

PLAYS ON ALL CD- AND SACD- PLAYERS!



Press Info:

**HOMMAGE
À KOMITAS**

*Armenian and German Lieder
by Komitas (1869-1935)*

**HASMIK PAPIAN, SOPRANO
VARDAN MAMIKONIAN, PIANO**

The Armenian monk Soghomon Soghomonian, better known by his priest's name of Komitas, collected hundreds of folk-songs around 1900 during the course of his travels through the Armenian highlands between Van Lake, the Black Sea and the southern Caucasus. These songs, handed down orally over the centuries, express all the archaism of this ancient people's un-mistakeable culture – a culture than was nearly extinguished in the genocide of the Armenians during the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1917. Komitas was himself a victim of mass arrests and deportation in April 1915; although he escaped being murdered, the experience left him a mentally broken man and he spent the rest of his life in psychiatric institutions. This composer and ethnomusicologist, educated in Berlin amongst other places, also occupied himself with the liturgical tradition of the Armenian Apostolic Church; today he is considered the founder of classical modern Armenian music. He set a portion of his collected folk melodies as arts songs (and also choral works). This SACD aims to present a representative recording of the best-known songs of this cultural treasure to a wider listening public; this music is largely unknown except in Armenia and amongst the worldwide Armenian Diaspora. The immediately gripping Lieder, so typical of the Christian-Armenian identity on the point of intersection between Orient and Occident, tell of majestic mountains and of longing for the lost homeland, of the profound and ever-continuing suffering of this people, as well as of love.

Alongside 26 Armenian Lieder altogether, the CD also contains nine Lieder to texts by German poets (including Goethe, Lenau and Uhland) set by Komitas during his period of study in Berlin. In these Lieder, recorded here for the first time, one can hear how familiar the Armenian composer was with the Western tradition extending from Schubert to Hugo Wolf and Richard Strauss. The booklet includes the complete Lied texts, printed in Armenian, German, English and French, as well as a detailed text on the life and work of Komitas.

Hasmik Papian has been at home on the world's great operatic stages for many years. She has regularly appeared in roles including Tosca, Aida and Norma at the Met, La Scala, the Bastille and the State Operas of Berlin, Munich, Stuttgart, Dresden and Vienna, whilst simultaneously maintaining a lively relationship with her native Armenia. Hasmik Papian has already presented recitals of Komitas in London's Wigmore Hall, in Brussels, Munich and Washington, amongst other places. The young Armenian pianist **Vardan Mamikonian** performs regularly in renowned international concert halls such as Carnegie Hall, the Herkulesaal in Munich, the Tonhalle Zurich and the Salle Gaveau in Paris; alongside the classical-romantic repertoire (Liszt, Chopin, Rachmaninov, etc.) he has also become well known for his interpretations of the works of the Armenian composer Arno Babadjanian.

The present SACD production presents a number of special features, both in terms of content and of interpretation. These are reflected in the exclusive appearance of the SACD, with its visually convincing hard-cover packaging and golden foil embossing – sure signs of high quality and elegance.

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