yerevan

WINTER, 2008 ISSUE (3)

A MAGAZINE WITH AN ACCENT



052
OLYMPIC GAMES
MADE IN CHINA

064
MARK GERAGOS
REWRITING
SAROYAN

126
VORDAN KARMIR-
THE COLOR OF
ETERNITY

138
PROMISED LANDS'
RECOVERY CAMPAIGN
CANCELLED

KIM KARDASHIAN ARMENIAN CURVES IN HOLLYWOOD

$6.99US /
$6.99CAN

HAYASA productions ltd

Presents

alltime armenian favorites



www.hayasaproductions.com


KOHAR
Symphony Orchestra and Choir
lutfi kirdar
istanbul concert
KOHAR
Symphony Orchestra and Choir
state kremlin palace
moscow concert
KOHAR
Symphony Orchestra and Choir
special features
bonus material
available soon
www.koharconcert.com
HP - 08- AD1




с 1887 г.
ARARAT
MEET A LEGEND
АРАРАТ
ՆԱԻՐԻ · НАИРИ
ՏԱՐԻ 20 ЛЕТ
АРМЯНСКИЙ КОНЬЯК
АРАРАТ
ՆԱԻՐԻ · НАИРИ
ՏԱՐԻ 20 ЛЕТ
NAIRI
A Yerevan Brandy Company Product









012 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

014 OUR FOLK

Between Father and Son

Narek Dourian conquered the theatrical stages of France.

016 BRIDGES

Beauty and the Flower

The exotic island of Singapore has history tightly connected to its notable citizens of Armenian descent.

028 INFO

030 PERSON

Trying to Keep Up With Kim Kardashian

Who is she: a new pop phenomenon, a family girl, or a savvy businesswoman? An exclusive interview with the first Armenian *Playboy* cover girl.

036 EXPERT

A Relentless Scholar of History

Richard Hovanisian, the keeper of the Armenian people's history, collector of personal accounts of a whole generation, presents the story of his own journey to his national identity.

040 DE FACTO

Map of Critical Battles

Timeline and geography of battles that determined the present state of Armenia.

042 OBJECTIVELY

I Fly

A spectacular view of Yerevan opened to the eyes of the participants of the International Hot Air Balloon Festival.

044 NAMES

Crossroads

Two ladies, Baroness Cox and Dr. Ani Kalayjian, human rights activists from different backgrounds tell us about their passion - helping people in need.

048 OPINION

American Circumcision Mania

Is it a prophylactic medical procedure, a historic ritual, or violation of infants' rights?

052 SPORT

Made in China

Armenian athletes won six bronze medals during the Beijing Olympic Games.

058 TOPLIST

Armenian Olympians

060 INFO

062 YEREVAN ACTUAL CITY

Northern Boulevard

064 CAREER

Mark Geragos: Rewriting Saroyan

The outspoken celebrity lawyer tells about his victories in the courtroom and his personal quest of reshaping Armenian History.

070 FASHION

The Wild Colors of Success

A celebrity designer of high profile clients presents the charismatic profile of his multidimensional character.

074 BRAND

King of Caviar - Armen Petrossian

"I am more than a gourmand, and caviar represents for me more than food."

078 PHOTO-PROJECT

Wrap it up!

080 ECO

The Nobel Recognition

for Martin Tsarukyan.


с 1887 г.
ARARAT
MEET A LEGEND
ANI
A Yerevan Brandy Company Product









084 PATRONS
Walk of Life
Hundreds of enthusiastic volunteers participated in a charitable event for the benefit of the Armenian Bone Marrow Registry.

086 INFO

088 VIRTUAL CITY
Reflection

090 GALLERY
Person moving
"I am a sculptor, not a tailor," declared Arto Chakmakhchyan to the KGB agents.

096 EVENT
Armenian Navy Band at Disney Hall
ANB's earthy fusion of traditional and modern sounds mesmerized Los Angeles music fans.

098 CINEMA
East Of Byzantium
A team of young artists led by an Oscar-winning cinematographer and armed with the latest technology in pursuit of taking the stories of Armenian people to Hollywood.

104 AUTOGRAPH
Datevik: Jazz Improvisations in Time and Space
An exclusive interview with Datevik Hovanesian, the Armenian First Lady of Jazz.

108 AMBIANCE
Incredibly beautiful
A new perspective to the traditional images of beauty.

118 INFO

120 JOURNEY
Khachtars
Oshakan village is the burial site of Mesrop Mashtots. Rich with history and natural beauty, it is one of those "hidden treasures" that is, in the reality, much more accessible for tourists.

126 HYPOTHESES AND DISCOVERIES
Vordan Karmir
The secret of the eternal dye has been guarded and passed down for over 2,000 years, only to be lost a century ago. The scientists of Matenadaran are working to recover it, learning a lot more in the process.

132 EXCURSION
Contra Tabachi
The fascinating and controversial life of Hovannes Vanetsi, who, among other things, was a fervent anti-tobacco activist as far back as in 17th century.

136 YEREVAN PERSPECTIVE
Moscovian Street

138 RETRO
Turkey Campaign is… CANCELED
Joseph Stalin gave hopes an broke promises of returning a part of the lost lands to Armenians.

144 POSTSCRIPTUM
Tabula pro Memoria
Again, with initiative of Yerevan magazine, a memorial plaque dedicated to General Silikov was installed in Yerevan.


с 1887 г.
ARARAT
MEET A LEGEND
AKHTAMAR
A Yerevan Brandy Company Product

yerevan

A MAGAZINE WITH AN ACCENT



On the cover:
Kim Kardashian
Photographer:
Andrew Macpherson (Corbis)

PUBLISHED BY ETHNOPRESS
Project Director RUBEN DJAGINYAN
Executive Director VLADIMIR KOSTANDYAN

ETHNOPRESS-ARMENIA
Editor-in-chief IDA MARTIROSYAN
Art Director ARAM GYUMISHYAN

Senior Editors
Production MICHAEL BALAYAN
Literary Editor TATYANA MARTIROSYAN
Culture ANAHIT HOVHANNISYAN
Special Projects and Information ERNA REVAZOVA
Diaspora Relations ELEONORA MALHASYAN
Business and Science RAZMIK CHRAKYAN
Correspondent, special projects and information department ARTAVAZD YEGHIAZARYAN

Designers ARSEN KIRAKOSYAN, NONA ISAJANYAN
Photo Editors KAREN MANUKYAN, HAIK MELKONYAN
Deputy Photo Editor ARMEN POGHOSYAN
Photo Coordinator ARMEN HAYRAPETYAN
Page Design VAHAGN POGHOSYAN, ARMEN YOLYAN
Copy Editor MARIANNA NIKOGHOSYAN
Administrative Assistant ANNA KOSTANDYAN
Public Relations NARINE BABAYAN

ETHNOPRESS-USA
Editorial Director RAPHAEL HAKOPJANIAN
Creative Director GRANT CHORLYAN
Literary Editor LIANNA ZAKHARIAN
Consulting Editor SEAN EARLY
Editor for News and Entertainment AZZIE MEKHITARIAN
Copy Editor DEBRA TYSALL
Special Projects EUGENE BALAYAN
Subscription & Distribution KHOREN KESHISHYAN
Advertising Manager ARMEN KHANYAN
Contributing Editor HAYK MAKHMURYAN
Public Relations EVE ARAKELYAN

ETHNOPRESS-RUSSIA
Editorial Director IGOR ZOTOV
Creative Director MARINA LEVASHOVA

COMMERCIAL MANAGEMENT
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MEDIACRAT

Address and contact info in Armenia:
Koryun St., 21, Editorial office, «YEREVAN» magazine
Tel: +374 (10) 58 28 72, +374 (10) 54 74 93
Fax: +374 (10) 52 52 49
Advertisement dep. Tel: +374 (10) 58 28 72 EXTN: 304

YEREVAN Monthly, Ethnogroup Publishing Ltd.

© 2005-2008 «YEREVAN»

Any use of the materials or extracts from the magazine in any language is permitted exclusively upon the written consent of ETHNOPRESS USA, LLC.

This magazine is registered with the NSDP Library of Congress National Serials Data Program
ISSN 1993-3387 Dated 07/01/2008
The issue has been submitted to printing on August 29, 2008
Printed in USA:
Lion Press 9344 Glenoaks Boulevard Sun Valley, California, 91352
Price $6.99
Circulation 30 000 copies

The editorial office is not responsible for the opinions of authors and the content of the advertising materials.

Contributing photographers: Aram Agasyan, Robert Asatryan, Hayk Melkonyan, Vahan Janjigian, Arnos Martirosian, Sergey Kovalenko, Amos Kwok, Suren Manvelyan, Lika Brutyan, Jayson Gutierres, Agnes Joaquim, Judhi Prasetyo, Lori Dorman, Levon Parian, Lianna Zakharian, Andres Muhe, Jennifer Byrne.

Images from: Corbis, iStockphoto, Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts "Matenadaran", National Film Library of Armenia, Playboy Entertainment, Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance, Lark Musical Society, Photoplanet, *Iconographie Armenienne* (Sarkis Boghossian, Paris, 1987), Photoalbum *Architecture of Soviet Armenia* (Moscow, 1951), archives of Arto Chakmakhchyan, archives of Baroness Caroline Cox, Fugitive Studios, archives of Dr. Ani Kalayjian, Getty images.

For more information on subscription and distribution, please visit us at **www.yerevanmagazine.com** or **magazine.yerevan.ru**

Address and contact info in USA:
135 S. Jackson Street, Suite 204, Glendale, CA 91205
Telephone +1 (818) 507-7057 Fax: +1 (818) 507-9015

Special thanks to:

Aram Agasyan, Ph.D., Senior Scientist of the Institute of Zoology of the National Academy of Sciencies of the Republic of Armenia, for assistance in preparation of the article "Vordan Karmir".

The family of Sargis Bogosian for providing antique French gravures used in the page design of the article "Contra Tabachi".

Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia, Yerevan Mayor's Office, the National Archives of Armenia and Yerevan Production Center for assistance in preparation of *Yerevan Magazine's* charitable event.

Geragos and Geragos' law offices' staff for assistance in preparation of the article "Mark Geragos: Rewriting Saroyan".

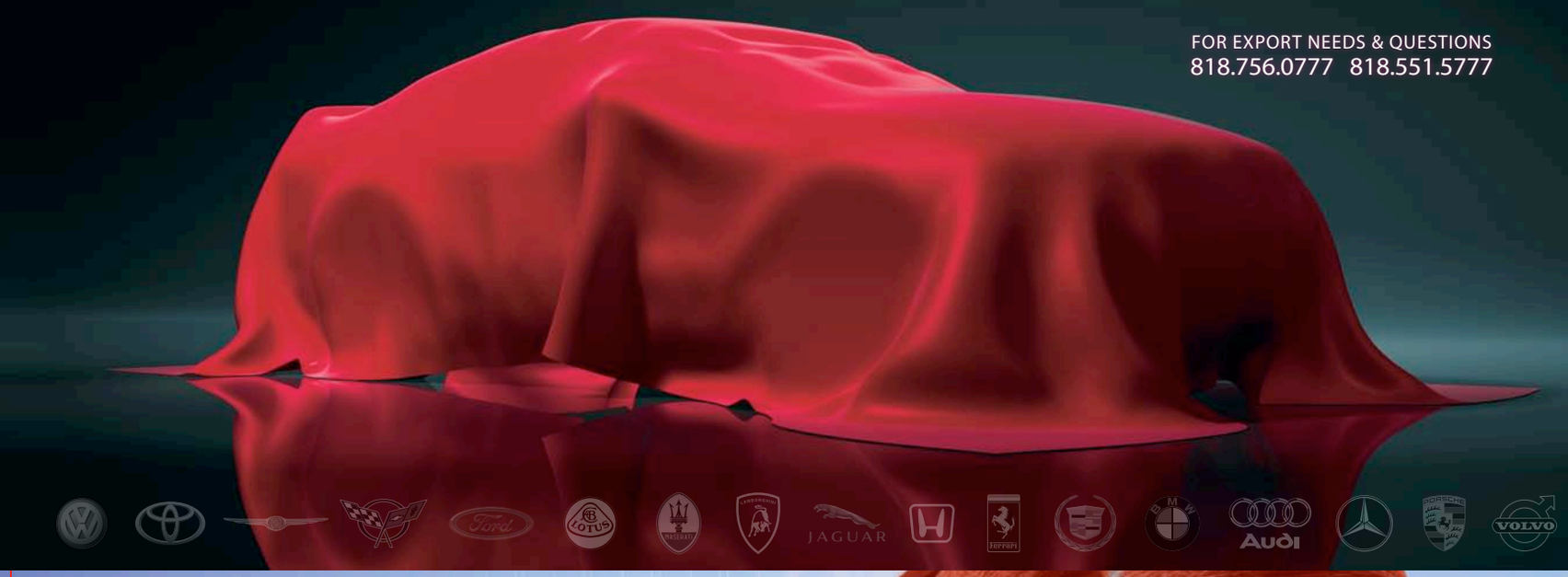
Dr. Robert Kachadourian for assistance in preparation of the article "Crossroads".

HYE AUTO
SALES & LEASING

A BRAND NEW WAY TO OWN A CAR
WITHOUT STRESS AND AGGRAVATION
JUST PULL THE COVER FROM THE TOP
TO GET MAGICIAN'S NEW SENSATION

TO FIND OUT CAR MAKE AND MODEL
888.979.3777
WWW.HYEAUTO.NET

FOR EXPORT NEEDS & QUESTIONS
818.756.0777 818.551.5777



24/7 High-Quality Armenian Music and Programming

100,000 monthly visitors from **119** countries worldwide

#1 Armenian Online Radio

www.yerevannights.com



Have you discovered it yet?

YEREVAN NIGHTS

© Copyright 2008 Yerevannights.com. All rights reserved. 877.220.8951 info@yerevannights.com



THE GOLDEN RULE

People's perspective on winter illustrates the duality in human nature very well. On one hand, we impatiently wait for it, foretasting Christmas holidays and the subconscious hope for change that the New Year may bring. On the other hand, winter seems dreary and endless, also subconsciously evoking thoughts of fuss and bustle. Incidentally, the truth is that we look at summer the same way: waiting for warmth and holidays, then complaining about heat and humidity. Probably that is our nature – we always want more than we get. But it is not so bad after all. The situation would be much worse if one was content with what he or she has. In that case, there would be no technological, intellectual, or spiritual progress. Indeed, progress is not just the road from a fire to a microwave oven, from a shepherd's reed-pipe to a saxophone, but also from a dictatorship to a democracy, and from polytheism to monotheism. Of course, this viewpoint has one more vector, parallel to the first, but in the opposite direction. This vector is the movement from an arrow to a bomb, from one poisoned well to worldwide contamination of natural resources, from atheism to satanism. Such is the man – liking everything in excess, both good and bad; and forgetting about the noble ancient rule of the golden mean.

Fortunately, not everyone is like that. Life taught us, Armenians – as well as some other cultures – not to "stick our necks out" too much: it is not so easy to survive at the intersection of civilizations. But we survived and aspire to live better in every way. Sometimes it actually works. Probably, because the rule of the golden mean is deeply i entrenched our very genes.

IDA MARTIROSYAN, *editor-in-chief*

More than meets the eye.



Masterpiece Lune Rétrograde.
Projects the compelling play of the moon phases on your wrist.
Find out more: www.mauricelacroix.com

MAURICE LACROIX

Manufacture Horlogère Suisse

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Fall 2008

DEAR READERS,

THE NUMBER OF YOUR EMOTIONAL LETTERS GROWS RAPIDLY WITH EACH ISSUE OF OUR MAGAZINE. WE CAN ONLY PRINT A FEW. NEVERTHELESS, YOUR NEW IDEAS AND COMMENTS HELP US IMPROVE OUR MAGAZINE AND CHOOSE OUR TOPICS AND HEROES. SO KEEP WRITING, WE WILL BE WAITING FOR FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE.

YEREVAN MAGAZINE TEAM

I am writing to acknowledge the success achieved by the athletes described in "The Ultimate Fights of Modern Day Gladiators." I understand that the extreme sport is not for everyone; however, as the fastest growing sport in US, it is important to recognize the high level of competition. It is rather surprising that three Armenian athletes have risen to the top of the sport saturated by athletes from all across the world. Karo, Manny, and Roman have introduced the ancient Japanese art form of Judo o the world in a way that has not been accomplished by any of the Japanese fighters. Of course, I was saddened with the outcome that two of the three fights discussed in the article were losses… However, the big picture is that the underdog (big hearted) Manny will continue to win, if Karo gets back in shape his technique will out-master 99% of the rest of the athletes, and Roman has already impressed with a 23 second victory; and I expect more to come as the UFC holds less events in the mountains. Now, excuse me as I re-watch Matrix in search of Roman's part.

DANIEL ANANYEV, Rancho Cucamonga, California

I liked your "Ambience" rubric titled "The Art of Beauty". It was amusing and elegant at the same time. The posh girls brought a smile to my face.

SAM BOGOSIAN, Sherman Oaks, California

As a devoted subscriber, I thoroughly enjoy every issue of your magazine. You always have plenty of articles that make me feel proud to be Armenian. However, I think it is time for you to turn your attention to topics that not only have Armenians at their center, but focus on issues of global importance. This pertains to the issues concerning the environment, in general, and global warming, in particular, since it is currently the single most important problem facing mankind. Armenians need to know that every one of them can play a vital role in saving our planet, starting with our own country. They also need great role models to look up to for inspiration.

NANCY ARIAN, Los Angeles, California

As a fashion designer myself, I was very pleased to read the article "The Sunny Creations of Serpui Marie". It is wonderful to read about our contemporaries in other countries and be informed about Armenian trend setters around the world. Your magazine is doing a wonderful job, and I hope to see many more articles that tell about successful Armenians in fashion world. There are so many interesting fashion designers in Los Angeles. To be fair and balances, maybe Yerevan Magazine can alternate between European, Latin American, and U.S. fashion designers of Armenian descent. Keep up the good work.

CHRISTOPHER BALI(AN), Los Angeles, California

I liked your overview of Armenians in the history of art, but I would really like to see more attention given to Armenian artists of the last 30-40 years – whether in Armenia or abroad. There are many contemporary artists who contribute so much to the world, but have to struggle to be noticed. Fellow Armenians like us can learn to appreciate and promote their work, simultaneously raising awareness about our people as very multifaceted. We don't need to wait for our brothers and sisters to be discovered and "legitimized" by the larger society, before we praise their talent and creative vigor. So, I think, part of your role as a cultural magazine is to discover and promote new talented Armenian artists from all corners of the world and to introduce them to the rest of us. The same task should include notable young Armenians from all walks of life.

JACK CHUCHIAN, Boston, Massachusetts

I have been reading Yerevan Magazine for some time now, and I am very pleased with the quality of the articles. However, I was bit disappointed with "With Metal in Voice". It started out great and I was really interested in the topic, but towards the end it was a bit stretch. Although the article sets the reader to expect a great and very interesting tie between the Armenian language and the properties of chemical elements, their periodic functions and atomic numbers, there were no substantial connection being made. For someone who is interested in this subject this was a disappointment. I was hoping that by the end of the article I would be more convinced about the probability of such a connection. Anyway, it was still fun to read, perhaps we just need to do a little bit more research on the subject and the we can have a more realistic connection.

ERNEST M., New York, New York

Reading your article about Vahe Berberian was very inspiring. I am so proud to know that there are such wholesome individuals amongst Armenians. A true artist of the 20th (and 21st!) century, Mr. Berberian seems to be first and foremost a philosopher, always aligning his creative vision with what he truly believes in. I think individuals like Vahe Berberian are a much needed balance to our mostly traditional culture.

H. HARTOONIAN, Providence, Rhode Island

Thank you for the article "Why Did You Give Me so Much?" It really brought me closer to Jansem. Before reading this article I knew that he is one of the most prominent Armenian artists in the world, but it was this article that showed in artist's own words the warm human side of the great painter. The deep meaning of his words was very touching. I wanted to learn more about him, so my internet search opened several very important websites that entered me a into the world of Jean Jansem's art galleries in Japan, and his own personal website. Thank you Yerevan Magazine for your choice of the material. I learn a lot, just by reading your magazine.

JOSEPH MARKARIAN, Miami, Florida

OLGA BURTSEVA
"RETURN OF THE LUNAR AVANT-GARDE"



A personal exhibition by a young star of Russia's Art Scene, Olga Burtseva, takes place in the luxurious elite resort Acqualina in Miami, Florida, from October 1, 2008 to January 4, 2009. The exposition is organized in partnership with Eddie Trump and the Russian-American Foundation. Olga Burtseva is an extremely successful Russian artist from Moscow, and has numerous works displayed in private collections around the world, including Russia, Paris, London, Amsterdam, Switzerland, and New York. Recently, at the Metropolitan Museum, in the presence of notable politicians, celebrities and art-dealers from Sotheby's and Christie's, she handed her painting Blue Love of the Tulips, to the Mayor of New York City, Michael Bloomberg, at the official presentation during the Russian Heritage Festival and her personal exhibition at the prestigious National Arts Club in NYC.

Bright, expressive, and innovative ideas reveal a deep philosophical core at the heart of each painting in her collection. Despite her youth she has been able to tap into the ancient traditions of artistic integrity and individualism.





www.narek.com presents

ARMENIAN BOOKS & MUSIC & MORE

narek.com

Your worldwide source for everything Armenian

Get in touch with your inner Armenian™

℗ & © Narek.com. All rights reserved.



BETWEEN FATHER AND SON

The rubric, Our Folk was presented by the
PUBLIC TELEVISION OF ARMENIA
Based on materials for a television project
MERONK **BY RAFAEL HOVHANNISYAN**

It's been thirty years since I moved to Paris, but as Saroyan said, "My heart's in the highlands." My heart is in Yerevan, where I was born, raised and educated. I never actually graduated from the Theatrical Institute, although I studied there, because my father…well, the fact is that my father is the famous conductor Ohaness Dourian. I am very proud, of course, of comparisons people make between me and him but his fame is also a burden to shoulder. Recently, I was called to my son's school – his name is Ohan as well. Seeing me, his classmates whispered, "Look, it's Ohan Dourian's father!" "That's something new," I thought. My whole life I have been the son of Ohan Dourian, and now I have become the father of Ohan Dourian. My own life has taken place in between these two Ohans. So, I dropped out of the Theatrical Institute because my father left the Soviet Union and asked for political asylum in Austria. In 1980, not seeing any future in a country where I had became the son of an infamous defector, I relocated – first to Austria, then to France. At first, I did not speak a word of French and made a living playing piano in jazz clubs. I soon learned the language, and even had an opportunity to perform in one of the French theatres. Shortly after this experience, there were seven of us who gathered and decided to create an Armenian theatrical group. It wasn't an easy task – in addition to creative problems our group had a problem specific to the diaspora. Armenians who live abroad are not fully fluent in their native language, and I don't mean just the dialects of the descendants from various countries. When I decided to stage plays in the Eastern Armenian dialect, I was told that no one would understand it. It turned out that they should not have worried. It's been twenty years since we began touring around the world, usually twice each year. On our tours, we give 60-70 performances, which are well-attended because of the quality of the material and because it is very unusual to see an Armenian disapora theatre.

Recently I realized that I was finally ready to stage a play in French. A comedic monologue titled "Thank you, God!" was performed in one of the best Parisian theatres - Theatre Dejazet. It is my play and my own story. I mean, it's the story of a young man who fled from a dictatorship to a democratic country and realized that in the first country he was not allowed to talk, and in the other, he could not be heard. The government of France booked the play for a two-month run during the celebration of the Year of Armenia. During the first month the audience was predominantly of Armenian descent – they were even coming in tour buses from neighboring cities. Eventually, the French public began to attend my play as well. At first their numbers were few; I should confess that we played when a hall that held 600-700, had only 100 spectators. Gradually, more people came to see our play and by the end of the second month we were practically sold out. It was a success, and so I leased the Theatre Clavel for four months to continue presenting the same work.

I have three children, and it is forbidden to speak French in our house. However, in spite of all our efforts we are gradually assimilating into France. In contrast, I noticed that in Yerevan, where we often visit, Armenians from various countries become more and more similar; very soon they all become Yerevantsy. ■

NAREK DOURIAN

Born in Yerevan in 1959. Was accepted to Yerevan State Art and Theatre Institute in 1976. Took the second place in Yakhontov competition of elocutionists in Leningrad. At the same time was actively involved in the creation of the first Youth-Experimental Theatre, commonly called "Theatre in the Pit." Left for Austria in 1980. Resided in Paris since 1981. In 1985 he received First Prize for the best screenplay in the short-length film category, which was aired on Canal 3 of French Public Television. In 1986 played the role of Mussorgsky in the opera of Mussorgsky "Salambo" directed by Yury Lubimov (15 performances) on the stage of the Opera de Paris. In 1987 formed a theatrical group of actors from Yerevan with which he is actively engaged up to this time.

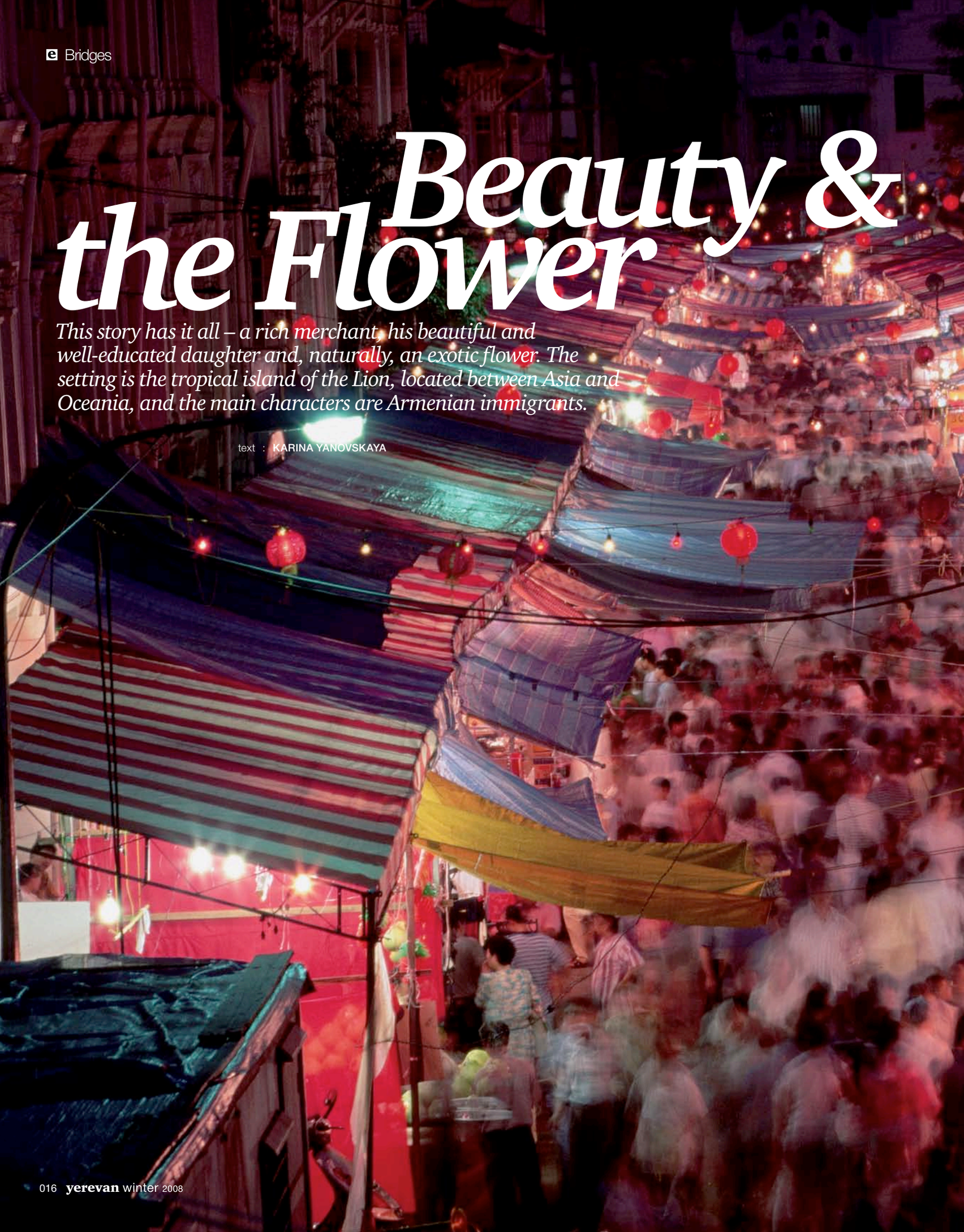



2ND ANNUAL
ARMENIAN
COMEDY
AWARDS
DECEMBER 14
818.265.0506
THE PASADENA CIVIC
Command the Best.
AEG
ARMENIAN ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Beauty & the Flower

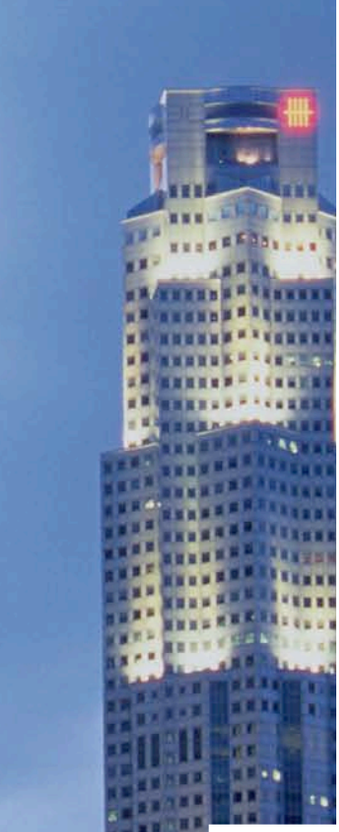
This story has it all – a rich merchant, his beautiful and well-educated daughter and, naturally, an exotic flower. The setting is the tropical island of the Lion, located between Asia and Oceania, and the main characters are Armenian immigrants.

text : KARINA YANOVSKAYA



Corbis


HITACHI
HSBC
THE FULLERTON HOTEL





Corbis



Singapore's business district

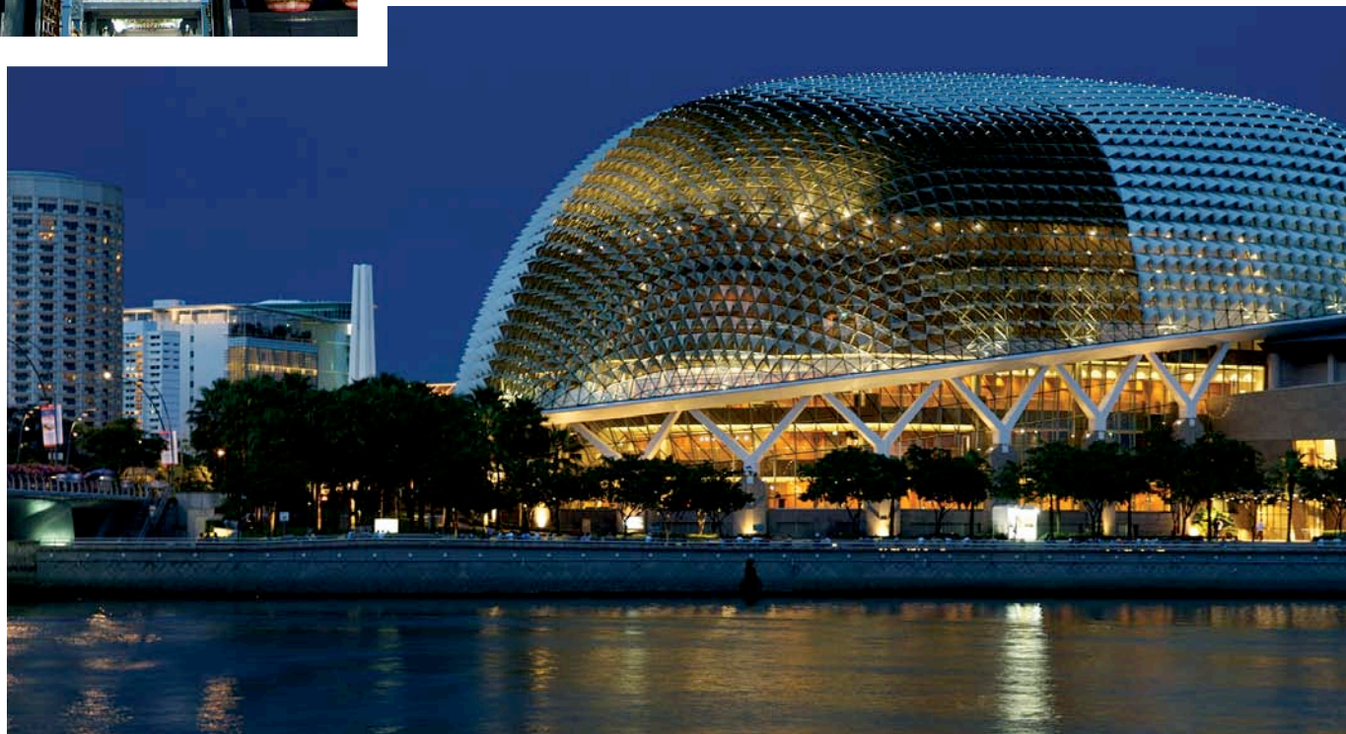
Hotel Merlion in the City Center

Hindu Temple, Little India

Singapore at night



Corbis



GOOD THINGS COME IN SMALL PACKAGES

Small countries are a special case: Monaco, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Brunei, Kuwait, Singapore; sometimes their quest for perfection leads to the most outstanding results.

Singapore is a small country, and by small I mean tiny. The widest part of the island nation is less than 42 kilometers across, about the distance from Santa Monica to East Los Angeles, or from Yerevan to Khor Virab. Bearing its diminutive physical size in mind, little Singapore is also a wealthy and extremely tidy land, functioning as precisely as a Swiss watch. Where else in the world could an otherwise law-abiding citizen get a $700 fine for chewing gum in public? Which other country could afford to set the tax on imported cars so high that only one in ten citizens could afford one? These and other strictures do not reflect contempt for the citizens. On the contrary, as a result of a seemingly endless list of prohibitions, the country is in an ideal ecological condition, completely free of traffic jams and garbage dumps, with common flies listed as an endangered species. Along with flies, the country is free from crime and national turmoil. Ninety percent of the population is Muslim, descendants of settlers from the South

THE TINY COUNTRY OF SINGAPORE IS AS NEAT AS A PIN AND FUNCTIONS LIKE A PRECISE SWISS WATCH. WHERE ELSE COULD AN OTHERWISE LAW-ABIDING CITIZEN BE FINED $700 FOR CHEWING GUM IN PUBLIC?



Corbis

Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The local Muslims are politically conciliatory and, alongside Koreans and Europeans, are putting into action long-held dreams of friendship between nations. This kind of friendship is alive and well among the people of the four ethnic regions, each with its own culture. The Indians of Singapore live in Little India – a tiny district, more closely resembling scenes from Indian soap operas than reality. The air is full of the scent of sandalwood, and visitors can taste the local delicacy known as thali, buy garlands of jasmine for women's hair and chewing betel nuts for men. In some ways, the well-maintained "dollhouses" and clean streets, free of both cows and beggars, look more like England than India.

Even the Muslim quarters with its primary attraction – the rather rustic buildings of the Mosque (they say the first immigrants were so poor that they used any building materials they could get hold of, including recycled glass bottles, which indeed decorate the mosque), look like an old European town. It is a recent phenomena that the Singaporeans can afford to show off artificial islands, luxurious six-star hotels and $20 million laser shows. The main feature that sets Chinatown apart from its clean and pristine neighbors are the traditional Chinese medicine shops (which may feature a remedy made of dried dog's penis or bat guano) and the huge Chinese Temple. The central street is covered with a Plexiglas roof and is air-conditioned. It is done not just for comfort, but also to preserve the historic buildings, which are the largest surviving antiquities of modern Singapore.

In fact, the local understanding of the term "antiquity" is a relative notion, since the oldest of the preserved historic buildings, the Armenian Apostolic Church of Sourb Grikor Lusavorich (St. Gregory the Illuminator), was built in 1835.



Corbis

GOURMET ADVENTURES

Singaporean cuisine is a unique mixture of Chinese, South Indian, Malaysian, and European culinary traditions. The exotic ingredients of the Chinese cuisine and the European style presentation of the dishes combine into a unique Singaporean culinary art.

Try shrimps twisted inside-out on slices of watermelon or chicken meat coiled around cinnamon sticks. If that's too exotic for your palate, enjoy a three-course dinner served on banana leaves. Those who seek their dining thrills in the interior design of the restaurant can drop in at the Café Clinic on Clark Street, where customers enjoy their meal sitting in wheelchairs around surgical tables.



Lindy Poncaya



Open-air café on Bugis Street in Singapore

Rickshaw in Singapore's Chinatown

Masjid Sultan Mosque

The Buddha Tooth Relic Temple


SINCE
FABI
1965
SHOES. ACCESSORIES
EREVAN: SAYAT–NOVA 5 (3741) 589 724
MOSCOW: TVERSKAYA 6 (495) 692 9014 GUM (495) 620 3216 CROCUS CITY MALL (495) 727 2470
ATRIUM (495) 970 1167 VESNA (495) 543 9702 "EUROPEAN" TC (495) 229 1906
CALL CENTER (495) 543 3210
MILANO. SIENA. MONTECARLO. DUBAI. MOSCA. SAN PIETROBURGO. www.fabishoes.it





The Armenian Sourb Grigor Lousavorich Church

ARMENIANS ALL AROUND...

Singapore indeed has it all, even its own Little Armenia. Today it exists in a modest state: it is represented by just two buildings, a newspaper, a small cemetery, and by the national symbol of Singapore. The story of the national symbol I will leave for later. First, a description of the more substantial objects.

The attitude of local residents toward old churches lacks the appropriate respect, at least for Western eyes. The non-Islamic modern islanders are not especially religious, and their idols seem to be the lesser gods of consumption and business. They might easily put a nightclub in a Catholic temple without considering the religious implications. The same pragmatic atheists, for some reason, have preserved the Armenian Church on Hill Street. The white neoclassical building resembling a cross when viewed from above and three miniature U.S. White Houses from the sides, today stands vacant. It is neither a museum nor a functioning church. It's been little more than a tourist attraction for more than 75 years. The last service in this temple was held in the late 1930's. In fact, even the priest in the 1930's was imported from overseas, as if he were an opera diva or a film star.

The history behind the Armenian Apostolic Church speaks to the spirit of Singaporean cosmopolitism. When the first Armenian immigrants arrived in Singapore and decided to build a church, they soon realized that they were lacking the financial resources to do so. They sought help from the Armenian communities in the neighboring countries of India and Java, and the funds were collected in short order. A famous architect from Ireland, George Coleman, was invited to design the church. In spite of his lack of familiarity with Armenian architectural traditions, by the time of the Singapore commission he had already built the Parliament House and St. Andrew's Cathedral on the island, which were well-known to the local elite. The neoclassical colonial building of the church with its minimalist interiors and hollow archways is considered Coleman's masterpiece. The church bears very little resemblance to anything intrinsically Armenian in its design; it lacks a stone revetment on the facade, and frescoes in the interiors. The only spot of color is the red carpet between the pews. The Armenian Apostolic Church of Sourb Grikor Lusavorich, which was the first building with electricity in Singapore, is surrounded by a well-maintained tropical park with a small cemetery that was added after the time of construction. The graves were relocated to this site in the 1960s from a cemetery at Fort Canning, which was then transformed into a gorgeous park. The little Armenian cemetery adjacent to the church is the final resting place of distinguished Singaporean Armenians of the 19th and 20th centuries. Four Sarkis brothers, the famous Agnes Joaquim, and Khachik Moses, an entrepreneur and the co-founder of one of the largest business newspapers of the country, *Straits Times*, all have found their rest here. Notably, the *Straits Times* is the only local newspaper to join the international giants, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Herald Tribune*, with daily delivery to the luxurious hotels of Singapore.

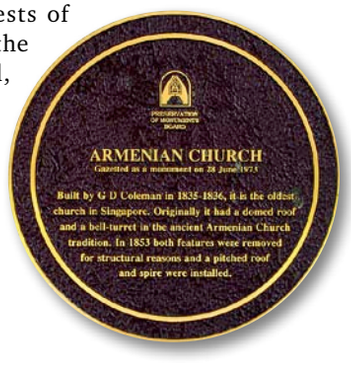
THE WHITE, NEOCLASSICAL BUILDING, RESEMBLING A CROSS WHEN VIEWED FROM ABOVE, TODAY STANDS VACANT. IT IS NEITHER A MUSEUM, NOR A FUNCTIONING CHURCH. IT IS NOW A MERE TOURIST ATTRACTION LANDMARK.

FOR THE FORTUNATE FEW

Not surprisingly, the most famous five-star hotel in Singapore was built by Armenians. When I was taken there to admire the old lace-like building and heard its history, I was not surprised.

The Raffles Hotel, named after the founding father of Singapore, Sir Stamford Raffles, is not just a hotel. Nowadays, the contemporary Russian elites check in at the Raffles, dissatisfied with the accommodations at the Ritz. Apparently the Ritz is no longer grand enough to suit their inflated needs. In the book *1000 Things to Do Before You Die*, well-known throughout Singapore, the authors urge readers to "Visit the Raffles Hotel". Raffles is a legend, a dream. Built in 1887 by the Sarkis brothers from Isfahan - Martin, Tigran, Avet, and Arshak, - the hotel has its own theatre, tropical garden, museum, and a world-famous restaurant. The brothers spared no expense for their Singapore project – even the marble was brought here from the Italian region of Carrara. The thought that the hotel's floors and Michelangelo's statues are made of the same stuff compensates for any inconveniences. Leaving the superlatives for others, I will simply say: the hotel is gorgeous.

Until 1930 Asians were not allowed there. Distinguished guests of the hotel include the Queen of England, Elisabeth II, Eva Gardner, and Rudyard Kipling. For Kipling, who was known for





BE FABULOUS. BE RESPONSIBLE. @2005 CHAMPAGNE MOËT & CHANDON

FONDÉ EN 1743

MOËT & CHANDON

CHAMPAGNE

★







Restaurants and hotels on Singapore River

Statue of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles

Hotel Raffles

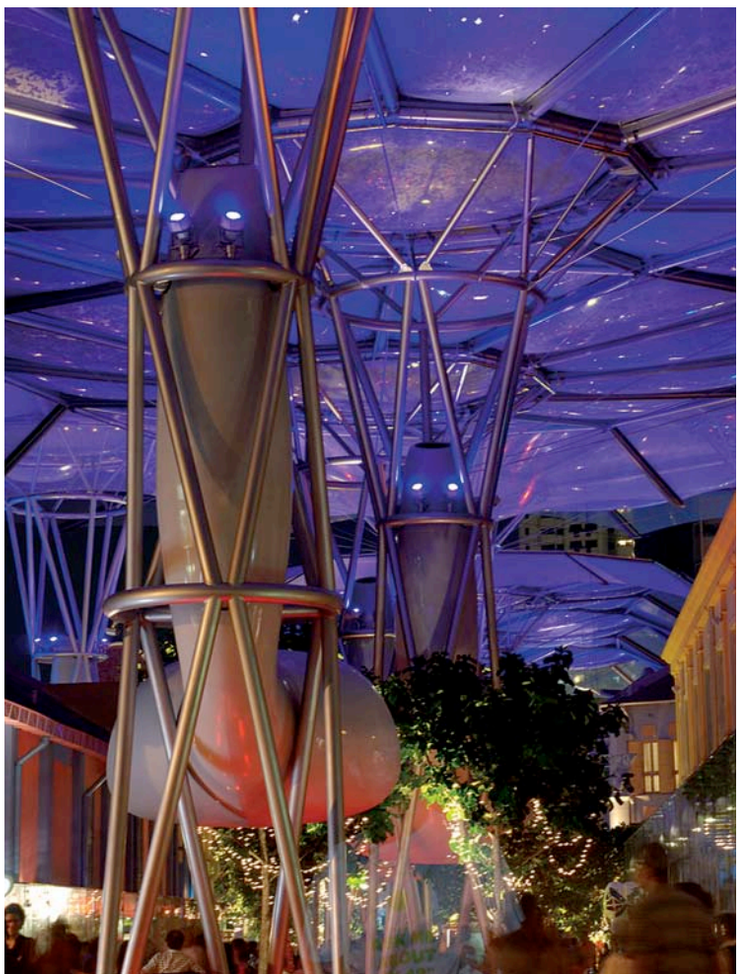
A picturesque night scene at Clark Quay

his sense of colonial supremacy, the local regulations governing the conduct of the native-born residents were particularly welcome. The anti-colonial agitation started after the last of the brothers, Arshak, passed away in 1931. Even after changes in policies and rules, the constituency of Raffles did not change meaningfully; it just added Asian princes and prime ministers to its guest book, and thus continued to hold its special status. During World War II the Japanese occupied Singapore. As the apocryphal story goes, the Japanese allowed the hotel guests to finish their waltz and then they occupied the hotel after asking the guests to vacate the premises. Forty-five years later the hotel was pronounced a national landmark, and the Sarkis brothers received the title of Honorary Citizens of Singapore.

THE PINK GOLD OF SINGAPORE

In the Armenian cemetery Agnes Joaquim rests next to the Sarkis brothers. Joaquim was a prominent Armenian who is practically the symbol of Singapore, or at the very least one of its two symbols.

Singapore has two symbols – one feminine and one masculine. These symbols are always depicted together, like a couple in love. They are most commonly represented as a lion and an orchid, or occasionally a lion-headed mermaid and a flower. The original name of the country – "Singha Pura" translates from the Sanskrit as the City of the Lion. Legend would have it that the first "tourist", an Indian prince with his retinue who arrived here from neighboring Java, spotted a lion behind some bushes. The lion immediately entered into folklore, and later into the name of the country. Having the tail of a mermaid, which turns him into an odd sort of a hybrid symbol, it represents the fishing villages that were the only inhabited communities on the island before the 19th century. The second



LANDMARKS

Because the country suffers a chronic lack of land, the Singaporeans relentlessly expand their tiny island. They seal all non-toxic waste in hermetic containers to serve as the firmament for future landscapes. They top the landfill with soil bought in Malaysia and cover it with sand imported from Indonesia. They then dress up the reclaimed territory with tall hats of skyscrapers with gardens on the 65th floor and dig canals filled with tame dolphins. The pages of the Guinness Book of World Records seem insufficient to capture all of Singapore's achievements: the world's largest fountain, the largest floating stage, the busiest naval strait, and the latest addition, the Singapore Flyer: the world's largest observation wheel which was opened on Valentine's Day, 2008.



www.groupe-manoukian.com Tel.: +7 495 508 08 69

manoukian



Wax figure of Agnes Joaquim and the orchid named after her in the National Orchid Garden

Arnas Kvok



SINGAPORE - FINE CITY

The laws and regulations in Singapore are strict, but fair. At least that's the opinion of the majority of Singaporeans, who eagerly follow the letter of the law. Large fines are imposed on those who break laws. Some of the fines include: 1500 Singapore dollars for smuggling illegal fireworks; 1000 Singapore dollars for chewing gum in public; 500 for smoking practically anywhere; for using cell phone while driving - imprisonment. There are no stray animals in this country – they were exterminated –just like the sparrows in China. All windows in hotels are sealed for security reasons.

national symbol, the orchid, is also a hybrid. However, in comparison to Singapore's version of the king of beasts, the queen of flowers is a much more natural hybrid.

Singapore is a commonly accepted orchid mecca. The array of orchid types is numbered in the thousands, with dozens of new kinds of orchids created through hybridization every year. The large Botanical Garden includes a small VIP garden with special orchids named after famous individuals. For instance, "Margaret Thatcher" has an exquisite shape, intensely purple color, and spiraling petals, making the flower resemble the antlers of a spiral-horned antelope. The "iron lady" grows in an equally regal surrounding in the botanical garden's hothouse. We can also find the glamorous "Ricky Martin", the refined ruby-colored "Japanese Emperor Akihito", and the dark-pink "President of the Republic of Namibia".

In fact, using orchids as tribute flowers is far from the most extravagant idea related to this flower family. In Africa, for example, orchids are used in local cuisine, their petals are added into traditional sauces. Turks also eat orchids; the roots are ground into a sort of flour and used in the preparation of ice-cream, which has an exquisite taste and is considered as a means to enhance sexual potency. Who might be stimulated by what means, I dare not ask. However, my experience is that the local residents are mostly stimulated by money. The most expensive orchid was recently sold for $120,000; an ideal contender for the right to be called a national symbol! Anyone could guess that orchids, beautiful, native, and luxurious, were destined to become the national flower of Singapore. The only thing that remained to be decided was which one was the most worthy type.

SINGAPORE IS AN ORCHID MECCA. THE ARRAY OF ORCHID TYPES NUMBER IN THE THOUSANDS. THE LARGE BOTANICAL GARDEN INCLUDES A SMALL VIP GARDEN WITH ORCHIDS NAMED AFTER FAMOUS INDIVIDUALS.

A daughter of a rich Armenian merchant, Agnes Joaquim, loved flowers. Orchids of many colors and sizes grew in her garden – red, purple, magenta, white, and creamy with freckles, some small, and some as large as melons. Once, as she admired her orchids, she noticed a new flower, one she had never seen before. The unknown natural hybrid had a gourmet coloration – something between strawberries with cream and cream without strawberries. It was tall and had a perfect shape. Miss Joaquim immediately took the flower to her friend, the first director of the Singapore Botanic Gardens and the best regional orchid expert, Mr. H.N. Ridley. He carefully examined the strawberry-creamy flower, confirmed that this was an unknown type of an orchid, and registered it under his own name. However, being a true gentleman, he made sure that the new orchid was named after the young lady who discovered it – Vanda Miss Joaquim. The year was 1893. In 1981, as the Singaporean government sought a national symbol, it chose this orchid out of thousands of known types. Vanda Miss Joaquim was an ideal choice, a flawless native hybrid, the perfect orchid.



One can now buy this flower in its natural form or gold-plated. A gold orchid is not a metaphor; it's a top seller at local jewelers. A real flower is dipped in a 24-carat gold-saturated solution and in the process of hydrolysis is covered by a thin layer of gold dust. Each pair of earrings, brooch, and pendant created with this technology is unique , just like the real orchid sealed inside. The jewelers thereby avoid the problem of copies turning a masterpiece into an article of mass production. This popular souvenir is carried by tourists to all corners of the world and is delivered not to a single Armenian merchant's daughter, but to thousands of women. ■



Fortune Vodka is distilled in the tradition of Old Russia from the finest wheat of the legendary Kuban region using only the purest artesian spring water. Smooth as velvet, Fortune™ will make your every experience distinguished and unforgettable.

BORN IN RUSSIA

WWW.FORTUNEVODKA.COM

PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY

40% ALC./VOL. Distilled From Grain Product of Russia ©2008 Imported by West Coast Wine and Spirits, Inc. N.Hollywood, CA



Goddess of Dawn

The shores of Lake Sevan were the site for the presentation of the new Volkswagen Eos, which combines the stylish outlines of a classic coupe and the elegance of a cabriolet. This model was not overlooked when it came to the love for allegories of this German automaker. The car was named after the Greek goddess of dawn. The new Volkswagen Eos is the first 4-seat cabriolet-coupe with a five-sectioned folding top. **One touch of a button and Eos turns form a cabriolet into a coupe**. The guests of the party enjoyed the sight of the "Goddess of Dawn" until sunset, listening to the music of Empyray, Reincarnation, and DJ Guess.

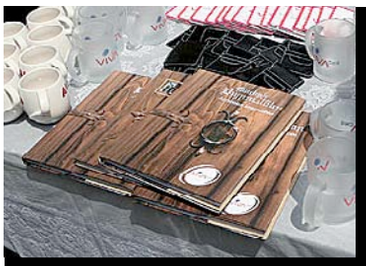


Order Bearer

Armenian jazz legend Levon Malkhasyan received the Russian Order of Mikhailo Lomonosov for his musical contributions. The eight-pointed star with Lomonosov's portrait was given to the Maestro by the Vice-President of the National Committee of Civil Rewards of the Russian Federation Karo Hakopyan. The award ceremony took place at the "Malkhas" jazz-club in Yerevan.

Tchouhadjian's Zemiré Revived

Lark Musical Society and AGBU Ardavazt Theater Company staged a new production of Zemiré - Opera Semiseria in Four Acts by composer Dikran Tchouhadjian. The libretto was written by Dikran Kalemjian and translated by Vatsche Barsoumian. The three performances took place in the Pasadena Civic Auditorium. Dikran Tchouhadjian (1837-1898), a talented composer, community activist, and music educator, had gained wide international public recognition for his operetta **Lebleiji**. Among his other notable works is the first Armenian opera, **Arshag II**. His operetta **Zemiré**, based on an Arabian Nights motif, is characterized by its lyrical mood, with romantic arias, spirited duets, and expressive ensembles.



Informative stories

«Armenian Monuments Awareness Project» (AMAP), a socio-cultural organization, and Armenia's Ministry of Culture created a joint project, dedicated to improving the quality of information about the historical and national monuments of Armenia. In the past, both Armenian citizens and tourists who wanted to know more about these sights found little or no information – particularly, because of lack of information boards next to the monuments. Because of this visitors often missed a lot of interesting details. For instance, very few know that in Garni, apart from the temple, one can find an undamaged part of a titanic castle wall, an antique bath, as well as the remains of a palace complex and St. Zion church. The AMAP project will create information boards, printed guides, multimedia and web resources in several languages as a solution to this problem. Garni, the historic part of Gyumri, Zvartnoc, Khor Virab and Noravank are among the first sights where this project is taking full effect.

Award-winning Documentary, "Husher", Screens in Los Angeles

Avedis Ohanian's award winning documentary, *Husher* (Memories) was screened in Los Angeles at the Leammle Sunset Theatre during the New York International Independent Film and Video Festival in LA. *Husher* is a 45 minute documentary on the Genocide, featuring interviews with survivors living in Italy. It was awarded Best International Political Documentary of 2008 by the New York International Independent Film and Video Festival. Avedis Ohanian was born in Armenia and graduated from the Armenian Moorat-Rapheal College in Venice, Italy. *Husher* is his directorial debut.

This year's Broadway Tony Award winners include Doumanian and Manocherian

Jean Doumanian and Jennifer Manocherian are among a list of producers who won a Tony Award for the production of Tracey Lett's **August: Osage County**. The play is a tragicomedy about a dysfunctional Oklahoma family and its cruel matriarch. It has been heralded as the best American play on Broadway in years. **August: Osage County** has not only been awarded the distinguished Tony Award for best play but also the coveted Pulitzer Prize.



L.A. Galaxy soccer team has signed a new Armenian star

Vardan Adzemian, a Glendale Homenetman soccer player, is L.A. Galaxy's newest star. Adzemian signed a one-year contract with L.A. Galaxy. He traveled to Armenia last summer representing Glendale as part of the Ararat A division soccer team for the Pan Armenian games. This summer the native of Armenia was sent to play for Oregon state's professional team, the Portland Timbers. He will begin this soccer season playing alongside L.A. Galaxy's top players like, David Beckham and Landon Donovan.

Shooting has begun on the movie "Love Journal", a romantic comedy based on the novel *M+W* by Andrei Zhvalevski and Evgeniya Pasternak. The screenplay is penned by Alexander Chernikh, produced by Anna Melikyan, and scheduled to premiere in 2009.

Komitas Honored in Quebec

A bust of the famous Armenian composer Komitas was unveiled in the Park of Poets of Quebec on July 6, reports the press service of the Foreign Ministry of Armenia. It was granted to the municipality of Quebec by the Central Office of Hay Dat in Montreal. Armenian community representatives, officials of the Embassy of Armenia in Canada as well as deputy mayor Jacques Joli-Coeur attended the ceremony.



No Winner at Rachmaninoff Piano Competition

The jury at the Third Rachmaninoff International Piano Competition and Festival in Los Angeles did not award the Grand Prize of $30,000 in the final round of the triennial contest. Artem Abashev from Russia - a post-graduate student at the Kazan State Conservatory of Music - did, however, take the second prize of $20,000 for a performance of Rachmaninoff's Concerto No 2 in C minor. And the third prize of $15,000 was awarded to Great Britain's Fazliddin Husanov, who began his studies at a music school in Tashkent, Uzbekistan and became a piano professor at Cardiff's Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in 2001. Culminating at Walt Disney Concert Hall on 22 June, the contest was judged by an international panel chaired by American pianist Earl Wild. Twenty-four competitors from across the globe took part in the 10-day event, performing their chosen concerts with Moscow's Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra.

PROVIDENCE
Health & Services



Providence
Center for Orthopedics and Sports Medicine

Advanced Surgery Techniques

Whether you're an all-star athlete, a "weekend warrior" or just someone who wants to resume the activities you enjoyed before an injury, our Providence Specialists offer broad expertise and the most advanced technology.

Dr. Armen Hagopjanian is Board Certified in Foot and Ankle Surgery and specializes in diagnosis and treatment of foot and ankle pathology. In partnership with Providence Holy Cross and Providence Saint Joseph Medical Centers, Dr. Hagopjanian uses state-of-the-art techniques and provides complete podiatric care from simple foot fractures to complete ankle reconstructions, including total ankle replacement. For more information on Dr. Hagopjanian, please visit www.newankle.com or call his office at (818) 848-5588.

For more information on our world-class physicians, state-of-the-art facilities or Centers of Healing, call 1-888-HEALING or visit us at www.providence.org/losangeles.

Providence
HOLY CROSS
MEDICAL CENTER
Mission Hills

Providence
SAINT JOSEPH
MEDICAL CENTER
Burbank

Los Angeles Institute
FOOT & ANKLE
SURGERY
Burbank, Northridge & Valencia





Trying to Keep Up With Kim Kardashian

Kim Kardashian came upon the gossip circuit as a member of a famous and well-connected family. She soon distanced herself from that image and began to reinvent herself. The 27 year old Armenian-American first came onto the Hollywood radar as a close friend of the socialite Paris Hilton, but very quickly learned to play her own fame game.

interview : **AZZIE MEKHITARIAN**
photo : **CORBIS**

Kim Kardashian burst onto the Hollywood social scene like a storm. Unlike many who only manage to scrape away with their 15 minutes of fame, she has been able to brand her image in such a business savvy manner that the limelight is far from fading. She is the daughter of the famed OJ Simpson attorney, Robert Kardashian, who passed away in 2003. Kim appeared on the first episode of Paris Hilton's reality show "The Simple Life" in 2003. However, she was still not well known outside of the Hollywood social circuit until a sex tape emerged on the Internet of her and her former boyfriend, R&B singer, Ray J. Kim's voluptuous good looks, in addition to the controversy surrounding her denial of the existence of the infamous tape, and then subsequent release featuring her coupling with Ray J, catapulted her to instant celebrity status. Public interest in Kim lead to her own reality show "Keeping Up With the Kardashians", which debuted on the E! Network in 2007. According to Nielsons Media Rating, the show was the highest rated series on Sunday nights among women 18-34 years old. The show follows the lives of the Kardashian family with Kim as the main focus of the series. The premiere of the second season attracted 1.4 million viewers and Kim has signed on for a third season of her reality show. The desire to extend her celebrity status does not stop there. Kim was featured on the cover of the December 2007 issue of *Playboy* with a twelve-page spread, one of the largest the magazine has had. The Armenian-American beauty is also testing the waters with a career in acting with a new comedy film, *Disaster Movie*, which hit theaters August 29. Her good looks, connections and smart industry decisions have kept her in the limelight. Needless to say, Kim's businesses, the two boutiques she co-owns outside of L.A., DASH and Smooch, are attracting large numbers of customers. Kim is famous today not only for being a well-connected socialite or a sex symbol but because she is a savvy business women who understand the delicate game of keeping the public interested.

You have created a successful public persona, but who is the real Kim Kardashian?

I am such a family girl. I think, that became evident when I did the show "Keeping Up With the Kardashians", and I think that's kind of a big reason why I wanted to do the show because I think people thought of me as this wild party girl and, you know, there is the stereotype of Hollywood girls, that we just party all night and shop all day and we don't really do anything. And I wanted to do the show because I wanted to show who I really am instead of what people make up about me. I think the show does a good job of showing me and my sisters, we get up everyday, we go to our store, we have a whole bunch of stuff going on but at the end of the day we are as close as ever with our family and you know family is at the basis of everything. That's a huge part of my life. Whether it's making new friends or dating someone, my sisters get to give their approval. So I definitely implement family in pretty much everything that I do.

What are you most passionate about, what inspires you?

Fashion! I love fashion, that's pretty much my life. My sisters and I are so lucky that we have a clothing store and our job basically has been running the store and now we have the online store and this year we're hoping to start designing. I worked in my dad's office for seven years, in his music company called Movie Tunes, it was great and it was fun and amazing but we would always go back to the fashion stuff.

Who is your greatest inspiration in life?

I definitely say my dad. He raised us very strict, very Christian. I can't even really explain how amazing he was at raising us. He was strict but he was so much fun. Obviously, my mom was the more lenient parent. But I only wish that I can raise my kids like my dad raised me because it was just the best childhood. I had the best upbringing.

> I SAY I'M ARMENIAN, WHEN I'M ONLY HALF ARMENIAN. MY KIDS ARE GOING TO BE ARMENIAN; THEY HAVE TO KNOW WHAT THAT IS AND WHAT IT IS ABOUT. MY DAD WOULND'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY, SO I DEFINITELY HAVE TO MAKE HIM PROUD.

What were your childhood dreams? Did you ever imagine you would be so famous?

Not at all. To be honest with you my dreams were to just get married and have a family. That really had nothing to do with this life but it just happened and I love it and I'm having so much fun. But I never imagined it at all.

It takes a lot of work to keep the public interested and you have managed to do this very successfully. You have a successful show on E! Network. How do you deal with life in the limelight?

Because I have my family and we're so honest with each other, I think if any of us started to get a big head or anything like that, I mean clearly we all have our little diva moments, but it is shut down so fast in my family. Because there is just so many of us we don't have time for all the egos and all that. I am so grounded because of my family. It is because of them that I personally have not gotten into drinking and not gotten too crazy over the deep end. It is totally due to my family.

How do you deal with gossip and tabloids since there is so much out there about you?

Gosh, at first it was really hard for me. I'm not going to lie to you; it was really tough because I would think that people just believed everything that's being said. I was like, no this isn't true and I never dated this person and how could they say that and they are making me have a bad reputation. But you know, I kind of just have to say, you know what, it's never going to stop, this is now my life and I have to suck it up and deal with it. And that's basically it. Obviously there are certain things that you can do; you can't give them too much to talk about. If I'm out partying every night of course they are going to say something, you know. So you have to grow a thick skin and I have definitely learned that.

What do you envision next in your career? Are you thinking about going into acting or further modeling?

Definitely. I just finished my first film, it's called *Disaster Zone* and it comes out Labor Day weekend. I've been promoting that all over the place. I went into that really nervous, thinking, I don't know if this is really for me, I really want to do a good job if I do this, and I fell in love with acting. I love it. So I definitely want to start acting a little bit more and doing more high fashion modeling, that's what my photo shoot is about today. To me success is when you start a family and I just love how I was raised. I loved my childhood and I only wish that I can have the same when I start a family and provide that for my kids.

You have been dating Reggie Bush, the NFL player, for a while now. What's up in your personal life, marriage, children? Any movement in that direction?

When you spend a lot of time with someone you definitely talk about it and think about it. But I think right now I'm just focusing on my career, we just got picked up for a third season for my show "Keeping Up With the Kardashians" and he is in season three of the NFL. So we're just kind of focusing real hard on that this year, but I don't know. It's something that we talk about and want to get to, but we need a little time.

Many models dream about getting on the cover of *Playboy*. Were you interested in being in *Playboy* before you became famous?

No, I actually thought that's something I wouldn't do. I met with Hugh Hefner and he told me everyone that has been on the cover. And when he told me Marilyn Monroe, who I love, was on the first cover and she was on it six or seven times, and I was just like, you know what, I might never be asked again. I have, what I think, is a very healthy body image. I'm more curvy than most in the business, I definitely have the Armenian curves, and why not have control over an amazing photo shoot and show people the way I want to be seen.


I'M
JUST REALLY
HAPPY THAT I GET ALL
THESE E-MAILS AND LETTERS
FROM THESE ARMENIAN GIRLS
THAT SAY, "WE'VE NEVER SEEN
AN ARMENIAN ON THE COVER."
IT'S SO GRATIFYING TO ME. AND
I KNOW THAT MY DAD WOULD
BE SO PROUD THAT I AM
REPRESENTING THE
ARMENIAN CULTURE.



TO ME SUCCESS IS WHEN YOU START A FAMILY. I JUST LOVE HOW I WAS RAISED AND I LOVED MY CHILDHOOD. I ONLY WISH THAT I CAN HAVE THE SAME WHEN I START A FAMILY AND PROVIDE THAT FOR MY KIDS.

You are the first women of Armenian heritage to be on the cover of *Playboy*. How was that experience and how has it affected your career?

I didn't know how big it was going to be. My mom told me everyone will see it, even girls go buy *Playboy* just to look at the cover to find the little bunny on the cover. It really has changed my life and I'm just really happy that I get all these e-mails and letters from these Armenian girls that say, "we've never seen an Armenian on the cover." It's so gratifying to me. And I know that my dad would be so proud that I am representing the Armenian culture. I remember my dad told me that a lot of Armenians when they move to America will change their last names, they'll take off the "ian" and he told me, "don't you ever do that" and he thought it was really wrong. I would never do that, it wasn't even a thought process.

You have said that your late father instilled in you a lot of Armenian culture. Tell us a little about your father and your Armenian heritage.

Me and my sisters are fourth generation here so we didn't grow up speaking Armenian but when we were in high school there was this Armenian school on the corner and my dad used to always say that he wished that we went there and that we spoke Armenian. We are only half Armenian and my grandparents didn't really speak Armenian. We kind of regret it now, that we didn't speak Armenian, but we ate a lot of Armenian food. What my dad liked to do was always get together with the family, his brother and sister, their kids, my grandparents, and we would only eat Armenian food. We would go to the Armenian restaurant every Sunday. There were just little things that my dad wanted to instill in us to make us proud to be Armenian. Growing up, I grew up in Beverly Hills, I had no Armenian friends, except for all my cousins, we knew some Armenian words but no one really knew what Armenian was in that area back then. A lot of people didn't know what I was, they would ask me if I was Spanish, Italian, Persian, no one really could quite figure it out until I would say I'm Armenian. Even when I first started becoming known in the business people would always ask me what nationality I was, no one knew, they would guess a whole bunch of different things. It was pretty cool to put Armenia out there like that.

Food is a very powerful form of cultural expression and for Armenians this is certainly the case. Which Armenian dish is your favorite and do you know how to make any of them?

Well I'm really simple, I love to just take frozen lamajun and put it in the oven. I love lavash and Armenian string cheese, just really simple stuff. But my grandmother, she would make the dish called Beshy, and not a lot of Armenians have heard of it. I swear to you I've asked like everyone I know because its my favorite Armenian dish. It is basically like an Armenian pancake, its thin like a crepe but its fried. It is really crispy, you put sugar or syrup all over it. I had it on my website because I wanted to know who else knows what this is because half the Armenians I talk to have no idea what this dish is but my whole family grew up eating it. My grandmother was Russian Armenian so we think the dish may have come a little bit more from the Russian side. Some Armenians do know the dish others have never heard of it.



I'M MORE CURVY THAN MOST IN THE BUSINESS. I DEFINITELY HAVE THE ARMENIAN CURVES, AND WHY NOT HAVE CONTROL OVER AN AMAZING PHOTO SHOOT AND SHOW PEOPLE THE WAY I WANT TO BE SEEN.



How has your Armenian heritage shaped who you are and your world view?

Growing up it has made me feel like I have something special. Even in my faith, I'm Christian, I feel like I have something special that I personally can hold to my heart. It has made me just have that wholesome sense of family that is so important to me. It has made me feel more worldly, Its given me an understanding of other places in the world and that these places have issues going on. My great grandparents escaped the Genocide; this gave me a different perspective of the world. I just felt like I belonged to something bigger and I had this whole part of my family that understood where I was coming from, when kids at school didn't know. I was a little bit darker than the other kids at school, and like I said, at the time no one really knew what Armenia was. They always thought I was just the Spanish girl, and I always had to explain that I was Armenian and what that was. I felt like I had this cool understanding of the world that I thought, at the time, no one else really understood.

When you have children do you intend to give them that part of your culture?

Of course. Its funny, I say I'm Armenian when I'm only half Armenian. For some reason I don't really say I'm Armenian-American, which I probably should. When I think about it I say definitely, my kids are going to be Armenian, they have to know what that is and what its about. My dad wouldn't have it any other way, so I definitely have to make him proud.

You have written on your blog that you and your sisters and brother decided it is mandatory to go to Armenia. What lead you to that decision?

Because my dad always wanted to go, he had never been to Armenia. We want to do things that he wanted to do but didn't have the chance, and now we have the opportunity to do it. We would like to bring our show there but we don't know if it's going to work this time. We'll probably wait until next spring.

What do you expect to gain from a trip to Armenia?

I think it will be something that we can't even imagine. I think when we get there we will feel really proud to be Armenian and we'll learn the culture and try the food, and maybe its really different from the way we make it at home.

Is there anything that you think that Armenian fans don't know about you that you would like them to know?

Just that I am probably a lot more normal than people think. They see this life and think it's a lot crazier than it really is. I'm loving my life and I'm having such a good time, I really am, but I'm totally normal and I have problems and make mistakes like everyone else and I have fun and I love to hang out with my friends just like everyone else. It's important to just have a good head on your shoulders and stay close to your family. ■

A Relentless Scholar of History

As I walked into Richard Hovannisian's office I found myself surrounded by countless boxes and files overflowing with the history of the Armenian people. Each box and file contained a not yet forgotten shadow of our past and a piece of the puzzle as to how we became who we are today. Professor Hovannisian has devoted his life to patiently gathering the history of the Armenian people. Through his journey he has also become a pioneer in Genocide Studies, the first Chair of the Armenian Studies Department at UCLA, a Guggenheim fellow and a recipient of numerous honors and awards for his advancement of Armenian Studies. He has also often found himself in the center of the struggle between remembrance and denial. As a Professor of Armenian and Near Eastern History at UCLA, Professor Hovannisian, has inspired many young Armenians and non-Armenians about a forgotten and often overlooked history. A relentless researcher and acclaimed author, he has mentored two generations of Armenian scholars.

interview : **AZZIE MEKHITARIAN**
photo : **LIKA BRUTYAN**



What was it like to grow up in the San Joaquin Valley as a young Armenian-American?

I was born in Tulare, California. I belonged to the first generation of Armenian-Americans born in this country after the Genocide. In our town there were probably fifteen Armenian families. Our social life was with those families. But I still didn't feel particularly connected with Armenians. I was an Armenian, but my generation tried to become Americans as quickly as possible. We could understand the Armenian dialect of our elders but we couldn't speak it. They spoke to us in Armenian and we answered in English, which is, of course, a common thing even today. I grew up very much in an anglicized atmosphere. I was always interested in history, and even though I was very much anglicized, I didn't feel there was a particular advantage to being Armenian. Nonetheless, whenever there was a book of geography or history I would look in the index for Armenia, and usually I wouldn't find it, and if I did find anything related to Armenia, it was in passing reference. That wasn't very satisfying to me. I was, perhaps, partly an idealist dreamer. I was excited by history and international diplomacy and as a young person dreamed of Armenia having its own flag in front of the United Nations. I had this somewhat confused dual identity. On the one hand, I was an American and on the other hand, I was strangely drawn to my Armenian heritage. History always fascinated me, and I knew very early on that I wanted to be a teacher.

What does being a "hyphenated" American mean to you, and what do you think it means to Armenians living in the US?

For me a "hyphenated" American was my stereotype of the Fresno Armenians; they were very clannish. In school all the Armenians would sit together, there was prejudice against Armenians in Fresno in particular, because of their foreign ways, and because they were very numerous. I always felt they were a different breed and I was unlike them. I was not like them. My friends were not Armenian, they were of all backgrounds. So I didn't feel I was a "hyphenated" American. I was a "good American" kid. Later on I realized that for the outsider I was no different than other Armenians. I guess now in my older age I am more of a "hyphenated" American than I was as a child. That is, I think, a positive idea right now, in that I can be comfortable and effective as an American, and I can be a devoted Armenian. You have to have a level of self-confidence to achieve a level of success, a level of acceptance in the host culture in order to also feel very proud in your own. So I can slip back and forth between an Armenian environment and an American environment and feel as comfortable and effective in both. I think that's the success of being a positive "hyphenated" Armenian-American, or Russian-Armenian. As opposed to those who are "hyphenated" because they can't speak the language and they do not fit into one of the cultures, therefore they retain that hyphenation, not as a positive characteristic, but as negative one. The challenge, of course, is to make it positive, and that's what I see now with Armenian students. Some of them run away from their Armenian identity and don't want to reclaim it, while others feel very comfortable. They are going into medicine, law and many other professions and, at the same time, they enjoy the Armenian cultural connection. They feel it enriches their lives, and they are willing to commit part of their life to that positive hyphenation.



I was excited by history and international diplomacy and as a young person dreamed of Armenia having its own flag in front of the United Nations. I was strangely drawn to my Armenian heritage.

What was the impetus for you to become so involved in Armenian History and Armenian issues?

I always had an interest in History. I was aware of my Armenian background. As I said, I was troubled that I rarely found anything about Armenia or Armenians in my schoolbooks. But certain things occur in one's life. In my case I met my future wife while I was in high school. She had come as a displaced person from the Soviet Union. The so-called DP's had either fled from Stalin's regime or had been taken to Germany as laborors during World War II. She was born in Ukraine and ended up with her family in Stuttgart, Germany in an Armenian Lager or camp. There for years Armenians from various parts of Russia gathered together and reclaimed their Armenian identity. Most of them did not know how to read or write but they created, within the larger displaced persons camp in Stuttgart, an Armenian camp. The Armenian camp had approximately four thousand people from the former Soviet Union. My wife, Vartiter, came to the U.S. from the Stuttgart camp in 1949 as a displaced person with her family and ended up on a farm near Fresno, California. When I met her she was very encouraging of my learning Armenian since I didn't know how to read or write in Armenian at the time. So Vartiter was one of the influences. The second influence was a person I met towards the end of High School and the beginning of college, Simon Vretzrian, who happened to be the last Prime Minister of the first Independent Republic of Armenia. He apparently saw something in me, and he encouraged me to go Beirut for a year to learn Armenian. If I was ever going to become involved in Armenian History or Armenian leadership I had to learn Armenian. After college I decided to go abroad. In the mid 1950's I stayed for eight months in Beirut where I spent about sixteen hours a day studying Armenian. Beirut had a strong Armenian community; it was the strongest Armenian community of the Diasopra. Well, someone can say, "why didn't you go to Yerevan?" But in those years there was the Iron Curtain. People did not go to Yerevan as they did years later. That year in Beirut was very important. When I returned to Berkeley I could read and write in Armenian and I finished my studies in History. I did my MA thesis on the Sovietization of the Independent Republic because I had dreams of independence and wanted Armenia to be independent and free. I had these romantic images of it being this wonderful place without realizing what a miserable place it was in many ways and what great deprivations it had. The same kind of deprivations that were experienced by the new Republic in the 1990's had been there for the first Republic as well. I had my first trip to Soviet Armenia back in 1959, when very few people were going to Armenia. The fear of Stalinism was everywhere and people were afraid to meet with me openly. Obviously, I was being followed by the secret police. Of course, now I have been to Armenia more than 50 times. In the 1950's there was no University in all of the United States that had Armenian courses. Around the late 50's and the beginning of the 60's we had, here at UCLA, a Director of a new center in UCLA known as the Near Eastern Center, and he wanted to introduce a non-Muslim non-Arab minority culture of the Middle East into the program. In 1962 I was invited to come to UCLA as a lecturer in Armenian Studies. It was a one year appointment that has lasted for almost a half century.

Milan Kundera wrote, "The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting." Can you tell us what this means to the study of History in general and more specifically to Armenian history?

Frequently history has been written or remembered by those in power

and the victors of history are those who frequently write history. They don't want to remember their victims. In US History we frequently look at things from the point of view of the White man and the White House and the inevitable realization of "Manifest Destiny," very rarely from the point of view of the Native Americans or of the Black slave population. To maintain memory is very important. Without the memory of their culture, their own historical record of what occurred to them, Armenians would not know who they are and indeed they would be lost. Against these powerful forces that want to obliterate entire peoples, sometimes the strongest weapon of resistence is memory. We find this today when it comes to Armenian-Turkish relations, I mean the Armenians are five or six million. That's a very telling figure. They have barely replenished themselves to where they were before the Genocide began. In other words, it took a hundred years for the Armenian world population to crawl back up to the figure where it was before 1914. In the meantime, the world population has doubled and redoubled in that period of time. So the question is , why is it the Turkish government of sixty to seventy million people is so alarmed by the Armenian issue? Armenia is a small country that cannot challenge Turkey either militarily or economically, yet it does posses the agency of memory. It is enduring memory, therefore, that in some quarters is vewed as a real problem or even a threat.

Tell us a little about your Oral History Project that you have been working on for four decades.

By the time I got involved I realized we were losing the last of the generation of people that were born in the historic homeland. In the 1970's I began to organize a class at UCLA on oral histories as a way to gather as much material as we could from the remaining Genocide survivors. By and large, these histories provide a very powerful testimony. We have gotten to the stage where we have stopped collecting because there is virtually no one left, and now I am taking these 800 hundred interviews and sending them to Armenia for transcription. The stories are gripping. My students tell me at the end of this course that it was the most meaningful course that they had ever taken. These are very powerful stories.

Of the 800 interviews what has left the strongest impression on you?

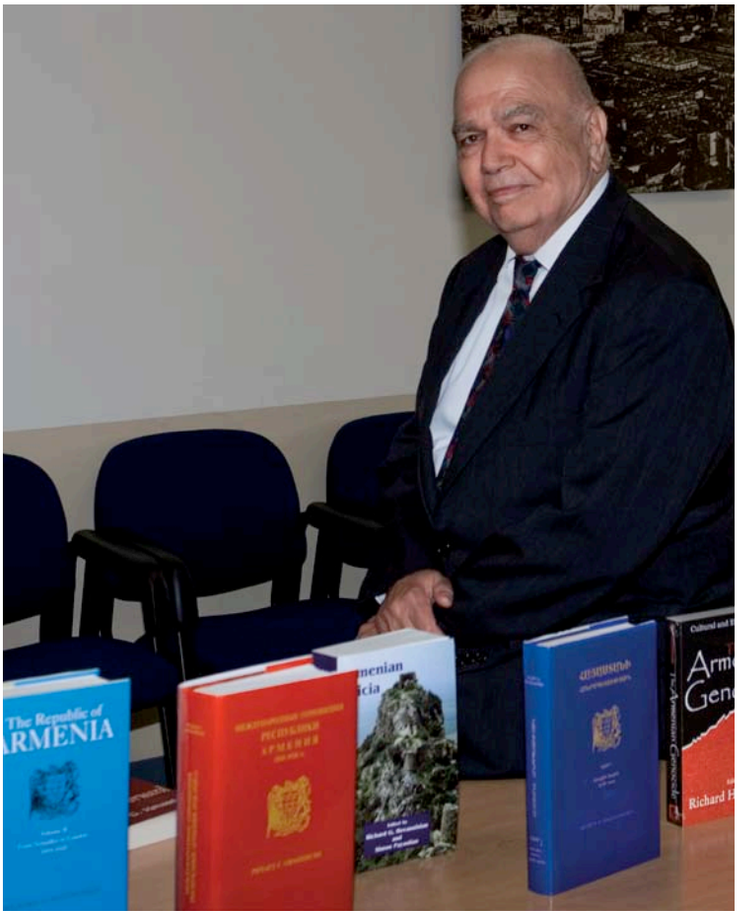
The ones that stick out most of all are the stories of women. In two ways, the personal loses that women sustained, the loss of their children. Moreover, the women took on a very unusual role in that they became the heads of household. The men were eliminated, it was up to the women to carry on and save their families. You really have to give credit to the women of that generation for having preserved, as much as possible, their nation.

What in your assessment are the secrets of Armenian survival?

Their persistence, their individuality, part of it has been their history; part of it has been their commitment to their religion. They just have these strong family networks. They don't sit and mourn about the past, they rebuild. That was their secret. The message of Armenian history in many ways is the message of survival.

What is your greatest professional achievement and what is your most cherished personal achievement?

Well I suppose, my most cherished professional achievement was taking the history of the First Republic out of the shadows, out of prejudice, and putting it down onto a firm scholarly foundation, not realizing at the time that Armenia would ever become independent again. At the time I could not even imagine that during my lifetime the Soviet Union would or could collapse. As far as a personal achievement, I suppose my proudest day was March 2, 1992, when I had my childhood dream of being at the United Nations and seeing the Armenian flag raised. So on March 2, 1992, I was in New York to see Raffi Hovannisian, my son, who was then the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia, raise the Armenian flag and to speak in the UN for the first time in Armenian. My childhood dream was realized with my son.



On March 2, 1992, I was in New York to see my son – who was then the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Armenia – raise the Armenian flag and to speak in the United Nations for the first time in Armenian.

If you could change one event of Armenian history aside from the Genocide what would it be?

It probably would be the enforcement of the treaty of Sevres in 1920. The Western powers had made so many promises to the Armenian people about restoration and rehabilitation after the Genocide and punishment of the victors. In 1920 they created the United Armenian State on paper. If they had enforced that, if they had been willing to put the military force that was required to enforce it, today Armenia would have a population of fifteen million people or more. It would have been a viable state, it would not have been landlocked, it would not have all the difficulties it faces today. If they had not only drawn an Armenia United on paper, but had given to it, and recognized that it was in their own best interest to support that state and make it a reality the whole course of Armenian history would have been changed.

What is your message or advice to Armenian youth?

Mentoring is something like being a good cultivator. You plant the seed, but then you need to nurture and water it. Some receive and absorb that water of life, whereas others having the same potential do not taste the water and therefore wither. We must strive so that our life's work reaches out to irrigate as widely and deeply as possible, to ensure that the delicate new sprouts will grow, flourish and produce bountiful yield. ■

$20 IN THE U.S. BUYS YOU:



Soy Green Chai Latte



Portobello Mushroom Burger



Movie Tickets



Designer Pizza



$20 IN ARMENIA BUYS YOU:

Unlimited Clean Drinking Water for Dzoramut Village in Lori

IF 10,000 ARMENIANS CONTRIBUTED $20 EACH, THIS GIRL AND HER ENTIRE VILLAGE WOULD HAVE CLEAN WATER FOR LIFE. CHANGE A LIFE. DONATE NOW!

Design: mark.mardigian.com
Concept: Sarah Kalenjian
Photo: Michael Levin

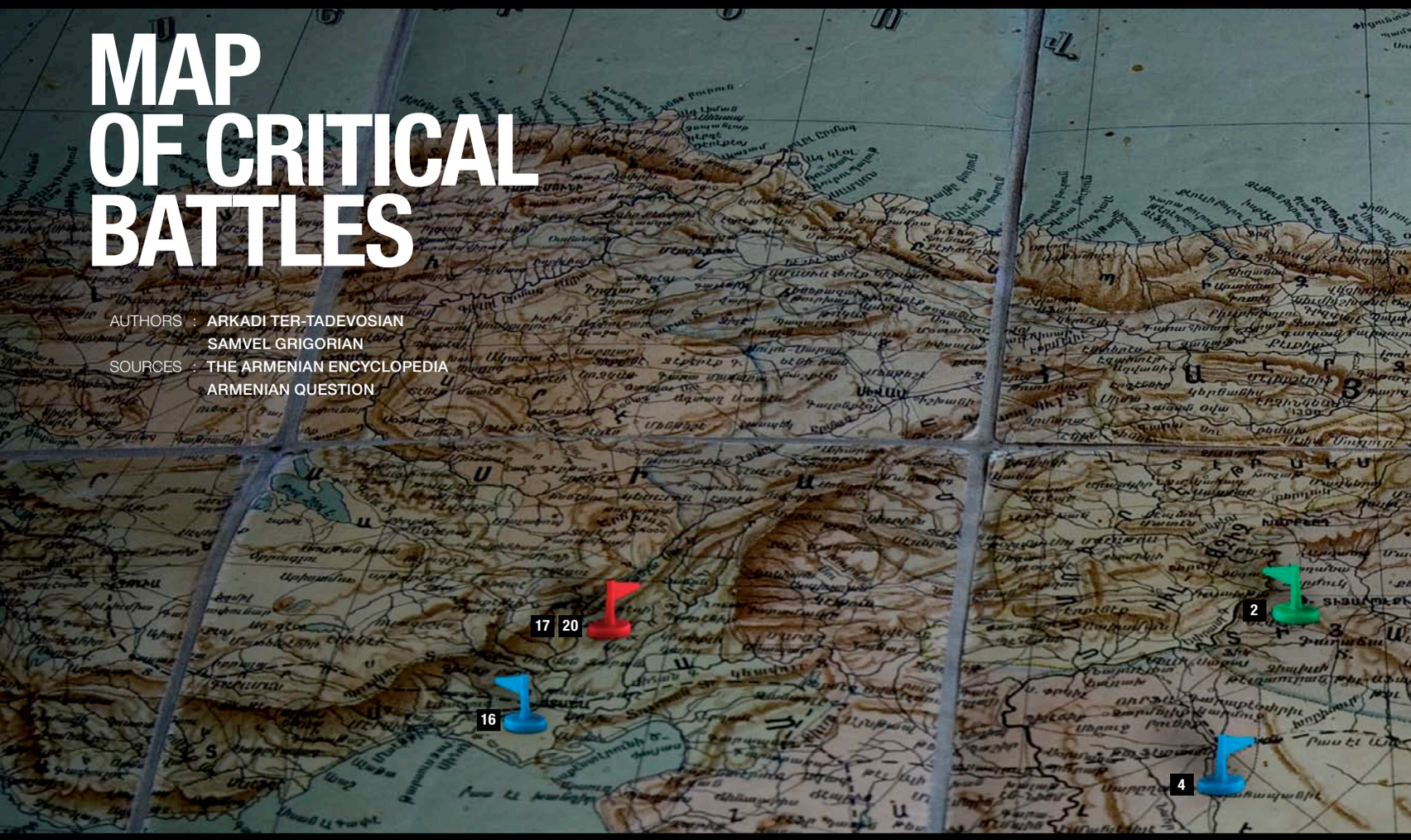
ArmeniaFund

Armenia Fund – FOR ARMENIA FOREVER • armeniafund.org

©2008 Armenia Fund

MAP OF CRITICAL BATTLES

AUTHORS : ARKADI TER-TADEVOSIAN
SAMVEL GRIGORIAN
SOURCES : THE ARMENIAN ENCYCLOPEDIA
ARMENIAN QUESTION



1 2492 B.C., 1st day of Navasard (August 11th). The battle took place between the armies of the Assyro-Babylonian emperor Bel-Nebrot and Haik Nahapet near Lake Van. The legendary father of all Armenians killed Bel-Nebrot in battle and led his troops to a decisive victory, proving himself as sovereign of an independent nation. Thus, the recorded history of Armenia began.

2 189 B.C. Under the command of Artashes (Artaxes), the ruler of the Kingdom of Greater Armenia, and Zareh, the King of Tsopk, Armenians liberated their lands from the Seleucid conquerors. The reign of the Artaxiad dynasty was established.

3 68 B.C. The Battle at the Aratsani River (a tributary of the Euphrates) took place between Romans troops and the army of Tigran II the Great. The Romans, led by Lucullus, suffered an excruciating defeat and retreated to South Mesopotamia.

4 53 B.C. The Battle at Carrhae (Kharen). Armenians loyal to King Artavazd II fought alongside their new Parthian allies against Romans. The Roman legions were devastated, and their commander Crassus, the general who once defeated the slave army of Spartacus, was captured in the battle. Notorious for his greed even in the far lands of his enemy, Crassus was beheaded after molten gold was poured down his throat.

5 335 A.D. On the North-Eastern coast of Lake Van, near the town of Arest, the combined forces of Vache Mamikonian and Vahan Amatouni, 13,000 strong, claimed a glorious victory over the entire army of King Shapouh II of Persia. Armenians were liberated from the Persian occupation.

6 336 A.D. The Battle of Oshakan. Armenian troops under command of Sparapet Vache Mamikonian defeated the invading army of the Persian King Sanatruk. The mortally wounded king later died in captivity. Armenians reinforced their interests in the region.

7 350 A.D. The Battle of Voskh. United Roman and Armenian forces, under the command of princes Syunatz Andovk and Arshavir Kamsarakan, encountered the forces of Shapouh II. The Persian king fled the battlefield. Once reaching safe haven in Tizbon, he agreed to free the captive Armenian royals and warriors, thus finally relinquishing his plan of conquering Armenia.

8 371 A.D. The Battle of Dzirav took place between the troops of the Armenian King Pap and the united forces of Persians, Aghvans and Lezgis, led by the kings Urnair, Shergir and the treacherous Armenian melik Meroujan Artzrouni. Armenians gained an impressive victory. Pap strengthened his dominance, while Shergir and Artzrouni were killed in the battle.

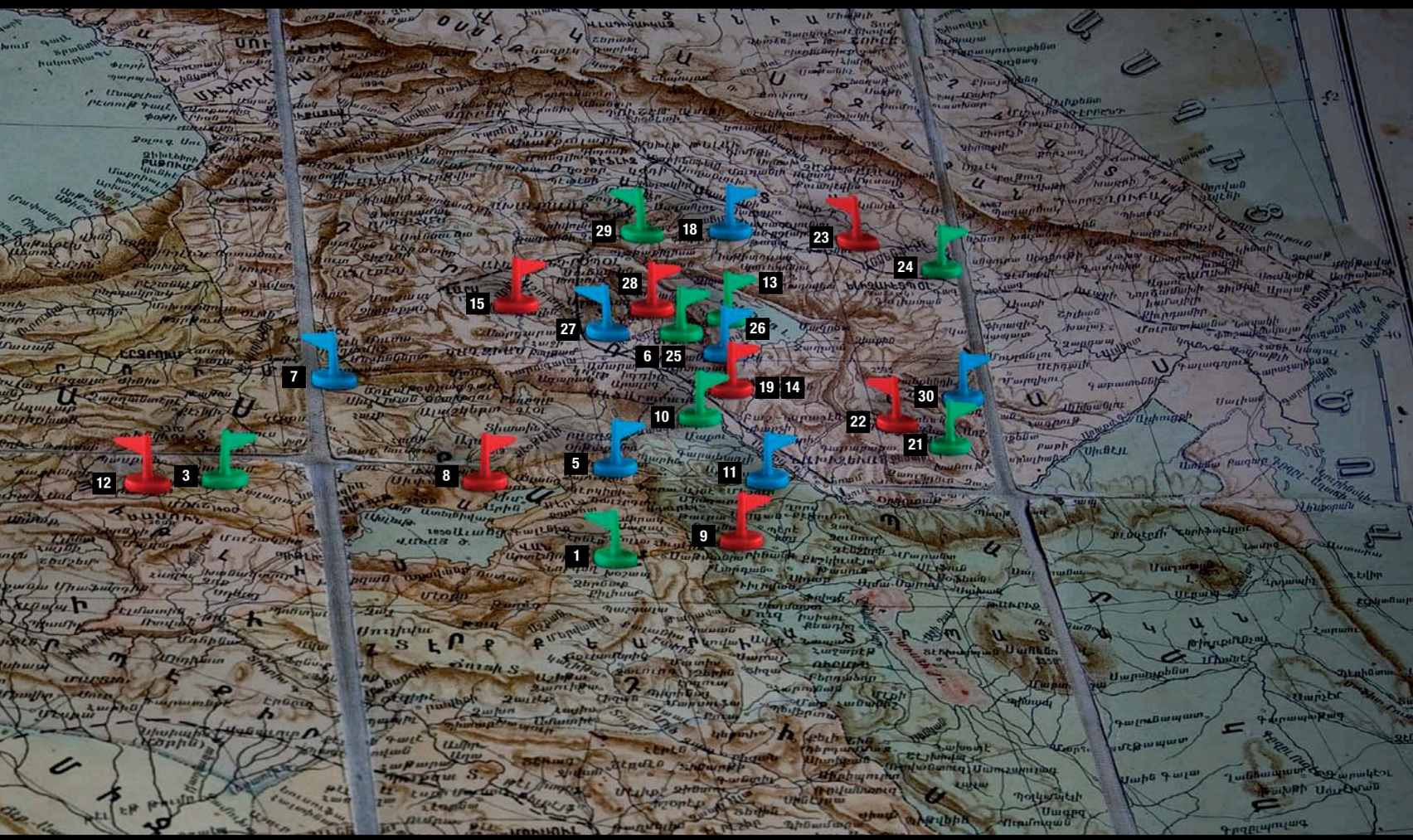
9 451 A.D. The Battle of Avarair. A 60,000 soldier Armenian force led by the Sparapet Vardan Mamikonian, faced the 300,000 strong Persian regular army of Mushkan Nusalavourt. Recently mobilized and poorely armed peasants, women, and children made up a significant portion of the Armenian Army. By contrast, the army of the Persian Empire was equipped with war elephants and aided by elite "immortals" and mercenaries. The Sparapet was killed in the battle. He was later canonized by the Armenian Church as a martyr for Christianity. Armenians suffered heavy losses and retreated to the hills, where they persisted with guerilla warfare. Persians, whose losses were very high, faced a war of attrition. Overwhelmed by the fighting spirit of the enemy, as well as dedication to the new religion, they decided to desist from their aggression. Armenians managed to defend their right to practice Christianity.

10 481 A.D. The Akor Battle. The Marzpan Atrvshnasp of Atrpatakan (present-day Azerbaijan) invaded Armenia. Vasak Mamikonian and Babken Syouni repelled the aggression by conducting a nighttime operation with 400 commandos. They attacked the camp of the enemy and assassinated the Marzpan.

11 482 A.D. The Nerseapat Battle. The Armenian victory in this battle forced the Persians to rely on diplomacy for resolving disputes with Armenians. In 484 A.D. the treaty of Nvarsak was signed. It guaranteed religious freedom and sovereignty to Armenians.

12 851 A.D. Sasountsis, headed by Hovan Khoutetsi, crushed the Arab invaders and killed their leader Yousuf. This event was immortalized in the epic tale "David of Sasoun".

13 925 A.D. The Battle of Sevan (Tzovamart). Armenian King Ashot II Yerkat (Iron) crossed Lake Sevan and destroyed the army of the Arab conqueror Bashir.



14 987 A.D. The Battle for Dvin. Armenians, led by Smbat II Bagratouni, were victorious in defeating the Arabs and defending the capital.

15 1043 Gagik II and Vahram Pahlevouni successfully defended the city of Ani. Nonetheless, within a year the Byzantines eventually took the city by deception.

16 1156 Near the Cilician city of Tarsus the Armenian forces led by Toros II won over the Byzantines. General Andronicus Komin was forced into captivity. The dominance of the Cilician kingdom rose significantly, and other Armenian principalities integrated under the leadership of Toros II.

17 1187 Near the city of Sis, Levon II crushed the horde of Iconu Seljuk Turks. Within several months Levon forced his authority onto the sultans of Aleppo and Damascus.

18 1221, January. The Kotman Battle (Tavoush marz). The first serious repulsion of the Mongol conquerors in the South Caucasus. The 20,000 man forces of the Mongols headed by Djebe Noyin and Subata Behetour lost to the united Georgian-Armenian army under the leadership of the Georgian King George IV Lasha and Armenian General Hivane Zakharian.

19 1225 After taking severe casualties, Khorezm Shah Jalal-Addin managed to destroy the Armenian capital Dvin.

20 1375, April 22. The troops of the Egyptian sultan Malik Ashraf captured Sis. The Armenian kingdom of Cilicia ceased to exist.

21 1725, February. The Battle of Verand. Fighters led by Mkhitar Sparapet crushed the 6,000 strong force of the Turkic intruders and saved Artsakh. In the following year, they achieved four other major victories, making sure that the region remained Armenian.

22 1727 The Battle of Halidzor. After seven days spent defending the city, Mkhitar Sparapet and Ter Avetis made an astonishing excursion out of the besieged citadel and destroyed the surprised Turkish enemy.

23 1826. The Battle of Shamkhor.A 10,000 strong Persian force under Amir Shah was defeated by a Russian company that was 5 times smaller. The Armenian volunteers, led by General Valerian Madatov, displayed the utmost courage and excellence in battle. Iranians had to abandon their plans of taking Tiflis (Tbilisi) and Shoushi.

24 1826, September 13. Near Elizavetopolis (now Ganzak) a Russian-Armenian army of 8,000 under Madatov's command repelled the 25,000 strong Persian Iranian army headed by the heir to the throne Abbas Mirza. The humiliated enemy withdrew beyond the Araks River.

25 1827, August 17. The Battle near Oshakan. Abbas Mirza tried to take the Echmiadzin, the spiritual capital of Armenians, and then Tiflis. Once again, his efforts were in vain: the Russian troops of Krasovskiy repelled the attack.

26 1827, September. Armenian fighters within the Russian army of General Paskevich liberated Yerevan from the Persians.

27 1918, May 21-28. The Sardarapat Battle. Armenian forces commanded by Generals Abegian, Movses Selikov, Andranik Ozanian and Colonel Perumov repelled an attack by the Turks. Armenia was saved from ultimate destruction.

28 1918, May 23-28. The Bash-Abaran Battle. Armenian voluntary brigades led by Dro (Drastaman Kanayan) with the help of Yezidi Sheikh Jangir-Aga stopped the advance of the Turks towards Yerevan.

29 1918, May 24-28. The Battle of Karakelisa. Armenian 6,000 manned force consisting of General Nazarbekov's soldiers, as well as poorly armed civilians of Pambak and Dilijan, held back the 10,000 strong Turkish troops for four days. On the fifth day the defense was broken, resulting in a massacre of 4,000 civilians. However, the remaining Turkish force was so devastated by the battle that it disbanded.

30 1992, May 9. The Battle for Shushi. Located at a vantage point above Stepanakert, the Azeri regulars, helped by Islamist volunteers, including Al-Qaeda agents bombed Armenian civilian targets. Armenian fighters conducted a remarkable 2-day campaign to capture the Shushi castle. The success of this operation was a turning point in the Artsakh War of Independence. This day it is celebrated as a national holiday both in the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh along with the victory in the World War II.

I Fly!

Residents of Yerevan decided to learn a new way of defying the pull of their beloved city. It is an unprecedented feeling: you are flying in a hot air balloon and you see Yerevan on another, bigger balloon – gliding right by you!

photo : HAYK MELKONYAN








VZEF
AERONATC




AERONATC



CROSSROADS



Often our journeys in life bring us to unexpected crossroads and encounters with unlikely kindred spirits. Two women from different worlds told us their stories of courage and dedication. Baroness Cox is a representative of the British noble class. She is a former Speaker of the House of Lords. Dr. Ani Kalayjian is from an Armenian family of Genocide survivors. Caroline Cox is a nurse by profession, who was drawn into Armenian issues by her strong sense of compassion for those who are worlds away from her British up-bringing. Ani Kalayjian, who holds a degree in psychology, was drawn into her line of work trying to overcome her own family's and community's tragic past.

Interview with Baroness Cox by Gayane Haroutyunyan

What is your impression of people of Armenia, their culture, philosophy, their character?

If I could compare the people of Armenia in time of war, I would compare them to the heroes of ancient Greek. I have visited Armenia 64 times, and I have visited Karabakh in a time of war. The Armenians have a wonderful ability to create beauty in the ashes of destruction. I saw destroyed villages that looked like pictures of hell, and yet 400 people gathered in mourning at the local church, expressing their grief, praying in Stepanakert.

Did you notice any similarities between the Armenian and the British peoples?

Armenian people have a wonderful commitment to European culture. We saw Shakespearean Theatre in Yerevan; you also have wonderful musical traditions. We share a Christian faith, of course, even though yours is orthodox.

Many of us are fascinated by English Literature…

I want to tell you a story about how impressed I was by the fact that from young ages your children are interested in the great works of literature and in the English language. I was speaking in a church in London and there was a head teacher who wanted to help children in Karabakh. That teacher and I visited a school in Karabakh where we spoke to students aged twelve. He was amazed by how these children, even in a time of war, were fluent in two languages – Armenian and Russian – could read and write in both languages, and were learning English as their third language. As he talked about literature and books, one of the children said, "I like to read foreign authors; Mark Twain, Dorris Lessing..." And the child was so humble about his accomplishment. It's a tribute to your passionate devotion to knowledge and to great intellectual traditions.

Can you tell me about your book about Karabakh. How did that come to be?

During the time of war, as I repeatedly visited Artsakh, I was very concerned that Azeries would tell the world lies about the war in Karabakh, so with my colleague John Eisner, who also came with

me during the war, we thought that we have to put all of this information into the historical record, to turn it into a book of history of this millennium and the history of Pan-Turkism. We have to reinforce the truth that the Armenians are not the aggressors.

You have a recent project regarding Karabakh. I think that you were addressing the concept of self-determination.

I am not so sure about the concept – it's the country. I can understand why the Armenians of Karabakh say "never again" to the idea of Azeris returning to power on their land. I guess, you can call that self-determination. That is a determination of people to make sure that national and ethnic cleansing would never happen on their land again.

How does a relatively fragile woman like you deal with danger and risk?

Obviously I had very real fear in the days of war in Karabakh. Out of fear I went home intending to never return in a time of a war – I was shot at several times and our helicopter was once shot down. So I thought, "I don't want to go back." It was out of very real fear. I became suspicious and shocked, even mortified after my helicopter was shot at. But one day I called a spiritually-minded friend and the next morning I went to church and the pastor read out of the gospel: "He who is not prepared shall not survive." So, I went back to Karabakh feeling more alive and energized than I ever did before. That's how I continued working – I went to Nigeria, Uganda, the Sudan; I just kept working. I overcame anxiety and fear, thinking I will not necessarily be shot at in a war zone. When I am with people that need my help I leave these feelings of trepidation behind, I forget about them and think only about the things that should be done in order to help those in need.

Do you think that forces guide your mission from high above – from God?

Yes, I presume that I am under divine protection; at least I know that I pray for it – I am Christian and I do pray. But I never go with complete confidence that things will go just as I like, as I pray for. As a Christian I ask God for His will, but as a Christian I understand that I might not come back. So part of being a true Christian is to be with people who are in dangerous places in the world. Part of being a Christian is holding a belief that God gives and sees much more than I can give or understand.

What is your source of courage and inspiration? Where does it come from, what is the ultimate source for you?

As I said, it comes from the Bible. It says, if people are hungry and sick, first satisfy their hunger and cure their wounds and then speak to them. In situations of war people are certainly hungry and sick – so you need to satisfy their basic needs, and they also need someone who will speak for them, on their behalf – so these are the basic principles that guide what we try to offer.

What do you think humanity is missing today – is it love, humility or something else?

We should try not to speak of humanity as a single entity; we should not generalize. There are obviously people who are trying to do their best in parts of the world, there are churches who are trying to help. I happen to be part of that kind of Christian organization – people who are passionately trying to help. And then, of course there are situations that are in desperate need of intervention. I think, part of the problem is that some countries support a general belief that the first priority of their citizens is to pursue their own national interests. I have seen injured children in Karabakh with missing extremities, and other body parts – that was a terrible crime against humanity. When I came back to Britain and met with the Foreign Minister to tell him that Azerbaijan is infringing upon the human rights of the Armenians, he had little time for me. Our meeting was very short, and he said that our country has no interest in other countries; our only interest is that there is oil interest in Azerbaijan. I was saddened and angry. And I said, "For the first time in my life I am ashamed that I am British." And at that I left. I understand that there are commercial and other such interests, but I don't think that any nation should disregard human rights in the pursuit of commerce, and I think that the obligation of the British people is first to ensure human rights and those of children. It should go without saying that we are a moral nation. This is an illustration of a situation that should be without compromise and should rise above international, national, or commercial interests. Politicians, unfortunately, have to balance national interests with the human rights of all people.

Can you tell me what do you like to do outside your work?

Obviously, there isn't much I can do outside my work. But my hobby is sport – croquet, I like to play tennis very much, walking, particularly in the countryside. And also, as you know, I am a Christian, so I go to church, and I do appreciate spiritual relief. When I have time I go to a retreat. I am English, and one has to understand a strange phenomenon of being English: I like playing bridge – it has all these mathematical sequences, it's



PART OF BEING CHRISTIAN IS TO BE WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE IN DANGEROUS PLACES; HOLDING A BELIEF THAT GOD GIVES MUCH MORE THAN I CAN GIVE OR UNDERSTAND.

DOSSIER

Caroline Cox—a deputy speaker in the British House of Lords and president of Christian Solidarity— UK (United Kingdom) began her humanitarian efforts in the 1980s with convoys to Poland on behalf of the Medical Aid for Poland Fund. This introduced her to members of the Polish Solidarity movement and earned her Poland's highest award for a foreigner, the Commander Cross of the Order of Merit. She joined Christian Solidarity International (CSI) in 1990. CSI is an interdenominational, international human-rights organization that provides aid and advocacy for persecuted Christians and others, including Muslims, suffering repression. She was then asked to help organize a human-rights conference in Russia in 1990, which got the attention of Andrei Sakharov's widow. Mrs. Sakharov invited her to help organize a human-rights congress in Moscow to commemorate what would have been the 70th birthday of her deceased husband. Lady Caroline chaired a committee looking into human-rights abuses in the USSR. That's how she ended up crossing into Azerbaijan, waving a white flag.

Her role as the British president has enabled her to travel to and assess volatile situations throughout the world. Since 1992 she has made 15 trips to Sudan, one of which included a crew from NBC's «Dateline» covering the slave trade. Her advocacy for Armenian Christians focused world attention to the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh.

a very complicated, but glorious pastime.

How do you feel about the atheist part of humanity? Do they have your support as well?

As we are humanitarians and human advocacy workers and, yes, we are Christians and the Bible says we should cure the sick and feed the hungry and give rest to people in need, not just Christians. Our charity organization is HART, which stands for Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust. It is supporting a rehabilitation center in Artsakh. HART is helping people who are in need. People who work there are Christians – and our love, our passion is our advocacy. We are helping people in Artsakh, Nigeria, Sudan, who are also Christians, but also we are working with people, without any intention of changing their culture, traditions, and so on.

How are you perceived in the countries where the dominant religion is other than Christian, are they skeptical, or suspicious of you?

Not at all, because they receive our unconditional support. They know what HART is, a humanitarian trust, and they know that we help people of any faith.

I understand that the Bible is the ultimate guide for you. Has it ever happened that you did something that contradicts biblical teachings?

I wouldn't say that the Bible per se is my guide, as you know it consists of both New and Old Testaments. I would say "the word of Jesus Christ," is my guide because it's His word that guides me. He said "love each other," and that is my guiding principle. The Bible, on the other hand, is interpreted in many, many ways. I don't think I have an authority to break laws, but there were times that I acted in some unorthodox ways by crossing borders to reach people in need.

But don't you agree that, as strange as it may seem, loving each other is sometimes the most challenging thing that can be?

Absolutely, and it also can be costly and hard. Many times I have risked my life, and we also should agree that the task of the prosecuted churches is by far the most challenging work of all.

When you encounter people that are not nearly as self-sacrificing as you are how do you encourage them to change? What do you say to them?

Well, I never see myself that way. For me it is a privilege to serve. We have so much – our liberties, security, possessions. And working in the regions at war I have met so many wonderful heroes and colleagues in so many countries – in Nigeria, Sudan, in Artsakh. Actually many wonderful people work in our rehabilitation center in Artsakh, that we are no match for.

You dedicate so much time and effort to Armenia. It seems that you almost favor our nation over any other…

That is not quite true – we love all Christians. But I have a special love for all those people with whom I work. My special affection for the Armenian people must be very clear and particularly very special affection for the Armenians of Artsakh. But I won't favor Armenians at the expense of the rest of the world, because my cause is the freedom of the individual, and people are endangered in lots of places. But I should say that I have a special respect for the Armenian people, and particularly for their culture, the way they recover their land from ashes, the way they are devoted to their religion – so yes, they do have a special place in my heart.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

It's when you visit people who are in these war-torn regions. It's the joy that these victims feel knowing that they are not forgotten. It's the way they say time and time again, "Thank you for caring about us." And then when I return they say, "How wonderful that you could come back." These are my greatest rewards.

What are you working on right now?

I work to help our rehabilitation center in Artsakh – to help all those who are injured, those who have diseases. I am raising money for Artsakh, for displaced people in Nigeria, in the war zone in Uganda.

What do you pray for?

I pray for physical health, stamina, patience, and courage to continue my work.



DOSSIER

Dr. Ani Kalayjian is a graduate of Long Island University with a Masters and Doctor of Education degree from Teachers College, Columbia University. As a pioneering therapist, educator, director and author, she has devoted her life to bringing healing to those who have survived the devastation of disaster, whether man-made or natural. Ani Kalayjian is an internationally recognized expert on the psychological effects of trauma in disaster victims, and the author of the authoritative handbook, Disaster & Mass Trauma: Global Perspectives in Post Disaster Mental Health Management. She has worked extensively with veterans of the Gulf and Vietnam wars, with survivors of the Holocaust and Ottoman-Turkish Genocide of the Armenians, and with survivors of earthquakes and hurricanes. From 1988 to 2006 she went to Armenia, California, Cyprus, Florida, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Turkey to assist health professionals treating trauma cases after natural and human made disasters and to train psychiatrists, psychologists and general practitioners in post-trauma therapeutic interventions. Her ultimate vision is that through peaceful resolution, man's injustice to man will be prevented altogether. Dr. Kalayjian travels around the world lecturing on sociopolitical violence and the psychosocial and spiritual effects of trauma, as well as on avoiding such trauma through conflict resolution and peace education. She has private psychotherapeutic practices in Manhattan and Cliffside Park, New Jersey, where she resides, and is an adjunct Professor of Psychology at Fordham University.

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF WE ARE CHRISTIAN, HINDU, BUDDIST, MUSLIM, SIKH OR JEWISH. WE ALL DEAL WITH TRAUMA IN THE SAME WAY. WE ARE MORE ALIKE THAN DIFFERENT.



Interview with Dr. Kalayjian
by Azzie Mekhitarian

What lead you to devote your life to helping others come to a state of balance and wholeness after trauma?

There is a joke about psychologists going into the discipline to either help themselves, their family or their community. So for me being a child of a genocide survivor the trauma was part of my daily upbringing in Syria. My family and the community at large were also grappling with this problem. In addition to old trauma there were also ongoing issue due to the war between Israel and Syria. My quest was to try to make it better, heal it, work through it and learn from it.

What are some of the similarities between your own journey and that of other individuals who have been through emotional difficulties?

There are some things that I share with the collective Armenian journey. By carrying out twenty years of different mental health outreach projects, going to different trauma zones and different countries and helping with psychological first aid we noticed we are all more alike than different. From Africa to Sri Lanka, from Spain to Argentina, from Armenia to Pakistan to Turkey, people react and deal with trauma in the same pattern. I really was humbled and very moved that we see these artificial divisions and differentiations between cultures, countries and religions, and yet basically, when it comes down to a threat or an actual trauma we are all the same. It doesn't matter if we are Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Sikh or Jewish. We have worked with all these groups of people and it is so moving to see that we all feel the same way. This is a point I try to reinforce in my writings, lectures and research; that we need to gain a deeper understanding of humanity as a family. We are more alike than different. The positive lesson I like to emphasize is that God, the Universe, or whatever you want to call it, has presented us with this opportunity to grow, to learn from different situations, because if we don't we will keep repeating history over and over and we will stay in the painful cycle of trauma.

Tell us about Meaningful World and Armenian American Society for Studies on Stress and Genocide (AASSSG).

We started AASSSG in 1988. This year we celebrated the 20th anniversary of AASSG which is a humanitarian not-for-profit non-governmental organization (NGO). I had just finished my doctorate at Columbia University, and I had begun going to different conferences on traumatic stress studies. I found out that there was so much research on the Holocaust but nothing at all on the Armenians and the Ottoman Turkish Genocide. That put a question mark in my head. Soon after, I called a group of psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and psychiatric nurses together to form this organization. Our first priority was to research the impact of the Armenian Genocide on the survivors and the community in general. In the middle of this research, the earthquake happened in Armenia, so I put the research aside for a while and co-founded Mental Outreach to Armenia. For a year and a half I trained mental health professionals and sent them to Armenia. After the earthquake we finally concluded our research on the Armenian Genocide. AASSSG now has annual conferences with the participation of scholars who have done substantial work in the area of Genocide Studies. In addition, we have an essay contest to generate interest among the youth. We keep saying "never again" but then things like genocide keep happening. There is something inconsistent in this cycle which we are trying to explore in every possible direction; from the United Nations, to governments and from NGO's to individuals. This is especially important for the youth because they are going to be our future decision makers. After the work we did in Armenia, I was invited to do psychological outreach programs in other trauma zones. I realized that we needed a new organization, ATOP, which is the organization that goes to other countries such as, Pakistan, Turkey, Mexico- about twenty countries in all. ATOP's focus is to do humanitarian outreach. Meaningful World is the partnership of the various organizations that we are involved in.

How is it that an event that occurred so long ago, like the Armenia Genocide, has such an effect on people's lives today?

It is an issue that is very much alive today, especially for the genocide survivors and their children. Denialism has perpetuated the trauma of the Armenian Genocide. It has clearly impacted generations of Armenians. It is like an open wound and a continuous state of trauma.

Have you found that one's outlook on life affects how we deal with adversity?

A lot depends on the attitude you have, a positive or negative outlook. It really depends on what you emphasize, how you look at it, and what you do with it. Really, the choice is ours. People need to be informed about what the choices are and that is what we do. The more choices we see, the more empowered we feel. When we are emotionally stuck, we really feel helpless. That is what makes some people feel apathetic and hopeless, that makes people live like robots, go to work, come home and remain indifferent.

FORGIVENESS IS A PERSONAL JOURNEY, IT IS NOT SOMETHING POLITICAL OR COMMUNITY BASED. FORGIVENESS IS HEALTHY FOR YOUR BODY, YOUR MIND AND YOUR SPIRIT.

Do you adapt your language and style according to the cultural background of the groups you work with?

Yes. Before we do any outreach, we do a pre-assessment to explore who the survivors are and a thorough assessment of the disaster situation.

It is said that disasters can help us discover meaning in life. Do you find this to be a crucial aspect of healing?

It is important to first resolve and process the trauma before we can search for meaning. But then at some point forgiveness is an important step. How long must the Armenians wait for the Turkish government to acknowledge what happened in 1915 so that they can begin healing? When I started talking about forgiveness we started having some problems with fanatics in the Armenian community. Even our lawyer stopped responding to us because he was too angry to see forgiveness and genocide in the same sentence. People started writing articles against me. People, not really knowing what I was talking about, were attacking the concept. There is great controversy over linking the concepts of forgiveness and genocide in the same thought process. When we forgive we do not forgive the act of genocide, we forgive the people who were unconscious, ill intended or mainly in-sane.

The point you are trying to make is that forgiveness is a step towards finding peace within yourself; it does not mean to let the issue go or let the issue die.

Exactly! Forgiveness is a personal journey, it is not something political or community based. Research in the last 15 years shows that forgiveness is healthy for your body, your mind and your spirit. If we have anger we need to manage it, find the roots of it and transform it into power. So it is an individual journey. In fact, we have an Armenian Turkish reconciliation group. We started this after I went to Turkey for a conference in 1999. The purpose was to express my own personal forgiveness and ask the Turks how we can bridge this gap. How can we help them let go of this obsession with denial and embrace their history instead? I realized there was a lot of work to be done in this area. A dialogue group, we decided, would be a wonderful way to facilitate this. I'd like to stress that when I say "forgiveness" I mean an inner peace. ■



AMERICAN CIRCUMCISION MANIA

According to the World Health Organization, a minority of cultures practice male circumcision, and globally approximately 70% of the world's males are intact. Circumcision is practiced by Jews, Muslims, tribal peoples and residents of the United States. It is uncommon in Europe and its former colonies, Latin America, China and India. The United States is the only country in the developed world that circumcises the majority of its male infants for non-religious reasons. A considerable number of Middle Eastern Armenians and Armenian Americans have joined the quarter of the world's population in circumcising infant boys.

text : **ASTRIK VARDANYAN**

Why do some cultures choose to circumcise their newborn baby boys? Why not "trim" an earlobe or allow the fingernail of the pinky to grow long, as some have asked or done? Medical history may help us understand how the growth in the popularity of circumcision has occurred. Beginning in the late 19th century medical descriptions of the male genitalia and the foreskin in particular have filled thousands of pages of scholarly literature in depicting the human prepuce (foreskin) as the most malignant of all body parts and its functions the most impure. The verdict was handed down more than a century ago: the foreskin was nasty and polluted, and should be cut off - the sooner the better! Is this decision to support routine circumcision based on science, pseudoscience, or non-scientific traditional beliefs? Is it driven by a religious doctrine or economic benefit? In short, how scientific is the American foreskin phobia?

Ironically, Americans frame the exotic circumcision rituals of "the other" (Africans, Muslims, or aboriginal peoples) as mutilations of backward tribes, while circumcision is performed in the "civilized" context of the American hospital. One might reasonably wonder how the actions of American crusaders against foreskin are any less mutilating than the circumcisers in the developing world. By examining the roots of circumcision we can discover how Americans have adopted and institutionalized this ancient ritual. Once we have established where the current fascination with circumcision originated, we will turn to the question of how (and why) Armenians have come to adopt the practice as their own.

THE ORIGINS OF CIRCUMCISION

The first evidence of male circumcision is a depiction on the walls of Egyptian tombs from approximately 5,000 years ago. The Egyptians are believed to have made a small slit on the foreskin as a bloodletting or a purification ritual. Some theorists have suggested that circumcision was used as a castigatory measure, as a mark of slavery, and as a diminution of, or substitution for human sacrifice. Some suggest that circumcision was imposed on the Jews among other ethnic groups as a mark of slavery during their subjugation in Egypt. Over time circumcision has become more central to Jewish identity and has been incorporated into Jewish religious practice as a bodily sign of the covenant between God and Abraham (described in Genesis 17). Moses Maimonides, the medieval Jewish rabbi, proposed that the original rationale for circumcision was the desensitization of the sexual organ to moderate sexual activity and thus improve morality. In the context of ancient religious practice, the yearning impulses of sexual desire should be repressed since they would distract men from spiritual and communal pursuits.

THE ETHICS OF PERFORMING AN IRREVERSIBLE PROCEDURE ON THE INFANT WITHOUT HIS CONSENT HAVE BEEN CHALLENGED BY MANY.

ABRAHAMIC VS. RABBINIC CIRCUMCISION

After Alexander the Great's conquest of the Middle East between 334 and 331 B.C., Hellenistic ideals of the male body and the Jewish practice of circumcision came into conflict. In contrast to the Jews, Greeks and Romans placed a high aesthetic value on the foreskin and regarded circumcision as a form of mutilation. The Romans passed laws to protect the prepuce by prohibiting circumcision. The Hellenized Jewish males adopted many Grecian customs, such as attending Greek gymnasia and appearing at public baths where nudity was the norm. The circumcised Jews had to attempt to hide or reverse their circumcision by stretching penile skin or restoring the foreskin surgically in order to avoid public ridicule. In spite of cultural pressures during the Hellenistic era, intact foreskins were anathema to

Jewish identity, and the reversal of circumcision – a rejection of Abraham's holy covenant. In a fury, rabbinical authorities introduced a more radical surgery: peri'ah, which went beyond the historic and relatively simple Abrahamic trimming of the tip of foreskin and externalized the entire head of the penis, so that no movable skin was left and no stretching was possible. Thus, the circumcision procedure performed in modern American hospitals is actually the ancient Jewish practice of peri'ah.

CIRCUMCISION AS PUNISHMENT

In the 18th century circumcision was performed in all English-speaking countries as a punishment for masturbation, which was seen as a grand culprit at the time. Masturbatory insanity was believed to cause a plethora of physical and mental ills, including epilepsy, paralysis, tuberculosis, blindness, and bedwetting, to name only a few. So potent was the influence of Victorian ideology in America, that it continued to be accepted without contest until the later decades of the 20th century. Until 1977, long after physicians in other countries had abandoned surgical solutions for masturbation, the National Blue Shield Association covered female circumcision in the U.S as a cure for sexual "dysfunctions." In real life this translated into picking up prostitutes off the streets and circumcising them by force in hopes of curing their deviant behavior. Up until late 1970's, female circumcision was also recommended by doctors for sexual frigidity.

CIRCUMCISION IN VOGUE

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the old narratives of circumcision as punishment and for the alleviation of sexual dysfunctions were forgotten and a new cause for circumcision emerged: cleanliness. Influenced by germ phobia and a public obsession with dirt, the foreskin was demonized as a potential site of contamination and disease. Soon many leading for-profit hospitals catered to upper and middle class families by circumcising their infant boys at birth. Circumcision became a mark of modernity, wealth, and sophistication, while the foreskin became a signifier of ignorance, neglect, and poverty.

Circumcision was further institutionalized during World Wars I and II and the Vietnam War, when mass circumcisions were administered in the military service prophylactically. Circumcision soon created a lucrative multi-million dollar industry. During this period the incidence of circumcision dramatically increased, reaching its peak in 1979, when 85% of American boys were circumcised. The public's attitude toward circumcision eventually became internalized as a deeply-rooted custom in American society. Circumcision was in fashion, like the latest Gucci bag or Coach shoe.



***MEDICAL DICTIONARY:**

Mastectomy – excision of the breast.

Appendectomy – surgical removal of the vermiform appendix.

Appendicitis – inflammation of the vermiform appendix.

MEDICAL CLAIMS AND SCARE TACTICS

No other surgical procedure has promised cures for as many diseases as circumcision. Almost every decade a new purpose for circumcision competes for the public's attention. The historical record reveals that advocates of circumcision have typically used scare tactics: if you were not circumcised you were susceptible to whichever incurable disease was being targeted by circumcision advocates at that moment. Financial incentives also increased rates of circumcision, as few doctors could afford to reject an opportunity to charge up to $800 for a ten-minute procedure. Circumcision was seen as the magic bullet that would eliminate syphilis, gonorrhea, urinary tract infections, penile lesions, and, more recently, prostate and cervical cancers (strategically targeting women's health through a procedure performed on males). Without refuting each and every claim, it will suffice to state that no medical organization in the world, including any in the United States, endorses circumcision as a prophylactic measure for curbing the diseases mentioned above. The American Academy of Pediatrics (1999) states that there is no absolute medical indication for routine circumcision. Similarly, the American Medical Association (2003) has found no sufficient reason for endorsement of infant male circumcision. Likewise, the Royal Australian College of Physicians (2004) states, "there is no medical indication for routine male circumcision." Moreover, the British Medical Association (2006) emphasizes that circumcision should be discouraged and that "parental preference alone is not sufficient justification for performing a surgical procedure on a child". The Canadian Pediatric Society (1982, 1989, 1996) termed circumcision a "mutilative" and "obsolete" operation.

However, as the old claims were debunked, a new target disease emerged – AIDS - and circumcision advocates soon marketed the procedure as a preventive tool against acquisition of HIV/AIDS. These claims have come along with calls for universal circumcision and the export of single use circumcision kits to African countries with high rates of HIV/AIDS. American doctors, under the auspices of the World Health Organization, are currently preparing for the mission of saving Africans from ravages of AIDS. Ironically enough, the well-meaning individuals are implementing this mission through increases in circumcision rates, rather than increases in condom distribution or proven medical treatments, such as the use of anti-retroviral medications. Before the West enters into another "humanitarian" mission, it should look more carefully at the data. The U.S. has the highest rate of circumcision among industrialized countries, as well as the highest rate of HIV infection. Clearly, circumcision alone has not protected the circumcised American males from AIDS.

In some quite rare medical conditions circumcision may be required. These occur less often than breast cancer. In the logic of the circumcision advocates, we should perform prophylactic circumcision to eliminate any risk of these conditions. By extension, are we to advocate routine prophylactic mastectomy* in order to save women? Doctors do not perform prophylactic appendectomies* on newborns because a few might develop appendicitis*. Similarly, the U.S. public should more rigorously question the wisdom of routine circumcision of newborns in the hope of preventing diseases that the vast majority would never develop.

ANTI-CIRCUMCISION MOVEMENT.

In recent decades, a strong anti-circumcision movement has brought down the rate from 85% (1979) to 60% (2005) nationwide (below 40% in California). While overall rates in the U.S. are going down, the rate among Armenian-Americans is rising (approximately 70%). Human rights advocates have challenged the ethics of performing an irreversible procedure on the infant without his consent. They rightfully argue that pain should not be the first experience of a penis. Moreover, like any other surgery, circumcision is not without risks - the American Academy of Pediatrics (1999) and other medical societies mention excessive bleeding, infections,

complications from anesthesia, and disruption of sleep and breastfeeding patterns. In the U.S. female circumcision is banned, while male babies are not offered the same protection.

BAPTIZED AND CIRCUMCISED?

Traditionally, circumcision has not been a custom among Christian Armenians. While in the Old Testament God is said to have commanded Abraham to circumcise himself and his descendents (Genesis 17), the New Testament rejects circumcision. In the New Testament, it is circumcision of the heart that matters and not circumcision of the flesh. Paul's outspoken preaching against circumcision is abundant. He declares, "If you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all" (Galatians 5:2). "Watch out for those dogs," Paul warns, "they are evil workers, mutilators of the flesh" (Philippians 3:2). In light of these admonitions, how is it that conservative and Church-loving Middle Eastern Armenians have come to circumcise their sons in modern times? Isn't there an apparent contradiction between baptizing and at the same time circumcising the Armenian boys?

SYMBOLIC MARK OF ISLAM

Quite apart from Christian doctrine, in the perception of Armenians circumcision was the mark of Muslims. Leaving children intact was a significant aspect of ethnic identity and religious boundaries for Armenians surrounded by Islamic, circumcising cultures. The Muslim rulers led systematic and coercive policies to convert Armenians to Islam that included ritual circumcision. There is ample evidence of coercive circumcisions referenced by the 17th-century historian Arakel Davrizetsi in his *History*. Under the Persian King Shah-Abbas the stateless Armenians were systematically subjected to forced circumcision as a prerequisite for conversion to Islam. Genocide survivors who escaped the death marches (mostly children) received



SOME ARGUE THAT THERE IS AN APPARENT CONTRADICTION BETWEEN BAPTIZING AND, AT THE SAME TIME, CIRCUMCISING ARMENIAN BOYS.

assistance from those who have come to be known as "good Turks". However, these children had to pay a high price: Turks massively assimilated them through coercive conversion to Islam, which entailed name changes and for boys – circumcision. In other words, the Armenian Genocide survivors were rescued by making them into Turks. Some genocide survivors endangered their lives by preserving their foreskins, and identity as Armenians, by escaping from their Turkish rescuers. Circumcision, the characteristic sign of Islamic dominators, was perceived by Armenians as the stigmatizing, physical manifestation of their forced conversion to Islam. Circumcision denoted assimilation, and resistance to it ensured ethnic survival.

ADOPTING CIRCUMCISION: EMBRACING MODERNIZATION.

This cultural meaning was destined to be erased with the medicalization of the procedure, through which circumcision slowly made its way into the Armenian communities of the Middle East. Armenians with higher social class and standing came to associate circumcision with medical sophistication and reclaimed the practice anew. Circumcision gradually and quietly lost the cultural and religious stigma, to which it had been historically connected. It is fascinating that Genocide survivors who once escaped circumcision would later circumcise their sons and grandsons as a health and hygiene measure. While most features of traditional Armenian culture have been strongly preserved – language, intra-group marriage, religion, customs of everyday life - the strict line between the circumcised and the uncircumcised has been crossed. By contrast, circumcision is unheard of in the Republic of Armenia and among recent immigrants from the motherland who still associate circumcision with Turkishness.

FINALLY, ABOUT SEX.

In some cases, adult Armenian males had fallen prey to peer pressure; to avoid ridicule in locker rooms, they underwent painful circumcision while failing to ask, who is teasing whom? Ironically, more than two thousand years ago the opposite physical state was ridiculed! Most unfortunately, some young Armenian men have been pressured by their girlfriends who would refuse sex with an uncircumcised partner. A disclaimer: both male and female genitalia produce the same substance, called smegma - the natural antibacterial, antiviral white emollient. Nowadays, people wash away smegma as part of their daily ablutions. Women in fact produce more smegma than males. Cleanliness should be associated with proper hygiene, rather than "extra skin."

Please excuse my cynicism, but if women knew about the properties of foreskin they would never order their boyfriends to amputate it. Research shows that the foreskin is a highly erogenous tissue comprised of thousands of nerve and sensory endings. It has somewhat similar sensory functions to the clitoris. Instead of discarding the foreskin in a biohazard medical waste bin, there are good reasons to protect it.

TO CUT OR NOT TO CUT?

In contemporary American multi-ethnic society, as well as in the diverse community of Armenian Americans, the question of the child's right to genital integrity should become a new frontier for public discussion. Circumcision is ethical at the request of an adult who makes a personal choice. However, in the absence of medical indication, circumcision of an unconsenting minors fails to hold up under ethical scrutiny. Bear this in mind – circumcision is irreversible. Parents always make decisions for their children, from simple piercing of ears to more monumental ones, such as religious and cultural practices. With the best intentions for their children, parents should think twice before making a decision to circumcise the next baby boy. ■



MADE CHINA

The words, "made in China," are encountered every day by nearly everyone who buys manufactured products on Earth. It is difficult to find a toy or shoe or machine that is not, at least partially, "made in China." And now the Olympic Medals…

text : **RAPHAEL HAKOPJANIAN**



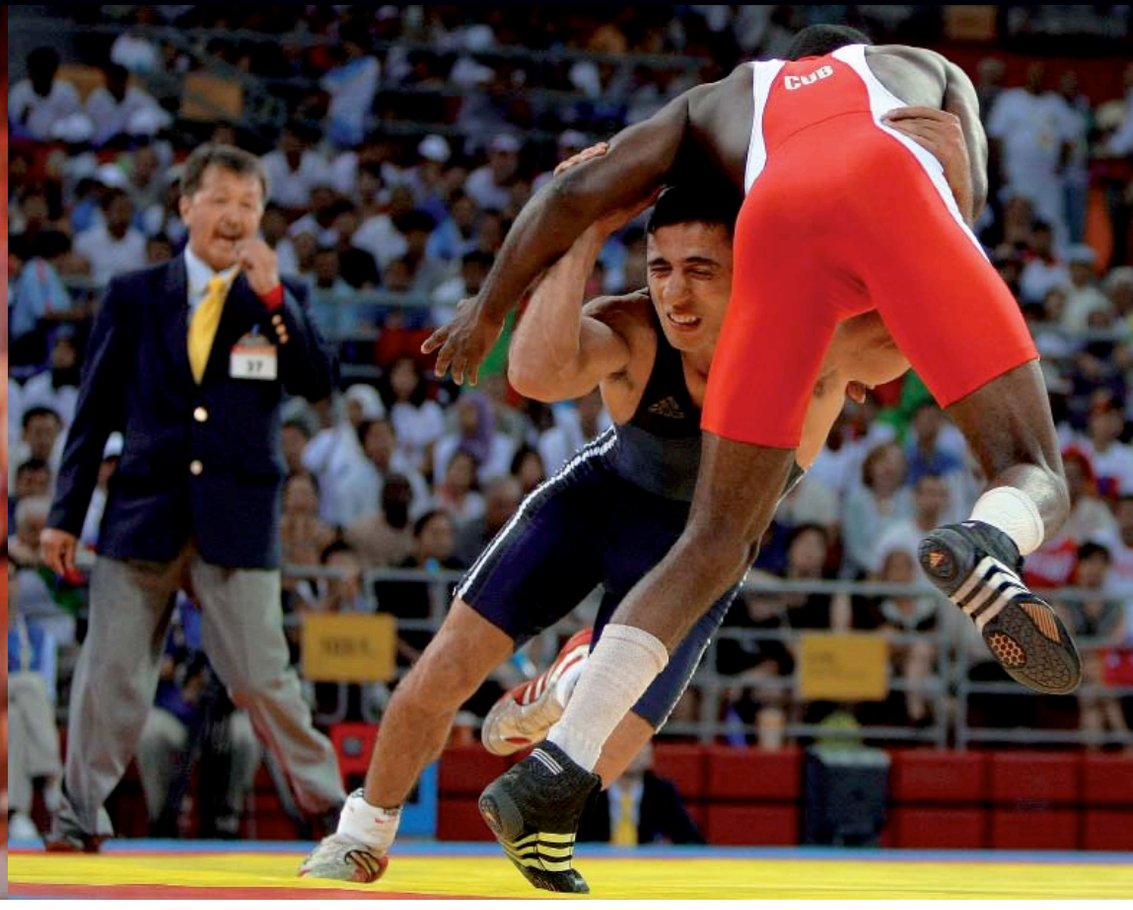
Beijing is the second capital of a communist country (Moscow the first in 1980) to welcome the Olympic Games. While the Moscow Olympiad, boycotted by the Americans, started polarization of the sport world in the Cold War era, the Beijing Olympic Games have become the opposite, with a record number of world leaders gathering for the opening ceremony.

It seems that China, home to one in five people on the planet, wanted to make a bold statement from the start. Most journalists agreed that the opening and closing ceremonies of the XXIX Olympic Games were by far the best in the history of the modern Olympics. Not only did they surpass all prior ceremonies by the number of participants, but also for their creativity and technical performance.



THE OPENING AND CLOSING CEREMONIES OF THE XXIX OLYMPIC GAMES WERE BY FAR THE BEST IN THE HISTORY OF MODERN OLYMPICS. THE BUDGET FOR THE BEIJING OLYMPIC GAMES EXCEEDED 40 BILLION DOLLARS.









CHINESE ATHLETES COLLECTED THE MOST GOLD MEDALS - 51. USA WAS SECOND IN GOLD MEDAL COUNT- 36, BUT COLLECTED THE MOST MEDALS OVERALL - 110. RUSSIA WAS THIRD IN BOTH GOLD MEDALS - 23 AND OVERALL MEDAL COUNT - 72.

The budget for the Beijing Olympic Games, including significant infrastructure improvements, exceeded 40 billion dollars. New arenas and new buildings were raised. The "Bird's Nest," (as locals dubbed their new state of the art National Stadium), the National Aquatic Center or "Water Cube" and other masterpieces of modern architecture took their rightful place on the list of landmarks to see in China, along with The Forbidden City, The Great Wall, the Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian, and The Temple of Heaven. In this way, a new chapter of modern Chinese history was written.

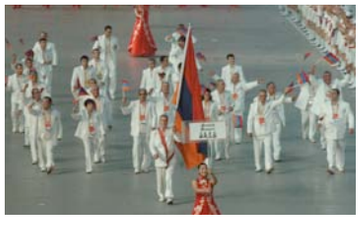
Of course, some peculiar things did not go unnoticed by a traditionally critical media. The spectacular fireworks during the opening ceremony turned out to be largely computer generated for television audiences. The beautiful Chinese girl actually lip-synched her song during the opening ceremony, replacing a "less attractive" child endowed with a beautiful voice. The entire women's gymnastics team from China looked much younger than their "newly issued" Chinese passports were showing. However, for those who have lived in a communist country, these small aberrations from Western norms were all to be expected.

The Chinese athletes also dominated many sport disciplines and rightfully collected the most gold medals. Are they already the next major world power or still on the way to becoming one? The only nation that was close to China with the number of gold medal wins was the last remaining superpower – USA, which collected the most medals overall.

Chinese athletes also represented other nations in the XXIX Olympiad. The table tennis team from the USA was composed entirely of Asian players born in China. Germany was also represented by an ethnically Chinese badminton player who lost to none other than a Chinese player from China... I guess, the migration of athletes in search of a better life has had a significant impact on the demographics of the Olympics. It wasn't shocking to see ethnic Russians: Nastia Liukin, the daughter of an Olympic champion from the former USSR, and Alexander Artemev, the son of another Russian champion, now representing the US gymnastics team. Another Russian - Yuri Patrikeev - was a favorite Greco-Roman wrestler from Armenia. On the other hand, the "business of sport", has also moved to a national level. Many athletes shop around to represent countries that can afford to pay more for their participation. Finally, some athletes simply wanted to participate in the Olympic Games in spite of the fact that they were not chosen to represent the home country's team. This was the story of Chris Kaman, an American basketball player from Los Angeles Clippers, who represented Germany

LUCKY NUMBERS IN CHINA

The opening ceremony of XXIX Olympic Games took place on the 08.08.08 (August 8, 2008), at 8 hours and 8 minutes Beijing time. 8 is a lucky number in China, while in Asia, generally, it is used as a symbol of prosperity. The spectacular ceremony, consisting of 15,000 participants, was designed by Chjan Imou, a renowned Chinese director. 76 heads of state were present at the opening ceremony. 302 sets of medals (165 for men, 125 women's, and 10 mixed) in 28 denominations were contested among 11,028 athletes from 204 countries. The Chinese delegation, as a host nation, was the largest one. For the first time athletes from the Marshall Islands, Montenegro and Tuvalu were representing their nations. On the opening day, the national team of Brunei was disqualified for not registering their athletes in due time.







ARMENIAN ATHLETES WON SIX BRONZE MEDALS - STILL A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT FOR OUR SMALL NATION. ARMENIANS COLLECTED MORE MEDALS IN GRECO-ROMAN WRESTLING THAN GREEKS AND ROMANS COMBINED!

even though he has only visited Germany via air transit. The only thing that could be guaranteed is that there wouldn't be any Georgian athletes competing for Russia…

Armenian athletes were no exception to the new practice of representing other countries. Arthur Ayvazian won Gold for Ukraine in shooting (50 m rifle). Armen Vardanyan, also representing Ukraine, won bronze in 66 kg class of Greco-Roman wrestling. Another Armenian, Ara Abrahamian, representing Sweden in Greco-Roman wrestling, made headlines with his protest. He took the bronze medal from his neck during the medal ceremony, stepped down from the podium, dropped it in the middle of the wrestling mat, and then walked off. Abrahamian believed his loss to the eventual gold medalist Minguzzi from Italy was "totally unjustified". Swedish coach Leo Myllari said: "It's all politics." Abrahamian later said: "My friends called me just 20 minutes before the [bronze] competition, begging me to compete. I decided that I had come this far and didn't want to let them down, so I wrestled." A bitter Abrahamian, silver medalist at Athens 2004 who had high hopes of top honors in the 84 kg competition in Beijing, announced he was quitting the sport. He eventually was disqualified and stripped of his bronze medal by the International Olympic Committee for violating the spirit of fair play during the medal ceremony.

For Armenia, represented by 25 athletes, Beijing turned out to be a "bronze" city. Weightlifting, Greco-Roman wrestling and Boxing were the only sports in which Armenians earned medals. In the heavyweight 120 kg category of Greco-Roman wrestling Armenia's Yuri Patrikeev, favored as a finalist at the beginning of the competition, lost to Mijain Lopez from Cuba, but won the bronze medal by defeating Jalmar Sjoberg of Sweden. Roman Amoyan, another Greco-Roman wrestler, won the bronze in the 55 kg class.

FASTER, HIGHER, STRONGER

The first written reference to the Olympic Games in Ancient Greece dates to 776 BC. Yet, it is known that similar athletic events took place even earlier. When the games were taking place, sacred cessation of all wars and hostilities was implemented (though it was often broken, and unfortunately even these XXIX Olympic Games were darken by the events in Georgia). In 394 AD the games were banned by the Roman Emperor Theodosius I, as a remanence of Paganism.

The idea of reviving this great tradition came to the celebrated French educator and social activist Baron Pierre de Coubertin. By his initiative, the first International Olympic Games took place in 1896 in Athens, the country of their historic origin. He organized the International Olympic Committee and became its first president.



Weightlifters Gevorg Davtyan, Tigran Gevorg Martirosyan, and Tigran Varban Martirosyan won their bronze medals in 77 kg, 69 kg, and 85 kg categories respectively. Finally, boxer Hrachik Javakhyan won the bronze in light weight 60 kg category.

Six bronze medals should still be considered a great achievement for our small nation. Considering the fact that countries much larger in size and population were not able to achieve even that much! Armenians won more medals in Greco-Roman wrestling than Greeks and Romans combined! Finally, Armenia collected more medals than some of the major nations known for strong sport ing traditions, such as Switzerland, Bulgaria, Portugal, Argentina, and Croatia, to name just a few! Nevertheless, I hope that the XXX Olympic Games in London will be more successful and turn "Golden" for Armenian athletes representing our proud nation. ■

JOIN THE YEREVAN MAGAZINE CLUB
OR GET YOUR SUBSCRIBTION FOR ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN VERSIONS AT

www.yerevanMAGAZINE.com
WEBSITE WITH AN ACCENT

WHETHER REACQUAINTING WITH YOUR OWN MOTHERLAND OR SIMPLY CURIOUS ABOUT ITS RICH CULTURE, BOURGEONING ECONOMY AND EXCITING TRENDS, WE WELCOME YOU TO CLICK YOUR WAY INTO OUR EVER-EXPANDING LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS AND START ENJOYING CONTENT THAT IS AS RICH AS ITS TRADITIONS AND AS FLAVORFUL AS ITS CUISINE. **YEREVANMAGAZINE.COM** – IT'S A PLEASURE TO HAVE YOU!





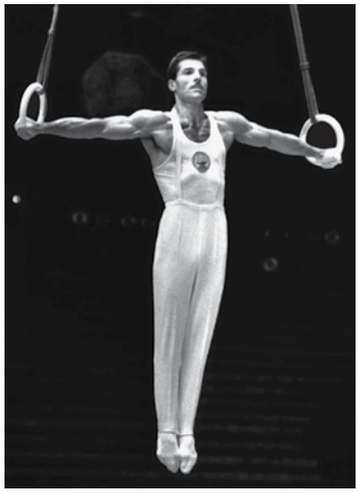
Armenian Olympians

"The Olympic movement is a…religion, where there is no injustice of caste, of race, of family, or wealth," once said Avery Brundage, the former President of the International Olympic Committee. Many athletes of our relatively small nation were able to compete and win in these historically most prestigious athletic events, the Olympic Games. Our top ten list is dedicated to the athletes who made a difference in the "Armenian Chapter" of the Olympic history.



Trdat III, King of Armenia – the first known Armenian to achieve victory in the Ancient Olympic Games in Greece. Trdat, from the Armenian family Arshakuni, won in wrestling during the Ancient Olympic Games. In 286 A.D., he became the King of Armenia and ruled the country for 56 years. Armenian historians Movses Khorenatsi and Aghatangeghos, who was Trdat's secretary, wrote in detail about his life and his Olympic achievements.

Albert Azaryan, gymnastics, Melbourne 1956, Rome 1960. Four Olympic medals: 3 gold and 1 silver. Twice Albert Azaryan has won gold for still rings exercises, and once he has earned gold in the team competition as a member of the USSR's men's gymnastics team. Albert Azaryan became a sports legend for creating the extremely difficult still rings move called the "Olympic Cross." This move is also known as the "Azaryan Cross." Another still rings element, the "Azaryan Roll," is named after Albert and is officially recognized in the International Gymnastics Federation Code of Points. The enthusiastic press wrote about Albert's performance, "On that famous day in 1956, the Australian spectators leapt from their seats as one to acclaim a Soviet gymnast of Armenian origin who had just achieved an act of gymnastic prowess never before seen. Suspended from the rings, Albert Azaryan, rose slowly into the air, separating his powerful arms with ease, a smile on his face, and all of a sudden performed that famous cross."



Hal Prieste (Haig Kechichian), diving (10m platform). Bronze – **1920, 7th Olympiad, Antwerp** – The first Modern Olympics Armenian medal winner was a diver, a member of the US national team who earned a **bronze medal** in the 10m platform event. Hal (Haig) Prieste was born in Fresno, California on November 23, 1896; the same year in which the Modern Olympics began. His diving medal came from a 3rd place finish behind his teammate Clarence Pinkston and Erik Adlerz of Sweden. Later in his life Hal Prieste was America's oldest Olympian and the oldest surviving Olympic medal winner in the world. He died on April 19, 2001 at a nursing home in Camden, N.J. at the age of 104.

Hrant Shahinian (Grant Shaginian), gymnastics – the first Armenian gold medalist in **Modern Olympic Games,** he won 2 gold and 2 silver medals for the Soviet Armenia, representing USSR, in **1952 in Helsinki, Finland**. The experts unanimously agreed that Hrant Shahinian was unique among the competitors for its elegance in execution.

At the age of eighteen Hrant volunteered for the Soviet Army to fight against the Nazis. Inspite of his injuries, he was still able to become the first Armenian to win gold in the Modern Olympics. Shahinian's sports achievements allowed him to open the first gymnastics school in the Soviet Armenia. The International Olympic Committee granted Hrant Shahinian a rare and honorable official title of the "Knight of Sports."





Vladimir Yengibarian – Melbourne 1956 – Olympic Gold Medal in boxing.

Vladimir Yengibarian is the greatest Armenian boxer. He dedicated fifteen years of his life to boxing and won 172 out of 185 fights. His first and the main opponent in Olympic games in Melbourne was Drogash, who previously defeated Yengibarian in European Championship of 1955 in Berlin, Germany. Vladimir defeated him and won all of the subsequent fights to become the Olympic Champion. His triumph brought the first great victory to the Soviet boxing team. His technique was often compared to the boxing style of the great Joe Louis. Three times in his career (1953, 1957, 1959) Vladimir Yengibarian won the European Championships.

Yuri Vardanian, weightlifting – Moscow 1980, gold medal. His combined result in two exercises (177.5, 222.5) added up to the incredible total of 400kg. That particular result elevated him to the rank of member of the "Weightlifting Hall of Fame." It is important to note that when Vardanian lifted the 400 kg total, he was taking part in the 82.5 kg category with a bodyweight of 81.70 kg. As long as this category survived (it was eliminated from competition in 1992) no athlete came close to the 400 kg mark. The seven-time World Champion's record still stands, along with 42 other world records in weightlifting.





Andre Agassi –Olympic Gold winner in tennis, 1996 Atlanta games. The son of an Olympic boxer of Armenian descent from Iran, Andre Agassi began playing tennis at the age of three, with a racket taped to his hand. He turned professional when he was sixteen years old. His breakthrough came when he won at Wimbledon in 1992. Agassi earned 57 singles tournament championships, including eight Grand Slam events, his most recent being the 2003 Australian Open. In 1996, Agassi took time off from his professional career to represent the United States at the Atlanta Olympics. He beat Sergi Bruguera of Spain in the finals to add the Olympic title to his many other achievements. He is married to fellow Olympic tennis champion, Steffi Graf.

Sirvard Emirzian, High Board Diving, (3m springboard) 1980 Moscow Olympics, silver. The only Armenian woman to win an Olympic medal representing the Soviet Armenia. This slim athletic girl was only eighteen when she stepped up to the Olympic pedestal to stand one step higher than her teammate, the bronze medal winner, Liana Tsotadze from Georgia. Sirvard did everything her own way – she was the one and only Armenian woman to win the USSR championships (1979-1981) in diving and to be included in the USSR Diving Olympic Team. Hrant Shahinian's famous quote is very much applicable to Sirvard, "They, Armenian athletes, had to outdo their opponents by several notches for a shot at being accepted into any collective Soviet team. But those difficulties notwithstanding, ninety percent of Armenian athletes in Soviet Olympic teams came back with medals." Sirvard Emirzian presently lives in the U.S.





Karina Aznavourian, fencing, Atlanta 1996 – bronze, Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004 (épée, **team gold, Russia**), the only Armenian woman to win two Olympic gold medals and participate in three Olympic Games. Born and raised in Baku, Azerbaijan, Karina and her family fled to Moscow during the persecutions of Armenians in 1991. After the Olympic Games in Atlanta she suffered a knee injury but soon recovered and won two more epee gold medals as a member of the Russian team in the next two Olympic Games. Presently, she continues her graduate education in International Diplomacy in Moscow, Russia.



Armen Nazaryan, Greco-Roman wrestling – won gold medals in three Olympic games: **Atlanta 1996, Sydney 2000, Athens 2004**, the longest participation record among Armenian Olympians. Wrestler Armen Nazaryan won the first Olympic gold medal for Armenia when he took the top spot in the lightweight category. On his way to winning the gold medal, Nazaryan, 22, defeated Samuel Danielian, (an Armenian representing Russia), in the quarter finals, and earlier, Alfred Ter Mkrtichian (an Armenian from Germany), and Rouslan Vartanov (of Armenian descent, from Lithuania). Nazaryan was European champion in 1994 and 1995, and took second place at the World Championships in 1995.



Victoria «Vicki» Movsessian, USA, ice hockey, gold in 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics – the only Armenian to win gold in the Winter Olympics. The resident of Concord, Massachusetts, was a relative veteran of the US Women's Hockey Olympic team at age 26. However, her physical strength and speed made her one of the key players of her team.

These eleven athletes represent just a small part of the long list of the Armenian Olympic medalists and competitors from across the globe. Among the other Armenian Olympic Gold winners are: 1956, Melbourne Olympics – **Nikita Simonian** (USSR Soccer Team); 1972, Munich, 1976, Montreal – **Norayr Nourikian** (weightlifting); Moscow, 1980 – **Edward Azarian** (gymnastics), **Yuri Sargsian** (weightlifting), **Khoren Hovannisian** (soccer); 1988, Seoul – **Ogsen Mirzoian** (weightlifting), **Levon Julfalakian** (wrestling); 1992, Barcelona – **Israel Melitosian** (weightlifting), **Mnatsagan Iskantarian** (Greco-Roman wrestling), **Hrachia Bedikian** (sharpshooting); 2000, Sydney – **Pavel Soukossian** (handball, Russia). This list would be much longer, if we included also the numerous silver and bronze medalists, who were often a fraction of a second, a step, or a wink of fortune behind the gold medalists. Our Olympians are role models for the young generation. Their determination, achievements, and expertise in their particular disciplines allowed the establishment and continuation of sporting traditions in Armenia.









A Harvest of Apricots

The capital of Armenia hosted the "Golden Apricot" Fifth Annual Yerevan International Film Festival. Russian press already calls it the "new Mecca of independent movies". This year the commission of admissions received an unprecedented number of entries: more than 450 films from 65 countries. 166 films participated in three competitions: best feature film, documentaries, and "Armenian Panorama", where Armenian directors from all over the world participated. The festival started with Roman Balayan's *"Heavenly Birds"* and ended with Atom Egoyan's *"Adoration"*. **Anna Melikyan's *"The Mermaid"* (Russia) received the top prize in the Best Feature Film nomination**. Among documentaries, Meira Asher's *"Women See Lots of Things"* (Netherlands) received the Golden Apricot, while Eric Nazarian's *"Blue Hour"* won in the "American Panorama" nomination (Eric also received the Ecumenical Jury award). The FIPRESCI jury award was given to the Turkish film *"My Marlon and Brando"* (director Huseyin Karabey). The festival allowed Armenians in Armenia to find out more about the best of modern European and world cinema. There was also a special program devoted to the the cult Italian director of *"Zabriskie Point"*, *"Eclipse"* and *"Identification of a Woman"*, Michelangelo Antonioni.

Twenty-six year old Mher from Moscow was awarded the audience sympathy award, *The Diamond Wave*, at the international competition for young pop-musicians The New Wave.



Wings of a Falcon

"Baze 2008", an annual international summer camp took place in the Armenian vacation town of Jermuk. For a few years now, this program has been bringing together young Armenians from all over the world. **This year "Baze" hosted over 650 Armenians from 22 countries**. Athletic competitions, hiking trips, and cultural discussions were part of the program. One of the main events of this year's "Baze" was the simultaneous Christening of 50 young Armenians at the Surb Gayane Church in Holy Echmiadzin.

Wo/Men in Politics

For a long time golfers kept one rule sacred: gentlemen only, ladies forbidden. It seems that Armenian politicians follow the same rule; women are a rarity in the Armenian political arena. The BRITISH COUNCIL of Armenia decided to get rid of this "gentlemen only" stereotype both in golf and in politics. **The Wo/Man in Politics project will span two years, during which Armenian women that want to get into politics will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of trainings and discussions**. The project began with a game of golf at the Ararat Valley Country Club just outside of Yerevan. Waiting to move from one hole to the other, the women discussed the political problems of the country and voiced their ideas on overcoming the obstacles.



Friends of Yerevan

The "Barekamutyun" (Friendship) State Choreographic Ensemble of Armenia (artistic director – Norayr Meghrabyan) celebrated its 20th anniversary. Armenia's President presented it with the well-deserved title of "Honored Ensemble of the Republic". **The dancers demonstrated excellent technique as they performed Armenian, Georgian, Russian, Moldavian, Bulgarian, Jewish, Indian, Arab, and Italian dances to uplifting, energetic music**, classic and modern choreographed miniatures to the music of Khachaturian, Komitas, Sayat-Nova, Alan Hovhaness, Elton John, etc. And all that is not even one tenth of the entire repertoire of the ensemble. Four generations of "Barekamutyun" dancers participated in the jubilee. In addition, young dancers from famous European groups, Arsen Meghrabyan (John Niemeyer's Hamburg Ballet) and Vahe Martirosyan (Heinz Spoerli's Zurich Ballet) came to take part in the performances.





Golden Graz

Armenian choir "Avetis" won three gold medals at the 5th World Choir Games in Graz 2008. The musical competition took place in July in the old Austrian town of Graz, the capital of Steiemark Province. Over 440 choirs from 93 countries participated in the games. **The Armenian choir was undefeated in gospel & spiritual, mixed, and modern choral music**. Members of "Avetis" performed the works of Komitas, Edgar Hovhannisyan, Tigran Mansuryan, and others. Armenian classical and spiritual music seemed to be made for Graz, a town with excellently preserved medieval streets and closed yards, completely unlike imperial Vienna.



Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

For almost two years the position of the head of the United States Diplomatic Mission in Armenia remained vacant, following the recall of John Evans after he publicly confirmed the genocide of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey. Richard Hoagland's nomination twice failed in the Senate because of his denial of the Armenian Genocide; senator Robert Menendez vetoed the nominations both times. **On August 1st, 2008 the United States Senate approved the new nominee for the position of US ambassador in Armenia, Marie Yovanovitch**. She described the Armenian Genocide as "mass killings and forced deportation of half-a-million Armenians based on ethnic origin during the last years of the Ottoman Empire" during the Senate hearings. Yovanovitch clearly indicated that she is in line with the White House on this issue, calling the Genocide "one of the greatest tragedies of the 20th century". Marie has worked for United States diplomatic missions in Somali, United Kingdom and Canada. From 1998 to 2000 Yovanovitch was the Assistant Director at the State Department's Russia Desk. From 2001 to 2004 she worked as the Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine. Before her assignment to Armenia, Yovanovitch headed the US embassy in Kyrgyzstan.



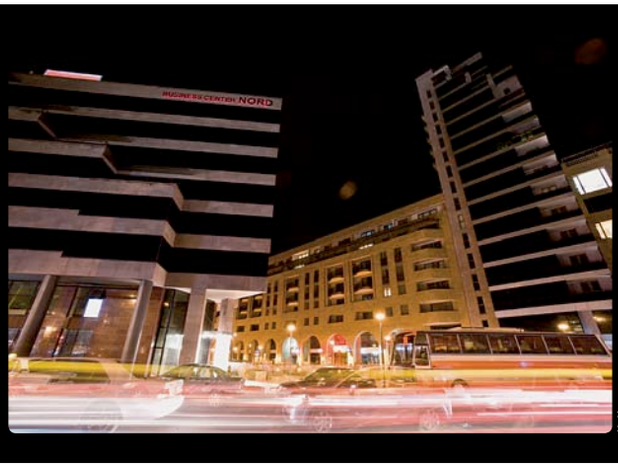
SHOW ROOM +39 02 76023614

BILANCIONI

GALLERY GIMENEI - BALSHAYA YAKIMANKA, 22 - MOSCOW


VIVAcell
NORD




NORD







Hayk Manukyan

An Architect's Dream

In the city at the foothills of Mount Ararat, a prospect connects Yerevan's Republican and Theatre squares. The idea of creating it was part of architect Alexander Tamanyan's grand plan of reconstructing Erivan back in the 1920s.The architect's dream was brought to life very recently. The Northern Prospect was completed in November of 2007. Now the capital's residents and guests fill the street as they walk between the magnificent buildings – at once modern and so very Armenian.



MARK GERAGOS: REWRITING SAROYAN

For most people in the US with a television set who watch news programs, ***Mark Geragos*** *needs no introduction: he is one of the most prominent lawyers in this country; over the past several years he became the face of the Armenian community in many charity organizations, hosting the Armenian Fund Telethon and presiding over the Board of the Armenian Bone Marrow Registry. He has recently directed his efforts on behalf of Armenians by trying to establish ties between the Californian and Armenian governments. My conversation with Mr. Geragos revealed his family's past and its connection to who he is now.*

interview : **LIANNA ZAKHARIAN**
photo : **LORI DORMAN, LIKA BRUTYAN**

Tell me about your family. If you can, start with your grandparents.

My grandparents from both sides emigrated from Turkey. My maternal grandparents were from Aintab. They fled from the Genocide and came to live in Fresno, where my mother was born. While living in a Turkish orphanage during the Genocide, my father's mother escaped and came to live in Chicago. There she met my grandfather and married him. Sadly, my grandfather died when he was quite young during the Great Depression. My grandmother remarried. Her second husband, Aram, was also an Armenian man, and became the grandfather that I knew. They came to California in the late forties – early fifties. I have a certain special connection to Downtown Los Angeles. My father met my mother here, and I, myself, was born here in the city. Furthermore, my office is in Downtown LA. I married Paulette, a strikingly beautiful all-natural Armenian woman, and with her, bore two amazing children, Teny and Jake. My wife and these children are my heart and soul.

How was it - growing up in La Cañada?

I grew up in La Cañada. I was raised as a "shish-kebab" Armenian, which means that I ate shish-kebab, but that I understood just a little bit of Armenian. I used to go to Armenian Sunday school, and once in a while I would go to an Armenian summer camp. That was my connection to the Armenian community of my childhood.

How has our community changed since you were a child?

It has changed dramatically. In fact, when I was growing up in La Cañada I was a "token" Armenian. The Marootian family was there, but that was it. And most people thought, even until recently, that I am Greek, because of my last name. When my grandfather came over to Ellis Island somebody told him, "Drop the –ian, it will make a better American out of you." But it turns out that now most people think I am Greek and not Armenian because of the name change at Ellis Island. Over the past century, several waves of Armenians have immigrated to the States. The first wave came when, after the fall of the Shah, the Persian-Armenians arrived. They had characteristics of the Persian culture. Then the next wave came after the war in Beirut, Lebanon, so the Lebanese-Armenians came over. I think, the most noticeable change has been since the Armenians from Armenia arrived. This last flow of Armenian immigrants has dramatically changed the community. I think for the better. It is interesting to observe how each of these groups has assimilated so quickly. First, the Persian-Armenians assimilated, and then they looked down on the Lebanese-Armenians. Then the Hayastantsi came over and the Beirutsis looked down on them. So I am waiting to see who will be next. Who are the Hayastantsi going to look down on?

Later you went to Haverford College to study theology. Why theology?

I studied theology, sociology, and anthropology. I was very close to entering the priesthood. In my junior and senior years I had a professor whose courses I loved. The subject was the philosophy of religion, and I couldn't get enough of it. I was particularly fascinated by 19th century German theological thought, protestant thought. Later this brilliant professor got a deanship at Harvard and Yale Divinity School. Because of him, I was seriously considering going into theology. Serbazan Vache Hovsepian talked me out of it. He said that we had enough priests, and he thought that it would be better for me to go to law school. I had been an altar boy in the Armenian churches, as I was growing up, but it was the philosophy of religion that I loved. It was a fascinating area.

You said once that you were programmed to work in the courtroom. It seems like a huge shift from theology.

My father is a prosecutor. As I was growing up, during my summer vacations I would follow him around from courtroom to courtroom starting from around the age of five or six. I thought at that time, "This is the greatest job in the world. All he does - he goes in, he talks, and people pay him money." I couldn't believe that you could make a living out of talking and just arguing, "This is fantastic," I thought. And the law seemed like the only side-track that I could take out of the priesthood.

Susan McDougal was kept in jail on charges of obstruction of justice for refusing to testify before the grand jury about the Arkansas real estate financial operations of Bill and Hillary Clinton. Nobody else wanted to take that case, how did you decide to get involved?

…and nobody thought you could win it. But inspite that it was thought to be an "unwinnable" case, we won not only here in LA, but we also won in Arkansas. All this was achieved back-to-back, within a year.

Did you experience any political pressure at that time?

There was quite a bit of that - I was threatened, I was put on "enemy's lists", and things of that nature. It was pretty tumultuous time. One of the interesting things about that is that it gave me a taste of how the public, depending of who you represent, can be really with you or against you. And that case really divided the law along the lines of Democrats versus Republicans. It was highly contested, I would call it "a political show-trial."

You said once that your father supported your decision in taking this very politically charged case.

He did, because he thought that Susan is a remarkable woman, which she is. He thought that what was happening to her was an outrage. I told him, "I really want to do this. Are you OK with that?" And he said, "Yes." So I said, "I am going to go for my little tangent, and I'll see you… in a couple of years."

Was the Susan McDougal case a turning point in your career?

Yes, absolutely. I would like to think that I worked really hard and inherited my father's practice, but we were pretty much a local firm, a well-known, but essentially local firm. That case catapulted me to national and international levels. Certainly, nobody had asked me to be on TV before that case. Once that case started,

I STUDIED THEOLOGY, SOCIOLOGY, AND ANTHROPOLOGY. I WAS VERY CLOSE TO ENTERING THE PRIESTHOOD.

MARK J. GERAGOS

As the Principal in the 14-lawyer firm of Geragos & Geragos, Mark Geragos has represented some of the most prominent figures in the world. Geragos confirmed his national reputation as a trial lawyer with back-to-back State and Federal Court jury trial acquittals for renowned Whitewater figure Susan McDougal, the former business partner of former President Bill Clinton. Mr. Geragos was one of the lead lawyers in a pair of groundbreaking Federal Class Action Lawsuits against New York Life Insurance and AXA Corporation for insurance policies issued in the early 20th century during the time of the Turkish genocide of over 1.5 million Armenians. Mr. Geragos was awarded the prestigious California Lawyer of the Year award in Civil Litigation. He has also been named «Trial Lawyer of The Year» by the Los Angeles Criminal Courts Bar Association, making him one of only two lawyers ever named Lawyer of the Year in both the Criminal and Civil arenas. California Law Business Magazine named Mark, "One of the 100 Most Influential Attorneys in California," three years in a row and he has been repeatedly voted by his peers as one of Los Angeles' Superlawyers.

Mr. Geragos' client list has included former Congressman Gary Condit, brother to Pres. Bill Clinton Roger Clinton, Academy award-winning actress Winona Ryder, pop star Michael Jackson, and hip-hop star Nate Dogg. This year, he won dismissal of prostitution charges against the internationally renown James Bond movie director Lee Tamahori. Mr. Geragos has regularly appeared as both guest and legal commentator on "Good Morning America," "Dateline NBC," "Larry King Live," "Greta Van Susteren's On the Record," "60 minutes" and "48 hours."



which was about fifteen years ago, I became a regular commentator on legal issues. After that it just snowballed.

Thus you became a celebrity lawyer. You defended in court Michael Jackson, Winona Rider, and Lee Tamahori. You were probably invited to a lot of glamorous events.

I don't know about that term. I have so many misgivings about that, people always call me a "celebrity lawyer", because I have represented celebrities, but the vast majority of my clients are not celebrities. I can't tell you how many Hollywood parties I have attended and still attend. Sometimes I look around and I can't imagine what am I doing there. But I have represented some of these people: movie directors, TV stars, Oscar-winning actresses. One of my clients was Lee Tamahori, the director of "Die Another Day", a movie that I like. After representing him, I went and bought that James Bond car, an Aston Martin.

The class action suit against New York Life Insurance was successful. It won $20 million for heirs of the Armenian Genocide victims. Lead plaintiff in the case of Marootian, et al. v. New York Life, Martin Marootian received the largest payout from the case, $250,000. Other Armenian Genocide heirs demanded their rights against a French firm, AXA, and two German companies, Deutschebank and Viktoria. How did you get involved in the New York Life case?

It began when Vartges Yeghiayan came to me and Rita, his wife, called my mother, and between the two of them I got involved. That was a very important case for us, because nobody had ever done it before. It was huge in terms of setting the bar - twenty million dollars. The twenty million – it was important that we get that amount. Before that case, all the litigation over the Holocaust did not really get anywhere in the courtroom, the governments were doing something, but not in litigation cases. We wanted to show that we can get somewhere.

The Japanese after World War II, Mexican migrant farm workers tried, but did not get anywhere in the courtroom. This was the first class action litigation of its kind, and then we leveraged it in the AXA case. We went to do research on it, and while we were in Paris, we found this card which had the name of Bogos Geragosian. I called my father and asked, "Could he be related to us?" My father said, "Mark, you are an idiot. My name is Paul, which is Bogos in Armenian. Who do you think I was named after? That was my uncle Bogos Geragosian."

It was very surprising to me that such a long time ago so many people back in Turkey actually bought life-insurance policies from the American companies.

The most surprising fact about this case is that this was the oldest cause of action. People bought policies back in 1914 and the litigation was settled in 2001. In that sense, it was the oldest case in American history, ever. It is amazing to see these policies. As I looked at these policies, they listed dates that the premiums were paid, mostly in gold coins. Well, you could see that the premium stopped being paid in each village roughly on or around the same date. So one could track the Genocide by the policy cards and see how the Turks progressed in wiping people out, village by village, merely by observing the dates when people stopped paying their insurance premiums. It was the most heart-breaking thing to see. Looking at the card, one could see the name of the insured: the father, the wife, and the kids, what he did for living, where he was from. We noticed that thirty to forty percent of these people did not make a single claim, because their entire families were wiped out.

That was powerful factual evidence. Do you think that these cases had an impact on the process of the official recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the U.S. Congress?

I think it was important. The fact that two major international corporations have paid so far roughly thirty-seven and a half million dollars, obviously affirms Genocide as a fact. Nobody would pay thirty-seven million dollars otherwise. Currently, we are in litigation process

with the Deutsche Bank. I have just returned from conducting depositions; clearly, they had depositors who were Armenians. It was called "depos", which was a pre-cursor to the safety deposit box. All the stuff that was looted, two to three million marks back then, is worth a lot of money today.

Now, they say that going with you on a trial is "a full contact sport". Is it a calculated strategy, or you do you just have the right sort of temperament for trial work?

I know; there is a long list of DA's who would say that. I would say that I am volatile, emotional, and passionate. As soon as I lose that passion in the courtroom, I will be done going to the courtroom. If I am going into a trial, I believe in my client. If I am not going to be passionate about it, then they need a different lawyer. If somebody is attacking my client, I am going to attack back. I am like a mother bear with its baby cub, "don't get near me, cause I will strike out."

You are involved in many charitable and community organizations. The Armenian Bone Marrow Registry is on its way to become a major life saving organization. Can you tell us more about it.

I am the Chairman of the Board of the Armenian Bone Marrow Registry. I helped to establish it back in 2001. I had a client whose daughter contracted leukemia. I discovered much to my surprise, that the Armenians have their own DNA. This is due to the fact that we have been around for so long. You couldn't really find a match through traditional bone marrow registries, because the markers of Armenian DNA are so different. We have the most beautiful women in the world, and there is a reason for that. So we set out as our goal to have ten thousand people registered in our registry. I am happy to say that now we have over fifteen thousand registered donors. I am also happy to say that recently I went to Armenia to open a Stem-cell Harvesting Center in Yerevan. We have already made many matches that worked perfectly, which brought happiness to many families.

You also helped us to raise many millions of dollars on Thanksgiving during the Telethon.

I do it every year. Thanksgiving is a good time for raising money for a meaningful cause. I think, it is important that the Armenian Fund becomes established, and that the Telethon becomes established as a place to tune in on Thanksgiving Day. We should all contribute to our common cause. I think it should be an institution.

What is your vision of the future of the Armenian Republic?

Armenia needs foreign investments. The Disapora needs to support Armenia. As good as the Armenian Fund is, when we started the Armenia Fund, (and I wasn't even there yet) we raised three-to-six million dollars. And the budget for Armenia as a nation was three-to-six million dollars. When I was there the last time, the President was saying that their budget is now three billion, so the Diaspora needs to step up. We have a wonderful thing, a country of our own, but we also have an economic engine that needs to be fed and fuelled. That needs to be done.



And how do you see that happening?

People from the Diaspora are starting to make Armenia their destination annually. I think they should go there, spend their money, buy property, invest in Armenia, invest in the infrastructure, donate to the villages, donate to industry, educational institutions, etc. and, particularly, invest in Armenian banks. Investing in the economy and these banks will help the country support itself and promote an increase in its economic growth rate. Investing in Armenian banks gives resources to lenders who turn around and loan the money back out to the locals. An economy cancot grow without investments, and these investments will serve not only to support the status quo economy, but also to promote an increase in the economy's per annum growth rate. I always compare the Armenian community to the Jewish community. The Jewish community holds Israel in a special light, and rightfully so, because it's their "never again", so to speak. We, Armenians, should be the same way.



How often do you visit Armenia?
I just went there last month, and I am planning to go again in two months. I went for the Armenian Fund, and now I will go for the opening of the Stem Cell Harvesting Center. Next time, I will go with a special mission, I will not go into details, but I am trying to foster a connection between California and Yerevan.

What do you think of Yerevan Magazine?
It is a real glamour magazine, which is very appropriate. During my last visit to Yerevan, I was sitting in front of Yerevan Hotel and watching all these women go by, I thought that they really look very glamorous, more so than in any city that I have ever seen. And dressed up with such a taste. So, I think we need this kind of a magazine, that makes us, Armenians, feel better about ourselves.

As I thanked Mr. Geragos for the interview, he pointed to a poster on the wall, "Now let me show you something interesting here."

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE ARMENIAN FUND BECOMES ESTABLISHED. WE SHOULD ALL CONTRIBUTE TO OUR COMMON CAUSE.

The poster depicted William Saroyan's profile and Mr. Geragos' and my own favorite quote from Saroyan:

"I should like to see any power of the world destroy this race; this small tribe of unimportant people whose history is ended, whose wars have all been fought and lost, whose structures have crumbled, whose literature is unread, whose music is unheard, whose prayers are no longer uttered. Go ahead, destroy this race. Let us say that it is again 1915; there is war in the world. Destroy Armenia. See if you can do it. Send them from their homes into the desert. Let them have neither bread nor water. Burn their houses and their churches. See if they will not live again. See if they will not laugh again. See if you can stop them from mocking the big ideas of the world. Go ahead, try to destroy them."

And then Mark continued, "But do you know what's interesting. All of it is not true anymore. Our history has not ended, our wars are not lost, we build our wonderful houses wherever we are, our music is again heard. We have System of a Down, our books are read, we have the *Black Dog of Fate* by Peter Balakian and we have Saroyan. I think, if Saroyan lived today, he would have to come up with something else. I look at it every day, it is a great motivational force for me."

"Yes,", I thought to myself as we parted company, "It is truly fascinating to witness that statement "re-written" Mark Geragos's style." ■

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE/NEW YORK LIFE/AXA INSURANCE CLASS ACTION
Armenians living in Turkey before the 1915 Armenian Genocide purchased insurance policies from New York Life Insurance Company. The initiator of the case Vartges Yeghiayan and one of the main plaintiffs, Martin Marootian, were represented by Mark Geragos and a team of lawyers. As a result New York Life must secure a $20 million class-action settlement to be distributed to Armenian charities and beneficiaries of the original insurance policies. This case, the first that successfully enabled the families of victims of a Genocide to collect on insurance claims, brought international attention to the existence of the Armenian Genocide, which neither the United States nor Turkish governments recognize. It is potentially the oldest case in U.S. history-spanning 89 years from the date of loss to restitution. A related lawsuit, against AXA Konzern AG, was also recently settled for $17.5 million. Pending decisions include those for class-action lawsuits against Deutsche Bank and Dresdner Bank.

MASERATI

EXCELLENCE THROUGH PASSION

"Exotic and Glamorous, Inspiringly Original and Deliciously Unconventional."

—Motor Trend



INTRODUCING THE MASERATI GRANTURISMO — THE FIRST LIMITED-PRODUCTION CAR THAT YOU'LL WANT TO DRIVE EVERY DAY.

The world's first limited-production GT — penned in 1947 by legendary designer Pinin Farina — wore a Maserati trident. Six decades later, the same trident badge is borne by a worthy successor called GranTurismo. This styling masterpiece — once again by Pininfarina — raises the bar for excitement. With its exclusive Ferrari-engineered 405 hp V8, seating for four adults and produced in limited numbers, it combines performance, beauty and exclusivity in a package that will leave onlookers breathless and drivers spoiled for anything less. RSVP now to commission your own GranTurismo, priced from $113,750.* Visit our award-winning website to specify your own GranTurismo and locate your local authorized Maserati dealer: maseratiamerica.com

MASERATI OF PASADENA • (800) 711-4587

300 SOUTH FAIR OAKS AVENUE • PASADENA, CA 91105

WWW.MASERATIPASADENA.COM

*MSRP includes gas guzzler tax, dealer prep and transportation. Dealer price of vehicles may vary. ©2008 Maserati North America. All rights reserved. Maserati and the Trident logo are registered trademarks of Maserati SpA.



The Wild COLORS of Success

Since the 1970's flamboyant designer Alek Adorian has been dressing stars in London and Hollywood. His unconventional style and unique approach have attracted big names like Elton John, Madonna, and Will Smith. He has added color and flare to the Hollywood fashion scene.

interview : AZZIE MEKHITARIAN
photo : CORBIS





I did not know what to expect from my meeting with L.A. fashion designer Alek Adorian, but the minute I saw him I was sure that that this was not going to be a typical interview. Alek Adorian is a multi-dimensional character, who since his arrival in L.A. in 1985, has attracted many high profile celebrities to his Melrose Avenue studio. He does not exactly fit the stereotypical image of a well known designer. In fact, he embodies a unique combination of the eccentric and traditional, whose artistic inclinations have lead to extravagant experiments that, by various twists of fate, have brought success to his door. He has designed clothes for such high profile clients as Elton John, Michael Jackson, Will Smith, Madonna, Eva Longoria, Carmen Electra, Paulina Rubio, Jennifer Lopez, Prince and the list goes on and on. Yet his fashion sense does not really correspond with the trends of the moment, nor does it resemble anything from the runways of Paris, Milan or New York. Alek Adorian is in a class of his own. In fact, it is impossible to label either Alek or his particular style. To truly grasp the effect Alek can have, one has to have the opportunity to meet him and see his work. I had a chance to sit down with Alek and ask him a few question.

Your path to the world of design was very unconventional. What lead you to a career in fashion?

Fashion is my passion. I breathe, eat and sleep fashion. I was always surrounded by beautiful fabrics, and I grew up seeing my mother make beautiful things from these very colorful and exotic fabrics. In my 20's I got into boxing and was very successful. I became a middle weight champion. Then I got into dancing and ended up moving to London, and there I earned many dance competition awards and became a disco champion. Because I had such a unique way of dancing, and because my body was different, none of the dance costumes fit me very well, so I started making my own costumes. People noticed my outfits and asked me where I bought them. So I started making costumes for others and then I opened Ace of Diamonds, my shop in London. My first big client was Elton John.



Above:
Alek Adorian with Latoya Jackson

Below:
Alek making his final changes to Paulina Rubio's dress.



How did you end up in Los Angeles?

My mother lived in Connecticut, so I had been to America many times but I didn't like it at all. One day this Hollywood producer came into my London studio and said, "Alek you belong in Hollywood." I don't even remember her name anymore, but the thought stayed in my mind. I had a cousin in the San Fernando Valley, so I came to California. I hated it. There was nothing that excited me, I thought this is not for me; there is no fashion in California. But then one day, my cousin took me to Melrose, and I knew I had found my place. Melrose had a very exciting fashion scene, and I knew that I could fit into this crazy world. I opened a studio on Melrose, and began designing and making clothes. Famous people started coming to my studio. One day this huge security guy came to my front door and from

behind him out came this tiny man. It was Prince; he bought so many outfits from me that day. I started designing for some shows. I designed for movies like *Men in Black* and music videos, like the one for Madonna. I designed dresses for the 2007 Latin ALMA Awards show. I have dressed many celebrities since I first came to LA.

Do you find a big difference in working with celebrities and regular clients?

No. I treat all of my clients the same way. Celebrity or not, before I start making an outfit I ask them about the event they are going to attend, who is going to be there and other questions like that. I then treat the client like a canvas and begin the creative process. The only difference is that some people want to be involved in every step of the creative process. I cannot work like that. It is like questioning an artist between brush strokes. I need to be given my creative space, and then I will give them the most beautiful outfit, one that will not go out of fashion, one that will fit them perfectly.

What is next in your career? What are your plans for the coming year?

The past years have been so incredibly busy with the Latin Music Awards and other shows that I have worked on. I think I will take a few months off and then begin full force again. I am thinking about re-connecting with my Armenian roots and maybe opening up a studio in Glendale. I think it is really important to make every one of my clients feel like a celebrity for a day, so I would really like to work on something in this area: a studio, or something that would cater to Armenian and Iranian clients and their specific desires. I am thinking about adding this new aspect to my business. There is nothing like that in Glendale and I really think that people in Glendale and the surrounding areas are in need of this kind of place. I think it is really important for people to feel that they too are important, and they too deserve to be treated like celebrities. I would like to brng this element of luxury to my new studio. I think people in this area would appreciate the kind of service and care that I bring to my designs. It is important that people feel they are special and the clothes they wear reflect who they are and what they want others to see in them.



Above:
Alek Adorian with Eva Longoria

Below:
Carmen Electra at the 2007 ALMA awards wearing a dress designed by Alek Adorian

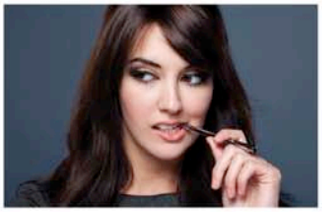


How has your Armenian-Iranian heritage influenced your designs?

Colors! I love colors. Armenia has beautiful colors - deep, rich natural colors. Iran also has incredible colors. While I was growing up I was surrounded by naturally colored fabrics that were dyed using the flowers of the land, naturally pigmented. So I can say that the colors in my designs are influenced by the colors of my childhood. ■








PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY
FOR YOUR ADVERTISING,
PORTFOLIO AND SPECIAL EVENTS

CALL 1 (800) 406-7906, www.yerevanstudio.com


PARIS
CAVIAR

The King of Caviar

Petrossian Company- the largest distributor of the Russian sturgeon caviar in France and in the U.S. – controls more than 15% of the global market. The general manager, Armen Petrossian, a Frenchman of an Armenian descent fondly known as "the King of Caviar," talks with us about the specifics of his business.

interview : **ANNA SARKISIAN**
photo : **ARNOS MARTIROSIAN**





For centuries caviar was considered a Russian product, and yet today there is talk of French, Chinese, American, and even Israeli caviar. What do you think is the cause of the trend of "globalization"?

In order to give you an answer to this question I have to tell you about the three periods of the development of the caviar business. The first was the Russian Tsar's period – when the entire trade was in the hands of five Russian families including the Mailovs, to whom my mother belongs. The second period, the Soviet era, was when everything that was related to caviar was controlled by the state. During that period the caviar business expanded first into France, and then throughout Europe. Incidentally, the first exporters of Russian caviar were my father and my uncle. Finally, we are in the third period, the post-Soviet era. This period began when each of the former Soviet republics took direct control over the sturgeon and caviar fishing industries in their territories. Because the industry was not completely developed or controlled by the government, smugglers soon came to dominate the trade in caviar using gray markets. The sturgeon was soon at the brink of extinction. To prevent that 165 countries signed the Washington Convention of 1998, including Russia and other countries of the Commonwealth. The important outcome of the Convention was the decision to establish strict control over the sturgeon and caviar industry.

As a result of the Convention, sturgeon is now farm-raised, and the new "cultivated" caviar is produced. This is why caviar can now be Chinese or French or Israeli. According to statistical data, in 1998 only 500 kg of black caviar was raised through aquaculture worldwide. Today that number is 60 metric tons per year. Although the cultivated caviar is of generally good quality, it will never have the same taste as the natural. These differences in quality also explain the price variations in the market, which offers many types of caviar from various types of osetra (sturgeon).

You are considered a world class specialist of caviar, but which one is your personal favorite?

For me caviar represents much more than just a food product. The sales process for me is not just a transaction; it also is a creative process. Aside from the caviar business, I also manage the importation of a complete line of other culinary products and spices. I am very interested in anything that is related to the culinary arts, starting with the soil in which a product is grown and ending with the recipes in which it is featured.

You are a gourmet!

I am more than that, a gourmet enjoys the food that is already on the table, but I enjoy the food long before the it is served. I am right at the beginning of the food chain: I am interested not only in the product itself, but also how it came into being, who identified the culinary value of a product, where it was originally discovered, etc. My clients buy the history of the product from me, and I take great pleasure in all these associated factors.

You are a very successful businessman. What qualities does one have to possess in order to achieve for success in business?

I believe there can be no business without honesty. A lot of people think that a successful business requires the ability to step over everything and everyone, attaining material wealth for himself. But in reality, a good business is an establishment of long-term goodwill relationships between the salesman and the client. For that, one has to take into consideration interests of all the parties in the transaction and respect them. Of course, starting a business one also has to correctly assess his own capabilities – excessive ambitions without a real foundation will always lead to a failure.

The curtains in your store are reminiscent of the colors of the Armenian flag.

That's right. This year France celebrates the Year of Armenia, and I wanted to emphasize my ethnic background. I was born and raised in France, and in some









sense I am more of a Frenchman than an Armenian, but this doesn't mean that I have forgotten where I came from, and where my roots are. I have never lost my connection to Armenia, although it wasn't an easy task at times. The Diaspora has always supported Armenians in our Historic Motherland, although this support was not always overt or official, because during the Soviet era this kind of support was banned. We wanted to help, but we did not want to get involved in politics, as open support of an independent Armenia would complicate the business partnership with the USSR. This why everything was done secretly, without publicity.

Last year you visited Armenia with Jacques Chirac. Was it your first visit to your historic Motherland?

No, actually I have been in Armenia before, but this time it was my first visit to the independent State of Armenia. I have to confess that the change was staggering. It's a completely different country.

Do you perceive yourself more of an Armenian as it is today than you did with the Armenia of the Soviet era?

Objectively, modern day Armenia is closer to me spiritually. But I should say that even before, we were happy that there was an Armenia bound to the USSR. Also we now have our own territory, we have Karabakh.

Are you in business partnerships with Armenia?

We have undeniable business partnership perspectives. But first of all, the mentality of some Armenian businessmen should change. This relates to their attitudes to the quality of the product. For example, the potential partner offers you potatoes, and you are saying that the offered potatoes have spots on them, and this is why you don't want the potatoes. He responds that, yes, the potatoes have spots, but that is why he is offering them for a lesser price. Unfortunately, in the market I serve, I don't want anything for a lesser price; I prefer to pay more in order to have an Armenian product of perfect quality, which would sell out immediately in France.

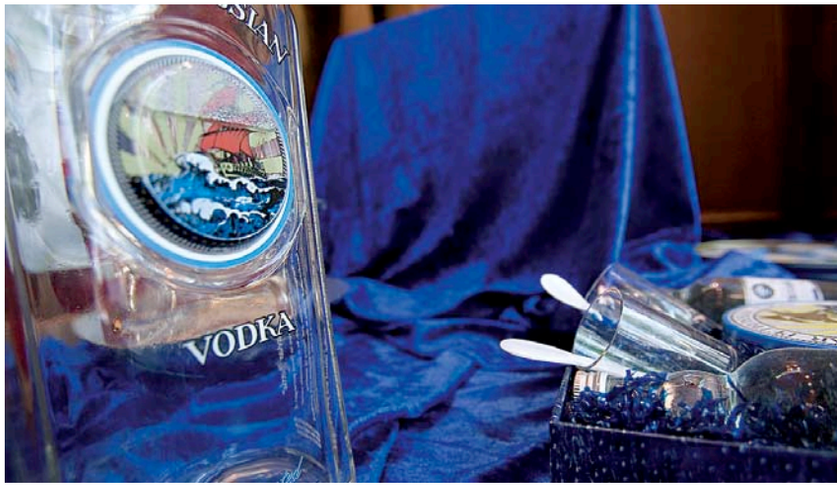
Nevertheless, I am actively looking for Armenian products that could be of interest to the French consumer. With that in mind I have visited Armenia, criss-crossing its regions many times over. I covered one thousand, five hundred kilometers, which, you will agree, is not an easy task considering the quality of roads in Armenia. All of my travels were conducted to study the quality and variety of products that my motherland had to offer. The problem may also be in difference of tastes. For example, people in Armenia like the jelly made of sweet kinds of apricots, but in France people prefer it made of less sweet types. It means that from the whole range of various types, as businessmen we must choose the one that is in demand in France. That is time-consuming, but it's a task that brings me pleasure, and believe me, not just for the money. I want to sell in my store true Armenian products and not, for instance, Australian apricots, although frankly, I like them a lot.

You took part in financing of the exposition and the catalogue publication of the "Holly Armenia" at the Louvres, within the context of the Year of Armenia. Are you a religious man?

I have faith in Good and Evil, and God's fairness, but I don't believe in miracles. For me the highest creature is an abstract idea, more of a philosophical nature. But I know one thing – there is no Armenia without its Church. It is a unifying link between all Armenians, particularly to the Armenians of the Diaspora. That explains my participation in the project.

In your opinion, how successful was the " Year of Armenia" in France"?

I salute any positive initiative. Amazing work was done by all participating parties - the Armenian government, the Commission of the Year of the Armenia in France, and the Armenian Diaspora. Each of us had a special connection to the event, and experienced it in our own way. Was everything organized perfectly? It is easy to criticize, but I will refrain from it. Most importantly, it served to improve the image of the modern Armenia, and brought all of us, Armenian citizens and the Armenians of the Diaspora, together. The Days of Armenia in France are already a good tradition, and I would like to make every year in France a Year of Armenia. ■



WRAP IT UP!

Durum, Burum, Brduch…It is very unlikely that today somebody will be able to provide a positively accurate description of the etymology of these word-synonyms - all three happen to mean the same thing in Armenian Language – a sandwich. Except, one can loosely claim that "Burum" can be translated as "in one's hands" ("bur" means - a palm). Everything that could be on a plate is right in your hands! And any Armenian who respects oneself knows what it is by heart - with all possible variations and tastes. Wrap it up!

photo : ARNOS MARTIROSYAN




Tarragon
Dill
Garden Radish
Goat feta cheese
Coriander
Basil

THE NO-BEL RE-COG-NI-TION



The Earth's climate is drastically changing. Armenian environmental scientists are on the forefront of the fight for recognition and containment of the global climate change. Among them, Martiros Tsarukyan, whose contribution was recently recognized by the Nobel Prize Commttee 2007.

text : LIANNA ZAKHARIAN
photo : ARNOS MARTIROSYAN



In April of 2008 Martiros Tsarukyan, an employee of the Ministry of Ecology of Republic Armenia and Green House Gas (GHG) Inventory National Coordinator, received a big envelope in his mailbox. The return address read "Nobel Peace Prize Selection Committee". Martiros sat down before opening the envelope. Not that he had any hope of receiving the award and becoming the first Armenian Nobel Prize recipient, but still, the envelope bearing a return address promised something very significant for a scientist with many years of work experience. For the majority of us such an envelope would be an unexpected surprise, but Martiros already knew that he was part of the larger group of Nobel Peace Prize recipients for his work on climate change. For those of us who are not familiar with Mr. Tsarukyan, among his many responsibilities is the representation of the Armenian Government in the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC).

As a member of the expert group of the IPCC, Martiros was well aware that former Vice President Al Gore and the IPCC shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize. Vice President Gore's work was reflected in the documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*. The Oscar-winning film has been warmly received around the globe. The Vice President visited major scientific and governmental forums in many countries, gave countless interviews and lectures to university audiences conveying the central message of the film – the Earth's climate is drastically changing. Global temperatures are rising at an alarming rate due to greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere. He has continually called for governmental action to restrict and control the amount of emissions, particularly that of Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) produced by the burning of fossil fuels. The documentary, co-produced and presented by Vice President Gore, was based on the reports of the IPCC. The IPCC was established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), which are two organizations within the United Nations.

MARTIROS TSARUKYAN RECEIVED INDIVIDUAL RECOGNITION FROM THE NOBEL PRIZE COMMITTEE FOR MANY YEARS OF HIS WORK.



It is important to understand that the IPCC does not carry out research or monitor climate change. The main function of the IPCC is publishing reports related to implementation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which is an international treaty that acknowledges the possibility of climate change that would be dangerous to humanity. This important treaty has resulted in the Kyoto Protocol. The volume of evidence on climate change is immense; it includes meteorological evidence from every corner of the globe over long periods of time. No single organization could undertake the task of collecting and interpreting all the necessary information, which is why the role of the IPCC is to review all the existing published scientific material related to climate change anywhere in the world, summarize it, and present its conclusions to the international policy makers. So far the IPCC has presented four assessments of climate changes, the most recent issued in 2007. The IPCC reports are at the center of any serious decision-making process related to climate. They have also generated a maelstrom of criticism from all directions.

The IPCC is comprised of a broadly representative group of scientists who are assigned to the panel by their governments. The local representatives of the IPCC do not receive additional compensation beyond the salaries they receive from their home institutions. Their job, however, is complex, time-consuming, and requires funding from their own research programs. Martiros Tsarukyan invested all he could give over the course of the past eleven years, from the inception of the Armenian Climate Change Information Center, a governmental organization responsible for



THE VOLUME OF EVIDENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE IS IMMENSE; IT INCLUDES METEOROLOGICAL EVIDENCE FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE PLANET.



communicating its work with the IPCC.

The Climate Control Center collects data in several crucial areas for the country. Its projects include reports on the consequences of climate change in Armenia, the socio-economic implications of climate change, adaptation to climate change, impacts on mountain and forest ecosystems, and developing a national strategy for limitation of greenhouse gas emissions. Although Armenia, as a developing country, does not have obligations for greenhouse emission reduction, a limitation strategy was developed as a part of Energy Master Plan of the Republic of Armenia for the period ending 2010. This proves that the Armenian government takes the warnings of the scientists very seriously.

The Climate Change Information Center presented an alarming report on the consequences of climate change in Armenia over the next 100 years, including potential effects on climate-dependent branches of the economy. The report predicts an expansion of the desert-semi-desert zone area by 33%, a reduction of the alpine belt by 22%, a reduction of successful plant cultivation in Armenia by 8-14%, which will adversely affect the agricultural industry of the country. Assuming the occurrence of the most widely accepted scenarios, Armenia will lose 15% of its river waters, and elevated temperatures will cause reduction of the surface of Lake Sevan by 13-14%. Climate change will negatively affect human health through possible increases in cardio-vascular disease, outbreaks of plague, malaria, and epidemic outbreaks of highly communicable diseases, such as cholera.

The national strategy for greenhouse emission is included in the Energy Master Plan of the Republic of Armenia. It calls for modernization of existing power plants and increased use of more efficient technologies, allowing reduction of reliance on fossil fuels. These efforts would include the use of hydroelectric power plants, use of geothermal and wind energy, increases in the amount of natural gas used and reductions in the amount of fuel oil in energy production from 32% to 6-7% by 2010. The plan includes two possible variations: one without nuclear energy, and the other with nuclear energy, but with increased levels of safety. It should be remembered that safer nuclear power plants have several advantages over fossil fuels. First, they allow increased diversity of energy sourcing, and second, they allow the country to decrease dependence on imported energy sources. The report also contains many other considerations and suggested limitations to inform and educate the nation about the importance of making energy-efficient choices.

Because of his work at the helm of the Climate Change Information Center, Martiros Tsarukyan received individual recognition from the Nobel Prize Committee stating that he is one of the few members of the IPCC whose dedication and many years of work were a contributing factor in the overall results achieved by the IPCC. This high recognition also reflected the numerous climate studies conducted by many Armenian and international environmental scientists.

In the words of Tsarukyan, “Although Armenia is not among the most vulnerable countries with respect to climate change, we must share the burden of taking all possible measures to decrease the negative impacts of modern societies on the global climate. It is vital not to be indifferent toward our planet – our common home.” ■

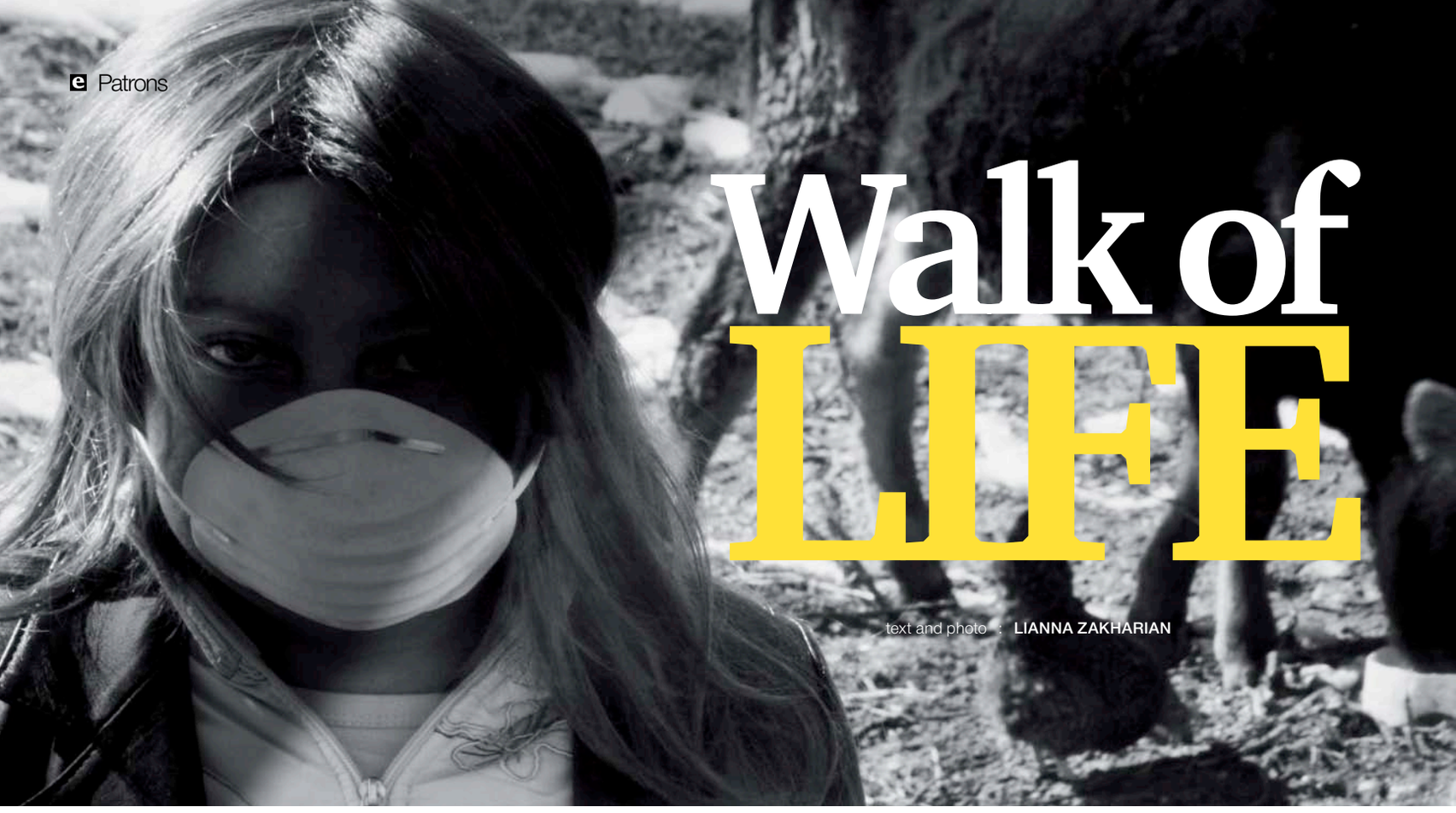
ethnoprincipe™



www.ethnoprincipe.ru

E-mail: info@ethnoprincipe.ru, phone: +7 (495) 970-8847

All Rights Reserved



Walk of LIFE

text and photo : LIANNA ZAKHARIAN

On June 21, 2008, Yerevan Magazine participated in the "Walk of Life," the annual walk/run event organized by the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry and by the Glendale Memorial Hospital & Health Center. The event was a family friendly day of fun, food, entertainment and activities for children. The walkathon, however, had a higher cause – to identify larger number of registered donors, which potentially could save lives of leukemia patients. We talked to the President of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry, Dr. Frieda Jordan.

HOW WAS THIS PROJECT ORIGINATED?

Eight years ago a few people started a project to impact the lives of many ethnic Armenians worldwide. At this point the Armenian Bone Marrow Registry has recruited over 14,000 donors, identified 1,276 patients, found 921 matches, and facilitated eight transplantations in Armenia, the United States, and Europe. Hundreds of thousands of people have been educated and inspired through the printed press, Armenian television, and personal appearances in schools and churches throughout the Diaspora.

WHY DO WE NEED THIS REGISTRY?

The importance of ABMDR is evident, since for people in need of transplant, a good match means a chance of survival. They must have stem cells to help their bodies make new, healthy marrow. The first course of action for doctors is to seek a perfect match within the patient's family. But statistically, only 30% of patients find a match in their family. With the shrinking size of families the probability of finding a sibling match dramatically drops. Armenians have developed a unique DNA fingerprint which makes it very difficult for Armenian patients to find matches among non-Armenian populations. With its global reach and international links the ABMDR has an extremely important role in helping patients find matching stem-cell donors. In addition, contrary to a common misconception, modern technologies do not require any type of invasive procedures on the part of the donors. The final procedure is the same as a regular blood donation.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR NEW CENTER IN ARMENIA.

A new state-of-the-art Stem Cell Harvest Center will be opened in Yerevan, which is a huge step forward towards achieving the goal of the ABMD Registry. Without this Center, ABMDR depends on institutions outside of Armenia for the stem cell harvesting required to perform life-saving transplants. For donors residing in the US and Europe, the ABMDR relies on its partners for cost-effective quality service. However, over 80 % of the Registry's donors are from Armenia, and none of the country's medical centers offer stem cell harvesting. Now, after negotiations between the ABMDR and the Armenian government, ABMDR was able to establish a Stem Harvesting Center at the Oncology and Hematology Institute of the Health Ministry of Armenia. Using U.S. and European accreditation standards, the Center will greatly improve the collection of stem cells from volunteer donors, significantly reduce the cost of harvesting, and therefore, of transplantations required to treat leukemia and other blood illnesses. The considerable decrease in harvesting expenses will translate into a similar decrease in transplantation expenses, thus bringing this modern day medical miracle of stem cell transplantation within reach of many Armenian patients who are often denied this life-saving procedure because of prohibitive costs.

WHAT CAN BE THE OUTCOME OF TODAY'S EVENT?

The outcome could be saving one person's life. We have established a booth here to register those who have not yet had a chance to register



and become a bone marrow donor. Today we have a patient who came here from Armenia. He is waiting and hoping to find a donor that will match his parameters. His name is Asatour, his relatives who live in Sevan also are waiting and willing to register. We are sending a team from Los Angeles to register his relatives. So with joint efforts here in Los Angeles and in Armenia we hope to find a donor for Asatour. That is the main goal and intention of our work, to help patients who suffer from leukemia to get a necessary transplantation and save their lives.

IS THE CENTER IN ARMENIA MORE OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE OR A RESEARCH CENTER?

I would say that the functions of the center are more of an administrative nature. We are registering and collecting cell samples throughout the world. Next, we send them to Armenia, where they identify the parameters and input them into our computer data base. The research aspect of our work will start after the opening of the Stem-Cell Harvesting Center. We will collect data on the growth parameters of the collected stem cells, the optimal conditions of the stem cell preservation in low temperatures, etc. For now, our work consists predominantly of registering new donors, typing their tissue and entering the data into our registry. It is a combination of administrative and scientific work. Volunteer recruitment and data entry is administrative work, while tissue typing is laboratory/scientific work. I have to emphasize that our laboratory in Yerevan has received European accreditation three years ago, and our work is conducted according to the internationally accepted standards.

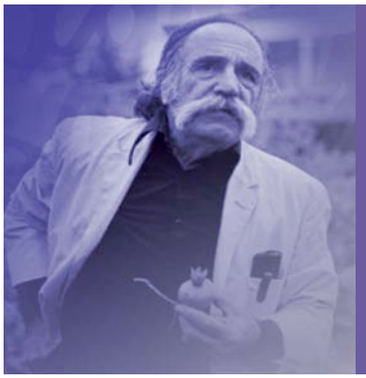
CAN YOU CLARIFY ON THE CONTROVERSY AND DISPUTES AROUND STEM-CELL RESEARCH?

There are two types of stem cells. Embryonic stem cells, those widely discussed by the international community are a source of controversy because, while they have the potential to become any type of cell in the body, they can only be obtained from embryos. Bone marrow stem cells, in contrast, are present in the spongy part of bones of all adults, are renewed constantly, and are the source of our red blood cells, our white blood cells, and our platelets. What we need and use for transplantations are the latter, the bone marrow stem cells. We do not work with embryonic stem cells.



HOW MANY VOLUNTEERS DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION HAVE AND HOW DO YOU SPREAD THE WORD INTO THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITIES?

We have hundreds of volunteers. Each person that participated today makes a huge difference by spreading the word in their workplace, at hospitals, and with relatives. We have a strong team in Armenia, consisting of fifteen staff members, who are highly educated and trained by internationally renowned centres. I am absolutely sure that any person who will participate in our events, becomes informed of the work that needs to be done, and turns into our best advocate among his friends, relatives and colleagues. I am proud to share with you that we were able to raise over $250,000 in the course of five hours through the telethon. And today, on this extremely hot day, so many people came, participated, helped, and showed their support, which is very inspirational. ■



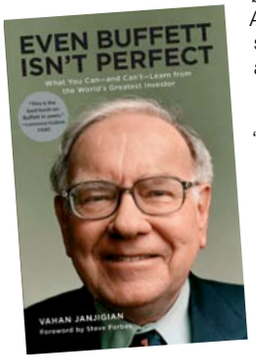
Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance Third Annual Celebrity Gala and Reading

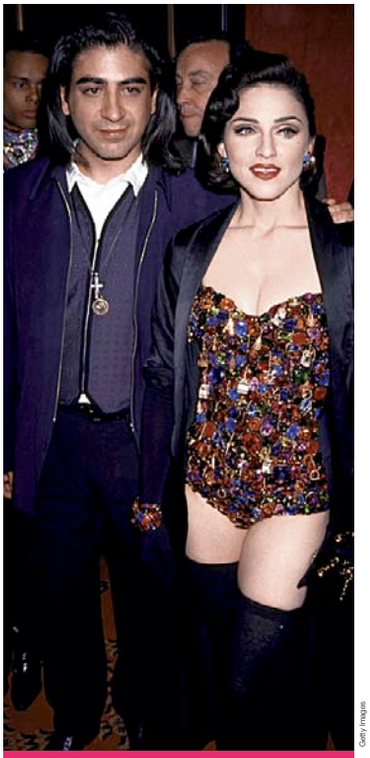
Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance held its Third Annual Celebrity Gala and Reading Series in Los Angeles. The Gala celebrated the Saroyan Centennial with live play performances, a $10,000 Saroyan Playwriting Prize and the Armenian Star Award with celebrity appearances, a catered dinner and a silent auction. It is the Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance's (ADAA) main annual fundraising event. The reading series featured three new plays by Armenian playwrights that were the finalists for the 2008 Saroyan Prize for Playwriting, a new contest for Armenian writers. The ADAA is a charitable organization. Its mission is to make the Armenian voice heard on the world stage through the dramatic arts of theatre and film. The organization accomplishes this mission by supporting playwrights and screenwriters and provides production opportunities, commissions, scholarships, research tools, networking resources and writing awards. The organization is currently working on creating relationships with leading theaters in the United States to establish a reading series so that the winning scripts – and other scripts by ADAA-affiliated playwrights -- will be seen and heard. ADAA's headquarters are in Cambridge, MA, with worldwide affiliates in Paris, Yerevan, Los Angeles, Boston, New York and other major cities. You can read more about ADAA by visiting their website at www.armeniandrama.org.

Vahan Janjigian

Vahan Janjigian, Forbes Chief Investment Strategist and Editor of the Forbes Growth Investor and Forbes Special Situation Survey Investment newsletters, has recently published his book ***Even Buffett Isn't Perfect: What You Can-and Can't-Learn from the World's Greatest Investor***.

Warren Buffett is the most revered investor in the world. He is personally responsible for creating a large number of millionaires. Buffett has done a great job of managing Berkshire Hathaway for four decades. During that time, he transformed Berkshire from a textile company, to an insurance company, to an investment company. Berkshire now owns more than 70 subsidiary companies and has significant positions in more than 40 publicly traded stocks. Janjigian examines Buffett's investment strategies and separates myth from reality. For example, although Buffett has primarily followed a strategy of portfolio concentration, he believes most investors should do exactly the opposite by extensively diversifying. Furthermore, while Buffett has a reputation for being a strict value investor, the truth is that he often buys growth stocks. And although he says he is a buy-and-hold investor whose favorite holding period is "forever," Buffett often trades stocks. Janjigian also criticizes Buffett for advocating policies that are detrimental to investors. For instance, Buffett favors higher income tax rates on the so-called rich, as well as higher estate taxes. Yet the evidence shows that higher tax rates result in lower tax revenues. Buffett has also urged a number of large companies to stop providing earnings guidance. However, data analysis shows that stopping guidance results in a statistically and economically significant loss of shareholder wealth. Despite these flaws, however, Janjigian concludes that Buffett is indeed one of the world's greatest investors.





Getty Images

Bed Time

English-Armenian director Alek Keshishian will give Madonna's fans another opportunity to be with her… in bed. Back in 1991, the controversial documentary *Madonna: Truth or Dare* was a complete revelation. At the time the film grossed $29 million. **This year, to mark the pop-icon's 50th anniversary, a sequel to the original documentary will be released**. The name is still unknown, but the film will be based on three weeks spent with Madonna in London, where she lives with her husband and two kids. No doubt, Keshishian will show audiences the most interesting sides of Madonna's life and work.

Taking back the championship on the first light weight IBF, with a fifth round knockout, Australian fighter Vic Darchinian knocked out the unbeatable Russian Dmitri Kirillov at the Queen Casino in Tacoma City, WA

Armenia Fund Bike Ride, a dream fundraiser for cyclists and outdoor enthusiasts

Los Angeles, CA - Armenia Fund U.S. Western Region and Armenia Fund - Toronto, Canada, two major affiliates of Hayastan All-Armenian Fund in the Western Hemisphere, came together to announce the launch of a recruitment process for their upcoming "Armenia Fund Bike Ride 2008". This special fundraising event, sponsored by the two affiliates, is a bicycle ride from Monterey, CA to Los Angeles, CA, spanning more than 350 miles (555km) along the breath taking California coast. Bicycle riders have the option of participating in the full 350 mile ride or the final 70 miles, during the last day of the event. The partial ride is suitable for people who are unable to commit to a week, but want to help Armenia Fund. Individuals interested in participating in the bike ride as well as businesses interested in sponsoring the event should contact bikeride@armeniafund.org. The Bike Ride will take place over a course of six days, starting October 28 and ending November 2, 2008. Proceeds from the Bike Ride will benefit the construction of a school in Spitakashen village in the Martuni region of Nagorno Karabakh. Recently, in May 2008, the Canadian affiliate unveiled a new, similar school in Verin Horatagh of Martakert, NKR. The school was named after Baroness Caroline Cox. Armenia Fund's long term development goal is to help secure the future of the next generation of Armenia.



The Chosen

System of a Down bass guitarist Shavo Odajian followed the rest of his former band mates in having a project "on the side". **Together with an old friend and rapper RZA, the founder of legendary hip-hop band Wu-Tang Clan, Odajian created the band Achozen**. The band's self-titled album, performed in a "cosmic hip-hop" style, will be realeased by the end of the year. Odajian will be on bass, and will also play a sitar (an Indian plucked stringed instrument with an orchestral sound). Red Hot Chili Peppers guitarist John Frusciante, Wu-Tang Clan's GZA and others will also help in recording the album.



10,000 Greeks

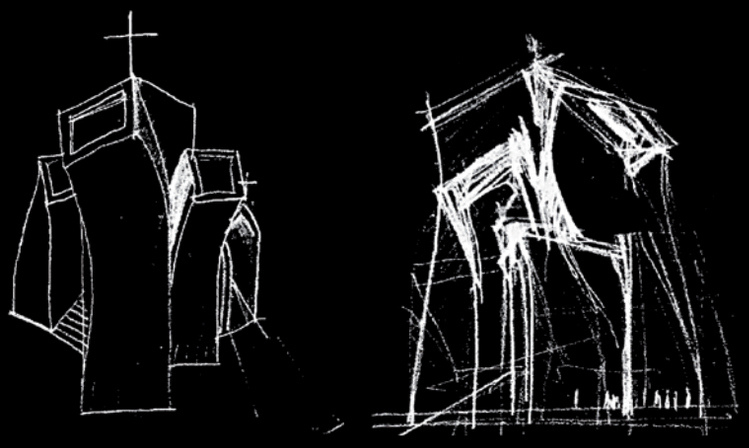
Columbia Pictures plans to bring the Greek historian, politician, and military leader Xenophon's famous "Anabasis" to the big screens. The epic work describes the retreat of ten thousand Greek mercenaries from Mesopotamia to the Black Sea following the unfortunate battle of Cunaxa (401 BC). Having been part of that army, **Xenophon gave detailed descriptions of the battles, the lives, and culture of the people living in the Armenian highlands, through which the Greeks retreated**. "Anabasis" also contains valuable information about ancient Armenia. But it still remains to be seen how the story will be interpreted by screenwriter Robert Schenkkan, a writer, a playwright, and a Pulitzer Prize laureate.


LOUIS XIII
Rémy Martin
GRANDE CHAMPAGNE COGNAC

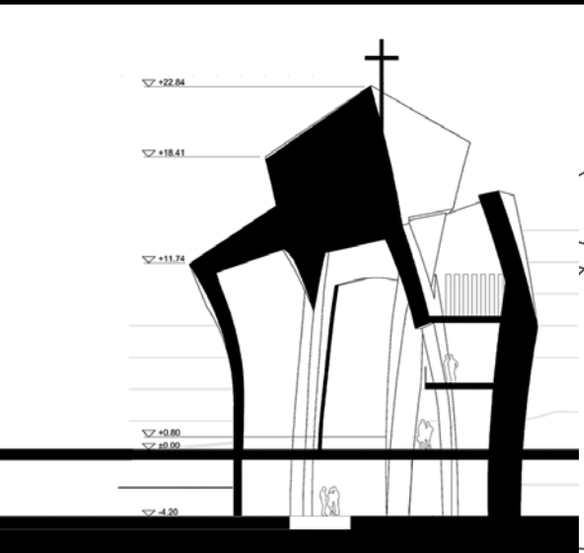
reflection

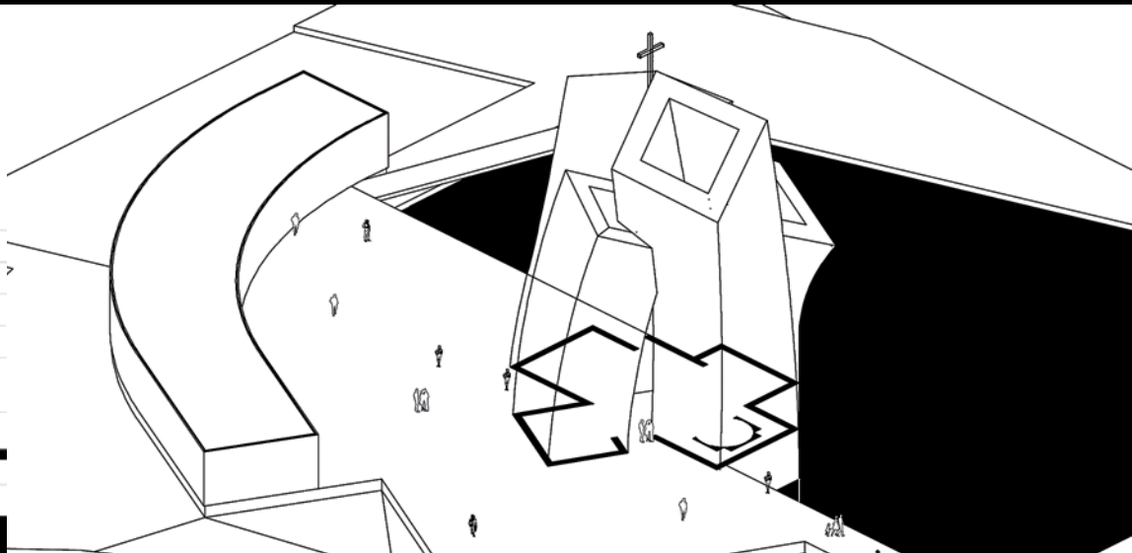


QUELQUE-CHOSE ARCHITECTS



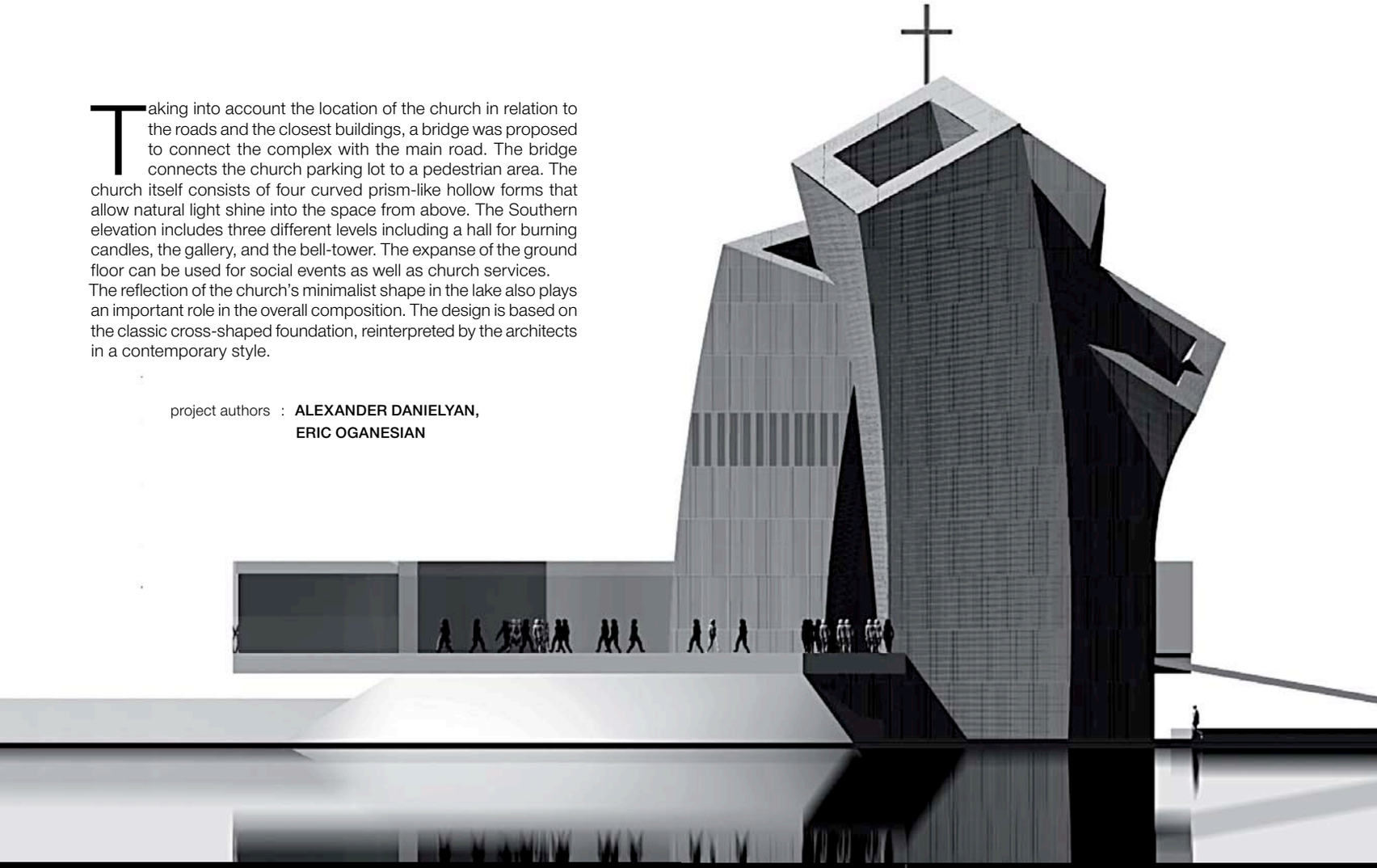
A spectacular park, a small lake, excellent visibility from the intersection of the roads leading to Yerevan from Ijevan and Vanadzor, and isolation from street noise determined the choice of the location in Dilijan. Gugark's Eparchy of the Armenian Apostolic Church decided to build its chancellery here, in Tavush, and announced a competition for the best design idea. All this inspired architects to create a multipurpose complex that would unify the church, the chancellery, and park.



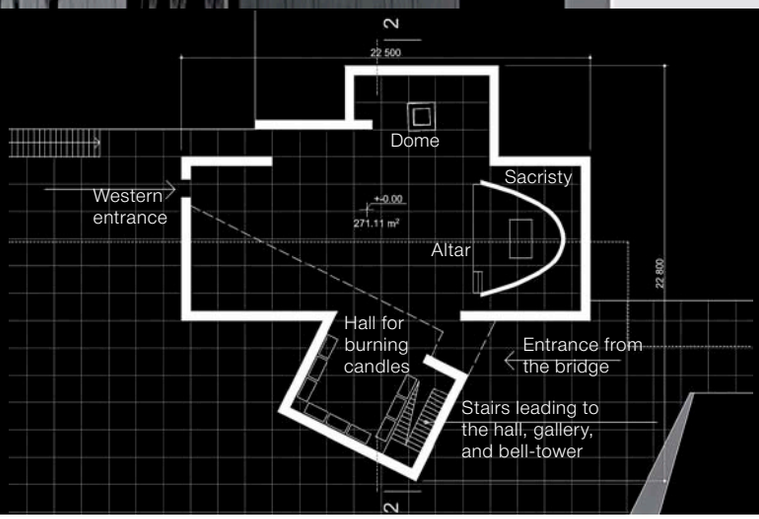


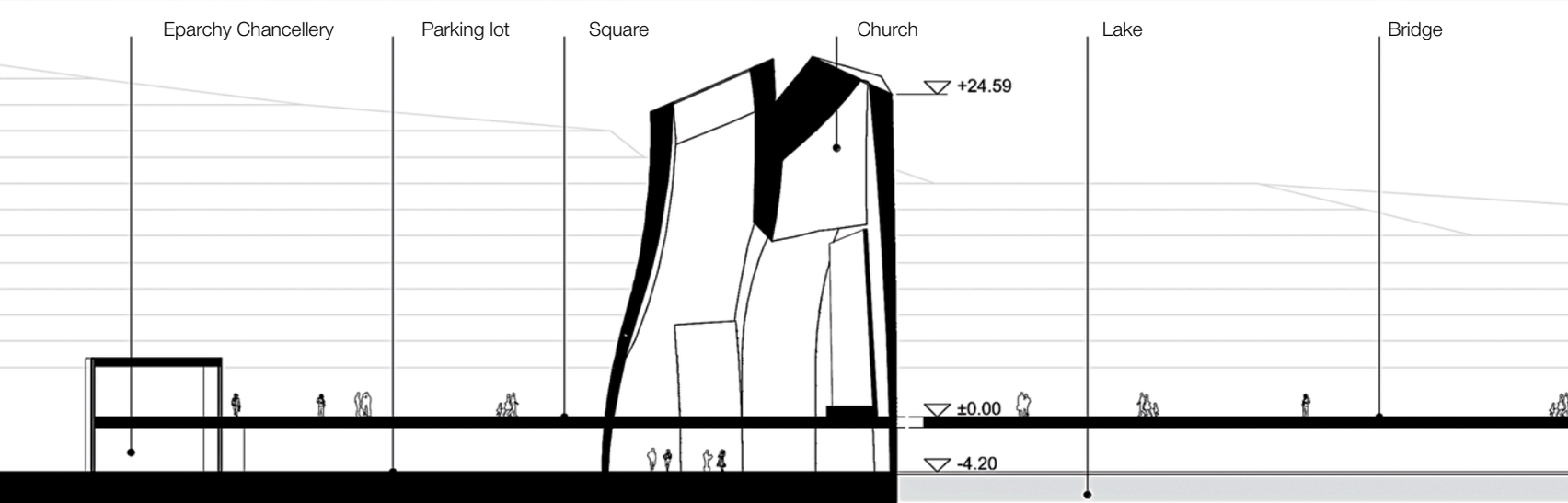
Taking into account the location of the church in relation to the roads and the closest buildings, a bridge was proposed to connect the complex with the main road. The bridge connects the church parking lot to a pedestrian area. The church itself consists of four curved prism-like hollow forms that allow natural light shine into the space from above. The Southern elevation includes three different levels including a hall for burning candles, the gallery, and the bell-tower. The expanse of the ground floor can be used for social events as well as church services.
The reflection of the church's minimalist shape in the lake also plays an important role in the overall composition. The design is based on the classic cross-shaped foundation, reinterpreted by the architects in a contemporary style.

project authors : **ALEXANDER DANIELYAN, ERIC OGANESIAN**













PERSON MOVING

*Sculptor and graphic artist **Arto Chakmakhchyan** moved to Canada thirty years ago. He is now better known outside Armenia, but he has always stayed in touch with his homeland. In 2004 Arto was awarded the Movses Khorenatsi Medal for his unique contribution to national art. His sculpture "Moving Person" will soon be installed on Northern Prospect.*

interview : **HARUTYUN ZULUMYAN**
photo : **ARTO CHAKMAKHCHYAN ARCHIVE**



AN ARTIST HAS TO HAVE UNSULLIED HANDS AND A CLEAR CONSCIENCE. THERE IS NO SOAP IN ART: ONCE DIRTIED, YOU CAN NEVER COME CLEAN AGAIN.

Armenians know very little about you. Tell us about yourself.

I was born in Egypt and my entire family repatriated to Armenia in 1948. I liked sculpting as a child and pursued sculpture as a student. After graduating from Yerevan's Terlemezyan Art School and College of Art and Theatre, all doors – oddly enough – began to close in front of me. My style had none of the pompous zeal and poignancy that had become an essential ingredient for art-making in the USSR.

A person comes to this world only once with a specific mission, and he has to carry it out according to his own philosophy of life. Not once did I betray this conviction, although it was never easy. For many years my art was not displayed; it sat in darkness, wating for its chance to shine. As a result, I accumulated an enormous body of work and did not know what to do with it. As an artist, you are addicted to the creative process and cannot just stop. An artist can choose to bring his ideas to life, otherwise, he risks madness by ignoring his creative impulses. The Soviet art establishment tried to change me so persistently, that I did stop working for a while, but without leaving the world of art. I traveled throughout Armenia for ten years and accumulated a great wealth of knowledge about our rich culture.

You still left though…

Leaving, I was thinking only about one thing: how can I remain useful to my nation? After arriving in the West I ran into another problem – the commercialization of art. I again resisted the temptation of following the received wisdom and did not make commercial compromises, preserving creative purity in my work. To resist commercial pressures, I began teaching at the Center for Modern Art in Montreal, where I've been teaching for the last 30 years. During my time as a teacher and as an artist, I have learned that Armenians are very talented people.



What are the artistic convictions that you so vehemently defended?

The most fundamental of my beliefs is that an artist must have unsullied hands and a clear conscious in order to make art. There is no soap in the world of creative practice, once tainted, you can never scrub yourself clean again.

What is the main theme in your work?

The human being himself. Art and culture are first and foremost human experiences, national identity is always secondary to this. Examining and showing the spiritual in humankind is the most important thing in art. That is why I believe that from the Renaissance to this day the human is the only topic that has not been transformed in any way. I am able to continue working only because I believe in humanity.

The problem of national art is a constant subject of discussions…

When something is national, it is not simply a collection of formal attributes, but a profound concept, preserved in the subconscience of a nation. National art cannot be limited by tradition, because its main objective is to reflect the soul of the people in all its richness and beauty.

You don't sound like a person who has been living in a foreign country for much of his life.

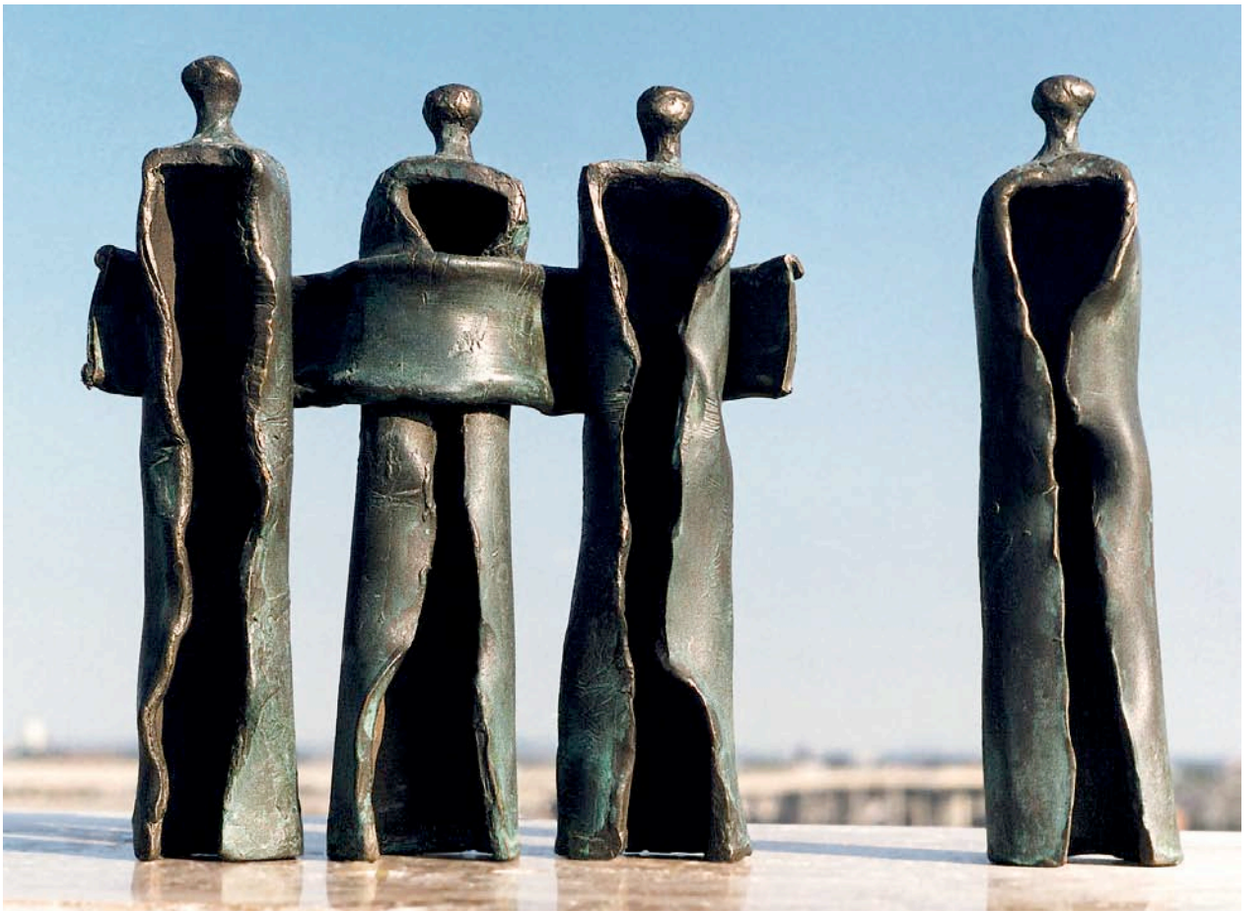
You know, I think it may be time for me to return home and restore my relationship with Armenia. In truth, this connection was



The Crowd and the Idol
Bronze, 1999
(top left)

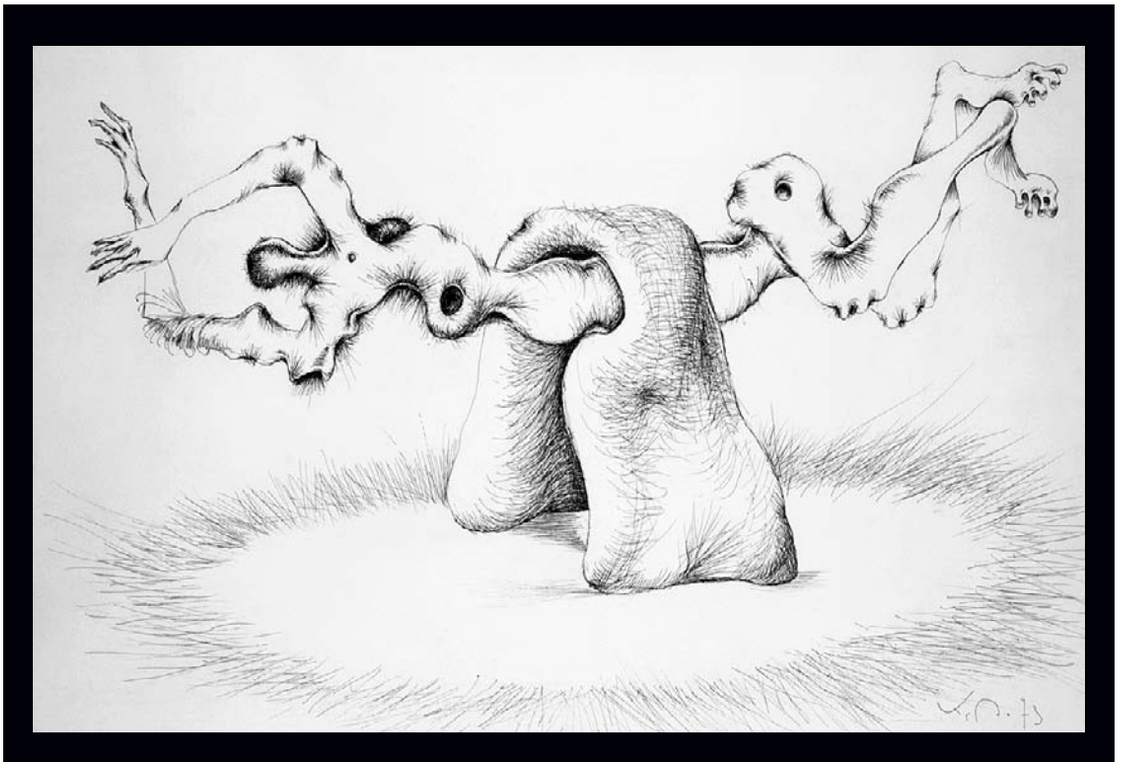
One and the Others
Bronze, 1979
(top right)

Four Scluptures
Bronze, 1997
(bottom right)





never really broken, because my love for my country was always present. This is more true now than ever, especially as I am surrounded by sophisticated and understanding people in Armenia. Of course, the country faces many problems, but more importantly I am surrounded by wonderful individuals and want to live among them very much. I see enormous changes taking place in Armenia, and I am becoming more and more moved by its hardships. An invisible force pulls me to my homeland, and I feel that I should return more strongly each year. I also have a very strong desire to create a sculpture that would symbolize the new, independent Armenia. Art-making came to a brief halt in Armenia at some point, but there is visible progress again. This fact is what prompted me to create the *Moving Person* sculpture.



THEY SAID "YOU DRESSED KOMITAS IN A CASSOCK, INSTEAD OF A SUIT." "I AM A SCULPTOR, NOT A TAILOR," WAS ARTO'S REPLY TO THE KGB AGENTS.



The government decided to put the sculpture in the most central part of Yerevan. What does the work symbolize?

The rebirth of an independent Armenia, the beginning of a path to grand achievements. These are the first steps in a new direction for our nation, and we have a long road ahead, which is why I left so much open space in front of my sculpture: space for future steps.

When will the inception of the sculpture take place?

Probably in about a year, when the sculpture will be cast in metal.

There is an interesting story about the 5-meter monument to Komitas.

This is the monument that was installed on Komitas Prospect in Yerevan with the support of the Chairman of City Council Grigor Asratyan during the Soviet era. One day after the installation – following an order from above – the monument was secretly dismantled and dumped in front of my studio. Then I was summoned to the KGB. They said,"You dressed Komitas in a cassock, instead of a suit." "I am a sculptor, not a tailor," was my reply.

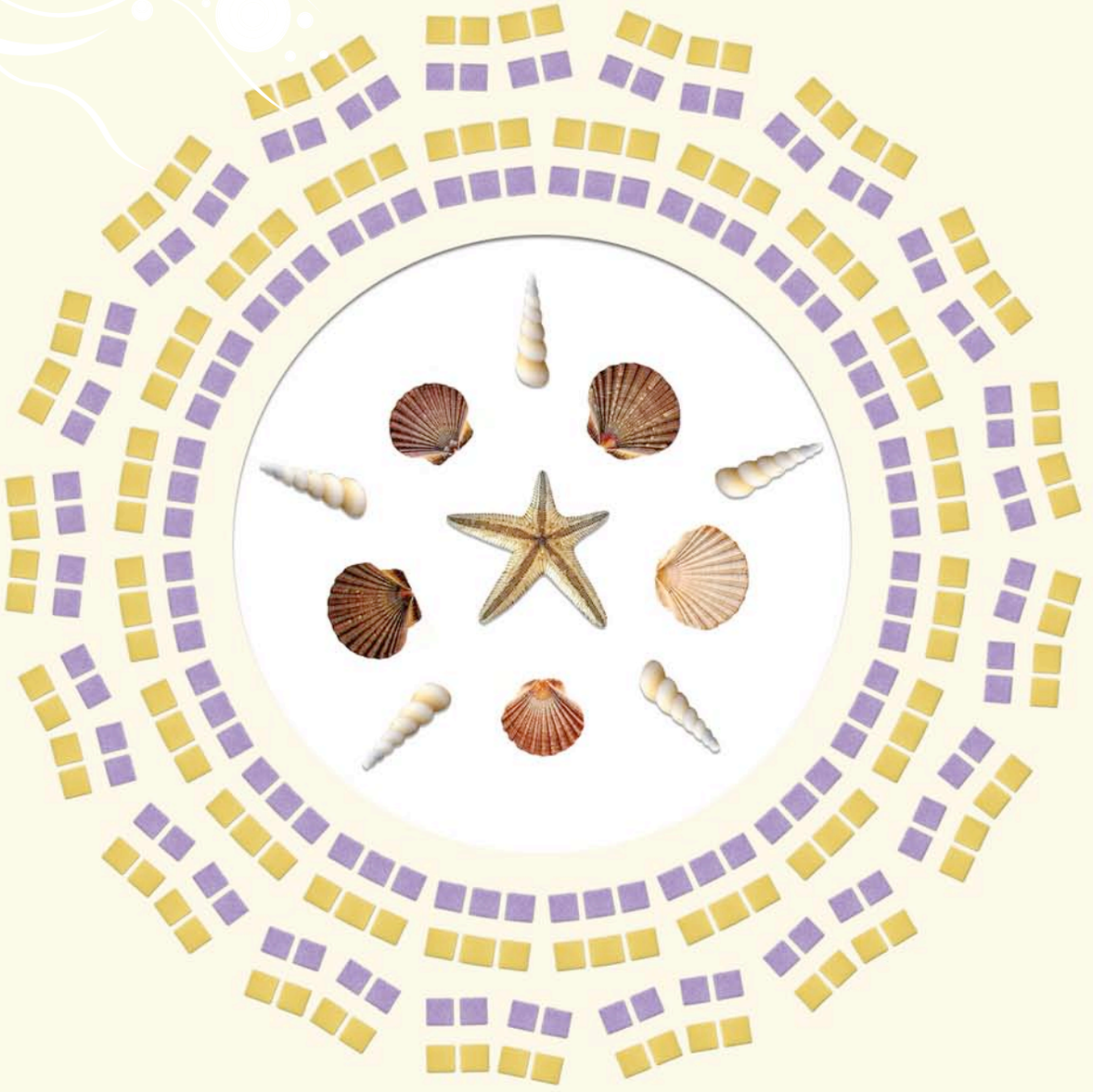
A lot of your work has been installed all over the world.

My sculptures can be seen in many American and Canadian cities. One of them almost got installed in Japan. One of my sculptures called *My Hiroshima* won a contest honoring the memory of the atomic bomb victims, and the Japanese sent me an invitation for its installation. They planned to build the monument that I conceived, but it was during Soviet times and the KGB was quick to advise that I forget about the whole thing.

Is *Moving Person* the only project for Armenia that you are working on now?

No. The Sarkis Khachenc publishing house is working on an album of my drawings. Every drawing is a spark of memories. Among them are portraits of amazing people, such as writers Avetik Isahakyan, Paruyr Sevak, Hrant Matevosyan, Kostan Zaryan, and Samuel Beckett, art historian Lidia Durnovo, conductor Ohan Duryan, Catholicos Vazgen I, physicist Yuri Orlov, prominent contemporary philosophers Jean-Francois Leotard and Gadamer. The publishing house is also preparing an album with photographs of the sculptures I made during the Soviet period. ■



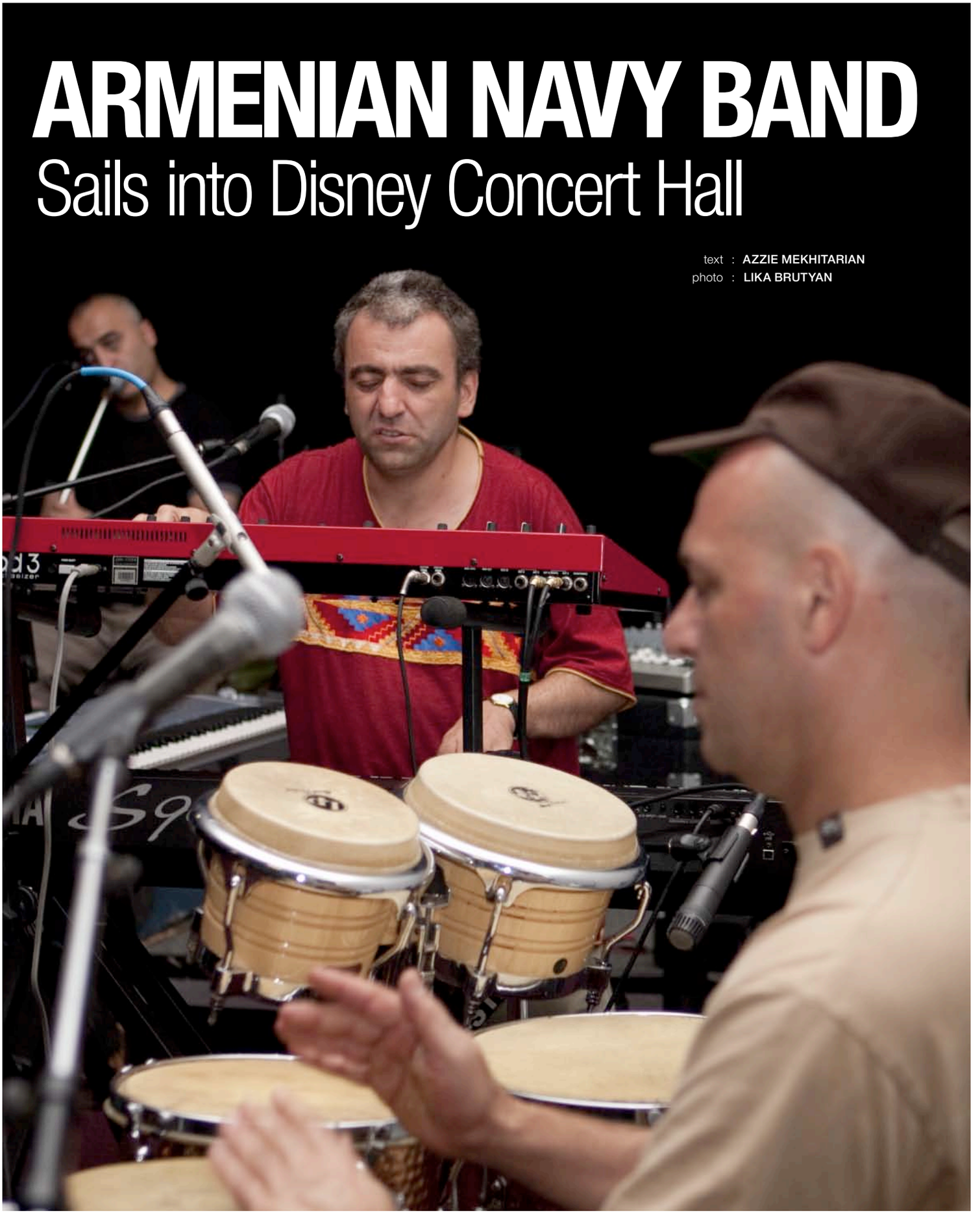


ARTHURS
SPA HOTEL

+7 (495) 644 41 21, + 7 (495) 644 4100
www.arthurs-hotels.com
e-mail:info@arthurs-hotels.ru

ARMENIAN NAVY BAND
Sails into Disney Concert Hall

text : AZZIE MEKHITARIAN
photo : LIKA BRUTYAN









On August 15 the Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles was filled with the mesmerizing music of Arto Tunçboyaciyan and the Armenian Navy Band. The 12 piece avant-garde folk ensemble made its U.S. debut at Disney Hall in a benefit concert sponsored by Artists for Kids, a Los Angeles based non-profit organization that promotes artistic expression among youth. The band's past tours, including numerous European tours, have received great accolades by enthusiastic audiences and music critics from around the world. Its U.S. debut was no exception; the audience at Disney Hall was equally captivated by the unforgettable music of the Armenian Navy Band.

The Armenian Navy Band was formed 10 years ago by percussionist and vocalist, Arto Tunçboyaciyan, who wanted to bring together the finest Armenian musicians in an effort to communicate the diversity and humanity inherent in musical expression. The music is a synthesis of the celebratory and melancholic, with moments of sheer surprise. The members of the band say that they would like to promote the notions of love, respect and truth through the forum of world music. "We are not really playing cultural music, it's personal music with a cultural flavor. Our foundation is in humanity, but our seasoning is Armenian," says Arto. The small orchestra is rooted in Armenian and Anatolian musical tradition and is infused with contemporary rhythms and jazz influence. The compositions are all originals written by Arto, who says his music contains the sounds of his life. Arto explains the band's metaphoric name, "Armenia has no seas, so how are you going to move a boat without water? If you are honest and respectful in you ideology, you can move because, when people receive us in their heart, they become our sea."

I was given the opportunity to interview the Armenian Navy Band during their rehearsal session before the concert. As mesmerizing as it was to hear the band play at Disney Hall, hearing the orchestra play for the first time in the rehearsal studio captivated my soul. The instrumentation is an earthy fusion of traditional and modern sounds that take the listener on a journey from the past to the present. The music is hypnotic and fascinating. It is as if each note contains within it sorrow and joy simultaneously. The compositions are alluring but become more spellbinding as the vocalist, Arto Tunçboyaciyan, begins singing. His voice is like a river flowing from the collective human experience. It invites you to freely immerse yourself in its haunting pulse. Arto has a jovial manner about him, but in his voice there is a deep primal sorrow that gives his music an undeniable appeal.

Watching this small ensemble rehearse it becomes abundantly apparent that there is a familial depth and warmth in their communication, which is a key element to their playful musical combinations. Vahagn Hayrapetyan, piano and keyboard player, explains the bands musical diversity, "We all come from different life experiences and we bring that into our music every time we play." The Armenian Navy Band has successfully managed to merge traditional and contemporary elements in a stunning example of avant-garde folk, which Arto considers the most open form of musical expression because it doesn't direct you to any culture, religion or ethnicity. He says, "The meaning of avant-garde folk is to live for today and imagine tomorrow." When asked how they have successfully managed to merge such diverse elements in their music, Armen Hyusnunts, tenor and soprano sax player says, "You have to tell a story. Music is not for the brain, it is for the heart." ■

ARMENIAN NAVY BAND:

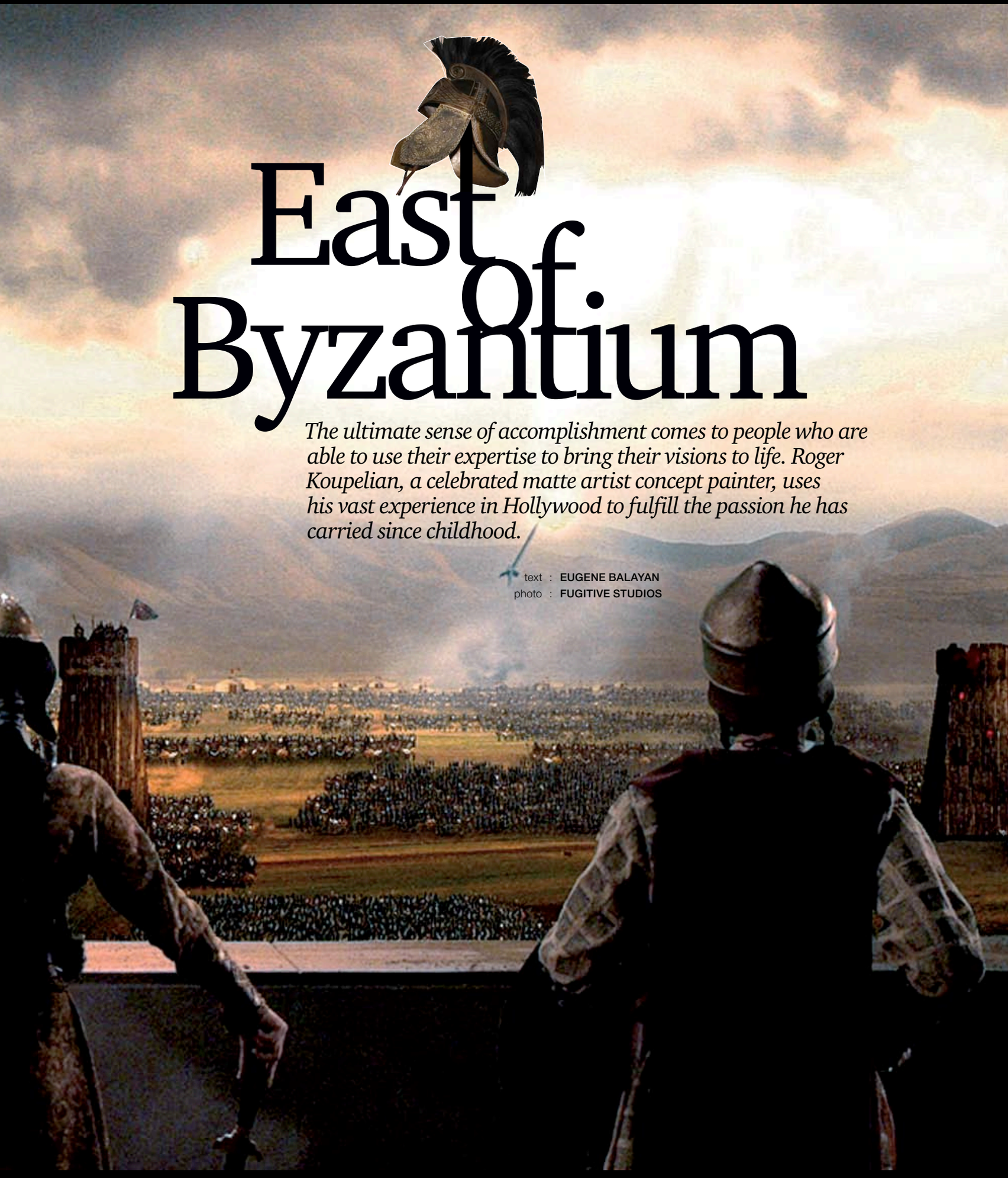
Winner of the 2006 BBC World Music "Planet Audience Award"
1998 ANB recorded their first album "Bzdik Zinvor"
1999 ANB recorded their second album "New Apricot"
2001 they recorded a new album called "Light Anatolian Music with Turkish Words"
2003 they began a new project called "Sound of Our Life – Part One: Natural Seeds"
2004 ANB recorded their first album in Armenian called "How Much is Yours"
2005 they recorded the soundtrack for the movie, "Le Voyage En Armenie"
ANB is collaborating with rap group Paper Boys for an upcoming CD
ANB is currently working on "Sound of Our Life – Part Two"

MUSICIANS

Arto Tunçboyaciyan Percussions, vocals, sazabo
Anahit Artushyan Kanun
Armen Ayvazyan Kemanche
Armen Hyusnunts Tenor & soprano sax
Ashot Harutiunyan Trombone
David Nalchajyan Alto sax
Tigran Suchyan Trumpet
Norayr Kartashyan Blul, duduk, zurna
Vardan Grigoryan Duduk, zurna
Arman Jalalyan Drums
Vahagn Hayrapetyan Piano, keyboards
Vardan Arakelyan Bass







East of Byzantium

The ultimate sense of accomplishment comes to people who are able to use their expertise to bring their visions to life. Roger Koupelian, a celebrated matte artist concept painter, uses his vast experience in Hollywood to fulfill the passion he has carried since childhood.

text : **EUGENE BALAYAN**
photo : **FUGITIVE STUDIOS**

Roger and his team at Fugitive Studios have worked on the graphics and concepts of such Hollywood blockbusters as the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, "Charlie Wilson's War", "The Mummy", "Cloverfield", and many others. The young cinematographer has also tested himself in the role of a director in the documentary "Black Forest in the Mountains". Risking his life in the trenches alongside Armenian fighters and amidst the devastated villages and towns, he brought the amazing story of their struggle to the world. His current project, "East of Byzantium", is an attempt to tell the world about what is important to Armenians, and what he has cherished since childhood.

The home of Fugitive Studios is an office space in a funky, repurposed complex that was an industrial site in its previous life. Fugitive Studios fits in perfectly among its neighbors – free-spirited, cosmopolitan, yet highly professional artisans and artists. The office is crammed with elaborate costumes, armor, and weaponry that are used during the concept stage for movies. Roger's own paintings and sketches decorate the walls. A large bookshelf to the side of the conference table contains the fruits of Roger's profession: thick albums with sketches and computer graphics of characters and backgrounds for feature films. We were invited to browse through them and enjoy a cup of Armenian coffee.



Are these authentic?

No, they are close replicas; basically, you can put them on and go to war. It's a CA qualifier, which means that if someone hits you, you will survive. As opposed to this one, which is built out of aluminum, it is lighter and not as protective. This is a Sassanid helmet, they have one at a museum. This one is a Chinese helmet from the Han period.

We made a lot. The originals were made in New Zealand. A lot of the stuff that we made you can't find in many places; perhaps you can see them in old manuscripts. But then, in medieval Europe any hero from any time period or place is drawn exactly the same way, so Vardan looks like King Arthur. We wanted to find out how Vardan and the Armenian warriors looked authentically. Obviously, in history there were very few completely objective facts, because historians were paid to "shape" the historical record to the liking of whoever commissioned them. So we have decided to take basic facts, but not to make a documentary. We are doing two feature films for a non-Armenian audience who comes to theatres to watch a movie, eat popcorn and get entertained. The authenticity is not a priority here. Armenians are very picky about history; all you hear is, "That's not exactly what happened - Anahit really did this, and Vartan really did that." But the mainstream movie-goers only care about the quality of their entertainment. So we said, "Let's do as much research as we can, because we want to do justice to our own people and their history. But then, let's consider that we have to tell a two-hour story, so we have to be selective." Vardan's story is in the second part. After all the men were killed in Avarair, the army was still intact. So what happened? All the women kept the army intact for thirty-three years, and then Vahan came and continued.

WE ARE DOING TWO FEATURE FILMS FOR A NON-ARMENIAN AUDIENCE WHO COMES TO THEATRES TO WATCH MOVIE, EAT POPCORN AND GET ENTERTAINED..





Is that what the history says?

Yes, but it doesn't say it directly. What we know is that the women did not get married for that period of time. And as we were thinking about the plot, we said, "What we know about Armenian women is that when the time comes to step up, they will step up and take the leadership role." So even though we fictionalized here and there, it is also very symbolic. So we have Vartan's widow, who goes to an old armory, finds his armor and restyles it. We tried researching her, but they never wrote about women; they were always treated as side characters. We couldn't even find out her actual name. So I called her Anahit, because it's our ancient goddess. We know his daughter's name was Shushan, because she became a saint. We want it to be more about the whole Armenian culture and identity. We took traditional motifs and put them all together. This armor in the sketches is not what she would fight in; this is what she puts on and goes to lead the army. So the men would say: "Ah, a Mamikonian is still fighting." And that's the second part of the movie plot.

The first part of the movie is about Trdat and Hripsime, and it's about our identity and its redefinition. We had our identity before, but they redefined the Armenian culture, sometimes with a sword, sometimes with faith, sometimes with sacrifice. And, obviously, people look at Hripsime and say, "Ah, that's a legend." But we want something of a legend, something that will get the viewer involved.

But who says she is a legend? After all, we have a temple of Hripsime, and her grave…

Absolutely, but we are interested in love and the theme of attraction. She was a beautiful and very innocent woman. He could have



captured the heart of any woman he wanted. But she was different; she was a woman he couldn't have, because she was a nun. Maybe there was a little bit of an attraction. From her part it was purely innocent, but for him it was an obsession. So once he destroyed her, he was on his downward spiral. He tried to destroy all the good things around him. Trdat lost his mind and became insane. But Hripsime is more than that for Armenians. If we had a symbol of Hayastan as a woman, it would be Hripsime - innocent, beautiful and free.

Going back to Trdat, one thing to consider about him is that he was an orphan, and orphans have a very special way of looking at the world. Later in his life, the Roman Emperor betrayed him. This is some tough luck for him, because he was a Roman person: he followed the Roman law, wrote Roman plays, Roman this, Roman that. Then, he found out that the closest of his confidants was the son of a traitor. All the way through, Trdat had people rejecting and abandoning him. So when Hripsime, a person who he really needed, said, "I can't be with you," it was the final blow. Eventually, when he came out of his drunkenness with fury and madness and realized what he has done, his sister confessed that she had also converted to Christianity. His sister, Khosrovidoukht, also abandons him and walks out of his life. The only good thing that happened after this ocean of misfortunes was his conversion, which brought sanity and harmony to his life.

Meanwhile, we have a whole other side of the Armenian culture, the Hetanos (Pagan) story, which is represented by Vahe Berberian's character. There is a character like this [he points at another one of his sketches], who symbolizes the ancient Armenian way of life. So this character came up and said: "Look, this Christianity is an alien thing. We are Armenians, we have our own religion, and the idea of Christianity is all political." Pagans rebelled, and all the nobles who were following them rebelled, too. And so it went on, until Gregory the Illuminator came up with an army and wiped them out completely. In return, Vahe Berberian's character cursed Gregory's descendants: "Our blood will rise from the ground and you will not have a moment of peace." Thus, 150 years later, Vardan, who was related to Gregory from his mother's side, was able to break the curse (what happens in part two of the story). And right now there is a decision we are trying to make: the story is written from Vardan's point of view, but we are trying to decide whether or not we should tell it from Anahit's perspective. A lot of our supporters are women. Men support us, too, but women are essential to this project. And another thing about Armenian women – if they are passionate about something, they will have their way eventually.

I really like these pictures. What is their primary purpose? Do you use them mostly to consolidate your ideas, to work with the team, or for outsiders?

This is what I show people when I want to share the concept and get feedback. We took the battle scenes and descriptions, and we read them to expert medievalists in New Zealand. Basically, they are people who dress up in armor and charge each other on horseback. They said that it is pretty accurate in terms of the battle itself, if you take away the flowery, poetic church language. They said that out of 66,000 Armenian troops, 45,000 were actually the warriors, the rest were blacksmiths and other support personnel. Similarly with the Persians, if you had 320,000, 60,000 were cooks, tailors, musicians, the guys who cleaned

up after the elephants, and such. That is logistics. But they said that it's perfectly possible that the battle was fought that way. So there is a lot of reality in this story.

So you were saying that Christians actually fought against the pagans?

Yes, they did, but not in the beginning. At first, it was very simple: Gregory would go around and offer priests, "Your wealth is your land, you can keep your land, you can keep your income, just let us put this church on your land." The priests would say, "No problem!" because they could keep their money. You have to remember that they had many gods, and they were O.K. with one more god. But later, people started being forced. Especially, the people who really deeply believed in their religion, or, possibly, people who were more aligned with Rome or Persia, did not want to give up what they were comfortable with. At that point, it turned into a political dilemma, since Gregory said, "The only way we can make this country stronger against Persia or Rome (Rome was Pagan, and Persia was Zoroastrian) is to unite around Christianity." And, unfortunately, to counter this Trdat went around and annihilated any record of pre-Christian history.

So, the only temple that remained was Garni?

Yes, thanks to Trdat's sister who liked to go there.

But this one on your sketch looks so much bigger.

Yes, we are emphasizing. And who knows what has been destroyed? In our footage we created temples that are fictional, but at that time they probably had some amazing structures. And not only the Christians destroyed temples, so did the barbarians and other subsequent invaders. Zvartnots also started as a temple.

I can't even imagine Garni with larger structures around it, because it seems like such a small area. There are Roman baths around it though…

It was more like a retreat. Wasn't there speculation that it was actually a mausoleum? It does not seem like an actual temple, because it's too small.

So, I spent six years doing the research and preparing for the production at a cost of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Big companies spend a million, a million and a half to do the same job. The good thing about this is that I did all this development. I can go to the same big company guys and tell them, "Because I did this, I saved you a lot of money on development, and you don't have to do this any more." We have got the scripts, all the costumes designs and settings are ready, so all we need is a green light and within months we can start shooting. Otherwise, we would spend six to seven months, at the very least, before rolling the tape. Epics take about five years to make by the time you finish the post-production. So what we are doing is we are cutting down that time, because

ARMENIANS ARE VERY PICKY ABOUT THEIR HISTORY. BUT THE MAINSTREAM MOVIE-GOERS ONLY CARE ABOUT THE QUALITY OF THEIR ENTERTAINMENT













we are shooting a lot of it using green screen technology, like *The Three Hundred*. We are happy that *The Three Hundred* did so well, it was like a confirmation of viability. Already in the *Lord of the Rings* we saw this technology in action. "Green screen" is when we shoot everything against a green backdrop, then take out the green and put in any background we want, be that Armenia, or Persia…or Glendale.

Who wrote the script?

I wrote Vardan's script, and then, we are going to invite a Hollywood writer. As for the first script – I wrote the story, and then a couple of people finished it up. Obviously, once the script is written, it is going to go through several revisions in the process of shooting. Serge Tankian is doing the music. Also, we have an artist who creates the graphic novel. It will give the reader an opportunity to see a different side of the story, and to think about the facts in more detail. We will eventually publish three graphic novels. Then, we want to do a module for a videogame, because it's a good way to involve the audience.

Tell us about how you got inspired to do this project. What prospects do you see?

I grew up in Freetown, Sierra Leone. There was only a handful of Armenians living in that part of the world. My Dad raised us with a very strong understanding of who we were, even in Africa. On African sands he used to teach me Armenian letters. I learned the story of Vardan from a very young age. I remember sitting on my Dad's shoulders and a ship from Armenia came, and my Dad said: "These are Armenians". I was so fascinated I started calling at the top of my lungs, "Hye am yes! I am Armenian!" These people couldn't believe it – imagine somewhere in Africa this kid yelling: "Hye am yes!" They were crying. As much as Armenians are identified as a minority, being an Armenian from Africa I was even more of a minority, and I always had to fight for my identity.

I started working in the movie industry in 1995 in New Zealand. As I saw the *Braveheart* and other similar epics coming up, I thought that we had our own stories to tell. I always wanted to make an Armenian epic. The saga starts with Trdat and goes on to Vardan's story. As we were planning, it became three two-hour films, then turned into two three-hour films. Then, HBO came along and suggested that they want to do even more. They want to develop it into a mini-series, like they did with the *Rome*. I am not going to say no, because it guarantees a big audience; we have been very flexible in that sense. But, definitely, these are very dramatic pieces – lots of battles, many diverse characters. We want to do it the right way, and we are committed to it. ■

DATEVIK: JAZZ IMPROVISATIONS IN TIME AND SPACE



When the voices of children playing under the wisteria subsided and the sun's last rays turned the neighboring buildings every shade of pink, the only sound was the hushed laughter of young couples strolling the narrow passages of Isahakian Street under the protective umbrellas of old acacia trees. At midnight another sound began to drift down from one open window to another – the majestic low baritone of Willis Conover followed by the equally wonderful singing of other great jazz musicians. It was "The Jazz Hour" on the radio - a magnificent reminder of a world free of political boundaries and restrictions. Unexpectedly, a mature and velvety voice of a girl joined in, a voice resembling that of the immortal ladies of jazz: Ella, Sarah, and Billy. It was the voice of Tatevik.

interview : LIANNA ZAKHARIAN
photo : LEVON PARIAN

Armenians who grew up in Armenia have known Tatevik from the time that she was 11 years old. Since her first appearance with Orbelian's Jazz Band she has left an indelible imprint on Yerevan's cultural landscape. Tatevik comes from a family of famous musicians. Her mother, Ophelia Hambartsumian, is the "Queen of Armenian folk song" and her father, a folk musician is a master kamancha player Norair Hovanesian. Tatevik chose a purely musical genre for her artistic expression - jazz. For the younger generation she represented something very special – an individual who did something different and with her own style in a time of enforced artistic and cultural conformity. Many young Armenians liked jazz, collected records, and listened quietly to the sounds on their short wave radios. Some fanatically followed the daily "Jazz Hour" with its host Willis Conover. The majority of jazz lovers at this time were in the stage of acquiring jazz culture as consumers, while Tatevik performed for the public and produced jazz. This was during the Cold War era, when one had to strike a balance between the officially approved repertoire and actually playing Western music (if one was brave enough). The attractive, slender and petite girl, always dressed in casual "Western" clothes, became a cultural icon for many. In her daily life, however, this brilliant jazz vocalist was very reserved and publicity-shy.

Tell me about the seventies. How were they for you? Did you have the freedom to choose your repertoire, or you were bound to strike a balance between the official cultural establishment and your own musical tastes?

I can't say that anyone tried to control me, or told me what to perform. I was free to choose what to perform.

You were the official "First Lady of Jazz" in the USSR for nine consecutive years before moving to the U.S. What did that title give you? Were there any additional privileges, favorable performance opportunities, or special royalties?

Of course, popularity brought me certain privileges. I traveled a lot, and I had the opportunity to perform with the best jazz bands of the time. But that kind of popularity is different from the notion of being popular in the U.S.; the "business" aspect was less prevalent in the entertainment industry of the former USSR. Back then there was great and enduring respect for artists. I was invited to all the jazz festivals, I had my own style, and my opinion was always taken into consideration, both by the audience and by the musicians.

I remember around 1984 a small club opened in the basement of 32 Komitas Street in Yerevan. I was fortunate to listen to many talented, young performers of the time – you seemed so much at ease there…

Of course, I remember it very well. The club was called Azat Zhamants (Leisure Time). Arthur Grigorian, who organized it, was not only my artistic partner, but also a close friend; we collaborated for many years. Arthur created all kinds of opportunities for me, he wrote many songs especially for me. They immediately became hits – "Dzyoun," "Nor Tari," and other songs. At Azat Zhamants, there was an atmosphere of unbounded freedom and camaraderie, and we were impatient for the arrival of the evening to come together again and jam. Those were very good times, I will always cherish those memories.

Many of us left Yerevan and moved here, to the U.S., or to other places. What was your story?

It is quite a story indeed… It's interesting that you mentioned Azat Zhamants, because my story about moving to the U.S. started in that club. In Azat Zhamants I met my husband, Vahram. He came to Armenia from the U.S. with a group of friends as a volunteer for Zoryan Institute, to conduct and document interviews with survivors of the 1915 Armenian Genocide. They learned that I was singing in a club and came to see the show. After the performance they all approached me, and we got acquainted. I invited Vahram and several of his friends to visit me at home, and a very warm friendly relationship was established between us. There was nothing serious at the time, just a spark of mutual interest. Even before I met him, I was planning to visit the U.S. for a month. I wanted to spend time with my godfather's family who lived in New York and get a little rest. Learning that I was planning to come to New York, Vahram gave me his contact information in New York. We met and spent a lovely time together, and gradually the nature of our relationships changed. We became closer, fell in love, and eventually got married. That's how I moved to the U.S. It allowed me to settle down, it gave me stability, and the basis for further advancement. I am very thankful to my husband for being such a wonderful person. Vahram supports me in every way, particularly in my music; without him I would never be able to accomplish my goals in life. He is the best thing that has ever happened to me.

How did you feel professionally about relocating to the U.S.? After all, there are so many talented and professional jazz musicians here. Were you ready to face that kind of competition and challenges?

Of course, nothing came easily. There were a lot of difficulties, and there still are. Many musicians who came to this country were not able to overcome these challenges and returned to Armenia. However, for me there was no other way; the thorny path that I have chosen (and being a musician one always takes a difficult path in life) continued here and probably will continue in the future. But first and foremost, I believe in destiny. Deep inside I always wanted to come to this country. I dreamed of coming for nothing other than the music, but these were just vague, distant dreams. Who would have thought…

Now, I say that I believe in destiny, because my marriage brought me exactly to the place I dreamed about – New York. Also, back in Armenia, I was at a stage in my life when I needed change. Some might not know me well, but I am completely devoid of a sense of superiority, always was and always will be. Moreover, I am extremely self-critical; like many musicians I am my harshest critic. Jazz has always been my life, so I needed to learn more about it, to advance professionally, to get to the roots of this musical form.

But you did perform with the best jazz musicians in the USSR…

It would be fair to say that. Indeed, I was surrounded by wonderful musicians. Igor Brill and his band was one of the best in Russia and my personal favorite. We toured with his band in many cities of the world, both with solo concerts and in prestigious jazz festivals. Even now, when I go back to Russia with my own musicians, we still jam together… Actually, we performed together three times in the past few years. ►



I HAD MY OWN STYLE, AND MY OPINION WAS ALWAYS TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION, BOTH BY THE AUDIENCE AND BY THE MUSICIANS.

Tell us about your recent concerts in Russia.

Our first concert in Moscow took place in 2003, fourteen years after I moved to the U.S. I was very nervous before the concert – my Russian was not so good anymore, since I didn't use it much here in the US. After all, fourteen years had passed; the country, the people, everything had changed. Many musicians moved to other countries. In addition, my artistic name was spelled in a way that was not familiar to the Russian audience. Before they knew me as Tatevik Oganessian, but by the time of my first concert in Moscow in 2003, I spelled my name as Datevik Hovanesian, which is closer to the Armenian pronunciation. Nonetheless, I received a very warm welcome in Moscow. The same happened during my most recent visit to Russia in 2007. The first performance was in St. Petersburg, as part of the International Jazz Festival. I thought, "Who will recognize me after such an absence ?" But when they announced my name, the audience burst into applause. Even before I started singing, people brought me flowers. Gradually, I recognized a lot of familiar faces, noticed my old friends, and jazz critics that I had known before. In spite of the fact that the performances took place in a huge concert hall, the atmosphere was very warm and familiar. Generally, Leningrad (now called St. Petersburg) was always my favorite city. In the past I spent a lot of time there. Overall, the concerts were a great success, particularly considering the fact that I presented my Armenian ethno-jazz pieces as well. I was not so sure that the audience would understand my newer work, but it was received unbelievably well. Oh, it was such a pleasant experience.



I WAS IN A TRANCE MYSELF. A NEW GENRE WAS CREATED, AND THE NEW GENERATION OF THE ARMENIAN JAZZ MUSICIANS PICKED IT UP AND CONTINUED.

How can you characterize your unique style?

You see, when I lived in Armenia I performed with various groups, but one thing was constant – I had a classical American jazz repertoire. Although I mostly performed with Russian jazz bands, I always included at least one Armenian folk song. People liked it, they often approached me with questions about these folk improvisations. In a way, I introduced our national heritage to a wider audience with these folk songs. Some reporters even called me an Ambassador of Armenian music. Wherever I went, I presented an introduction about our musical traditions; I spoke about the music of Sayat Nova, Komitas, and our folk traditions. Truly, I did it with a sense of pride. My mother was the greatest mentor in that sense. So when I relocated to the U.S. nostalgia literally choked me at one point. All I needed was a little push for Armenian music, my folkloric identity, to overflow and to transform into a new musical art form. Luckily, I worked at that time with an American-Armenian musician Armen Donelian. I told him how I felt and asked for his help with the instrumental aspects of my project. He immediately agreed. We started with one song, and gradually proceeded until we had sixteen and more songs. Over the course of several years the project resulted in successful concert tours across the U.S. and abroad. During one of the concerts the legendary American- Armenian producer, George Avakian, who was the producer of such jazz giants as Miles Davis, Keith Jarret, and Louis Armstrong, to name a few, approached us with an offer. Being a true Armenian in his heart, he always attended all Armenian cultural events. I have met him on many occasions. He remembered me from my first visit to the U.S. with Orbelian's Band when I was a little girl. Later, he admitted that from that first encounter he had been interested in my artistic endeavors, particularly in my latest project exploring Armenian ethno-jazz. Even before meeting Mr. Avakian we wanted to release an ethno-jazz CD. After one of our performances here in New York at Flushing Town Hall in Queens, Armen Donelian approached me beaming with excitement and said, "You won't believe it. George Avakian just offered to produce our CD." It was a dream come true. When you hear stories like this from others, you think it's all made up, but in our case the unbelievable happened to be true. The legendary Mr. George Avakian became the producer of my CD Listen to My Heart. I came up with that title, because it was exactly how I felt about my Armenian ethno-jazz creations. And of course, Armen Donelian made critical contributions to the project with his instrumental arrangements.

You have performed in many countries around the globe – if you could remember a single, most memorable performance, which one it would be?

Armenia, undoubtedly. In 1998, I returned to Armenia for the first time for two solo concerts and participation in the International Jazz Festival. Until that moment my ethno-jazz program traveled in many countries around the globe, and everywhere it was received with a great success. However, this was the first time that Armenia could hear its native traditional songs in a completely new musical form – as ethno-jazz. Coincidentally, *Listen to My Heart* CD was just about to be released by Sony Records.

DATEVIK HOVANESIAN BIOGRAPHY

Jazz singer, educator, recording artist, and arranger. Performances in over 30 countries on every continent in every medium; concert halls, clubs, festivals, television and radio, master classes, workshops, recordings. Datevik has appeared in every musical setting up to a full big band. She also specializes in ethnic and folk music arrangements, ethnic and ethno-jazz songs.

Artistic Collaborations:
Larry Willis, Major Holley, Walter Davis, Joe Williams, Frank Wess, Ben Riley, Clifford Jordan, Armen Donelian, Paquito D'Rivera, Claudio Roditi, Marc Johnson, Tom Chapin, Steve Williams, Andy McCloud, David Finck, Portinho, Andy Gonzalez, Steve Berrios, Igor Butman, Dick Oatts, Alex Foster, Barry Danielian, Frank Owens, Igor Bril, Vladimir Chekasin, Tiit Paulus, Joe Ascione, John Baboian, Ben Allison, Valery Ponamarov, Arto Tuncboyaciyan, and others.

Five solo Albums:
Listen to My Heart (SONY/EPIC), Ballads From the Black Sea (Mapleshade), Doors (Melodia), Day Dream (Melodia), Concerto for Voice and Orchestra (Melodia).She has recorded over 100 pop and jazz singles, as well as recordings for TV shows, theatre and movies, animations and commercials.

Festivals and Tours:
North Sea Jazz Festival, Montreal International Jazz Festival, Prague Jazz Festival, Jakarta Jazz Festival, Windsor Jazz Festival, Belgrade Jazz Festival, Debrecen Jazz Festival, Tallinn Jazz Festival, Portsmouth Jazz Festival, Islip Jazz Festival, Yerevan International Jazz Festival, Moscow International Jazz Festivals .

Time-wise, everything worked out pretty well: the record, the festival, and the two solo concerts. The public was very excited, that was a true triumph. I remember President Kocharian giving me a standing ovation. Everyone there loved my interpretations of Armenian folk songs. My mother, the Queen of Folk Song Ophelia Hambartsumian, completely accepted my work, which was very important to me personally. Last but not least, after so many years living abroad, I came back to Armenia for the first time with my husband, Vahram, so it was a true family reunion. That was the most memorable experience for me. I have had many performances all around the world, but if I had to chose just one – that would be it –Armenia, 1998.



ALL I NEEDED WAS A LITTLE PUSH FOR ARMENIAN MUSIC, MY IDENTITY, TO OVERFLOW AND TO TRANSFORM INTO A NEW MUSICAL FORM.

Yes! I attended your concert of that same program here in the U.S. The audience was literally in a sort of a trance - meditation state.

I was in a trance state myself, never mind the audience. Besides, a new genre was created – a genre which the new generation of Armenian jazz musicians picked up and continued. Even some dance groups stage their shows using it. Armenian ethno-jazz has gained a large number of followers over the years. I am happy - it means that my music took off with a life on its own.

Who were your teachers in jazz? Your idols in jazz?

Usually, when this question is posed to a female vocalist the anticipated answer is another female vocalist. However, it was not so in my case. My older brother was the driving force behind my affection towards jazz. He is a professional violinist, a huge jazz fan and he listened to a lot of instrumental jazz and vocalists as well. Following his footsteps, I too started listening to the great masters of instrumental jazz, such as Oscar Peterson, Ahmad Jamal, Dave Brubeck, big bands, and, later on, a French group called the Swingle Singers who made wonderful jazz interpretations of classical music, Bach, Mozart, etc. Then gradually I started listening to vocalists – Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Dianne Washington, Sarah Vaughan, and others. So all of that developed into a love not only for jazz music in general, but also a love for improvisation. People often compare my style to Ella Fitzgerald or Sarah Vaughan. I think that all of them were part of my musical education. All of these musicians, in their turn, had their own teachers as well. I listened and learned their solos from beginning to end, literally copying them. And of course, I could not avoid the fact that, one way or another, my style, the modulation of my voice and so on, reflected these influences. No one can avoid this in their developmental stage; the important thing is to reach a certain point and then to create your own style. It's not worth it to remain an imitator for the rest of your life.

I know you are an educator. Who were your best students and who are you most proud of?

First of all, a wonderful American -Armenian singer Kim Nazarian. She was one of the first students who took jazz improvisation classes. I worked with her over the course of several years. Now she is a member of the Grammy Award winning vocal jazz ensemble called New York Voices. Over the years we have developed a very close friendship that continues even today. Also, I had several talented students of Brazilian descent who performed in the style of Brazilian Jazz and gradually gained popularity in New York and beyond - Ana Lu, Marianne Ebert, Deborah Watts, and many others.

You are collaborating with a new generation of talented young Armenian jazz musicians – you performed with Thelonious Monk Piano Competition Award-winner Tigran Hamasian. What do you think of them?

Tigran is talented, extremely talented. But there are many other talented jazz musicians in Armenia – notably Michael Zakarian –I call him the "Armenian Bill Evans", Vahagn Hayrapetian, bassist Nikoghaos Vardanian (Kolya), and many others. It's heartening to know that there is a new generation who will continue the tradition of Jazz music in Armenia.

What do you like aside from music?

I am crazy about gardening. Every spare moment I get I spend in my garden, that's my therapy.

Tell me about your artistic plans – what is your calendar for the year 2008-2009.

In my life everything seems to be planned except the artistic part of it. My life as a performer just happens, I get invitations, I travel, and I perform. In September I will take part in the "Women in Jazz Festival" in New York organized by Jazz at Lincoln Center. Then I will travel to Armenia to take part a huge celebration of 70 Years of Jazz Music in Armenia, which is an amazing accomplishment for Armenians and their musical traditions. This time I am going to present a newer program that includes ethnic-jazz along with Brazilian and American standards.

Thus, Datevik's wonderful improvisations continue through the years and across the continents. Audiences continue to enjoy her fascinating vocal journeys that connect our national heritage with the global modern day rhythms. Indeed, Datevik is the First Armenian Lady of Jazz. ■

Appearances:
Jazz at Lincoln Center, Town Hall, Carnegie Recital Hall, and in most major New York clubs, Charles Hotel and Night Stage (Boston), Sands Hotel (Atlantic City), Tacoma Station Tavern (Washington-DC), Shrine Auditorium , Alex Theatre and Stars Theatre (Los Angeles), Jazz Club Hanover and The A Train (Germany), Sunside and Duc de Lombards (France), Armenian State Philharmonic Concert Hall (Armenia) Special Appearances: "MacNeil Lehrer News Hour" PBS-TV USA, "Jazz Central" BET Cable TV, Live interview from Public Radio International on World's Global Hit, Live Broadcasts of Voice of America; Worldwide live TV tribute to Willis Conover, Live TV broadcast of Russia-Japan Jazz summit, "Special Jazz Hour" on 2NSB.. FM (Sydney, Australia), 2-hr special on BURG-FM (Yerevan, Armenia), Live interviews on KCRW Café LA with Tom Schnabel and KPFK in Los Angeles, and many more.

Magazine and newspaper coverage:
New York Times, The Boston Globe, San Francisco Examiner, Jazz Times, NYC Tribune, Jakarta Post, The Independent Holland, Jazz Magazine Poland, Cadence USA, Jazz Novine Yugoslavia, AIM USA, ARI USA, Melodia Magazine Russia. She appears in the New Grove Dictionary of Jazz as Tatevik Oganesyan and was perennially voted "The First Lady Of Jazz" in the Former Soviet Union .

Teacher and Educator:
Choral director and voice teacher. She has led workshops in jazz vocal and improvisation, styling and technique. Workshops and Master Classes at Manhattan School of Music and New School of Music (New York USA), among many.



The muse of Sound wants to see and to be seen.



INCREDIBLY *beautiful*

Beauty pervades everything. Any environment blossoms with the unexpected appearance of beauty. Here, an artist attempts to incarnate the muses of beauty in female form, letting us observe how they intertwine and mastefully use all five senses to impregnate the surroundings with passion.

text : **HAYK MAKHMURYAN**
photo : **SERGEY KOVALENKO**





The muse of Sight
touches the old an new in one accord.





The muse of Touch
foretastes fulfillment from a finished work.



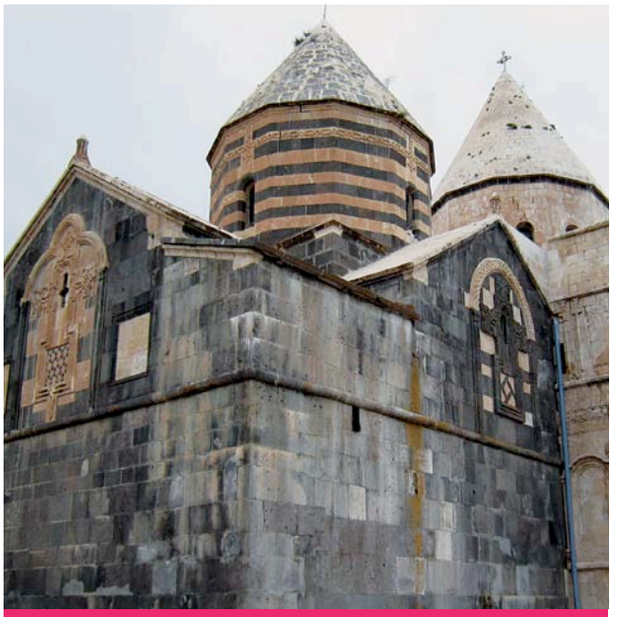


The muse of Taste
cannot survive without the smell of burning fire.





The muse of Smell
hears the freshness of a mountin spring.



Three Armenian churches in Iran added to UNESCO World Heritage List

The Islamic Republic of Iran submitted three Armenian churches hoping the Armenian monastic ensembles will be added to UNESCO's list. Under the UNESCO World Heritage Convention World Heritage sites are protected as symbols of world cultural heritage. The decision was made to add the sites to the World Heritage List during the 33rd meeting of UNESCO World Heritage Committee session in Quebec, Canada on July 6.The UNESCO website described the monuments as "examples of outstanding universal value of the Armenian architectural and decorative traditions" and added, "They bear testimony to very important interchanges with the other regional cultures, in particular the Byzantine, Orthodox and Persian." The three Armenian churches included among the 851 objects of importance in the World Heritage List, were, St. Stepan (Stepanos), St. Faddey (Tadevos) and Chapel Dzor-Dzor.

Three Armenian Directors Participate in Cannes Film Festival, Egoyan takes prestigious Ecumenical Jury Prize at Cannes

Three Armenian Directors participated in the 2008 Cannes Film Festival-Atom Egoyan of Canada, Diana Mkrtchyan of Russia and Armen Tadevosyan of Armenia. Egoyan participated with his film "Adoration" which is a discourse on the chat phenomenon of the internet age. Diana Mkrtchyan presented "GATA", a film about an Armenian refugee family living in a Moscow dormitory. The film was shot in a real dormitory with most of the characters being real refugees. Armen Tadevosyan presented a short film about the cultural and civil transfiguration of Kars. Canadian-Armenian director, Atom Egoyan, won the prestigious Ecumenical Jury Prize for the second time. According to the Cannes Film Festival official website, the Ecumenical Jury Prize was created in 1974, in order to distinguish those works that "display human qualities and touch upon the spiritual existence."



Fotobank

Shant Petrosian wins an Emmy for the "Rachel Ray Show"

Shant Petrossian and a number of "Rachel Ray Show" producers received an Emmy Award for Outstanding Talk Show/Entertainment at the 35th Annual Daytime Emmy Awards. Shant Petrossian, the Talent Relations Producer for the "Rachel Ray Show", has also been an Associate Producer for "Rock and a Hard Place" and was the Field Producer for the "Armenians: The Story of Survival".

The legendary French singer Charles Aznavour became an Honorary Officer of the Order of Canada, an honor established in 1967 by Queen Victoria and usually given to those who have demonstrated great lifetime achievements and generosity.

Ellis Island Medal of Honor award recipients includes six Armenians

Six Armenian-Americans were awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor. The award is given to outstanding Americans who are distinguished citizens of the United States and have promoted the preservation of their ethnic identity while integrating successfully into the fabric of American life. Since 1986 the Ellis Island Medal of Honor celebrates and gives homage to the many different ethnic groups that have contributed to building the United States. The Armenians honored this year included Dr. Noubar Afeyan, Harut Sasounian, Maria Mehranian, and Annette Choolfaian.



Andres Muhe

Loyalty Belt

Arthur "The King" Abraham the undefeated middleweight champion made his U.S. debut. With a June 21st fight which was broadcast on Showtime as a special main event, he stormed onto the international boxing scene. Born Avetik Abrahamyan, in Yerevan, Armenia, Abraham now trains in Germany. Abraham earned bragging rights with three powerful blows against Colombian Edison Miranda, winning the fight by fourth round TKO. This is the second fight for the duo. Their first meeting ended with a controversial win by Abraham after his jaw was broken during the fight. Skillfully winning his second fight with Miranda showed the world that Arthur "The King" Abraham is a force to be reckoned with.

In an unexpected twist of events, Arthur Abraham lost his champion's belt. This did not happen in the ring though, but in a secure parking structure at the Miami International Airport, when the boxer went to get a luggage cart. However, he was reunited with the belt a few weeks later, when "The King's" promoter ordered him a new one, convinced that - first and foremost - the belt "has a symbolic meaning for Abraham."

Insight

Larry Gagosian, one of the most influential art-dealers in the world, will be coming to Moscow with a new show. **The project, called *For What You Are About to Receive*, will be presented by the famous Gagosian Gallery at the "Red October" confectionery from September 18th to October 19th**. The exhibit will feature the works of William de Kooning, Cy Twombly, Ed Ruscha, Takashi Murakami, Richard Serra, and others. Gagosian already has been to Moscow with the show called *Insight last fall*. No other foreign galley of Gagosian's rank has brought their shows to Moscow before him. At the time, the Barvikha Luxury Village under Moscow displayed works by Pablo Picasso, Archile Gorky, William de Kooning, Jeff Koons, and Roy Lichtenstein. Aside from paintings, the exhibit had sculptures by Richard Serra and furniture by famous designers. Most of the paintings (with a combined price tag of $90 million) were bought by Russian collectors well before the opening.



Arakelian set his second Guinness World Record

Hratchia Arakelian has done it again. The 38-year-old resident of Glendale crushed, for the second time, the world record for cumulative amount of weight lifted by an individual in one hour. Arakelian broke his own record set in 2006 for the greatest weight squat lifted in one hour of 27,263 pounds, and surpassed the world record set in 2007 of 69,950. By the time the native of Armenia finished reclaiming his record he had pressed 95,650 pounds in 45 minutes. Arakelian has been weight lifting competitively since the early 1980's when he won the Weight Lifters Junior Championship of the Republic of Armenia. Since then he has won many competitions, including a European championship in Germany in 1989. Arakelian says he is now going to wait for someone else to break his record and then he will try to surpass it for the third time.

DELIVERY OF FLOWERS AND GIFTS TO ARMENIA AND WORLDWIDE

















BRABION
FLORA SERVICE

You can send flowers, cakes, sweet and alcohol to your favorites and friends in Armenia and worldwide.

(+37410) 54 80 54; (+37410) 52 52 70

service@brabion.am

www.brabion.am



Khachtars

Throughout Armenia,the village of Oshakan is quite well known. Teachers from the surrounding area bring their first-graders here, because the great teacher Mesrop Mashtots is buried in a crypt in Oshakan. The primary students explore the shadows of the tomb reverently, honoring the creator of the alphabet that they have mastered with so much dedication and effort. All this brings one question to mind, "Why is it that Mashtots was buried here?"

text and photo : **SOUREN MANVELIAN**





Khachkars shaped as letters. These could be ever so appropriately called “khachtars”, (“tar” meaning a letter in Armenian)



There are many ways that I could have answered the question: I could have called up a friend of mine who is a historian, or even done the research myself. The best way, of course, was to travel to Oshakan, just 30 kilometers away from Yerevan. I set out on a hot and breezy summer day. The highway was in a great condition, but my companion and I never would have arrived without asking for directions from passers-by every now and then. Evidently, the local authorities firmly believed that every Armenian should be guided to the landmark by an innate sense of national identity. We did, however, encounter one homemade sign directing us to Oshakan. It seemed almost as though the locals were annoyed by the frequent inquiries of lost tourists and decided to save everyone some time.

The site that captures the travelers' attention first is the 19th century basilica. In the adjacent apricot orchard there is a crowd of curious sculptures, letter-shaped khachkars. One can spend hours tracing the continuous lines of the elaborate ornamentation. The subject of each of these khachkars, or more precisely "khachtars", corresponds to the letter itself. For instance, the letter "P" is dedicated to Saint Peter. The all-knowing candle vendor told us that the khachkars were carved by four brothers from the village of Arshaluys and were installed there in 2005.

The basilica looked modest enough from the outside, but it was almost entirely covered by frescos on the inside, which is uncommon for Armenian churches. The main subject of the frescos is the life of Mesrop Mashtots, who was canonized by the Armenian Church. His tomb is located to the right of the altar. Returning to the original question, I found out that the issue of the sepulture of St. Mesrop was discussed on the level of a council of princes.

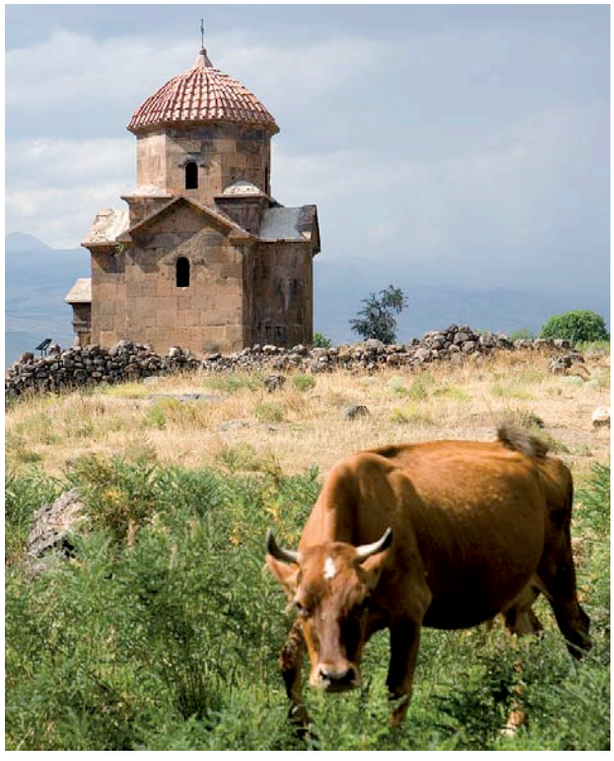
In the vicinity of the basilica there is a cemetery and a chapel called Tukh Manuk. Next to the cemetery is a hill crowned by ArmenTel's radio towers and a strange-looking building. The name of the hill is Kond, and the building has an interesting story. One of the residents of Oshakan, who happened to be well-off, had a dream that he had to build a chapel dedicated to Gregory the Illuminator in his home village. Also being somewhat religious, he decided to follow his vision and commissioned the construction of the church on the hill. After a while, when the chapel was complete, he had another dream. The later dream prompted him to build a dome over the chapel. Incidentally, the construction of the

A well-off resident of Oshakan had a dream that he had to build a chapel dedicated to Gregory the Illuminator in his home village. After a while, he saw another dream that prompted him to build a dome over the chapel.

HOLLY RELICS

Mesrop Mashtotz died in 440, in Armenia's ancient capital of Vagharshapat (now Echmiadzin). As he was a man of great significance, the choice of the place of his sepulture was of top priority. Therefore, a council of princes (nakharars) was assembled. There were many suggestions: some proposed the Taron region, Mashtots's native land, while others argued for the Gokhtn prinicipality, where the master started his clerical work, yet others suggested that he should be buried in Vagharshapat Cathedral, in the tomb of the saints. But the final word was given to Prince Vahan Amatouni, as he was "strong in faith and earthly power". Thus, the remains of Mashtots were transported in a regal procession to Oshakan, in Amatouni's hereditary possessions. They were kept in the tomb in the church that Amatouni built and specifically dedicated for that purpose. The second church was built in its place in 1640 by Catholicos Pilibos Akhbaketsi. The one that we see today is the third church built on the same foundation; it was commissioned by catholicos George IV in 1875-1879.

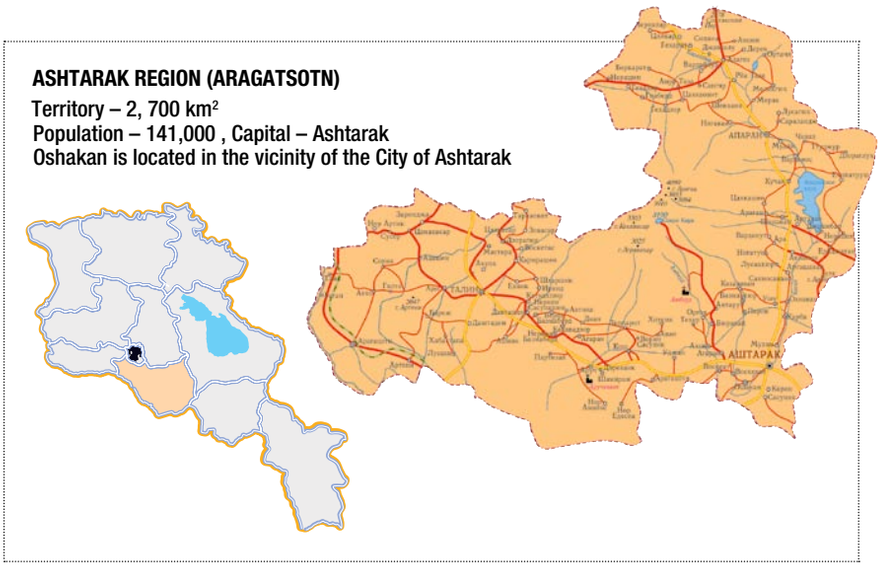






Basilica of St. Mesrop Mashtotz,
built in 1875 – 1879 AD







dome was taking place when we came by. Because our car couldn't manage the steep slopes, I rushed to the summit on foot. After a rough fifteen-minute hike, I was rewarded by a magnificent view.

On one side of the hill the view included Mount Aragats and Mount Arai Ler, with the Ararat Valley spreading on the other. Two builders, a father and a son, were working relentlessly on completing the dome under the harsh sun. The hill also held the ruins of the cycloid castle that dated back before the 1st millennia BC. These ruins were discovered during the construction of the radio towers, and ArmenTel had to pay fines for utilizing lands of archeological significance. A portion of the fines went to fund the excavation of the ruins of the castle, which was unfortunately later abandoned. Another important landmark in Oshakan was the bridge over the river Casakh. Built in 1706, the bridge significantly reduced the distance to Echmiadzin. Our friend, the candle vendor, also told us that there was a 7th century church, St. Sion, or Mankanots, as it is called by the locals. I gave in to my desire to see the Mankanots Church. Confused by the directions of the residents, we found ourselves in Voskevaz, a neighboring village. The patriotically predisposed residents tried to sell us their own St. John Church, and others recommended Badal's Temple as the infamous St. Sion. Nevertheless, we did not regret the side journey: stunning vineyards spread

The hill held the ruins of a cycloid castle that dated back to the 2nd – 1st millennia BC. The ruins were discovered during the construction of the antennae, so ArmenTel had to pay fines for utilizing lands of archeological value.

over the picturesque countryside, the area was famous for its wine. Because our driver refused to drive any further, we followed on foot. We soon discovered one of our promised pseudo-destinations, the Temple of Badal, which was beautifully located overlooking the Casakh River Canyon. On our way back we finally found St. Sion. We were amazed by its modesty and beauty. It was quite similar to Ashtarak's Karmravor Church of the 7th century, only smaller. It was located between Voskevaz and Oshakan on the bank of River Shahband, a tributary of Casakh. The interior decor of the church consisted of replicas of Rafael's "Madonna" and Leonardo's "Last Supper", as well as other articles of arts-and-crafts, mostly made by the local children. Overwhelmed and tired by our sight-seeing, as well as the long hike, we rested on a bench next to a manmade basin by the river. The clouds gathering around Aragats suggested rain, so we decided to hurry back to Yerevan. ■







Vordan Karmir

Ancient symbol of power and admiration, essence of beauty and goodness, the one creature whose glory does not fade in the face of the ravages of time. At first, it might sound queer that these qualities are attributed to a 12-millimeter long red insect. The lowly scale bug, however, lies at the center of the creation of one of the most rare and special pigments known to man. The secret of the preparation of the truly permanent dye, one which defies the destructive forces of light, temperature, humidity and time, was kept by our Armenian ancestors for over 2,000 years, passing it down from generation to generation. Tragically, the secret was lost only 100 years ago as artificial dyes gained broader acceptance among consumers.

text : **GAYANE MIRZOYAN**

Hovik Matevosyan

THAT VERY BUG

Sitting among many others, a small jar holds a thick fluid of deepest crimson, looking for all the world like a jar of red raspberry jam, "here it is, the Vordan Karmir," my guide, Armen Saakian, stated.

The tiny chamber to which I had been led in Matenadaran was tightly packed from floor to ceiling with sagging bookshelves. A 17th century Testament was open on a stand and carefully covered with a cloth. Everything in the room had an air of sanctity and without thinking, I reached out for the jar. Surprisingly enough, the pot of bug jam had a very pleasant smell. The odor was reminiscent of a long-stored wine of the highest quality. In spite of its olfactory appeal, these desiccated and processed insects were not designated to be eaten or otherwise consumed.

Pointing to the minute palette of seven colors, ranging from dark-blue through blackberry to Jaffa-orange, Armen clarified,"These are the famous dyes extracted from Vordan; in the whole world only a fortunate few have access to them." The pots in front of me were not a complete set– one was missing. In fact, the missing tone was the same shade of truest crimson that made "Araratean cochineal" famous throughout the world.



Aroshn Aslan

THE LOSS OF THE WONDER OF THE ORIENT

The dye has been prepared in the Ararat Valley since the most ancient times. The Bible mentions that Noah's descendants wore garments colored with a red dye made from the scale bug. Records of Sargon II that dated to 714 BC make note of the precious crimson fabrics had been taken from the country around Ararat as trophies of war. The dye extracted from the adult insects was used by the kings and high priests alike to seal their most important documents. Ancient physicians also took advantage its medicinal qualities: soothing temperatures, antiseptic for wounds, and for contraception. The textiles made with Armenian crimson were highly valued in Greece and Rome alike. The beauty queens of the time had many cosmetic uses for the bug. Additional recognition came during the Arab invasion in the period of 7th to 9th centuries AD, when the Europeans declared it the "Wonder of the Orient" for its unique ability to delight the eye. Some of the more specific descriptions of the dye and the bug are to be found in the notes of Arab travelers and explorers. A renowned writer and geographer, Abu-Isaak Al-Istarkhi, mentioned in his book the *Roadmap of Kingdoms* (930 AD): "In the city of Dabil (Dvin) woolen dresses, carpets, pillows, saddles, ropes and many other articles of Armenian industry are made. Also, the red dye kirmiz is manufactured here, and it is used to dye fabrics. I discovered



Aroshn Aslan

THE DYE EXTRACTED FROM THE INSECT WAS USED BY KINGS AND PRIESTS TO SEAL THE MOST IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS. MEANWHILE, PHYSICIANS USED ITS MEDICINAL QUALITIES.



that kirmiz is extracted from the larvae that knit around themselves just as silkworms do." It is universally known that Vordan Karmir does not knit. Perhaps, this may be evidence of how protective Armenians were about their craft, resorting to deception and misinforming the foreigners. Another Arab traveler, Shams Ud-Din Al-Muqaddas, came up with a slightly more credible report: "Kirmis... is a worm that lives in the ground; women go there and collect the worms in copper .... Which they later place in bread ovens." In the period of the 9th through the 11th centuries AD, Armenians were active in international commerce. Dvin was an important transit destination on many trade routes. One of the essential exports was crimson. Armenian carpets made of red wool were very much in fashion in ancient times. Judging from the high value of Vordan, its manufacture surely generated great returns. and naturally the dye trade flourished. In addition to Dvin, Artashat was also known for its dyes. Form the 7th to the 13th centuries there were so many dye manufacturers in the city that it was often called Kirmiz.

From a much later period, there is some evidence that Stradivarius and Leonardo Da Vinci used Armenian crimson, and that Rembrandt tried to acquire the vordan as well.

With Columbus's discovery of the Americas, Vordan Karmir had to give way to its crimson cousin, the South American cochineal. Brought from the New World, the new bug received wide popularity for its ease of use in production and availability. That said, its qualities were no match for vordan's, but the immigrant bug became more and more widely used. The Armenians of the time may also have erred in failing to guard the production secrets used for the new bug as closely as they had the old.





Hayk Mkrtchyan

THE UNDERGROUND LIFE OF THE ARARATEAN CHOCHINEAL

The life of the red scale bug is also tangled in mystery. They spend most of their days up to 5 centimeters below the ground, feeding on the roots the plant called Vordan. They come out to the surface only during their mating season, in the months of September and October, that lasts about 40 days. The males and females are distinctly different. Only the females are used for extracting the pigment; they are bigger than the males and have an oval shape. After conception, the females return to the underground where they lay their eggs. Accomplishing this important mission, the adult females soon die. To observe the creatures in their natural habitat, you have to travel to the grasslands of the Ararat valley on a early Autumn morning. You won't miss the bright puddles of congregating crimson specks. The locals claim that in the old days there was so much of Vordan Karmir that they made the entire valley look like it was covered with a crimson carpet.

THE LIFE OF THE RED BUG IS TANGLED IN MYSTERY. THEY SPEND MOST OF THEIR DAYS UP TO 5 CENTIMETERS BELOW THE GROUND. THEY COME OUT TO THE SURFACE ONLY DURING THEIR MATING SEASON.

AZAZELLO'S MAGIC POTION A LA ARMENIA

Armen Saakian admits: "We managed to extract that very crimson color, referred to as "tzirani" (apricot) in the manuscripts, but we are having trouble keeping it fixed. The dye changes its tone rapidly."

Nevertheless, the search for the ancient recipe continues in Matenadaran. A great hope is laid upon experiments with the roots of the Indian plant Lotur, as many ancient authors claimed that it aids the brightness of the desired crimson tone.

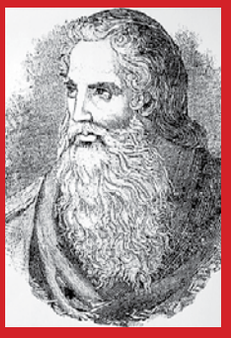
For a time, the scientists were puzzled by the fat reserves of the insect. Constituting 30% of the insect's overall body weight, it was getting in the way of

THE "RED" ROOTS

The origin of the word roots meaning "red" in many languages can be traced to Vordan Karmir. For instance, "chervonny" (red in Russian) originated from the word "cherv", which means "worm" in Russian. More remarkably, the Greek "koginos", Turkish "kurmuz", Hibrew "karmil", Farsi "kirmez", and, finally, Armenian "karmir" – all originated from the Indo-European root "kirmi", which mean a "worm".



Matenadaran



And on hearing such wise sayings, Artashes went to the bank of the river. And seeing that the maiden was beautiful, and having heard these words of wisdom from her, he desired her. And calling Smbat, his chamberlain, he told him the wishes of his heart, and commanded that he should obtain the maiden for him, swearing unto the great Alan nation oaths of peace, and promising to send the youth back in safety. And this appeared wise in the eyes of Smbat, and he sent messengers unto the King of the Alans asking him to give the lady Satenik his daughter, as wife unto Artashes. And the King of the Mans answered, «From whence shall brave Artashes give thousands upon thousands and tens of thousands upon tens of thousands unto the Alans in return for the maiden?» Concerning this the poets of that land sing in their songs: «Brave King Artashes mounted his fine black charger, and took the red leathern cord with the golden ring. Like a swift-winged eagle he passed over the river, and cast the golden ring round the waist of the Alan Princess; causing much pain to the tender maiden as he brought her swiftly back to his camp.» Which being interpreted that he was commanded to give much gold, leather, and crimson dye in exchange for the maiden. So also they sing of the wedding.

MOVSES KHORENATSI

The History of Armenia, 5th century



acquiring the pigment, which is only 2-5%. However, the problems associated with the excess fat was resolved in Matenadaran. They learned to separate it during the boiling process, the same way as glycerol was collected during the preparation of soap. One of the recipes, written in 1830 by the Archimandrite of the Echmiadzin monastery Isaac Ter-Grigorian, dictates: "After the insects are mortified in the solution by potassium carbonate, they shall be kept in water for 24 hours. Then boil it in saponaria solution, add lytrhum and alum. Then filter and dry." In addition to the insect itself, the compound also includes hedgehog fat, ant eggs and other rarities. However, perhaps the most important ingredient of the mysterious dye is the prayer which is to be recited during the process of preparation, at least three times. "Ancient manuscripts give us clues that would be impossible to decode without knowledge of the Holy Scripture. Generally speaking, our forefathers would not start any project without a prayer," declared Armen Saakian, who has been serving as a deacon (sargavak) in one of the churches in Yerevan since 1993. In the exhibition halls of Matenadaran one can enjoy the finely crafted manuscripts of the ancient masters..

The images have preserved their original freshness, despite the fact that many of them were abused or kept in unfavorable conditions. Saving the books from frequent enemy attacks, Armenians immured them into the walls or buried them in the ground. Nevertheless, neither the damp of the monasteries, nor the hostile environment of the soil, managed



to extinguish the crimson fire of Vordan. Actually, the creature is not only instrumental in preserving the crimson of the manuscripts. It is also famed for having intense rejuvenating effects on human skin. Armen Saakian has spent over a decade on recreating the recipe for a skin ointment. Today the mildly pink "Vordan Karmir" cream is on the market to help those in pursuit of preserving their youth. It has amazingly efficient antioxidant, with moisturizing, purifying and antiseptic qualities. In medieval Armenia, only the ladies of the nobility could take advantage of Vordan, but now through the efforts of Armen Saakian and others, it is somewhat more accessible. The magic cream has already gained recognition in Europe and Russia. In the words of Saakian, "All that we have accomplished in our Institute so far is just a drop in the ocean. The manuscripts of Matenadaran contain many more secrets yet to be discovered." ■

NEITHER THE DISINTEGRATING HUMIDITY OF THE MONASTERY WALLS, NOR THE HOSTILE DECOMPOSING ENVIRONMENT OF THE SOIL MANAGED TO EXTINGUISH THE CRIMSON FIRE OF VORDAN.



armtv.com

To subscribe:

888.988.5288
818.558.4830

MGN | Paradise, Inc.
mgnparadise.com

Contra tabachi

Who would have thought that even back in the 17th century a rancid anti-tobacco campaign was taking place in Armenia? The evidence of this is contained in the archives. This campaign was led by the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, Hovannes Vanetsi, also known as Tutunji. Despite the high clerical rank, Tutunji was a desperate adventurer. He was the first traveler who managed to describe the sources of the Blue Nile to the rest of the world.



text by ERNA REVAZOVA
joint project with the Digital Library of the Armenian Classical Literature of the American University of Armenia
www.digilab.am



AT THE SOURCE OF THE BLUE NILE

In the period of the late middle ages the Kingdom of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) was considered a secluded and mysterious corner of the world, where Westerners did not set foot. The members of the Catholic Church were prohibited from entering the country by a special royal decree. As *The Life of St. Eustachius* tells, "Evil monks and clergy were prosecuting Saint Eustachius, even tried to assassinate him". St. Eustachius found shelter and spent his last days under the protection of Armenians. He died in 1353 AD and was buried in an Armenian church. This is just a minute example of the centuries long Armeno-Ethiopean friendship and cooperation. Nevertheless, if the secular Armenians often traveled to the country for trade, the clerical figures would seldom visit here. The visit of the Archbishop of Shamiramakert (Van) was very elevated and pompous. The Ethiopian chronicles account, "The Archbishop came from Armenia carrying the most precious relic – a piece of bone from the arm of our Eustachius." Tutunji further developed trust of the Ehtiopian by diligently answering all the questions about faith and the Nature of Christ asked by the chief Ethiopian cleric, Catholicos Constantine. In fact, Coptic Ethiopian and Armenian Apostolic Churches are very similar in their doctrine about the matter. Monophysitism (the belief in single nature of Christ) was the reason why the two, along with some other churches, separated from the Catholic Church during the Ecumenical Council of Chalchedon. During the two years of his stay in Abyssinia (1678-1680), Tutunji traveled to the most distant corners of the Empire. Thus, he became the first foreigner to travel to the source of the Blue Nile and see how the first tide of the great African river was born. Later on, he even managed to leave the country without any trouble. As Hovannes himself mentions in his memoirs, "No foreigner is able to enter the land, and even if he does, he will seldom be able to leave. But we, with the mercy of Christ and aid of the king, were able to do both… We decided to leave because the priests were interrogating us with questions of faith and righteusness."

Tutunji further developed trust of the Ethiopians by diligently answering to all the questions about faith and the Nature of Christ asked by the chief Ethiopian cleric and fellow monophysite, Catholicos Constantine.

AT THE COURT OF THE SUN KING

After leaving Ethiopia, Tutunji with his companions made their way back to Cairo, then to Alexandria where they took a boat to Livorno, Italy. Hovannes was very skillful in combining his work as a missionary and a discoverer with his struggle of liberation of Western Armenia. Tutunji and his contemporaries were romanticists – they assumed that attending parties thrown by European royals and telling them about the miserable plight of the Armenian people would turn the monarchs to action. Historians relate to Tutunji's death as the end of the "romantic" period of the Armenian liberation movement of the 17th century.

Armenians were given audience in France, where Louis XIV ordered a reception in their honor at Versailles Palace. This was one of



HANDWRITTEN HERITAGE FROM HOVANNES VANETSI

Hovannes wrote about his impressions from Abyssinia in the Manuscript called "the Journey". Today there are only two surviving copies: one is stored in the Archives of Matenadaran, the other was found in the Armenian Catholic Convent in Bzoummar, Lebanon.

Also, from the same period, two poems titled "About Tobacco" and "The Story of the Nasty Tobacco" reached our times. At first. their origin was somewhat ambiguous, as they were signed by just the name "Hovannes". However, all the experts agree that the author of these poems is the one and the only Hovannes Tutunji.

MEROUZHAN KARAPETIAN
Scientific Director of the Digital Library of the Armenian Classical Literature of the American University of Armenia.
ELIZABETH TAJIRIAN
Associate at the History Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia.

the most lavish venues, even for Versailles; there were about 55 diverse and exquisite platters on the menu. The Armenian delegation included some of the most accomplished and dedicated representatives of the Armenian community of the time: Shahmirad Bahishetsi, Vardapet Hovannes Vanetsi himself, Vardapet Zacharias Sisiantsi, Giuseppe the sun of Lazaros of Aleppo, Solomon, the Nephew of Vardapet Voskan Yerevantsi (the first successful publisher of printed Armenian Bible).

The Oriental guests told the Sun King and his court about the tough luck of the Armenians in their ancestral lands, as well as shared their impressions about their astonishing journeys into the distant lands.

THE STORY OF THE NASTY TOBACCO

Why on Earth would a cleric be nicknamed Tutunji? Tutun means tobacco in Turkish. So, the first thing that comes to mind is that our Vardapet was a fan of puffing tobacco every now and then. Or, maybe, being a man of enterprise and adventure, he owned tobacco plantations. But, in reality, everything happened to be much more curious. Tutunji earned his nickname by being a zealous fighter against tobacco. The evidence to support this hypothesis was also found in the archives of the Vatican. One of the translators at the service of the Roman Pope was Barsegh Barseghian (Don Basilius Barsegh). Among others, one of his responsibilities was to write descriptions of every Armenian who would appear at the Papal court. Actually, ninety-nine out of a hundred of these descriptions were negative. But our hero, Tutunji, happened to fall in the fortunate 1%. Barseghian "summarized" Tutunji in 20 points. The diligence and passion that he put in his job were admirable. Incidentally, he and Hovannes were personally acquainted before. As the clerk of Vatican writes, "There is no Armenian in the Orient who does not know him personally, or at least heard about his name." And thus, while Hovannes was around, Barsegh wrote about what he saw, but after Tutunji left, he continued writing about what he heard. Another point in the *Attestato de Joanne Episcopo Samiramides Armeno, qui cognominatur Tutungi* describes the story of the origin of the nickname. Tutunji is the man who speaks "Contra Tabachi" (against tobacco). In fact, he does not only speak, but writes poems on that issue. "About Tobacco" and "The Story of the Nasty Tobacco" are the two poems that reached our times. They reject and criticize the people who "drag fumes" and "buy the nasty weed." He also observes the problems caused by the addiction, "You harm not the health, but the soul!" The author scorns the one who spends the last penny on his vice, while his house is empty, and he has no food to put on the table. He advocates a healthy way of life and prudent spending of money. He advises that monetary excess can always be given to charity.

THE GREAT SPECULATOR/ ADVENTURER

The Catholicos of All Armenians Jacob Jugaetsi once appointed Hovannes to be his personal envoy on a mission to collect funds from the Armenian communities in different lands. This was despite the fact that the predecessor of Jacob, Catholicos Philippe Akhbaketsi, subjected Hovannes to anathema back in 1662. After being banished by the Patriarchate, Hovannes left Constantinople for a while, and then came up with sufficient funds to pay the penalty to the new Catholicos. He was vindicated by the Church and recovered his position of the Patriarch of Constantinople. At that point, Echmiadzin was in sharp need of covering its debts. Thus, the newly-recuperated Patriarch was sent to Poland by Jacob. Tutunji did collect the entire necessary sum… but then appropriated it to himself. The furious Catholicos ordered to decommission the crook. But Tutunji managed to overthrow his replacement, Lazaros Sebastatsi, safely return to Constantinople, and occupy his designation by bribing the Grand Vizier. After numerous ups and downs, Tutunji was finally and ultimately banished from Constantinople in 1667.

He also observes the problems caused by the addiction: "You harm not the health, but the soul!" The author scorns the one who spends the last penny on his vice, while his house is empty and has no food. He advocates healthy way of life.

Talented preacher, unruly adventurer, proponent of healthy lifestyle, glorious traveler, community leader… the man combined the most disharmonious cluster of qualities. ■

ARMENIAN DUDUK from Djivan Gasparyan

is an exclusive collection.

The exclusiveness of this collection is in the duduk, which is made by well-known masters and tuned up by Maestro Djivan Gasparyan. This instrument made in 1000 examples. Each of them has gold **signature of Maestro** that is a **quality** confirmation for the latter. Besides the duduk, this collection includes one **information booklet**, one **CD** recorded of well-known contemporary duduk players, as well as original compositions executed by the famous jazz and ethno-folk musicians, one **DVD** of a film translated in 4 languages, where **Maestro Djivan** tells interesting stories about the national instrument. Besides this film, there is a music video of Djivan Gasparyan after the **"Msho Gorani"** music.

Thus, purchasing this collection you will inscribe your name in the history of duduk that the value, as the value of each masterpiece, increases in the time. In a certain sense, you will become a member of an aesthete club, including your name in addition to their creators.

ARMENIAN DUDUK
from Djivan Gasparyan
collection is made with love and respect to the ancient Armenian traditions, and you will be able to become a part of ancient and beautiful legend about duduk that is the music of our heart.

Part of the income received from the sale of the **ARMENIAN DUDUK from Djivan Gasparyan** collection, will be sent for the duduk school construction of Djivan Gasparyan.

For information about the purchase of the **ARMENIAN DUDUK from Djivan Gasparyan** collection, call:

Yerevan (37 491) 42 57 22
Moscow (7 495) 745 13 95
USA (18 18) 434 77 14
www.armenianduduk.ru





ARMENIAN DUDUK
FROM DJIVAN GASPARIAN

Decorative fence of the park was removed during the reconstruction works.



Architecture of Soviet Armenia Moscow, 1961

Yerevan,
Moscovian Street

1949

More traffic lanes were added in the 1970s.



Soumi Mahnaian

Yerevan,
Moscovian Street

2007



Corbis

THE TURKISH CAMPAIGN

CANCELED

Stalin's translator Valentin Berezhkov recalls in his memoirs how a newly printed post-war school map of USSR was brought to the General Secretary's dacha. Stalin pinned it to the wall and said with a degree of complacency: "Let's see what we've done. Everything's good in the North. Finland faulted us and we pushed the border further away from Leningrad. The Baltic nations are ours again. Byelorussians, Ukrainians, and Moldavians now live together. We took back the Kuril Islands and Sakhalin, too." And, following along the Turkish-Armenian border with his pipe, he added: "This, this is where I don't like our border…"

text : **ARTYOM YERKAPIAN**

"LET THEM SHARE THE JEWS' FATE"

As early as the Fall of 1944, Stalin gave orders to prepare legal justification for annexing the Armenian lands seized by Turkey to the Soviet Union. This was not as much an attempt to right a historic wrong, as it was a desire to punish Turkey for being a passive ally of Germany throughout the war. An official document confirming the alliance between Berlin and Ankara was signed on June 18, 1941, just weeks before Germany invaded the USSR. On that day Franz von Papen, the former German chancellor and Fuhrer's envoy on special assignment, signed the non-aggression and friendship treaty with the Turkish Foreign Affairs Minister Sukri Saracoglu in Ankara. The treaty was clearly within the context of Germany's impending invasion of the Soviet Union. Many historians claim that this agreement – just like the Soviet-German Pact of 1939 – included secret protocols containing timelines for the Turkish invasion of the USSR and ensuing division of the Transcaucasus.

Ankara was counting on getting Armenia and South-Western Georgia. Pan-Turkic ideology had returned to the surface. Following the efforts of Azeri immigrant activists, a special committee pursuing the goal of creating a single Turkic state was formed in Erzerum. Not everyone among the Fuhrer's supporters approved of this scenario. Although the Nazis wanted Turkey as part of their military bloc, Berlin refused to grant all of Ankara's requests. Saracoglu brought the issue of the Reich's attitude towards Armenians to the table while negotiating the agreement with von Papen in April of 1939. It was made clear that the likelihood of an agreement with Turkey would increase dramatically, if the Fuhrer were to add Armenians as Semitic people that needed to be killed or deported. Active underground work of the Turkish lobby in Berlin resulted in printing an anti-Armenian article in *Der Volkischer Beobachter* – the official publication of the Nazi party. The author claimed that the Turks were right, that Armenians originated from Jews and should share their fate. The Armenian community in Germany had to make a monumental effort to convince the Nazi's main ideologist Alfred Rosenberg that such Turkish propaganda could not be allowed to be officially sanctioned. In the end, Rosenberg gave the green light for the University of Berlin's Professor Artashes Abeghyan to publish an article in the same paper, proving Armenians' Aryan, Indo-European roots. To Hitler, his arguments seemed more convincing than the Turks' allegations.

Returning to Turkish plans to invade USSR, it is important to note that Franz von Papen and the Turkish foreign minister Fevzi Akmak decided that the Turks would invade as soon as Germans defeated Russians at Stalingrad. Ankara was diligent about following its pledges as an ally. In early August of 1942, Turkish military forces approached the Armenian border and started large-scale maneuvers in the area. In his essay "Turkey Deals a Blow to Russia" American historian John Gill writes that Marshall Chakmak was ready to attack with the second and fourth armies, and 14th corps. The third and fifth armies followed immediately behind, with the objective of occupying Armenia and Georgia.

The convincing victory of the Red Army at Stalingrad ruined Turkish plans and put Ankara in an uncomfortable position, to say the least. Joseph Stalin was not going to forgive Turks for making him keep 26 divisions at the Southern border when those troops were desperately needed on the Western front. The Soviet dictator used Armenians to



Corbis

University of Berlin professor Artashes Abeghyan published an article which proved Armenians' Arian, Indo-European roots. To Hitler, Abeghyan's arguments were more convincing than the Turks' allegations.



Corbis

Captain Franz Von Papen, German Military Attache



Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey Sukru Saracoglu

TOP SECRET

The minutes from the Politburo meeting, where Anton Kochinyan was approved as the Secretary of Kars Region Committee of the Communist Party of Soviet Union, are stored in the Kremlin archives, in a folder marked "Top Secret". Nevertheless, there is indirect confirmation that in Spring of 1945 Kochinyan received a title that even members of his family did not know about. A note in his work-record card provided the clue. According to the card, from January of 1945 to December of 1946 Kochinyan was unemployed, which is hard to believe. To dispel any rumors, Kochinyan writes in his autobiography that he was studying in Moscow at a high level Party School during that period. However, the politician's daughter asserts that her dad lived and worked in Yerevan at the time. This means that he was hiding his true status.



People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the Armenan SSR, Sahak Karapetian



Национальная фотоагентство Аскания

"In 1921 the Turks took advantage of the Soviet Union's weakness and captured a part of Soviet Armenia. Therefore, the Soviet government raises the question of returning the territories that legally belong to us."



Corbis

exact his revenge. Soviet Armenia's administrators and organizations in the diaspora knew that this was a historic chance to win back some of the lost Armenian lands. At the end of 1944, the head of the newly established People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs in the Armenian SSR, Sahak Karapetyan, received a directive from Moscow: he was to prepare a historical survey of Western Armenia with legal justification for the Soviet Union's claims on these territories. Two months later the document was on the desk of the Commander-in-Chief. Sahak Karapetyan suggested three possible scenarios. In the first, only Kars and Ardahan –regions that were part of the Russian Empire until 1914 – were to be returned to Armenia. In the second scenario, the border was to be drawn according to the 1878 Treaty of San Stefano. This way the Aleshkert Valley and the city of Bayazet would also become part of Armenia. The third scenario presumed the return of Van, Erzerum, Mush, and Bitlis in addition to the regions listed above. Historians to this day are not sure which plan Stalin approved.

DON'T COUNT YOUR CHICKENS BEFORE THEY HATCH

On May 7, 1945, the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs in the USSR Vyacheslav Molotov officially presented Turkey with territorial demands. Moscow denounced the 1925 treaty of friendship and cooperation. For 11 days the Soviet Union and Turkey negotiated to repair the relationship between the two countries. The Soviet side insisted that a friendship treaty would be signed only after Ankara returned the illegally captured Kars and Ardahan. The rest of Armenian territories were not yet part of the discussion.

Stalin did not want a new war. He was convinced that everything would end peacefully, and Turkey would accept the ultimatum. All he needed was agreement from the Allies. Potsdam would be the best place to get approval from the United Kingdom and the United States. The Armenian question was raised on the first day of the Potsdam Conference. During a preliminary meeting, Vyacheslav Molotov said, "In 1921 the Turks took advantage of the Soviet Union's weakness and captured a part of Soviet Armenia. Armenians feel offended. Therefore, the Soviet government raises the question of returning the territories that legally belong to us." Anthony Eden, the UK Foreign Secretary asked, "Do a lot of Armenians live in the Turkish territory?" Molotov replied, "There are around 400 thousand Armenians there, with over a million living outside Armenia. Once Armenia has more territory, they will all return to their homeland." Then Molotov added, "Armenians are very capable and energetic people. Turks should turn Armenia over to us. It would be only fair…"

The discussion about Armenian territories continued during the sixth and seventh days of the conference. Winston Churchill – to Stalin's surprise – assumed the role of the Turks' defender. "I would like to direct the Generalissimo's attention to the fact that frightening Turkey is impermissible. Turkey is alarmed by constant verbal attacks and the concentration of Soviet troops at its borders…" Stalin was adamant: "We are talking about restoring the pre-World War I border. The border in the Kars and Ardahan regions is incorrect, and we told Turkey that if they want a good relationship with the Soviet Union, the border must be corrected." That is where Stalin drew the line. Others at the conference thought that Moscow wanted too much. They



Corbis

Suddenly Churchill assumed the role of the Turks' defender. "I would like to direct Generalissimo's attention to the fact that frightening Turkey is impermissible. Turkey is alarmed by constant verbal attacks and the Soviet troops at its borders…"

were ready to concede to Stalin on either the dispute over Poland, or over Turkey but not both. Stalin chose Poland. The request to push the Polish border back to the Oder and Neisse rivers was satisfied. Stalin did not, however, give up the idea of taking Western Armenia back. He decided to take Kars and Ardahan without the help of international allies. Meanwhile, Moscow's relationship with Washington and London worsened by the day. On August 6, Stalin was truly shocked by the news of an atomic bomb being dropped on Hiroshima. Military historian and former spy Igor Atamanenko – according to eyewitnesses – reproduced the General Secretary's reaction very well. Summoning the members of Politburo, Stalin said, "The march on Turkey is cancelled until better times. Turks should forever thank the Japanese, who suffered instead of them…"

Stalin's depression did not last long. He refused to allow the Americans to think that he could be easily scared. Stalin decided that the question of Kars and Ardahan would stay on the agenda. His methods would simply shift from diplomacy to military action. Marshall Zhukov was ordered to prepare for war. The plan was to advance from three directions: Armenia, Georgia, and Iran, where eighteen Soviet divisions had been positioned since the beginning of the war. It was no an accident that General Hovhannes Bagramyan, an Armenian, was put in charge of the divisions in Iran. On March 6, 1946, the American Consul General in Iran, Robert Rossow, wrote the following in a secret report to Secretary of State James Byrnes: "Bagramyan came to Tebriz and took charge of the Soviet troops. The previous commander, general Glinsky, did not have a lot of experience, while Bagramyan is an expert in tank warfare… This indicates that the Soviets are preparing for large-scale operations."

The Soviet strategy was to use blitzkrieg against the Turks. When the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Armenia, Grigoriy Arutyunov, asked Rokossovsky how long the military operation would take, the latter said, "I think, a week will be enough. At most, 10 days…"

The Kremlin was not in a hurry to decide on a starting date for the operations, since local communication was inadequate for the execution of military tasks. The entire infrastructure of Transcaucasia had to be reshaped for war. The region's economy was being militarized. Simultaneously, work was being done to form a governing body that could be installed in the liberated territories right after the successful military operations. Party veterans state that a secret Politburo decision made Anton Kochinyan the Secretary of Kars Regional Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (later Kochinyan became the First Secretary of the Central Committee of Armenian SSR). The Central Committee of Armenia also gave Moscow possible candidacies for secretaries of Van and Erzerum regional



First Secretary of the Central Committe of the Communist Party of Armenia, Grigoriy Aroutyunov



National Film Library of Armenia

Tbilisi's appetite rose to new heights. On December 20th 1945 an article by academics Djanashia and Berdzenishvili – claiming not only Kars, but also Erzrum oblast as historic Georgian territory – was published in the Izvestiya daily.



Corbis

ARMENOPHOBIA

Immediately before the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, armenophobic propaganda saw a rise in Turkey. Prime-minister İsmet İnönü gave an order to free all the imprisoned Young Turk leaders, and gave them important governmental jobs. The masterminds behind the Armenian Genocide, Talaat and Enver, were ceremoniously reburied in Istanbul. Later, the butcher of Armenian people, Kazim Karabekir, became the head of parliament. There was a partial draft in Turkey in 1940. Drafted Istanbul Armenians were given neither weapons nor military training. In fact, historians have determined that a concentration camp in the vicinity of Konya was created specifically for drafted Armenians. Armenians' deportation to Konya was to begin as soon as Turkey entered the war on Germany's side.

committees. The first issue of the new "Red Kars" newspaper was even printed in Yerevan and scheduled to be handed out to the troops following the capture of the city.

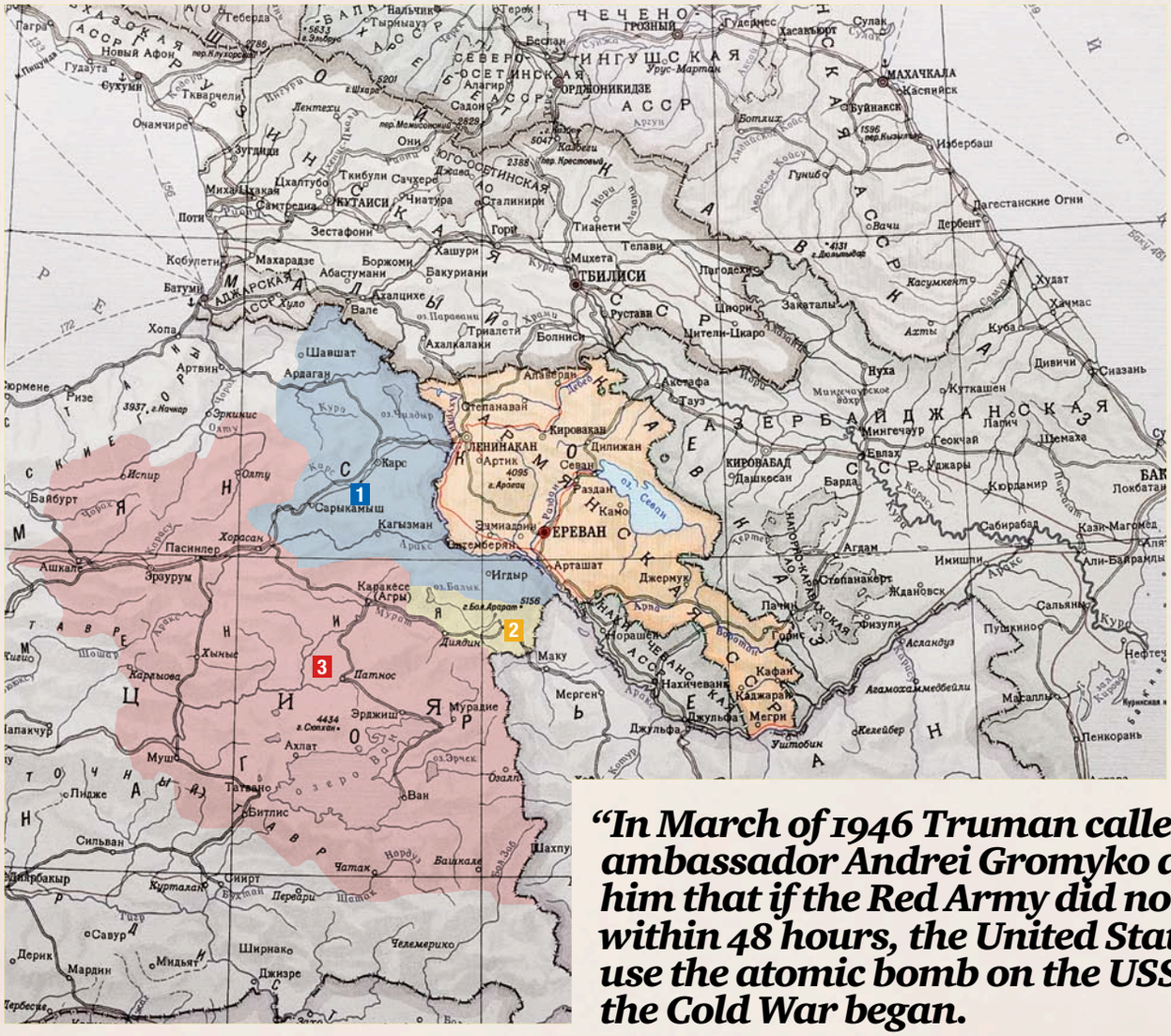
Excessive enthusiasm on the part of Armenia fueled envy from the Georgian side, whose leaders thought that the developing situation could also be to their advantage. Tbilisi used its influence in Moscow to try to convince Politburo members that most of the land that Armenians claimed really should be part of Georgia. In the fall of 1945, the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the Georgian SSR, Georgy Kiknadze, presented Lavrentiy Beria and Vyacheslav Molotov with two report notes. These notes stated that the Georgian administration insisted on annexing at least 13 thousand of the 26 thousand square kilometers that would be liberated by Soviet Union to the Georgian SSR. This conflicted with Moscow's original plan to give Georgia only the North of Ardahan, roughly five and a half thousand square kilometers. "Aside from the Southern sectors of former Batum and Artvin regions, in our opinion, the Georgian SSR should also get its historic provinces – Ardahan and Oltin regions," reads one of the notes. Stalin and Beria liked the idea. The efforts of the influential Georgian lobby in the Kremlin soon increased Tbilisi's appetite. On December 20, 1945, an article by Djanashia and Berdzenishvili was published in the Izvestiya daily newspaper. The authors went back to the times of Tzarina Tamara, claiming not only Kars, but also Erzerum Region as historic Georgian territory. According to them, Armenia should have received only ten thousand square kilometers, the Southern portion of the Kars Region.

The Turks did not hesitate to react to this counting of unhatched chickens. Sukri Saracoglu, Turkey's prime-minister at the time, told Soviet Ambassador Vinogradov, "First figure out your internal disagreements, and only then present your pretences to us."

WENT AND SPAT IN THEIR FACE

The new territories were to be settled and developed. Soviet Armenia's population was clearly insufficient for that, so the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia, Grigoriy Arutyunov, convinced Stalin that the best way to solve the problem would be mass repatriation of Armenians from the West and Middle East. On November 21, 1946, the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR passed a resolution entitled "Activities and Events with the Goal of Returning Armenians from Abroad to Soviet Armenia". Committees for repatriation were formed in 12 countries, including the United States, France, Romania, Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria. About 360 thousand Armenians stated their desire to return to their homeland. In December, the first ship with Armenians from France arrived in Batumi. Only a few months later the number of repatriates was already in the tens of thousands. Armenia welcomed everyone with open arms, but could not provide them with suitable living conditions. The repatriates were housed in basements and barns, and were consoled with promises that the Red Army would soon liberate Western Armenia, and they would be given houses and land. This repatriation effort did not last long, two years later it was abruptly ended with another resolution, this time by the Soviet of Ministers.

What was the real meaning of the revocation of repatriation efforts? The year was 1948, and the military operation



Map with the options of territorial changes offered by Sahak Karapetian to the heads of the Politburo

1. Kars and Ardahan, which until 1914 belonged to Russia, are connected to Soviet Armenia
2. The borders established by the San Stefano Treaty
3. Van, Erzerum, Mush, and Bitlis regions also included

"In March of 1946 Truman called in Soviet ambassador Andrei Gromyko and told him that if the Red Army did not leave Iran within 48 hours, the United States would use the atomic bomb on the USSR." Thus, the Cold War began.

had been postponed several times. It was clear that the international climate was less and less favorable for Stalin to start a new war. The West might have been more tolerant of the Iron urtain's movement to the South, if Stalin had not been so greedy. With the question of Western Armenia still unresolved, the Man of Steel was already dividing Iran, where in 1946 a puppet pro-Soviet "Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan" was declared in the Northern regions. Washington and London could not watch the growth of Soviet expansion without responding. Great Britain moved much of its navy into the Persian Gulf and Eastern Mediterranean in the summer of 1946, while the United States stated their plans to send a fleet that included the new USS Franklin Roosevelt to the shores of Turkey. Earlier, on March 5, Truman sent the USS Missouri to Istanbul. On March 21, President Truman gave a verbal ultimatum to the Soviet Union. Many years later, in January of 1980, Senator Henry Jackson, a White House insider, made the contents of the ultimatum available to the public. He wrote, "In March of 1946 Truman called in Soviet Ambassador Andrei Gromyko and told him that if the Red Army did not leave Iran within 48 hours, the United States would use the atomic bomb on USSR." Thus, the Cold War began, creating a very unfavorable climate for the efforts of reuniting Western and Eastern Armenias. Yerevan started to realize that there would be no military operations. The Soviet Union soon left Iran. The excess of Soviet troops was moved out of Armenia and Georgia.

Formally, Moscow did not renounce its territorial demands until after Stalin's death. It was Nikita Khrushchev, who sanctioned rebuilding a friendly relationship between Turkey and the Soviet Union. On July 19, 1953, *Pravda* published the Soviet Foreign Ministry's note to their Turkish counterparts which said, "In the name of preserving a good relationship with their neighbors and strengthening of peace and security, Armenia and Georgia considered it possible to renounce their territorial demands. Thus, the Soviet government states that it has no territorial conflicts with Turkey." Commenting on his decision, Khrushchev declared at a Central Committee plenary meeting: "Turks are our comrades and friends. Yet we went and spat in their face. That was stupid. As a result, we lost a friendly Turkey..." Even after this implicit apology the relationship between Turkey and the Soviet Union remained chilly. It was under Brezhnev that a bilateral agreement confirming the absence of territorial demands was signed between the two countries. On August 22, 1978, Turkish Premier, Bulent Ecevit, and Head of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Aleksei Kosygin, signed a document, which put an end to the hopes that the communist regime would be able to solve the Armenian question. ■



Prime Minister of Turkey, Bulent Ecevit



TABULA PRO MEMORIA



English historian Christopher Yoker writes, “If Armenians would have suffered a defeat at Sardarapat, a word “Armenia” would have only been a geographical term…”General Movses Silikov fought a great battle in May 1918.

When Armenians were involved in the confrontation between great empires and the very existence of the nation was at stake, the responsibility for Armenia’s fate fell on the shoulders of the military. And General Silikov – the commander of the Erevan Army division – brilliantly accomplished the mission he was entrusted with. It is not for nothing that Marshal Bagramyan had called him the “most gifted of all the military leaders of that era.” Unfortunately, the Soviet authorities had a strange way of rewarding Silikov’s excellent service – he was executed.

Even today, the names of many heroes, undeservedly neglected during the Soviet Era, remain in oblivion.

To redress this injustice, YEREVAN magazine decided to place a memorial tablet (Author – Tariel Akopyan) on the house (located in Yerevan, Pushkin Street., #38) where the general resided during the years of the First Republic of Armenia (1918–1920). Supported by the Defense Ministry of Armenia and the city administration, a ceremony commemorating the placement of the memorial tablet took place on the 16th anniversary of the National Army of Armenia.

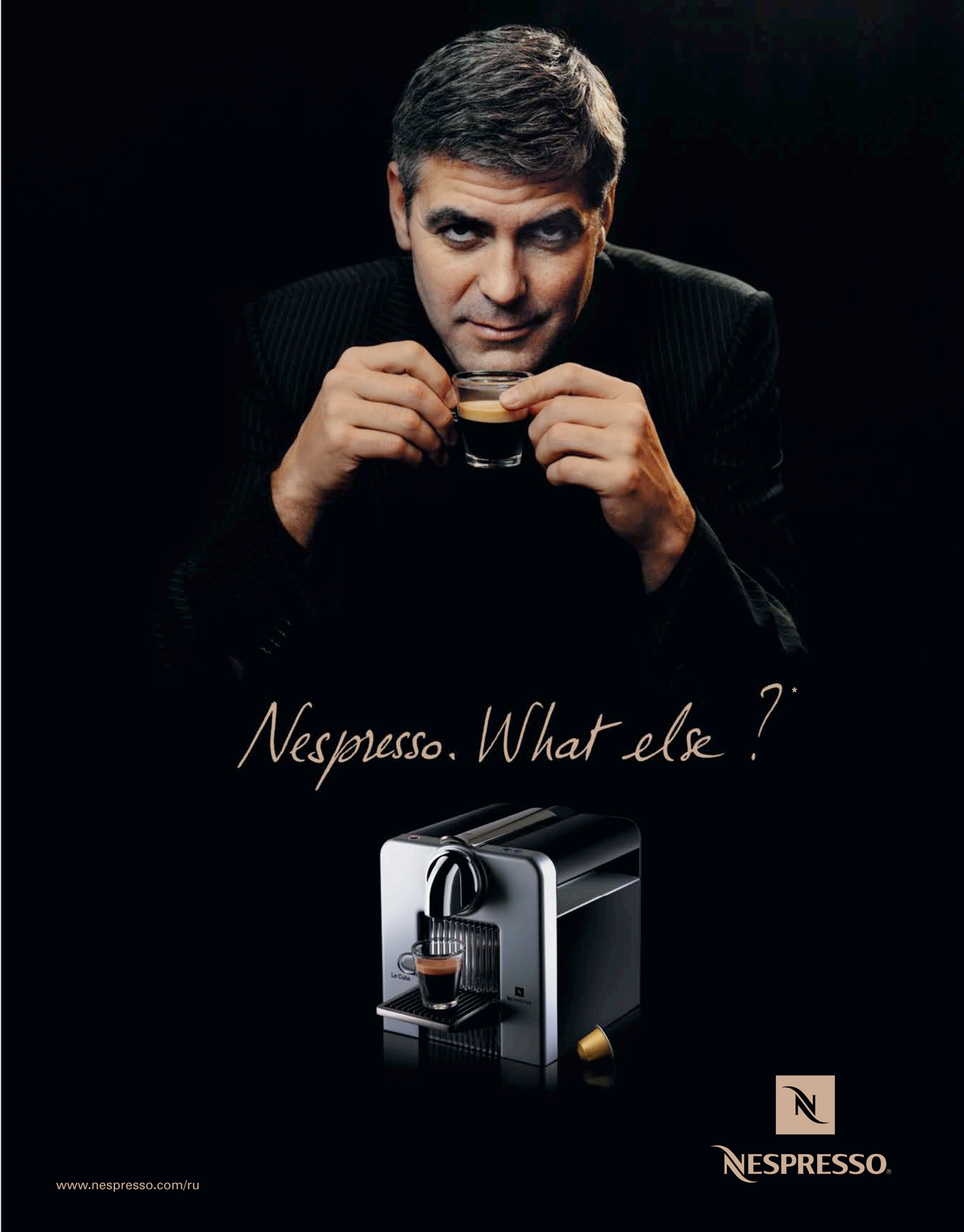








Armo Martirosyan


Nespresso. What else ?*
Le Cube
NESPRESSO
www.nespresso.com/ru

For frequent flyers:
Patravi TravelTec GMT
featuring a world first in
time zone functions.



The new Patravi TravelTec GMT features multiple time zone functions unique in the history of watchmaking: the third time zone display can be set either eastward or westward using the new single push-button mechanism for which the patent is pending. The automatic CFB 1901 chronograph caliber also allows the wearer to quick-set local time in hourly increments and to set the date backwards as well. The new masterpiece from Carl F. Bucherer will thus delight both frequent flyers and those who appreciate complex watch movements.

www.patravi-traveltec-gmt.com

CARL F. BUCHERER

FOR PEOPLE WHO DO NOT GO WITH THE TIMES.