



**Hommage à Komitas**

aud 92.570



[American Record Guide](#) May/June 2007 (Boyer - 2007.05.01)



Komitas (1869-1935), born Soghomon Soghomonian, took the name he is known by following his ordination as a priest of the Armenian Church in 1893. His work in preserving the folk songs of Armenia, akin to the work of Bartok and Kodaly in Hungary, has earned him the unofficial title of “Father of Armenian classical music”. This album concentrates on his folk song arrangements for voice and piano (26 are included), concluding with nine recently discovered settings of German poems (including Goethe’s ‘Meerestille’ and ‘Glückliche Fahrt’) that he wrote in the late 1890s while studying in Germany. He was active as a composer and choral conductor from the 1890s until the First World War, but his later witness of the horrors of the Armenian Genocide put an end to his creativity.

Komitas’s music has been discussed in these pages only a few times (July/Aug 1990, July/Aug 1999, Mar/Apr 1996). His folk settings, which appeared in a series of volumes beginning in 1895, have a strangely modern sound, now strongly suggestive of the exotic moods that would later be explored by Alan Hovhaness in the 1950s, now recalling Ravel’s Greek songs of 1904-6. His German songs are cast in a more conventional late romantic style.

Soprano Hasmik Papian handles her part well enough, but one wishes for a bit more relaxation in her voice. Always there is a suggestion of forcing, as if the tessitura were too high for her natural range. Audite’s engineers also cloud the matter by including too much (probably artificial) reverberation in the sound picture, some of which may be a result of the processing for SACD.

The handsome booklet is marred by some awkward notes. Texts and multilingual translations are thoughtfully included.

Despite its faults, one hopes that the album will stir more interest in the work of Komitas and Armenian folk music.

Armenisch-Deutsche Korrespondenz Nr. 133/134 - Jg. 2006/Heft 3 & 4 (Ludolf Baucke - 2007.02.23)



Armenisch und abendländisch

*Compact Disc mit Komitas-Liedern*

Armenisch und abendländisch

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Armenpress ( - 2006.08.26)



The new CD of world-famous soprano Hasmik Papian dedicated to Komitas has been...

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[Fanfare](#) May/June 2007 (Steven Ritter - 2007.05.01)

fanfare

1869 saw the birth of the future priest Komitas (Sghomon Sghomonian in the world), a man who is hailed as an Armenian national hero, yet is also a man of enormous complexities. His early life was training for the priesthood in Etchmiadzin, the seat of the head of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the oldest national church in history, dating from the early fourth century. He accepted ordination, perhaps precipitously, as early as 1893, and was given the name Komitas after a seventh-century saint who was both Catholicos (head of the Church) and a musician of great import. Early in his life, Komitas was a favorite of the Catholicos, but when he died and a series of successors took over, this favor turned to disdain, and Komitas was to have a difficult relationship with the official church authorities for the rest of his life.

Though profoundly religious, he was also haunted by his early ordination. (Armenian priests, like most Eastern priests, are allowed to marry before ordination, but not after.) He was enamored of one of his favorite singers and biggest supporters, Marguerite Babayan, who was to turn up at varying points in his life, and the question remains open as to the depth of his relationship with her, though he did continue to dress in clerical clothing his whole life. He was a profoundly sensitive and rather ill man, whose last years were plagued by what some have described as mental illness, others by what we today would call "post-traumatic stress syndrome."

Komitas certainly had reason for this. In 1915, after years of established fame, he was arrested in Constantinople—where he was one of a number of noted Armenian intellectuals residing in the city at that time—and deported by the Turks. What he witnessed was no less than the now-infamous Armenian genocide at the hands of the Turks, where some two million people perished. When he was brought back in 1916, his life was never quite the same, and many years were spent in various psychiatric institutions and programs for treatment. He died 20 years later, in 1935.

This tragic yet brilliant story, along with the mysteries surrounding different incidences in his life, only adds to the aura of the man who is called the "Armenian Bartók"; indeed, he is rightly recognized as the "Father of Armenian classical music." Music in Armenia up to that time had been exclusively religious, but as in so many other countries a vast amount of secular and non-religious music existed among the people in the guise of folk music. Komitas traveled the land and wrote down thousands of these melodies, and incorporated them into his own music. For this he incurred the wrath of the ecclesiastical authorities and fought a constant battle against them, often having to take secondary positions in the church since they were so against him. But his music, both secular and sacred, gained enormous popularity, and the composer's standing with the people was never in question. Today he is regarded as perhaps the greatest cultural hero the country has ever known—quite a feat for this unassuming little priest with the golden voice that so enchanted people in his youth, who sang praises to God in middle age, and persuaded a whole generation of countrymen of the value of art and the Armenian soul found in it.

This album, "Hommage à Komitas," is a collection of his Armenian songs and a world premiere of his German songs, set earlier in life, by two of the leading artists of the country today. The Armenian songs are all of a piece, lonely, meditative, stoically bittersweet, and haunting, though many might find them easier to digest in smaller portions. They are not unlike the religious music of Armenia, but the texts betray their secular inspiration, suitable for any romantic composer. The German songs have hints of Wolf and early Strauss, and while not as good as the works of those masters, still maintain a distinct flavor about them. I am unsure as to whether I can agree with Debussy, whose opinion of Komitas was of the highest regard when he said "Brilliant Father Komitas! I bow before your musical genius!" But it does show that the devout little man attracted the attention of some major players in the classical world, and as such deserves an honest evaluation from all of us.

The sound is spectacular. This is the first SACD issue of piano and voice that I have ever heard, and the results are most gratifying, with excellent balance distributed among the five speakers. Komitas may not be for everyone, but if the hints given above attract you at all, you will not be disappointed.

**Fono Forum 12/2006 (Thomas Schulz - 2006.12.01)**



### **Der armenische Bartók**

Wenn es ihn nicht gegeben hätte, wäre vielleicht der unvergleichliche Schatz der armenischen Volksmusik für immer verloren gegangen: Soghomon Soghomonian (1869-1935), bekannt und bei seinen Landsleuten bis heute legendär unter seinem Priesternamen Komitas. Ähnlich wie Bartók, mit dem er oft verglichen wird, sammelte er unzählige Volksweisen seines Landes und veröffentlichte sie in Gestalt von Liedern und Chorwerken. Bei der Geistlichkeit stieß er damit keinesfalls durchgehend auf Gegenliebe. Das hinderte ihn nicht daran, die Musik Armeniens im Ausland, vor allem in Paris, bekannt zu machen – und dies mit großem Erfolg: Zu seinen Bewunderern gehörte Debussy. Während des Genozids an den Armeniern 1915 bis 1917 entging er der Ermordung, wurde jedoch deportiert. Nach seiner Freilassung aufgrund von Intervention war er ein gebrochener Mann und beschloss sein Leben in einer psychiatrischen Klinik in Frankreich.

Komitas wird oft allzu einseitig als Sammler von Volksmusik betrachtet; dabei war er auch ein Komponist von großer Eigenart, der in seinen Liedern die Grundzüge der armenischen Folklore zu etwas sehr Persönlichem verarbeitete, das in der Musik des beginnenden 20. Jahrhunderts keine Vorbilder hat. 26 dieser Lieder präsentiert die armenische Sopranistin Hasmik Papian im Duo mit dem Klaviervirtuosen Vardan Mamikonian auf sehr geschmack- und gefühlvolle, jedoch nie sentimentalisierte Art; man spürt die tiefe Verbundenheit der Interpreten mit der Musik ihres Landsmanns. Als Zugabe gibt es neun bislang größtenteils unveröffentlichte Lieder auf deutsche Texte, die Komitas während seines Studiums in Berlin zwischen 1896 und 1899 schrieb – sympathische Miniaturen, die das Bild dieses Komponisten ergänzen,

ohne indes Wesentliches hinzuzufügen.

[klassik.com](http://klassik.com) Dezember 2006 (Andreas Schubert - 2006.12.13)  
source: <http://magazin.klassik.com/reviews/revie...>



### Armenische Seele

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Le Républicain Lorrain 22. Janvier 08 ( - 2008.01.22)

**Le Républicain  
Lorrain**

### La diva arménienne

La diva arménienne

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Muzyka21 5 (82) - maj 2007 (Wilfried Górny - 2007.05.01)



Hasmik Papian jest jedn? ze ?piewaczek najbardziej cenionych przez polskich...

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Ópera Actual OA 100 (mayo de 2007) (Xaver Cester - 2007.05.01)



Entre la nómina de pueblos machacados por la historia -o mejor dicho, por otras...

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Partituren Nr. 7 - November/Dezember 2006 (Volker Tarnow - 2006.11.01)

Partituren  
DAS MAGAZIN FÜR KLASSISCHE MUSIK

Der Sopran Hasmik Papians, sehnsuchtsvoll und weithin tragend, dringt wie von fernen Bergen zu uns herüber. Pater Komitas betrifft jeden Menschen, er schuf keine exklusive Nationalmusik. Freilich vergegenwärtigen so berühmte Lieder wie Ohne Obdach; Rufe, Kranich und Ach, liebes Reh das Schicksal des armenischen Volkes; in ihrer Mischung aus slawischem Tiefsinn und orientalischen Verzierungen sind sie durchaus eigen – aber ihre Botschaft ist ebenso human wie universell. Ein bedeutendes Erbe der Menschheit! Komitas sammelte tausende dieser Bauernlieder um 1900 kurz vor ihrer Vernichtung und bearbeitete sie als Chor- oder Klavierlied. Audites Edition kommt einer zweiten Rettung gleich.

Pizzicato 11/2006 (Rémy Franck - 2006.11.01)

pizzicato  
Rémy Franck's Journal about Classical Music

### Die Lieder des Komitas

Der armenische Geistliche Pater Komitas (1869-1935) war ein eminenter Musiker. 1915 bewahrte ihn das Schicksal auf wundersame Weise vor dem Genozid der Armenier durch die Türken. Am 24. April 1915, dem Tag, an dem der staatlich organisierte Völkermord an den Armeniern im Osmanischen Reich begann, wurde Komitas in Konstantinopel mit einigen Hundert weiteren armenischen Intellektuellen verhaftet und deportiert. Während fast alle anderen Deportierten ermordet wurden, ordnete Innenminister Talaat Pascha die Rückkehr von acht Häftlingen an, darunter auch Komitas. Vermutlich hatten der amerikanische Botschafter Henry Morgenthau und der Dichter Emin Yurdakul für Komitas interveniert. Doch bei seiner Rückkehr fand der Komponist seine wertvolle Sammlung von Liedern verwüstet vor. Was erhalten blieb, befand sich in chaotischem Zustand. Er konnte sich von den Geschehnissen, die er miterleben musste, nicht mehr gänzlich erholen. Freunde lieferten ihn im Jahr darauf wegen seines sich zunehmend verschlechternden psychischen Zustandes in ein türkisches Militärhospital ein. Von dort wurde er 1919 nach Paris gebracht, wo er zunächst in eine Privatklinik in Ville-Evrard eingewiesen wurde. Ab 1922 bis zu seinem Tod im Jahr 1935 lebte er völlig in sich zurückgezogen in der psychiatrischen Klinik von Villejuif.

Komitas hatte also, wie Bartok und Kodaly, Volksmusik gesammelt und dazu Armenien kreuz und quer bereist. Er komponierte aber auch viele eigene Lieder (u.a. auf Texte von Goethe, Lenau, Storm und Uhland) und blieb dabei dem Stil des armenischen Lieds treu. Aus dem, was aus seinen Sammlungen erhalten geblieben ist, schöpften die armenische Sopranistin Hasmik Papian, eine Sängerin, die uns hier in Luxemburg in so manchen denkwürdigen Operaufführungen schon so viele schöne Stunden bescherte, und der armenische Pianist Vardan Mamikonian, 35 Titel, die ein eindrucksvolles Programm ergaben, dessen Wirkung man sich nicht entziehen kann, sofern man bereit ist, dieser wunderschönen Musik und den tiefschürfenden Texten seine Aufmerksamkeit zu widmen.

[www.anaclase.com](http://www.anaclase.com) 4/2007 (Hervé Kœnig - 2007.04.01)

**ANACLASE**  
la musique au jour le jour

La France fête actuellement l'Arménie, ce qui invite le mélomane à...

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[www.classicalcdreview.com](http://www.classicalcdreview.com) February 2007 (R.E.B. - 2007.02.01)

**CLASSICAL CD REVIEW**  
*a site for the serious record collector*

Audite's SACD features music of Armenian composer Father Komitas who was born in...

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[www.diverdi.com](http://www.diverdi.com) Diciembre 2006 (Norberto Tauste - 2006.12.01)

DIVERDI.COM

**Komitas – Un homenaje**

Komitas – Un homenaje

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[www.midilibre.com](http://www.midilibre.com) 27 septembre 2008 (Michèle Fizaine - 2008.09.27)

**Midi Libre**

**Classique Hasmik Papian dans la lumière de l'Arménie**

Classique Hasmik Papian dans la lumière de l'Arménie

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www.parutions.com 27/10/2006 (Jean-Jacques Millo - 2006.10.27)



Considéré comme le Bartok arménien, Komitas laisse, comme son homologue...

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