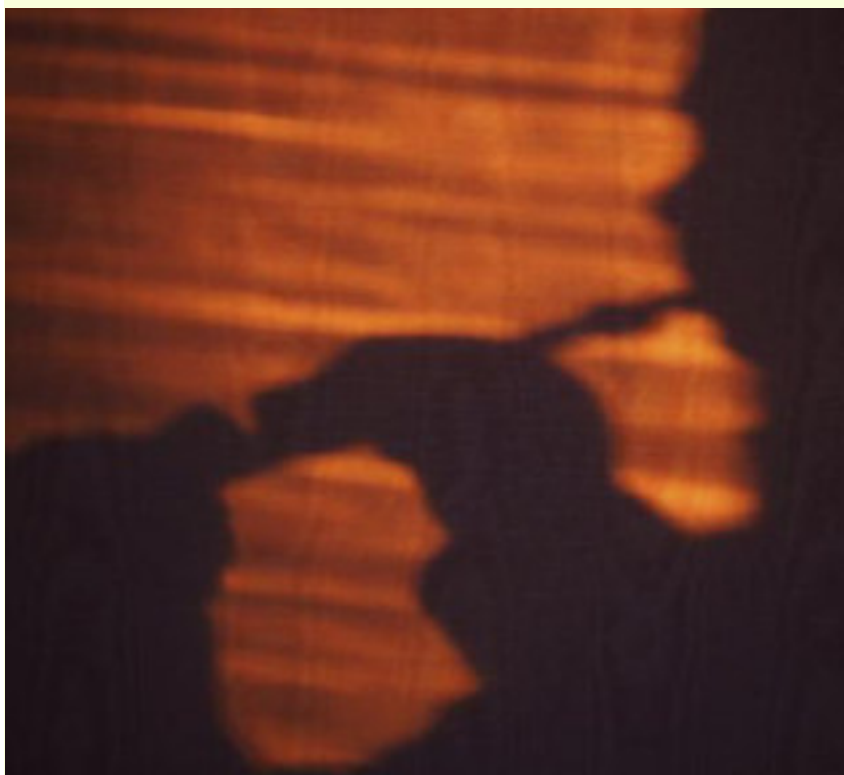


**GERARD MADILIAN**

**TRADITIONAL ARMENIAN  
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC**







Jul. 2022

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## **FOREWORD**

Transmitted from generation to generation, and moving away from its rural origins to perpetuate itself in an urban context, Armenian traditional music has not lost its original strength.

History has buried many secrets along the way, but we will try to gather together this heritage through the work of passionate musicologists.

This work is neither a manual nor an encyclopedia, but instead presents a synthesis of knowledge acquired over time.

It is dedicated to all those who wish to discover or better understand this unusual musical universe.

Armenian words transcribed into English (phonetic of Eastern Armenian) will be indicated with a capital first letter and will remain in the singular.

The author





## PREFACE

The long-awaited book on traditional Armenian instrumental music that was lacking has finally arrived!

As my long-time friend Gerard Madilian wrote in his foreword: "History has buried many secrets along the way." It was thus urgent to share the fruits of this research with the general public, and that is why this work was deliberately written in French and translated into English, to make it widely available to as many people as possible.

This book is a digest including the essential elements needed to form an opinion in this area. The specialized website *www.armentrad.org* was in fact selected by the author for this purpose of dissemination.

I have shared the same passion with Gerard for many years, having myself practiced the Tar within the Sayat Nova ensemble, which was a traditional Armenian ensemble founded in Paris in 1965.

I hope that this important book, which highlights a forgotten heritage of world culture, will be broadly distributed.

Gerard Sourenian



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## INTRODUCTION

I was born in Paris, and developed a passion for Armenian music and dance at an early age.

Information about Armenian instrumental music in France being rare a few decades ago, determination was the only course of action to get answers to my questions.

Over the years, meetings with professional musicians from Armenia and Georgia have shaped my experience and expanded my knowledge.

Obtaining information on the matter was further complicated by the fact that Armenia during the Soviet Union was difficult for me to access.

I took advantage of occasional visits by musicians from Armenia to ask questions that often remained unanswered. For most of them, knowledge about the origin and history of the instruments was not important; others confessed to me that in Armenia, those matters were of no interest, the important thing being learning and practice.

This study was an utopian venture, as very little writings have survived, since traditional music was mainly passed on through oral transmission.

The task was thus not easy...

During my early tourist trips to Armenia, I struggled to get interviews with qualified people, but with perseverance and luck "doors" opened as if by magic!

During those brief stays, I had the satisfaction of getting acquainted with authorities in the field of traditional music and dance.

First, the privilege of meeting Mrs. Srбуhi Lisitsian (1893-1979) twice in Yerevan (August 1971 and October 1973) filled me with joy!

An ethnographer and musicologist of exceptional culture, she wrote an encyclopedia on "Ancient dances and theatrical performances of the Armenian people" (Moscow 1958). The National Library. Paris.

Daughter of Stepan Lisitsian, creator of the first Armenian

ethnographic team at the end of the 19th century in Tiflis (Georgia), she dedicated her life to the study of ethnographic dance, collecting more than a thousand village dances throughout Armenia.

In one of the chapters of her book, which is written in Russian, she gives exceptional information about musical instruments of the past, greatly enriching the repertoire of those that we already know.

Other prominent musicologists, such as Nikoghos Tahmizian, Robert Atayan, Margarit Brutian, Anahit Tsitsikian, Aram Kocharian, Lena Khachikian, Anahit Kirakosian, Lilith Yerndjakian, and Hripsime Pikichian, among others, provided valuable contributions in this field; Grigor Garakhanian provided a thorough study of the tombstones and manuscripts of Armenia between the 12th and the 16th century.

It will be interesting to study the major musical modes used in Armenian traditional music and the way they were orally transmitted from master to disciple.

Issues of identification emerge when observing some ancient musical instruments that are reported in miniatures with visible forms, but without names.

On the other hand, some instrument names cited by historians and chroniclers of the past will require identification.

We will also establish similarities with some musical instruments of neighboring peoples.

In this major geographical crossroads of Near East civilizations, the Armenian plateau experienced a constant flow of many musical instruments often adapted to fit local music standards.

Instrumental practice being common these days in the country, we will seek to understand the cultural and artistic development of the Armenian people from its beginnings to the end of the twentieth century.

Are we going to be able, in this work, to establish a comprehensive overview of traditional musical instruments in use among the Armenians in the past?

The turbulent history of this people has left many cultural treasures buried, but we may consider that the wind, string and percussion instruments that are known represent a satisfactory heritage.



Srбуhi Lisitsian

## **ARMENIAN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC THROUGH THE CENTURIES**

This chapter was written based on the studies of Robert Atayan, Nikoghos Tahmizian, Lena Khachikian and Anahit Tsitsikian.

The tradition of instrumental ensembles in Armenian musical art dates back to pagan times.

Modern times have seen the development of the instrumental genre, which has its own rules rooted in the past, but adjusted to the standards of classical music.

The legacy of history, responsible for valuable known and unknown treasures, transmitted to the Armenian people a traditional music with a singular character.

We have some writings that tell us about the ancient musical instruments that were common on the Armenian plateau.

They are reported to us by historians and chroniclers or drawn from miniatures of ancient manuscripts.

They help us to reconstruct the essentials of a forgotten heritage and provide an overview of musical instruments as well as information relating to traditional music.

According to H. Stepanian (Medieval musical science in the 5-6th centuries. Yerevan. 2005), historians who have cited the names of musical instruments in their writings are:

Agatangeghos, Pavstos Buzand, Yeghishe,  
Movses Khorenatsi (5th century),  
Sebeos (7th century),  
Hovhannes Draskhanakertsi, Grigor Narekatsi (10th century),  
Aristakes Lastivertsi, Grigor Magistros (11th century),  
Nerses Shenorhali (12th century),  
Stepanos Orbelian (13-14th century),  
Arakel Siunetsi (14th century),  
Hovhannes Yerznkatsi (14-15th century),  
Hakob Ghrimetsi (15th century).



From the origin of the Armenian people, music has always played a major role. It faithfully accompanies the ploughman in his field and village, in his joys and sorrows, and helped him overcome the ordeals of history.

It resounds in public places, on the pediments of temples and in palaces, during religious rituals and pilgrimages and in public festivities.

It was enriched over time and still plays an important role today in Armenia.

The 5th century Armenian historian Movses Khorenatsi reports that during the Hellenistic period, from the 2nd century BC, when the country was becoming an independent state, music was actively developed.

He writes:

"... but the elders of the race of Aram remember theatrical performances and dances accompanied by the Bandir."

Pavstos Buzand records that King Pap was murdered by his enemies as he reveled in the sounds of drums, zithers, lyres and wind instruments.

Historians ensure that from the 1st to the 10th century instrumental music was very much alive in Armenia and that the musical groups were formed by many musicians. Trumpets, flutes, lyres and zithers resounded from all sides. We find these instrumental ensembles illustrated in miniatures, playing in the princely and royal courts.

During the 9th and 10th centuries, urban instrumental music was continuing its course. Archaeological excavations have unearthed bronze bells dating from the 2nd millennium BC once used during ritual ceremonies, a drum covered with skin and a small horn were found near the Lake Sevan, bronze cymbals found at Karmir Blur (Red Hill) near Yerevan, double flutes at Garni and Dvin; the essential of historical sources about many documents on music are located in the manuscripts of the National Library of Yerevan, the Madenataran Mesrob Mashdots, where some 11 000 manuscripts and 2000 fragments dating from the 5th to the 18th centuries are kept.

During this period of major economic and cultural progress, musicians were encouraged by this society to develop their ancestral art.

Kings Artashes, Artavazd, Tigran II, Artavazd II, gave a strong impetus to the spread of musical art.

In these days before Christianity the art of singing was alive with the Dzaynarku, professional mourners, the Vardzak, women singing and dancing at feasts, the Vipasan, popular epic singers, the Gusan, musicians, ballad singers, epic poems reciters touching upon the most diverse aspects of life (plowing, livestock, hunting, military life...) as well as historical events and legends of ancient Armenia: Hayk and Bel, Aram, Ara the Beautiful and Shamiram, Vahakn the dragon, Dork the ugly. Interspersed with songs, dances and mimes, these poems were often accompanied by Bandir or Bambir.

Manuscripts are sometimes illustrated with musicians playing different musical instruments, some of these being identified, others not.

Some descriptions show a woman hitting a Darabula and we find some annotations on the Barbut (barbiton).

Among the chroniclers of the past, Pavstos Buzand, Yeghishe and other historians mention the names of musical instruments used in pagan Armenia: the Knar lyre, Sring flute, Pogh trumpet, hunting horn, army trumpets, war drums...

Nerses Shnorhali (12th century) lists the Sring, the Pogh and the percussion Tmbuk when he talks about the city of Ani, the ancient capital of Armenia during the Bagratuni dynasty (10th century).

Pogh is a generic term for wind instruments without indicating its specificity. It is often translated as being a trumpet but is also used to designate other aerophones as Zurna (Srapogh that is to say an acute Pogh, a shrill trumpet), the Duduk (Glanapogh) or flutes in general.

Many other musical instruments existed in Armenia until the 10th century and then were lost.

The Rut, in use in Iran and other Asian countries, is mentioned in a manuscript as having four strings and being played with a bow.

Mentioned among the lyres, the Chnar closely resembles the Knar, taking its name from Chinar, the plane tree.

The psalms mention:  
"Bless the Lord with psalms and Chnar."

The origins of bowed stringed instruments also date back to the 10th century.

The ceramic vase discovered in Dvin, an ancient capital of Armenia, shows a player of a three-stringed Kamani, also called Greek violin, "sitting cross-legged" with the instrument on his shoulder, like the violin is held today.

The player has his eyes closed and his mouth half-open and sings. The instrument is the size of a viola.

Being spread in some parts of the country, particularly in the region of Pontus (shores of the Black Sea), the Kamani became with time the favorite instrument of some Ashugh, like Ashugh Djivani (Serop Levonian, 1846-1909), who enchanted crowds with this instrument, whose number of strings he increased to twelve. He wrote in the late 19th century:

"The Kamani is already a purely European instrument, a universal violin, an ancestor of the violin. It differs from the current violin by its size (it is roughly the size of a small Cello) and its usual number of four strings are brought to twelve with the lower bass chords for resonance."

Between the 10th and the 15th centuries, historians gave the description of the instruments an important role.

Hovhannes Yerznkatsi (13th century) commented on the Ud lute.

Arakel Siunetsi (14th century, Lena Khachikian's report "On major sources of history on Armenian Art") mentioned a lyre with eight strings, while classifying instruments cited by him according to category.

He also provides valuable information on how to construct some of them:

"The string is manufactured by a clever man... we braid it... we make various stringed instruments... Many people gather to hear the cheerful sounds, they not only hear the string instruments playing, but also the singer's various speeches, because the song charms the ear and the heart while the comments render wiser the spirit and the reason."

"The instrument is a piece of wood with strings or else it is a piece of wood with a skin and copper parts, and when we play with these instruments listeners are delighted."

"Music resonates through the hands and breath in this manner: hands draw sounds, for example while playing Duful, Nagar, Daba, Tzntzgha, Shashta, Shavarne, Chanka, Chagane, Tzkarka."

It is interesting to note that these quotations use dialectal terms recalling known names:

Duful the Dhol or Davul, the Nagar the Naghara, the Daba the Dap, Tzntzgha are the cymbals, the Tzkarka the Tik or bagpipe.

Shashta, Shavarne, Chanka, Chagane remain to be identified.

Shashta seems to probably be an instrument with six strings, shasht meaning six in Persian.

Shavarne is a type of viol with bowed strings like the Shavarr mentioned in the epic "David of Sasun"; Chanka refers to the harp (from the verb chankel scratch), identical to Chanki of Georgian neighbors.

Chagane is unknown in Armenia, this instrument can be found in Daghestan (northeast Caucasus).

It looks like the Georgian Shianuri a sort of viol with three or four strings with a round body that can sometimes be shaken like a tambourine.

Hakob Ghrimetsi (15th century) informs us that liturgical manuscripts showed new instruments alongside older ones, like the tambourine with an open body known as the Dap, the Dhol drum, Tzntzgha cymbals, shepherd flute Sring, huge horns made of reed, the Saz and lutes of the same family, the harp Chank, and other varieties of bowed stringed instruments, the Kamani and Kamancha.

Chroniclers and writers including Buzand, Narekatsi, Lampronatsi, Yerknatsi, and Ghrimetsi provided interesting remarks regarding the strings:

"Strings are made of gut or copper. Nerves are removed from the animal, and then stretched and soaked in salt water. They are then dried in the sun."

This ancient method was already in use at the time of King Tigran the Great in the first century BC.

In the 10th century AD, copper strings were common in the country. Hovhannes Yerznkatsi called the four-stringed lyre, known as the Knar, the "Karralar Knar", as the best way to harmonize himself with the forces of nature in relation to the four elements.

The choice for four strings to bowed instruments was also decided in agreement with nature. They correspond to the four seasons of the year.

Observations made by Davit Anhaght (5th century) highlight the power of music to change moods in human nature:

"One day of feasting, he says, the general Alexander the Macedonian listening to martial music walked out spontaneously from the hall of festivities and returned later and sat at his table while listening to a happier tune."

Yeghishe compared the lyre player to a god whose soul is incarnated in a body.

Yeznik Koghbatsi (5th century) thought that there was no art outside nature and he attributed holiness to the number four just like the ancient Greeks and ancient Egyptians.

This number expresses the four elements of nature: air, earth, water and fire, hence the musician establishes contact with the sacred through those elements:

"Immaterial music reacts strongly on the soul, that is why instruments were manufactured with the intention of raising the mind and heart," he wrote.

"The top string is called Zil, Zangun, high, acute. The second Tuga (second in Persian). The third Segá (third in Persian).

So the sharp string is hot and dry like fire, the second hot and damp like air, the third cold and dry like earth, the fourth low pitched, cold and wet like water."

"In case of illness, it is possible to use music as therapy.

When the patient complains of a blood flow, you have to play on the bass string that will be beneficial since by nature it is cold and wet as bile and gall. However for a bilious person music should be played on the first sharp string, Zil, which is warm as blood.

The sharp is warm as blood.

The second is hot and dry like yellow bile.

The third is cold and dry like black bile.

The fourth, low pitched and heavy, is cold and wet as the bile of phlegm.

If the patient has contracted yellow bile which is considered hot and dry, you have to play on the fourth string, which is cold and wet. If at the same time we play sharp and low or on sharp and heavy strings, we obtain an intermediate effect of dryness and coolness."

The art of music can help a patient heal either by music produced by an instrument or simply by the singing of the human voice. But the most important thing is the patient's ability to be in harmony with music, to benefit from its therapeutic action.

In Cilicia and other regions of Armenia, the poet-singers Gusan who perpetuated local traditions until the 18th century, played a major role in the life of the people, until the arrival of Ashugh, roaming musician-singers. (The term Ashugh is derived from the Arabic ashik which means lover).

An epic song of the 17th century describing the death of Prince Mirza of the province of Mok is built on a chromatic scale reminiscent to western songs.

While developing their songs on Persian modes, the Ashugh gradually contributed to the decline of the music of the sedentary Gusan, replacing their ancestral local tunes.

These poet-musicians singing of love in several languages greatly enriched their repertoire, bringing oriental colors to it.

Between the 13th and the 17th century, instrumental art was highly developed in Armenia.

No fewer than 59 musical instruments are listed in old miniatures and sacred books.

The 18th century became essential to the cultural and artistic life.

A whole generation of musicians helped to develop instrumental music to unknown heights, like the immortal Ashugh Sayat Nova (Harutiun Sayatian 1712-1795), who is one of their best representatives, while singing about love and brotherhood among the peoples of the Caucasus in the Armenian, Georgian, Persian and Azeri languages.

The names of Shamshi Melkon, Kichik Nova, Alvan Oghlan, Sayat

Oghlan, Shamshi Balen, Keshish Novas have also been etched in the memory of that century.

The Tampur player Arutin, a musician who lived in the 17-18th centuries and spoke several languages of the region, wrote a manual of oriental music. (Anahit Tsitsikian. "The Armenian music of stringed instruments").

## FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE 19th CENTURY TO THE END OF THE 20th CENTURY

In the 19th century, Sazandar were musicians whose art crossed the frontiers of Armenia, Georgia, Iran, Azerbaijan and other countries in the Middle East.

Trios of Tar-Kamancha-Dap/Singer were the most popular at that time.

According to Garegin Levonian, son of "Ashugh Djivani", the Ashugh of this period were divided into three groups: village, town and court Ashugh. Accompanied by three or four musicians, they played in coffee houses, or other places where crowds gathered. They called these groups "Tasda" (meaning bouquet in Turkish or Pundj in Armenian) in reference to the leader's name such as "Djivanu Tasda" or Tasda of Djivani, "Sherami Tasda" or Tasda of Sheram...

The musicologist and priest Komitas Vardapet called these ensembles "Nvakurt" including their Zurnachi, Sazandar, their Ashugh and groups with many musicians.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, groups were formed by various categories of instruments as we know them today.

The important cultural centers of that time were Constantinople in the Ottoman Empire, Ispahan in Persia and Tiflis in Georgia. Incorporating the different musical arts, Persian, Turkish and Georgian, Armenian musicians nevertheless kept their national character.

In the 19th century the move from rural to city life resulted in the gradual disappearance of ancient musical forms. Ancient rites, which were related to those musical forms, fell increasingly into disuse as well. Most disappeared over time and through historical circumstances.

In the late 19th century, in reaction to the threat of seeing this important musical heritage become extinct, the priest Komitas traveled through Western and Eastern Armenia to gather countless traditional songs and melodies, harmonizing them and giving them a



new life.

In the Caucasus, the instrumental art was particularly developed in the cities of Tiflis in Georgia, Shushi in Gharabagh and later in Baku. In the mid-19th century, Tiflis, the capital of Georgia was known to play a vital role in the cultural life of the Caucasian peoples. East and West cultures met there, under Russian influence.

Performances in Russian, Georgian, Armenian, and Azeri [languages](#) were common in this cosmopolitan and intercultural city. Russian travelers of the time reported that there was never a party without musicians.

One of them A. Kishishov describes an open air concert: "People crowded the windows of houses, rooftops and doorways, to listen to the street singers. This lasts until the middle of the night after which each one returns home. Some stay till the next morning and wait for the next evening group."

If Tiflis was an outstanding cultural center, the city of Shushi assumed in the 19th century the role of a music conservatory until its destruction in 1920.

Different instrumental disciplines were taught, Armenians and Azeris shared common culture in this region of Gharabagh, developing the science of Mugham, modal music of Persian origins.

This city of about 30 000 people had at that time 22 experts in music, 38 singers, a large number of musicians. Armenian bards were distinguished in the early 20th century, such as the bilingual and bi-cultural singer "Ashugh Aleksan", who was accompanied by his eight musicians.

As Azeri Muslim clergy looking unfavorably on instrumental practice, this area was therefore reserved for Armenians. Only singing could be practiced by the Azeri.

The science of Mugham anchored more in Azeri culture, while Armenians kept a refined and more popular genre.

Piridon Shushinski (from Shushi), son of the famous Armenian singer Khan Shushinski cites in his book many Armenian musicians in the early 20th century:

-Tar Players: Lazar Ter Vardanesov, Arsen Jaramshev, Bala Krikor Melikian, Tatevos Harutiunian, Aghamal Melik Aghamalian, Avak Tarkhanov, Shamil Melikov, Grigor Shushinski, Soghomon Seyranian,

Lazar Gabrielian, Kamanchahar Asadur, Arsen Kamanchahar...

-Kamancha Players: Alexander Hovhannisian alias Sasha Oganezashvili (who added the fourth string to the Kamancha), Avanes Avanesov, Levon Karakhanov, Moses Kuliants, Armenak Esriyev, Armenak Shushinski, Ruben Karakhanov and many other musicians, including Arshak Khidirov (Dap), Anton Nagharachi...

Between Tiflis and Shushi, the city of Gyumri also produced a long line of musicians like masters of Duduk Karo Yeghoyan, alias "Pancho Karo", and his two famous disciples Karo Charchoghlian and Levon Madoyan, future Dudukahar soloists of instrumental ensembles of Radio Baku and Radio Yerevan.

The inhabitants of the region of Shirak were known for their gift and musical sensitivity.

As oral transmission from master to disciple left no written records, only the fame of the musician and the memories he left to posterity indicated his degree of success.

Musicians played a big role in Eastern Armenia after the genocide of 1915 (perpetrated in the Ottoman Empire) by stimulating the morale of the people. Epidemics of typhus and cholera struck thousands of victims among the survivors who flocked to the first independent Republic of Armenia (1918). Seeing the difficulties it faced, this ephemeral state had no time to process its cultural reconstruction.

Some years after the Sovietization of the country (1920) however, most artists found their place in the new society, popular culture being encouraged and made available to all.

The creation in 1924 of the Music Conservatory of Yerevan was an important step and musical groups of traditional instruments were formed in many cities and villages of the country.

Eminent personalities created at that time first traditional ensembles in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

It is Vardan Buni (Buniatian) that gave a decisive impetus with the first ensemble of "Oriental music" (Areveilian Yerajshdutiun) in Yerevan where he gathered many traditional musical instruments, to be played in the tuning of classical music (A tuning).

Instruments of the family of the Tar, Kamancha, Duduk and Shvi had their capacities enlarged:

Tar: piccolo, baritone, bass.  
Kamancha: alto and bass.  
Duduk, Shvi in A and D.

In Baku (capital of Azerbaijan), Dr. Avanes Yonesyan created the first ensemble of oriental music bringing together Armenian musicians from the towns of Shushi and Gyumri.

A problem of harmony arose, due to the number and the diversity of instruments. A number of them were thus later abandoned in favor of using main instruments in each registers.

The master of Armenian music and dance Tatul Altunian imposed himself and recorded his name in the memory of the people while establishing the State Ensemble of Song and Dance of Armenia in 1936. He harmonized traditional songs and dances, giving them a national character, and set the standard.

The musicians in the new Armenian Soviet Republic obtained different statuses, thus helping their integration into society. Many amateur groups attached to factories sprang up, allowing workers to participate in artistic activities after their workday.

The Yerajisht (musicians) thus had guaranteed work, and obtained the status of employee. Many of them became professionals and played in official ensembles of music or dance, or large state or town formations.

Musicians playing for ceremonies, parties, funerals, often playing outdoors or in private settings at the request of the common people, were also officially recognized by incorporating a new structure created for them: the Rabiz.

This term is a contraction of two Russian words "Rabotnik Iskustvo" meaning workers in art. Armenians pronounce it "Rabiz."

It is often said that "Rabiz music" refers to styles escaping from the official culture, authors expressing personal trends, or an oriental style of music with accentuated melismas.

Large musical ensembles have continued their work of transmission and musical creation, and some composers have helped to develop instrumental music.

Alexander Alexandrian, in the years 1950-1970, composed many dance tunes within the Song and Dance State Ensemble of Armenia "Tatul Altunian".

In the late 1950s, the famous zither Kanon player Khachatur Avetisian was noticed by an original ways of using traditional instrumentation. He used the sounds of the respective instruments to create a fairy tale universe reminiscent of old Armenian tales and legends.

His music is an authority especially in dance music, and he wrote many tunes for the National Ballet of Armenia where he was the musical director for many years.

Currently, it is Hayk Grigorian that composes the dance tunes for this ballet company.

By the 1980s, Karlen Mirzoyan created the ensemble of wind and percussion instruments "Tkzar" rehabilitating old musical instruments depicted in ancient illuminations.

The Tik or Parkapzuk bagpipes, Dap and Dhol percussion instruments, Sring flutes and Duduk oboes sound together in an original way, reminiscent of medieval times.

During the last century, the instrumental genre expanded considerably, and gave birth to many musical ensembles.

The passion and the fervor of musicians has created growing enthusiasm for instrumental disciplines. This allowed the Armenian people to reconnect with its past and ensure the continuity of its traditions by perpetuating an ancient ancestral art.



Old musical instruments. Art Museum of Yerevan.

## **TRADITIONAL MODES IN USE AMONG ARMENIANS**

No treatise has reached us to date on Hittite, Byzantine, Hebrew, or Armenian traditional music with the exception of some annotations written on ancient Sumerian-Chaldean or Persian steles.

Traditional music being transmitted orally, we must look for reference points in the collective memory of peoples.

Armenian Gusan of Antiquity performed their songs in Persian modes.

However, the local particularities of these sedentary poet-singers, who served as transmitters of village traditions from generation to generation, gave them a unique character.

They lasted until the 17th century and then declined with the arrival of the itinerant Ashugh singers, who were completely influenced by the Persian music of their time.

Thus music of the Armenian plateau and the southern Caucasus, like that of other peoples of the region, have their source in the names of the Persian musical modes, which they have kept in some specialized circle:

Rast, Charga, Sega, Zabol, Shushtar, Bayati Shiraz, Shahnaz, Shur...

Musical modes are successions of notes, registers that help to express different states of mind or emotions.

Intervals were transformed locally within modes to express the spirit and sensitivity of the Armenian people.

Originally intervals that make up modes were not tempered and there were differences according to regions.

"Some treatises however talk about minor tones and semitones with shorter intervals, resulting in a quarter tone lower than the Western ones which is common in traditional vocal and instrumental Armenian music. This gives the European listener the impression that intervals or tones sound out of tune, except that the approach is different..." (Sylvart Kazandjian: "Origins of Armenian music". Paris. 1983).

In the old days, the musician was a true master of ceremonies who

solemnly marked celebrations, speeches, and funeral ceremonies using laments, songs, and other musical tunes creating their own atmosphere.

In private and friendly gatherings around a table, when a Tamada (table head) made a speech, it was customary that his words would be punctuated by short musical interventions; these, which were known as the "Dush", are often excerpts from songs or rhythmic tunes, accentuating the sad or happy mood of the speech.

The fame of the Varpet (master musician) depended on his ability to transform atmospheres from intense joy to deep sadness.

To each state of being there is a particular mode.

The French musicologist Dane Rudhyar (1895-1985) in his book "The magic of the tone and the art of music" (1982), tells us about this : "The character of a mode is always, in principle, determined by the nature of the emotions that it is supposed to awake in listeners."

To understand the Trans-Caucasian modal system, it is absolutely necessary to know the function of the drone or Dam.

The Dam is the fundamental base note which vibrates continuously and on which the musical mode is built.

In Armenian music, this note can remain unchanged or change within the melody.

Eight modes are prevalent in Armenian traditional music, significantly different from those used in the liturgy.

Here are the main registers developed among Armenians:

For example we will take as a basis the C major scale, notes in bold representing the Dam.

The SHAHNAZ so-called mode                    B C **D** E F G A Bb C

Familiar examples of Armenian music in this mode:

*Shushiki* dance tune,

*Deleyaman* song,

*Tamzara* dance tune...

The BAYATI SHIRAZ so-called mode        C# **D** E F G A Bb C

This is the western minor scale.

Familiar examples of Armenian music in this mode:

*Siretsi yars daran* song,

*Du anmegh es ko achern en meghavor* song,

*Tzaghepunch* dance tune...

The SHUSHTAR so-called mode                    B C **D** Eb F# G A Bb C

Familiar examples of Armenian music in this mode:

*Uzundara* dance tune,

*Krunk usti ku gas* song,

*Zov gisher e durs yek* song,

*Yes im anush Hayastani* song,

*Shalakho* dance tune...

The CHAHARGA so-called mode                    A Bb C# **D** Eb F# G A Bb C

Familiar examples of Armenian music in this mode:

*Dun en gikhen imasdun is* song by the ashugh Sayat Nova...

The SEGA so-called mode                        B C D **E** F G A Bb C

Familiar examples of Armenian music in this mode:

*Machkal* song,

*Lusniak gisher* song...

The RAST so-called mode                        B C D E **F** G A Bb C

This mode is the equivalent of the western major scale.

Familiar examples of Armenian music in this mode:

*Seghann e arrad* song,

*Lari tmbrela* song...

The ZABUL so-called mode                        C D E F **G** A Bb C

Familiar examples of Armenian music in this mode:

*Kalossi Prken* dance tune...

The SHUR so-called mode                        B C **D** Eb F G A Bb C

Familiar examples of Armenian music in this mode:

*Adanayi voghpe* song...

The same tune can develop in different modes:

The dance tune *Shalakho* can evolve on Shushtar or even Charga based on the inspiration of the performer.

From a Western point of view, we think that these modes are the same as they are similar. However a semitone difference generates a different atmosphere for the audience sensitive to this musical



culture. So we find the same intervals while ascending the scale, with sometimes a difference of a semitone while descending, slightly affecting the atmosphere.

Music is often built on two modes that are linked, each consisting of a tetra-chord, which is to say a series of four consecutive notes.

For example:

The traditional *Kochari* starts on the Segá mode and goes to Shahnaz.

Komitas's the song *Kele Kele* starts on Rast and then goes to Shahnaz.

When we play the dance Shalakho we start on Shushtar or Chaharga then we go on Bayati Shiraz.

Here again the Western ear would confuse Shahnaz and the key of minor but a semitone in the descending scale makes a difference.

The range of each mode being limited to a few notes, it is customary to marry modes naturally.

Common combinations include Zabul-Segá or Segá-Zabul, Shahnaz-Rast, Shushtar-Bayati Shiraz...

These modes were performed throughout the Caucasus in the second half of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century by many Armenian musicians from Gharabagh, Georgia and Azerbaijan.

They are the foundations of Transcaucasian music.

The Armenians drew from Mugham musical fragments, incorporating them at the beginning, middle or end of their improvisations.

We can also understand these structures from a Western point of view; taking the major scale as a basis, C D E F G A B, each of these notes may serve as a register key and evolve from it.

Examples:

Dam D. Shahnaz, Shushtar, Bayati Shiraz, Shur modes.

Dam E. Segá.

Dam F. Rast.

Dam G. Zabul.

We can also see similarities with ancient Greek modes: Ionian, Phrygian, Mixolydian, Locrian, Aeolian, Dorian (Shahnaz), Lydian (Rast)...

The musical art will consist not only of mastering the natural tone of a tune, but also transposing it into other modes. It will be the same for each of the other modes.

Armenians have found in it a possibility to fully express their sensitivity in an authentic way.

Differences exist however in the modal intervals of the Armenian, Georgian, Persian, Azeri, Kurdish and Turkish peoples.

While improvising, we enjoy emphasizing the nuances called Khagh (literally game). Armenians distinguish themselves through their melismatic style and musical play, which gives their music a unique character in this region of the world.

Some of the innate Khagh of this people are inimitable particularly during laments interpreted on Duduk, on Kamancha or on Tar.

However, Armenian music remains simple and uncluttered in its principles as compared to the music of the neighboring peoples, where decorative arabesques and modal nuances are complex.

Accompanying historical accounts, epic tales, and Mugham or Mughamat are long "instrumental parts" played to illustrate these stories or to commune an assembly within a specific atmosphere.

They include melodic phases that are rhythmic, intense, quiet, and marked by moments of improvisation...

They are called Raga in India, Magham or Destkah in Iran, Mugham in Azerbaijan, Bayat in Georgia, Taksim among Turks, Maqam among Arabs...

Persian original names are still used today among the traditional musicians in Armenia:

Rast, Sega, Charhaga, Shushtar, Bayati Shiraz, Shur, Shahnaz, Bayati Kurd, Hidjaz, Bayati Gadjar, Tshoban Bayati, Mahur indi, Qatar, Zabul,

Mirza Hussein, Rayeli Isfahan, Neva, Neva Shur, Nahab, Dilkash, Dashti...

The complexity of Mugham with their many developments is expressed more by the musicians of Azerbaijan and Iran from where they originate. Depending on the occasion, they could be played at different times of the day, month or year.

Armenians are often inspired from them to create an atmosphere in their introduction to their familiar tunes. For example, they start improvising a tune on the melancholic mode "Shahnaz" (close to the western minor key) and follow then on a rhythmic melody that enlivens the atmosphere on the "Rast" mode based on the major scale.

Or start Bayati Shiraz following up on Sega and then Zabol...

This ancient musical atmosphere, containing a wide register of emotional nuances, is a living library where each musician can draw inspiration at will.

Here we find some of the medieval modes in which we sung and danced for many centuries in Western Europe.

The peoples of the Caucasus in general before Sovietization (1920) played on common themes, customizing their music according to their own sensitivity.

For example, the ancient Armenian themes "Arak par" and "Akhalkalaki" are akin to the Georgian dance tune Kartuli which is based on the major mode Rast.

All music based on these common modes traveled freely through the Caucasus with the free movement of musicians throughout the region while under Tsarist Russian influence.

Modal music also had a therapeutic purpose. It strengthened the disposition of the people who appreciated its healing power. Composers and passionate researchers in music served as doctors and, as the minstrels of all time, they believed that the music healed suffering souls.

They include Nahapet Rusinian who composed the song Kilikia, Gevork Akhverdian (19th century), who published the first songs of

Ashugh Sayat Nova, and Avanes Yonesyan, who created the first ensemble of traditional instruments in Baku in the 1920s...

## **THE INFLUENCE OF THE MODES ON HUMAN BEHAVIOUR**

"You stop the trembling of the patient..."  
(Sayat Nova. 18th century).

Shakespeare said that one should not expect any good from a person who is not moved by music.

The power of music draws on the forces of nature. In this region of the world and in the East in general, music is an integral part of daily life; deeply engraved in the traditions of the people, constantly present, it is used primarily to boost the morale of everyone. Used for therapeutic purposes, it shows its power and beneficial influence on the mind and psyche of man.

Repeated musical sequences stimulate the healing process and seek to unknot the patient mentally and emotionally.

Closely linked to human sensitivity, and known to all ancient Mediterranean cultures and peoples of the East, musical modes carry a universal spiritual message.

Their different registers correspond to the vital centers of the body and the mind, and act on the personal and collective evolution of human society.

"So the mode is produced by the psyche of a culture and the conditions governing the musical execution. This may or may not carry a magical or sacred intention, but it is still designed to bring about some mental states in listeners..." (Dane Rhudiyar. The magic of tone and the art of music. 1982).

## **ABOUT IMPROVISATION**

The Armenian plateau has seen the development of interesting musical structures where people can build their own patterns.

After the main theme, the Armenian musician, an improviser at heart, personalizes the moment by giving it a unique character. He will give an energy corresponding to the emotion expressed. Each interpreter is identified by his unique style, and there is a necessary rule never to compare two musicians. To each his own personality. By his unique character, a Varpet (master) will be recognized by all.

During gatherings of family or friends, musicians have always been present to honor the meetings and express their improvisational skill.

We ask the musician to play using an ancient expression:  
"Aghper djan mi ban asa..." ("Dear brother say something...")

This tradition is still alive in the country.

## **LANGUAGE AND MUSICAL SENSITIVITY**

"Such language, such music!"

Human language and musical expression are complementary.

Each language vibrates on a specific register of sounds (more or less low or high) that determines the mood, the sensitivity or the mentality of peoples: traditional music responds to these same trends.

The language is built on a musical tone that shapes its character. Indo-European groups of languages have by affinity similarities in the way of thinking and feeling of encountered situations, but they differ significantly in their cultural diversity.

Favored by the many sounds of its alphabet, the Armenian language has a large sound register (vibrating several vital centers of the human body, belly, chest, throat, nose) and the ability to create words revolving around its rich consonances.

The nature of sounds is related to the four elements, earth, air, water, fire; when we speak a language, a specific sensitivity emerges and human emotions are expressed in each vibratory register.

The Armenian language which is based on a certain severity influences therefore its musical expression.

To properly perceive the identity of this culture, its state of being and its philosophy, some cultural parameters must be fully understood and assimilated.

In order for this traditional music, a natural extension of human language, to reveal its deep philosophy, we will have to learn to feel in a subtle manner its temperament and characteristics and discern them from neighboring peoples.

In accordance with the opinion of the great Armenian musicologists, Komitas Vardapet, Robert Atayan, Nikoghos Tahmizian... and unlike preconceptions due to the multicultural context of the region, Armenian music, in its original concept, has its own identity and is neither Eastern nor Western.

Having suffered many invasions in history and the domination of various conquerors, Armenians have always fought to preserve their profound identity.

The polyglot Armenians have assimilated the languages of others to blend into the surrounding cultures, and have always been able to keep their identity and cultivate their difference.

We have often been mistaken in thinking that Armenian musicians living in the Ottoman Empire played in the "Asia Minor" style, while Armenians of Iran played in the Persian style, and Armenians in the Caucasus or Gharabagh in the Georgian and Azeri style. In fact, they showed their Armenian sensitivity while adapting it to these other musical styles.

The music of the regions to the east of the plain of Ararat (present-day Armenia), of Shirak and Lori, have a more pronounced character than those of the eastern provinces of Asia Minor whose rhythms are simpler, less hammered and syncopated.

Just as one can identify a language, one can recognize the origin of a musician following his style, the Armenian has his languorous lyricism, his delicate and graceful execution of musical nuances, his innate sense of improvisation.

Therefore many Armenians have distinguished themselves by their musical gifts within the various neighboring countries of the Caucasus.



## VERBS MEANING "TO PLAY MUSIC"

Four verbs meaning "play music" have passed through time to the present.

The most common word used these days is *Nvagal* to fit all circumstances with its derivative nouns *Nvagan*, musical instrument or musical group.

*Nevagogh* player, musician.

The verb *Harel* (the root *Har* of which resembles the word *harmony*) is no longer in use today but is remembered through the derivative nouns relating to musicians *Dmbkahar* drummer, *Srngahar* flutist, *Dudukahar* *Duduk* player, *Tarahar* *Tar* player, *Kamanchahar* *Kamancha* player, *Kanonahar* *Kanon* player and its feminine counterpart, *Kanonaharuhi* female *Kanon* player...

*Harogh*, player is now an obsolete term.

*Chalel* (whose root is borrowed from Turkish) is a very popular term denoting less elegance than *Nevagal*, sometimes giving it a derogatory tone.

Instead, we use this verb in the sense of to animate in a festive way.

*Chalogh*, player.

Other terms for musician end with *Chi* or *Dji* - derived from the Turkish language - as the dialectal term *Chalghechi*.

Today we also add the termination "*ist*" which is derived from Latin origin languages.

Thus we can use indifferently *Dholchi* or *Dholist*, *Dudukchi* or *Dudukist*, *Tarahar* or *Tarist*... and we will be always understood whenever the original words are unknown.

*Atzel*, which means to lay in Western Armenian, to give birth, refers to both verbs for making or playing music in Eastern Armenian.

*Atzogh*, musician. Currently still in use in Tbilisi, among the Armenians of Georgia. We will say *Duduk Atzogh*, *Kamancha Atzogh*...

The famous 18th century Armenian troubadour Sayat Nova, praising his instrument the Kamancha, uses this "Atzogh" term:

"Khalkhin es iltimazn ara, asin abri ko Atzogh"

"Do honor to this people who says long life to your musician!"

We call Sazandar (a term derived from the string instrument Saz) players of stringed instruments in general (Tar, Kamancha, Saz, Ud...).

## **INSTRUMENTAL SOUNDS**

A melody played on the Tar or the Duduk does not affect the listener in the same manner; the vibrations of each musical instrument invisibly cause different reactions on the sensitivity of a person.

Composers have tried to push forward the traditional musical concept using these sounds, evocative of original universes and sensations.

As we have mentioned above, the composer Khachatur Avetisian, the zither Kanon virtuoso who had many followers in Armenia in the 1950s, used the specificity of each instruments in his musical creations.

The sounds of various wind, string, and percussion instruments successively intervene: conversing, dialoguing, creating fairy-like atmospheres...

WIND

STRING

PERCUSSION

INSTRUMENTS

## WIND INSTRUMENTS



Painter Ishkhan Martirosian.

Gerard Madilian Collection.

Dhol and Zurna players.



The ZURNA

also called

SRAPOGH

or KONAPOGH

of the oboe family is an ancient wind instrument prevailing in many Asian countries, from India to the Mediterranean basin.

It is very common in folk festivals and literally means flute of power (Persian Zor-Nay).

It is a double reed instrument, consisting of a conical wooden pipe and a double mouthpiece.

The Armenian Zurna has its own particularities.

The wooden pipe is called Zurni Pet (or Payt), stick of the Zurna and also Zurnayi Pogh (pipe of the Zurna).

Depending on the region, it can be constructed of apricot, walnut, cypress or pine wood.



The wooden part that slides inside and makes it possible to close the top hole or the first three holes of the instrument.

It was formerly used to easily hold the drone -Dam- or to play two Zurnas at a time, holding the Dam on one side and interpreting the melody in the other in accordance with the system of double flutes of antiquity.

Nowadays in Armenia a Zurnachi plays this way:  
Ambayi Ghazarian-Danielian.

Separate piece of wood playing a role of regulation inside the pipe.



The front part of the Zurna pipe is pierced with 7 to 8 holes and on the opposite side with a single hole, which does not exist in certain regions.

The tapered mouthpiece is called Chanagh.

The conical opening of the pipe is usually contained in a flat ring of metal, often silver (nowadays also plastic) to get a better sound.

In the opening of the pipe we find a small metal tube called Mil or Bbul (the term for nightingale); fixed on its end a small tube of reed held by the thread called Ghamish (or Chibbik, Bibich, Puk, Tzivan according to regions).





A disk helps block lip pressure and better enables the circular breathing characteristic of reed instruments.



Attached to the end of the metal pipe Mil is a double reed Lezvak or Bibich.



Bibich.

The Zurna has a shrill sound. It is suitable for outdoor games, processions, feasts and to accompany dances.

In enclosed spaces and to reduce the strength of the resonance, another mouthpiece made of reed, the Nay, Ney, Nar is sometimes adapted. This produces a softer sound.



Zurna players or Zurnachi often play in pairs, one interpreting the melody, the other holding a drone or Dam, an accompanying note.

A drum, Dhol, also joins with them to form a traditional trio.





Zurnachi of the Dance Ensemble "Sasunik". Village of Ashnak, Talin region. 1957.



Type of long Zurna  
Western Armenia.



Armenian religious procession in Iran. Early 20th century.

In some regions, when a Zurnachi was carried on by inspiration, one had the impression of hearing two Zurna.

The player took the second Ghamish in his mouth with the first one having removed the circle connected by a chain to Mil.

The reed of the second mouthpiece being in his mouth with the first, the second mil was not put into a Zurna. The sounds obtained from the main mouthpiece which played the melody were very shrill.

The sound of the auxiliary mouthpiece was then lower, allowing the Dam or drone.

This way of playing, which has completely been forgotten today, was typical on the older types of instruments.



Popular party to the sounds of Dhol-Zurna.



Ishkhan Martirosian paintings. Yerevan. G. Madilian Collection.





Figure of a flute player.  
Civilization of Lake Sevan,  
late 2nd-early 1st millennium B.C.  
Region of Lake Sevan. Cast bronze.

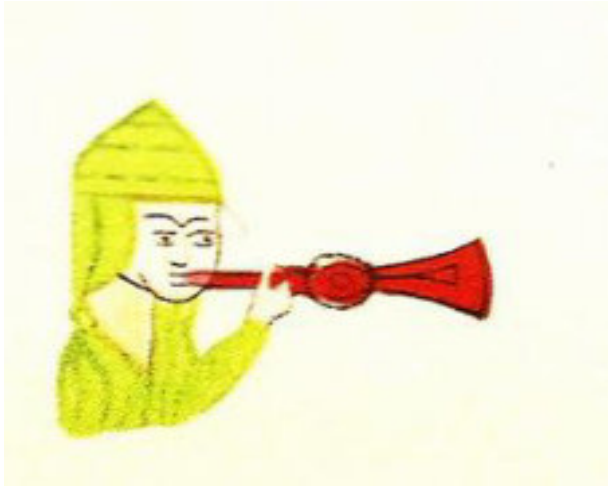
Different types of Zurna.



Philippe Shahbazian collection. Paris.



Gerard Madilian collection. Paris.



In antiquity and the Middle Ages different wind instruments were used in Armenia some of which were prototypes of the Zurna.



Porroza is a prototype of the long Zurna. It is also a bent trumpet of copper.





Konapogh.



Pogh Ieghdjeria, Ieghdjerapogh was a trumpet made of deer horn and served as a hunting horn.

The trumpet made of stag horn was called the Puk (from Persian Pug, a horn used by the dervishes) or also Porru (Persian pori).

Shepor, Shepora or Shipora (from Assyrian Shifora, Persian Shepur, Hebrew shofar) was a conical trumpet with different shapes.

It was used mainly in the country, during war, particularly during important feasts, on boats during the crossing for signals. Each type of signal had a corresponding play and melody.





Nshanapogh (Nshan signal, sign) Poghanshan,  
Pogh Nshanakan or Pogh Azdetsutian (Azdetsutiun, influence)  
was a trumpet used to announce some important event.



Ahaknakoch Shipora was a trumpet sounding the alarm bell to announce plagues.

Haghtutian Pogh, military trumpet, was used to announce victory over the enemy.

Pogh Navuts or Navapogh is a ship trumpet.

Medz Porru is a big trumpet.

Avakapogh or Pogh Nahapetian is a big trumpet, the queen of trumpets or the trumpet of the chief of the elders, of the chief of the clan.

Avakasring is a big blowpipe of the chief or the blowpipe of the chief of the elders, of the chief of the clan.

There was also another form of trumpet called Kavharkan made of clay, whose use we do not know.

Nafir: Trumpet.

Krapogh: a high-pitched, shrill trumpet.

The trumpet player was called Poghahar but also Poghakan, Poghar, Poghakardats. This last word literally means one who sings the trumpet (the verb Kardal originally mean to sing and later to read). Poghakan literally means with a trumpet playing.

Armenians also had bent trumpets. They were mostly in metal, copper or silver.

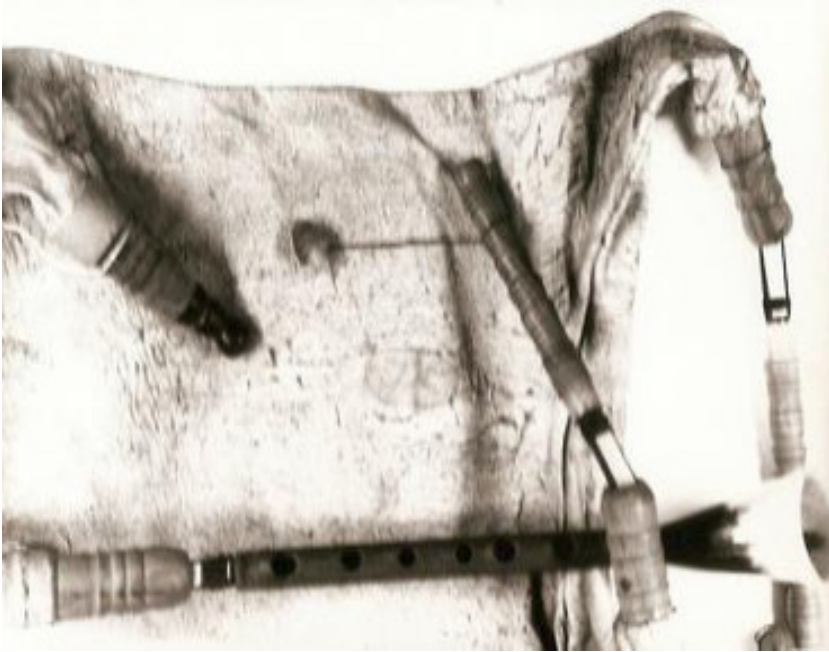


Galarapogh is a bent trumpet.

It was used during times of war, in the field. It had a very high-pitched sound.

In the popular Armenian epic "David of Sasun" it is called Pighlori Pogh.

Verbs Poghel, Poghiergel meant to trumpet: the verb Poghiergel literally meant to sing, dance, accompany by the trumpet.



The bagpipe is generally called Tik or Dik, Dikkar, Dizkai, Parkapzuk, Barkabzuk, Barkabzai, Barbzuk, Barkaboz, depending on the region.

It is made of goat, cow or sheep skin.

Tik blower.



An oral tradition dating back to the 12th century AD tells us that it took three people to play it, one to hold the instrument, the second to blow and the third to play the notes (according to the musician Felix Vardumian. Yerevan).





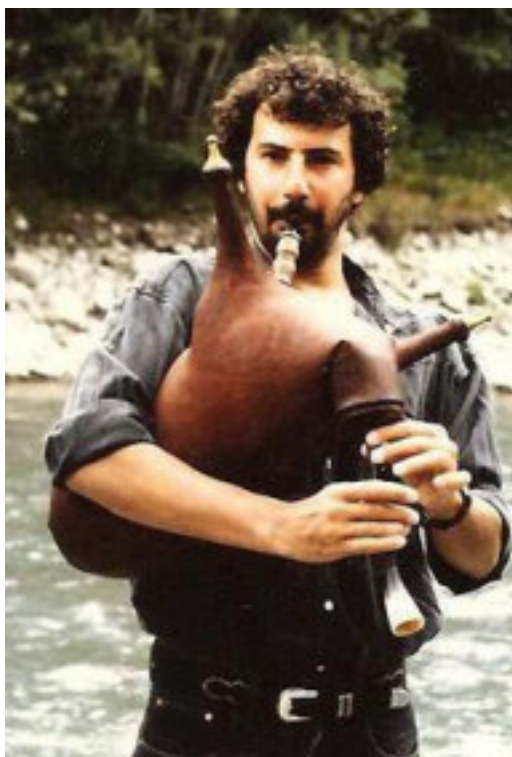
At one edge of the Tik is fixed the chanter, the pipe with holes for the fingers, and on the other end is the blow pipe. By the pressure of the arm on the bagpipe, the player, Parkabzukchi or Boinikchi or Tikzar, plays the melody.



While playing, he often sings long poems making the audience dance. The bagpipe was used more in rural areas than in cities. In the late 19th and early 20th century, people often danced to the sounds of ensembles of musicians "Sazandar" playing stringed instruments.

Bibech is a reed blowpipe made from the bark of a willow branch. After heating the whole bark, four or five holes are made. It was an instrument played by children.

Gayta is a bagpipe for shepherds.



Parkapzuk.  
Philippe Shahbazian. Paris.

Shvi (Shvov or Shhov, dialectal terms) is a shepherd's flute with seven holes made of reed or apricot wood, sometimes also from willow bark drawn in pipe form.



Shvi made of reed of the olden days.



Shvi of apricot wood in the bass register (Tav Shvi) were created in recent decades.



The recorder Tutak is similar to Shvi.

The Sring is a flute without a fipple.

This term was applied to the flutes in general. According to the musicologist Komitas Vardapet, the most authentic traditional instruments that allow to reflect the best the sensitivity of the Armenian people are Sring flutes, of which he had a nice collection.



Played by shepherds, it was also in use in palaces and princely courts.

The Sring player is called Sringahar or Poghahar.

People add to the instrument names words like Atzogh or Chalogh (see chapter on verbs meaning to play music), which gives Sring Atzogh, Sring Chalogh, Pogh Atzogh, Pogh Chalogh, Shvi Atzogh or Chalogh...

That is to say, one who plays the trumpet, whistle, blowpipe...



Philippe Shahbazian collection. Paris.

The old instrument Pku, made of reed, sometimes also of wood, is designed according to the ancient clarinets system that prevailed in many Mediterranean countries.



Philippe Shahbazian collection.

A wooden cylinder covering the reeds enables playing two sounds together.

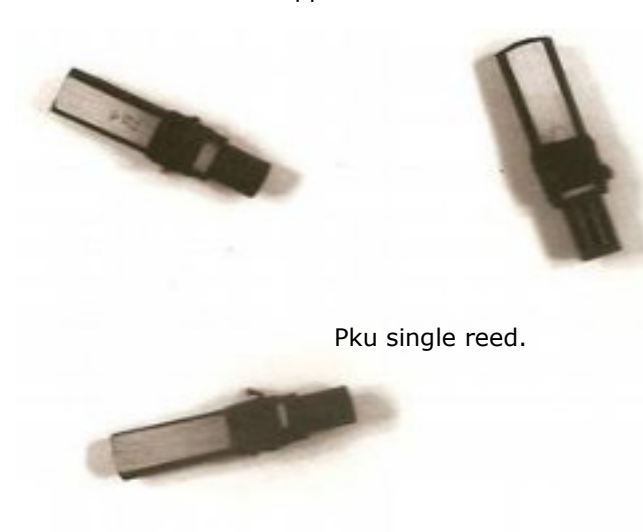
Double Pku.



The recent Pkou is conceived in accordance with the system of clarinets and saxophones, with a single reed separated from the rod on which it is attached.



Philippe Shahbazian collection.



Pkou single reed.





Bass Pku. Philippe Shahbazian. Paris.

Vizuk is a thick reed blowpipe, in willow bark and with a high register.

Torroza is a long thick reed blowpipe of willow bark with a register that is not so high.

Srasring is a form of whistling blowpipe with a very high-pitched sound.



The Gavits Blul is a whistle made of clay, egg-shaped and hollow inside. The wide end of the egg was closed and at the more pointed end, slightly tapered, was located the opening for the air Beran (mouth in Armenian).

At the upper part of the egg, on the left and right in the cross direction, there was a finger aperture and below a hole for the thumb of the right hand. Against the two holes on the top was fixed a small clay figure representing a hen, a little bird or a lamb.



Gavits a regional Blul.

Gavits Blul is also called Sulich, the whistle (from the verb sulel to whistle).

This term designates also a wind instrument with a mouthpiece like the Zurna.

Safara, Sapara, Savarr, Chikhirtma, Chigirdma, Chigirtma, is a small blowpipe as long as a thumb and as wide as a finger, with a hissing sound. It is also called Poghag, small trumpet.

The Susuk is a blowpipe, a whistle with a reed Lezvak.

The small Susuk is taken from a single piece in a willow bark, called Urrenu Patian, willow sheath (from Urreni, weeping willow). There was no hole for the fingers but only one opening on the top for air: it was open at the bottom and gives only one tone.

The great Susuk in willow bark but sometimes also of reed is made from a straight tree branch Chanugh with a soft heart and very malleable. It has 5 or 6 holes for the fingers only on one side.

Shvik is a blowpipe, whistle with a reed without holes for the fingers.

The Yergehon Dzerrin (hand organ) is a portable organ or a Miskhal, a straight pan pipe composed of several reeds in various lengths connected to each other (usually there were seven reeds). Each tube of the pan pipe was called Pok.

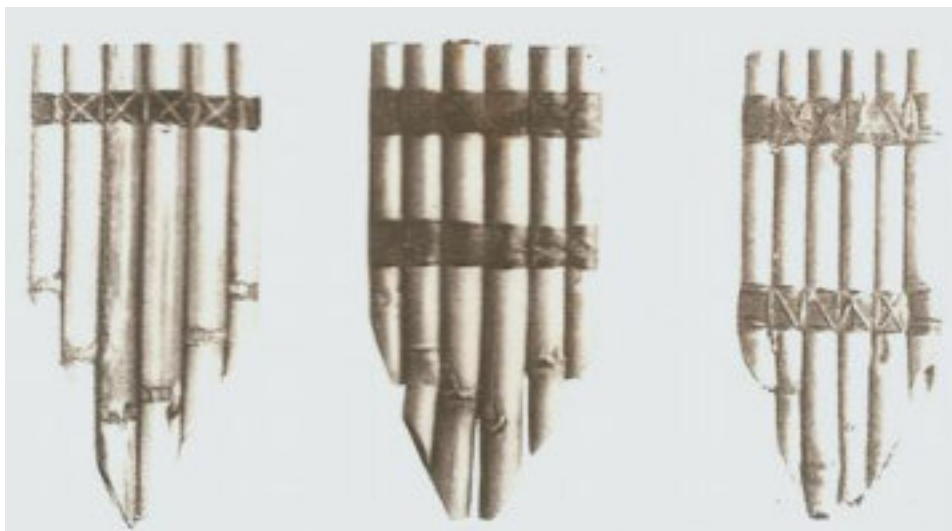
Harmo is a flat pan flute made of reed, wood or iron. The pipes had the same length and thickness. Different reeds were giving a more or less high tone.

All 7 to 8 pipes are met with a 1 cm thick plate of a length and width that could pierce the corresponding number of holes to set the pipes.

The plate was slightly above the center of the pipes and open at the top and the bottom.

Boys and adolescents played and danced together to the sound of the Harmo.

This instrument was replaced by different manufactured instruments.



Harmo from the region of Sevan.

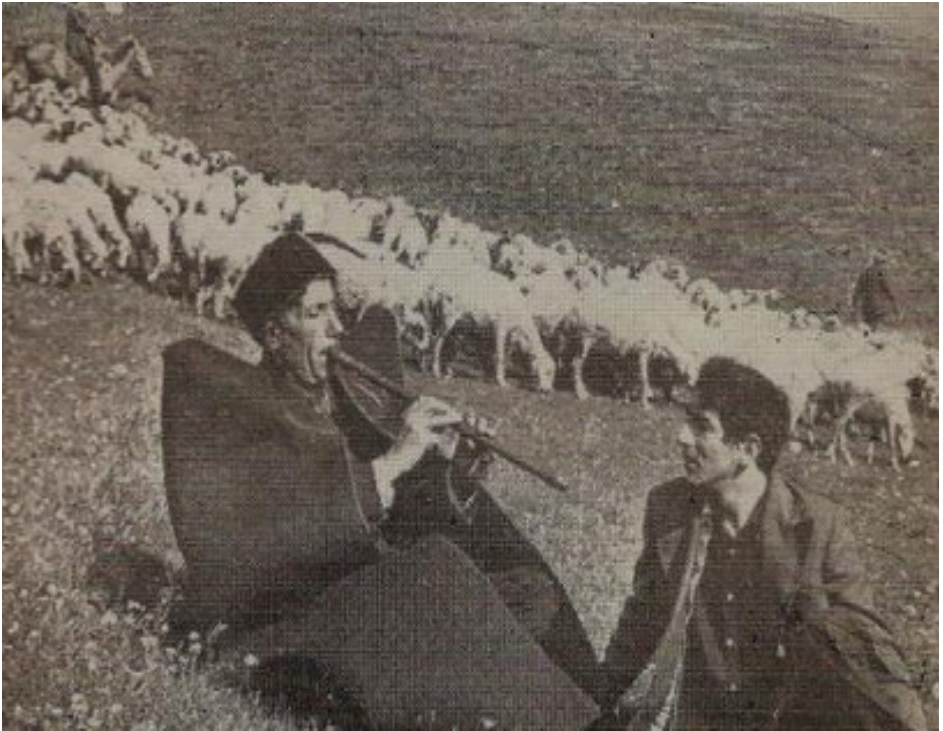


Govt or Batian is the wooden case of the blowpipe.

The Blul is a flute without a fipple made of reed or wood whose timbre is produced by the breath. This is a shepherd's flute with a veiled and captivating sound.



P. Shahbazian collection. Paris.



Shepherd playing Blul. Dilijan region.

The Duduk or Dudug, Tutuk, Dziranapogh (from Dziran the apricot) Glanapogh (Glan the cylinder) belongs to the cylindrical type of oboe family, widespread in Armenia and in the Caucasus in general.



An entire chapter "About the Duduk" is devoted to it hereafter.

The Tutuk is made from a cane Tashegh (unknown term) of willow bark or walnut. It measured twenty centimeters, its thickness being of three centimeters. On the top, there were 6 or 8 holes for the fingers and one for the thumb on the opposite side.

At the level of the Beran, the upper part of the Tutuk, they put a kind of walnut plug, Bipech or Lezvak so that it will not turn out.

The Bipech and the upper part of the Tutuk were planed obliquely towards the opening to a length of two centimeters.

The thickness of Bipech was calculated so that between the plug and the inside of the Tutuk a small gap would remain for the air inlet.

Its players were the Hodagh, cowherd keepers, the Garnaratz, sheep shepherds or others.

Shepherds and other herd guardians did not play Tutuk.

Also called a Tutuk was a child's blowpipe made of a thin rod of the length of an ordinary pencil with a similar wooden Bipech. They were made by the plowmen or Gypsies of the country.

Tulluk was also another regional appellation for Tutuk.



Zurna (of the early 19th century. City of Van).  
Duduk and Shvi, which belonged to the musician Baris Thovmasian  
(soloist in the Song and Dance Ensemble led by Tatul Altunian,  
1960s).





**STRING INSTRUMENTS**



The Tar belongs to the lute family.

It is widespread in Iran, the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

The body of the instrument, called Gush, is carved from mulberry or walnut wood.

This eight shaped body is covered with a fish skin (catfish); on the neck Kot or Tev divided into twenty-three spaces separate by string tied frets (Parda) are stretched three pairs of melodic metal strings (steel, copper, bronze) and five harmonic strings.

On the peg-head Glukh we find large and small tuning pegs Akandj (ear) for tuning the six to eleven strings (six melodic strings and five harmonic).

It is played with the plectrum Zakhme (Persian), Muzrab or Misrap (from Arabic). Harvadzich in Armenian.

The Tar has a range of three and a half octaves.



Tchaloyan collection. Paris.

In Armenian the plectrum is called Kntntots, Ktntots, Ktndots, Aghhnot, Aghnovt.



Aghalar Melik Aghamalian. Tiflis. 1960.  
(The oldest picture of a Tar player).

In a Sazandar ensemble, the Siuni Tar of a smaller size is ordinarily used, while playing the solo part the bigger Tavud Tar is preferred.

Tuning: A E A E bass / C G C / Bb F Bb.

According to Jean During, an orientalist and a musicologist (Traditional music of Azerbaijan and the science of Muqams. Valentin Koerner edition. 1988), the first Tar player in the first half of 19th century in the Caucasus was the Armenian Avak Tarkhanov.

Tarahar

Soghomon  
Seyranian.  
20th century.



The Saz was the favorite lute of Gusan and Ashugh.

In mulberry wood, the body of a Saz, Iran, has the shape of a pear with a wooden soundboard and metal strings, Simer.

It may have four to eight strings and sometimes even up to thirteen.

The plectrum is of pine wood, sometimes made of horn or bone.

The Tezena or Tezen is sometimes called Kntntots as for the Tar.

It is worn on the shoulder with the help of a Gaytan, attached to the arm and body by a belt or a cord.



The word Sazandar -musician- is derived from the name of this instrument.



Small Armenian Saz. Djurra Saz. G. Sourenian collection. Paris.

Tuning: A E A low.

In 1925, Vardan Buni expanded the range of Saz with small Saz Djurra, Chongur, baritone and bass Saz.

The Saz with twelve gut strings, called Baghlama, was played with a triangular feather plectrum, Lezu.





Kinds of Saz.





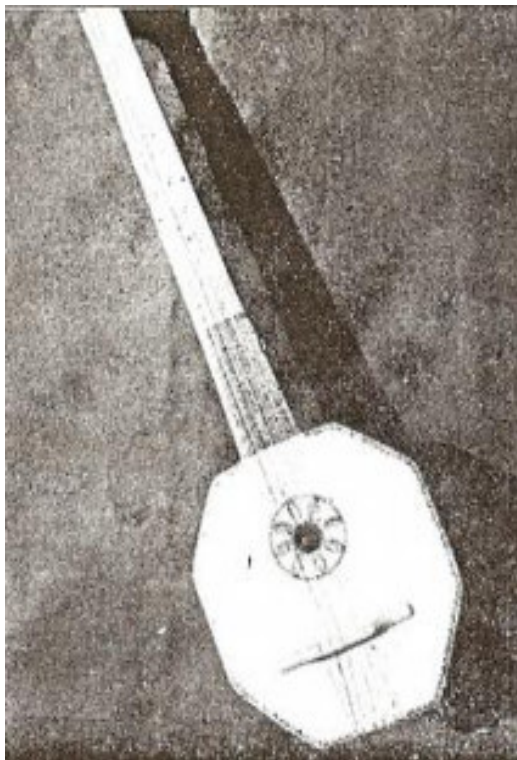
The term Saz, of Persian origin, refers in a broad sense to a family of long or short necked lutes popular throughout Western Asia, Iran, Armenia, Kurdistan, Turkey, Azerbaijan, in Greece and the Balkans.



Sayat Nova Ashughakan Ensemble led by the singer Vagharshak Sahakian. Yerevan. 1960.

The Bulgari, Bulgar is a stringed instrument similar to the Saz.





The Chongur, Changur,

Chingur, Chinku,

Changuir, Chungur,

is an ancient plucked string instrument of the lute family, its body (named Iran) have an octagonal shape.

It is played with a plectrum, Tezen on four metal strings, Simer.

The handle has no frets.

The Chingur, was also a type of violin from the region of Van.



Tuning: E A E A low.

A bowed string instrument with a bow made of horsehair, the Kamancha or Kemanche is a kind of viola with a spherical body, Gush or Por (belly), on which a thin skin is stretched.

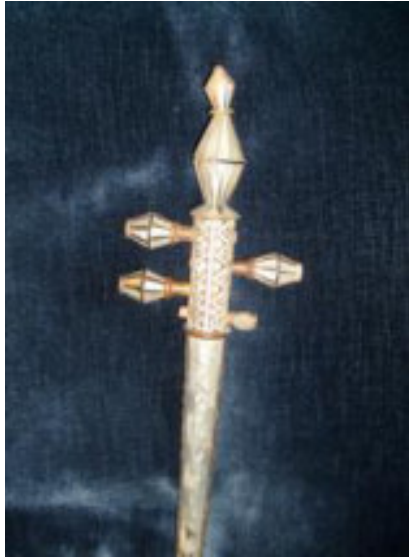
Prevailing in all the South Caucasus, Iran, neighboring countries, Armenia, it has originally two or three gut strings.

To extend the musical register a fourth string was added in the early 20th century by the famous Armenian musician from Tiflis (Georgia) Sasha Oganezashvili (Alexander Ohannesian)

The bow of horsehair is called Aghegh, Iay, sometimes also Tjipot, stick or Net, arrow.

The neck has no frets.

It is held upright by pressing the Yerkat (iron), a round metal bar attached to the base of the body, on the left leg, above the knee.



The Kamancha of the musician Apkar, made by himself in late 19th century. Kazazian collection. Paris.

On this Kamancha designed to be played on three strings, a fourth string was added in the first half of the 20th century.



As a traditional instrument, the Kamancha was frequently represented in the Armenian medieval miniatures on tombstones,

... and especially celebrated in the poem "Kamancha" of Ashugh Sayat Nova (1712-1795).

It is also mentioned in the verses by Ashugh Naghash Hovnatan (1661-1722).



Kamancha presumed to have belonged to the famous Armenian Ashugh Sayat Nova.

18th century.

Art Museum of Yerevan.

In 1920, Vardan Buni broadened its family, creating the alto, bass and double bass Kamancha.

After Sasha Oganezashvili many Kamanchahar distinguished themselves:

Levon Karakhan, Yerem Arustamian, Gurgen Mirzoyan, Vardan Vardanian, Khachatur Nersisian, Norayr Hovhannisian, Mardin Khachatryan, Gevorg Grigorian, Hrachia Muradian-Nikoghosian, Khachatur Shirakian, Vigen Hakobian, Hakob Arabian, Ararat Nazarian, Hrachia Avetisian, Yuri Gabobian, Onik Galstian, Artashes Leyloyan, Norayr Davtian, Vladimir Grigorian, Gagik Muradian, Haykaz Hakobian, Khachik Gasparian, Hakob Khalatian, Gagik Muradian (other than the one mentioned above), Ashot Vardanian, Narine Petrosian, Tigran Hambarian, Vardan Baghdasarian, Mkhitar Ketsian, Rafik Hakobian, Hovhannes Hayrikian, Margarit Shahbazian...



Kamancha with three and four strings.



Used particularly by the Armenians of the Black Sea region who often played while dancing, the Kamani, with originally three or four gut strings, had thereafter until twelve metal strings, six upper strings for melody and six strings below for resonance.

Arzakankadov: it is played by holding it vertically pressing it on the knee.

Played by the Gusan (who also manufactured them from maple or pear) for the upper classes of the society, it was sometimes held as a violin, resting against the shoulder.

Kamani manufacturer.  
Yerevan. 1980.





This ceramic vase, which was discovered in the city of Dvin, a former capital of Armenia, shows a Kamani player, also called Djut or Djutak (small Djut).

The figure represents a Djutak, an Armenian version of the violin.

At the time the vase was discovered, the historian Grigor Narekatsi (Gregory of Narek 950-1003) mentioned the Djutak in his "Book of lamentations."



Ashugh Djivani  
and his Kamani.  
Mid-19th century.

We Call Djutak or Chutag:

-A bowed string instrument representing the advanced stage of the evolution of the Kamani with a lighter appearance.

-An unknown stringed instrument revealed in ancient texts.

-Sometimes, the zither, the guitar, the cymbalum or the modern violin.

This instrument was widely used in the Pontus region, the shores of the Black Sea, and in the Caucasus.

The latter, in fact, is one of the oldest instruments among Armenians with two, three or four strings, and probably dates prior to the 5th century AD.

Different types of Djut were discovered during excavations at Dvin, the capital of Armenia during the 7-9th centuries.

The Djut is greater than a modern violin but smaller than a cello.

A violin from the epic poem "David of Sasun" is called a Shavarr. It was played by holding the instrument vertically supported on the knee.

Shaver or Shaverk is a musical instrument with copper strings that sometimes looks like a small Saz or Kemenche.

The bridge that lies beneath the strings of bowed musical instruments is called the Kherek, or sometimes Teleri adam, string tooth.



Tampura, Dampur, Ampura, Ambura is a bowed instrument with three strings used by the Armenian Gusan, more common in Western than Eastern Armenia.

It was also known in Tiflis in the 18th century thanks to the Ashugh Sayat Nova, who used to play it among other instruments.

It is also known as Tambur or Tambura.

The Armenian Tampura differs essentially from the Persian Tambur, of the lute family.



The different names mentioned were common especially from the late 19th century to the mid 20th century.

The people sometimes gave names that were not directly related to the instruments.

The Kanon, Ganun, Ganon is a plucked stringed instrument, the body of which has a trapezoidal shape.

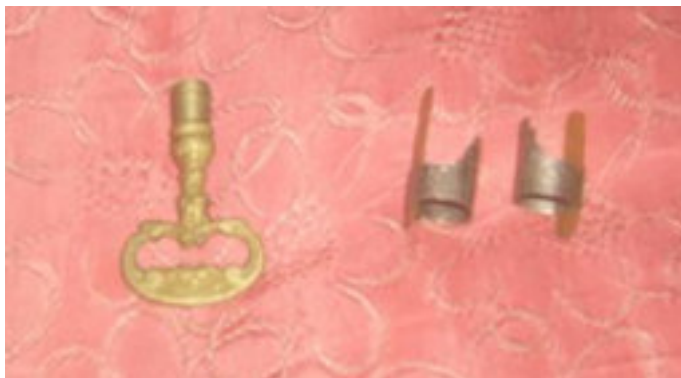
72 to 75 groups of three strings are stretched by wooden tuning pegs over a bridge set on a skin. It is played with Matnots (metal rings set with long, shaped horn picks) fitted on each index.

Each set of triple strings has two Bernak keys that can raise or lower the note one semitone.

Range: three and a half octaves.



Gerard Sourenian collection. Paris.



Banali, tuning wrench. Matnots, rings and horn picks.



Common throughout the Mediterranean basin, the Kanon illustrates many miniatures of the Middle Ages. Until the early 20th century, it was mainly played by men, Zaven Termendjian, Arshavir Ferdjolian, Nshan Hopian, Garegin Khanikian...

The famous Kanonahar and composer Khachatur Avetisian trained a whole succession of woman musicians starting with Angela Atabekian.

Then followed Luisa Sedrakian, Apolia Atabekian, Hasmik Leyloyan, Alvard Mirzoyan, Piruza Karapetian, Karine Hasasian, Anush Kirakosian, Karine Hovhannisian, Azniv Minasian, Anahit Nanagulian, Mariam Khachatrian, Marine Asadurian, Dzovinar Hovhannisian, Tatevik Karapetian, Iskuhi Abadjian, Meri Vardanian, Narine Danielian, Narine Malkhasian, Kanonahar Djivan Mikaelian...

"Knar", the lyre, is the ancient name of Kanon.

The Knar was held horizontally on the knees or on a table, and instead of using a plectrum, it was played by putting the right thumb in a kind of bone thimble.

The Knar lyre has kept this aspect even today. It is likely that the ancient Armenian lyre had the same shape as it is today.

The Davigh or Daugh is a very old kind of a harp with ten gut strings. This is why it was called Tasnaghi (tas means ten in Armenian).

It was played with both hands. The frame of the Davigh was in copper.

The Trigonon, a triangular Davigh might have a Phrygian origin.



This instrument is often mentioned by Armenian historians while describing feasts, processions, dances, songs...



Ancient harps  
also called Davigh

or Chank.



Another form of lyre called Knar.



An ancient  
Knar lyre  
player.



The term Knar is certainly derived from the Assyrian Knara.

With more resonance than the lyre, the instrument consisted of two forked horns with, at the beginning, four then five and finally seven strings: it was played either with fingers or with a small ivory stick the Gavazan.

Different forms of the instrument were widespread in the Mediterranean basin: in Greece, Assyria, among the Hebrews...

It was widely used among Armenians in ancient times and the Middle Ages.

Sometimes a Knarahar musician sings accompanying himself, they are called Knarirrk, Knarierku, Knarierkag, Knarierkogh.

The Chnar is another form of the lyre Knar. The player is called Chnarahar.

We also use this term for the following instruments: Chinar, Gitar, Davigh, Saghmosaran, Bandirrin and bowed and plucked string musical instruments like the Santur, Kamancha, Tampura, Prput, and the Harpa (harp), with gut or metal strings.



Reconstitution of the Chnar instrument with seven strings.

The Santur is similar to the European cymbalum. The hammered string instrument in the shape of an isosceles trapezium Santur, Santurr or Sandur, belongs to the family of Kanon and Knar in their current form.

On the soundboard were stretched up to one hundred and forty five metal strings at a rate of three to five strings by way of a movable bridge, Koch. Bridges alternate from right to left.

The Santur is used in the South Caucasus, Iran and the Middle East.



Akandj tuning pegs are on the right, and are turned with a Banali wrench. The strings are fixed with two thin strips of wood or bone, Dzoghik-ner, Zoghik-ner, Zahmek, Zakhpek.

Before the trapezoidal shape was adopted, it appears that the instrument was triangular in shape.

It is played on the knees or on a table.

The term Santur appeared in the 18th century (played by the Ashugh Sayat Nova).

Santur players, Santurahar, are fewer, the instrument being more specific to rare minstrel ensembles.



Musicians who play the Santur in Armenia:  
David Beglarian, Grigor Voskanian, Samvel Torosian,  
Sarkis Petrosian, Yebraksia Hovhannisian, Aghavni Hovhannisian,  
Hayastan Abrahamian, Kristine Avagian...



The Bandir, Pantirr, Pandirrin is a hammered stringed instrument often mentioned by ancient Armenian writers. It existed in antiquity among Assyrians. The Greeks called it the "Assyrian Pandura".

Armenians inherited this instrument from the Khetes (Hittites), which later on provided a relative of the Saz.

Could it be that the ancient instrument Bambirn is another form of pronouncing Bandir?

This question is still unanswered today.

For some researchers Bambirn referred to cymbals, small saucers attached to the fingers, such as the Tzntzgha, while others view it as a bowed instrument.

Sometimes it also referred to pieces of wood similar to castanets.

Currently in Armenia, the Bambirr is similar to a kind of cello.

Vin is a lute. This name comes from the Sanskrit Vina, Indian for lute.

The Armenian historian of the 5th century Pavstos Buzand reports that the deceased were mourned during dances of sorrow "Poghovk, Bandirrok yev Vinok" that is to say, with trumpets, Bandirr and Vin.



The Ud is an ancestor of the lute, made of walnut or pear tree wood, with six plucked strings of which five are doubled.

Of uncertain origin, it is traced to the 9th century. Also called Lutna (from the Arabic al ud meaning the tree branch).

Pear-shaped, it is played with a plectrum Mzrab or Harvadzich made of eagle feather.

A musical instrument widespread in the Mediterranean basin, the Armenian school of Ud was led in the 20th century by Soghomon Altunian who formed an important line of Udahar:

Stepan Blbulian, Stepan Mamoyan, Karapet Aristakesian, Grigor Altunian, Albert Ghazarian, Sedrak Terterian, Karo Yaylayan, Vahan Avetisian, Mihran Temirchian, Lilith Kotanchian, Karen Avetisian, Markar Hovhannisian, Artur Arakelian, Aramays Nikoghosian, Anush Estik, Lusine Davoyan, Karine Hovsepiyan, Levon Torosian.

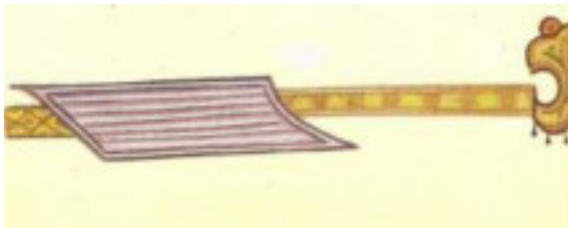








Other stringed instruments.





## RECONSTITUTED INSTRUMENTS IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Some instrument makers make changes to original instruments, thus creating variants and allowing their development.

The names of these prototypes are often inspired by their creator.

Example: Smbadapogh (Pogh name after his manufacturer Smbat) modeled on the former Galarapogh...

Bass, Tenor and Alto Bambir instruments were reconstructed by Mr. Khachatryan on the basis of the old instruments Bambir or Bandir, played by the Gusan.

Currently it is played by some musicians in Armenia:  
-Tigran Hambarian, Gevorg Papikian, Ashot Bazlasanian.

Stvarapogh	Big trumpet.
Poghak	Small trumpet with low and soft sounds.
Reconstituted by Edward Barseghian.	

SASHA OGANEZASHVILI (1899-1942).



On Kamancha.

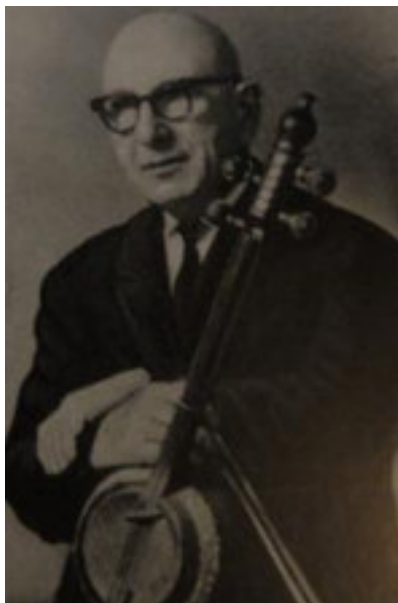


On Kamani.



Kamanchahar  
Levon Karakhan.  
Shushi. 1920.

Tarahar Lazar  
Gabrielian.  
Shushi. 1910.





Kamanchahar Armenak Esriyev.  
Shushi. 1920.



Varpet Stepan Budaghian.  
Tabriz. Iran. 1919.



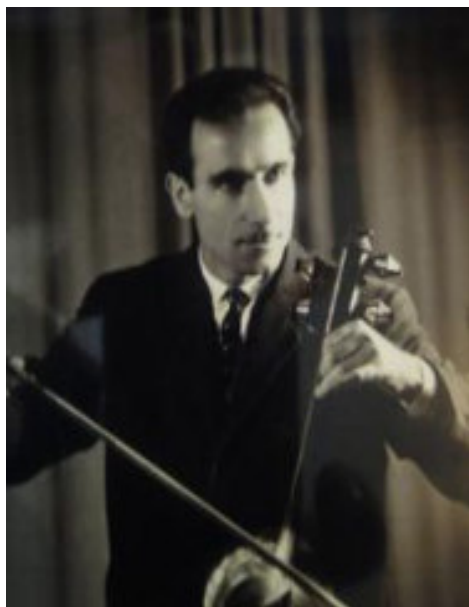


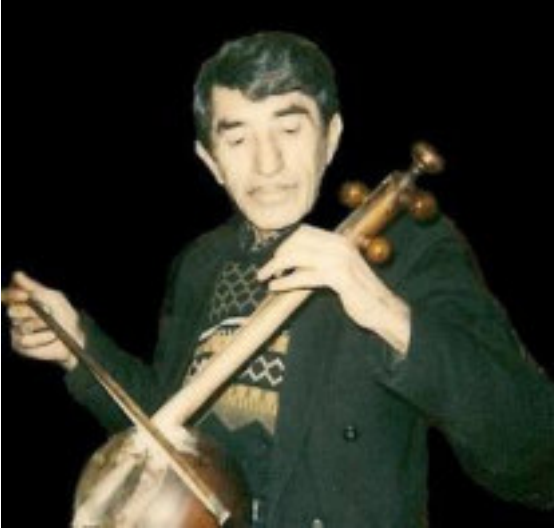
Tarahar  
Lazar Ter  
Vardanesov  
Baku. 1910.



Kamanchahar Hrach Muradian  
Nikoghosian. 1928-2007.

Tarahar Sasha Tarkhanov.  
Shushi. Gharabagh.





Kamanchahar  
Enrik Arustamian.  
1943-2012.  
Stepanakert.  
Gharabagh.

## PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS

The Dhol, Dol, Dhl, Dahol, Tavul, Davul

is a double skin drum stretched on a cylindrical body.





Played with the fingers.

Ara Madilian. Paris.



With both hands.

Hrach Apkarian.  
Yerevan.



With  
drumsticks.



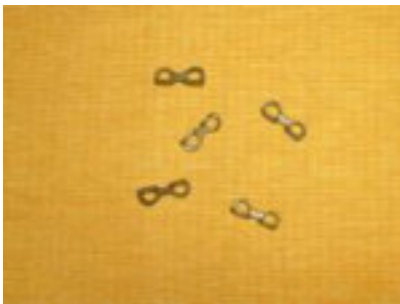
The Dhol has different  
sound possibilities.





The Dhol cylinder was called Khemk or Ghasnakh,  
the body Khazina, the skin head Parda or Farda,  
the iron circle Halgha or Djambar,  
the thick drum stick Kopal was also named Gmpich, Dmpich,  
Chomakh, Tokhmakh,  
the thin rod Tjipot, Chipukh, Chalik.

The skins are sewn on the edge  
of the iron ring and stretched by a  
thin rope threaded in metal hooks.



Kopal,  
thick  
drumsticks.



Tjipot  
thin rod.

The Dholchi, Dolchi, Davulchi, Dhlchi,  
is also commonly called the Tmbkahar  
(tambourine, Tmbuk, drum player).

It is currently the main percussion instrument in traditional musical  
bands.





At left, an Armenian Dhol player. The thick stick Kopal hits the upper skin, the lower skin being struck by the thin stick Tjipot.

At right, North Caucasus Dol players. The upper skin is struck with the two sticks just as for a drum.  
Early 20th century.

The Dap, Daf, Def, Dep or Ghaval is a tambourine with an open body, the inside of which is set with metal washers Zil.

It was more frequently used in the past than it is today.



Dap decorated with mother of pearl ornaments.  
G. Madilian collection. Paris.



A Dap covered with catfish skin.  
G. Sourenian collection. Paris.



Dap Chkhchkhkan with cymbals.

The Dapchi, Dafchi, Depchi, Defchi or Ghavalchi, mostly accompanied ensembles led by Gusan.



Jora Ghazarian. Dap player. Tkzar ensemble. Yerevan. 1990.



Dap player.  
Vladimir  
Yegorian.

1950.  
Yerevan.

Internal metal parts.



The Diplipito or Dimplipito is a percussion instrument made of several clay pots beaten with sticks. It accompanied Sazandar ensembles.

This instrument was also called Naghara. It is no longer in use today.

The musician was called the Nagharchi.





Naghara.

We also find in the percussion family, ritual objects made of metal which were once used in processions or pilgrimages to ward off evil spirits.

The Kshots is a metal disk decorated with angels and cherubs with sleigh bells, Bojojner, attached to the ends. It is used in religious ceremonies.





The Tzntzagh, Tzntzgha are cymbals in copper or silver that are held in each hand. Nowadays they are used in classical music orchestras.

Various forms of cymbals existed in the past, different from each other by their size.



Until the beginning of the 20th century, when Armenian dancers performed solo or duo dances, they would sometimes fix small metal cymbals on their index and middle fingers, Ziler or Zilpara, Chalpara.



Two pairs of small sticks, a kind of small castanets that some have associated with the expression Bambir, were also in use.



## SPECIFICITY OF ARMENIAN RHYTHMS

"When the Dhol sounds, it's the land of Armenia that speaks..."

Rhythm is the foundation upon which the poetic verses are built; the rhythmic constructions vary from one region to another.

Armenian folk rhythm reveals its specificity through syncopated time and the moving of strong accents on weak beats.

Avedis Messoumentz, the Armenian composer (1905-1981, Paris), speaks about changing pillars of rhythms (according to Gerard Sourenian his musical student), repeating themselves but not being strictly identical.

Rhythmic accents move constantly in the repetition of beats.

This trend is characteristic of the mountainous regions of Eastern Armenia (the actual country), the rhythms of Western Armenia (historical Armenia) being similar of those of Asia Minor in general.

There was a specific language for percussionists to designate different rhythmic movements:

- Silla or Chapalakh (dialect expression meaning slap) when the palm hits the skin.
- Usul for rhythm (term of Arabic origin).
- Tak Silla for a single hit and Tjurkhd for a double hit.
- Tars (in reverse) and Shitak (straight) for the syncopated hits.
- Tzaghik for a melismatic or melodic interpretation.
- Mat (finger) for snaps with fingers.
- Chertik for a fingers playing.

The sounds were transcribed as follows:

Tum, Tak Taka, Taka-Taka, on the center of the skin or Boom and Bak Bakko, Baka on the edges...

With regard to the rules that govern the traditional rhythm, the musician Tampuri Arutin (who lived in the 18th century in Constantinople) wrote a manuscript which is preciously kept in the National Library of Armenia and published by musicologist Nikoghos Tahmizian.

The cultural identity of Armenia developed and fortified throughout the 20th century, percussion players having expanded and enriched their techniques, which suggests more complex rhythmic patterns than the original ones.

Traditional dance tunes, once played on the Zurna and accompanied by the Dhol played with sticks Gopal and Tjipot, are nowadays hit by both hands or by fingers, which allows the musician more space for his creativity.

Just like the musician playing the melody, the Dholchi improvises sometimes his beat, giving free rein to accents according to his spontaneity.

In the Armenian sensitivity, rhythms are especially hammered for dance tunes. They highlight and accentuate popular movements and behavior.

The circle dances of the Lori region, said "Lorva Giond", are performed on hammered and syncopated rhythms with very local colors.

To give a lighter aspect to binary and ternary rhythms the Dap was more often used, its open body vibrating less powerfully.

Rhythms with a 6/8 beat are basic among Armenian people; musical similarities can be found from the east to the west of the Armenian plateau and also differences of interpretation that sometimes demonstrate a mountaineer's temperament with syncopated accents in Eastern Armenia, sometimes more tempered in the plains or the towns of Western Armenia.

The ancient dance "Ververi" of the plain of Ararat, with the hammered accents of the Dhol accompanying the Zurna, becomes "Bar Verver" in the Erzurum region (further west) with a simplified rhythm, the 6/8 beat becoming a 3/4.

The rhythmic structures used among Armenians may evolve into complexities that are difficult to approach for Western musicians, as local cultures transmitted for so many centuries have forged a very specific identity.

The rhythms commonly used are:

2/4 and 4/4 simple binary rhythms.

3/4 and 6/8 simple and composed ternary rhythms.

5/8, 7/8, 9/8, 10/8, 12/8 composed rhythms.

These particularities are rare nowadays, where compositions tend to be based on "classical" patterns with well shaped structures; this "old stuff" made up the charm of the traditional music a few decades ago.

Usually in the West, the strong beats are on the first beat of the rhythms and the weak beats follow, while in the "Armenian rhythms" we can place strong beats at any time to constantly stimulate musical motivation and bring nuances.



**CLASSIFICATION BY CATEGORIES OF INSTRUMENTS**



## WIND INSTRUMENTS

AHAKNAPOGH, AHAKNAKOCH SHIPORA	Trumpet announcing plagues, alarm bell.
AVAKAPOGH, POGH NAHAPETAKAN	Chieftan's trumpet.
AVAKASRING	Chieftan's big blowpipe.
BIPECH	Reed blowpipe.
BLUL, PLUL	Flute without fipple.
CHOBANI POGH	Shepherd's flute.
CHOBANI SRING	Shepherd's flute.
DLUL	Other name for a Blul.
DUDUK, DUDUG, DÜDÜG	Traditional Oboe.
GALARAPOGH	War curved, bent trumpet.
GAYTA	Bagpipe.
GHAMISHI POGH	Used to design a flute or a pipe made of reed.
GHAVAL, KHAVAL	Long flute without fipple.
HAGHTUTIAN POGH	Military trumpet of victory.
HARMO	Kind of pan-pipe with a reed system.
HOBELINI POGH, HOBELIAN POGH, HOBELIANI POGH	Big trumpet for sacred feasts.
HOVVAKAN SRING	Shepherd's flute.
KAVHARKAN	Queen of trumpets.
KAVITS BLUL, GAVITS BLUL	Ocarina.
KRAPOGH	Shrill Trumpet.

NAY, NEY, NAR	Flute made of reed.
NAY	Sometimes used for Duduk.
NAPIR, NAFIR, NAFIRA	Trumpet.
NAVAPOGH	Ship Trumpet.
NSHANAPOGH, POGHANSHAN, POGHANSHANAGAN, POGH AZDETSUTIAN	Signals giving trumpet.
NVIRAKAN POGH	Trumpet for prayers.
PGLORI POGH	Unidentified trumpet.
PKU, BKU, PPUK	Single reed instrument.
POGH	Trumpet, also used for flute, pipe, blowpipe.
POGH NAVUTS	Trumpet for boats.
PORROZA	Angled trumpet, bass Zurna.
PUK	Mouth piece.
PZUK, PARKAPZUK, BARGABZUK, PARAKAPZUK, PARKAPZU, PARKABOZ	Bagpipe.
RAZMAKAN POGH	War trumpet.
SAFARA, SAPARA, SAVARR, CHIKHIRTMA	Small whistling blowpipe.
SHEPOR, SHEPORA, SHIPORA	Trumpet of war and military campaigns.
SHVI, SHVOV, SHHU	Recorder.
SHVI, SHVU, SHHU, SHVIK	Blowpipe, reed whistle.
SRASRING	Chief big blowpipe.
SRING, SRINK	Flute without fipple.
STVARAPOGH	Unidentified Trumpet.
SUSUK	Blowpipe, reed whistle.



TIK, DIK, TKZARG	Other name for Parkapzuk.
TORROZA	Reed blowpipe.
TUTAK, TUTAG	Recorder, blowpipe, piccolo.
TUTUK, TULLUK	Child's blowpipe.
VICHABAKGLUKH POGH	Dragon headed trumpet.
VIZUK	Reed blowpipe.
VORSORTAKAN POGH	Hunting trumpet.
YEGHEKNAPOGH	Trumpet made of reed.
YERGHCHRAPOGH, EGHCHERIA POGH	hunting trumpet.
YEGHCHIUR	Kind of trumpet.
YERKEHON DZERRI, ARMONIK	Hand organ.
YERKPOGH	Trumpet with two pipes.
ZURRNA, ZURRN	Oboe, kind of bombard with a shrill sound.

## STRING INSTRUMENTS

BAGHLAMA	Lute identical to Saz.
BAMBIRR, BAMBIRRI, BAMBIURRI, PAMBIURRI, PAMBIRRI, BANDIRRI, BANDIRR, PANDIRR, PANTIRR	Kind of lute.
BARPUT, PARPUT, PRPUT	Barbiton.
BULGHARI, BULKARI, BULKAR	Lute identical to Saz.
CHAGANA	Kind of viola.
CHAMAR	Kind of lyre.
CHANG, DJANG	Harp.
CHANUR, CHIANUR, CHNKL, CHINGUR	Other name for a violin.
CHONGUR, CHANKURRI, CHNKUR, CHNGUR, CHANKIR	Lute.
DARABULA	Lute.
DAVIGH, TAVIGH, TAVUGH	Lyre.
DJUTAG, CHUTAG	Kind of violin.
GHAMISHE SAZ	Saz made of reed.
HARBA, HARPA	Harp.
KAMANI, KEMANI, KIAMANI	Reversed violin.
KAMANCHA, KAMANCHE, KAMANCH, KEMENCHE, KEMENCH	Kind of viola.
KANON, GANON, GHANON, GHANUN	Zither.
KNAR	Lyre.
SANTUR, SANDUR	Kind of cymbalum.
SHASHTA	Presumed to be a six-stringed lute.

SHAVARR, SHAVER, SHAVARRNE	Violin, sometimes a kind of blowpipe made of reed, some kind of Saz or Kamancha.
TAMPURRA, DAMPURR, AMPURRA, AMBURRA, TAMBURR	Bowed lute.
TAR	Kind of lute.
SIUNI TAR	Small Tar.
TAVUD TAR	Big Tar.
TASNAGHI	Ten stringed harp.
UD	Oriental lute.
VIN, VUN	Lute.

## PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS

DAP, DUP, DEP, DAHIRA, DAYRA, GHAVAL, DEPT, DÜP, DABA	Open bodied tambourine.
DHOL, DAHOL, DHL, DOL, DAVUL, TAVUL, DUFUL	Drum.
DIPLIPITO, DIMPLIPITO, DIMPILIPITO, TIMBLIPITO	Other names for the Naghara.
GOS, GURSH, ARABAN	Big drum.
KSHOTZ, KSHOTZK, KSHOTZANI, KHSHOTZ	Kind of sistrum.
KOSS, KOSK, KOSSER, KEOSS, KIOZ, KOZ	Drum made of clay.
KOCHNAK	Bell.
NAGHARA, NAGARA, NAGAR	Two drums made of clay.
TMBUK, TMPUG, TMPUK, SHMBEK, DMPLIK, TMPEK, TMPKI	Drum.
TZNTZAGH, TZNTZGHAH, TZNTAGH	Cymbals.
ZANGAK	Bell.
ZIL, ZILPARA, CHALPARA, CHALPALA	Small cymbals, rattles.

## **MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OF ARMENIA FROM THE 12TH TO THE 16TH CENTURY**

As reported by the international symposium on Armenian art in Yerevan 1978 by Grigor Garakhanian of the Art Institute of the Academy of Sciences of Armenia.

On Khachkar (carved cross-shaped rock or stone blocks) and tombstones dating from the 12th to the 16th centuries, we find scenes depicting hunting, agricultural and trade activities, wedding ceremonies, musicians, musical instruments, various clothing and other attributes of everyday life.

Musical instruments are depicted in domestic sculptures, mainly in scenes of festivities or wedding ceremonies.

The musicians were so popular that in the list of the most important jobs, they occupied second place.

Music always accompanied people. The traditional religious feasts and daily ceremonies were always accompanied by song and music.

In ancient Armenia, there were national singers, the Gusan who sang epic and folk melodies with instrumental accompaniment. Their art lay in their capacity of synthesizing words, song and accompaniment.

Obviously in the 10th century, Arab historian Abu Dulaf knew this when he wrote:

"Their voices while reciting the gospel and the rhythm of these tunes are more pleasant and clearer than the voices of other Christians. Their singing is more like a lament and is inclined by its nature to bear more pain and groan than the weeping over the graves practiced by the Arabs, and their spiritual songs are more pleasant to the ear of a sensitive and susceptible man as joy and happiness spring from their repeated song.

And it is certain that the level (height) of their song and of accompaniment is nice and fair."

Artistic education, methods and techniques to acquire skill in playing musical instruments were widely practiced.

In the 8th century, the sister of the bishop Stepanos Siunetsi,

Sahakdukht, was renowned. She composed melodies and taught singing art.

In one of the manuscripts of the National Library of Armenia "Madenataran" (N° 2595), we find information about the life of professional musicians; at that time music was frequently learned.

Among them were women musicians, playing tambourine and other instruments.

Various instruments have been identified in illuminated manuscripts. They can be divided into three categories: percussion, wind and string instruments.

In sculptures, we see very often an instrument similar to the Dap, with a plate fitted with a metal ring.

Another musical instrument can be seen on a rock, richly decorated by Zuchi, a 16th century sculptor.

The sculpture depicts a wedding scene in the following order:

-In the first row, there is a trumpet with another curved kind of trumpet Galarapogh; behind him stands the drummer in a draped dress.

-In the last row; there is a player with a zither Kanon on his lap.

Beside him, there is another sculpture: a bride and a husband on horseback in the foreground, then musicians following, a wind instrument player and a percussionist with their instruments.

Among the instruments carved on these stones, there is a Bambir (a bowed string instrument), several Dap and the trumpet.

The oldest description of a Dap is in a manuscript by Kilik of 1286.

Medieval historians mention the big drum known as Gursh, Gos or Araban.

Among the members of the musical ensemble, a percussionist is mentioned in the Pavstos Buzand ensemble.

Very often there is mention of percussionists in the writings of medieval historians, artistic and cultural writers like Movses Khorenatsi, Movses Kagantavetsi, Grigor Narekatsi, Grigor Magistros, Konstantine Erznkatsi, Mekhitar of Her, Sarkis Shnorhali, Vardan of Bartzrberd, Grigor Tatevatsi...

The 10th century writer Grigor Narekatsi tells the story of a woman percussionist and dancer. The description of a kettledrum like "the Urart" was found in a manuscript of 1462.

Kettledrums are mentioned by Armenian writers of the Middle Ages, David Anghaght, Grigor Narekatsi, Grigor Kandzagetsi, Grigor Tatevatsi and in the fables of Vardan Ayketsi preserved in the manuscripts of the National Library Madenataran of Yerevan.

In the illuminations, we see kinds of castanets that dancers hold in their hands during the dance and that are used to accentuate the rhythm of the melody. A description of these "castanets" was found in a manuscript of 1320 illustrated by the famous artist Sarkis Pitzak.

In the monuments belonging to Armenian culture as well as in miniatures, wind instruments are also frequently reported.

We find the single reed blowpipe Pku, the double reed Duduk, the horn, the curved trumpet Galarapogh, the Zurna and the bagpipe Parkapzuk.

Near the fourth tower of the Garni fortress, a Pogh made of a shinbone of a huge bird was discovered in an antique room.

Descriptions of pastoral double reed blowpipes of the same type are not uncommon in Armenian miniatures.

A similar specimen was found in Garni in 1955.

This last one is identical to the double reed blowpipe discovered in 1949, mentioned several times by Pavstos Buzand, Vardan of Bartzrberd, Grigor Tatevatsi and also other writers of the 5th and 14th centuries.

The oldest representation of the blowpipe in medieval miniatures dates back to 1304.

Among the wind instruments, the Pogh (horn made of reed) represented in the cave of Geghard temple dating from the 13th century, is of great interest.

Agatangeghos and other writers of the 5th century and the following centuries mention the "pipe-horns".

The trumpet is the most popular of wind instruments.

A specimen of that type was found during excavations of a cemetery dating back to the Bronze Age in the village of Sevak near the shores of Lake Sevan.

Describing the funeral of King Artashes, the historian of the 5th century Movses Khorenatsi informs us that among the wind instruments there were also copper trumpets.

This trumpet was a wind instrument used not only by "military bands" but also for funeral ceremonies or for festivities.

The description of the great religious writer of the 12th century Vanakan Vardapet tells us that every year, on the day of Navasart (The New Year of ancient Armenians was celebrated on the month of Navasart, August), they used trumpets to announce the new year.

The report of the 7th century historian Sebeos attests the existence of a trumpet for a forth voice.

The two double reed aerophones are described in detail in the works of thinkers of the 13th and 14th centuries like John of Voloten and Grigor Tatevatsi.

Among the types of instruments mentioned by Yeghishe, Thomas Ardzruni, Grigor Narekatsi, Mathevos Urkhaetsi, Stepan Orbelian, Shabuh Bagratuni and other authors, we find the Pogh (horn) and Galarapogh.

Wind instruments have been found on the memorial monuments.

A stone sculpture of the 15th century in the village of Tsakhgunk in the Sevan area is very interesting; it represents jugs, cups and a shepherd holding his flute in his hand. Near his feet there are goats.

The Saz, the Kanon and the Galarapogh are also depicted in another sculpture of the 15th century in the village of Arinj in the province of Kotayk (Abovian district).

Various movements can be seen on instruments and there are also some descriptions of everyday life with musicians; a musician playing Kanon sits near the trumpeter who stands on his knees and next to the latter there is an other musician playing Saz.

Another sculpture from the same area (village) shows a double horn (Yerkpogh).

Such instruments are found in all the sculptures of monuments of the Sevan basin.



On one of the sculptures of the village of Hatsarat in the Gegharkunik region, the following musical ensemble is described: a Saz, a flute made of reed, a Kamancha, a Kanon, a Galarapogh, a trumpet and a percussion instrument with a metallic ring of coins.

Another sculpture in the village of Astgadzor, not very far from the shores of Lake Sevan, includes a flute and a trumpet. This sculpture showing pastoral life is unique in its kind. Towards the north face of the sculpture, you see sheep. On the upper part, a trumpet made of reed and a shepherd's crook are represented.

On tomb sculptures and on "stone crosses" Khachkar, string instruments also commonly appear.

The representation of one of the oldest string instruments in Armenia, dating from the first century BC, was discovered in excavations of the city of Ardashad, on a terra cotta statue, preserved in fragments.

It shows a musician with a lute. He holds the lute with the bottom of its body pointing down.

The bottom of the body of the instrument should be pointed out (on the side) and Armenian poets and scholars of the 10th century mention a violin.

In addition, a stained glass depicting a musician playing violin was found in Dvin.

To study string instruments, the Khachkar of Paravadzor square in Siunik province deserves very particular attention.

Today it remains only the bottom part of the stone. The left side shows a Gusan with a Bambir lute.

The particular way of holding the string instrument is popular in the practice of traditional music. He takes the instrument on one of his feet; a ribbon is attached to the instrument to allow to be carried on shoulders. On the right side we see the date 1221. It is proved that the Khachkar was erected in memory of a famous musician Gusan.

Another Khachkar from the 13th century is also interesting; it shows a woman with a stringed instrument resembling a violin on her

shoulders, the instrument rests on her right shoulder and the bow in her left hand. Such a difference between the modern and traditional position can be explained by an improper installation of the stencil. The inscription on the stone informs that it was erected in 1194 by the son of Ableg Vasak in memory of his brother.

The representation of the string instruments, Bambir and violin on Khachkar gives an indication of the degree of popularity in medieval Armenian life.

One of the earliest depictions of a lute in miniatures was found in a manuscript of 1221.

The musician, shown sitting on a cushion, touches with his left hand the strings that are slightly visible on the neck of the instrument. Finger movement creating the melody is shown in detail.

The Saz is one of the oldest string instruments played by the Gusan. Among the sculptures representing a Saz, there is a tombstone of the 16th century from an old establishment near the village of Geghovit. According to the inscription on the stone, this sculpture dates from 1550.

In the foreground, a pear-shaped ornament is engraved with plants. A little further a musician is shown with his Saz, a three edged hat and an elegant pleated and draped dress. A horse is represented behind him.

A Saz was found on a tombstone in the village Eranos near Kamo (Sevan region).

The circumstances depicted on this stone are that of a dance scene. In the foreground is a figure holding an indecisive bow. A musician who plays the Saz stands near this scene. Behind him, there are three dancers, one of which carries a jug. A Kamancha is represented not very far. It is less frequent to find it on daily sculptures than in miniatures.

We found an interesting representation on a memorial stone in the village of Nerkin Getashen where, in addition to a Kanon and a Saz, a Kamancha and its bow are represented.

A horn is shown near the Kamancha.

In the background, we see a knight playing Saz.

Then between two musicians, we see another character; below him, a musician plays Kanon.

One of the most popular instruments in the Middle Ages was the Kanon.

It is represented in nearly a hundred copies in the sculptures, but we do not see much of it in miniatures.

Armenian writers of the Middle Ages mention Vin and Chnar string instruments, beside violin and lute Bambir.

Documentary sources, miniatures, sculptures and archaeological finds greatly enrich our knowledge about the various wind, string and percussion instruments.

This rich material not only gives us an introduction to the history of each instrument, but also helps us to make a more general study of the culture of the Armenian Middle Ages.

## COMPARISON WITH SOME MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS FROM THE REGION

We will mention here, for example, a few names of familiar musical instruments of the other peoples of the region, Egyptian, Greek, Assyrian-Chaldean, Hebrew, Persian, Turkish, Georgian.

### **Egyptian:**

Iarghul.



Ud,



**Greek:**

**Wind:**

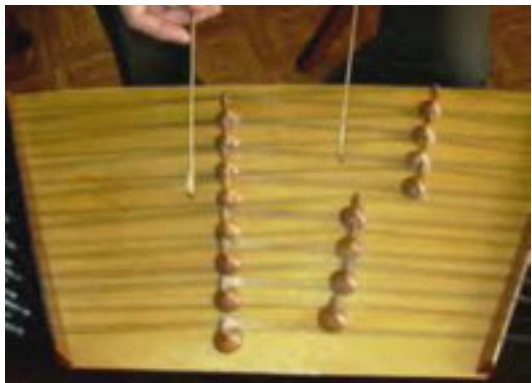
Aulos, Salpinx, Floyera, Suravli, Tzamara, Pipiza, Gayda, Tsambuna, Nunura, Klarino, Madura Lalitsa, Nerosfyrishtra, Aydhonaki, Kukkos, Vukino, Zurna.

**String:**

Baglama, Tambura, Lauto, Sazi, Uti, Kanonaki, Kemenzes, Kemanes,



Lyre,



Sanduri,



Buzuki.

Percussion:

Tarabuka, Tumbleki, Dauli, Defi, Zilia, Tubaki, Ghughura.

**Assyro-chaldean:**

Wind:

Simple and double Aulos, Hydraule organ.

String:

Lyre, Harp, Zither, Psalterion, Lute, Trigone.

Percussion:

Cymbals, Balag drum, Sistrum.

**Hebrew:**

Wind:

Ugab, Syrinx, double Aulos, Halil, Keren, Shofar, Hacocereth, Hugah.

String:

Nebel, Kinnor, lyre, Zither, Psalterion, Harp, Hasur, Ugab, Cabbeka.

Percussion:

Dof Tambourine, Cymbals, Tuph, Zalzelim.

**Persian:**

Wind:

Kerna, Zorna, Nay, Nafir,

Sentur.



String:

Tar, Saz, Dotar, Setar, Kemancha, Cheng, Sentur, Ud, Ganon, Rud, Robab, Rumuz.

Percussion:

Dayra, Deff, Zerb, Dohol, Tabl, Nagara Diulul.

**Turkish:**

Wind:

Bozuk,



Zurna,

Nay.



String:

Saz, Tambura, Ud, Kopuz, Baglama, Chevgen, Djura, Chigirtma, Tesht, Kemenche, Kaval,



Kanun.

Percussion:

Davul, Dumbelek, Def, Darbuka.

**Georgian:**

Wind:

Salamuri,



Duduki,

Zurna, Gudastviri, Chiponi, Buki, Buzika, Tsiko-Tsiko, Stviri, Sankeri, Pilili, Larshemi-Soynari.



String:

Panduri, Chonguri,



Bobghani, Knari, Changi, Abkhartsa,

Shianuri.



Percussion:

Doli, Dalabandi, Ghavali, Dambla.

## THE TRADITIONAL INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLES

Since the late 19th century and during the 20th century, traditional musical village ensembles from the regions of the Ararat plain, Shirak, Lori, Tiflis in Georgia, the west of the plain of Ararat and southern Armenia, were constituted as follows:

- Two Duduk-one Dhol.
- Two Duduk-one Dap.
- Two Zurna, one or two Dhol.
- Zurna-Duduk-Dhol.
- Parkapzuk-Dap.
- Parkapzuk, one or two Dhol.
- Zurna-Naghara.
- Tar-Kamancha-Dap.
- Tar-Kamancha-Dap-Naghara.



In the other regions musicians gathered in different formations:

- Duduk-Saz-Dhol (Shamshadin region).
- Two Duduk-Saz.
- Duduk-Shvi-Dhol.
- Duduk-Shvi-Saz.
- Zurna-two Duduk-Dhol (Javakhk, Ghushch).
- Duduk-Violin-Dap or Dhol (Javakhk, Akhalkalak).
- Duduk-Tar-Dap or Dhol.



We know that the Dhol-Zurna (or Davul-Zurna) duo was common throughout the country as well as traditional groups accompanying especially the singers.

In Western Armenia, ensembles were mainly constituted of string instruments, Ud, Kanon, Kemenche, often accompanied by the Naghara, sometimes by flutes, Blul...

In the past, the poet-singers Ashugh and Gusan accompanied themselves to the sound of string instruments, Saz, Tar, Kamancha, Santur, Tambur, Chongur, Bandir, Kamani, and percussion Dap.

It was after 1920 (Sovietization of the country) that they began to create large ensembles of traditional music by incorporating various wind, string and percussion instruments.

To form a large ensemble with balanced sounds, two major challenges had to be overcome:

- The tuning and harmony of all the instruments.
- The choice of wind and string instruments, the percussions Dhol and Dap finding their natural place.

Because of its shrill and nasal sounds, the Zurna, usually playing the rhythmical dance tunes, could not find its place in the instrumental ensemble.

So the Duduk and Tutak (or Shvi) which were not originally tuned to concert pitch, the note A, were integrated.

The Duduk and Zurna were originally tuned on the B note (the highest note of the register).

Musicians and instrument makers produced Duduk in A and D registers, as well as Tutak (or Shvi) in different tones (D, B flat, which were inexistent before).

As we have mentioned above, it is to Vardan Buni (Buniatian) in the years 1925-1927, that we owe these Duduk tuned for the ensemble, including baritone and bass registers (called then "Buniphones"), and the Tar family by introducing a first (arrachin), a piccolo, a baritone and a bass; in 1945, he made the Kamancha family tuned as alto, low and bass.

In the spirit of enriching the components of the traditional ensemble, the creation of these new instruments posed other problems of resonance, the sounds of some of them not naturally harmonizing together.

For example, it is more pleasant to hear a Saz, a Kanon and an Ud playing together without the Tar, due to its strong metallic sounds that largely cover those of the other instruments.

The Tar and the Kamancha fit more with a Santur, less with an Ud or a Kanon.

The first big ensembles had many musical instruments such as: Duduk, Shvi, Tavud Tar (bass Tar), Siuni Tar (high Tar), Ud, Kanon, Djura Saz (small Saz), Baghlama (big Saz), and percussion Dhol and Dap.

Due the problems of musical harmony, "corrections" were needed in the composition and the balance in relations between wind and string instruments especially.

Musical ensembles established in Armenia after 1920 also incorporated the drone, a continuous note held by the musician so-called "Damkash".

Among the musicians who contributed to the improvement of instruments is the famous Kamancha player Sasha Oganezashvili (Alexander Ohanesian. Tiflis. Georgia), who added a fourth string to his instrument at the beginning of the 20th century.

In the big traditional instruments ensemble of State Song and Dance of Armenia founded by Tatul Altunian in 1936, the following instruments could be heard playing together:  
Duduk, Shvi (Wind), Kanon, Saz, Ud, Kamancha (String), Dhol, Dap (Percussion).

This was the basic composition of large instrumental ensembles such as the Orchestra of Radio Yerevan, the State Dance ensembles, and dance groups in general, string instruments providing an essential harmonic support.



Two Zurna and two Dhol.



Two Zurna and one Dhol.



One Parkapzuk  
and two Dhol.

## **GUSAN AND ASHUGH**

It is impossible not to mention Gusan and Ashugh, these poet-singers who enchanted crowds, the names of the most famous of them remained engraved in collective memory.



Naghash HOVNATAN 1661-1722. Kamancha.

Baghdasar TBIR 1683-1768. Saz.

SAYAT NOVA 1712-1795. Kamancha.  
Chongur.  
Santur.



Painting by Jeanine Tchaloyan. Paris.



DJIVANI 1846-1909. Kamani.

Ashugh Djivani (Serop Levonian) wrote about his instrument:

"The Kamani is already a pure European instrument,  
A universal violin, an ancestor of the violin.  
It differs from the current violin by its size  
(it has roughly the size of a small cello).  
The usual four strings are brought to twelve the low  
strings of which serve for resonance".



Tasda of Ashugh Djivani  
(second from right), first from left Ashugh Djamali.

SHERAM 1856-1938. Tar.  
Gusan Sheram, real name  
Grigor Dalian.



SHIRIN 1827-1857. Kamani.  
Hovhannes Karapetian called "Ashugh Shirin".

SHAHEN 1909-1990. Kanon.  
Gusan Sarkarian.



ASHOT 1907-1989. Kamancha.



HAVASI 1896-1978. Tar.  
Real name Armenak Markosian.



Other Gusan and Ashugh:

Sahubi Gevorg, Hayrik Khazarian, Kovian, Razmar, Mkhitar,  
Haykazun,

Igit, Kayat, Apa, Gurgen Gabrielian, Onik, Siskin, Burji, Razmik,  
Malul,

Farmanian, Ohanian, Rubik, Khazanchi Hovanes, Hadanchi Markar,

Margar, Khul Khazar, Gevorg Grigorian, Khennchi Hayrapes, Mkrkich,

Tahmazian, Ratevos, Petros Hazarjribchi, Zakarian, Hamazasp,  
Nersik,

Ispirian, Farhat, Paydjare, Dvazi Mkrkich, Dunkianos Karnechi,

Mkhitar, Mijaz, Shirvani, Ata, Simon Oghli, Mushegh, Siskin Burdji,

Kakhni, Turab Dada, Sazayi, Aram, Tifili, Khgul Sargis, Ovanes Oghli,

Margar Gochani, Manug Gulgazian, Artem Khachatur,  
Ter Karapet,

Sembat, Alik Kspoyan, Yeram, Yeraz, Miskin Stepan.

## WOMEN MUSICIANS



Historians report that there were many women musicians in pagan Armenia.

The role of women in the transmission of the Armenian musical heritage was narrated by the historian of the 5th century Movses Khorenatsi.

The Dzaynarku, professional mourners and Vardzak, dancers animating banquets and private ceremonies participated in the cultural life of ancient Armenia.

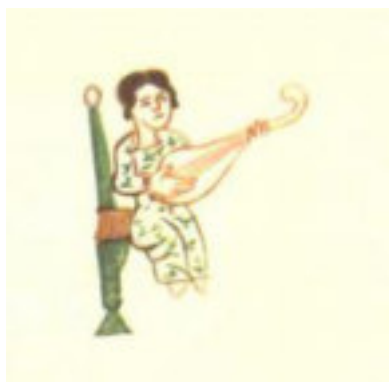
Stepanos Siunetsi (8th century) tells us about his musician sister Sahakadukht who also taught her art.

The illustrations of illuminations show us ancient musical instruments in women's hands.

Some musical instruments being easier for them to access such as Kanon zither, Saz, Ud lutes and the percussion Dap, many women have also played instruments that are usually played by men.

History does not report names of women Gusan, since they are more numerous nowadays, young girls having access to instrumental disciplines taught in the music conservatories of the country and practicing instruments previously reserved for men: Dhol, Zurna, Duduk...

We could mention among women-minstrels of the 21th century, Ashugh Leyli, Gaghni, Nazeli, Asdghanush.





A women ensemble playing Saz.

## **TRANSMISSION FROM MASTER TO DISCIPLE**

To become a musician is to become a philosopher..

This is the essence given to the traditional approach of apprenticeship from master to disciple, particularly in the Armenian tradition.

There is a saying:

"Linél mart yev yerajishd". "Becoming a man and a musician."

The focus is on the human qualities that a student must develop in order to build a strong contact with his future audience.

A gradual training is therefore necessary, which will give results over time.

The secrets of traditional music can be disclosed only to sensitive and intelligent beings gifted by nature.

The village musical culture of Gusan was easily transmitted given the sedentary nature of future disciples. That of the traveler Ashugh was more restrictive, confronting the disciple to the cultures of other regions if not of surrounding peoples.

The student or disciple will be evaluated and selected by his future master according to a personal contact:

"Lav tgha es kez ke sovoretsnem" (I'll teach you because you're a good boy) was the kind of answer to get to become a Nokkar, a disciple.

The disciple chooses his master, when he feels a community of character and sensitivity in the personality of his elder.

He would not hesitate to cross regions to meet him and make his request rather than waiting for his passage in his town or village.

Today apprenticeship tends to be more academic through music schools or conservatories, music teachers delivering different instrumental disciplines.



In our times, it is possible to become a self-taught musicians but it is also recommended to take some additional lessons with a teacher to improve one's knowledge.

The reciprocal relationship between master and disciple was determined by a common aspiration. The human aspect being important, the master had to recognize himself in his disciple.

Oral transmission had its benefits but also its constraints.

The disciple or student was bound by a rigorous discipline, being about listening or participating at times to "concerts" of his elder, knowing he would perform alone only after years of perseverance. He had to learn a real code of honor to be able to represent later his Varpet (master).

A form of osmosis and emotional reciprocity operated between them, the young infusing himself with the character and the personality of his elder: "Like master, like disciple!"

The master's style was obviously recognizable in the performance of his student, while the latter developed his own musical personality. He had to defend the honor and reputation of his master.

Whatever the evaluation of this system in the present, the result was quite conclusive and the disciple received a good formation.

During the apprenticeship each will confronted with his own limitations, possibilities of assimilation and especially the ability to strongly feel human emotions, the major rule to feel a musician.

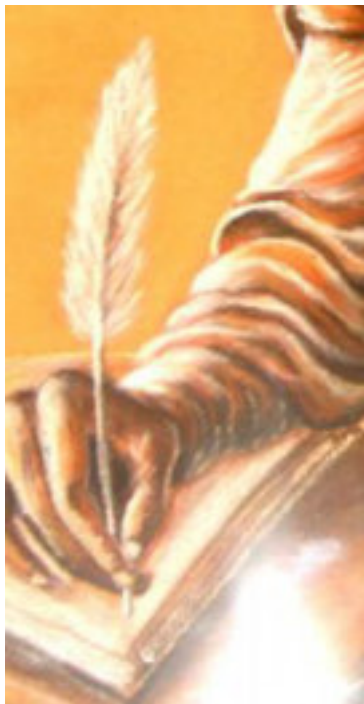
Armenian music having its own character, it is often difficult to distinguish from that of neighboring peoples, needing work to understand its subtleties. This learning can last a long time if one is not born in the country or connected naturally to this culture.

All experts also agree on this fact: Armenian musicians of the past though influenced by the music of neighboring countries expressed their music with a special character due to their origin. This is what made their reputation, Hay yerajishd (Armenian musician) had an innate musical gift that enriched the colors of the music of neighboring peoples.

As not well formed listeners to Armenian traditional music, the message will be received naturally by a sincere performer. Many practice music, few really become musicians.

To express musically the Armenian soul requires total commitment. In the rural context of the past, all famous musicians who marked their epoch have had a master.

The most famous of the Armenian Ashugh Sayat Nova (18th century) learned his art from the master Ashugh Dosti.



"Amen mart chee gana khmi  
Im djurs urish djren e  
Amen mart chee gana garta  
Im girs urish gren e".

"Not everyone can drink  
My water is of a different nature  
Not anyone can read  
My writing is different."  
Sayat Nova.



## ABOUT THE DUDUK



Better known nowadays in the West, the Duduk is not just a musical instrument with picturesque and unusual sounds and a beautiful tone but it also carries a particular musical and a spiritual message.

A common musical instrument on the Armenian plateau and in the South Caucasus, the family of this double reed aerophone spreads over many countries, Japan, China, the countries of Central Asia, the Arab world, India, Assyria, Phrygia, Greece...

Depending on the respective culture, it has different names (according to Hripsime Pikichian, author of a book about the Duduk published under the direction of UNESCO. Yerevan 2007.):

- In Armenia: Duduk, Pogh, Dziranapogh, Glanapogh, Nay, Ney, Ghaval.
- In Greece, Aulos.
- In Ukraine or Russia, Duduka or Dudka.
- In Georgia, Duduki.
- In Turkey, Kurdistan, Dūdük, Mey.
- In Iran, Narmeh Ney.
- In Azerbaijan, Balaman, Yazdi Balaman.
- In Daghestan, Yazdi Balaban.

- In Kabardino-Balkaria, Duduk.
- In China, Guan.
- in Chinese Turkestan, Balaman.
- In Korea, Din.
- In Japan, Hishiriki.

The shape, the range, the sounds produced by these instruments vary significantly from the bass to the treble register, according to these people.

It is pierced with eight holes on the front, a ninth hole lets out the lowest note and a hole on the back is for the top thumb.

It is set on a diatonic scale, while chromatisms and alterations are obtained through finger positions.

Usually made of apricot wood it stands alone in the oboe family by the nature of its double reed which is carved entirely from a segment of a reed. It was also made formerly of walnut, cherry, wild pear, plum or mulberry wood according to the region.

The Duduk produces a tone close to the human voice, lip pressure on the edges of the reed allowing to modulate sounds. It has a register of ten notes.

Few writings have reached us on this musical instrument on which we find trace at the 7th century AD on the front wall of the Church of Saint Gayane in Armenia (see photo above).

In the book "Hay Dudukaharner" (Armenian Duduk players), written by Kamo Mkrchian (Yerevan 1987), it is noted that its origin dates back 3500-4000 years, coming from the regions of Upper Egypt. Ms. Srбуhi Lisitsian reports also that it has been present only on the Armenian plateau and this for many centuries.

The Duduk traditionally accompanies the songs and dances, expresses melodies and complaints. The musician is commonly called Dudukahar.

Two Duduk and a Dhol percussion animated all religious ceremonies, Baregentan (Shrove Tuesday), Trendez (Candle-mas), Zatik (Easter), Hambartsum (Ascension), Vardavar (Transfiguration), Nakhratogh (livestock herd release), Madagh (animal sacrifice), Ughdaknaktsutiu (Pilgrimage), Arrachnegi dznunt (birth of the Eldest) and all feasts, engagements, weddings, celebrations and

funerals.

It was also common to play Duduk near a patient to ease suffering.

In principle, a Dudukahar named Varpet (master) plays the melody while another musician, Damkash, holds the Dam or drone tone.

Linked to ancestral traditions of the people, laments, chants, improvisations, songs and dance tunes played on Duduk express a whole emotional range extending from the deepest sorrow to the most intense joy.

This is the only traditional instrument that crossed all through the long history of the Armenian people, becoming a symbol of its identity.

Edward Mirzoyan (Composer, Chairman of the Union of Composers of Armenia. 1988.) in the introduction of his book on Armenian Duduk players (Hay Dudukaharner), cited above, writes about this:

"The Duduk has always been this musical instrument loved by the Armenian people. We rejoiced to the sound of the Duduk, showed our pride, been saddened by its sound. The Duduk is for us a language and that language has evolved since the beginning of the Armenian world and has never gone."

Aram Khachaturian, famous Armenian composer of the 20th century, tells us:

"The Duduk is the only instrument that makes me cry."

The way to play with two players is typical of ancient traditions as in Egypt where the double aerophone was in use, in Greece with the aulos, in Crete and other countries of the East, India, Tibet...

We find the drone in many parts of the world, in Celtic music in Brittany, in Scotland and also in the center of France...

We will show how this musical instrument is indicative of ancient musical systems.

The simplicity of the modal system is clearly revealed by the interpretation on a Duduk.

The number of fingers on which the Dam is held is essential.

In old traditional music it is the note on which to base the tune and which serves to support the development of the melody. Its power allows intensifying emotion, feeding the melodist for his performance. In Armenia, it can remain fixed or can vary during the course of the tune.

Each of the musical modes is based on a fundamental note corresponding to a number of fingers.

For example, for a tune being interpreted on the major mode Rast, the Dam is held by positioning three fingers, four fingers for Sega, five fingers for Shushtar mode as well as Shahnaz, Bayati Shiraz, Shur.

We note that the fundamental Dam in all Transcaucasian modes are played by positioning two to five fingers on wind instruments. All traditional musical modes follow this pattern.

Traditionally, the two Duduk played together on the same register and the Varpet melodist, to give a directive, never gave the name of the note to play, but simply stated the number of fingers on which his tune was based.

For example, saying "Hing Mat" (five fingers) the Damkash would hold the corresponding number of fingers to allow the master to express himself in the corresponding mode.



This ancient and very old way of proceeding demonstrates the connection that existed between music and numbers, connection certainly linked to an ancient science going back further in time.

These tones being adjusted initially on a number of fingers, the Dudukahar have to know how to transpose these modes on other tones than the original.

The Sega mode, originally based on four fingers, can evolve on five fingers to expand its register range by one upper note. The major mode Rast based on three fingers can also be developed on four fingers and a half as well as on one finger and a half.

To learn the Duduk and modal music on these principles help the musician to understand easily the fundamental note system, which will help him to transpose to other tonalities of Duduk.

For example on a Duduk tuned in C.

A melody in D minor finds his Dam of five fingers, the same melody can be expressed with three fingers in F minor, six fingers in C minor, eight fingers in A minor. But its original tone will evolve towards five fingers.

For a Duduk in A, with five fingers we obtain B, three fingers would give D, six fingers A...

The register of this instrument being limited in its range, it is better to play a tune in the key giving the easiest fingering.

Then, the mastery of the musician will consist in interpreting musical tunes in all possible tones.

Originally, the Duduk were tuned in B the same as Zurna.

After Vardan Buni designed the Duduk for orchestra in A and D (Yerevan in 1925-1927), thereafter other instruments were developed in other keys:

A (La) B (Si) C (Do) D (Re) E (high Mi) F (low F) G (low G), others instruments with higher tonalities being able to be added as needed.

The soft and velvety natural sounds of the Duduk are obtained more from the low notes.

It was also called Nay or Ney, meaning flute in Persian.

The musicologist Komitas Vardapet, in his last interview before his death in 1935 (Anahit review. Paris. 1936.), reported:  
"... there is also the musical instrument called Nay. A Nay plays the melody while another holds the key."

The lyrics of this popular song are symbolic of the Armenian apricot tree, wood from which the Duduk is made:

Yes mi dzarn em dzirani	I'm an apricot tree
Hin armad em anvani	I'm an esteemed old root
Ptughners kaghtsraham	My tasty fruits
Amen mardu bidani.	Are useful to everybody.



Margar Margarian. Duduk player (center).  
Echmiadzin. 1935.



The cultural and musical centers where the Duduk found its fulfillment in the 19th and 20th centuries were Alexandropol (Gyumri) and Tiflis (Tbilisi, capital of Georgia).

Some Armenian musicians born in these regions then left and went to settle in Yerevan and Baku, the capitals of Armenia and of Azerbaijan.

Among the many names who left their mark in these countries of the Caucasus, we find the master musicians Bagrat Baghramov (1850-1939), Gevorg Shulavertsi (1884-1940), Khachik Dalgoukov (1907-1962), Misha Sukiasov, Levon Amirkhanian, Robizon Sarkisov, Hovhannes Kasian...

In Gyumri, the master Dudukahar Karo Yeghoyan (Usda Pancho) formed at the beginning of the 20th century the famous Dudukahar Levon Madoyan (soloist of the Radio Orchestra of Yerevan) and Karo Charchoghlian (soloist of the Radio Orchestra of Baku).



Drawing by Vano Khodjabekian.  
Tiflis. 1910.

## ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF THE WORD DUDUK

What are the different names of this instrument in the region?

We saw at the beginning of this chapter that this double reed family of instrument spread throughout history in different countries. But it is on the Armenian plateau that it took this particular name, Duduk.

Like many other ancient musical instruments, this word reveals onomatopoeia, sound vibrations that it emits: dudu, dūdū, according to the ears that hear them...

The Russian word Dudka or Dudki meaning flute, logically derived from the name of the ancient Greek instrument Duduka, just like Georgian Duduki, Armenian Duduk, Kurdish and Turkish Dūdūk terms, which mean whistle like the word Shvi, coming from the Armenian verb Shvttsnel, whistling.

## THE TECHNIQUE OF THE DRONE OR OF CONTINUOUS BREATH

typical to Zurna and Duduk playing.

Played by the Damkash "drone holder" or a solo musician.

The continuous breathing technique goes very far back in time.

The people of the Near East and the south coast of the Mediterranean basin know this traditional technique for millennia.

Egyptian Zamr players, Tunisian Zukra, Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Armenian Zurna and also Duduk players in the whole Caucasus use this technique not only for holding the drone but also to play solo melodic themes.

This way of playing, perceived by some Western travelers, was commented as "unattractive".

Indeed, the musician must inflate his cheeks to form a large air pocket like an inflated balloon.

Then he exhales the stored air and at the same time he presses his lips on the double reed of the Duduk or the ring around the cylindrical tube (Mil) of the Zurna; he exhales and inhales air simultaneously, re-supplying again the air pocket formed and indefinitely continuing this process.

With this approach, the "Damkash" can keep the drone for hours.

Thus, the melodists "Varpet" (master) can further extend certain notes of the melodies, instilling in them more power or emotional depth.

It is also possible to adapt this process to recorders as the Tutak or the Shvi, to flutes without a fipple as the Blul and of course to reed instruments like the Pku and the bagpipe Parkapzuk, but not without difficulties.

## ORIGINALITY OF SOUND

The sound of the Duduk is similar to the human voice; it is in the low register, warm, sweet and velvety. It owes this particularity to the character of its double reed.

Different from the double reed of an oboe, the mouth piece called "Ghamish" (popular word meaning reed) it is designed entirely in one segment of reed.

This produces a specific sound among all the sounds of known flutes or oboes.

Sounds of Duduk differ depending on species of reed present in Armenia: "Teghakan" and "Gharghu".

The first, the local reed, called Teghakan, comes from the region around Yerevan. It is tender and it is know for its soft and velvety, airy timbre, that delights the ears of many listeners.

The second Gharghu grows in mountainous regions of the country. The sound is originally tougher, but it offers a wider register of vibration possibilities, from "dry, earthy" sounds, to those softer and velvety.

The former Duduk players used Gharghu reeds to play in traditional duo formations.

In ensembles, Teghakan reeds offer more facilities of tuning and harmony with the other instruments.

## DESIGN OF THE DOUBLE REED

### CALLED GHAMISH

Reed manufacturers having inherited their art from their predecessors continue to practice following ancestral ways.

The reeds are collected at certain phases of the moon (according to some) and listed according to their size, left to dry...

Currently, masters Ashot, Manvel, Arman, Tiko, Ruben, Misha, Felix and many others... continue manufacturing Ghamish in Yerevan.



According to the Duduk and reed manufacturer Felix Vardumian (Yerevan), about twenty successive steps are necessary to finalize a Ghamish.

At first, the cane is cut into pieces, revealing the base of the reed, the other side is cut to the selected height.



Then a line is drawn in a circular motion and a layer of reed removed, leaving the internal substance apparent.



At the base, a notch is made to reduce its circumference in order to put it in the neck of the instrument.



The reed is tied, the exact term used in Armenia. Indeed, they use the term "Ghamish kapel" to make reeds, which literally means attaching, tying the reed.



Ptkal a clasp and a regulation ring Ghsghanch, Khamot or Parda (made of vine stock) will give the final appearance to the Ghamish.



Often, to prevent air from leaking on the sides, two thin strips of leather are stuck. In order for the sound to remain stable, the base of the Ghamish is heated until obtaining a golden color, the makers putting their own secrets into practice to refine the sound quality of their reeds.



Manufacturing process of Ghsganch or Parda folded on a piece of wood designed for this purpose.

Reeds are designed following different principles in accordance to Armenian, Georgian, Kurdish traditions...

Here is a Georgian Duduki reed (at left) and an Armenian Duduk reed (at right).

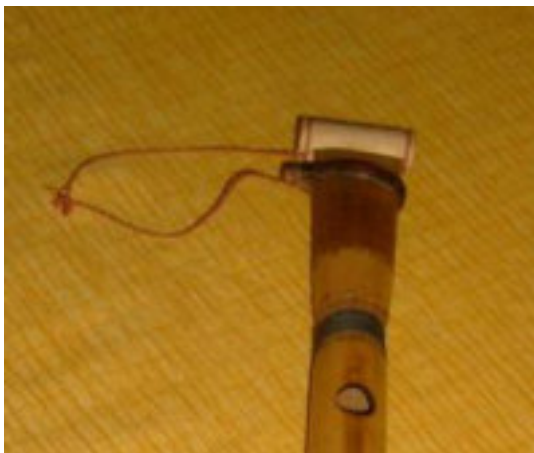




Specialists and manufacturers give to the ancestor of the Duduk the representation in the picture above. Reconstitution of a prototype of the Duduk by Ruben Rushanian. Yerevan. 2000.

It is designed from a single piece of reed bent at the end. It recalls the design of old Pku made of reed, whose sounds it resembles.

The double reed is the same as that of the current Duduk.







The Duduki used in South Georgia, made of walnut or apricot tree wood, have a different appearance, the body of the instrument being thinner, allowing a tuning in A or B flat. The bass Duduki which are a fifth lower, allow richer chords to support songs (photo above).



Armenians added clarinet valves allowing the instrument to obtain lower ranges.

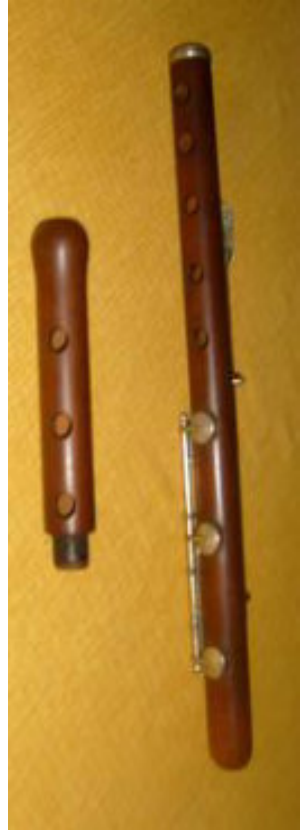
In general these Duduk were used to hold the Dam accompanying mourners in funeral ritual ceremonies (in use until the late 20th century).

In the early 1990s Sergey Avanesov, an Armenian native of Russia came to Armenia to produce Duduk with a clarinet aspect, giving them more extended sound, allowing the performance of hitherto inexistent polyphonic works.



Completely new registers appeared, bass, baritone, tenor, alto, on those already known.

The master of Duduk Giorgi Minasov uses these new instruments in the context of his "Dudukner" ensemble in Yerevan, Armenia.



BASS  
DUDUK



BARITONE  
DUDUK



TENOR  
DUDUK



ALTO  
DUDUK





Tenor Duduk.

Philippe Shahbazian. Paris.



Medium and piccolo Duduk.  
P. Shahbazian collection.

Other bass registers of the Duduk.

Bass Duduk.  
P. Shahbazian  
Collection.



## REGISTERS OF THE DUDUK



Philippe Shahbazian collection. Paris.

Here gathered above the different keys of Duduk.

We will detail the keys of each of these 20 instruments, from left to right, taking as basis of reference the Duduk in the key of A (A Duduk 7, 8, 9 below), on which we usually play the melodies.

Remember that the key of an instrument is defined by its highest note with all the fingers open.

- 1 Duduk in A or Duduk A bass with valves.  
Octave below the Duduk in A.  
Lowest note F#.
- 2 Same key with valves.  
Lowest note F#.
- 3 Same key without valve.  
Lowest note A.
- 4 Duduk in F.  
Lowest note D.
- 5 Duduk in F sharp or Duduk G flat.  
Lowest note D#.
- 6 Duduk in A bass.  
Octave below the Duduk in A.  
Lowest note F#.
- 7 Duduk in A or Duduk A.  
Lowest note F#.
- 8 Duduk in A.  
With upper valve  
(access to the note B) and lower valve (access to the note E).
- 9 Duduk in A.  
With tone pitch regulation system.
- 10 Duduk in G.  
Lowest note E.
- 11 Duduk in A.  
Lowest note F#.
- 12 Duduk in B flat.  
Lowest note G.
- 13 Duduk in B.  
Lowest note G#.
- 14 Duduk in C.

Lowest note A.

-15 Duduk in D.

Commonly known as Bigul (Piccolo) Duduk.

Lowest note B.

-16 Duduk in E.

Lowest note C.

-17 Duduk in F.

Lowest note D.

Octave above the Duduk F cited in number 4 above.

-18 Duduk in F sharp.

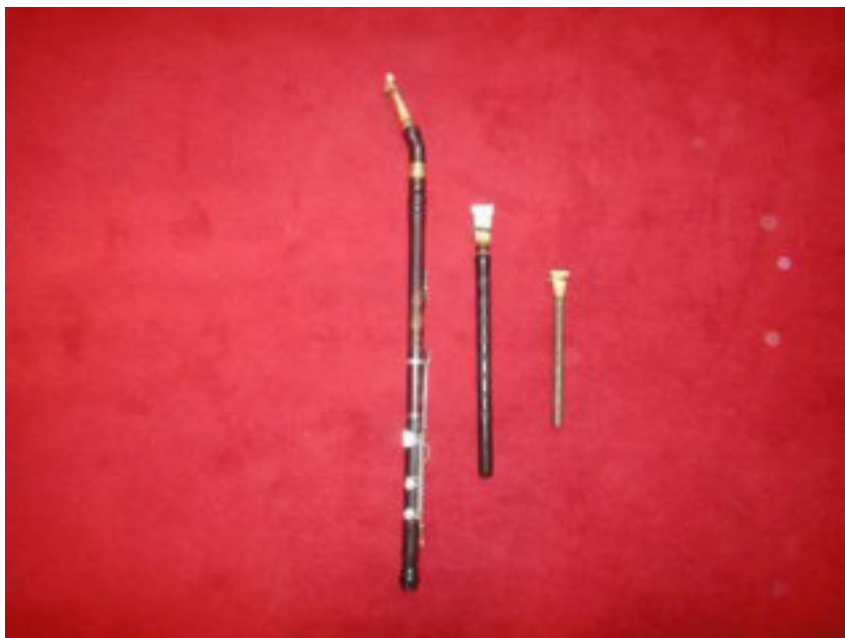
Lowest note D#.

Octave above the Duduk cited in number 5 above.

-19 Duduk in D.

Lowest note B.

Octave above the Duduk D cited in number 15 above.



Philippe Shahbazian collection, Paris.

Above are three keys of Duduk, from the lowest to the highest notes. They cover a range of three octaves.

To the left is a bass Duduk (the first at left on the picture), with a range beginning from F # and rising up to the A below the central C.

In the center a Duduk (cited on number 15 above), with a continuous tone which rises from the A below the central C up to the D above the central C.

To the right a Duduk the lower note of which is the B above the central C and the upper note is the D.



## SOME MANUFACTURERS OF DUDUK OF THE 20th CENTURY

Usda Karo. Varpet Suren.  
Karlen Matevosian. Gevorg Gevorgian.  
Varpet Hovsep and his son Artur.  
Ruben Rushanian. Abel Arshakian.  
Garen Mukayelian. Misha Sadoyev.  
Felix Vardumian.



Armenian party to the sounds of Duduki on the Kura in Tiflis in the  
19th century (painting by G. Inauri. Tbilisi).  
Gerard Madilian Collection. Paris.

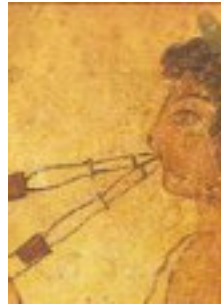
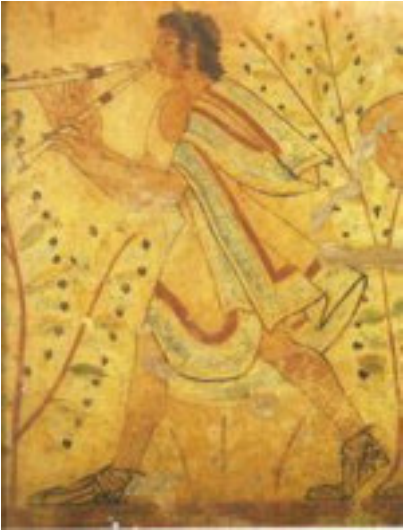


Drawing by Vano Khodjabekian. Tiflis. 1910.  
Dance of a man on the grave of his father  
to the sounds of Dhol-Zurna.



The Duduk and its ancestor.

## SIMILAR INSTRUMENTS TO DUDUK



Etruscan aulos players. Tomb of Tarquinia. Italy. 490 B.C.  
Common throughout the Mediterranean basin, some aulos had a double reed similar to the current Armenian Duduk.

Kuen (China).



Similar to the reconstitution of the original Duduk (previous page).  
Didier Malherbe Collection. Paris.

Hishiriki (Japan).  
Didier Malherbe Collection.  
Paris.





Varpet of Duduk.  
Baris Thovmasian (left)  
and Levon Madoyan.  
Yerevan. 1960.

The sounds of the Duduk have inspired composers for their classical and popular works such as A. Derderian, V. Sharafian, R. Altounian, E. Hayrabetian, G. Akhianian.

## MUSIC FOR RITUAL CEREMONIES

In the past each musical tune had a real function in people's lives.

Once confined to ritual ceremonies like weddings or funerals, they are often played in private circles nowadays, losing much of their original meaning.



To make the future bride weep before she leaves her parents, to make her regret the home where she grew up, bring the betrothed accompanied by music, escort the young couple from the coming out of the church to the place of rejoicing, to dress the table for the guests... so many situations that were accompanied by music.

Sahari is the complaint played at sunrise to announce the wedding. The Zurna or Duduk player improvises a melody on a major mode attended by a Damkash (player of the drone), which lasts till sunrise. It is also called Arevagal (the coming of the sun) or Harsankakanch (call to marriage). It is often linked to the song Aravot Luso of Nerses Shnorhali (12th century).

The tune is often played on the day after the wedding to end the ceremony.

Outdoor ceremonies were often preceded by Kanch (calls) played either on a Zurna or a Duduk according to the circumstances.

Daran Daran accompanies the bride from her father's house to the church. Kalosi Prken was played at the exit of the church to carry the young couple in a carriage to the place of festivities.

This solemn music punctuated the abandonment of an old life to start a new one. It resonated sometimes in train stations (called Vagzali in Russian language – Vagzal meaning train station), for a conscript who was leaving for his military service, for a person or a family definitively leaving their region or their country. It was interpreted also on the departure of pilgrimages.

During a wedding this rhythmic tune triggers the enthusiasm of the procession of the guests who follow the carriage expressing their joy, then the haunting improvisations of the musician gives the opportunity for people to talk; before arriving at the location of the celebrations, a musical crescendo accentuates the general enthusiasm before finishing the melody, thus leaving room for speeches and congratulations.

We find traces of this music in recordings interpreted on Duduk or Zurna by the musicians Levon Madoyan, Karo Charchoghlian and others.

Other ritual music interpreted on the Duduk accompanied Psaki baptisms, Tagvoragovk praise of the groom, Harsi lats the bride's tears, lyrical songs and dance tunes.

The tunes for the funeral ceremonies are very old.

In the past, the Duduk was particularly used for the rituals of mourners who were the heirs of the Dzaynarku of the antiquity.

Professional mourners were shouting, making the audience cry, telling tragically the life of the deceased with his family, evoking with regrets the happy moments of family life, plunged the crowd in an intense emotion and sadness. This solemn moment was the preliminary to placing the body in the coffin before bidding the soul that has left this world a last farewell.

This ceremony of another age, falling increasingly into disuse, was accompanied only with the sounds of the Duduk, particularly solemn for the occasion. The Dam vibrated very low tones while the shrill voices of mourners hovered over people.

Many ancient rituals have disappeared, some are still rooted in the habits of the population. They are part of the traditions and customs that the people of Armenia still perpetuate.

Will the future society pass on these traditions of the past, will they adjust them to a life where modernism imposes also its new rules of behavior?

## **TRADITIONAL MUSICIANS IN THE 20TH CENTURY**

### **DUDUK DZIRANAPOGH**

Karapet YEGHOYAN late 19th - early 20th century called Usda Pancho or Pancho Karo.

Born in Erzeroum, emigrated to Kars and then to Gyumri, he became a legendary figure of the Duduk, while he taught the great masters Levon Madoyan and Karo Charchoghlian who marked the first half of the 20th century.

Margar MARGARIAN (1894-1941).

First professional Duduk player in Armenia in the 1940's, soloist of the Orchestra of the Radio of Yerevan under the direction of Aram Merangulian.

Karo CHARCHOGLIAN (1905-1956).

Grand master of Duduk, born in Gyumri, student of Pancho Karo, he started his career in the ensemble of Vardan Buni in Yerevan.

Playing for many years in the famous ensemble of Avanes Yonesyan (Hovannes Hovhanesian) in Baku, he distinguished himself by the pure sound of his playing, his virtuosity and perfect knowledge of Eastern and Western music.

He then became a soloist of the orchestra of Radio of Baku in Azerbaijan.

Levon MADOYAN (1909-1964).

He inherited the Duduk of his musician grandfather. From an early age he attended in 1923 the new School of Music in Leninakan (currently Gyumri) where he became a student of Pancho Karo.

In 1926, still as a student, he tried his luck in Baku in the ensemble of Avanes Yonesyan. But filled with nostalgia, he returned to his city. He succeeded Margar Margarian as the soloist of the orchestra of Radio of Yerevan. He greatly enhanced the expression register and the capabilities of the instrument. He recorded many traditional songs on 78-rpm old records playing in trios or with an orchestra. He marked his time until the 1960s.



Vache HOVSEPIAN 1924-1978.  
Baris THOVMASIAN 1928-1972.  
Khachik KHACHATRIAN 1924-2000.  
Suren THOVMASIAN 1924-1999.  
Jora SIMONIAN 1927-1998.  
Djivan GASPARIAN 1928.  
Vladimir GROVAN 1928.  
Artavazt DER HOVHANNISIAN 1929-2006.  
Suren GRIGORIAN 1933-2001.  
Giorgi MINASOV 1933.  
Sergei KARAPETIAN 1933.  
Mgrdich MALKHASIAN 1933.  
Vladimir HARUTIUNIAN 1934-2001.  
Karapet MEKHAKIAN 1946-1988.  
Harutiun GEVORGIAN 1948.  
Armen SARGSIAN 1949.  
Yeghishe MANUKIAN 1950.  
Saro DANIELIAN 1951.  
Benik IGNADIAN 1952.  
Rupen HARUTIUNIAN 1956.  
Armen STEPANIAN 1962.  
Arsen GRIGORIAN 1963.  
Gevorg DABAGHIAN 1965.  
Gagik MALKHASIAN 1966.  
Arshak SAHAKIAN 1970.  
Armen GRIGORIAN 1971.  
Vahan HARUTIUNIAN 1972.  
Ara MKOYAN 1972.  
Norayr ARAKELIAN 1974.  
Karapet SHABOYAN 1976.  
Varazdat HOVHANNISIAN 1977.  
Kamo SEYRANIAN 1979.  
Norayr JAMBARIAN 1949.  
Hovhannes GHAZARIAN 1981.  
Vahan AVETISIAN 1982.  
Emmanuel HOVHANNISIAN 1983.  
Vache PASHINIAN 1983.  
Ardak ASADRIAN 1985.  
Sargis DAVTIAN 1989.  
Gevorg KARAPETIAN 1989.  
Arshaluys TATEVOSIAN 1990.  
Harutiun SHKOLIAN 1991.  
Norayr GAPOYAN 1993.

## SHVI SRING

Ilia MINASIAN 1929-2009.  
Yeghishe MARGARIAN 1931.  
Norayr JAMHARIAN 1949.  
Sofia SARGSIAN 1950.  
Mnatsakan CHALIKIAN 1959.  
Ararat PETROSIAN 1959.  
Sirak TOROSIAN 1961  
Samvel YERGNAPESHIAN 1962.  
Lilith SIMONIAN 1963.  
Norayr KARDASHIAN 1967.  
Artur GRIGORIAN 1968.  
Zakar KESHISHIAN 1968.  
Levon TEVANIAN 1975.  
Sevada IRITSIAN 1979.  
Artur YEGHIAZARIAN 1981.  
Margarit VOSKANIAN 1981.  
Avag MARGARIAN 1984.  
Hayk KARAPETIAN 1992.

## KAMANCHA

Sasha OGANEZASHVILI (1889-1932).

Born in Tiflis, Alexander Ohanesian won at the age of fourteen years a musical contest assembling all the musicians of the Caucasus. Kamancha virtuoso, he added a fourth string to the instrument giving it a more universal dimension. He played with the famous Azeri Tar player Gurban Pirimov giving many concerts in European capitals. He joined in Baku, Azerbaijan, the ensemble of the Armenian Avanes Yonesyan, creator of the first large ensemble of oriental instruments music. He also mastered other string instruments like Kamani, Violin, Ud, Tar... He died young at the age of forty-three leaving behind him a long line of Kamanchahar.

Levon KARAKHAN 1891-1979.

Yerem ARUSTAMIAN 1909-1995.

Gurgen MIRZOYAN 1911-1975.

Vardan VARDANIAN 1911-1994.

Ardem MEDJINIAN 1913-1998.

Martin KHACHATRIAN 1923-1992.

Norayr HOVHANNISIAN 1923-2009.

Khachatur NERSISIAN 1923-2001.

Gevorg GRIGORIAN 1926-1999.

Hrachia MURADIAN-NIKOGHOSIAN 1927-2010.

Khachatur SHIRAKIAN 1931-2001.

Robert SARGSIAN 1933-1997.

Vigen HAGOPIAN 1934.

Hakob ARABIAN 1934-2009.

Telman KOSTANIAN 1934.

Ararat NAZARIAN 1936.

Hrachia AVEDIKIAN 1940.

Yuri GABOYAN 1943.

Onik GALSTIAN 1946.

Norik HOVHANNISIAN 1947.

Artashes LEYLOYAN 1948-2001.

Norayr DAVTIAN 1950.

Vladimir GRIGORIAN 1954.

Gagik MURADIAN 1954.

Haykaz HAKOBIAN 1955.

Khachik GASPARIAN 1956-2010.

Hakob KHALATIAN 1956.

Vahan GASPARIAN 1959.

Gagik MURADIAN 1961.

Ashot VARDANIAN 1963.

Narine PETROSIAN 1968.  
Tigran AMBARIAN 1967.  
Rafik HAKOBIAN 1960.  
Vardan BAGHDASARIAN 1969.  
Armen AYVAZIAN 1971.  
Mkhitar TERZIAN 1972.  
Hovhannes HAYRIKIAN 1978.  
Margarit SHAHBAZIAN 1981.  
Mkhitar KHACHATRIAN 1986.

#### BAMBIR

Robert SARGSIAN 1933-1997.  
Khachik GASPARIAN 1956.  
Armen MNATSAKANIAN 1958-2009.  
Gevorg PAPIKIAN 1962.  
Tigran HAMBARIAN 1967.

#### KANON

Garegin KHANIKIAN 1882-1946.  
Zaven DERMENDJIAN 1913-1986.  
Arshavir FERDJULIAN 1915.  
Nshan HOPIAN 1910-1993.  
Khachatur AVETISIAN 1926-1996.  
Melania DADRIAN 1927-2004.  
Angela ATABEKIAN 1938.  
Luisa SETRAKIAN 1938.  
Apolia ATABEKIAN 1939.  
Djivan MIKAYELIAN 1941.  
Hasmik LEYLOYAN 1954.  
Dzovinar ATABEKIAN 1955.  
Vergine ALIMIAN 1956.  
Alvart MIRZOYAN 1956.  
Karine HAMASIAN 1956.  
Anush KIRAKOSIAN 1957.  
Azniv MINASIAN 1959.  
Piruza KARAPETIAN 1960.  
Anahit NANAGIULIAN 1961.  
Mariam KHACHATRIAN 1961.  
Marine ASATRIAN 1963.  
Dzovinar HOVHANNISIAN 1965.

Karine HOVHANNISSIAN 1966.  
Anahit VALESSIAN 1966.  
Lilith KHODJAYAN 1969.  
Maria BAGHDASARIAN 1981.  
Liana MARTIROSIAN 1981.  
Marine MALKHASIAN 1982.  
Nune DANIELIAN 1983.

## SANTUR

Petros HOVAKIMIAN 1889-1965.  
Sarkis PETROSIAN 1956.  
Aghavni KOVAKIMIAN 1963.  
Hayastan GABRIELIAN 1964.  
Yeva HOVAKIMIAN 1965.  
Kristine AVAGIAN 1975.

## UD

Udi SARKIS 1891-1950.  
Soghomon ALTUNIAN 1901-1946.  
Udi HRANT 1901-1978.  
Stepan BLBULIAN 1905-1969.  
Stepan MAMOYAN 1922-1988.  
Karapet ARISTAKESIAN 1923-1990.  
Onik KHACHATRIAN 1932.  
Grigor ALTUNIAN 1937.  
Setrak TERTERIAN 1929-1995.  
Albert GHAZARIAN 1937-2010.  
Sergey SADOYEV 1945.  
Karo YAYLAYAN 1947.  
Anushavan AVETISIAN 1949.  
Mihran DEMIRCHIAN 1950.  
Lilith KARAPETIAN 1963.  
Karen AVETIAN 1963.  
Liudvig DAGESIAN 1968.  
Margar HOVHANNISSIAN 1964.  
Artur ARAKELIAN 1970.  
Aramayis NIKOGHOSIAN 1980.  
Anush HOVHANNISSIAN 1972.  
Aram NOKOGHOSIAN 1980.  
Edgar AVETISIAN 1986.

Levon TOROSIAN 1987.

## TAR

Aghalar Melik AGHAMALIAN 1830-1906.

Samson KARAPETIAN 1885-1965.

Bala MELIKOV 1888-1935.

Vardan BUNI (BUNIATIAN) 1888-1960.

Alexander ALEXANDRIAN 1889-1982.

Sergey SERGEYEV 1898-1979.

Aram MERANGULIAN 1902-1967.

Andranik BUNIATIAN 1905-1942.

Mikayel CHAGHALIAN 1907-1942.

Soghomon SEYRANIAN 1907-1974.

Alexander SARGSIAN 1911-1966.

Ashot GASPARIANTS 1915-1966.

Hrant TOROSIAN 1920-1993.

Khachik ZATIKIAN 1920-2001.

Aram NIKOGHOSIAN 1922-1993.

Shahen BEGLARIAN 1923-1994.

Andrey BARAYEV 1923-1964.

Levon SARGSIAN 1925.

Poghos CHIPCHIAN 1927-1996.

Varazdat HOVSEPIAN 1931-1998.

Vazgen KHRIMIAN 1932.

Raphayel VARDANIAN 1936.

Khachatur SOGHOMONIAN 1940-1999.

Hovhannes DARBINIAN 1940.

Hrachia HOVHANNISIAN 1947.

Suren MEHRABIAN 1952.

Hovik SAHAKIAN 1956.

Artem KHACHATUR 1968.

Arkadi POGHOSIAN 1970.

Artak DAVTIAN 1976.

Hayk MARTIROSIAN 1984.

Davit AVAGIAN 1987.

Arsen MIRZOYAN 1988.

## DHOL

Hrachik ABGARIAN 1928.  
Henrik AVOYAN 1939.  
Sos PETROSIAN 1948.  
Harutiun KARAPETIAN 1952.  
Gagik HAKHVERDIAN 1954.  
Jirayr MELKONIAN 1956.  
Araz ORDINIAN 1961.  
Norayr SHAROYAN 1962.  
Robert DURUNTS 1962.  
Samvel TOROSIAN 1964.  
Kamo KHACHATRIAN 1967.  
Albert PELOCHIAN 1970.  
Mesrob KHALATIAN 1971.  
Andranik MKHITARIAN 1972.  
Garik MNATSAKANIAN 1972.  
Norayr AVETISIAN 1975.  
Garen GEVORGIAN 1977.  
Lilit HOVSEPIAN 1979.  
Karapet HAKOBYAN 1957.

## CONCLUSION OF THE AUTHOR

Feeling strongly the emotion that is anchored in each Armenian melody is essential for authentic learning.

Emotional reactions towards this old music of the past differs according to our education and respective cultures.

Among the cultures of this region of the world, the melodies and rhythms of the Armenian people denote a specific character.

Old tunes, simple and natural, particularly those of the plain of Ararat, Lori and Shirak regions, remind us of our ancestral roots.

The Armenian musicologists, Komitas Vardapet, Robert Atayan, Nikoghos Tahmizian... defined traditional Armenian music as being "Neither Eastern, nor Western".

As was written by Valery Brusov the 19th century Russian poet, it reflects "pain without falling into despair, passion without sorrow and admiration without indulgence".

The deep mystical nature of Armenian music had "forged" the Gusan and the Ashugh of the past including Sayat Nova (18th century) who sung love and brotherhood of peoples of the Caucasus in several languages.

Komitas (late 19th - early 20th century) instilled a universal dimension into Armenian music and songs and other composers gave them a strong impetus by making it known to the whole world.

Aram Khachaturian (20th century) with his world famous symphonies and ballet music (Gayane, Spartacus...) also inspired a line of musicians and composers of different nationalities.

Societies evolve just like music which follows their destinies throughout history.

Since the appearance of electroacoustic instruments in our modern society, new musical genres have been born.

What future for traditional musicians in this context?



Other choices appear for the "old" musical instruments which today find more possibilities of expression in different styles far from their original tradition.

Rock, jazz, classical music, instrumental research... sometimes integrate nowadays the Duduk as well as other wind and string instruments (Blul, Kanon).

So, regardless of new horizons that always open before us, the millennial tradition of Armenian music will always delight us with its magic and timeless melodies and chants.

How to find a right definition for traditional Armenian music?

Every musician or music lover will find his or her own answer according to his musical culture and sensibility.



Armenian Duduki Players. Tbilisi. Georgia. 1996.



Former clubs of Armenian Duduki players.  
Armenian Quarters of Havlabar and Svaneti Ubani. Tbilisi. 1991.





Gerard Madilian with the famous Armenian singer of Tbilisi Glakho Zakharian and the Dudukahar Robizon Saralidze. Tbilisi. 1991.



"Sayat Nova" ensemble led by the artist singer Vagharshak Sahakian. Yerevan. 1960.



Achughakan songs "Sayat Nova" ensemble.  
(1942-1972) led by Vagharshak Sahakian. Yerevan.



Vardan Buni (center) and his ensemble of reconstructed instruments  
in 1925. Yerevan.



Naghara-Dap-Tar-Kamancha quartet.



Dap-Tar Duo.



Ensemble of "oriental music" under the direction of Sasha Oganezashvili, at left on second row.



Quintet of  
Sazandar.  
Tiflis. 1900.



Ensemble of "oriental music - Arevelian Yerajshdutiun" led by the  
doctor Avanes Yonesyan (center).  
Sitting in front on the Kamancha Sasha Oganezashvili. Tiflis. 1930.



The young Alexander Ohannesian (Sasha Oganezashvili) in the first row at left with musicians from his neighborhood. Tiflis. 1895.



Quartet of Sazandar. Naghara-Dap-Tar-Kamancha. Tiflis. 1900.



Ensemble led by Lazar Ter Vardanesov. Baku. 1905.

View of the city of Shushi. Early 20th century.







Tarahar Lazar Ter Vardanesov.



The Philharmonic Ensemble of Azerbaijan led by Avanes Yonesyan. Baku. 1920.



Achughakan ensemble "Hay Ashughner"  
under the direction of the singer Shara Talian (1927-1972).



Tarahar Bala Melikov. Kamanchahar Levon Karakhan.



Trio of Sazandar. Kamanchahar Armenak Esriyev.



Instrumental Ensemble led by Vardan Buni. Yerevan. 1930.





Nagharachi  
Anton.

Seyit  
Shushinski  
Dap-Song.

Tarahar Bala  
Grigor Melikian.

Tiflis. 1916.



Quartet led by Levon Karakhan (Kamancha). Yerevan.



Orchestra of the Radio of Armenia under the direction of  
Aram Merangulian. Yerevan. 1980.



Musicians of the State Ensemble of Song and Dance of Armenia.  
Dhol Hrach Abkarian, Duduk in the center Saro Danielian.  
Norayr Jambarian (at Right). Yerevan. 1985.



Musicians Duduk and Dhol players. Alexandropol. 1903.



Ensemble led by the Dudukahar Levon Madoyan. Yerevan. 1930.



Musicians of the State Ensemble of Song and Dance of Armenia.  
At the center, the composer Alexander Alexandrian.  
To his left, the founder Tatul Altunian. Yerevan. 1960.



Village musicians.

Zurna  
Sarkis Cherkejian.

Bass Dhol  
Hacob Matevosian.





Musical ensemble of stringed instruments. Yerevan. 1920.

No celebration without the presence of the Duduk.  
Alexandropol.1903.





Dudukahar  
Suren Smbatian,  
Mkrtich Keropian.  
Dholchi Andranik.  
Yerevan. 1916.



Musicians of the Radio of Yerevan. 1950.



Dholchi Gagik Hakobian.  
Yerevan. 2001.



Gerard Madilian and the kamanchahar Enrik Arustamian.  
Shushi, Gharabagh, 2007.



With the master of Duduk Giorgi Minasov. Yerevan. 2007.



Saro Danielian. Born in Armenia. Dudukahar in the State Ensemble of Song and Dance of Armenia (in the 1980s). Currently oboe soloist in the Philharmonic Orchestra of Buenos Aires in Argentina.

Ruben Harutiunian.  
Born in Armenia. Dudukahar  
in the State Ensemble of Song and  
Dance of Armenia (in the 1980s).  
Currently lives in Los Angeles in the  
United States.





Gerard Madilian with Armenian Dudukahar. Tbilisi. 1996.



Gerard Madilian, the Armenian singer Azat Kasian (in the center), the Duduki players Archil Alaverdashvili (on the right) and Robizon Saralidze (in front). Tbilisi. 1996.



Ara Madilian. Dhol player. Ververi ensemble.  
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Tkzar Ensemble led by  
Karlen Mirzoyan. Yerevan.  
1980.

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Armenian musicians in the 20th century.

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You can obtain additional information on traditional Armenian music by connecting to the specialized website:  
[www.armenrad.org/AccueilEn.htm](http://www.armenrad.org/AccueilEn.htm)









Transmitted from generation to generation, and moving away from its rural origins to perpetuate itself in an urban context, Armenian traditional music has not lost its original strength.

History has buried many secrets along the way, but we will try to gather together this heritage through the work of passionate musicologists.

This work is neither a manual nor an encyclopedia, but instead presents a synthesis of knowledge acquired over time.

It is dedicated to all those who wish to discover or better understand this unusual musical universe.

**Gerard MADILIAN**