

**Arno Babadjanian:
an Armenian Composer in the Soviet
Context.**

by

Nune Melikyan

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts Performance Studies.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Introduction.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Chapter I. Armenian Folk Music and its most characteristic traits.....	1
Chapter II. Education and early influences of Arno Babadjanian.....	13
Chapter III. Maturity in life and career. Independence of style.....	23
Chapter IV. The main compositions of Babadjanian's mature and late periods. Diversity of musical language.....	42
Chapter V. Babadjanian's legacy.....	61
Appendix	72
Bibliography	95

Abstract.

The cultures of Armenia and Russia often seem to be considered similar. This perception is rooted in Armenia's former status as one of the Republics of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the recorded history of Armenia's culture predated that of Russia by several centuries. Armenian and Russian cultural traditions, such as music, arts, and literature, come from different origins, language groups, geographic regions and time periods. And, while the Sovietization of Armenia in 1920 certainly led to the initiation of new cultural paradigms, thousands of years of traditions did not dissolve in a seventy-year period.

Arno Babadjanian was a multifaceted musician of the Soviet era who was known as a virtuoso pianist at the beginning of his career, a progressive composer of classical music, and in the late decades of his life, the most renowned composer of popular and film musics. The aim of this thesis is to extensively recount Babadjanian's life and career. While numerous dissertations are dedicated to this subject in Russia and Armenia, limited materials are available in English. This thesis is the first English-language study that provides an in-depth exploration of the composer's bibliography, music, and legacy.

Nous assimilons souvent la culture Arménienne à celle de la Russie car dans la perception de l'histoire elle faisait partie de l'ex URSS. Cependant, la culture Arménienne débute bien de siècles avant celle de la Russie: les racines de la musique, de l'art et de la littérature proviennent d'origines différentes, d'un mélange de dialectes, de régions et de périodes spécifiques. C'est seulement en 1920 que la soviétisation du pays a engendré de nouveaux paradigmes culturels en Arménie, sans pour autant effacer plus de mille ans de tradition.

Cette thèse sur Arno Babadjanian offre une occasion unique de découvrir la vie et le travail de ce compositeur Arménien durant l'ère soviétique. Certes, il existe un nombre considérable d'écrits sur ce sujet en russe et en arménien, mais il est très rare de les trouver en anglais. C'est donc une première qu'un ouvrage publié dans cette langue permet une dissection aussi précise de la bibliographie, de l'art et de l'héritage du compositeur.

Introduction.

The Soviet Regime is one of the most fascinating phenomena in the history of the XX century. While often undeniably destructive and cruel to its people, the Soviet Regime nevertheless managed to create a special legacy in culture, art, and music. For instance, many wonderful organizations, cultural and governmental, were initiated during or *despite* the dictatorship. Concurrently, many talented individuals lived up to their glory thanks to these institutions, while at the same time many geniuses perished under the Soviet Regime's merciless grip. Whereas certain Soviet composers such as Sergei Prokofiev, Dmitry Shostakovich, and Aram Khachaturian are still widely recognized in the history of Western music, many have been undeservingly neglected.

The most notable Soviet Composers of Armenian descent are Aram Khachaturian (1903–1978), Arno Babadjanian (1921–1983), Eduard Mirzoyan (1921–2012), Lazaros Saryan (1920–1998), and Tigran Mansurian (1937–). Today, the best known by far is Khachaturian, who was one of the first composers of Armenian origin to obtain a serious musical education (at both the Moscow State Conservatory and the Gnnessin Academy). Khachaturian also was extremely prolific as a composer and active as a member of the Soviet musical societies.

Goals: In addition to providing a detailed biography and discussion about musical accomplishments of Babadjanian, this thesis also offers a broader overview of Armenian music and Armenian Soviet composers. I will demonstrate that Babadjanian's diverse music represents a valuable contribution to Armenian music. This thesis will recount Babadjanian's considerable success during his lifetime and investigate the subsequent erasure of his legacy on the international scale. While offering a discussion about Babadjanian's career achievements, this paper will provide a comparison with the stylistic and career development of his colleagues and contemporaries. It will trace the development of his style by analyzing his music, referencing the major influences on his style of classical and popular music and their relevance within the Soviet era. **Chapter I** offers a short overview of Armenian folk idioms, the nationalistic music idea and musical activities of Soviet Russia and Armenia. **Chapter II** concentrates on the bibliographical facts as well as the composer's early influences. **Chapter III** discusses the mature period of the composer, while **Chapter IV** surveys five of his most notable works from the mature and late periods: Violin Concerto, *Heroic Ballade*, Piano Trio in F-sharp Minor, Violin Sonata and *Six Pictures*. **Chapter V** highlights and assesses Babadjanian's achievements as a composer of popular music and discusses his touring activities and consequent legacy.

Methodology: My research has benefited from two recent studies of Babadjanian and his music, which are (to my knowledge) the only major publications about him in English:

(1) “Exploring Armenian Keyboard Music: Roots to Modern Times” by Marina Berberian (2010), which provides a short biographical overview and analysis of Babadjanian’s piano compositions, and (2) “Armenian Folk Elements in Arno Babadjanian's Piano Trio in F-Sharp Minor” by Artur Tumajyan (2016), which concentrates on the analysis of the Piano Trio. These papers represent a significant step towards unveiling Babadjanian’s legacy for Western readers. Nonetheless, each focuses specifically on certain aspects of the composer’s life and works. My thesis, in contrast, presents more complete examinations. Though the materials in Russian and Armenian exist in abundance, the lack of material in English inspired me to undertake this study, which makes this information available to English readers for the first time. This thesis aims to provide an overview of the Soviet period, Babadjanian’s biography, and a stylistic survey of his major works. This study draws upon extensive interviews I have conducted with individuals who knew Babadjanian personally, as well as on a wide range of Armenian- and Russian-language sources.

Some challenges in undertaking this research include the following: many scholarly publications about Babadjanian (including some of the most important ones) suffer from a lack of precision—for instance, the dates of the premieres of the same work may vary from one source to another, and some occasionally misquote their sources (especially when citing non-Russian non-Armenian sources). For instance, numerous materials refer to a French critic called René de Juvenel, who allegedly wrote praising reviews for Babadjanian’s Piano Trio and *Heroic Ballade*. With due diligence, I attempted to locate the original sources of every foreign review mentioned, but the majority of them (including Juvenel’s) could not be found. Tumajyan and Berberian often use foreign reviews citing the Soviet/Armenian sources. While I respect the work of all previous scholars, I nevertheless preferred to keep mostly the original references that I was able to consult directly or from a reliable source.

The second difficulty is that few recordings exist of Babadjanian’s piano playing. Since after his youth he was seen among Soviet musicians mainly as a composer (and not as a pianist), he was therefore seldom able to make recordings. His reputation as a serious pianist suffered further because, by the 1960s, he had become best known as a composer of popular songs and

film scores. And while his popular works have been recorded extensively, some true gems of his classical works—such as *Poem-Rhapsody* or Third Quartet after Shostakovich—have never been recorded. Notably, some of his important collaborations were never audio- or video-documented either, such as his performance of his Piano Trio together with violinist David Oistrakh and cellist Sviatoslav Knushevitsky. Yet, the few existent recordings of his performances offer remarkable evidence of Babadjanian's skills as a pianist. His virtuosity and charismatic artistry shine through even on the latest recordings from the final decade of his life, when the composer suffered from the terminal illness. It is a great loss, from both researchers' and listeners' perspective, that so many other important performances were never recorded and are lost to history.

The mission of every researcher is to find the unknown details and shed the light on their existence. The ultimate goal of this thesis is to offer the Western public an opportunity to discover a composer whose life and art represent an important part of Armenian and Soviet heritage, both in classical and popular music.

Acknowledgements.

I would like to thank to my advisor at McGill University, Professor Edward Klorman. His dedication, support, and readiness to help in any matter related to the thesis process were beyond any researcher's dreams. I will forever bear my deepest gratitude for Prof. Klorman's dedication, professionalism, integrity and patience. My thanks go to the other members of my D.Mus. Committee at McGill University, Professors Lena Weman and Axel Strauss.

My sincerest gratitude goes to my family. The continuous support from my parents, Dr. Melikset Melikan, PhD and Lyusya Manvelova, who contributed immensely to this thesis and to whom it is dedicated.

In preparation of this paper, I have undertaken four trips to Armenia in 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2018. While the majority of my trips was self-funded, the generous McGill Travel Award made it possible in 2017. The Babadjanian International Foundation's support and cooperation played a crucial role in collecting the files and missing parts of the composer's life. I am grateful to Ara Babadjanian and Armen Sarkisyan for a kind permission to use all the archival materials, photographs, and music score that appear both in this thesis and in my documentary *Arno* (Melik 2018). I am also grateful for the numerous conversations and precious insights that they willingly shared with me. Thanks are due to all the musicians and colleagues of Babadjanian whom I had a chance to interview for the documentary. These include Aram Satian, Martin Vartazarian, as well

as Armen Budagyan, Armen Babakhanian, Anahit Nersesyan, Mikhail Kokzhaev, among many others. My sincere thanks to the President of the Willian Saroyan Foundation Scott Setrakian, and Varoujan Der Simonian, the President of the Armenian Museum of Fresno. The Yerevan State Conservatory librarian provided insightful directions for finding resources and materials. She spent an entire afternoon helping me locating numerous volumes of the journals *Soviet Music*, which was the leading music periodical during Babadjanian's lifetime. My gratitude also goes to Arthur Ispirian, the head of the Radio and Television Archives in Yerevan, Armenia. His assistance helped me to find some of the rarest recordings of Babadjanian. My gratitude extends to Alexandre Siranossian who provided some insightful details on Babadjanian's trips to France, as well as shared some rare photographs of the composer.

The monograph *Arno Babadjanian: The Instrumental Art* (Amantuni 1985) is the most impressive source of musicological analysis of the composer's works. I thank the author's son, Hayk Melik-Adamyan, for graciously giving me this book and sharing some details about his mother's work. Mr. Melik-Adamyan also kindly gave me the book *Arno Babadjanian* (Teroganyan 2001) which is an irreplaceable (and rare) monograph on the composer's life and works. The historical evidence and scholarly articles contained within these journals became a generous source of information for this thesis.

All quotations from texts originally in Armenian, Russian, French, or German have been translated by the author. Musical examples and photographs discussed throughout the thesis appear in the Appendix. These materials either appear with the kind permission of the Babadjanian International Foundation or else are not subject to copyright.

Chapter I.

Armenian Folk Music and its most characteristic traits.

Although Babadjanian's music was written during the Soviet period, his style is strongly influenced by older Armenian traditions and folk music. In order to assess the use of the national elements in the composer's music, one needs to be acquainted with the Armenian folk music characteristics. Since the Soviet regime left its imprint on the development of national arts of all the Republics, a historical overview will facilitate in a better comprehension of the cultural mélange in the Soviet Union.

Discussing this subject of nationalism in music, the noted Georgian-Soviet musicologist Georgiy Ordjonikidze observes: "The idiom of national style belongs to the terms which are frequently used. Yet, a convincing interpretation of this term causes a lot of difficulties." (Ordjonikidze 1988, 145; Понятие национального стиля относится к ряду тех, которыми легко и часто оперируют и которые на деле труда поддаются четкой и убедительной расшифровке.)

Indeed, what exactly do we refer to while speaking of nationalism in music? In regards to music derived from folk idioms, do we consider Igor Stavinsky's *Petrushka* or Sergei Prokofiev's First Symphony to be Russian national music? Do the Hungarian Rhapsodies of Franz Liszt belong to the category of folk music or represent an internationalized standard of instrumental brilliance? The ambiguity involved in interpreting musical nationalism or folk traditions is often hard to pin down. For instance, during his lifetime, Tchaikovsky was often criticized within Russia for writing music which was "not nationalistic enough," even though elsewhere his music was always considered Russian. And while his musical language was different from that of Rimsky-Korsakov, who used folk legends and fairy tales, do we perceive it any less Russian? Likewise, the national traits of German dances can be traced in many compositions of Ludwig van Beethoven. Nevertheless, we consider them as examples of classical music tradition rather than as specifically German ethnic or nationalist music.

However, every culture possesses some distinctive qualities to its folk music, and the majority of the composers frequently incorporate these features as a base of their artistic work. Babadjanian did not make an exception, as his music is deeply rooted in Armenian culture. The abundance of folk elements is present in all his instrumental and vocal compositions. Even his most innovative works bore an utterly national color. Therefore, in order to discuss the importance of Armenian culture in Babadjanian's works, this chapter will provide a brief yet holistic overview of

Armenian folk music, followed by a timetable of the multicultural Soviet conjecture prior to and during Arno Babadjanian's active years as a composer. It will also facilitate the understanding of the particularities of folk music which distinguishes music written by the composers of Armenian origin from the composers of other cultural backgrounds as well as what are the folk elements which Babadjanian incorporated in his works most frequently.

The origins of Armenian music.

As an ancient nation, Armenians have an extensive history of arts, including music. Already starting in the III century BC, the Armenians developed a musical art form. The Urartu Empire, from which modern Armenians trace their cultural heritage, existed from the XIII century BC to the VI century AD and was rich in cultural blending of Eastern and Western traditions and connections. Kritapor Kushnaryan explains: "The memory of the Armenian nation for long preserved a number of traditions inherited by the Urartians ... These traditions include ... highly artistic myth of the Armenian King Ara and the Assyrian Queen Semiramis ... The Armenian peasant songs have also preserved echoes of the myth of ... the mother of Semiramis" (Kushnaryan 2016, 19). Within the Urartu Empire, the Assyrian culture was the closest one to Armenian; therefore, the fact that the latter composed songs based on Assyrian characters is easily perceivable. The geographical location of the Armenian cities advanced ties with different, if not sometimes, polar traditions and influences.

Armenia's most glorious days date from 189 BC to AD 12. Donn Bor Cherdet argues that "during the reign of Tigranes the Great, from about 95-55 BC, Armenian culture reached a height not attained since. Tigranes gathered musicians and artists at his court ..." (Bor Cherdet 1959, 2). The first mentions of Armenian music tradition appear in the documents of Armenian historians Movses Khorenatsi, Մովսես Խորենացի (410–490 AD) and Favstos Buzand, Փավստոս Բուզանդ (circa 317 to 387). Khorenatsi is known principally as the author of "The History of Armenia," the first chronicle of the Armenian nation. This text provides an account of the art of *gousans*, an Armenian equivalent to the German *Meistersinger*, and he also describes the sounds of Armenian folk instruments. The *gousan* art flourished starting from the V century AD. According to Bor Cherdet, Khorenatsi writes that they "composed and performed a great deal of music, and were allowed access everywhere" (Bor Cherdet 1959, 2). Replaced by *ashugs* in the XVII century, *gousans* were musicians and storytellers, accompanying any significant events. Their art was elaborate and sophisticated, and their poetic language was literary and lyrical.

Gousans used the *khaz* notation system (discussed later in this chapter), whereas the *ashugs* simplified the tools, making their poetry and music more accessible for the general public.

One of the most prominent elements in Armenian folk music is its mourning tradition. As early as the V century AD, both Khorenatsi and Buzand mention lament singers; centuries later, the Armenian poet and theologian Grikor Narekatsi, Գրիգոր Նարեկացի (951–1003) echoes them in mentioning “mourning women” as an influence for Armenian folk musical traditions. Narekatsi wrote a “Book of Mourning Songs” in 1002. This monument of Armenian philosophical thought, comprising ten thousand lines, was later translated into numerous languages. It was first published (in a fragmentary version) in 1513 in Venice, and the first complete publication was made in 1673 by Voskan Yerevantsi, Ոսկան Երեւանցի (1614–1674) in Marseilles. Ex. 1.0 is a modern transcription of Narekatsi’s prayer. This prayer refers to the Resurrection, and the music exemplifies a complex rhythmic organization with extensive ornamentation.

The Baptism of Armenia in the IV century changed the course of its history and fundamentally influenced Armenian culture for centuries. While Christianity had been practiced in secret by a growing number of people in Armenia during the I and II centuries, it was Saint Gregory (302–325) and King Trdat III (287–330) who in 301 AD officially proclaimed Christianity as the official religion of Armenia and thus made Armenia the first nation in world history to adopt Christianity as the state religion (University of South Florida 2019).

Der Hovhannissian writes that “with the adoption of Christianity, music was soon intoned in the Armenian churches” (1956, 19). All pagan songs dedicated to the glorification of the sun, fire celebration and sacrifices were banned, and these were replaced by the Christian ideas of love and faith. With the creation of the Armenian alphabet in the V century by Mesrop Mashtots, Մեսրոպ Մաշտոց (362–440 AD), the Armenian culture flourished through new expressive possibilities. The writing initiated the creation of monophonic hymns and liturgical works known as *sharakans* (շարական). The art of *sharakans* reached its climax in works of Saint Nerses Shnorhali, Ներսես Շնորհալի (1116–1143), who was the head (*Catholicos*) of the Armenian Church. The idea of one God was expressed through this monophonic tradition (Der Hovhannissian 1956, 66). Since God is one, this tradition holds that there should be just one voice celebrating Him. The Armenian music has kept the monophonic tradition ever since.¹

¹Armenian monody was dominating up until the XVIII century

Due to the influence of sacred music, Armenian folk music was also monophonic. A large number of songs and dance types accompanied many kinds of events, including weddings, burials, and fieldwork. Folk songs were meant to mirror the everyday life of the rural people, depicting children at play, expressive lover's feelings, and so on.

One of the most striking characteristics of Armenian folk music is its rhythmic organization. Besides the seemingly capricious rhythmic figures, and pronounced use of syncopations, the meter also often varies within a song. Silvert Poladian also points out that "the duple rhythms have a small predominance over those in triple rhythm" (1942, 32). Haprik Der Hovhannissian (1952, 105), nevertheless, argues that Poladian's conclusions overlook the dominance of trochaic meter in Armenian folk music, which has parallels with similar features in folk musics of Germany, England, and Ireland. The most striking examples of complex rhythmical figures are found in Armenian folk dances. The rhythmical base of the dances was usually played by a *dahool*, a drum with two tones. Bor Cherdt notes that "various parts of Armenia have different styles of dancing, consequently musical styles also differ" (1959, 10). Describing a dance originating in northeast of Mount Ararat, the author points out that the music is characterized by "narrow melodic ranges and much ornamentation such as trills and grace notes." This dance, called *Galust I Brungh*, includes a drum part to be played on the *davool* line that perfectly exemplifies these features. It is characterized by the extensive use of the short-long rhythm (Ex. 1.1). Discussing the time signature and rhythmic characteristics of Armenian folk music, Der Hovhannissian (1952, 105) emphasizes the common use of the pattern shown in Ex. 1.2. The accentuation of the weaker beat becomes a somewhat original trait not only of Armenian's folk music but also its church music. Later in this thesis, my analysis of Babadjanian's style will demonstrate the strong influence of these Armenian rhythms on many compositions. The original rhythmic elements are generously incorporated in such pieces as the "Sasun Dance" and *Dance from Vagarshapat*, the Finale of the *Heroic Ballade*, and the third movement of the Violin Sonata. According to Poladian (1942, 16), an expert on modality in Armenian folk music, the modes in Armenia folk music are diatonic, with frequent use of the Phrygian mode. Der Hovhannissian (1952, 97) also relates Armenian folk modes to the "Greek Phrygian tetrachordal or pentachordal genus" and the chromatic scales. The folk melody in Ex. 1.3, chosen by Der Hovhannissian (1952, 102), is based on the Greek Phrygian tetrachord.

Regarding formal structure, Tumajyan (2016, 19) notes that another characteristic of Armenian folk music is its repetitiveness. In her thesis, Der Hovhannissian based her conclusion

on the analysis of the second ethnomusicological volume of the celebrated scholar of Armenian music Komitas Vardapet (discussed further below). She provides a detailed outline of the forms: “the largest number of songs (thirty-three) were cast in a-variation form (or a-form). Twenty-two songs were in a-b form, fourteen songs in fragmentary (one phrase) a-form” (Der Hovhannissian 1952, 112).

The “purification” of Armenian music from foreign influences (Arabic, Iranian and Turkish in particular) became a life mission of Komitas (1869–1935), a renowned ethnomusicologist and an ordained monk. Having received his education in Tiflis and Berlin, he was one of the first Armenian composers who also received Western compositional training. However, besides lecturing about Armenian church and folk music abroad and introducing it to such composers as Saint-Saëns and Debussy, Komitas spent a considerable amount of time walking through the villages of rural Armenia and collecting over four-thousand songs. In a way, Komitas was a predecessor of Bartók, and his meticulousness in taking notes was impressive. For instance, when notating dance songs, he made sure to include the breaks in the melody that reflected breathing pauses and long jumps. According to Komitas, while the plowing and other working songs were heavily influenced by Persian modes, the pure Armenian folk songs lived on in women’s singing: bridal preparations, lullabies, weaving songs, etc. His song collection was published in two volumes, which have become an encyclopedia of Armenian folk music. The first volume was published by a student of Komitas, Spiridon Melikyan. The latter based it on Komitas’s notes, which, according to Alina Pahlevanian, were given to him parting gift from his teacher (1985, 375).

In an interview to Vera Gornostaeva, Babadjanian mentioned that he spent hours transcribing, arranging and analyzing the melodies from Komitas’s collection (Gornostaeva 1982). The foundation of the folk music, planted by the ethnomusicologist, became an invaluable source of inspiration for the future composer: numerous renditions and arrangements of Komitas’s songs could be eventually found in Babadjanian’s works.

In 1915, during the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire (which ruled in Armenia 1299–1923), the majority of Komitas’s work was lost. With the massive annihilation and deportations, a new genre of Armenian songs emerged both in the folk and the *ashug* tradition: the songs of *antuni*, literally meaning “homeless.” These songs, created by Armenians who were forced to leave their lands and homes, are characterized by the lamentation and lyrics about the lost motherland. Komitas Vardapet is renowned as the author of one of the most popular *antuni*

song, “Crane” (Կռնկւկ). One of the variations of this song is illustrated in Ex. 1.4.

A little-known fact outside the country is that Armenia is the only nation that has used three different musical notation systems: *khaz* (խազեր), the Limondjian system and Western notation. *Khaz* is a neumatic system, originating in the VIII century and broadly used up until XVIII century for the Church services. Robert Atayan, a specialist of the Armenian neumatic system, notes that there are two types of *khaz*: prosodic and melodic (Atayan 1999, 17). With twenty-five basic symbols, each sign, placed on top of the word, indicates a particular sound, pitch, musical intonation, or length. Example 1.5 illustrates some of the main basic *khaz* elements of the prosodic group. The peak of *khaz* system occurred in the XII century; however, its sophistication and complexity made this system unfit for practical use. After the XIII century, the use of *khaz* decreased, though Komitas dedicated extensive research to transcribing the system. Unfortunately, all of his findings were lost during the events of 1915.

Born in Istanbul, Hambartsoom Limonjian (1768–1839), a follower of the influential XII century Armenian theologian Nerses Shnorhali, made it his mission to remove the influence of Turkish modes from Armenian church music. This influence was seen to be problematic because Armenians were devoted Christians, whereas Turks belonged to the Islamic religion. Establishing a clear distinction between Christian and Muslim music was, therefore, an important task.

Later on, Komitas continued the purification of both Armenian church and folk music from Turkish modes, *oussoulis* (Der Hovhannissian 1952, 53–56). He walked miles deep into deep rural areas in order to observe improvised, traditional melodies. While trying to preserve the *sharakans* unaltered and transcribe them using Western notation, Limonjian realized that the well-tempered system could not account for all the semitones of Armenian intonation. This inspired him to creating an alternative system, simpler than *khaz* and more precise than the well-tempered Western tuning. His system is neumatic and does not use a five-line staff. It allows a melody to be noted in the space between the lines of the text of a spiritual poem (Armenian Travel Bureau 2018). Though the Church was against the new notational system, Limonjian managed to gather a great number of students and followers who contributed to the preservation of pure Armenian music. Limonjian’s system came to be widely used: for instance, Komitas used it for notating the folk music in his notebooks. Example 1.6 demonstrates the Limonjian alternative to Western music notation. Undergoing extensive changes and transformations, Armenian folk music has survived countless Muslim impositions and invasions, as well as

numerous Church reprisals. Regardless of which power was in control at various points throughout history, Armenian folk traditions persisted and eventually became the most important inspiration for Soviet and modern-day Armenian composers. Armenian music began to experience the impulses of individual creativity and professionalism only by the middle of the XIX century. The country had to choose whether to comply with the international trends, Muslim influence or to maintain its national and cultural autonomy. The opposing trends facing Armenian musical culture became the status quo, which resulted in a variety of standards of national style ranging from the musically inclusive Tigran Tchoukhajian² to the purified Komitas, from the expressive Aram Khachaturian to the ascetic Aro Stepanian.

The Pre-Soviet period in the history of Armenian music.

After centuries of Muslim oppression, invasions, and political wars, Armenia “entered the family of Soviet Socialist Republics on November 29, 1920” (Kristapor Kushnaryan 2016, 279), becoming a part of the Soviet Union. Given that music from any given country unfailingly reflects its political events, this turn of events impacted the Armenia’s musical legacy forever. Ordjonikidze (1988, 160) argues that national idioms are often influenced by the predispositions of the social character. While this statement is true, it is important to remember that a movement promoting Armenian musical nationalism started prior to the Soviet regime in 1920 with the aforementioned work of Limonjian, Komitas, and Melikyan. As a church musician, Komitas also possessed a deep knowledge in Armenian monodic music, and his contribution to the idea of what he regarded as a pure or true Armenian music (both church and folk) remains unmatched.

One of Komitas’s students, Migran Tumanjian (1890–1973), studied in Paris and New York. Tumanjian worked extensively to gather folk material of the Armenian refugee community in New York and collected over a thousand patriotic folksongs (*gousan*). The two volumes of his collection were published in Soviet Armenia (Tumanjian 1972 and 1983). Other important contributions to Armenian national music came from Tigran Tchoukhajian (1837–1898). After receiving his formal education in Constantinople and Milan, the composer dedicated his life to the promotion of Armenian culture. He composed the first nationalist Armenian opera, *Arshak the Second* (1868), which gained him immediate success. The opera was based on a story written

² Tchoukhajian willingly used Islamic *oussoulis* in his music. *Oussoulis* are the modes used frequently in Turkish and Azeri music. They usually consist of quarter-tone intervals.

by the Armenian poet of the VI century, Movses Naregatsi, concerning the eponymous emperor of Armenia, one of its most influential. The plot of the opera showcases the aspirations of Armenians for independence from Rome and Iran in 367 AD. Tchoukhajian also became the first Armenian composer to compose for Western orchestral instruments. According to Nelli Shakhnazarova (1985, 8), Kristapor Kara-Murza (1853–1902) was among the most active advocates of Armenian music. He dedicated his life to collecting Armenian music and educational activities. In less than seventeen years, he single-handedly organized over ninety choruses, gave almost two hundred forty-eight concerts and brought together more than six- thousand participants. Armen Tigranyan's (1879–1950) opera *Anush* (1908) marked a new era in Armenian classical music.

This work is based on real folk music and masterfully replicates its character. The plot is based on a drama by the prominent Armenian writer Hovhannes Tumanyan (1869–1923). In 1950 Tigranyan wrote another opera inspired by Armenian epic poems' hero, David Bek. Romanos Melikian (1883–1935) received his education in the St. Petersburg Conservatory, and was one of the founders of the State Opera in Yerevan. Similar to Komitas, he was a dedicated ethnomusicologist (Pahlevanian 1985, 375). In 1917, he collected songs from the Shirak region, and in 1927–1928 he published two books of Armenian national songs and dances.

A short overview of the Soviet nationalism idea.

Nationalism in music was openly celebrated during the Soviet era. The Soviet motto of “friendship of nations” (*дружба народов*) became one of the regime's main goals, and composers were encouraged to transmit their cultural traditions through music. Although the official ideology of the Soviet Union was based on the unity of the Republics, the friendship of nations concept, nevertheless, supported artistic expressions reflecting each nation's cultural traditions. The tide of Georgian, Armenian, and Uzbek works flooded the musical scene at that time.

Adams (2011, 34) points out that the opening of opera houses, philharmonic societies, and conservatories in various Soviet Republics was a necessary step toward establishing a national music identity for each. The teaching of the Russian academic tradition was spread around: teachers and performers would be sent to different Republics for an internship. While some Republics had previously established music institutions (for instance, in Tiflis, the pre-Soviet capital of Georgia), this idea proved to be beneficial for many states. Ethnic composers, deprived of academic foundations, were grateful to learn the musical basics. At the same time,

were exposed to different musical idioms and inspirations. Huseynova (2016, 40) adds that for the Soviets, national music was regarded as a symbolic marker of national identity. Soviet multiculturalism was reinforced with the help of numerous festivals, and cultural exchange programs. It was broadly promoted in the media and press. For instance, starting from 1935, annual festivals of music and culture known as Weeks of National Art became regular events. Within three years, Ukrainian, Kazakh, Georgian, Uzbek, and Azerbaijan festivals were organized. In 1939, Kirghiz and Armenian arts were celebrated (Sima 1947, 28), as Bishkek and Yerevan hosted the festivals. During a week, and up to ten days, a chosen country showcased its latest works in art. The celebration of dances and national food were a crucial part of these festivals. Though these events had a mainly positive influence on national arts, there was a controversy in that policy. Despite the fact that organization of national art celebration events became a signature practice in the Soviet period, Adams (2011, 13) notes that, while in the general the “harmless” displays of national pride were encouraged, the regime’s ultimate motive was the removal of ethnic differences. It was the image of the worker, of any nationality, that had to prevail and was the final ideological destination.

Soviet policy obliged every Republic to open Composers’ Unions. During the 1930s, in every capital, these Unions ensured that each composer complied with the guidelines of the system. These institutions still operate to this day in the majority of former Soviet Republics. During the Soviet era, the Unions possessed a decisive power, and their members played a leading role in shaping the Soviet musical landscape. Officially, the mission of these Unions was to encourage the composers’ ideas, whereas in reality, they were holding control over everything that happened in arts. Before any work was performed publicly, the standard procedure was to obtain multilevel permissions. Besides, auditions of the work before the members of the Committee were necessary. The Plenums—the organizational committee meetings with the following concerts and conferences showcasing the latest works and tendencies in the Soviet art—became obligatory.

The “Sovietization” of music in Russia.

In parallel with other Republics, Russian Nationalism also rose from 1937. Tchaikovsky was presented as an essentially folk-oriented composer. Glinka’s art was also praised: his *Life for the Tsar* was staged with success on numerous occasions, although in this period, it was renamed as *Ivan Susanin* and stripped of any mention of the Tsar (Fairclough 2016, 22). In 1937, a letter

from the Committee on Artistic Affairs read that the “Soviet Republics are supposed to study their own folk culture; but if that study seemed to be leaning too far away from Russian influence, they could be censored for that too” (Fairclough 2016, 6). Soviet propaganda regarded Rimsky-Korsakov’s cultivation of folk legends as the correct type of art. Mussorgsky’s music was portrayed as a messenger of the people’s protest against social evil and injustice. In order to encourage the right type of nationalistic music, the Stalin Prize was created in 1941. As Frolova-Walker notes, the ideology music was “the music national in form, socialist in content” (2016, 180). The second-degree category was specifically designated for music written by the ethnic composers. In 1941, the list of the second-degree awards included Prokofiev’s film score *Alexander Nevsky*, along with works by Armenian, Georgian, Azeri, Ukrainian, and Belarusian composers. Aram Khachaturian was included in the list for his Piano Concerto.

This political move influenced decades of nationalist musical compositions. After 1941, the majority of composers, willing to acquire the prestigious distinction, realized that it was easier for them to compose works in a conservative “national” style with no experimental ideas. However, the consequences of the 1948 Resolution, the list condemning some modern composers’ works,³ also included stagnation of the musical experiments in the country and a fortified idea of representation of the socialist ideas in music.

Nationalism in Armenian music during the Soviet period.

Sergei Koptev (1985, 153) states that the establishment of the Soviet government in Armenia facilitated the blossoming of national art. In many regards, this is true. The increasing urge of Armenian musicians to obtain a professional musical education coincided with the fact that the “compulsory universal education was introduced and many higher educational establishments set up” (Kushnaryan 2016, 279). Opened as a musical studio in 1921, the Yerevan State Conservatory received the status of the higher education institution in 1923. Kushnaryan also points out that “the Soviet period has been marked by increased interest on the part of the Armenian people in their historical past” (2016, 9). Indeed, in 1934, the Folk Music Research Laboratory was initiated within the Conservatory walls. This laboratory’s activities contributed tremendously to the research of Armenian folk music. In 1938, the State Ensemble of Folk Instruments was created, and its concerts covered all the Republics of the Soviet Union (Pahlevanian 1985, 387).

³ The 1948 Resolution will be discussed in detail in Chapter III.

One of the most remarkable Armenian musicians of this period was Alexander Spendiarian (1871–1928), who moved to Armenia from Ukraine in 1924. Spendiarian's activities enabled the foundation of the State Opera House as well as the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra. A student of Rimsky-Korsakov, he composed opera *Almast* (1923), which embodied the best traditions of Russian symphonic music and Armenian themes. Spendiarian is considered to be the first Armenian symphonic composer. He wrote the *Yerevan Etudes* (1925), a symphonic work featuring two Armenian dances. Here the composer used quotations from a song written by the XVII century *ashug*, Sayat-Nova. In the 1930s, Aram Khachaturian (1903–1978) reached new heights in Armenian music. He brought a synthesis of Russian and Armenian traditions to large symphonic and instrumental forms. His Piano Concerto (1938) and ballet *Gayané* (1941) incorporate folk dance rhythms. They brought the composer overwhelming success, long-lasting relationships with the Soviet apparatus, and the Soviet people's affection. Such works as *Oriental March* (1937) by Nikoghayos Tigranian (1856–1961) and the ballet *Nariné* (1940) by Sarkis Barhudarian (1887–1973) highlighted the *ashugs'* themes, as well as the city romance motifs as basics elements of composition. The city romance genre occupied a notable place in Armenian composers' music. For instance, Spendiarian wrote many of them during the pre-Soviet period, and his romances are known to have operatic qualities: they tend to showcase traits close to such of legends, ballades and airs. Melikyan was fascinated with amorous lyrics and philosophical ideas, portrayals of pastoral and rural life. Aro Stepanian (1897–1966) wrote over 150 songs in this genre; in the 1920s and 1930s, he wrote many vocal compositions based on texts by Armenian poets. The composer's mature works convey the ideas of social inequality and people's struggle. Stepanian's music was an antipode of Khachaturian's as his compositional style was markedly different from Khachaturian's. Unlike the latter, Stepanian used Armenian monodic tradition, the nation's legends, and poetry as a basis for his works. Stepanian also wrote works based on Armenian historical figures, such as opera *Sasuntsi David* (1936).

Unlike Komitas or even Khachaturian, Babadjanian was one of the composers who was born at the rise of the Soviet Armenian culture and grew up concurrently with its development. The blossoming of national music was witnessed by the young composer and the results of the predecessors' work laid at the base of his professional education. Living the majority of his life in Moscow, however, Babadjanian used the musical achievements of the older generation of the composers as a never-failing inspiration of his compositional style. The monodic traditions,

the epic poems about ancient Armenia, the art of *ashugs* and Armenian literature became crucial elements in Babadjanian's works throughout his life, an influence that we will return to throughout the remainder of this thesis.

Chapter II.

Education and early influences of Arno Babadjanian.

As a child, Babadjanian was exposed to all sorts of Armenian traditions originated centuries back. Later in his life, the composer extensively used national folk idioms. However, it was during the Soviet time that Babadjanian had an opportunity to receive serious education, both in Armenia and Russia. The following chapter will provide a summary of his activities both as a student in piano and composition classes.

Education.

Arno Babadjanian was born on January 21st, 1921 in Yerevan, Armenia. However, all the official documents state January 22nd. The reason for this discrepancy was in the fact that Vladimir Lenin, the so-called great leader of the world's proletariat, died on January 21st, 1924. In order to avoid arousing the neighbors' suspicions, Babadjanian's parents could not have a noisy celebration on the Union-wide mourning date. They therefore eventually changed the composer's official date of birth to January 22nd (Grachev 2012).

Babadjanian's education occurred during an exciting time for the musical life of Soviet Armenia. During these years, many amateur and folk ensembles filled Yerevan's concert halls and streets with music. As previously mentioned, the 1930s and 1940s were full of important cultural events: in 1932, the Armenian Union of Composers was initiated, and the public attended the opening of the Armenian National Theatre of Opera and Ballet in the following year. The foundation of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra, together with the first Armenian symphony written by Khachaturian in 1934, established a new era of the Armenian cultural life (Amantuni 1985, 9). Babadjanian's interest in music started at an early age, and his parents encouraged his early development. At one time, in 1926, an official representative of the government came to the music kindergarten where Babadjanian was taking classes. He remarked about the child's talent: " ... I was invited to numerous kindergartens in the Soviet Union ... The work with children offered me a lot of joy ... One of them was Arno Babadjanian ... I advised his parents to give him professional music lessons" (Teroganyan 2001, 19). This designated "official" turned out to be none other than Khachaturian. Starting from that encounter, the relationship between these two musicians continued until Khachaturian's death.

Babadjanian was officially admitted to the Yerevan Conservatory in 1929. Though called

a “conservatory,” the institution provided only elementary, middle and high school education. His first piano teacher at the conservatory was Yevgenia Khosrovyan. Concurrently, he took composition classes with Vartkes Talyan (1896–1947). Talyan was a counterpoint specialist and a son of the prominent Armenian *ashug*, Sheram. Knowledgeable in traditional music, Talyan had a significant influence on young Babadjanian, instilling in him an admiration for folk music. Babadjanian’s abilities in composition were encouraged by his parents, and his first “serious” work, *Pioneer March* for piano, was written at the age of eleven. Yegishe Tcharentz (1897– 1937), Armenia’s most prominent poet and a friend of the Babadjanian family, published thousands of copies of this piece. The first edition also included a picture of picture of Babadjanian as a child.

Although Babadjanian received his formal education at the Conservatory, he was also influenced by Armenian traditional musics during this period, such as through his exposure to music-making by *ashugs*. Besides being educated and skilled musicians, many of the *ashugs* were virtuoso instrumentalists (specializing in such instruments as the *kemanche*) and authors of exquisite lyrics. Their legacy continues to this day, since schools of *ashugs* continue to teach and preserve their traditions. One of the most memorable musical experiences for young Babadjanian was attending a series of the dress rehearsals of Spendiarian’s opera *Almast*. The first staging fascinated young Babadjanian (Tegoranyan 2001, 53) and was forever imprinted in the composer’s mind. Based on a poem by the legendary Armenian poet Hovhannes Tumanian (1869–1923), whom the young Babadjanian admired, the opera’s nationalism and folk rhythms had a marked effect on young Babadjanian’s imagination.

At the age of seventeen, in 1938, Babadjanian came to Moscow for the enrollment exams at the Moscow State Conservatory. Unfortunately, the Yerevan Conservatory did not give its permission for Babadjanian’s studies in Moscow (Grachev 2012). Because of the Soviet bureaucracy, Babadjanian was accepted at the Gnessin Music Academy instead. This was only possible because of Khachaturian’s intervention; since he was well connected, he was able to make arrangements for Babadjanian. From this time forward, Khachaturian and Babadjanian entered into a rare mentor-protege type of relationship. At the Academy, Babadjanian was in the composition class of the prominent Soviet composer Vissarion Shebalin (1902–1963). During the same period, he also became a student of Elena Gnessin’s piano class (1874–1967). As a highly respected pianist, active cultural figure and professor who created cultural initiatives, including foundation of three musical institutions in

Russia, Gnessin's impact on Babadjanian's piano playing cannot be overestimated. As one of her students said about her: "To everyone that surrounded her, she kind of gave an impulse to self-discovery, self-realization" (Bulatova 2009, 144). Babadjanian finished a four-year program in two years and finally was accepted to the Moscow Conservatory in 1940, where he became a student of Konstantin Igumnov (1873–1948). A legend and titan of the Soviet piano school, Igumnov was a former student of Nikolay Zverev⁴ (piano) and Sergei Taneyev⁵ (counterpoint). It had long been Babadjanian's dream to study with Igumnov, and throughout his life, he stressed the importance of Igumnov on his development as a pianist.

The outbreak of World War II interrupted Babadjanian's musical studies. During the war, the faculty of the Moscow Conservatory was evacuated to various cities throughout Soviet Union: in Saratov (Russia), Tashkent (Uzbekistan), Tbilisi (Georgia) and Yerevan (Armenia). In 1941, Babadjanian completed military training in a city south of Moscow. Shortly thereafter, Babadjanian was directed to Saratov, one of the Moscow Conservatory evacuation cities (Ara Babadjanian, telephone comm., March 3rd, 2018). Although I have been unable to determine the exact dates, his military service must have concluded by 1942, since in that year Babadjanian was reunited with Professor Igumnov in Yerevan. A 1942 letter from Igumnov to Yakov Milstein dated November 18th, 1942 reads: "At the Yerevan Conservatory I am teaching twelve people, ten of whom had studied [with me] in Moscow. Among them is Arno, who is now also a composer as well" (Milstein 1975, 280). As for Babadjanian himself, he emphasized the value of Igumnov's training on all aspects of his professional life, not only as a pianist but also as a composer. In 1973, he wrote: "[Igumnov] taught *music*... Anyone who showed even a little bit of the compositional talent while studying with Igumnov would necessarily become a composer" (Babadjanian 1973, 103). While the extent to which Igumnov supported Babadjanian as a composer may be unclear all sources agree that he greatly encouraged his development as a performing pianist. At one of the lessons, Igumnov exclaimed "what a paw!" (Zolotova 2008, 48; Вот это лапа!) as reference to the impressive size of Babadjanian's hands. Teroganyan recounts a similar to that anecdote, attributing the following statement to Igumnov: "Arno, do you know

⁴ Nikolay Zverev (1832–1893) was a piano professor. He is known especially as the main teacher of such pianist as Serge Rachmaninov and Alexander Scriabin.

⁵ Sergei Taneyev (1856–1915) was an established composer, author and professor in Russia. Taneyev is an author of various theoretical books was a recognized master of counterpoint.

that your hands are extremely similar to Rachmaninov's?" (Teroganyan 2001, 43; Арно, знаешь ли ты, что твои руки похожи на руки Рахманинова?). The professor's addressing the resemblance of Babadjanian's hand to Rachmaninov's became anecdotal in the Soviet musical circles. The Moscow music professor Yuriy Saulskiy recalled that the reputable Soviet pianist Emil Gilels, while addressing Babadjanian's music and performance style, called him "an Armenian Rachmaninov" (Teroganyan 2001, 43).

At the same time that Babadjanian was continuing studies at the Yerevan Conservatory, in 1946, the Cultural Committee of Armenia sent him to the House of Culture of Armenia in Moscow. These institutions were residence houses where students lived, and many prominent musicians gave lessons. Only the most promising students from all over the Union were sent to receive free supplementary musical training. While continuing his piano studies with Igumnov, Babadjanian took composition lessons with Khachaturian from 1946 to 1948, and with Genrih Litinsky (1901–1985). Litinsky emerged as a highly influential composition teacher for Babadjanian. Already an important contrapuntist by the time when he worked with Babadjanian, he later wrote numerous important theoretical works, including *Polyphonic Composition* (1951), *Soviet Polyphonic Art* (1954) and *Tasks of Polyphony for Composers* (1965). The subsequent publications of *Textbook* (1965–67), *Imitations of Strict Writing in Counterpoint* (1971), and his article entitled "Some Features of the Soviet School Composition" (1986) established the modern Soviet school of counterpoint. Under his guidance, Babadjanian's composed Polyphonic Sonata, Dance from Vagarshapat, and his Piano Concerto. Litinsky's impact might be found in both Babadjanian's activities as a performer and composer. Bach's contrapuntal thinking fascinated Babadjanian, and this devotion to Bach can be traced in numerous works of his mature period. He often performed Bach's music for his friends, and in Litinsky's classes he spent hours on compositional exercises based on strict counterpoint (Amantuni 1985, 20). Almost at the same time as Babadjanian, Alexander Arutiunian (1920–2012) also composed a piece entitled *Polyphonic Sonata*.

Apoyan and Zolotova argue that the two composers "created a notion of the importance of polyphonic cycle in Armenian piano repertoire" (1985, 330). Indeed, before these two works, nothing similar existed in the Armenian repertoire. In 1947, Babadjanian graduated from the Yerevan State Conservatory in composition (as a pupil of Talyan). In 1948, he graduated from the Moscow State Conservatory with the highest Honors diploma in piano (as a pupil of Igumnov).

Babadjanian as a pianist.

The brilliance of Babadjanian's virtuosity mesmerized the general public and impressed his colleagues. A variety of sources, including diary entries, memoirs, and other publications, scholars, musicians, students, and friends emphasized the exceptional nature of Babadjanian's pianistic skills. During and after his lifetime, Babadjanian was regularly compared both as a composer and a pianist to Sergei Rachmaninov (as noted above). Besides their similar hand sizes, Babadjanian had a particularly vivid admiration for Rachmaninov's music. According to Babadjanian's son, Ara, his father started every morning by playing Rachmaninov and Chopin Preludes (telephone comm., October 8th, 2017).

Babadjanian's first milestone as a composer was the composition of his *Pioneer March* in 1932. Success as a pianist soon came in the following year: in 1933, as a 12-year-old, he won the first prize at the Republic Competition for Musical Youth. According to Teroganyan (2016, 15), the newspaper *Pioneer Call* published a long article praising the young virtuoso. In the spring of 1937, Babadjanian won the first prize in a piano competition among the students of Yerevan State Conservatory (Tumajyan 2016, 6).

In 1935, Babadjanian made his solo debut with the Philharmonic State Orchestra with Ludwig van Beethoven's First Piano Concerto. Pianist Nathan Perlman,⁶ who was in Yerevan on tour, happened to hear the young pianist. In his letter dated April 1976 to the Yerevan musicologist Shushanig Apoyan, Perlman writes: "The talented playing of the little musician ... made me swoon" (as quoted in Sarkisyan 2008, 66). The pianist wrote in his diary that everyone will know Babadjanian's name. For his graduation piano exam in the Conservatory, Babadjanian played the following works: Prelude and Fugue in C Minor of Taneyev, Chopin Etudes opp. 10 and 25, Beethoven's "Appassionata" Sonata, and both a prelude and the Second Piano Concerto by Rachmaninov. Arutunian claimed the Babadjanian's playing was outstanding, and the whole event seemed to be a first-class recital rather than an exam (Teroganyan 2011, 153). Arutunian and Babadjanian often performed together—mainly, the jointly composed *Armenian Rhapsody*, and *Festive*. Though not as virtuosic as Babadjanian, Arutunian was also a former student of Konstantin Igumnov's and a solid instrumentalist. Besides the Republics of the USSR, Babadjanian performed *Armenian Rhapsody* in Hungary, France, and in the United States. Another

⁶ Nathan Perlman (1906–2002) was a concert pianist, professor at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory professor, producer of television broadcasts and author of numerous books.

loss for the future scholars lays in the fact that none of the numerous performances were recorded.

Babadjanian's contemporaries point out his extraordinary capacity to draw a beautiful sound even from the least-expected instruments. Hacopian (2016, 214–220) gathered a significant collection of memories about Babadjanian's pianistic abilities. For instance, Nariné Arutunian (the daughter of Arutunian) recounts the following story about a London performance that included both Babadjanian and the well-known British pianist David Wild. Wild's performance was apparently sub-par, and he explained to the public after finishing that the grand piano's keyboard had jacked keys that had impeded his performance. Nevertheless, when Babadjanian played immediately afterward, he made the instrument sound perfectly well, to the astonishment of the audience. Another similar situation happened in Armenia. Lazaros Saryan, the Dean of the Yerevan State Conservatory, recalled that, at some point, the administration was thinking of getting rid of an old Becker piano. Babadjanian offered to try it, and under his fingers the worn and tired instrument sang, shone and spoke. Needless to say, the instrument remained at the Conservatory (Hacopian 2016, 39). Evgeniy Evtushenko, a renowned Soviet poet with whom Babadjanian collaborated extensively, said: "He was such a multi-diverse musician that he could do it all. He was an ingenious composer, and the ingenious pianist who could play everything." (Grachev 2012; Он настолько многогранный музыкант, что он мог делать абсолютно все. Он гениальный композитор, и гениальный пианист, который может играть абсолютно все).

More evidence of Babadjanian's performances comes from the internationally acclaimed Soviet pianist Sviatoslav Richter: "He could have been a legendary pianist ... but he composed [instead]. And, dissolved in composing, performed only his own works (as quoted in Sarkisyan 2008, 49). After Babadjanian's triumphant 1947 solo recital in Moscow, the acclaimed film director Grigori Melik-Avakyan (1920–1994) remarked: "Arno, dear, why do you compose music? We are losing a great pianist!" (Zolotova, 2008, 50; Арно, голубчик, ну зачем Вы сочиняете музыку? Ведь мы теряем великого пианиста!).

As a pianist, Babadjanian was considered the best interpreter of his own works. His performances as a soloist or chamber musician always drew attention. Aram Satyan, the head of the Composers' Union in Armenia, noted that the halls were fully packed with public standing in the doorways, and that Babadjanian's performances in Moscow were rare, but always successful (pers. comm., August 2018). Babadjanian's performance of his own *Heroic Ballade* gained him an ultimate praise from both the public and professionals. However, before every performance, he

was as nervous as if it were his debut (Grachev 2012). His pianism impressed the foreign public as well. When in 1963, Babadjanian played the work for the first time in France, the audience asked for numerous encores: “After his interpretation of *Heroic Ballade*, the excitement electrified both from the hall, and the stage. [It] was followed by [demanding] a series of encores [to which] Arno responded by playing some of his own pieces as well as some of S. Rachmaninov.” (Siranossian 2016, 6; Après son interprétation de la Ballade héroïque, l’ambiance était survoltée autant côté public que côté scène. S’en est suivie une série de bis auxquels Arno a répondu en jouant plusieurs de ses œuvres ainsi que certaines de S. Rachmaninoff.)

Babadjanian’s attitude toward different interpretations of his works is also worth mentioning. Svetlana Navasardyan (1946–) had an insightful recollection of the experience with Babadjanian. Navasardyan, a laureate of the Queen Elisabeth Competition (1972), the Robert Schumann Competition (1966) and the Johann Sebastian Bach Competition (1968), is currently a piano professor at the Yerevan State Conservatory. In 1973, as a young pianist, she recorded the *Six Pictures* and shared the recording with the composer. Babadjanian, excited to hear the interpretation, invited her home and after every piece (“Improvisation,” “Folk,” etc.) would stop the recording, stand up and perform the piece with the words: “This is how *I* play it!” (Teroganyan 2001, 137). Nevertheless, the young pianist did not feel discouraged and kept the warmest memories about the composer throughout her life. Later that year, in 1973, she learned that Babadjanian circulated her recording among his colleagues, with high praise. Moreover, he also oftentimes recommended Navasardyan to replace him for concerts where he could not play. Navasardyan twice recorded the “Sasun Dance,” one of the miniatures of the cycle (Teroganyan 2011, 139). She often performed his *Six Pictures* abroad: in Belgium, Luxembourg, Australia, Sri Lanka, and Venezuela (Teroganyan 2011, 140). Another insight comes from Anahit Nersesyan, a highly regarded piano professor at the Yerevan State Conservatory. Nersesyan remembered how, as a student in the 1960s, she came to play Babadjanian’s *Poem* for him. As he sat down to play for her after her performance, she noticed that he added more bars at the climax of the piece. When she asked about the extra bars, Babadjanian replied: “Who cares how many bars, as long as they transmit the *emotional* message of the work!” (Anahit Nersessian, pers. comm., August 2018).

After 1948, Babadjanian seemed to make a decision to devote himself to composition entirely. Since around this time, which coincided with his graduation from the Moscow State Conservatory, he never publicly performed any other compositions besides his own. Yet, Babadjanian was still an active concert pianist in the beginning of the 1950s. As to why

Babadjanian chose for most of his professional life to perform only his own works, this question has invited speculation since his graduation from Moscow State Conservatory. As a pianist with considerable technical command, he could have built an international career while composing at the same time. Teroganyan offers a theory that perhaps if Babadjanian had gone to a major piano competition, his career might have progressed in a different way. While this is a thought-provoking idea, various sources, including the composer's son, stress the ever-growing pain in Babadjanian's hands: the leukemia, diagnosed at the age of thirty-two, took its toll on his capacity to play. His performances therefore became less regular, although they never ceased completely. Before his death, however, Babadjanian expressed a desire to make a recording of Bach, Rachmaninov, and Chopin (Grachev 2012). Unfortunately, this idea never came to fruition.

A 1982 television interview with Babadjanian provides the most vivid evidence of the composer's personality. Babadjanian claims that he is "out of shape" but reluctantly agrees to play Preludes in E-flat Major and C Minor by Rachmaninov, and a couple of his own miniatures (Gornostaeva 1982). At the time, Babadjanian was sick and visibly in pain; nevertheless, he delivered a performance of a rare technical virtuosity, using diverse tone colors and stylistic taste. Besides the contemporaries' accounts and recordings, evidence of Babadjanian's formidable technical skills as a pianist can be found in the scores of his compositions for that instrument. In each work, Babadjanian challenges pianists with a complex dramaturgy: the piano parts are always technically difficult yet always idiomatically written for the piano. The composer uses the technical possibilities of the instruments to its maximum, but in his works, virtuosity was not a tool for impression per se but rather served *expression*. Even though he chose not to pursue a performing career, the impressive nature of Babadjanian the pianist undoubtedly impacted the style of Babadjanian the composer.

First works and early success.

Babadjanian's early works were exclusively composed for solo piano. These first compositions were part of his homework assignments in Talyan's class that included a series of pieces like Andante and Scherzo, a *Circle Dance*, and Eight Variations. Unfortunately, the majority of these compositions, though finished, were never published. They are only available in manuscript form and stay in the private collection of Ara Babadjanian. Amantuni (1985, 13) points out that they lean strongly on folk themes, combining Armenian modes with major and

minor relations.

The Prelude in F Minor composed in 1940, though heavily influenced by Chopin and early Scriabin, nevertheless hints of Babadjanian's independent style. Using diatonic harmonies and folk themes, the piece carries a serene character (Terogyan 2001, 25) *Dance from Vagarhsapat* (1943) is the first example of Babadjanian's signature fusion of folk and modern idioms. Based on an Armenian folk dance *rangi* (րանգի), it is an original work full of energy, rich colors, and character changes. Whereas the *rangi* was a functional dance used in rituals and was danced by women, Babadjanian's composition transforms it into a brilliant concert piece. The folk theme is cast in a rich pianistic texture and a Rachmaninov-like virtuosity. Another early piece, *Impromptu*, represents another side of Armenian folk music—this dream-like work is composed in a ternary form. Two themes, both highlighting national traits, are characterized by melodic ornamentation and syncopated rhythms. In 1942, Babadjanian composed his first piano sonata. At the same time, in collaboration with Arutunian, he wrote *Dance* for two pianos. These two composers had been close friends since their Yerevan years in Vartkes Talyan's class, and they performed together as a piano duet on numerous occasions. As composers, they would later collaborate again in the 1950s and in 1960s.

In 1943, Babadjanian became a member of the Composers' Union. This was an official confirmation of his professional status as a composer. His first important work, the Piano Concerto, was composed the following year. Unfortunately, neither his Piano Sonata nor Piano Concerto was ever published. These manuscripts are in the collection of the Babadjanian International Foundation located in Moscow. At the present moment, there are no recordings of these pieces available. Based on an analysis by Robert Atayan, Amantuni (1985, 14) mentions the direct influence of Liszt, Khachaturian, and Rachmaninov in both of these works. Babadjanian's first chamber work, the First String Quartet composed in 1942, was never published either. I have been unable to locate the manuscript of the String Quartet, despite searching the Composers Union's archives and consulting with the composer's son. With such little information available about these early works, the brief mention by Nestiev (1950, 26) of the "modern nature of the work" sheds some light. Terogyan (2011, 63) writes that, according to Eduard Mirzoyan, the First Quartet was part of Babadjanian's graduation compositions at the Yerevan State Conservatory.

In 1947, Babadjanian composed *Counterpoint Sonata*, consisting of three contrasting

movements: Prelude, Fugue and Toccata. This work was one of the most important compositions of his early period and displayed a compositional approach eventually used throughout the composer's life, namely contrapuntal writing. The prelude is written in a three-part form: in the first, the main theme is played in a canon at the octave; in the second, some elements of the theme are developed through imitation; and the third represents a concentrated and more emotionally charged recapitulation. The fugue reveals Babadjanian's fascination with Taneyev's contrapuntal principles. Babadjanian creates a synthesis of contrapuntal technique and homophonic texture, common in Armenian music. Paradoxically, while keeping the strict form, Babadjanian manages to weave rhapsodic elements into the main theme. The toccata is a whirlwind of virtuosity with a strong metrical drive. The expressiveness of the technically difficult Allegro vivace reminds Amantuni (1985, 25) of Prokofiev's Toccata. There are two main themes juxtaposed against each other; he uses invertible counterpoint doubled in octaves to present these two contrasting themes. While keeping the strict counterpoint features, the movement is, never the less, expressive and improvisational.

In July 1947, the First World Festival of Youth and Students took place in Czechoslovakia. This event, organized by the World Federation of Democratic Youth, was conceived to be a peaceful reaction to the 1939 student riots against the Third Reich, after which 1,200 students vanished in the concentration camps. Despite the challenging circumstances for the festival amid the Cold War environment, it drew thousands of young professionals and gained an impressive following. For the festival's fifth edition in 1957, Pablo Picasso created a dove emblem, which eventually became its enduring symbol. The event still takes place all over the world (the most recent being held in Russia in 2017). Back in 1947, Babadjanian was one of the students sent with the Soviet delegation. His *Dance from Vagarhsapat*, Prelude F Minor, and Toccata movement from his *Counterpoint Sonata*, won a prize at the festival's International Composers Competition.

Sources differ as to the specifics of the prize. Robert Hacopian (*Our Arno*, Yerevan 2006), Teroganyan (2001, 32), and several other documentaries all mention him winning the first prize. Tumajyan (2016, 9), relying on Seda Tashchian's book *Arno Babadjanian* (Yerevan 1961), mentions the second prize. Unfortunately, the official records of the festival's sponsor, the World Federation of Democratic Youth, contain no exact entry. Although the specifics of the prize are difficult to ascertain, Babadjanian's participation in this historical, international event was an early milestone in his compositional career.

Chapter III.

Maturity in life and career. Independence of style.

As Babadjanian achieved stylistic maturity as a composer, his recognition grew rapidly in the Soviet Union, which led to new creative responsibilities. While continuously exploring new musical ideas and idioms, Babadjanian nevertheless continued drawing from Armenian folk music as a source of inspiration. This chapter will examine his evolving style, as well as the impact of the Soviet political realities on his compositional career.

Babadjanian vs. Khachaturian.

To understand Babadjanian's career, a comparison with Khachaturian's figure is needed. Babadjanian's early style bears some resemblance to that of Khachaturian, although this resemblance has often been overstated. Moreover, it is instructive to compare the way these two composers navigated the Soviet system, Khachaturian being more inclined to fit within the frame of Soviet ideology. Babadjanian's reluctance to do so ultimately harmed the trajectory of his career and the reception of his works in narratives of the Soviet music history. Finally, his turn at mid-career towards pop and film musics, which came to be his primary activities, further harmed his image and led him to be devalued by "serious" composers of the Soviet establishment.

Upon graduation in 1949, Babadjanian was appointed as professor at the Yerevan State Conservatory, a post that was poorly remunerated. According to Tumajyan (2016, 15), Babadjanian was unhappy since this position required his wife, Teresa, to provide for the family. In 1950, Babadjanian and Arutunian collaborated to compose *Armenian Rhapsody* for two pianos, a work of national power, strong character, and utter virtuosity. The two composers collaborated in an idiosyncratic way: Babadjanian wrote the part of the first piano, and Arutunian the second. The *Rhapsody* was the first work of such national grandeur in the Armenian repertoire, and it was immediately celebrated due to its brilliant style and the two composers' outstanding performances of it. *Armenian Rhapsody* is cast in two movements, Andante and Allegro, connected *attacca*. The main subject of the slow, lyrical part, based on a folk song "Gardener" ("Բւհմսւնի"), was suggested by Babadjanian's father, who was a skillful *duduk*⁷

⁷ Duduk is an Armenian folk instrument resembling the flute, made of apricot wood.

player. Written in ten days total (Teroganyan 2001, 144), the work represents a pure dedication to Armenian folk. The two friends would later return to composing together in 1960. Whereas Babadjanian's first important work, Violin Concerto (1948), was accused of imitating Khachaturian's Violin Concerto from a decade earlier, by the 1950s Babadjanian seemed to have found his stylistic recipe: bearing the traits of an Armenian color, his compositions of that period were determined by his own, individual vision and ideas. Moreover, as I will discuss below, Babadjanian's violin concerto actually bore only a minimal resemblance, at most, to Khachaturian's.

Years prior to switching to the popular music style, Babadjanian seemed to find his own "voice" in classical composition. Close analysis of two composers' styles reveals that Babadjanian's use of national idioms was much closer to their source, whereas Khachaturian's style represents a more general "summary" of Trans-Caucasian musical traditions. Yet, Khachaturian's success as a composer of folk music was immense. Frolova-Walker recounts a statement by Uzeyir Hajibeyov, a rival colleague from Azerbaijan, who stated the following in his speech during the 1940 Plenum: "In order to write Armenian music, good knowledge of Armenian folk music is needed. The music he [Khachaturian] writes has nothing to do with [true] folk music" (Frolova-Walker 2016, 149). This comment can be explained by rivalry and by Hajibeyov's shortcomings in music education: after all, Khachaturian was a talented composer with an impressive academic training. Yet, Hajibeyov's criticism bears a grain of truth: the majority of the alleged folk themes in the Khachaturian's music never really existed. Krebs (1970, 228) insightfully notes that the idiom Khachaturian used was not authentically Armenian but essentially his own.

Khachaturian managed to live the life of a wealthy man during the rockiest years of the Soviet period, whereas Babadjanian would become wealthy only after switching to writing music for films and popular artists. Besides composing, Khachaturian started teaching at the Moscow Conservatory and Gnessin Academy in 1950. He was a talented conductor and enjoyed a successful career with extensive touring opportunities. Yet, many other outstanding musicians, including Sergei Prokofiev, had difficulties maneuvering through the system and lead a happy life. What Khachaturian possessed, besides mere talent, was a strong gift for strategic thinking. Babadjanian's music, in his turn, seemed to be unable to fit into the Soviet music ideology. For instance, Khachaturian dedicated his First Symphony to the Fifteenth Anniversary of Soviet Armenia. Immediately after the success of his Piano Concerto, he wrote the *Stalin Poem*,

which received a triumphant response in the press. Both pieces were nominated for the Stalin Prize. In 1936, the ballet *Happiness* was written for the Armenian Assembly, which took place in Yerevan. During the Soviet era, it was a common practice to designate weeks of cultures, where all composers could promote their works. The Decades or Ten-Day Review of National Art is a series of annual events that began in Moscow in 1935 (Sima 1947, 28). These were designated weeks of cultures mentioned in the Chapter I, where the composers wrote and promoted their compositions to the “friendly republics” (*дружеские республики*). Khachaturian pieces were oftentimes premiered during these weeks. The ballet included a set of national dances, including the Armenian *kochari* (Բռնարի), the Georgian *lezghinka* (ლეკერი), the Russia round dance (*хоровод*), and the Ukrainian *hapack* (*занак*). Through the abundance of the dances, Khachaturian aimed to demonstrate the friendship between the nations.

In 1946, Khachaturian wrote the *Russian Fantasy for Orchestra*, which was known as a celebration of Russian themes. He changed the versions of the ballet *Gayané* several times: taking the 1936 plot of his first ballet, *Happiness*, as a base, Khachaturian shifted toward Russian nationalism and added a war theme in the adaptation as *Gayané*. In the 1952 revision of the ballet, Khachaturian added post-war characteristics, and made all the couples international (in the first two revisions they were all Armenians). In addition, the revised version emphasizes the Soviet message of happy labor and ideas of brotherhood (Krebs 1970, 228). After the 1948 Resolution, the composer wrote *The Ode to Lenin* which was used for the score for the winning *The Battle of Stalingrad*.

Whereas Khachaturian often made artistic choices to align his work with the priorities of the Soviet regime, Babadjanian was staunchly opposed to this in his own work. In his speech from the Sixth Plenum in 1953, Babadjanian insisted that “only musical ideas inspired by passion could truly move the listener” (Teroganyan 2001, 34). Addressing the source of compositional inspiration, he wrote: “I have not written *any* composition by contract” (Soviet Music 1980). While the composer, of course, wrote commercial works, he meant that he had never accepted any government commissions (what he called “contracts”). Moreover, even without government commissions, a composer could use politically “convenient” ideologies to develop artistic ideas, but Babadjanian always instead went with his own artistic vision.⁸ In his last newspaper interview

⁸ One such examples can be found in the dedication to the Violin Sonata, discussed in the following chapter.

in 1982, he said: “I am disgruntled when the ideological motives become a leading factor in the assessment of works of a musician. Often, this ideology coming from officials of the ministries and departments is vulgar.” (as quoted in Ivanushkin 2018; Я возмущен, когда идеологические мотивы становятся главными в оценке творчества какого-то музыканта. Зачастую идеология эта, исходящая от чиновников министерств и ведомств, вульгарна.)

A close friend of Babadjanian (whom I interviewed but who asked to remain anonymous) recounted the following story: sometime during the 1960s, he received a call from Babadjanian, who expressed his frustrations that no concerts or performances of his works were promoted or scheduled in Moscow. He felt that there was no adequate platform for his art, concluding his remarks with the following stark statement: “I am behind enemy lines.” (pers. comm., 2018; Я в тылу врага.) Babadjanian’s frustration can be easily explained: while his striving for innovative musical ideas in the 1950s was irritating to the older generation of composers, his eventual switch to popular music in the 1960s was severely punished by the “serious” musical establishment. The reluctance to “draw within the circles” and write music praising the image the Soviet worker and government seemed to harm Babadjanian’s standing during his lifetime. It is very probable that the composer’s eventual erasure from the Soviet Union legacy was caused by that.

Shakhnazarova (1985, 26) argues that in the first half of the 1950s, Armenian music experienced a burst of new music: many symphonies were written by Armenian composers in this decade. The music idiom slowly shifted from the emotionally exuberant style of Khachaturian to a more laconic, stern music, and Babadjanian was on the front line of this trend. Various scholars (Sarkisyan 2002, 69; Shakhnazarova 1985, 30; Ordjonikidze 1988, 177) stress the importance of Bartók’s and Shostakovich’s styles as inspiration for Armenian composer of this generation. Khachaturian’s idioms with their generalized perception about national music (oriental modes and such), smashing emotionality became a somewhat “yesterday’s flavor,” and the younger generation had an urge to create a new type of Armenian music.

Despite Khachaturian’s many successes writing music that suited the political demands of the Soviet regime, he was not invulnerable to its demands and critiques. A case in point is the 1948 Resolution, which was a reaction by the Bolshevik party, and consequently by Stalin himself, to the opera named *Great Friendship*. It was written by Stalin favorite composer, Vano

Muradeli, an Armenian who, according to Karine Avladyan (2016, ii) renounced the nationalist style and even his own national identity in order to achieve political gains. Stalin was personally displeased with the opera, and the Composers' Union issued an official list of the "anti-Soviet" works by various composers. Inclusion to the 1948 Resolution came to Khachaturian as a total surprise, since a change in the committee of governmental staff resulted in Khachaturian's *Symphony-Poem* leading the list of works decried as formalist. Khachaturian had composed the *Symphony-Poem* ("Симфоническая поэма") in 1947, and the work includes an organ solo and over fifteen trumpets. It was a more experimental work, and he was criticized for going too far. By including his name in the Resolution list, the Soviet apparatus forced him to continue writing the safe "song and dance" music for which the "exuberant Armenian" was best known (Frolova-Walker 2016, 151). And while Krebs (1970, 228) suggests that the criticism barely affected Khachaturian, Frolova-Walker argues that it actually had a strong impact on the careers of all individuals mentioned in the Resolution. In the abstract of her dissertation, Avdalyan (2011, iii) supports the suggestion of Frolova-Walker, arguing that "the sharpest phase of the crisis of national style in the Armenian musical culture" coincided with the Resolution. Besides sharp criticisms damaging Khachaturian's image, the Resolution's repression permanently damaged the reputation of Azat Shishyan, a talented Armenian composer who remained unknown even in the Armenian Republic due to this crisis. At the same time, both Frolova-Walker and Krebs agree that Khachaturian's attempts to move away from the "ethnic pigeon hole" were severely punished by the 1948 Resolution against formalism in music. Therefore, it would be only fair to suggest that, had the Resolution never occurred, Khachaturian's style might well have continued in a more daring, experimental direction, including new expressive means.

Nevertheless, out of pragmatic necessity, Khachaturian's style seems to have changed very little throughout the composer's life. Apart from that humiliating incident in 1948, the composer quickly pivoted stylistically, allowing him to retain his status in the composers' bureaucracy circles. But where Khachaturian was safe and cautious, Babadjanian went on full speed—the latter was always among the pioneers of the foreign compositional idioms (jazz, twist, and such) that often earned the Composers' Union's disapproval. Strikingly, Boris Schwartz, in review from *Le Contrat Social*, writes: "the Soviet jazz is advancing. Let us note that 'serious' composers such as A. Eshpaï, A. Babajanian write jazz music." (Schwartz 1967, 184; le jazz soviétique est en train de progresser. Notons que des compositeurs "sérieux"

tels que A. Eshpaï, A. Babajanian ... écrivent pour le jazz.)

Babadjanian's contemporaries.

Babadjanian was one of a handful of Soviet Armenian composers active this period who sought to integrate Armenian idioms into their modernist works. In the 1940s, the attention of the Armenian composers gradually turned towards symphonic genres. In Aro Stepanian's First Symphony—a work inspired by heroic and military themes—the composer used ancient Armenian liturgical songs known as *sharakans* (Shakhnazarova 1985, 25). This was a new step towards the empowerment of Armenian nationalist elements in music. The WWII years bolstered composers' patriotic spirits, exemplified by such programmatic works as *Armenian Rhapsody* by Sergei Balasanyan (1902–1982) and the symphonic poem *Armenia* by Grigoriy Egiazaryan (1908–1988). Alexander Arutunian (1920–2012), one of the most brilliant Armenian composers, wrote the opera *Sayat-Nova* and the cantata *Motherland*.

The 1950s marked a breakthrough in symphonic music. Bartók and Stravinsky started to fascinate Armenian composers' minds (Sarkisyan 2002, 69). Edgar Oganessian's (1930–1998) opera *David Sasuntsi* (1976) achieved a balance of elements from ancient Armenian folklore and other stylistic elements inspired by Bartók. Oganessian also made choral arrangements of more than forty folk tunes (Pahlevanian 1985, 389).

Together with Babadjanian's daring works written in the 1950s, Eduard Mirzoyan's Quartet provoked a new school of thought among Armenian contemporary composers. The latter took a bold step in a new direction: his aesthetically laconic work String Quartet incorporates a new musical language, including variations on a theme by Komitas in it. This laconic and somewhat grotesque composition also received strident disapproval from the conservative members of the Composers' Union. Labeled as “the composer's artistic mistake,” the work had a difficult performance life (Shakhnazarova 1985, 27).

Like his contemporaries, Babadjanian navigated occasional tension between his artistic priorities and the expectation of the Soviet apparatus. For example, Babadjanian's post-war monument to patriotism, entitled the *Heroic Ballade*, complied with the Soviet idea of the “correct” music. In fact, it complied so completely that none of his subsequent works could match its tremendous success. While his more daring compositions earned the praise and respect of his

colleagues and public, none received another governmental “approval” similar to that of the *Heroic Ballade*. That might be, perhaps, because Babadjanian never wrote pieces based on another Republic’s folk stories, music or legends (e.g. Azeri, Georgian, or Uzbek). If he had adopted other folk styles, that would that have represented support of the Soviet idea of friendship among nations. Nor did he compose works of praise for the Soviet ideology or any important governmental person. And in refusing to do so, that made him seem more Armenian nationalist than pro-Soviet. Even the greatest Soviet composers, such as Prokofiev and Shostakovich, wrote compositions aligned with the Soviet ideology, as did such composers as Muradeli, Tikhon Khrennikov, and Rodion Shedrin, among many others.

In the early 1950s, besides the new tendencies in Armenian music, another significant event changed Babadjanian’s life forever: he was diagnosed with leukemia, an illness that plagued him for the rest of this life, that is, for more than thirty years. With no viable solution in the Soviet Union, the composer was seen by the best oncologists from France, Dr. Jean Bernard (Hacopian 2006, 151). One of Babadjanian’s main treatment routines was to drink sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) mixed with water frequently. During times of pain attacks, Babadjanian had this as an emergency remedy. The illness heavily impacted Babadjanian’s ability to play as a soloist. According to his son, Ara, the composer frequently complained about his hands, grumbling that they no longer moved with the same virtuosity, and they felt as “if [they are] made from cotton” (Grachev 2012). The illness, mostly unknown to anyone but the composer’s inner circle, might be one of the reasons why Babadjanian mostly performed his own works after graduation. His illness was surely a reason why he eventually decreased performing altogether.

The 1940s and 1950s were extremely productive years for Babadjanian’s classical music legacy, despite the disease that would lead to a noticeable decline in the 1960s. “Capriccio” for piano was written in 1952. Apoyan and Zolotova (1985, 333) call it “an exciting composition” where folk dance idioms embodied the virtuosic texture of the piece. The pulsating waltz rhythms accompany the singing and capricious melody. The contrasting middle, with more intense harmony and rhapsodic textures, maintains the ongoing waltz pattern. Safaryan describes “Capriccio” as a “simple yet comprehensive piece for the general public” (1953, 30). In the same year, the composer wrote his monumental Piano Trio in F Sharp Minor. Shakhnazarova (2013, 135) notes that by the mid-fifties, young Armenian composers were impacted by the XX century musical ideas of Stravinsky, Bartók, and the

Second Viennese School. A work of a remarkable ratio of national color and powerful tragical message, the trio signaled a whole new era of the composer's art.

Mature period.

One of the most mysterious gaps in the materials about Babadjanian's music is the curious lack of information about *Poem-Rhapsody* for orchestra, written in 1954. Teroganyan (2001, 102) seems to be the only author who dedicated a whole chapter to this work. Virtually no information about this work is available online, and most sources about Babadjanian's music do not mention it. Nevertheless, the fact that Babadjanian made two later revisions of it (in 1960 and 1980) indicates that he regarded it as an important composition. However, the work was only published posthumously. Moreover, whereas his Violin Sonata and Trio were performed frequently, the *Poem-Rhapsody* does not seem to have entered the repertoire. Amantuni (1985, 57) mentions that the premiere took place in Moscow in 1955, but it was not performed again for a long period thereafter. The score was not published until 1981, when the composer's Jubilee concert took place in Yerevan, and conductor David Khandjian presented his arrangement of the piece. The only contemporary mention of the work is found in a Siberian newspaper review of 1958: "The best compositions by the composer are marked by strong emotionality, melodic expressiveness, and professional skillfulness. These traits are characteristic of the *Heroic Ballade* and the *Poem-Rhapsody*." [Лучшие произведения композитора выделяются большой эмоциональной насыщенностью, мелодической выразительностью и высоким профессиональным мастерством. Именно эти черты характерны для Героической баллады и Поэмы-Рhapsодии.] (as quoted in Teroganyan 2001, 103)

The third performance of *Poem-Rhapsody* during Babadjanian's lifetime took place in Bulgaria in 1962, and the next documented performance took place in Moscow in 1991. In articles dedicated to Armenian symphonic works from 1947 to 1955, many notable musicologists fail to mention this work. Despite this lacuna, *Poem-Rhapsody* nevertheless represents a masterful work for orchestra, comprising many musical contrasts composed in an excellent balance. Full of woodwind solos, dance rhythms (with the typical change of meter 9/8, 6/8, 5/8 and 3/8), and rich tembral sonority, this neglected piece is the composer's only orchestral work in symphonic style (without soloist). One of the main reasons that the Soviet apparatus was generally displeased with Babadjanian was his lack of symphonic works, which apparently conflicted with the Soviet musical ideology. A tacit Soviet rule held that Babadjanian could not be acknowledged as "great" because

he did not write symphonies like Khachaturian. Yet, his lone existing symphonic masterpiece seems to have been largely ignored, deleted from records and forgotten. This living evidence of Babadjanian's masterful understanding of symphonic forms, orchestral timbres, and colors disappeared from the records of that time and for the future generations.

Another enigma of Babadjanian's reception is the total disregard for the music he composed for the ballet *Parvana* during the same time period. While Amantuni (1985, 57) mentions the work, she does not provide an analysis of this piece in her book. The ballet's plot is based on a novel by Tumanyan, telling a story of a girl who was waiting for a brave knight but never got to find him. Teroganyan (2011, 167) suggests that the changed ending of the libretto, written by a contemporary Armenian writer, discouraged the composer from finishing the work. Another unpublished ballet bore the name *pas de deux* and was initially meant for a prima-ballerina Nina Timofeeva (1935—2014). Unfortunately, this project never actualized and the dancer never had a chance to perform it. Nevertheless, in 1972, a celebrated German choreographer, Tom Schilling (1928–) rearranged the number for three dancers, thus transforming it in a somewhat *pas de trois*. Being the leading artistic director of the *Komische Oper Berlin*, Schilling was known for attention to detail and for his mastery of realism in dance. An article dedicated to the choreographer's 90th birthday reads: "Tom Schilling's ever-probing manner thus encouraged to venture a realistic dance theatre at the *Komische Oper*." (Gorgas, 2018; Tom Schilling auf stets hinterfragende Weise darin bestärkt, ander Komischen Oper ein realistisches Tanztheater zu wagen.)

Indeed, the choreographer managed to incorporate the Armenian dance rhythms inherent in Babadjanian's music, which were far from the choreographer's German musical culture. With the help of the Soviet dancers from the theatre who had previously learned the basic moves of Armenian dance, Schiller created a truly original show. The performance was broadcast by a Leipzig television station for the Freudentreffen Festival.

The music of *pas de deux* was revived in 1973, this time by Moscow choreographers Nataly Kasatkina and Vladimir Vasiliev who produced a movie-ballet called *Choreographic Novellas*. The authors staged different scenes and gathered music by Bach, Wagner, Prokofiev, Ravel, and Babadjanian. An impressive cast from the Bolshoi Theater, including the celebrated Soviet ballerina Maya Plisetskaya, performed the numbers (Gurariy 2016, 162). The *pas de deux* was renamed "Sunny Duo" and was performed by Ludmila Semenyaka and Alexander Bogatyrev. A rare fragment of this production with Babadjanian's music is available

on the internet: the golden stage decoration represented sunlight, and the dancers were dressed in Armenian national garments. The main theme, played by flute, is a beautiful, singing melody. The orchestration of the music becomes extremely rich and, with numerous string *glissandos*, resembles the best film-score traditions for Hollywood movies. After a high E played by violins with extensive tremolos, a fast dance bursts in. The folk element is a joyful, *scherzo*-like dance that flows with fast passages from the violins and flutes, followed by a contrasting, dissonant middle part. The dance rhythm comes back, and the piece ends with the lavish sound of the first theme. Though Plisetskaya did not perform the “Sunny Duo” in this film, she and Babadjanian knew each other quite well. Plisetskaya’s husband, composer Rodion Shedrin, “was lucky to have Dmitry Shostakovich, ... Andrey Eshpai, and Arno Babadjanian as his friends and teachers” (Gurariy 2016, 10). Babadjanian had an idea to write a ballet for her, but the project remained unfinished.

In 1956, despite being highly praised professor in Yerevan, Babadjanian moved with his family to Moscow where he started teaching at the Moscow Conservatory. Shostakovich held a very high opinion about Babadjanian’s pedagogical talent (Hacopian 2006, 159). Though the latter had a strong temperament, he was always attentive to his professional surroundings and was a dedicated teacher and a loyal colleague. A year prior to moving, Babadjanian wrote his first film score for the movie *In Search of the Recipient*. The music was in popular style, and Babadjanian’s career as a popular music composer sky-rocketed. The chronology of his popular music will be discussed in detail Chapter V, but for now I would like to introduce a speculation about the rationale for Babadjanian’s move toward film and popular music: Babadjanian, a financially struggling composer who had graduated from the two best conservatories in the Soviet Union, stepped into the film-music industry, where his work rapidly became the Soviet Union-wide success. The remuneration for the music of this genre was significantly higher than it was for “serious” concert music. Given the cost of his expensive medical treatments abroad, Babadjanian’s eventual career pivot toward film and popular musics appears to be justified. Nevertheless, this same speculation could also be re-framed as a negative: is it conceivable that a lack of encouragement, protection, and appreciation for his classical work led (or even forced) the talented composer to veer toward an industry where at least was able to see his works appreciated? This latter idea is consistent with the fact that, despite his financial difficulties, the composer did not stop writing classical music even as he gradually turned his attention to film and popular musics.

In 1958, Babadjanian wrote his Violin Sonata B-flat Minor, one of the most groundbreaking works of the mature period. This piece became the logical continuation of the new idioms

explored in his Trio—a powerful dramatic message expressed with more angular language, tense harmonies, and laconic means. But whereas the Trio had gained significant recognition among his colleagues, the Sonata became a stumbling block with the Soviet musical environment. The evidence of Shostakovich’s musical ideas in an otherwise Armenian nationalist composition was remarkable, and like many works by Shostakovich, the Sonata was criticized as formalist. In his works of the 1960s, Babadjanian further developed both new-modal for the Soviet music and dodecaphonic principles (Sarkisyan 2008, 75). And while Aram Khachaturian focused mainly on concert-rhapsodies during this time, Babadjanian based his works instead on tightly organized, more structurally disciplined musical thinking. And in 1960, Babadjanian collaborated on yet another piece with Arutunian called *Festive* for two pianos and percussion. It is a miniature but remarkable work. Instead of arrangements of the folk motifs (as in their earlier collaboration), they created the original melodies inspired by Armenian music. The introduction starts with roaring dissonant tremolos in both two pianos, growing rise through a powerful *crescendo*. The percussion instruments echo the rhythmic figures, and the main theme follows, in the form of a joyful, bravura dance. The second subject represents a more lyrical theme, a gracious and softer melody, resembling a women’s dance. Starting in *piano*, the theme eventually peaks in *fortissimo*. The third theme is a whimsical scherzo, with capricious rhythms. In the recapitulation, the main theme returns in a stronger version, now accompanied by the percussion echo. Throughout the piece, the percussions have small solos, used as a bright contrast to the pianos. The role of the percussion remains secondary, and the triangle, xylophone, snare drum, and large tambourine provide rhythmic pulsation that enhances the celebratory mood.

Festive became an innovation in the Soviet-Armenian musical repertoire. Although it was heavily folk-inspired, the piece nevertheless features the elements of Babadjanian’s evolvment as a composer. Besides *Festive*, 1960 brought another important event to Babadjanian’s life. The Pulitzer-Prize winning playwright and novelist William Saroyan (1908–1981), an American of Armenian origin, visited Armenia and Russia. While in the Soviet Union, Saroyan was presented to the most brilliant intellectuals, Babadjanian included. The two artists seemed to get along extremely well and met again when Saroyan returned to Armenia in 1976 and 1978. The photograph taken in 1963 was signed by Saroyan in 1974 in Paris (Ex. 3.0), after Babadjanian’s performance of the Armenian Rhapsody at the Salle Gaveau: “Great admiration for my friend Arno Babadjanian, composer of world music” (the Babadjanian International Foundation, 2019).

The composer wrote music for a theatrical adaptation of Saroyan’s novel *My Heart is in*

the Highlights that was staged at the Yerevan State Theater after Gabriel Sundukyan with a mise-en-scène by Vardan Adzhemyan. The story features a poor but honest family of immigrants missing their Motherland. In the main theme, Babadjanian seems to find a perfect balance between the writer's two cultures: Armenian and American. Levon Grigoryan, who directed a 1975 film adaptation based on the play, observed:

Five People's Artists of the USSR took part in the movie at once: I consider the fifth to be the composer Arno Babadjanian! It was very difficult to shoot the film, to recreate the American reality of the 1970s [in the Soviet Union] was troublesome: one inattentive move—and the [Soviet] reality could emerge. Heroes of my movie, as a reflection of the heroes of the play of William Saroyan, are very subjective. Their dialogues are subjective as well. Yet, this subjectivity leads to the [objective] truth. [В фильме принимают участие сразу пять Народных артистов СССР: пятым я считаю композитора—Арно Бабаджаняна! Снимать фильм было очень сложно, поскольку воссоздать в 70-е годы американскую реальность было непросто: одно лишнее движение—и на поверхность всплывала действительность. Герои моего фильма, как отображение героев пьесы Уильяма Сарояна, очень условны. Такими же условными являются и их диалоги. Но эта условность выводит к истине.] (Kinonoteatr, 2015)

Upon his return to the United States in 1960, Saroyan wrote an article entitled “Three Great Armenians.” The article discussed Armenia's most prominent painter, Martiros Saryan (1880–1972), as well as Aram Khachaturian and Arno Babadjanian. The writer's appraisal expressed in this article meant a lot for Babadjanian. His friend Armen Geodakyan had a duplicate of the article for a quite some time, when, and at a certain point, Babadjanian requested that he make him a copy. Geodakyan asked why does the composer need it so desperately. It turned out that Babadjanian was feeling discouraged due to an uncomfortable relationship with the Composers' Union heads. He hoped that showing the article to the Union elite would win his graces back: “It appears, that Babadjanian felt ... unfavorable during this period, his professional self-esteem was obviously hurt by something. And he was confident that if he showed this article to Union leadership, something would change for the best.” (Teroganyan 2001, 59; оказывается, Бабаджанян чувствовал себя в тот период...дискомфортно, авторское самолюбие его было явно чем-то ущемлено. И в нем жила уверенность, что, покажи он эту статью в композиторских верхах творческого союза, что-то изменится для него в лучшую сторону.)

This story demonstrates how lost Babadjanian must have felt in the classical music environment of that time. The awkwardness of Babadjanian's position in the Soviet Moscow

composers' hierarchy can be explained by the growing popularity of his film music and popular songs. Among the Soviet musical establishment, Babadjanian's non-classical music was seen as a matter of shame for a serious composer. Indeed, whereas his accomplishments earned him a title of the People's Artists of Armenian Republic in 1960, the highest distinction for an artist to this day, at the same time in Moscow, his growing reputation (and wealth) was a target of harsh criticisms and negligence from the ideologically representative composers who held sway within the bureaucratic circles.

In 1961, Babadjanian composed music for another of Saroyan's signature works, *Human Comedy*, which was adapted for a radio broadcast. In the same year, his ballet music *Star Symphony* (which was originally written around 1958) was staged as part of an ice-ballet entitled *Snow Symphony*. Directed by the prominent Soviet choreography Leonid Lavrovskiy (1906–1967), *Snow Symphony* included several numbers accompanied by music of various composers, including Khachaturian, Shostakovich, and Shedrin. Since 1961 marked the history's first space trip by Yuriy Gagarin, one of the show's characters was a cosmonaut (Ex. 3.1). The show included ten movements by Babadjanian, with such names as "Stars," "Mercury" (where the composer uses jazz idioms), and "Saturn" (with Latin-American rhythms). In addition, Babadjanian used a theme of a song written by Isaak Dunaevsky (1900–1955), a well-known film and song composer of the Soviet Union. In the finale, Babadjanian also added a vocal female quartet (Teroganyan 2001, 177).

There is a remarkable fusion of cultures in this work: Babadjanian depicted a Russian folk fairy tale in one piece, while using foxtrot rhythms with a solo of saxophone in another. Despite Babadjanian's integral role in this ice-ballet, it is remarkable that a book dedicated to the choreographer of the ballet (Lavrovskiy 1983) mentions Babadjanian's name only in footnotes while Khachaturian, Shostakovich, and Shedrin were featured prominently. Indeed, all internet sources providing information on the *Snow Symphony* fail to mention Babadjanian whatsoever. Considering his major contributions to this production, this neglect is difficult to explain. Presumably, the other composers received more acknowledgment not only because they were more famous but also because they were seen more representative of the Soviet musical ideal.

Babadjanian had a longstanding relationship with Mstislav Rostropovich and his wife, Galina Vishnevskaya. Living in the same building in Moscow, the musicians quickly became friends. In 1962, with active involvement from Rostropovich, Babadjanian wrote the Cello Concerto (Ex. 3.2). The composer himself considered the piece a continuation of the

intellectual line he had started in the Violin Sonata. Teroganyan (2001, 120) argues that the work actually is more closely related to *Six Pictures* and Quartet after Shostakovitch. However, the composer's assessment seems to be more justified, as the concerto is full of angular and dissonant harmonies, and written in a concentrated style. Amantuni (1985, 71) refers to the Cello Concerto as one of the most notable achievements in Soviet music in general.

Dramatic and powerful, the work is written in a two-movement form, performed *attacca* (Babadjanian's signature characteristic). Sarkisyan (2008, 76) argues that the concert's two-part form anticipates the modern cyclic model used by many XX-century composers: Witold Lutoslawski's String Quartet and Second Symphony, and Alfred Schnittke's String Trio. In the Concerto, the main theme is a powerful declaration in the style of a dramatic recitative, starting with the dissonant seventh in the solo part. The second theme features the *lamento* intonations, representative of Armenian folk style. These two main elements undergo a series of thematic transformations, including the use of inversions, dissonant *ostinato* chords, and rhythmic developments. Speaking of rhythms, Teroganyan (2001, 121) mentions that both the conductor and Rostropovich agreed that the ever-changing meter created a challenge for the ensemble of the soloist and orchestra.

The Cello Concerto occupied an important place in the Soviet repertoire. Rostropovich often performed this work not only in the Soviet Union but also abroad, which contributed to its popularity. In 1962, the prominent cellist played this Concerto in Sofia, Bulgaria, and in 1964 he performed it in Latvia at the Trans-Caucasian Spring Festival. After his performance at this Festival, Rostropovich reportedly exclaimed: "I, most likely, will die as an Armenian!" (Balyan 2013; Нет, я, наверное, умру армянином!).

The repertoire performed at a later edition of the Trans-Caucasian Spring Festival (in 1979), including compositions by Gubaidulina and Denisov, was in many cases criticized by the head of the Composers' Union at that time, Tikhon Khrennikov, one of the most self-righteous Soviet composers. He wrote: "At the Trans-Caucasian Spring Festival, we heard several 'sound inventive' [звукоизобразительные]⁹ compositions ... To be honest, it made a sad impression ... As for ideology, foreign to our art, there is no doubt that the Soviet composers will continue the uncompromising fight against it." (Khrennikov 1979; Несколько подобных «звукоизобретательных сочинений» мы слышали на «Закавказской музыкальной весне» ... Признаться, это произвело печальное впечатление... Что касается чуждой нам идеологии в искусстве, то нет сомнения в том, что советские композиторы будут продолжать бескомпромиссную

борьбу с ней.) This remark demonstrates that the Trans-Caucasian Spring Festival had a reputation for featuring the most innovative compositions of the time. Even in 1979, any composition not derivable from the Soviet ideology was derided as “sound inventive.”

In 1966, Moscow-city was preparing for an exciting musical event: the Third International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition. The Ministry of Culture, joined by the Composers’ Union, announced a composer competition for a compulsory work for the second round, which was required to “use of all the technical tools of the instrument” (Teroganyan 2011, 155). Among twelve candidates, Babadjanian’s work, *Poem* for piano and orchestra written in 1965, was chosen as the winner. The piece is divided into two contrasting movements: Andante cantabile featuring a singing melody and Presto brillante characterized by virtuosity. The thematic material of both movements is summarized in a short introduction. The work concludes with a slow, Maestoso theme. During the second round of the competition, twenty-eight young pianists from all over the world performed the work. Babadjanian commented: “I was very happy those days. There is no greater joy for a composer than to see how the work, created by you, gets a warm response from listeners.” (as quoted in Teroganyan 2001, 156; Я был очень счастлив в эти дни.

Нет выше радости для композитора—видеть, как созданное тобою произведение звучит и находит добрый отклик у слушателей.) Though not based on serial rows like *Six Pictures*, the work still bears some traits of dodecaphonic technique, and it creates an impression of improvisation. In 1966, Babadjanian gave his own performance at an event at the Moscow Conservatory where students met with Nadia Boulanger (1887–1979). Simon Soloveitchik, journalist for *Komsomolskaya Pravda* who attended the concert, described Babadjanian’s *Poem* as follows: “It [*Poem*] was an absolutely different thing; and, at last, it became clear why the work is called *Poem*—it is really poetic in terms of ... imagination, collision of feelings, and passion.” (as quoted in Teroganyan 2011, 157; Это была совсем другая вещь; и стало, наконец, понятно, почему пьеса названа “Поэмой” — она действительно поэтична, если включать в понятие...фантазию, столкновение чувств, и страсть.)

In 1967, Babadjanian was awarded a National Prize of the Armenian Republic. Nevertheless, a long hiatus from composing classical works began in the following year, while he

⁹ This term is difficult to render in English but it is clearly a negative appraisal of the avant-garde music. The term “inventive” appears to refer to composers who needlessly invent complex or unusual sounds and techniques, rather than compose in natural or traditional ways.

concentrated instead on popular music. The disengagement from the Soviet composers' society forced Babadjanian's estrangement from classical compositions, though, he never ceased to write classical compositions entirely. With an overwhelming amount of work in the popular music field, the 1950s and 1960s were also filled with tours all over the world.

Late period.

In 1971, Babadjanian was named People's Artist of the USSR, the highest artistic distinction Union-wide. In 1973, the composer only wrote three short piano pieces—*Meditation*, *Andante* (often called *Melody*) and *Humoresque*. *Andante* and *Humoresque* are children's pieces written for his son, Ara, who was a student in the music school at that time. One of the teachers at Ara's school wondered whether Babadjanian would consider writing some easy pieces that the school could include into the examination program. Babadjanian willingly agreed. *Humoresque* is a tongue-in-cheek, whimsical scherzo, with a fairy character (Amantuni 1985, 91), incorporating both jazz and folk elements. *Andante* is a meditative reminiscence, incorporating a Rachmaninov-like texture typical for Babadjanian's early works. Indeed, it seems as if this children's works inspired the composer to "go back in time," recalling his earlier style. *Meditation* is, however, not a children's piece: an atonal, dissonant work, it represents a profound philosophical mood, rendered in a strict, three-part form (Ex. 3.3).

These three short pieces for piano embodied Babadjanian's whole compositional journey from the early influences (in the Rachmaninov tradition) to the atonal, dissonant idiom. Over thirty years later, Babadjanian returned to the chamber music genre and dedicated a composition to someone who represented an important influence throughout his life: Dmitry Shostakovich. The Third Quartet after Shostakovich became a musical reflection inspired by the death of his colleague and icon. Babadjanian was deeply impacted by the death of the composer, remarking in a 1980 interview published in *Soviet Art* (Արվեստագիտական Արվեստ): "[The death of Shostakovich] shook and saddened me, and I felt the internal urge to tell about the musician by means of music Shostakovich... in one night, I wrote five pages of the score [for the String Quartet after Shostakovich]." (as quoted in Teroganyan 2001, 158; Это меня потрясло, опечалило, и я почувствовал внутреннюю потребность сказать о музыканте посредством музыки... в одну ночь я написал пять страниц партитуры.)

Though the first impulse was strong and productive, the work took more than one year to be completed. In fall 1976, the composer asked a student ensemble eventually known as the Quartet

after Shostakovich to collaborate on this work. Babadjanian worked with them on instrumental details and specifics over a period of three months. The genre of work was no accident: Babadjanian believed that the Shostakovich's most powerful and philosophical messages were conveyed in his string quartets. In this piece, Babadjanian achieved a striking resemblance to Shostakovich's style. The use of sonority effects such as *non vibrato*, *ponticello*, mutes, and harmonics represents a striking range of expressive tools. The changing rhythm here fortifies completely improvisational, and flowing character (Sarkisyan 2008, 82). The quartet is built on micro-cells of intonations, which are apparent from the first bars of the piece. Even though technically it is a one-movement piece, Teroganyan (2001, 161) argues that there are four sections, each of them possessing relative independence. In the main subject of the first section, *Andante sostenuto*, the composer depicted the sobs using short intonations on long open D string, evoking traditional folk lamentations during burial rituals. The rhythmic and intervallic elements of the main serve as a leitmotif representing loss throughout the whole piece. The transition material is contrasting, with an exclamatory character (Amantuni 1985, 94), while the secondary subject is built on a muted viola lamentation, with an accompaniment of the minor second played by cello. The author recreated a folk-like lamentation, played by viola, resembling to the sonority of the national wind instrument, *duduk*. The middle part of the secondary subject features Shostakovich's monogram DSCH, which recurs in the development played *pianicissimo* in harmonics. The second section, *Allegro con fuoco*, is a grotesque scherzo. The following section is an energetic *fugato* showcasing the composer's contrapuntal mastery. Based on a seven-note cell that is presented without repetition, it resembles the serial technique used in *Six Pictures* and *Poem*. In the recapitulation, the main subject is omitted. In the cello part, the composer indicates "tap the top with the phalange of a finger." In the final part of the work, Babadjanian includes a theme based on his initials, featuring the notes A and B (actually B-flat, but spelled B in the German system).

Soviet scholars agreed that this work became a phenomenon in the Soviet music repertoire. Using the simplest forms but modernist language, the composer portrayed an image of tragic loss. The modern techniques coexist with folk idioms, and this combination conveyed a powerful message. Unfortunately, according to friends of the composer, his deteriorating health did not allow him to write another large-scale piece (Amantuni 1985, 98). The work was supposed to be premiered in Moscow at the same concert with the Third Quartet of Schoenberg.

Nevertheless, it turned out that Babadjanian's work had already been performed in Paris before the Moscow premiere. Babadjanian's quartet was later incorporated as the main theme for a movie produced by the "Screen" television company, which was shown only once in 1977 before mysteriously disappearing, never to be found again (Teroganyan 2001, 163).

In 1977, Babadjanian wrote the "March of the Soviet Armenian Police." This anthem was requested by the head of the Armenian police. His final piano piece *Elegy*, dating from 1978, assimilated the ideas of the most significant Armenian musicians. Based on the melody of Sayat-Nova "Until I am alive for you" ("Զաւիթ Վնւի Չաւ Իմ"), the work was dedicated to Khachaturian. The choice of this piece was inspired by an evening at Khachaturian's house, a few years earlier, where Babadjanian heard this melody played by a *duduk* player. Khachaturian loved the song but had never used it in any of his works. Upon hearing the news of Khachaturian's death, Babadjanian immediately remembered his mentor's affection for this melody and chose it as the inspiration for *Elegy*, which enhances the melody in a meditative and singing style.

Besides the national essence of Sayat-Nova, traces of Komitas and Khachaturian can also be found in this piece: "The main rhythmic formula of accompaniment, the *ostinato* featuring the rhythms of a quarter and a half note, is comparable to that of the dance of Aïcha of ballet *Gayané* of Khachaturian, and introduction of a motive variation that Aslamazian (1896–1978) used in *Kkrunk*, one of the fourteen transcriptions of songs and dances of Komitas for string quartet." (Siranossian 2016, 6; La formule rythmique principale d'accompagnement, noire-blanc est un *ostinato* comparable à celui de la danse d'Aïcha du ballet *Gayaneh* d'A. Khatchadourian et l'introduction une variante d'un motif que Sergueï Aslamazian (1896–1978) a utilisé dans *Grounk*, quatrième de ses 14 transcriptions pour quatuor à cordes de chants et danses de Komitas.) The composer's arrangement preserves the couplet form of the song, but some couplets are developed extensively. The third couplet, in particular, gets an expressive development (Amantuni 1985, 100): like in the early works of the composer, its rich texture of passages makes it sound almost rhapsodic.

In 1980, Babadjanian wrote a cantata based on Aramais Saakyan's text *Ode to Armenia*. It was performed in Armenia to an overwhelming success. This "ideological" work became accidental in Babadjanian's career. The composer who was initially supposed to write the *Ode* fell sick and was unable to finish the work. Babadjanian received the call from Saakyan who asked if he would be able to write a cantata in two days. Babadjanian, though heavily ill, worked relentlessly, and delivered the composition on time for the urgent deadline (Armen Sarkisyan,

pers. comm., March 29th, 2019). When asked if there was an ideological or political context of the dedication, the composer replied: “Why do you think so? I am a patriot ... And this is my right to speak, as I see fit. The years of Soviet power are the happy years of my native Republic. [Armenia’s] success in alliance with other Republics is indisputable ... How beautiful my homeland looks! It flourishes, and that is a fact.” (Ivanushkin, 2018; Почему вы так считаете? Я — патриот... И это мое право — высказаться, как считаю нужным. Годы советской власти — счастливые годы моей родной республики. Успехи ее в союзе с другими республиками неоспоримы... Как прекрасно выглядит моя Родина! Она процветает, и это — факт.)

Babadjanian had plans for many compositions that, unfortunately, never came to fruition. These included ideas of writing the ballet for Maya Plisetskaya and a cello sonata for the prominent Armenian cellist Vagram Saradjian, with whom the composer worked on numerous occasions. The sonata exists only in scattered drafts. At the time of this writing, the Babadjanian International Foundation is working on gathering together a ballet work based on the numerous drafts left by the composer.

Chapter IV.

The main compositions of Babadjanian's mature and late periods. Diversity of musical language.

Having given a general overview of Armenian music and of Babadjanian's *oeuvre* in previous chapters, I will now highlight his most important classical (non-popular) works. Beginning with the Violin Concerto written in 1948, the composer's style developed in a striking way. Indeed, according to Armen Babakhanian, Armenia's most prominent contemporary pianist, Babadjanian's radical stylistic transformation became perhaps his most defining characteristic which draw a clear distinction between him and many of his contemporaries (Melik 2018). The works discussed in this chapter represent his achievements in each period of his career as a classical composer.

Violin Concerto in A minor.

Aram Khachaturian's Violin Concerto (1940) was the first Armenian violin concerto and marked the Republic's new development in the concerto genres (Mateossian 2008, 84). Together with *Spartacus*, the concerto became Khachaturian's most internationally recognized and played piece. Although Babadjanian's Violin Concerto in A minor (1948) was only the second important instrumental concerto to be written in Armenia, as Teroganyan (2001, 77) points out, it never found its place in the established Soviet violin repertoire and, consequently, was not played abroad.

Babadjanian's was the first Armenian violin concerto to appear after WWII. There is some disagreement in the literature as to the performers and location of the premiere. According to Teroganyan (2001, 77), it took place in 1949, by the Yerevan Philharmonic Orchestra with Leonid Kogan (1924–1982) as soloist. However, Mateossian (2008, 84) writes that the premiere took place in St. Petersburg and Moscow a year later, in 1950, while the Yerevan premiere did not occur until October 31st, 1953 with Willy Mokatsian as the soloist for all three performances. Mokatsian and Kogan were both important violinists. Mokatsian was one of the most famous Armenian virtuosos, and he collaborated with most of the composers in Armenia at the time, while Leonid Kogan enjoyed a wider reputation as one of the most celebrated Soviet violinists of the day. Known for his utterly virtuosic style and warm tone, Kogan was often compared with Jascha Heifetz and David Oistrakh. Kogan and Oistrakh were considered rivals, though, during

the Moscow State Conservatory faculty meetings, where both violinists were professors, they kept up an amicable front. The 1949 Yerevan performance of the concerto was conducted by the prominent Armenian conductor Michael Maluntsian (1903–1973). He graduated in the cello class from the Tbilisi Conservatory and later taught in the Yerevan State Conservatory. He was the head and artistic director of the Yerevan State Philharmonic Orchestra from 1945 to 1960.

Later in 1949, in St. Petersburg, Kogan performed the piece with the noted Soviet conductor Evgeny Mravinsky (1903–1988). In his article “Composer Youth of Armenia,” the Soviet musicologist Israel Nestiev (1911–1993) notes that Babadjanian’s Concerto was harshly criticized by the Composers’ Union in 1949 (Shakhnazarova 2013, 200) as a mere imitation of Khachaturian’s concerto, and Babadjanian was accused of lacking his own style. However, recent scholars such as Teroganyan (2001, 78) and Amantuni (1985, 28) disagree with this claim. While Khachaturian’s influence on Babadjanian’s style must be acknowledged, Babadjanian’s Violin Concerto features its own imagery and structure. “As for direct proximity of the works specified ... it is impossible to consider Babadjanian’s concerto an imitative work. On the contrary, the piece entices [the listener] with its youthful spontaneity and deep lyricism.” (Amantuni 1985, 27; Что же касается непосредственной близости указанных... произведений..., нельзя рассматривать Концерт Бабаджаняна как произведение эпигонское. Напротив, произведение это подкупает юношеской непосредственностью высказывания и глубоким лиризмом.)

Babadjanian received an initial request from the composer Robert Andriasian (1912–1971) and the violinist Mokatsian (1932–1997) to write a piano reduction of the orchestra part of his concerto in 1954. However, discouraged by the initial criticism and later neglect of the piece, Babadjanian was reluctant to do so. Despite the composer’s misgivings, Mokatsian performed the concerto on numerous occasions after the Yerevan premiere and was a dedicated performer of the piece. The violinist’s influence on the development of this work is hard to overstate. In 1967, his performance was recorded by “Melody,” the Soviet Union’s most important record label. In 1968, Mokatsian once again asked Babadjanian to write the piano reduction, and the composer finally agreed. Babadjanian later immortalized his gratitude by dedicating his Violin Concerto to Willy Mokatsian.

The concerto is written in the classical three-movement form—Allegro, Andante, Allegro Vivace. Whereas the first movement of Khachaturian’s concerto starts with a life-affirming brass theme and continues with an energetic violin part, Babadjanian opens with a very short orchestral

introduction: two beats of pizzicato on the strings, followed by a singing violin theme. The opening violin theme (Ex 4.0) built on a primary triad with ornamentation (Amantuni 1985, 127). While the main and secondary subjects may seem to be in conflict at first glance, they represent two sides of the same lyrical idea. Mateossian (2008, 88) draws a parallel between Babadjanian's broad melodic lines and the main themes found in Mendelssohn's and Glazunov's violin concertos. The movement's second theme, written in D-flat major and based on characteristic Armenian ornamentation, develops gradually. The tonality's timbral specificity gives the theme a dreamy, soft character. Teroganyan (2001, 80) points out that Chopin's Prelude No. 15 Op. 8 and Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* love theme were both written in D-flat major, and Amantuni (1985, 28) adds that the lowered-fourth tonal relation is often used by Shostakovich. The D-flat theme in the first movement is similar to the second movement's main subject—the melodies are written in the same character. The Andante is written in a meditative mood, with long phrases and rich G-string passages. The movement opens in the low register of the orchestra: the cellos, English horns, and clarinets play the theme. Descending chromatic melodies enhance the music's sad affect.

While it shares the lyrical quality of the second movement of Khachaturian's Concerto, it differentiates itself in choice of mode (Khachaturian uses the Phrygian, whereas Babadjanian writes the movement in the Aeolian mode), and orchestral treatment. The main element of the movement, the minor third, repeated and presented in different rhythms, represent the *lamento* idiom (Ex. 4.1).

For the virtuosic and energetic Finale, written in sonata form as well, Babadjanian uses the rhythmic base from a folk song entitled "I Cannot Play" ("Չեմ կրնա խաղալ"). He uses a cyclical form, taking up the second movement's motif in the second theme. The recurrent motif, skillfully arranged, sounds in high registers in a dance-like rhythmical organization. The second part of the movement is built on the theme from the Allegro, again treated with the use of dance idioms.

Eventually, the Violin Concerto has come to be regarded by modern scholars as one of Babadjanian's greatest works. The use of orchestral registers and contrasting characters within the unifying lines of the movements marked a new level in Babadjanian's development as a composer.

The Heroic Ballade.

Interestingly enough, only a year after he wrote his so-called “imitative” concerto, Babadjanian composed what became his signature creation, the warmly received *Heroic Ballade for Piano and Orchestra* (1950). The work was an important milestone for the composer’s career (Amantuni 1985, 36). In an interview with *Musical Life*, Babadjanian said that while his Piano Concerto (1944) bore the influence of Khachaturian’s music, the *Heroic Ballade* was truly independent and free of any influence, describing it as the piece where his style crystallized (Babadjanian 1971, 17).

In the composition’s structure, Teroganyan (2001, 85) sees a resemblance to Cesar Franck’s *Symphonic Variations*. This comparison is suggestive but it might be derived from the subtitle of the *Heroic Ballade* which reads “symphonic variations.”

Each variation is distinct, though none of the five movements has numeric markings: the composer indicates *attacca* between each one. While there are no direct references to WWII, the *Ballade* has nevertheless been interpreted as representing the Motherland Armenia and the heroic spirit of the nation (Amantuni 1985, 37). It continues the line of patriotic works such as Shostakovich’s *Song of the Woods*, Arutunian’s *Motherland*, and Khachaturian’s *Ode to Stalin* (Teroganyan 2001, 85; Grigorian 1961, 21). While Grigorian (1961, 22) argues that the *Heroic Ballade* is a programmatic work, Teroganyan (2001, 86) disagrees, classifying it instead as a work of symphonic variations for piano and orchestra.

The piece begins with the Maestoso, a brief introduction of the orchestra. The significance of its *ashug*-inspired sound is evident: decisive and epic, it resembles the traditional call of the troubadours that announced their presence and attracted an audience. In the following Andante, the piano begins a noble theme that represents the Motherland and becomes one of the main elements of the work. Flowing and majestic, the theme is written in a ternary form (Ex. 4.2). The main theme in E major is replete with minor triads, suggesting the color of Armenian national modes. The first variation, Allegro energico, offers a contrast (Ex. 4.3).

In the whimsical, almost grotesque scherzo, with broken syncopations and tonality changes, the main theme is hardly recognizable (Grigorian 1961, 24). The composer approaches motivic development here with a rhapsodic, “cross-cutting” flow.

The following variation, the second and shortest, Andante Cantabile, is more meditative. The piano solo starts the theme, and *tutti* eventually repeats it. Amantuni (1995, 174) discusses this passage in terms of “hidden polytonality,” a concept introduced by the Soviet musicologist

Yuriy Tuilin (1893–1978). According to this interpretation, although the main tonality of the passage is C-sharp minor, there are other elements that strongly suggest the Aeolian mode on G-sharp. The main key of C-sharp minor is only conclusively asserted at the cadence that ends the variation (Ex. 4.4). The third variation, *Allegro Moderato*, bursts like a storm into the preceding philosophical section and creates a striking contrast both to it and to the following variations. The third variation is a depiction of a life-affirming, youthful dancing celebration. Presented in the original key of E major, the main theme is treated with all twelve pitches of the chromatic scale (Amantuni 1985, 158). Babadjanian combines a waltz rhythm with Armenian folk dance. The rhythmic organization changes from 5/8 to 6/8 with an emphasis on the first beat of the bar.

The only program variation in the piece may be the fourth variation. Teroganyan (2001, 86) suggests that *Maestoso, Marcia Funebre*, is dedicated to the fallen soldiers of the war. However, it may also represent a different tragic event, from Armenia's history:

In 1978, during a press conference at the Opéra de Marseilles for a concert where A. Babadjanian was present, a participant was surprised at the absence of themes devoted to the victims of the [1915] Armenian Genocide in his work. Seemingly irritated, the composer abruptly answered that, by listening to the funeral march of his *Heroic Ballade*, he would have his answer. [En 1978, lors d'une conférence de presse à l'Opéra de Marseille pour un concert en présence d'A. Babadjanian, un participant s'est étonné de l'absence, dans son œuvre, d'une pièce dédiée aux victimes du génocide des Arméniens. Un peu agacé, le compositeur lui a alors brièvement répondu qu'en écoutant la marche funèbre de sa *Ballade héroïque*, il aurait la réponse.] (Siranossian 2016, 6)

The *Marcia*, written in C major, begins with a stern melody introduced by the brass before the strings enter with the powerful and energetic main theme. As the variation comes to a close, the brass section plays again in a solemn manner, making a connection to the introduction and creating a timbral arch.

The fifth variation is the uplifting finale of the piece, *Allegro Vivace* (Ex. 4.5). Babadjanian uses the *Maestoso* theme as a cadenza, in the midst of which he introduces a melody very similar to the Armenian folk song “I Saw You” (“tu lq̄q̄ unuu”). The lyrical quality of the *Ballade*'s main theme becomes more affirmative. The coda offers an amplified rendition of the Motherland theme and a joyful and glorious conclusion.

The *Heroic Ballade* premiered on September 20th, 1950 in Yerevan. Babadjanian himself

was the soloist, backed by the State Philharmonic Orchestra of Armenia. He was twenty-nine years old. The piece was an overwhelming success and became a national treasure overnight. Babadjanian was promptly hailed as the best interpreter of this work, yet in addition to his own numerous performances, the *Heroic Ballade* was adopted into the repertoire of the popular Soviet pianists of the day, including Emil Gilels (1916–1975) and Lev Vlasenko (1928–1996). Vlasenko, in particular, was attached to the piece for the rest of his life and regularly performed it abroad. Vlasenko often included it in his repertoire for students, and it became a compulsory piece in the Moscow State Conservatory competition in 1953. In 1954, a French vinyl label called Le Chant du Monde released a recording of Babadjanian’s interpretation of the *Heroic Ballade*, accompanied by the State Radio Orchestra under the direction of Natan Rachlin (1906–1979). The work was praised in a 1954 review in the French journal *La Pensée* by Marc Soriano: “In my opinion, we need to pay attention to the *Heroic Ballade*. In *Ballade*, we admire the masterful use of solo piano and ‘marriage’ between piano and orchestra parts. The ‘program’ that inspired ... [this work] is the history ... of Armenia.” (Soriano 1954, 129; Il faut à mon avis réserver une attention particulière ... à la Ballade héroïque. Dans la Ballade, on admirera la maîtrise dans l’utilisation du piano soliste et le ‘mariage’ entre du piano et de l’orchestre. Le programme qui inspire ... c’est l’histoire ... de l’Arménie.)¹⁰

Another review from *L’Humanité*, dated June 5th, 1954, describes the *Heroic Ballade* as “a work that, without doubt, will be considered one of the most significant.” (as quoted in Teroganyan 2001, 91; Произведение, которое можно, не задумываясь, отнести к числу самых значительных).

The *Heroic Ballade* brought Babadjanian not only the love of the musicians of his nation and the musical audiences, the *Heroic Ballade* brought young Babadjanian the Stalin Prize, an award that had been inaugurated in 1941 to encourage nationalistic music. The Stalin Prize, according to Vitaliy Tikhonov, “became a form of ‘soft’ control over the cultural and scientific life of the Soviet Union. Winners of the award became reference points for scientists and representatives of artistic professions, and the reward clearly demonstrated which research the [ruling] regime considered relevant and useful, and what [it] expected from other [artists and scientists].”

¹⁰ Although I found this quotation in Soriano 1954, Teroganyan attributes the same review to a different source: an issue of *L’Humanité* dated May 6, 1954. It is possible that the same review was published in two places, or else Teroganyan may have been mistaken.

(Tikhonov 2016; Она стала формой «мягкого» контроля над культурной и научной жизнью Советского Союза. Лауреаты премии становились ориентиром для научных работников и представителей творческих профессий, а награждение наглядно демонстрировало, какие исследования правящий режим считает актуальным и полезным и чего ждет от других.) The composers Shostakovich, Khachaturian, Shchedrin, and Prokofiev were all laureates of the prize, yet Babadjanian remains little-known for this distinction. Western scholars tend to omit his name in papers related to it. This is presumably because the prize was tiered. Frolova-Walker, in her monograph on the Stalin Prize (Frolova-Walker 2016), fails to mention Babadjanian in the main body of the book, although she does include him in a table listing every winner of the prize, indicating that he was a 1951 winner of the second-degree prize. The second-degree award was specifically designated for music written by ethnic composers and “catered for the highest achievements at the level of the republics (with some Union-wide exposure), while the first-degree was reserved for work of Union-wide or even international importance” (Frolova-Walker 2016, 60). As well as prestige and acclaim, the Stalin Prize offered monetary awards: hundred thousand rubles for the first-degree prizes, fifty thousand for the second, and twenty-five for the third. For Babadjanian, who had just moved to Yerevan and struggled to provide for his family, even the second-degree distinction meant a brilliant future and the approval of the Soviet apparatus.

Piano Trio in F sharp minor.

In an interview published in *Musical Life* No. 4, Babadjanian said that his Piano Trio, written in 1952, reaffirmed his period of artistic independence and maturity (Babadjanian 1971, 17). Teroganyan (2001, 91) argues that it is his best work.

Babadjanian started working on the piece in 1951, and initially thought of writing a sonata for violin (Budagyan 1998, 23). At the time, he was collaborating with a brilliant Armenian virtuoso Hacob Vartanian (1928–1981), but the cellist Gerontiy Talian (1926–2000) asked him to consider writing a trio. Once, when Babadjanian and Vartanian were rehearsing, Talian who was in the hall where the rehearsal took place, began to improvise a cello part. Babadjanian was convinced and agreed to write it. A commonly held theory (Geodakyan 2008, 23; Grigorian 1961, 29) attributes the dramatic character of the trio to the fact that Babadjanian had started to notice the first symptoms of his illness. And while Teroganyan (2001, 93) addresses these arguments with skepticism, Amantuni (1985, 47) suggests that the work falls

into the XIX century Russian tradition of the “tragic trio.” As a matter of fact, when Stalin died, the trio was performed next to his coffin at the burial (Razzakov 2007, 401).

The piece has three movements: Largo—Allegro Espressivo, Andante, and Allegro Vivace. The Largo theme, a four-bar melody with the leading violin and cello, introduces a leitmotif that reoccurs throughout all three movements. The Largo melody (Ex. 4.6) sounds very much the folk song “It Is Springtime” (“Գարնաւ”) in Komitas Vardapet’s arrangement (Ex. 4.5). The theme reappears in the exposition and coda of the first movement, in the middle section of the second movement, and in recapitulation and coda of the third movement.

This trio has two particularities: a cyclical form and the use of folk motifs, “thus creating a distinctive approach to the melding of different traditions” (Tumajyan 2016, 32). For Teroganyan (2001, 91) the piece is a perfect example of the cyclical form, while Amantuni (1985, 47) admires its symphonic qualities, pointing to the development of the motivic material and lines as organically connected parts of the whole cycle.

The work begins with tragic intonations, while the narrative is reserved and reticent. Written in sonata form, the first movement juxtaposes contrasting moods: the primary subject is based on Largo intonation but in a more expressive rendition. Both stringed instruments get an emotionally charged part, while the piano provides harmonic support in the form of passages.

The second theme in F major is introduced by the piano—lyrical and simple, the motif comes like a ray of sunlight. Both the violin and cello follow the piano, bringing the new line to its climax. In the development, Babadjanian introduces “waves” of transformation, with transpositions to different keys. At the development’s climax, the Largo theme comes back in triple *forte*. The recapitulation is short, and rather than re-introducing the first subject of the exposition, it concentrates on the second theme. After the series of transitions leading to the Coda, the primary theme returns in an intense and dramatic version.

The jewel of the cycle is in the almost divine serenity of the second movement. Written in C major, it has a pastoral character and a subtle folk color (particularly in the ornamental texture of the sixteenth-note triplets and melodic turns). The ternary form, with its simple structure, makes a contrast to the dramatically charged and texturally busy first movement. The main theme, played by the violin with subtle accompanying chords, combines vivid emotionality and lyrical tranquility. The theme of the middle section is more expressive, with a thicker texture, more chromaticism, and a leading cello part. Before the recapitulation, the Largo theme returns, now in E-flat minor, shattering the former feeling of innocence.

The third movement is inspired by a rowdy Armenian folk dance. Based on a men's dance, *kochari* (կոչարի), the main subject is full of syncopation and features the accented and augmented fourth degree, B-sharp (Ex. 4.8). The composer said: "This [Finale] theme was conceived from a simple melody of *zurna* (զնրփու) ¹¹ which accompanies folk dances" (as quoted Teroganyan 2001, 47).

The theme softens with diminishing dynamics, and the cello begins an elegiac melody resembling a *horovel* (հորով) —a traditional work song, used especially for plowing. *Horovel* is a genre of Armenian folk song which is sung by the workers in the fields. In the development of the movement, the composer uses a *fugato* technique, and the instruments enter a contrapuntal section with light *staccato* strokes. The numerous chromatic passages create an ever-growing tension, making the development dense and giving an impression of instability. The recapitulation develops the main subject and leads to a climax, where the music stops suddenly; afterward, the piano, with heavy chords in the lower register, the violin and the cello play the Largo theme in tragic unison. Upon its culmination, the violin plays the theme once more—in a stern and unforgiving manner. The Piano Trio ends with a laconic, yet utterly dramatic, Coda.

The two premieres of the work took place in 1952: the first, at the Composers' Union in Yerevan, was performed by Babadjanian, Vartanian, and Talian. It was such a great success that Babadjanian felt extremely encouraged as he traveled to Moscow the next day for the second premiere. In Moscow, he performed the piece with David Oistrakh and Sviatoslav Knushevitsky (1908–1963). Oistrakh and Knushevitsky had formed a trio together with the prominent Soviet pianist Lev Oborin (1907–1974). In the history their collaboration, Oistrakh and Knushevitsky played with a pianist other than Oborin only twice: once, in 1944, Oborin was replaced by Shostakovich for the performance of the *In memoriam of I. Sollertinsky Trio*, ¹² and the second time was when Babadjanian played the premiere of his Trio. Oistrakh (then aged forty-four) and Knushevitsky (forty-two) were already renowned musicians; the collaboration with such moguls was a rare opportunity for a young composer. In interviews, Knushevitsky's daughter Maria Knushevitsky, who was present at rehearsals, mentioned that

¹¹ *Zurna* is a wind instrument known for its raw sound. It is considered to be a predecessor of the modern oboe. In the Armenian tradition, the *zurna* accompanied all sorts of dances, especially during the wedding celebrations.

¹² Ivan Sollertinsky (1902–1944) was a Soviet musicologist, theatrical critic, and a close friend of Shostakovich. His sudden death inspired Shostakovich's Second Piano Trio.

both Oistrakh and Knushevitsky were very fond of Babadjanian (Teroganyan 2001, 100). She remembered that rehearsals could start at nine o'clock in the evening and finish at past two in the morning, as the musicians lost track of time in their excitement. Babadjanian dedicated the Trio to Oistrakh and Knushevitsky.

The Moscow premiere was as successful as the one in Yerevan, and the following year, in February 1953, the musicians performed the piece again at the Plenum of the Soviet Music in Moscow. Shostakovich attended this performance and noted the following in *Yerevan Komsomol* from January 21, 1971: “An equal partner of Oistrakh and Knushevitsky was the author of the trio, Arno Babadjanian—a wonderful pianist, a performer with magnitude.” (as quoted in Hacıopian 2006, 159; Достойным партнером Д. Ойстраха и С. Кнушевицкого явился автор Трио Арно Бабаджанян — великолепный пианист, исполнитель крупного масштаба.)

Oistrakh said of the work and Babadjanian's interpretation: “In the Trio, regardless of the [people] performing violin and violoncello parts, if Babadjanian is behind the grand piano, [it] creates an impression that the piano part is brighter and more dense” (as quoted in Hacıopian 2006, 159; В трио, вне зависимости от того, кто исполняет партию скрипки и виолончели, если за роялем А. Бабаджанян, создается ощущение, что партия фортепьяно более ярче и насыщеннее.)

In a 1956 article “About chamber music” in *Soviet Music*, Adolf Gotlib discusses the “forgotten genre of the piano trio,” remarking that it was often considered “old-fashioned” but that Babadjanian managed to revive it: “However, all that talk [about the old-fashioned genre] was proved worthless when A. Babadjanian wrote his impressive [талантливое] Trio, a work of immersive artistic power.” (Gotlib 1956, 52; Однако, все эти разговоры оказались ничемными, когда А. Бабаджанян написал талантливое Трио, произведение захватывающей художественной силы.)

In addition to its great reception among the musicians of the time, the music of the trio inspired the ballet dancers at the Bolshoi Theater to create a number called “Pursuit.” Babadjanian was pleased with this work: the choreography was impressive and temperamental, and their performance was accompanied by a live trio performance, not a recording (Teroganyan 2001, 171). Surprisingly, when a Georgian choreographer Aleksey Chichinadze (1917–1994), offered Babadjanian to set a ballet to the trio, the composer was not interested.

The Piano Trio in F-sharp minor is probably the best-known of Babadjanian's work to Western listeners. The mastery of his style is on display. In this chamber work, he managed to

give each instrument a distinctive voice without losing the integrity of his vision or the unity of the structure. Using traditional forms, and meeting them with new means of expressivity, this trio may be considered the definitive inception of Babadjanian's distinct style: a synthesis of Armenian monody, European major-minor tonality relations, the harmonization tendencies of the XX century (in particular, Messiaen's modes of limited transposition), and Russian symphonism.

The Violin Sonata in B-flat Minor.

Starting in 1953, immediately following Stalin's death on March 5th, the Soviet system was subject to "Khrushchev's Thaw." Stalin's right-hand man, Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971), became head of State. Under his leadership, for the next ten years, there was a mass exoneration of political prisoners. The air of liberation, especially at first, was overwhelming. The possibility of freedom of expression, which resonated with the uplifting spirit of the period, inspired artists to create daring, and experimental works.

The Violin Sonata in B-flat Minor was one of these works. Grigorian (1961, 45) writes that Babadjanian's initial idea was to open his piece with an epigraph calling for peace between the nations of the world. However, he did not do this, opting instead to dedicate the piece to Shostakovich. Teroganyan (2001, 107) suggests that, for Babadjanian, the older colleague represented the embodiment of artistic tragedy and pain. Babadjanian's son, Ara, says the dedication came about after his father presented the piece to the Composers' Union in Moscow. It had an unfavorable reception in the committee hearings, and Babadjanian was discouraged. Shortly afterward, he received a telephone call from Shostakovich. Shostakovich said: "I heard about the reaction of the Composers' Union, but rest assured, you have written a wonderful piece. I am very fond of it." This encouragement meant a lot for Babadjanian, who immediately added the dedication (Ara Babadjanian, pers. comm., April 2017).

Written in a standard three-movement form, this work became Babadjanian's successful attempt to find bolder ideas and more expressive tools. His language was truly innovative in this piece, as the sonata shifted to a new rhapsodic, richly textured, dissonant style that would become his signature. His usual melodism is replaced here by more declarative, angular strokes. Likewise, his usual expressive style based on nationalistic themes gives way to *recitativo* passages, complex melodic and intonational passages, and innovative harmonies. A further significant shift appears in the thematic treatment—unlike earlier works that included extensive improvisatory passages, this style is avoided in the sonata.

Of his three principal chamber works—the *Heroic Ballade*, Trio, and Violin Sonata—the sonata is the least a nationalistic and foregrounds the composer’s modernist tendencies the most. There is some nationalist influence rooted in Armenian folk traditions, but the composer does not use direct quotes; his skill in imitating and reproducing the Armenian musical idiom was masterful. The folk-inspired motifs and rhythms form islands of contrast in short sections. The music of the sonata explores inward or philosophical moods and avoids bright or flashy styles. The main feature of the dramaturgical unfolding of the sonata, which uses contrast as its primary tool for development, can be heard from the first bars of the first movement. As in the *Heroic Ballade*, Babadjanian planted the “core” of the piece in the slow introduction of the first movement—the declamatory and engaging Grave (Ex. 4.9).

The violin starts with a tense, dissonant solo, and the piano completes it with alarming chords played at the lower register. The primary subject of the following *de Allegro energico* provides motivic material for the sonata’s development. The exposition’s second theme is a contrast—based on the lyrical *antuni* (անդնի) song. The development is one of the most dynamic sections of the movement, where Babadjanian uses contrapuntal writing combined with new motifs and intonations. In the middle of the development, with an accelerated tempo (*piu mosso*), the Grave theme returns, wrapped in a complex rhythmic organization. The climax of development leads towards recapitulation, featuring the Grave theme with another rhythmic transformation. The main subject of the exposition is shortened and sounds like a sad reminiscence.

The second movement, Andante (G-sharp minor) is written with simple harmonies and musical language and is the movement that sounds almost like folk music. Here the principles of dialogues thrive. The simple, clear melody is accompanied by an angular contrapuntal line; in a clear counterpoint texture, a *cantabile* melody is combined with *pizzicato*, long melodic lines, and accents. The middle section of the movement, Presto (*con sordini, pianissimo, leggiero*), is introduced by a series of scales (Ex. 4.10) and bursts unexpectedly, gradually building up to *fortissimo*, and a sudden reappearance of the Grave theme. This creates a “dramatic” (Amantuni 1985, 64) effect like an “alarm bell” (Teroganyan 2001, 111). Sarkisyan (2008, 34) suggests that the use of the scales is a reference to the Baroque period and its importance in Neoclassical works.

The Allegro risoluto is a forceful third movement (as suggested by the risoluto indication). Written in sonata form, its primary theme is based on the theme from the first

movement. The time signature varies between 6/8, 4/8, 5/8, and 7/8: this complicated temporal mosaic is derived from Armenian folk dance. The second theme is announced by a change in the time signature (3/4), minor seconds in the piano accompaniment, and a violin melody set out in ghostly harmonics. Although it is similar to the secondary theme of the first movement, its intonation is based on the Grave theme. The main feature of the development is the way contrasting elements are intertwined, contributing to the motivic dominance of the primary theme. The recapitulation comes as a logical continuation of the thematic build-up begun in the development section (Amantuni 1985, 67). At the very end, a contrasting *Pesante* section showcases the Grave theme, performed with violin double stops (in the sixths and the octaves) while the piano plays heavy chords in its lowest register (Ex. 4.11). The cycle ends with a *Maestoso* section, where both instruments finish on a conclusive triple *forte*.

The Sonata was initially criticized for the dissonant idioms, but its eventual success was an absolute win for Babadjanian. Technically challenging for both instruments, the sonata attracted the Soviet Union's most notable performers. The pioneer of this work was the violinist Hacop Vartanian, who had helped Babadjanian with the violinistic aspects as he wrote it. Composer Mirzoyan (1921–2012) commented: “It was ... a hard work. Every phrase was meticulously worked on.” (as quoted in Budagyan 1998, 21; Это был...тяжелый труд. Тщательно отделялась каждая фраза.)

On November 5th, 1959, the piece premiered at the Composers' Union in Yerevan. Vartanian broke a string at the beginning of the performance but gave a convincing performance after replacing it. On January 21st, 1960, the Sonata was performed at the prescreening auditions for the Fifth Plenum of Soviet Music. Though “Khrushchev's Thaw” made Soviet society more liberal in some ways, the musical landscape remained almost as conservative as it had been during the Stalin years. The policy of pre-auditioning compositions, with consequent approval or disapproval, remained the same. Hence, when Babadjanian presented his Sonata at the Composers' Union in 1960, the work was called formalistic. Its success was built by the performers Union-wide who fell in love with it. The work was recorded by a number of notable violinists: in 1963 by Valery Klimov¹³ (1931–) with Babadjanian; in 1970 by Alexei Mikhlin

¹³ Valery Klimov is a prominent Soviet/Russian violinist. He is mostly known as a winner of the First Tchaikovsky International Competition in Moscow (1958), and as a laureate of the Long-Thibault Competition in Paris (1955).

(1938–) with Tsiala Kvernadze (1937–); and in 1972 by Edward Gratch¹⁴ (1930–) with Babadjanian. Klimov made suggestions during rehearsals that Babadjanian later added to the score (Tegoranyan 2001, 114). The violinist recalls that, after the poor reception of the piece at the Composers' Union, the performances of the sonata were always triumphant elsewhere. The violinist recorded it three times, once at the Union-wide Radio, once for the recording label "Melody," and once at the Central Television station. He toured with the piece all over the Union: "[The sonata] is accepted warmly everywhere and is a huge success ... Besides, I teach it to some of my students." (Teroganyan 2001, 114; Она всюду принимается горячо и имеет огромный успех... кроме того, я прохожу ее с некоторыми из своих учеников.)

Teroganyan (2001, 100) mentions that Oistrakh, whose performance of the trio was instrumental to its success, never performed Babadjanian's Violin Sonata in public. As a chamber musician, Babadjanian was quite authoritarian. Teroganyan suggests that Oistrakh, who was famous for his dominance in ensembles, was reluctant to work with the composer again and was not inclined to perform the piece with a different pianist. Gratch also remembered Babadjanian as a demanding musician who insisted on many detailed nuances in rehearsal. In the 1970s, Gratch and Babadjanian performed the sonata in East Germany to great acclaim. Another notable violinist who worked with Babadjanian is Ruben Aharonian (1947–).¹⁵ Aharonian, a laureate of the Fifth Tchaikovsky International Competition, played the sonata in 1967. Like Gratch, Aharonian was impressed by the Babadjanian's meticulousness and attention to detail (Ruben Aharonian, pers. comm., August 2018). At Babadjanian's 60th birthday celebration in Yerevan, Aharonian performed the Sonata with the composer. Aharonian remembers, "Before coming up on stage, Babadjanian was extremely nervous. It was unexpected as we had prepared the piece thoroughly. When I mentioned that, 'But Mr. Babadjanian, we are so well-prepared, why are you nervous?' his answer was, 'That is exactly why. What if we lose *something*?''" (Ruben Aharonian, pers. comm., August 2018). In 2015, I contacted Aharonian, who kindly shared a video of his 1983 performance with the composer. This rare recording is an artifact of exceptional value is now available on YouTube.¹⁶

¹⁴ Edward Gratch is one of the most influential violinists and pedagogues in present-day Russia. He is an organizer of various festivals and music societies and is a professor at the Moscow State Conservatory.

¹⁵ Ruben Aharonian is the first violinist of the Borodin Quartet.

¹⁶ The video can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ss1f7oRmlTE&t=485s>

Besides Aharonian, such well-regarded violinists as Vladimir Landsman (1941–) and Gideon Kremer (1947–) have performed the sonata on numerous occasions.

Six Pictures for Piano.

Six Pictures were written in 1964 and marked a new path both for Babadjanian and for the musical landscape of Soviet Armenia. This piece demonstrates Babadjanian's pianistic abilities and his drive for the new expressive tools: *Six Pictures* were composed using the serial technique. Before the Violin Sonata, Babadjanian's work was mostly inspired by Rachmaninov's pianism (Amantuni 1985, 80), with its rhapsodic virtuosity, monumental character, and multi-layered texture. Beginning with the Sonata, the composer turned to a concentrated, transparent texture and contrapuntal writing.

Six years before conceiving *Six Pictures*, Babadjanian became fascinated with the ideas of the Second Viennese School (Sarkisyan 2008, 24). While he used new compositional techniques, the cycle of six miniature pieces still bears Babadjanian's stylistic stamp—emotionality, melodic nature, philosophical ideas, and the omnipresent nationalistic color. Though a total liberation in arts was yet an unattainable dream, a French revue discusses the “Khrushchev's Thaw” as evinced in new music of Soviet composers: “Arvo Pärt, Arno Babadjanian, to name but a few who use new techniques with boldness. Serial music has even made ‘converts’ among the composers who, until now, [were considered] traditional.” (Schwartz 1967, 184; Arvo Pyart, Arno Babadjanian, pour n'en citer que quelques-uns, qui usent avec une hardiesse des nouvelles techniques. La musique sérielle a même fait des “convertis” parmi des compositeurs jusque-là pour traditionnels.) This insight is fascinating because it reveals that prior to *Six Pictures*, Babadjanian was considered by Western society as a traditional composer of the Soviet Union. Moreover, it confirms the reach of Babadjanian's music and his stylistic development to musical circles beyond the Soviet Union.

Leo Masel (1907–2000), the Russian musicologist of Soviet music, described *Six Pictures* as follows: “... this cycle, partly using the Dodecaphonic technique, has a clearly expressed nationalistic character.” (Masel 1965, 16; ...этот цикл, отчасти применяющий додекафонную технику, носит ясно выраженный национальный характер.) The American musicologist and journalist Maya Pritzker (2006, 190) echoes this point of view: “Using the 12-tone system freely and with fantasy, the composer provides an example of the balanced fusion of the seemingly

‘dry’ and abstract compositional principal and the originality of national idioms.” (Насопian2006, 190; Свободно, изобретательно используя 12-тоновую технику, автор дает пример гармонического слияния этого, казалось бы, сухого и абстрактного композиционного принципа со своеобразием национального языка.)

Though it is small, the cycle still has the qualities of a concert piece—the diversity of its thematic material, and pianistic virtuosity add to its luster in performance. Each piece has an evocative title: “Improvisation,” “Folk,” “Toccata,” “Intermezzo,” “Choral,” and “Sasun Dance.” The following is a short overview.

“Improvisation,” Andante recitativo: While Sarkisyan (2011, 32) argues that the miniature’s introduction sounds similar to the primary theme of Schönberg’s *Survivor from Warsaw*, Amantuni (1985, 81) and Teroganyan (2011, 134) draw attention to the *ashugs* idiom in the piece. The introductory passage and the subsequently repeated F-sharp note (Ex. 4.13) can be heard as a reference to Khachaturian’s *Song-Poem after Ashugs* for violin and piano (Ex. 4.12). Khachaturian’s lyrical homage to folk musicians showcases their virtuoso passages, and uses repeated seconds to imitate the tuning of strings.

“Folk”: This section features whimsical accents, broken rhythms based on traditional folk-dance idioms (Ex. 4.14). Amantuni (1985, 82) suggests a parallel between the main motif from the Moderato section and the Armenian dance *darchi* (դարձի), previously used by Spendiarian in his opera *Almast*. Four measures of the introduction are based on twelve-tone organization. The following theme is built on the intonations of the introductory four measures.¹⁷

“Toccata” has a strong energy suggestive of an urban landscape with its never-ending machinery and busy factories. The Presto’s opening minor seventh and recurrent tritons create the intonation on which this miniature is based. This movement could come across as a particularly harsh and dissonant if Babadjanian had not included changing time signatures and unexpected accentuation, which add a humorous character.

“Intermezzo” offers a relief from the busy textures of the previous pieces: its capricious rhythmic structure and numerous time-signature changes (4/4, 3/4, 2/4, and 6/4, varying six times in a 26-bar piece) create an impression of uncertainty. Given its brevity, Amantuni (1985, 84) and Teroganyan (2001, 136) argue that this piece is a draft, not a finished work. “Choral”

¹⁷ See Berberian 2010 for a complete serial analysis.

creates contrasting, philosophical tone: a chordal *ostinato* represents four segments of the twelve-tone row, creates an impression of steadiness and calm. The main interval, the seventh, is used as the base for the piece's development. Nevertheless, the most important elements of the piece are in the melody: on the base of the chords, Babadjanian includes a middle voice which can be seen as an allusion to folk idioms (Ex. 4. 15).

The Allegro energico of "Sasun Dance" is a kaleidoscopic celebration of rhythm: the time-signature changes every bar (Ex. 4.16). The contracting element comes as a reminiscence of a soft-sounding folk dance (Ex. 4.17). The name refers to a historical place, Sasun (Սասն). It was one of the most important sites of the Great Armenian Empire (190 BC to 428 AD) and the last city to fight the Ottoman Empire during the 1915 Genocide. The people of Sasun defended their city for six months and only surrendered when they ran out of food and weapons. The Sasun fighters were known for their military dances, which came to stand as symbols of bravery, heroism, and patriotism. Babadjanian created a strong, emotional rendition of the "Sasun Dance" based on the three serial rows, each treated in *ostinato* variations. Starting *pianissimo*, the line of the dance becomes multi-layered and moves toward the climax. Babadjanian occasionally uses fourth- and fifth-chords, which are common in the Armenian monodic tradition and the music of Komitas.

Six Pictures offer a beautiful synthesis of the most characteristic Armenian national idioms (Sasun, folk dances, ideas from Spendiarian, Khachaturian and Komitas, the art of the *ashugs*), and the latest developments in classical music (serial rows), plus other traditional classical elements (contrapuntal writing and classical forms).

Benjamin Britten and *Six Pictures*.

In 1968, the Armenian musicologist Shushanik Apoyan wrote that Benjamin Britten had heard and been fascinated by the rhythmic effects of the "Sasun Dance" (Teroganyan 2001, 130). Benjamin Britten had visited Armenia with Peter Pears in 1965. At the official invitation of the Composers' Union,¹⁸ along with personal invitations from Rostropovich and his wife, mezzo-soprano Galina Vishnevskaya, Britten spent the month of August in Dilijan. Situated in one of the most beautiful nature reserves in Armenia, Dilijan had been the Soviet composers' retreat for years. Many Soviet composers, Shostakovich and Khachaturian included, spent time there working on their compositions. During his visit, Benjamin Britten worked on the *Poet's Echo* op. 76, based on Alexander Pushkin's poetry. Pears's diary entry dated Thursday, August 12th reads:

“There is more contact with the three Armenian composers Mirzoyan, Babadjanian and Arutunian” (Johnson 2017, 188–189). Babadjanian had an opportunity to meet and play for Britten. After hearing *Six Pictures*, Pears’s diary entry, from Thursday, August 19th, reads: “The composer Babadjanian visited the English guests to play his *Six Pieces for Piano* with ‘tremendous gusto and agility.’ His style was post-Bartók folk-based Armenian” (quoted in Johnson 2003, 189).

In September 1965, the Composers’ Union organized a festival called Days of Benjamin Britten (Ex. 4.18). Rossinsky and Vorontsova (2013, 167) describe the event as “the first thorough presentation of many of the composer’s works, attended by Symphony Orchestra of Armenia, the composer himself, his long-time singer, Peter Pears, the singer Galina Vishnevskaya, [and] Mstislav Rostropovich ...” In an online article in *Voice of Armenia*, the former director of the Armenian Philharmonic shared the difficulties he encountered organizing the event: “As always, as with any innovation, the initiative was not without nay-sayers, without [some sort of] resistance. Some officials in the Ministry, predicting disorder in the new work, thought the festival would be impossible.” (Balyan, 2019; Как всегда, любое новшество, инициатива не обходились без неверующих, без сопротивления. Некоторые чиновники в министерстве предрекали развал текущей работы, считали фестиваль неосуществимой затеей.) Nevertheless, the event proved to be successful and left both Britten and Pears impressed with the hospitality and artistic integrity of the Armenian Republic.

Babadjanian’s *Six Pictures* opened new horizons for the Soviet repertoire and inspired composers to search for new expressive means in their compositions. Sarkisyan (2002, 74) compares his arrangement of Armenian folk rhythms, especially in *Six Pictures*, to Khachaturian’s. While Khachaturian made use of the improvisational nature of the rhythms, Babadjanian chose varying meter, which, according to Sarkisyan, is similar to the asymmetrical Bulgarian rhythms used by Bartók in the third movement of his Fifth Quartet. The impact *Six Pictures* made on Armenian piano music is highlighted in the article “Piano Music” in *Soviet Music* journal from 1985: “*Six Pictures* by Babadjanian are the pinnacle of an extremely charged period in the development of Armenian piano music, summing up a long, creative quest and leading toward something new.” (Aroyan and Zolotova 1985, 345; “Шесть картин” Бабаджаняна есть

¹⁸ At that time, the Union’s President was Eduard Mirzoyan, a progressive composer and friend of Babadjanian’s

своеобразный итог-вершина чрезвычайно насыщенного периода развития армянской фортепьянной музыки в целом, обобщающий, выводящий на новую качественную ступень результаты многолетних творчески поисков.)

The 1960s brought a slight shift in the Iron Curtain (*железный занавес*). Stravinsky paid an official visit to Moscow in 1962, causing great excitement in the Soviet musical world. Unfortunately, the impact of his ideas was suppressed by Khrushchev, who gave a speech in 1963 that categorically denounced abstraction, formalism, and bourgeois ideas in Soviet art.

Six Pictures were among the works accused of favoring Western ideologies, and were considered “radical.” As musicologist Ekaterina Vlasova explains: “The new works particularly specified for radicalism in their musical language are ... the Second Symphony by R. Shchedrin ... and the *Six Pictures* of A. Babadjanian.” (Vlasova 2015, 110; Из новых произведений, отличающихся радикализмом музыкального языка, прозвучали... Вторая симфония Р. Щедрина... «Шесть картин» для фортепиано А. Бабаджаняна.) Even during the “Thaw,” ideas that fell outside Soviet ideology in music were heavily derided. Twelve-tone technique (which by then was no longer new in Europe and America) was considered too experimental and accused of being bourgeois.

Based on the analyses in this chapter, we can conclude that Babadjanian’s style developed remarkably throughout his career. From the early influence of Rachmaninov to the most daring avant-garde techniques of his later compositions, Babadjanian worked relentlessly toward developing his signature style. The composer did not write many works in any one particular genre. However, these analyses prove that he deliberately tried to push the boundaries of the conventional musical idioms that were common in Soviet practice. Nevertheless, Babadjanian never experimented for the sake of doing so. The current head of the Composers’ Union in Armenia, Aram Satyan remembered that Babadjanian once commented that, as a composer, he had a responsibility to create opuses, finished works, and not simply experimental ideas (Melik 2018). Finally, the prevalent influence of Armenian traditions in his music became a golden thread uniting all of his works. Despite the wide variety of idioms and techniques he employed throughout his compositional career, this Armenian imprint made each of Babadjanian’s works easily recognizable.

Chapter V.

Babadjanian's legacy.

Soviet popular music, *estrada*.

Babadjanian was known for his rebellious character—as a composer, he was not afraid to experiment. Throughout the years, Khachaturian was a figure respected by Babadjanian, yet the latter's experimental works in dodecaphonic style and his eventual switch to popular music received strong disapproval from Khachaturian. Armen Djigarhanean, a well-known Russian actor, reports that Khachaturian was deeply saddened by what he referred to as Babadjanian's "little ditties" (песенки). Khachaturian repeatedly claimed, "He is wasting his talent—he is a great symphonist!" (Grachev 2012). Once, in an interview from 1971, Babadjanian said, "A badly written ditty is better than a badly written symphony because it is shorter" (as quoted in Teroganyan 2001, 290).

Writing popular music nevertheless came naturally to Babadjanian, and his songs were far from primitive. They are some of the best examples of Soviet popular music, *estrada*, and they remain popular to this day. The composer wrote over 250 songs and over fifteen film scores. Since the primary goal of this thesis is to provide a comprehensive study of Babadjanian's classical compositions, this chapter will cover only the general facts about Babadjanian's popular music repertoire.

The composer's first song, "Let the Friendship Banners Fly Higher," was written in 1953. It was composed for the occasion of the Fourth World Festival of Youth and Students in Bucharest, where it was eventually awarded the first prize. This success filled Babadjanian with enthusiasm. In 1955, he wrote the film score for *In Search of the Recipient* and the following year, he worked on a score for *Path of Thunder*. In 1958, he was hired to write a song for another movie. The song he wrote, entitled "A Song of First Love," became so popular Union-wide that the movie itself was named after the song. Indeed, the music written for this film became popular through radio broadcasts even before the launch of the film, and by its premiere, the whole Union was singing "My Yerevan" and "A Song of First Love." Valentina Tereshkova (1937–), the first woman to go to space, reportedly took a recording of "A Song of First Love" with her to space (Teroganyan 2001, 244). Lazaros Saryan, the Dean at the Yerevan State Conservatory and Babadjanian's childhood friend, also worked on the score of the film, composing the symphonic

pieces for it while Babadjanian mostly concentrated on songs. This movie gained Babadjanian a reputation the USSR as the best composer of film scores and songs. Another film released in the same year, *A Groom from the Other World* (1958), was directed by prominent Soviet director Leonid Gaydai (1923–1993) and featured the most talented actors of that time. Babadjanian wrote the music for this film as well, composing in the best tradition of European popular tunes.

By the 1960s, Babadjanian had established a thriving career as a popular music composer. The popularity of his songs was enhanced by his artistic collaboration with Muslim Magomaev, an opera singer of Azeri origin, and Robert Rojdestvenskiy, a poet of Russian origin. With the latter, Babadjanian collaborated on more than twenty songs (Teroganyan, 2001, 199). The trio worked together extensively, and their formula for success seemed to be unbeatable. For the musical *Monday Is a Difficult Day*, Babadjanian wrote a song called “Wedding.” Magomaev recognized the song’s potential popularity and insisted on releasing it as a single. The song became an immediate hit Union-wide. Babadjanian’s song “The Best City on Earth,” celebrating the beauty of Moscow and based on the rhythms of the twist, was voted the most popular song of 1964 in the USSR. However, the “Western music” idioms, such as rock and roll, and jazz, were seen as un-Soviet. Khrushchev heard the song on a radio: “A twist song about Moscow? Remove it from radio circulation immediately” (Grachev 2012). Only a couple of months later, following Khrushchev’s removal from leadership, the song returned to the radio. Another of the composer’s songs, “Beauty Queen,” was inspired by a beauty pageant that took place in Yerevan in 1965. Written to lyrics by poet Anatoly Gorokhov, the song became perhaps the most prominent Soviet hit (*шлягер*) of that time. Gorokhov remembered how, together with Babadjanian, he heard harsh criticism from the older generation of colleagues at the Composers’ Union’s reunion: “There are two Babadjanians. The one who writes symphonic and instrumental music, a well-respected composer. And another one, who writes some trivial songs, a non-serious musician.” Babadjanian replied, “And I know composers who give beautiful speeches and compose ugly music (Grachev 2012).

Indeed, Babadjanian’s growing popularity (and wealth), accompanied by Union-wide love and adoration, irritated many of his contemporaries. Moreover, he managed to write popular songs at the same time as remarkable classical works such as his Violin Sonata, Cello Concerto, and *Six Pictures* was truly remarkable. Babadjanian’s ear was very sensitive to many genres and styles from around the world, and this allowed his song repertoire to include such a variety of motifs, melodies, and idioms. For instance, in an *a capella* rendition of the composer’s song “My Happy Nation” (“Մզգ իմ փառապանծ”), one can notice the strong influence of Komitas in the

harmonies and the monodic structure. A note from Babadjanian on the score for *Song of First Love* reads “in tempo of rumba-serenade” (Teroganyan 2001, 218). Its orchestral accompaniment consists of lavish *glissandos* characteristic of the rumba style. Magomaev wrote: “Arno had a rare gift: he managed to hear a popular theme and, taking some stylistic elements, to melt it into the gold of his own melody. In this manner, ‘tuning in the ear’ on Adriano Celentano’s twist ‘24.000 baci,’ he wrote his twist ‘The Best City on Earth.’” (Magomaev 2013, 130; У Арно был редкий дар: он умудрялся, услышав популярную тему и взяв какие-то стилистические элементы, переплавить в золото собственной мелодии. Так, “настроив слух” на твист Адриано Челентано “Двадцать четыре тысячи поцелуев”, написал свой твист “Лучший город земли”). Magomaev’s baritone added an operatic quality to Babadjanian’s songs. Often, the latter wrote songs with Magomaev’s voice in mind. Magomaev, in his turn, confessed that Babadjanian’s songs were almost as challenging for voice as some opera parts (Grachev 2012). Martin Vartazarian mentioned that songs written by Babadjanian were globally loved and “accepted [by singers beyond the USSR] as their own” (Melik 2018). Translated into more than a dozen languages, some songs were recorded by eight or nine different performers. Babadjanian’s songs were sung by foreign singers. Such artists as Mireille Mathieu (1946–),¹⁹ contributed to the general recognition of the composer’s art. In Mathieu’s rendition, the song is called “Je suis là.” Jorge Luis Pacheco, a well-known modern Cuban jazz pianist,²⁰ also arranged Babadjanian’s song “Do Not Rush” for piano.

Babadjanian almost turned down the offer to compose the music for *Bride from the North* (1973) because his health was in critical condition. But since his son played one of the leading roles in the movie, Babadjanian changed his mind and wrote the score from his hospital bed. The story features an Armenian young man who fell in love with a Russian woman, and his adventures bringing her to Armenia to meet his parents before the wedding. Following the plot, the film score combined both Armenian and Russian idioms. Three songs written for the picture—“Year of Love,” “Losing Love,” and “White Fuzz”—gained immediate success. The score of *My Heart Is in the Highlands* (1975) was based on play of the same name, for which Babadjanian wrote the music in the 1960s. In 1976, Babadjanian wrote the score for *Baghdasar’s Divorce*, a Soviet musical full of dances. The composer collaborated with Melik Mavisakalyan (1937–), one of the most

¹⁹ Mireille Mathieu (1946–) is a legendary French singer.

²⁰ Jorge Luis Pacheco is a well-known Cuban jazz pianist.

prominent of the young generation of Armenian composers and conductors. Babadjanian's music for *The Flight Starts from the Earth* (1980) included two enduring masterpieces of the genre, the nostalgic songs "Nocturne" and "Vocalise." The composer later arranged "Nocturne" for piano and orchestra.

In 1974, Babadjanian, was awarded the title of Best Composer at the Third Tokyo Music Festival for his song "Ferris Wheel." Babadjanian competed with such industry moguls as Francis Lai (1932–2018)²¹ This prestigious honor inspired Babadjanian, who came home full of enthusiasm (Grachev 2012), even though criticism back home remained vigorous. Composer Alexander Jourbin wrote: "His Piano Concerto and especially the well-known *Six Pictures* ... are sturdy, great; they are bright and brilliant, and willingly played by various performers. And nevertheless now ... we see that their shine is external, and the serial technique is used very primitively and poorly" (as quoted in Teroganyan 2011, 201; Его Фортепьянный концерт и особенно знаменитые Шесть Картин ... сделаны добротнo, здорово, они ярки и блестящи, охотно играются различными исполнителями. И все-таки сейчас ... мы видим, что блеск их несколько внешний, а серийная техника использована весьма примитивно.) However, in truth, no parallel should be drawn between Babadjanian's classical compositions and popular music (*estrada*). Amantuni (2008, 193) insightfully notes that the composer had a clear distinction between the genres, and they did not overlap in his mind. Of course, some resemblances did exist, including numerous references to Armenia as an inspiration for music in both styles. Out of dozens of movies that Babadjanian scored, only one was produced by ArmenFilm, the Armenian production company; however, in many of his film scores, Babadjanian would add a song about Armenia or use the national idioms. Babadjanian's Armenian music, like Armenian music in general, is marked by a rich singing tradition and melodism. Therefore, the composer's success in this genre is not surprising. Moreover, according to the director of the Babadjanian International Foundation, Armen Sarkisyants, "Vocalise," one of the last songs by Babadjanian, was written in memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide (Armen Sarkisyants, pers. comm., March 16, 2019).

Babadjanian willingly collaborated with leading Russian and Armenian poets. Oftentimes, the Soviet poets were writing works in hopes that their poetry will get approved for a potential hit.

²¹ Francis Lai was a French composer of popular music who wrote, among dozens internationally popular songs, the main theme for the movie *Lovestory* (1970).

The composer, in his turn, sometimes wrote a melody to set a finished text, and often he would write a melody first and the lyrics would be written to match. One of the most popular songs on the Soviet scene, “Beauty Queen,” was written this way. Babadjanian was very attentive to the text of the song and made sure that the melody reflected its character. For instance, with poetry about Armenia or Yerevan, Babadjanian used the national idioms and specific intonations. In an interview, the composer confessed that hearing Siberian students singing the song “My Yerevan” from *Song of First Love* in the streets of Tomsk was the best reward for him (Gornostaeva 1982). As mentioned before, in *Bride from the North*, the composer managed to portray both Armenian and Russian essences in music—a challenging musical task that required deep knowledge of both cultures. For the song “White Fuzz,” the composer used the idioms of the Russian city romance, while for Saroyan’s play, he composed jazz themes for trumpet.

One signature of Babadjanian’s *estrada* style is a marked melodic emphasis on the fifth scale degree. This characteristic is particularly clear in such songs as “Do Not Rush,” “Beauty Queen,” and “Thank You.” The composer starts with the fifth degree and makes the melody rotate around it. Another trait is the use of minor seconds, as well as circular ornamentation (Amantuni 2008, 111), where the melody comes back or rotates around the different degrees of the song. In the song “Golden Tango,” the composer uses the descending sequence from the seventh degree, to the fourth and then the third, concluding on the tonic. Yet, besides his individual style, Babadjanian conveyed the latest musical trends of the *estrada* genre. Babadjanian presumably felt more freedom in writing for this genre. And for lyrical songs without any particular national color, the composer used modern tools, reflecting contemporary trends in music. He had his finger on the pulse of his time, and this could be the reason why foreign singers readily used his melodies—his songs were accessible on the international level.

In Russia and Armenia, Babadjanian is nowadays perceived as the most prolific composer of popular songs and music for films. The overwhelming success of his “non-serious” works during his lifetime became his continuing legacy, which paradoxically harmed his reputation as a composer of classical concert music. And while Babadjanian’s classical legacy deserves more acknowledgment and research, his songs are still alive, being interpreted by various popular and opera singers. Since throughout the former USSR, Babadjanian is best known for his *estrada*, concerts of his popular music are held annually in his memory, especially in Russia. It is ironic that, whereas Babadjanian now enjoys a tremendous reputation in the former Soviet Union, especially for his popular music, many of the composers who were his

chief critics during his lifetime are scarcely known today.

Touring life, performances abroad, and notable distinctions.

In spite of the aforementioned obstacles that hampered Babadjanian's recognition as a Soviet classical composer, Babadjanian nevertheless had an extensive touring career. For instance, in summer 1973, he spent twenty-two days visiting and giving performances in Round Top, Texas. The organizers in the United States had to reach out to Elena Furtsev, the Minister of Arts at that time: "We would be very grateful if you could let us know by mid-April about Babadjanian's availability to participate in the 1973 festival." (as quoted in Teroganyan 2001, 286). Besides performances, Babadjanian gave a series of seminars and lectures on topics such as musical education in the USSR and contemporary Soviet music.

On June 25, 1973, Babadjanian became an honorary citizen of the city of Houston, Texas, for "valuable contribution you have made, and making through unselfish public service and welfare of mankind." (as quoted in *Arvest* 1996/97, 33). Babadjanian's growing international visibility led to his inclusion, in 1974, in the fortieth edition of the *International Who's Who*, an encyclopedia of prominent living persons who are distinguished in a particular field (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2019). In a letter dated December 20, 1974, Mae Boren Axton, who was known as the "Queen Mother of Nashville" and even had an award named after her (Ferguson et al., 2019), wrote: "The evening in your home was a highlight of my visit to Moscow" (as quoted in Teroganyan 2011, 289). Axton was a music industry figure and a well-known songwriter, having co-written her most famous song, "Heartbreak Hotel," with Elvis Presley. In the letter, she also promises Babadjanian that she would use his melodies for her future songs.

In 1966, Babadjanian visited Denmark. Numerous newspapers, including *Ekstra Bladet* highlighted the visit of the youngest official representative of the Soviets Composers' Union, "den sovjetiske komponist er den første af de yngre Sovjetkomponister" (article dated November 8, 1966, accessible at ekstrabladet.dk). The Society of Young Musicians of Denmark organized an event called Professional Encounter where Babadjanian (then forty-five years old) spoke about Armenian music and Armenians in general.

Babadjanian was equally loved in France. His first concert trip to the country occurred in 1963, when he performed solo and with Arutiunian at the Festival of Armenian Youth in France. This festival aimed to gather the most brilliant representatives of Armenian culture from all over

the world, and subsequent editions of the festival were regularly organized by the Armenian diaspora in France and regularly took place in Marseille.

The Festival in 1972 was held under the patronage of Aram Khachaturian. The 1966–1975 period was particularly active: “This period was also marked by the visit of Armenian personalities from abroad, such as ... the composers Arno Babadjanian, Edouart Mirzoyan ...” (jaf-paris.org., *n.d.*; Cette période sera aussi marquée par la venue de personnalités arméniennes d’horizon divers, telles que ... les compositeurs Arno Babadjanian, Edouart Mirzoyan...)

In 1972 and 1974, Babadjanian and his wife, Teresa, visited Paris, where, in addition to giving concerts, the composer met the head of the Mekhitarists Order, a community of Benedictine monks of the Armenian Catholic Church that originated in 1717. In 1977, Babadjanian gave concerts in the French cities Romans-sur-Isère and Valence to perform his *Heroic Ballade* with L’orchestre de la Société des concerts. Like the first time in 1963, Babadjanian received an incredibly warm welcome: “It was a triumph, and to respond to the public ovation, [Babadjanian] played encores for more than 45 minutes.” (Siranossian 2016, 7; Ce fut un triomphe et pour répondre aux applaudissements du public il a été bissé plus de 45 minutes.) In the same year, 1977, as a representative of Soviet culture, Babadjanian took part in the Festival of Soviet Music in Rome, Italy (Hacopian 2006, 253). The composer also performed concerts in Lyon just a few months before his death in 1983.

Besides concerts in England, Bulgaria, Ukraine, and Hungary, Babadjanian visited China (in 1971), Japan (for the Third Tokyo Music Festival in 1974), and India. Babadjanian was not only a sought-after musician, he was also an active member of various cultural organizations and aimed to establish international cultural exchanges (Armen Sarkisyants, pers. comm., March 16, 2019). Though Sarkisyants was unable to provide precise information about Babadjanian’s activities in India, the available materials suggest that Babadjanian likely took part in the Soviet Union Friendship Festival which took place in April 1959 in a city called Androl (Dyakonov 2015, 1). Babadjanian’s extensive traveling declined during the years when his illness progressed rapidly—the 1960s and 1970s were filled with new successes but also with constant pain. Finally, in 1967, Babadjanian underwent an operation to remove lymph nodes, performed by his doctor, Dr. Jean Bernard, and a course of chemotherapy (Grachev 2012). Regardless of his physical pain, Babadjanian tried to stay as active as possible, and never let a travel opportunity go to waste. While visiting foreign countries, Babadjanian not only represented the culture of Soviet Armenia and of Soviets in general, but he also

collected new recordings and scores to share back home. He was known to be able to openly express his political opinions and concerns while never directly criticizing the Soviet government or the political events in the USSR. His main goal was to introduce the music of his heritage to a broader audience, which he always did with success. Teroganyan (2001, 291–294) documents numerous instances of the warm reception of Babadjanian's music.

In terms of Babadjanian's recognition within the Soviet Union: Besides the aforementioned Stalin Prize (1951) for the *Heroic Ballade* and the titles of People's Artist of Armenia (1960) and People's Artist of the USSR (1971), Babadjanian was also awarded Lenin's Order in 1981, the highest distinction for a citizen of the USSR. In 2001, Babadjanian posthumously received a star on the Moscow Walk of Fame. In summer 2003, a statue of Babadjanian made by David Berdjanian was unveiled in downtown Yerevan. Although it at first received harsh criticism because of the allegedly exaggerated depiction of the nose of the composer by the sculptor. Yet, soon enough, the statue became a tourist attraction and a source of pride for the locals. In 2015, Yerevan State College was renamed after Arno Babadjanian. Besides the college, the city has an elementary music school and a street named after Babadjanian. The Russian airline, Aeroflot, assigned the name of Babadjanian to one of its Boeing 777. The second largest hall in Yerevan, after the Opera State Building, bears Babadjanian's name. On March 15, 2001, the Russian Academy of Sciences named a minor planet after Babadjanian; this honor was suggested by Zhores Alferov, winner of the 2000 Nobel Prize in Physics.

Legacy.

Babadjanian seemed to have an ability to communicate with people of different nationalities, and his music was loved by representatives of all social backgrounds. On one dark night, Babadjanian was stopped and robbed by a street gang on a street in Moscow. He was ordered to hand over his watch and wallet, which he did. Suddenly, the gang leader saw his face and ordered the others to return the items. When Babadjanian was walking away, he heard his song "My Yerevan" behind him (Gracher 2012). The love for his music crossed borders. Vartazarian recalled that, when performing in Argentina in November 1983, he learned about Babadjanian's death on the day of his first performance. When he announced the tragic news, he witnessed the whole hall standing up and giving a minute of silence (Melik 2018).

Babadjanian's talent at making people laugh gained him a reputation as a talented comedian within close circles. His artistic abilities and sense of humor seemed to never leave him,

event in the most difficult moments of his life. Demanding and strict in his work, Babadjanian nevertheless succeeded at connecting with people on a human level. In Marseille in 1963, he lightened up the orchestra musicians who were nervous to work with him. Alexandre Siranossian, a French pianist who knew Babadjanian quite well, recounts the anecdote as follows:

Before the concert, at the time of coming back on stage, while all were united on the set, I asked Arno to say some words to the orchestra and [I] got ready to translate his speech when, to my great surprise, he pronounced with a heavy accent the only words [phrase] which he knew in French: ‘chicken and the fish, it is necessary to eat them in no [fancy] way.’²² Everybody then burst into laughter, and it was enough to create a very advantageous communication in the group. Avant le concert, au moment de rentrer sur scène, alors que tous étaient réunis sur le plateau, j’ai demandé à Arno de dire quelques mots à l’orchestre et m’apprêtais à traduire son discours lorsque, à ma grande surprise, il a prononcé avec un accent très prononcé, les seuls mots qu’il connaissait en français : ‘la [sic] poulet et le poisson, il faut les manger sans façon’, tout le monde s’est alors esclaffé et cela a suffi à créer une communication très bénéfique dans le groupe.] (Siranossian 2016, 6)

Babadjanian’s name lives on through not only his music but also in numerous compositions dedicated to the composer. Magomaev wrote a short lyrical piece for an orchestra called “Dedication,” which was performed in 1987 in Moscow. Vladimir Khorotschyanski, a well-known choirmaster, wrote another “Dedication” for chorus and orchestra. He bases the melody on the motive A–B–D, where “a” represents Arno, “b” Babadjanian, and “d” stands for death. Yuriy Kokjaev wrote a short cycle called *Memories* (1984) for piano, dedicated to Babadjanian. Hrachia Melikian wrote a Piano Trio (1973) inspired by Babadjanian’s work. Asya Sultanova, an Azeri composer, also dedicated a piano piece, “Elegy,” to Babadjanian. Also, in 1994, Adam Khoudoyan, a prominent composer of a younger generation, wrote a sonata for solo cello:

The sonata was performed for the first time by Medea Abramyan. The foreign premiere of the sonata, performed by the German cellist Hans Joachim Scheitzbach, took place at the “Days of the Soviet Union”

²² While the direct translation to English barely makes sense, in French this statement makes for a humorous rhyme.

Festival in the German Democratic Republic. From the GDR I came back with an Award Medal from the Society for German-Soviet Friendship. This was very dear to me as I was awarded it for the First Quartet and the Sonata in Memory of Arno. Сонату впервые исполнила Медея Абрамян. Зарубежная премьера сонаты прошла в исполнении немецкого виолончелиста Ганса Иоахима Шайцбаха на фестивале “Дни Советского Союза в ГДР”. Из ГДР я возвратился со специальной медалью Общества германо-советской дружбы. Этой очень дорогой для меня награды я был удостоен за Первый квартет и Сонату памяти Арно.] (Khoudoyan, 2017)

Arno Babadjanian’s legacy is now protected by the Babadjanian International Foundation, which was founded in 1991. The Foundation’s mission is to promote the composer’s music, and its activities include organizing annual concerts and cultural events, producing documentaries, and publishing written material. Currently, the organization, based in Moscow, is managed by Ara Babadjanian and Armen Sarkisyan. The information provided on their web-site, <http://babajanyan.ru>, is the most reliable about Babadjanian. The Foundation has two international representations—in China, and North America. The representative of the North American Office is the author of this thesis.

Conclusion.

The rich history of the Armenian folk became an immediate source of inspiration for Babadjanian that continued throughout his life. Born into a highly educated family, as a child Babadjanian was exposed to Armenian culture and music and was able to receive a good education both in Armenia and Russia later in his life. His academic training, combined with outstanding virtuosity and an open mind, enabled him to develop a unique approach to composing. Analysis of Babadjanian’s works from his mature and later periods explicitly shows his dynamic development in compositional style. This ongoing stylistic development was one of the main characteristics of Babadjanian’s music.

Since ideas that did not comply with Soviet ideology were considered disruptive, his open-mindedness in music prevented him from being adequately valued within Soviet bureaucratic circles. However, as Satyan notes, even in spite of opposition and silent repression, Babadjanian’s music managed to find its way to the hearts of listeners (Melik 2018).

Despite Babadjanian’s striking musical output and personal history, his image still suffers from its poor representation during the Soviet era. It is worth considering the

reasons Babadjanian's music is still so little known in the West and for its insignificant role in Western accounts of Soviet music. Reflecting on these themes, Armen Babakhanian, one of the most brilliant contemporary pianists of Armenia, expressed the opinion that it is every performer's duty to play Babadjanian's works as much as possible (Melik 2018). The pianists added that he has always been using every opportunity to play Babadjanian's pieces, including his performance on the Ninth Van Cliburn Competition. Another consideration is that the Soviet Union, besides cultivating talent, nevertheless groomed only a certain type of personality. If Babadjanian would possess the power within the political milieu of the time, his music could now be considered more important. However, as shown in Chapter III, Babadjanian's love for independence and freedom of expression prevailed over practical career decisions. It seems likely that, if he had a more flexible character, his legacy would have been more celebrated and valued.

Strikingly, it is this strength of character that did not let him fold before any obstacles; fighting a terminal illness for more than thirty years, Babadjanian nevertheless stayed positive and active until the last days of his life. Though the collection of classical works he left can be considered modest in comparison to that of more prolific composers of the time, every one of Babadjanian's works represented a step further in his stylistic development and represented significant progress in Soviet music. Though he received his education and training in Soviet institutions and from the brightest minds of the country, it is very probable that if he lived in a different social and political environment, Babadjanian would have been much more prolific and that he might have composed more experimental music.

Babadjanian is a unique representative of Armenian Soviet culture, yet his music transcends the limitations of time, ideology, and geographical borders. Once heard, his works—brilliant, tragic, monumental, humorous, or heroic—always gain immediate success and excitement from listeners. Arno Babadjanian's life and music deserve widespread recognition, beyond time frames, nationalities, and political affiliations.

APPENDIX.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL AND EXAMPLES FOR THE THESIS

“ARNO BABADJANIAN: AN ARMENIAN COMPOSER IN THE SOVIET CONTEXT.”

ՀԱՒՈՒՆ ՀԱՒՈՒՆ

Andante dolce §

Հա - տն
ներ

հա -
ձայ

տն
ներ

արք - նա
տատ - ըա

ցյալ
կի,

դի - տն
սի - ըա

յով
սնունդ

զին - թա
սի - ըն

1. 2. *Dal* §

նո - սրս.
լուն,

նո - սրս

ձայ -//լուն:

Ex. 1.0

Narekatsi, Grigor. “Avun-Avun.” Modern rendition.
 Reproduced from vayotsdzoritem.com
 (Accessed March 29th, 2019)



Ex. 1.1

Traditional folk song. "Galust I Brungh." Reproduced from Bor Cherdn 1959, 10.



Ex. 1.2

Typical Armenian folk rhythm. Reproduced from Der Hovhanessian 1952, 105.



Ex. 1.3

Traditional folk song. "It Is Springtime." Reproduced
from Der Hovhanessian 1952, 102.

ԿՈՌԻՆԿ

Չափավոր դանդաղ

Երաժշ.՝ ըստ ԿՈՄԻՏԱՍԻ

Կոռ'նկ, ուս-տի՜ կու գաս.

ծա - ռա հմ ծայ Գիդ.

Կոռ'նկ, մեր աշ - խար - հեճ

խապ - րիկ մը չու Գի՜ս.

Կոռ'նկ, մեր աշ - խար - հեճ

խապ-րիկ մը չու - Գի՜ս.

Ex. 1.4

Komitas Vardapet. "Crane."

Reproduced from murugana.livejournal.com

(Accessed January 15th, 2019)

▽ 2624
 \ 575
 0 444444
 0 444
 ~ 6444

7 08 5 444
 7 444
 4444444
 ... 644444
 ... 444444

Ex. 1.5

Basic elements of khaz notation. On the left: *shesht*, *bout*, *parouyk*, *sough*, *erkar*. On the right: *tav*, *sosk*, *apararts*, *entamna*, *storat*.



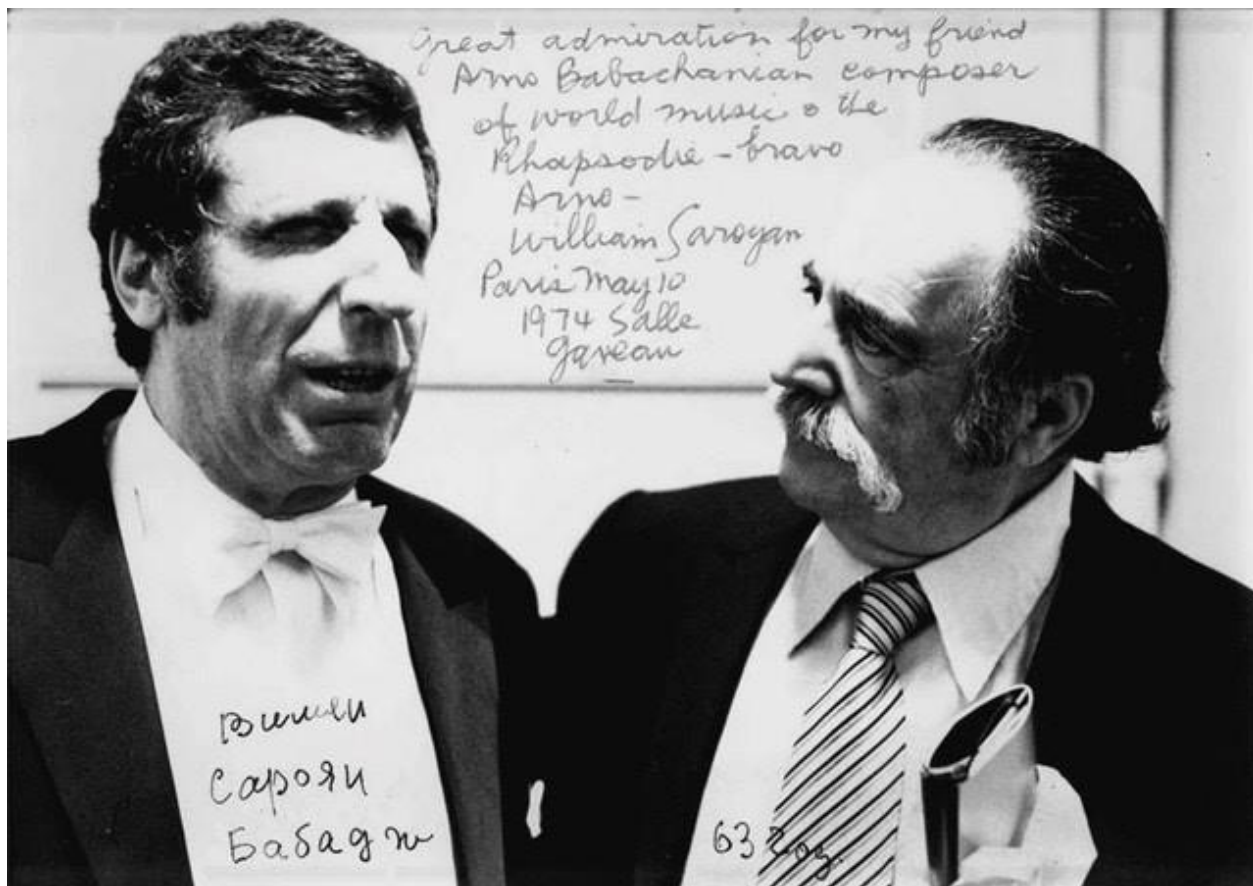
РИТМИЧЕСКИЕ ЗНАКИ

Суг	o	o	Ереккѣт	∴	o
Ерккѣт	..	o	Кѣтстѣр	?	o
Кѣт	.	o	Тав	7	o
Стор	7	o	Кисатѣв	7	o
Еркстѣр	77	o	Карордѣв	+	o
Цунк	o	o			
Циккѣр	oo	o			

Ex. 1.6

Limonjian's alternative to the Western notation. Reproduced from www.tarrabass.livejournal.com





Ex. 3.0

Photograph of Babadjanian (left) with the writer William Saroyan in 1963, with a dedication added by the latter in 1974.

Courtesy of the Babadjanian International Foundation.



Ex 3.1

The cosmonaut character of the ice-ballet “Snow Symphony” (Moscow, 1961).

Reproduced from www.ruscircus.ru (Accessed January 23rd, 2019).



Ex. 3.2
Rostropovich (left) and Babadjanian working on his Cello Concerto. Courtesy of the Babadjanian International Foundation.

РАЗМЫШЛЕНИЕ

ԱՐՆՈ ԲԱԲԱԺՅԱՆԻ
ԱՐԻՈ ԲԱԲԱԺՅԱՆԻ

Andante

Poco più mosso

Ex. 3.3
 Babajanian, Arno. *Meditation*, mm. 1–10 Reproduced
 from *Selected Works for Piano* (p. 10).

КОНЦЕРТ

I

Арно Бабаджанян

Violin solo

Allegro

Piano

Allegro

pp

mf

Vln.

Pno.

Ex. 4.0

Babadjanian, Arno. Violin Concerto, mvt. I, mm 1–4.

Violin

Piano

simile

3

7

3

3

Ex. 4.1
Babadjanian, Arno. Violin Concerto, mvt. II mm, 21–24.

Piano

2 Andante

p

3

3

3

3

Ex. 4.2
Babadjanian, Arno. *Heroic Ballade*, mm. 25–29, Motherland theme.

Allegro energico

Piano

3

sf

cresc.

Ex. 4.3

Babadjanian, Arno. *Heroic Ballade*, mm. 74–77, variation I.

Andante cantabile

I

p

3

3

Pno.

Ex. 4.4

Babadjanian, Arno. *Heroic Ballade*, mm. 140–147, variation IV.

37

Piano

f

8^{va}

Ex. 4.5

Babadjanian, Arno. *Heroic Ballade*, mm. 414–418, variation V.

Ex. 4.6

Traditional folk song, arr. by Komitas Vardapet. “It Is Springtime.”

The image displays a musical score for three instruments: Violin, Violoncello, and Piano. The score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo is marked 'Largo'.

Violin: The first staff shows a melodic line starting on a whole note G4, followed by eighth notes. It includes dynamic markings *pp* and *pp*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs. There are also some performance instructions like *pp* and *pp*.

Violoncello: The second staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. It includes dynamic markings *pp* and *pp*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs.

Piano: The third staff features a complex accompaniment with chords and moving lines in both hands. It includes dynamic markings *pp* and *pp*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs.

Violin (Vln.): The fourth staff continues the melodic line with a *poco a poco cresc.* instruction.

Violoncello (Vc.): The fifth staff continues the harmonic accompaniment with a *poco a poco cresc.* instruction.

Piano (Pno.): The sixth staff continues the complex accompaniment with a *poco a poco cresc.* instruction.

Ex. 4.7

Babadjanian, Arno. Piano Trio, mvt. I, mm.1-7, Largo theme.

Allegro vivace

Violin *f*

Violoncello *f*

Piano *f*

6

Vln. *dim.* *mp* *cresc.* *f*

Ve. *dim.* *mp* *cresc.* *f*

Pno. *dim.* *p* *cresc.* *f*

11

Vln. *fp*

Ve. *fp*

Pno. *f* *p*

Ex. 4.8
 Babadjanian, Arno. Piano Trio, mvt. III, mm. 1–14.

I

Арно Бабаджанян

Violin

Grave

f

accelerando

rit.

$\text{♩} = 60$

a tempo

Piano

Grave

f

8va

Vln.

pp

a tempo

p

legatissimo

Pno.

mp

rit.

(8)

Ex. 4.9

Babadjanian, Arno. Violin Sonata, mvt. I, mm. 1–6, Grave theme.

6 **Presto** ♩ = 100
con sord.
pp

Violin

Vln.

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is for Violin and the bottom staff is for Violoncello (Vln.). The Violin part begins with a box containing the number 6, followed by the tempo marking 'Presto' and a quarter note equal to 100. Below this is 'con sord.' and 'pp'. The Violoncello part begins with a triplet of eighth notes. Both staves contain complex rhythmic patterns with many sixteenth notes and slurs.

Ex. 4.10

Babadjanian, Arno. Violin Sonata, mvt. II, mm. 69–73.

Babadjanian, Arno. Violin Sonata, mvt. III, mm. 268–278.

Recitando con espressione ♩. = 84

Recitando con espressione ♩. = 84

mf m.d. poco accelerando m.s. m.d. 4 poco rit. dim.

Ex. 4.12
Khachaturian. *Song-Poem after Ashugs*, mm. 1–2.

I Имровизация

Andante recitativo

Piano *p*

2 *mf* *mf*

Ex. 4.13
Babadjanian, Arno. *Six Pictures*. “Improvisation,” mm. 1–3.

Moderato

8^{va}

mf *cresc.*

5 *sf* *dim.* *mp*

Ex. 4.14

Babadjanian, Arno. *Six Pictures*. “Folk,” mm. 1–7.

Piano

mp *p*

Ex. 4.15

Babadjanian, Arno. *Six Pictures*. “Choral,” mm. 28–31.

Allegro energico

Piano

pp

Pno.

Ex. 4.16

Babadjanian, Arno. *Six Pictures*. “Sasun Dance,” mm. 1–8.

Piano

p

Ex. 4.17

Babadjanian, Arno. *Six Pictures*. “Sasun Dance,” mm. 56–57.



Ex. 4.18

Rostropovich (left), Britten (center), Pears, and Babadjanian (far right) in 1965 at the Days of Benjamin Britten Festival 1965.

Courtesy of the Babadjanian International Foundation.

Bibliography.

- Adalian, Rouben Paul. 2010. *Historical Dictionary of Armenia* (version 2nd ed.). Historical Dictionaries of Europe, No. 77. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Adams, Margarethe A, Donna A Buchanan, Thomas R Turino, Gabriel Solis, and Lilya Kaganovsky. 2012. "Music and Entertainment in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan: Ideology and Legacy." PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Accessed January 24, 2019, <http://muse.jhu.edu/article/537852>
- Alajaji, Sylvia. 2015. *Music and the Armenian Diaspora: Searching for Home in Exile*. Public Cultures of the Middle East and North Africa. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Accessed on ProQuest October 1st, 2017, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/305126521/fulltextPDF/B3F46DCF19074AF6PQ/4?accountid=12339>
- Alexeyev, Alexandr. 1974. *The Soviet Piano Music, 1917-1945*. Moscow: Music House.
- Amantuni, Susanna. 1985. *Arno Babadjanian: The Instrumental Art*. Yerevan: Soviet writer.
- _____. 2008. "About Songs of Arno Babadjanian." In *Dedicated to Arno Babadjanian*, edited by Svetlana Sarkisyan, 103–115. Yerevan, Armenia: Antares.
- Andonian, Aram. 2010. *Exile, Trauma and death. On the road to Chankiri with Komitas Vardabed*. London: R.S. Kuyumdjian, Tr. & Ed.
- Apoyan, Shushanik. 1968. *Piano Music of Soviet Armenia*. Yerevan: Hayastan.

Apoyan, Shushanik, and Irina Zolotova. 1985. "Piano Music." *Musical Culture of Armenian Republic*, edited by Michael Berko, 322–367. Moscow: Music House.

Armenian Travel Bureau. "Armenian Music." Accessed March 5th, 2019, [http:// atb.am/en/armenia/culture/music/](http://atb.am/en/armenia/culture/music/)

Atayan, Robert. 1999. *The Armenian System of Notation*. Translated by Vrej Nersessian. Richmond: Curzon Press.

Avdalyan, Karine. 2011. "National Style in Armenian Culture of the XX Century." MM diss., Russian Academy of Arts, Moscow. Accessed March 2nd, 2019, <http://www.dissercat.com/content/natsionalnyi-stil-v-armyanskoi-muzykalnoi-kulture-xx-veka>.

Babadjanian, Arno. 1953. *Violin Sonata in B-flat Minor*. Yerevan: Aipetrat.

_____. 1971. "Encounters with Composers." *Musical Life* No. 4: 17–23.

_____. 1973. "Wreath to Konstantin Igumnov." *Soviet Music Journal*: 100–105.

_____. 1976. *Piano Trio in F-sharp Minor*. Moscow: Music House.

_____. 1979. *Third Quarter after Shostakovich*. Moscow: Soviet Composer.

_____. 1982. "Musicians About Music," interviewed by Vera Gornostaeva, Cultura Television Company. Accessed January 3rd, 2019, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dv161HLNC-M>

_____. 2006. *Selected Works for Piano*. Yerevan. Antares.

_____. 2014. *Heroic Ballade for Piano and Orchestra*. Yerevan: Harmonium.

Balyan, Vladilen. 2013. "A Great Celebration of Arts." Accessed February 26th, 2019, <https://www.golosarmenii.am/article/21070/velikij-prazdnik-iskusstva>

Berberian, Marina. 2010. "Exploring Armenian keyboard music: roots to modern times." MM diss., Florida International University. Accessed on Jan, 3rd, 2019, <http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/1604>

Bournoutian, George. 2018. *Armenia and Imperial Decline: The Yerevan Province, 1900–1914*. Routledge Advances in Armenian Studies. London: Taylor and Francis. Accessed January 15th, 2019, <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9781351062626>

Budagyan, Armen. 1998. *Violinist Hacop Vardanian*. Yerevan: Amrots.

Bulatova, Lydia. 2009. *Piano School of Elena Gnessin in the XXI century*. Moscow.

Cherdt, Donn Bor. 1959. "Armenian Folk Songs and Dances in the Fresno and Los Angeles Areas." *Western Folklore* 18 (1): 1–12. Accessed January 18th, 2019, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1496887>

Dyakonov, Severyan. 2015. "Soviet Cultural Diplomacy in India, 1955-1963." Masters diss., Concordia University, Montreal.

Ekstra Bladet. "Arkivet_idag." Accessed January 31st, 2019, <http://www.ekstrabladet.dk>

Fairclough, Pauline. 2016. *Classics for the Masses: Shaping Soviet Musical Identity under Lenin and Stalin*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Accessed July 23rd, 2018, doi: 10.12987/yale/9780300217193.003.0004

Ferguson, Kate. 2017. "Rock and Roll Hall of Fame – Induct These Women: Mae Boren Axton." Accessed March 4th, 2019, <http://inspirer.life/home/2017/05/mae-boren-axton/>

Frolova-Walker, Marina. 1998. "National in Form, Socialist in Content." *Journal of American Musicological Society*, vol. 51, No. 2 (Summer): 331-371.

_____. 2016. *Stalin's Music Prize: Soviet Culture and Politics*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Geodakyan, Georgiy. 1973. *Aleksandr Spendiarov*. Yerevan: Armssr Publishing House.

_____. 1999. "Babajanyan Arno." In: MGG Online, hrsg. von Laurenz Lütteken, Kassel, Stuttgart, New York: 2016. Accessed on April 14, 2018, <https://www.mgg-online.com/mgg/stable/50118>

_____. 2008. "Impressive Talent, Unique Personality." In *Dedicated to Arno Babadjanian*, edited by Svetlana Sarkisyan, 6-29. Yerevan, Armenia: Antares.

Gjagapzanyan, Kariné. 2000. "The Rhythms of Armenian Music." DMA diss., Moscow. Accessed on Dissercat October 23rd, 2018, <http://www.dissercat.com/content/ritmika-armyanskoi-muzyki>

Gorgas, Gabriele Von. 2018. "Tom Schilling wird 90 – ein Erinnerungsgruß aus seiner ehemaligen Wirkungsstätte Dresden." Dresden Neueste Nachrichten. Accessed February 14th, 2019, <http://www.dnn.de/Nachrichten/Kultur/Kultur-Weltweit/Tom-Schilling-wird-90-ein-Erinnerungsgruss-aus-seiner-ehemaligen-Wirkungsstaette-Dresden>

Gotlib, Adolf. 1956. "About Chamber Music." *Soviet Music*, no. 3: 50-57.

- Grachev, Anderey. 2012. "Ferris Wheel of Arno Babadjanian." Produced by History TV. Accessed February 8th, 2019, <http://watchv=fQZilYjyC3M&t=50s>
- Gulbekian, Edward. 1998. *Armenian Sacred Music and Folk Music*. Richmond: Curzon Press.
- Gurariy, Semyon. 2017. *A legend's alphabet: Dialogues with Maya Plisetskaya*. Moscow: Litres.
- Hacopian, Ruben. 1996. "Arno." Special issue, *Arvest Magazine*.
- Hakopian, Armen. 2006. *Our Arno*. Yerevan: Antares.
- Hovhannisian Der, Harpik. 1956. "Armenian Music: A Cosmopolitan Art." PhD diss., Florida State University. Accessed October 3, 2017, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/89227749/61FE790240D24231PQ/1?accountid=12339>
- Huseynova, Aida. 2016. "The Russian-Soviet Factor: Facilitating or Disrupting Synthesis?" In *Music of Azerbaijan: from Mugham to Opera*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Ivanushkin, Anatoliy. 1983. "Arno Babadjanian: My songs are Beautiful Women," on *Noev-Kovcheg* official website, accessed January 31, 2019, <http://www.old.noev-kovcheg.ru/article.php?n=78&a=16>
- Jeunesse Arménienne de France. "Actualités: Passe et Present." Accessed March 13th, 2019, <https://www.jafparis.org>
- Johnson, Graham. 2017. *Britten, Voice & Piano: Lectures on the Vocal Music of Benjamin Britten*. Research Studies, 2. London: Routledge.

Khoudoyan, Adam. “Arno Babadjanian in Memories of his Contemporaries.” Accessed March 12th, 2019, <http://golosarmenii.am/article/49359/arno-babadzhanyan-v-vospominaniyax-druzej>

_____. 2016. *Stalin's Music Prize*. London: Yale University Press.

Karakashian, Meliné. 1998. “Armenia: A Country's History of Challenges.” *Journal of Social Issues* 54, no. 2: 381–392. doi:10.1111/0022-4537.721998072.

_____. 2014. *Komitas (1869-1935): Victim of the Great Crime*. New Jersey: Zangak House.

Kazinyan, Aris. 2007. *The 100 Greatest Armenians of the XX Century*. Moscow.

Khachaturian, Aram. 1948. *Song Poem After Ashugs*. Moscow: Music.

Khachaturian, Shahan. 1993. *Armenian Artists 19th–20th Centuries*. New York: National Gallery of Armenia.

Khrennikov, Tikhonov. 1979. “The High Meaning of the Soviet Music.” *Literature Newspaper*, no. 48: 30–34.

Koptev, Sergei. 1985. “Symphonic Music and Instrumental Concerto.” *Musical culture of Armenian Republic*, edited by Michael Berko, 153–223. Moscow: Music House.

Krebs, Stanley. 1970. *Soviet Composers and the Development of Soviet Music*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Kushnaryan, Kristapor. 2002. *Armenian Monodic Music*. Ankyunacar, Yerevan.

Murugana (Live Journal screen name). “Armenian Music.” Accessed January 15th,

2019, <https://murugana.live.journal.com>

Mannick, Sima. 1947. "Aram Khachaturian and the Soviet Creative Artist." MM diss., University of Southern California.

Manoogian, Torkom. 1987. *The Genius of Komitas*. New York: T. Manoogian.

Manukian, Manuk. 2002. "Music of Armenia." In *The Middle East*, edited by Virginia Danielson et al. *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, vol. 6, 723-738. New York: Routledge.

Masel, Leo. 1965. "About the Development Ways of the Contemporary Music." *Soviet Music*, no. 8: 10–16.

Mateossian, Louise. 2008. "About Violin Concerto of Arno Babadjanian." In *Dedicated to Arno Babadjanian*, edited by Svetlana Sarkisyan, 84–97. Yerevan, Armenia: Antares.

McCollum, Jonathan, and Andy Nercessian. 2004. *Armenian Music: A Comprehensive Bibliography and Discography*. Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press.

Medvedev, Alexandre. 1987. "Seven Monologues About Jazz." In *Soviet Jazz. Problems. Developments. Masters*, 29–77. Moscow: Soviet composer.

Melik, Nuné. 2018. "Hidden Treasure International: Arno Babadjanian." Produced by Hidden Treasure International. Yerevan-Montreal.

Milstein, Ykov. 1975. *Konstantin Igumnov*. Moscow: Music House.

Narekatsi, Grikor. 1985. *Book of Mourning Songs*. Edited by Peter Khachatryan and Armen Kazinyan. Yerevan: Science.

- Nercessian, Andy. 2002. *Postmodernism and Globalization in Ethnomusicology: An Epistemological Approach*. London: The Scarecrow Press.
- Ordjonikidze, Georgiy. 1988. "Some Characteristics of the National Style in Music." In *Traditions and Contemporaneity*, 144–160. Yerevan: Armssr Publishing House.
- Pahlevanian, Alina. 1985. "About the Role of the National Art in Musical Culture of Armenia." *Musical culture of Armenian Republic*, edited by Michael Berko, 367–396. Moscow: Music House.
- Peteri György. 2010. *Imagining the West in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*. Pitt Series in Russian and East European Studies. Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Pichikian, Ruben. 1996. "Zurna in Everyday's Life of Armenians." In *Traditions and Contemporaneity*, 155–170. Yerevan: Armssr Publishing House.
- Poladian, Sirvart. 1942. *Armenian folk songs*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Razzakov, Fedor. 2007. *The Lights of Falling Stars. People Who Always Stay With Us*. Moscow: Eksmo.
- Rossinsky, Alexander and Ekaterina Vorontsova. 2013. "Benjamin Britten in the Music Culture of the Soviet Union in the 1960s (to the 100th Anniversary of the Composer's Birth)." Special issue, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, vol. 3 no. 14.
- Russian Circus. 1961. "Ice and Fire." Accessed on January 23rd, 2019, <https://ruscircus.ru/plamen345>

Sarkisyan, Svetlana. 1985. "Aram Khachaturian." *Musical culture of Armenian Republic*, edited by Michael Berko, 3–35. Moscow: Music.

_____. 2002. *Armenian Music In The Context Of The XX century*. Moscow: Composer.

_____. 2008. *Dedicated to Arno Babadjanian*. Yerevan, Armenia: Antares.

_____. 1973. "The Development Specifics of the Armenian Soviet Symphony of the 1960s." In *Thoughts about Modern Armenian Symphonic Music*, edited by Georgiy Tigranov, 55–64. Moscow: Soviet Writer. Accessed Sept. 25th, 2018, <http://lraber.asj-oa.am/3809/1/55.pdf>

Schwartz, Boris. 1967. "Vicissitude dans la musique soviétique." *Le Contrat social: revue historique et critique des faits et des idées*, vol. 3 (May-June): 174–186.

Shakhnazarova, Nelli. 1985. "National Tradition and Composer's Art." In *Traditions and Contemporaneity: Questions of Armenian Music*, 3–35. Yerevan: Armssr Publishing House.

_____. 1986. "Aram Khachaturian and Music of the Soviet Orient." *Musical culture of Armenian Republic*, edited by Michael Berko, 219–240. Moscow: MusicHouse.

_____. 2013. *Selected articles: Memories*. Moscow: State University of ArtStudies Publishing.

Sedrakyan, Laura. 1986. "About the Transcriptions of A. Khachaturian, A. Babadjanian, and A. Arutunian." In *Traditions and Contemporaneity: Questions of Armenian Music*, 179 –198. Yerevan: Armssr Publishing House.

Simonian, Varoujan der, and Boghos Boghossian. 2008. *Saroyan: His Heart In The Highlands*. Fresno: Armenian Technology Group.

- Siranossian, Alexandre. 2016. "Arno Babadjanian." *L'Alakyaz, mensuel des cultures arméniennes*, no. 40 (April): 6-8.
- Slonimsky, Nicolas. 1944. "Soviet Music and Musicians." *The Slavonic and East European Review, American Series*, vol. 3, no. 4 (December): 1-18.
- Soriano, Marc. 1954. "Chronique musicale." *La Pensée: revue du rationalisme moderne*, no. 56 (Mai-Juin): 127-130.
- Tagmizyan, Nicogos. 1982. *Music in the Medieval Armenia*. Moscow: Soviet composer.
- Tarrabass (Live Journal screen name). "Armenian Notation at the End of XIX and Beginning the XX Century." Accessed January 19th, 2019, <https://tarrabass.livejournal.com/59320.html>
- Tashchian, Sona. 1961. *Arno Babadjanian*. Yerevan: Haypethrat.
- Teroganyan, Michael. 1995. *Sayat-Nova and the Armenian Minstrel Tradition*. Pasadena: Drazark, Press.
- _____. 2001. *Arno Babadjanian*. Moscow: Composer.
- Tigranov, Georgiy. 1985. "Some Reflections about Modern Armenian Symphony Music." *Musical Culture of Armenian Republic*, edited by Michael Berko, 199-219. Moscow: Music House.
- Tikhonov, Vitaliy. 2016. "Stalin Prize as Instrument to Shape General History of the People of the USSR" *Historical Journal*, no. 2: 175-185, doi.org10.7256/2222-1972.2016.2.17639
- Toulikova, Alisa. 2010. *The House of Hundred Pianos*. Moscow: Tonchu House.

Tumajyan, Artur. 2016. "Armenian Folk Elements in Arno Babadjanian's Piano Trio in F-Sharp Minor." DMA diss., Arizona State University. Accessed October 4th, 2018, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1793406738/4425BB83A02D489FPQ/3?accountid=12339>

Vlasova, Ekaterina. 2015. "Dodecaphonic' Plenum of the Soviet Composers' Union 1966." *From the History of Soviet Music*, 107–121.

Zolotova, Irina. 1985. "Six Pictures for Piano." *Musical Culture of the Soviet Armenia*: 345–370.

_____. 2008. "Babadjanian—Pianist." In *Dedicated to Arno Babadjanian*, edited by Svetlana Sarkisyan, 48–63. Yerevan, Armenia: Antares.

University of South Florida. "Armenia: The First State To Officially Adopt Christianity." Accessed January 3rd, 2019, <http://exhibits.lib.usf.edu/exhibits/showarmenianstudies/language-culture/religion>