Art Theatre "The theatre of Morozov and Tarasov." It's not difficult to sense the emotions behind these words. Without his substantial grant, the young theatre would not have survived. In contrast to Savva Timofeyevich Morozov, who demanded that the repertoire, staffing and many other details were coordinated through him, Nikolai Tarasov was "very tactful and did not interfere with anything." He didn't even attempt to set up his talented friend in the famous theatre troupe; so sure was he that the latter would manage without outside help. Tarasov was absolutely right. By 1906, Balieff was a member of the troupe. He had played several small roles, including that of Bread in Maeterlinck's *The Blue Bird*, and the Guest in Andreev's *The Life of a Man*. His most outstanding talent was his gift as a parodist. He impersonated many famous actors with precision and a great a sense of humor, causing deafening bursts of laughter in those who were parodied. He became the soul of MAT's "cabbage parties" [comedic improvisation shows], which were organized for the troupe and a close circle of friends and relatives. Based on the concept of these "cabbage parties" his first show took place on February 29, 1908 for a limited circle of an invited audience. That same day the comedic anthem of the exclusive theatre-cabaret *The Bat* was performed for the very first time. It said that the actors would "decorate the dull background of the everyday with the colorful patterns of the bat's flight."

According to Stanislavsky, "Tarasov, who was hiding backstage, played a significant role in Balieff's performance, as he was the author of many extremely amusing jokes and improvisations."

The love of the Moscow Art Theatre was not the only thing that Savva Morozov and Nikolai Tarasov had in common. These two millionaires also shared a tragic death ahead of their time: unexpected, inexplicable suicides, generating multiple theories and chains of gossip.

Savva Morozov was 43 in 1905 when he was found in a hotel suite in Cannes shot in the heart. Considered a suicide, it was assumed that he felt a heavy, psychiatric illness approaching. According to a different version, however, he was killed by the Bolsheviks when he stopped financing their party. Nikolai Tarasov was only 28 when he recklessly fired a bullet into his high handsome forehead while at his apartment. The rumor mill attributed it to an unrequited love, but more practical people thought that the real reason was that with the bullet he freed himself of the burden of unbearable sadness. The young Tarasov had everything in his life, almost everything that is, but the fairies that stood at his crib forgot to put one more gift in it — the ability to appreciate and enjoy life.

When Nikita Balieff lost his beloved friend in 1910, it seemed that their mutual child, *The Bat*, might cease to exist without the substantial, ongoing financial support and be buried next to the grave of Nikolai Tarasov at Moscow's Vagan'kovsky (Armenian) Cemetery. Nevertheless, Balieff swore on his friend's grave that "the bat wouldn't cease in weaving its patterns." The theatre-cabaret soon transformed from an exclusive club for professionals to one open to the public, becoming an extremely popular enterprise, with all the subsequent, favorable financial outcomes.

Constantine Stanislavsky remembered Balieff in this way:

His ceaseless joy, creativity, and wit — both by its essence and by the form of their stage presentation, his provocative bravery, an ability to control the audience, tactfulness, an ability to balance at the edge of humor and impudence, joke and insult, an ability to stop on time and give the joke a different, good-natured direction — all of it turned him into a new artistic figure for Russian genre.

The genre of the variety show was a new and unusual turn for the Russian theatre. The first cabaret appeared at the end of the 19th century on Monmartre in Paris, France: *Le Lapin Agile, Le Chat Noir, le Moulin Rouge*. It attracted Parisian bohemian crowds who came to hear the frivolous chansons, daring sketches, and uncomplicated plays.

Balieff and Tarasov created their "original show" for the actors of Moscow Arts Theatre following the same principles. They decided to parody the title of Meterlink's play, suggesting that their inspiration would soar as well, not as the mythical "Bluebird," but as the mysterious bat, which easily finds its way in the darkness of the night.

Balieff was not only the first Russian master of ceremonies, or the witty show "presenter" of various acts, but he became the main attraction — the creative and generously teasing "host of the evening," a tireless improviser, engaged easily in polemics with the audience (it was not very safe to respond to his comments). The Muscovites justly considered him the sharpest citizen of their city. The best-selling Russian satirical author, Nadezhda Teffi, stated that if one tears a page from a phone book and hands it to Balieff, he would commission musical scores, select stage decorations, choreography, and actors and "you will see what a show it will become." In reality, Balieff was taking pages not from phone books, but from the works of classical authors: Pushkin, Gogol, Lermontov, Turgenev, Chekhov and Maupassant. He braved to alter the compositions of Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Borodin and Dargomyzhsky. As a result, the actor with the moon face created "jokes," little masterpieces causing sardonic cackling and venomous giggling, laughter through tears and silly guffaws from his audiences. Although Soviet theatrical critics stated that Balieff "harmlessly touches the topics of the day," statesmen and politicians of all kinds were cautious in order to avoid the tip of his stinging tongue.

The public flocked to Balieff's shows. He said jokingly, "The whole of Moscow is present, although there are just 300 seats in the hall." The popularity of *The Bat* was rapidly spreading. Many actors and directors eagerly collaborated with the theatre-cabaret. In September of 1911, Nikita Balieff invited Yevgeny Vakhtangov, who was also of Armenian origin, to direct the play *Tin Soldiers*.

This short play received good reviews from theatrical critics, "The fairy tale with dolls and tin soldiers was charmingly presented by the new actor of the Arts Theatre, Vakhtangov," one of the critics wrote. The theatre-cabaret, fortunately, did not become a second-rate café chantant. The decisive factor was not only Balieff's personality, but also his close association with the Moscow Arts Theatre. *The Bat* — the first and the best theatre of miniatures in pre-revolutionary Russia was expanding its innovative repertoire. We refer our readers once again to Stanislavsky: Balieff "was forced to change his former direction and switch to beautiful, truly artistic sketches and numbers, a repertoire that brought world-wide fame to *The Bat*." However, times had changed — Lenin came to power in Russia. Balieff managed to immigrate to Paris with a group of artists in 1920. *The Bat*, which now was called *Chauve-Souris* in French, had a deafening success in the country where cabaret originated, running 273 performances in 65 weeks. The famous producer Charles Cochran attended one of the performances in Paris and immediately offered Balieff to "fly his Bat" to London: 175 sold-out performances in London substantiated Cochran's intuition of a producer and his business skills. Upon success in England *The Bat* "flew" once again, this time to New York. Its American debut took place on February 4, 1922, in a theatre on 49th Street. Shortly thereafter, in 1923, Balieff starred in the short film *Le Chauve Souris*, where his co-star, Tamara Geva, happened to be the first wife of the great choreographer George Balanchine. The film version offered *The Bat* a fresh start, this time in Hollywood, which always was prone to everything fashionable and profitable.

Balieff's broken English was not an obstacle in his artistic career; on the contrary, it became his artistic brand. Balieff often told an anecdote which took place with him in Glasgow. He once entered a pharmacy to buy some sleeping pills. The pharmacist recognized him and dared to ask: ▸

"Mr. Balieff, yesterday I was at your show, but I cannot understand in what language you spoke, and I think if you could speak English well you would earn very big money."

Balieff asked the man in response: "And you sir, are you a rich man?"

The answer was: "I have a little pharmacy; that is all I have."

"That is very curious," said Balieff, "for you speak so well the English."

His next brand became his most widely known *The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers*, a clear reminiscence of Vakhtangov's *Tin Soldiers*, which was itself based on an anecdote about the Russian Tsar Paul I.

Legend has it that during one of his military parades, the absent-minded Tsar walked off the parade grounds, forgetting to give the command to halt. Because he was so cruel, nobody dared to remind him. The soldiers went on marching to somewhere in Siberia before he remembered and ordered their return. They arrived with beards and in quite an exhausted state.

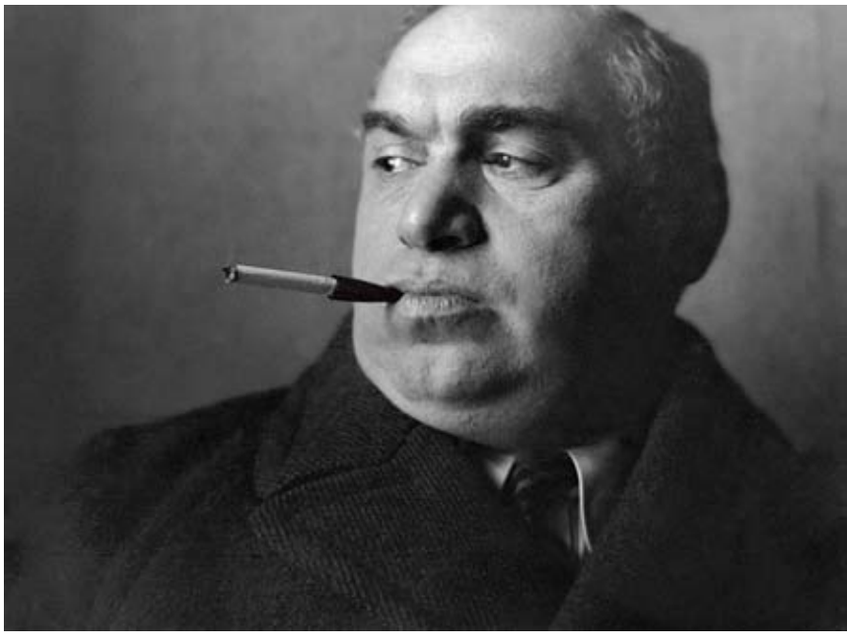
In 1926, a sort of a "cabbage party" style film adaptation of the play based on Alexander Dumas' romantic novel *The Lady of the Camellias* was filmed in Hollywood. First rate stars, such as Charlie Chaplin, Sasha Gitri, Dorothy Gish and Lionel Barrymore were involved in the project. Famous African-American singer Paul Robson played the part of Dumas' son. A whole cohort of American writers — Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, British author Somerset Maugham and even the Sultan of Morocco were also involved. And, of course, among all other celebrities was the illustrious Nikita Balieff himself.

Naturally, Balieff's miniatures are hard to retell. It would be more apt to present the words of the American critics who agreed that Balieff's shows were distinguished by "exquisite taste and a fresh outlook," and that, "the mixture of Russian, French and the broken English" brought a certain charisma to his popular shows. Six times in the course of six years the actors of *The Bat* toured the U.S. with over 1,000 performances around the country — from New York to Los Angeles — and Balieff himself became sort of a classic showman; many generations of the American masters of ceremony copied his style. His popularity in America was such that he was honored with an invitation from President Calvin Coolidge.

The night before the reception with the 30th President of the U.S. the "wittiest Armenian in America" was preparing a speech about his noble and tortured Fatherland — Armenia. He wanted to describe Erzerum, the indigenous Armenian town, which was given to Turkey in an agreement between the Soviet Union and Turkey; he wanted to remind the President about the Armenian tragedy of 1915, and about President Woodrow Wilson's intentions to help Armenia achieve independence. But during the meeting the usually outspoken Balieff was lost for the first time. The President firmly shook his hand smiled and asked, "How do you do?" Balieff was about to reply when a dry, presidential "Good-bye!" followed. Presidents are actors on their own stage, one void of any logic. It may have been that President Coolidge was eager to avoid becoming a target of the comedian's witty comments and therefore hastily retreated to prevent tempting the actor.

Although an immigrant, Balieff did not suffer the hardships so common to recent arrivals — he was considered a wealthy and generous man, as any bohemian should be. By the end of his life he tried to settle down, bought an apartment on 34 West 69 Street and married Helena Komisarjevskaya, an actress in his theatre. However, it is a rare thing for actors to conform to the rules of everyday life. In Art — it is often the exact opposite!

The *New Chauve-Souris* was premiered in the Ambassador theatre in New York on October 23, 1931. This time, however, Broadway was indifferent to the theatre-cabaret from Russia and only 29 performances were given. Not a single ticket was sold for the 30th show. In spite of the fact that the *New Bat* was unable to revive the fame of the old *Bat*, Nikita Balieff himself was an actor much in demand. He was frequently invited to lead concerts and shows, and in 1935 was invited to Hollywood to take part in the film *Once in a Blue Moon*, in which he, the moon-faced actor,



brilliantly portrayed General Onegin. It is hard to tell now what turn his career in Hollywood would have taken if it was not interrupted by his untimely death.

Nikita Balieff died at the age of 59, on September 3, 1936, in New York half an hour before midnight as a result of kidney failure. Most of the U.S. newspapers, including *The New York Times*, printed obituaries with characteristic titles such as, "Stage Figure Dies." The first master of ceremonies in Russia, the creator of Russian cabaret genre, a performer who toured the globe from Germany to South Africa, a popular showman in the U.S., was given his burial service at the Russian Orthodox Church of Christ the Savior in New York. Although the services for the Armenian were held in a Russian Church, the last prayer was given by Reverend Nichan Papazian, Vicar of the Armenian Prelacy, who at the end added that more than 1,000 people came to pay their respects to the actor.

One may question the significance of Balieff's artistry, but one should not come to hasty conclusions. All theatrical publications — all reference books and encyclopedias published in the U.S., England and France — list his name and contain information about this unique actor and a wonderful director, a man who despite the language barriers, was for a whole decade considered the first master of ceremonies in Russia (with an Armenian accent), a witty master of ceremonies in Europe (with a Russian accent), and an unsurpassable showman (with an Armenian-Russian-French accent) in America.

P.S.

Harold Clurman (1901-1980), one of the founders of the most popular 1930s New York's Group Theatre, stated that there is no reason why we should not trust him, "Stanislavsky's system did not influence any theatre in the world as much as it influenced the American theatre." Even today the actor's studios — from Lee Strasberg Film and Theatre Institute to the Stella Adler Acting School — use the innovative techniques of Moscow Arts Theatre as the basic principles of teaching acting technique. Even Charlie Chaplin thought that Stanislavsky described the most important things an actor needs for inspiration. A bright example of the power of the "system" is his book *My Life in Art* published originally in English by Stanislavsky in the U.S., in 1924. Its latest edition was published very recently, in 2008. This book is still considered the actors' bible. Ask any Hollywood actor. This book has helped many Armenians: Nikita Balieff, Yevgeny Vakhtangov, and Rouben Mamoulian!









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Tramway rails on Abovian Street were [illegible] .

The former building of the Men's Gymnasia became a section of the National Museum of History.



National Pinacotheca of Armenia

Erivan,
Lenin's Square

The reconstruction of the square that started in 1926, [illegible] of all old residential buildings.

1926

The building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was built in the early 1950s. Architects: Safarian, Israelian, and Arevshatian.

The complex of the "singing" color — illuminated musical fountains in front of the National Museum — was created in the early 1970s.



Mosaic composition in the center was included in the original 1924 blueprints of Tamanian, but was created during the renovation works in 2004.

Yerevan,
Republic Square

2009

WITH THE SHIELD & ON THE SHIELD

Assessing the developments of the war in May, 1918, British historian Christopher Yoker wrote, "Had the Armenians suffered a defeat in the battle of Sardarapat, the word 'Armenia' would simply have become a geographical term." General Movses Silikov led this decisive battle for the survival of the Armenian nation.

text **VICTOR ARZOUMANYAN**



From the archives of G.M. Sikov

A detailed biography of General Silikov and his photograph appeared in the Soviet press for the first time during the 70th Anniversary Celebration of the Battle of Sardarapat. This became possible only because his son, Georgy Silikov, who repeatedly petitioned the Armenian State authorities to rehabilitate his father, finally received notification from the Supreme Court of the dismissing the sentence due to unproven charges. Although restored to his rightful place in the military history of Armenia, in the beginning of World War I no one would have imagined that Silikov's illustrious career would ever include the least hint of scandal.

TROUBLED TIMES

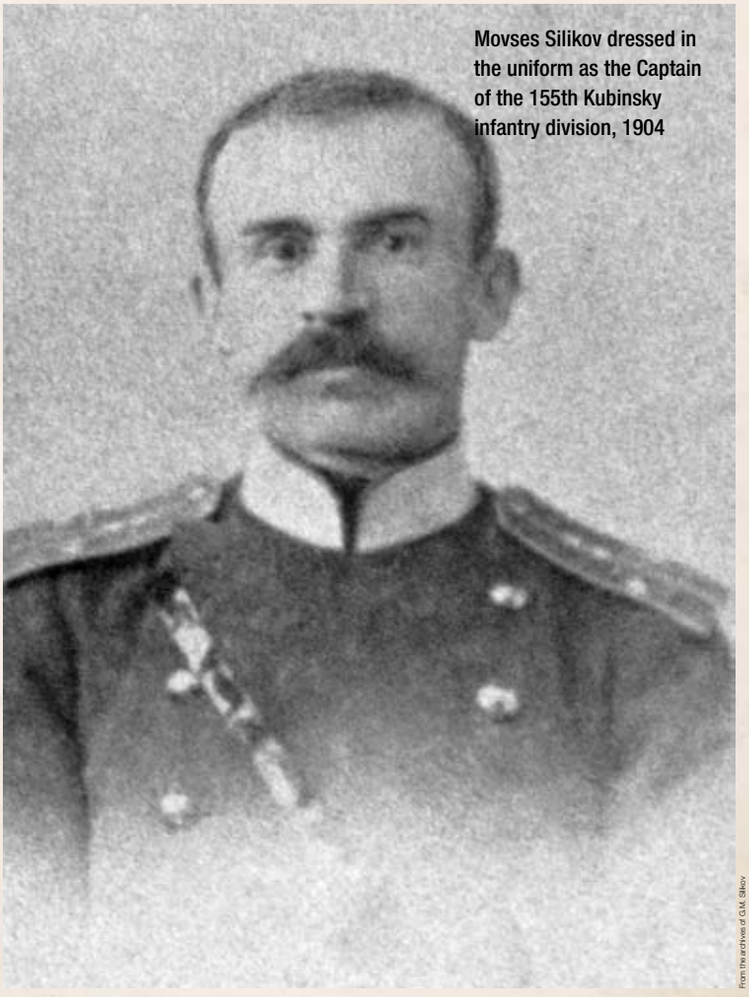
At the end of October, 1914, Russia declared war on Turkey in response to an Ottoman attack on the Russian coastline on the Black Sea. The military campaign was progressing well for Russia, evoking an unprecedented enthusiasm amongst the Armenian population and high hopes among its political leaders. Over the course of two years, Russian troops succeeded in controlling nearly the entire territory of Western Armenia. In spite of this and other military successes, an extreme political crisis ensued due to the severe economic situation, the indecisiveness of the government, and disagreement among the ruling elite, which opened the way for Russia's Bolshevik revolution. The Armenian front disintegrated and the Russian troops beat their retreat. A hastily formed Transcaucasian Government, acknowledged by no one and torn apart by internal opposition, was unable to control the political situation on the ground in Armenia.

At the time of the revolution in Russia, separate national military subdivisions already existed in Armenia, and as the Chief-of-Front, Lebedinsky wrote that the Armenian battalions were "the best troops among the operating units of the Caucasian front." Military headquarters made a decision to establish a national military corps. The Armenian National Council, operating in Tiflis, instructed General Foma Nazarbekov to form Armenian units. The experienced captain demonstrated outstanding organizational abilities and by January, 1918, managed to form an efficient corps consisting of two divisions and auxiliary support units. General Areshov was appointed the Commander-in-Chief of the First division, and General Silikov of the Second.

THE PROFESSIONAL

Movses Silikov was born on September 14, 1862, in the Province of Elizavetpol. The Silikovs had a comfortable life as their family owned a small factory. Carrying on the military tradition of his ancestors (there was a Major General of artillery among them), Movses received his primary education at the First Military Gymnasium of Moscow, which happened to be one of the best institutions of military education in Russia. Along with the major disciplines, students were taught trades, dance and singing. Movses continued his education at the Third Alexandrovski Military College, which was under the patronage of the Emperor. In August, 1884, Silikov was raised to the rank of Second Lieutenant and was directed to the 155th Kubinsky Regiment, then quartered in Kars where he attained the rank of Captain. There, in 1901, Silikov married Natalia Zdanovskaya, the Polish daughter of a military officer in the Russian army, who taught at the local gymnasium. Four years later their son Georgy was born. By that time, the character of the future General was completely formed — his calmness, firmness, and reason, combined with his cheerfulness, helped him easily endure the hardships of military service. Increasingly popular at the time, photography and tourism were some of his hobbies. He especially loved music, had a profound knowledge of the opera and, having quite a voice himself, directed the regimental chorus at one time.

In January 1904, Silikov graduated from the Oranienbaumski Officer Infantry School with honors and was appointed to Aleksandropol, where he served until the end of 1911. In December, Lieutenant-Colonel Silikov, the Deputy Commander of the Eighth Infantry Regiment, was sent to Persia with an expeditionary corps. At the beginning of World War I,



Movses Silikov dressed in the uniform as the Captain of the 155th Kubinsky infantry division, 1904

From the archives of G.M. Silikov

The military campaign was progressing well, which evoked an unprecedented enthusiasm amongst the Armenians and high hopes among their leaders.

he was stationed in Tavriz with the rank of Colonel, Commander of the Sixth Regiment of the Second Infantry Division. He participated in a number of battles, commanding the Mush and Van detachments and was the first commandant of Erzerum. For his military services, Silikov was decorated with numerous orders, the Georgievski weapon, and in 1916, he was promoted to the rank of Major General.

THE LAST STRIKE

The General accepted his appointment of Commander of the Armenian division and, leaving behind his family in Tiflis, enthusiastically proceeded to the formation of the division. The enormously extended frontline, which was earlier held by the forces of several divisions in the Russian army, was now defended by a few hastily formed Armenian military units. This happened at a time of scant war supplies, mass desertion, vast numbers of refugees, sabotage by the Transcaucasian authorities and, most importantly, incompetence and indecisiveness on the part of political leaders. The Tiflis commandership, on the other hand, was preoccupied not as much by the defense,



Armenian military commanders (Movses Silikov — middle row, second from the left), December 1918

National archive of Armenia

but by the evacuation of their personal property, which led to some of the few remaining armored trains to be removed from the front.

The Turks, who had been in a desperate condition not long before, took heart at the perceived weakness of the Armenian forces and resumed military operations. Despite the heroic resistance of the regular units and voluntary detachments, the front returned to its pre-war condition within several months.

In March of 1918, Bolshevik Russia ratified the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, according to which Turkey would be given the Armenian provinces of Kars and Ardahan, which had been part of Russia at the beginning of the war. The Transcaucasian Seim [parliament], which by that time had declared independence from Russia, refused to accept the conditions of the Treaty in regards to the Caucuses at first, but under pressure from Germany finally ordered the surrender of Kars, Ardahan, and Batum.

The Prime Minister of Great Britain, Lloyd George, stated in his memoirs that one of the goals of the allied governments was "the liberation of people trapped in bloody tyranny of the Turks, as well as the ousting of the Ottoman Empire from Europe as a civilization completely alien to the West." However, drawn into the opposition of great powers, the Armenian nation experienced the darkest pages of its history — the nation's very existence was under threat.

It was clear that the goal of the Turkish government was not merely the occupation of Western Armenia, but the complete annihilation of the Armenian people. Full responsibility for the nation's destiny was put on the shoulders of the military and, most of all, those of General Silikov, who commanded the Erivan troops at the time. The general handled his responsibilities brilliantly. As Marshall Ivan Baghramian stated, Silikov was "the most gifted Armenian military leader of that period."

Drawn into the fight of the great powers, the Armenians experienced the darkest days of their history — the very existence of the nation was under threat.

BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL

In May of 1918, the situation of Erivan became extremely complicated. The 36th Turkish division was approaching from the west. It captured the Araks station and, penetrating through the Ararat valley, occupied the large village of Sardarapat. The ninth Turkish division entered from the North, and crossing the mountains took over Bash-Abaran (Aparan). Supplemental Turkish forces rushed toward Araks from the South. There was an imminent threat even from the home front. The situation was so critical that in fear for the Catholicos' life, General Silikov suggested that His Holiness leave the St. Echmiadzin temple and retreat to the monastery on Sevan Island on May 20. Saint Georg V refused and, addressing the people who gathered in the courtyard of the cathedral, declared, "I will not betray the mother of our churches, bequeathed to us by our Holy ancestors. I will not abandon the hearth of the Armenian Apostolic Church. If the Armenian army and the Armenian people are unable to stop the enemy invasion, if they are unable to save our sacred relics, then I am prepared to perish right here on the threshold of our temple, as your spiritual ruler and with



Memorial museum of Sardarapat



Memorial museum of Sardarapat

Commander of one of the Armenian divisions — Colonel Daniel-Bek Piroumov

A participant of the Battle of Sardarapat, Bishop Garegin Hovsepian

A group of soldiers of the Fifth Armenian Division after the Battle of Sardarapat

God's blessing. And if the end is near, why not accept it with honor and courage, and not cringe before the sworn enemy!" By order of Georg V, from May 21 to May 29, the church ministers from Aragatsotn all the way to Sevan incessantly rang the church bells, urging everyone to take up arms and rush to the battlefield.

In this difficult situation the headquarters of the Armenian corps made a brave decision to switch from the strategy of passive defense and, securing all available forces, to counter-attack: not allowing the enemy to close the ring, to take the initiative and try to defeat the separated divisions of the enemy.

On the eve of the crucial battle, General Silikov addressed the Armenian populace with the following appeal, "Armenians! The time has come for every Armenian to forget his personal issues and, in the name of a great cause, spare no effort to strike the enemy. We did not want to make war. In the name of peace and harmony we were ready to sacrifice anything, but our perfidious enemy continues to take the path he has chosen. He wants to wipe us off the earth. But if we are destined to be obliterated, we'd better try to defend ourselves with arms in our hands…"

Silikov positioned his headquarters in the building of the theological seminary of Echmiadzin, between Sardarapat and Bash-Abaran, at the center of the Turkish offensive.

Knowing that the fourth Turkish division approaching from Iran was still far away and that the dangers from the South came solely from the frontline units, Silikov ordered the bridges across the river Araks to be demolished, and commissioned the Zeitun cavalry division of Salibekov and two volunteer units to secure the defense of the left river bank. The general also positioned reserve troops in the North because he considered that direction to be the most dangerous.

On May 22, the units of Dro and Daniel-Bek Pirumov struck the first counter-blows to the enemy. The troops of Dro pushed the enemy out from Bash-Abaran, forcing them to fall back nearly thirty kilometers–close to the Spitak crossing on the river. Colonel Pirumov's unit, on the other hand, attacked the Turks in Sardarapat and, after the day's fierce battle, knocked them out of the station and village. Suffering heavy casualties and pursued by the Armenian units, the enemy retreated, but managed to consolidate its position on the heights in the vicinity of Araks station after several dozen miles.

On May 24, the units of Nazarbekov resumed the offensive in Gharakilis (Vanadsor). In spite of being vastly outmanned (the Turks' forces consisted of ten thousand people, seventy canons and forty machine-guns), the Armenians defeated the enemy, forcing them to retreat approximately five kilometers.

The bloody frontal attacks on the Turkish positions continued for three days at Araks station, but the heroic assault brought no results. Both the Turks and parts of Pirumov's troops were exhausted and suffered serious losses. However, with the retreat of the ninth Turkish division, the threat to Gharakilis from the north was eliminated and Silikov immediately seized the opportunity to reposition his reserve units from Ghznausk to Sardarapat. The commander-in-chief formed a shock force from the reserve units — regular troops in conjunction with partisan detachments — and sent it to encircle the Turkish positions. Early in the morning of May 27, the Turks were unexpectedly attacked from the rear and the flanks, and the principal forces of the Armenians resumed frontal attacks. The Turkish forces could no longer sustain the battle and retreated toward Aleksandropol. Their retreat became more and more disorderly, and



Memorial museum of Sardarapat

Silikov's units followed them in pursuit. The victory was indisputable: the Turks lost significant territory in the battle, as well as approximately four thousand troops.

As a result of the operations in Sardarapat, Bash-Abaran, and Gharakilis, where the Armenians soldiers and military officers had manifested particular heroism and selflessness, the hostile troops were not only stopped, but also imparted with enormous losses. The commander-in-chief of the Turkish forces on the Caucus front, Vehib-Pasha, called the defeat of his soldiers a complete devastation.

In this difficult situation the headquarters of the Armenian corps made a brave decision to switch from the strategy of defense to counter-attack.

THE POLITICAL MAP OF THE WORLD

The Armenian commandership was ready to exploit the success and pursue the enemy. General Silikov even worked out a plan to liberate Aleksandropol. However, politicians interfered once more. At the Batum parley, the Transcaucasian delegates were not informed about the military successes and were ready to sign an armistice under any conditions. However, the Turks, being fully aware of the details of the recent events, gladly agreed to consolidate positions not controlled by them. Like before, after regaining their native lands at the expense of thousands of lives, Armenians had to give them up because of the mediocrity of the politicians caught in desperation and panic. They had no confidence in their own competence and sought the approval of distant patrons. The declaration of "independence" of the remaining patch of land in a ravaged Armenia was signed; without fanfare, at great cost to many, and without enthusiasm by its signatories.

Being a member of the newly formed government in Armenia, Silikov took an active part in military construction, organized campaigns against epidemics of cholera and typhus, and successfully led a number of military operations, specifically mopping up the northern provinces of Armenia from Georgian troops that had settled there.

Meanwhile, the united forces of France and Great Britain continued their triumphant offensive attacks against Turkey, forcing them to capitulate and withdraw of troops from a number of regions. In April of 1920, as a member of a governmental delegation, General Silikov welcomed Kars, which had been given up by the Turks without a fight. Once again, a ray of hope began to gleam, especially after Armenia, among other allied countries of the Triple Entente [between the United Kingdom, France, and Russia after the signing of the Anglo-Russian agreement in 1907], signed the Sevrsk Treaty, tearing away Western Armenia from Turkey. Determination of the exact borders of the future state was submitted to the U.S. President Woodrow Wilson for arbitration, with the foresight of a vast territory with an outlet to the sea. This hope was short-lived as yet another disappointment soon followed — Kemal Pasha, who led the uprising against the sultan's government, canceled all the hopes of the Armenians by signing the agreement. Kemal's success was stipulated by



Map showing the boundaries of Armenia as awarded by President Wilson.



Map showing the boundaries of Armenia as awarded by President Wilson

In April of 1920 General Silikov welcomed Kars, given up by the Turks without a fight. Once again, a ray of hope began to gleam.



Bell Tower of the Memorial Complex in commemoration of the Battle of Sardarapat

Hayk Melkonyan



Info

First Commemorative Coin of the Republic of Armenia

The first commemorative coin of the Republic of Armenia, dedicated to the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Sardarapat, was issued in 1994. It was the first release in the "National Replicas" series.

There were 3,000 copies of the coin, each made of 999-karat silver weighing 31.1 grams. Each coin has its serial number and a certificate of authenticity. On the obverse side it depicts the coat of arms of the Republic of Armenia with the inscription "Armenia, 25 drams, 1914" under the emblem.

The reverse side shows fragments of the Battle of Sardarapat Monument, which was built in 1968.

On both sides of the bell tower, the word "Sardarapat" is inscribed and under it, the date of the historic battle "1918."

the disagreement among the leading powers of the Triple Entente and the backing of Bolsheviks, who saw a stronghold of revolutionary spirit in the east, and supplied Kemal with money, weapons, specialists and military strength.

In autumn of 1920, Armenia, defending itself on all fronts and flooded with Turkish and Bolshevik emissaries, was forced to maneuver between units of the Red Army pressing from the east, and the Kemalists advancing from the west. As a result, parts of the provinces occupied by the Bolsheviks were proclaimed the Armenian Soviet Republic.

WITHOUT DATE AND PLACE OF DEATH

The day before the establishment of the new State power, General Silikov was discharged from the army, but stayed in Armenia by earning his living with a small enterprise of a textile factory. Soon thereafter, together with other former Armenian military leaders, he was subjected to a preventative exile to Ryazan. Later, his case was reviewed, and in 1921 he returned to Erivan to work for a Swedish store AO "Baltika," trading agricultural equipment in Aleksandropol. For several years, Silikov worked in the hospital of the American charitable society "Americom," one of the leaders of which was the former ambassador of the United States in Constantinople, Henry Morgenthau. In the last years of his life, the retired general was supported by his wife and son who, at his father's insistence, had chosen the peaceful profession of hydro-engineering. Silikov spent his spare time with a close circle of friends, playing chess and recalling the military campaigns in which he took part.

Silikov's name was often mentioned by the leaders of the First Armenian Republic and he was arrested again. The son of the General recalled, "In September 1937, after taking the last parcel to him, Mother returned and resentfully said that in his note, Father had ordered that the cuffs of his shirts be washed more carefully. Out of naiveté, if not foolishness, we didn't understand anything. And only after the woman who washed the linens brought the lilac clot — whatever was left from the note written with an indelible pencil, and placed in the cuff of the shirt — we learned that father wanted to warn us about something."

The family first moved to Tiflis to avoid capture, and later to Baku. The name of the general was buried in oblivion for decades. During the Khrushchev era, Georgy Silikov attempted to restore the good name of his father without success. Many years later, Marshall Baghramian warmly praised the hero of Sardarapat in his memoir, which was followed by articles about him in the Armenian encyclopedia. In 1988, the authorities finally informed his son of the abolition of the sentence. Although free of any criminal sentences, the records of Movses Silikov remain incomplete to this day — the place and time of his death are still unknown.







YEREVAN is closer than you think



To celebrate the rich Armenian heritage, **yerevan** attended a number of fall festivals in California. The festivities began with the ***Fifth Annual Armenian Festival of Orange County***, organized by a highly energetic group who call themselves Armenian Festival, Inc. Rows of booths flanked the promenade leading from the entrance where Armenian goods were snatched up by happy attendees from far and wide. While parents shopped, the kids had their faces painted, ran the obstacle course and, ate lots of good food while being entertained by song and dance. Next stop for **yerevan** was the ***52nd Annual Armenian Food Festival in San Francisco*** hosted by the Saint Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church. For over half a century, the festival has showcased Armenian tradition to its non-Armenian neighbors as well. This festival too had something for everyone, including good food. From Northern California, **yerevan** made its way south to San Diego for the ***St. John Garabed Armenian Church's 29th Annual Food Festival***. The food festival is the only event of its kind in the county, which presents San Diegans with the wonders of Armenian heritage, culture and, once again, good food. **yerevan** then traveled east to Palm Springs for the ***Third Annual Armenian Festival***. The event was organized by the Armenian Apostolic Church of the Desert and featured Armenian and American cultures. Proceeds of the festival will go to building a church in the Palm Springs area. Up and down the California coast, **yerevan** met wonderful and fascinating people who love all things Armenian. We can't wait to do it again. See you all next year!















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AMERIABANK

"AMERIABANK" CJSC
#9, G.Lusavorich Str.
Yerevan, 0015, Armenia
T.: (374 10) 56 11 11
F.: (374 10) 51 31 33
office@ameriabank.am
www.ameriabank.am