

**GRAND
PIANO**

Includes WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

SECRETS OF ARMENIA

PIANO WORKS BY

KARA-MURZA • KORGANOV • MELIKIAN

YULIA AYRAPETYAN



SECRETS OF ARMENIA

PIANO WORKS BY
CHRISTOPHOR KARA-MURZA (1853–1902)
GENARY KORGANOV (1858–1890)
ROMANOS MELIKIAN (1883–1935)

YULIA AYRAPETYAN, *piano*

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Engineers: Sergey Parfenov (1, 2, 4–12), Matthew Snyder (3, 13–15)

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Piano Technician: Sergey Parfenov

Booklet Notes: Mikael Ayrapetyan

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CHRISTOPHOR KARA-MURZA (1853–1902)		
1	POT-POURRI SUR DES AIRS ARMÉNIENS, OP. 11 (1885)	10:47
2	MARCHE FUNÈBRE (1890)	06:47
GENARY KORGANOV (1858–1890)		
3	BAYATI (1887)	06:01
4	RHAPSODIE ARMÉNIENNE, OP. 15 (1892)	10:17
ROMANOS MELIKIAN (1883–1935)		
	ZMRUKHTI ('EMERALDS') (1918) (arr. Villy Sargsyan [b. 1930], 2019)*	15:46
5	No. 1. Black Partridge	01:38
6	No. 2. The Night Has Come	02:35
7	No. 3. The Infant and the Brook	01:36
8	No. 4. Don't Cry	01:55
9	No. 5. You Shine	02:14
10	No. 6. I am a Nightingale	02:17
11	No. 7. Sprout	01:21
12	No. 8. Lullaby	01:49
13	VARD ('THE HEATHROSE') (1912) (arr. V. Sargsyan, 2020)*	02:34
14	ASHUN ('AUTUMN SONG') (1912) (arr. V. Sargsyan, 2020)*	02:05
15	SARE GYALIN ('RED-HAIRED BRIDE') (1913) (arr. V. Sargsyan, 2020)*	02:46

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WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING

TOTAL TIME: 57:25

SECRETS OF ARMENIA

Christophor Kara-Murza (1853–1902)

Christophor (Khachatur) Makarovich Kara-Murza (Arm. Բրիստապիոր Կարա-Մուրզա; born 2 March 1853 in Karasubazar (now Bilohirsk), Crimea; died 9 April 1902 in Tiflis (now Tbilisi), Georgia, studied piano, flute and music theory as a child. In 1882 he moved to Transcaucasia, where he visited a large number of Armenian villages and towns, collecting the music of several hundred folk songs and dances. In 1885 he began extensive and active concert activity. As a choral conductor, he organised hundreds of concerts, popularising polyphonic singing and striving to introduce it into the lives of the Armenian public. He created more than 90 large folk choirs in the cities of the Caucasus and Southern Russia, ranging from 40 to 150 participants each. Many of the participants of the choirs created by Kara-Murza became famous professional singers, such as Leon Isetsky, Nerses Shakhlamian, Beglar Amirjanian and Tsovak, who then continued Kara-Murza's educational initiative after his untimely death. Kara-Murza wrote numerous songs and romances based on the words of Armenian poets, as well as instrumental pieces, music for dramatic performances and the unfinished opera *Shushan*. He also set music to Mikael Nalbandian's *The Song of the Italian Girl*, which became the anthem of the First and Third Republics of Armenia. In addition, Kara-Murza wrote a large number of articles as a music critic, in which he touched upon important musical and aesthetic issues for that period of time, and musicological reviews of various concerts, opera performances and the creative activities of contemporary musicians, among other topics. For 17 years, from 1885 until his premature death in 1902, Kara-Murza managed to give around 248 concerts and write 320 songs. He often gave concerts in Tiflis, Baku, Alexandropol (Gyumri), Yerevan, Vagharshapat (Etchmiadzin), Astrakhan, Crimea, New Nakhichevan, Constantinople and other places, alongside organising choirs.

During his concert tours, the composer actively promoted folk songs, laid the foundation of Armenian concert culture and thereby gave music a socio-political influential force and turned it into a powerful incentive for the artistic education of the people. The greatest value in all the versatile musical and educational activities of Kara-Murza for the development of Armenian musical culture lies in his ascetic work associated with the preparation of choral arrangement collections of Armenian folk music.

Pot-pourri sur des airs arméniens, Op. 11 (1885)

In *Pot-pourri sur des airs arméniens, Op. 11*, one of Kara-Murza's major works, the composer uses folk songs framed by melodic interludes, perfectly interpreting Armenian folk music and combining it with Western European piano traditions and techniques.

It is noteworthy that the last song used by the composer in *Op. 11* is today known as the Armenia national anthem, and familiar to the general public under the name *Our Fatherland*. The anthem is attributed to composer Barsegh Kanachian, although this is in fact erroneous, as the melody is a folk tune, with Kara-Murza using it long before Kanachyan received his professional musical education.

Marche funèbre (1890)

This funeral march reflects the depth of grief, and draws parallels with the music and stylistics leanings of classic European works.

Genary Korganov (1858–1890)

Russian composer and pianist Genary Osipovich Korganov [Karganov] (born 30 April [12 May] 1858 in Kvareli, Georgia; died on 23 February [7 March] 1890 in Rostov-on-Don, Russia) was the son of Major General Osip Ivanovich Korganov (1811–1870). Five of his brothers and sisters – Elena Teryan-Korganova, Nina Korganova (Dariali), Maria Korganova (Svetadze), Ivan (Hovhannes) and Konstantin Korganov – were vocalists. Genary Korganov began his musical education in Tiflis under the guidance of Eduard Epstein. He went on to study at the Leipzig Conservatory from 1874 to 1877 with Carl Reinecke, Salomon Jadassohn and E.F. Wenzel, and from 1877 to 1879 he improved his skills as a pianist at the St Petersburg Conservatory with Louis Brassin and Gustav Kross. Returning to Georgia in 1880 and settling in Tiflis, he entered the civil service, continuing to study composition in his spare time. He gave concerts in the city as a soloist, and was part of Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov's inner circle. A music critic for newspapers in Tiflis, he also participated in the work of the Tiflis branch of the Imperial Russian Musical Society, and in 1889 was its delegate to St Petersburg as part of the celebrations commemorating Anton Rubinstein's anniversary. He died on the return journey.

Korganov wrote a number of works for piano, such as the fantasia *Bayati, Arabesques, Miniatures* and *Watercolours*, and also wrote for voice, including the romances *Serenade of Don Juan, Sharp Axe*, with words by A.K. Tolstoy, and *What in the silence of the nights*, which sets a text by A.N. Maikov. Some of these enjoyed a certain popularity during the author's lifetime, in particular Arthur Hartman's violin arrangements of his works, which were published in the United States. His style incorporates both the influence of Rimsky-Korsakov and the use of local Transcaucasian melodies: according to the Armenian musicologist Sh. Apoyan, 'Korganov's works related to Armenian themes are of great value for the formation of Armenian piano music.'

Bayati (1887) • Rhapsodie arménienne, Op. 15 (1892)

Bayati and *Rhapsodie arménienne* represent pictures of everyday life in Armenia. Korganov depicts scenes from people's lives, intertwining folk motifs with technical elements, in a similar way to Liszt in his *Hungarian Rhapsodies*.

Romanos Melikian (1883–1935)

Romanos Ovakimovich (Roman Akimovich) Melikian (Arm. Ռոմանոս Մելիքյան; born 1 October 1883; Kizlyar, died 30 March 1935, Yerevan) was an Armenian composer, musical and public figure, choirmaster and music teacher. Although we know some biographical details, his life is shrouded in mystery, as he never gave a single interview. Born into the family of Akim (Hovakim) Melikian, he had showed an interest in music since childhood, but began his studies relatively late, graduating from the Rostov Music College in 1905. He then continued his musical education in Moscow until 1907 with Boleslav Yavorsky and Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov, who had taught in Tiflis and used Russian, Georgian and Armenian folklore in his compositions. At the end of the 19th century an influential Armenian community lived in the capital of the Don Republic, and its members would have been familiar with Ippolitov-Ivanov through his *Armenian Rhapsody* of 1895, recognising the folk tunes used within it. While still a student, Melikian tried to write music based on choral singing, but it was Ippolitov-Ivanov who determined the creative landmark of the young composer – the national romance. After leaving Moscow, probably on the advice of a teacher, Melikian went to Tiflis, where he could enrich his work through the abundance of diverse folklore. It was here, in 1908, that he participated in the organisation of the Armenian 'Musical League' society. From 1910 to 1914 Melikian studied at the St Petersburg Conservatory in the class of Vasily Kalafati and Maximilian Steinberg. In 1921 he founded a music studio in Yerevan, which became the national conservatory

in 1923, serving as rector for only three years. The end of the Russian Civil War saw a truly fruitful period in the composer's career, as he travelled around the cities of Armenia, popularising choral art and creating studios throughout the country. There was then a job at the House of Armenian Art, and he later became the first artistic director of the National Opera Theatre, now the A.A. Spendiarov Opera and Ballet Theatre.

Melikian is the creator of the Armenian romance. His mastery of the features of Armenian national melody and the originality of his harmonic language had a great influence on Armenian music. He also made a great contribution to the development of Soviet mass song. He created many versions and adaptations of Armenian folk songs which reflect his musical and aesthetic principles. He wrote pieces for piano, romances for voice and piano, including the cycles *Autumn Lines* (1907–13), *Emeralds* (1918, published in 1928) and *Sequins* (1922, published in 1949), collections of songs such as *Songs of New Life*, *Red Army Songs* and *Pioneer Songs*, and arrangements of folk songs, including *Sketches*. His legacy can be found in the melodies of which, with the precision of a jeweller, he manages to finely interpret the nuances within the texts of Armenian poets and writers. He is the namesake of the Romanos Melikian State Musical College in Yerevan, which is still operating today.

Zmrukhti ('Emeralds') (1918)

Melikian's most famous cycles of romances include *Sequins* (1922) and *Emeralds* (1918). The hallmark of his creativity is in an almost indescribable emotional expressiveness. This arrangement of *Emeralds* by Villy Sargsyan reveals to the performer and listeners Melikian's rich imagination, which is organically transferred to the solo piano. Lyrics of love, philosophical reflections, pastoral sketches and scenes from folk life – all this is brought to life in the rhythm of musical narration. The vocal parts, saturated with choral singing, were originally written in literary Armenian language, conveying the finest nuances of the human soul, and evoking a deep sense of the poetry and beauty of nature. This link to Armenia's folk heritage was encapsulated by the Armenian artist and contemporary of the composer Grigor Sharbabchian, who depicted Melikian surrounded by Armenian peasants after watching the master record motifs performed by folk instrumentalists.

Vard ('The Heathrose') (1912) • Ashun ('Autumn Song') (1912)

Sare Gyalin ('Red-Haired Bride') (1913)

Melikian based *Vard* ('The Heathrose') on the poems of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and *Ashun* ('Autumn Song') on the poems of Hovhannes Tumanian. *Sare Gyalin* ('Red-Haired Bride') is based on a folk song.

These works give a unique insight into the composer's national identity. To fully understand this, one needs to be familiar with the genesis of the musical language of another Armenian composer, Komitas Vardapet (1869–1935). The respected Armenian composer, conductor and pedagogue, Arshak Adamian, stated that 'the origins [of Komitas's musical language] can be found in a certain principle of combining the language of the national (rustic) music with that of the European musical culture.' One could argue that both Melikian and Komitas share a similar principle. Melikian's musical language is a creative synthesis of rural *gusan* ('bard') and urban national songs using the expressive techniques of Western music. However, despite this similarity in compositional approach, Melikian's music displays certain differences dictated by his own artistic personality – for example, his music is never based on the direct quotation of folk melodies.

Mikael Ayrapetyan

YULIA AYRAPETYAN

Yulia Ayrapetyan is a US-based pianist, producer and pedagogue, establishing herself as one of today's exciting young artists after making her debut at the Stern Auditorium at Carnegie Hall in 2023. She has attracted international recognition for her exceptional artistry, displaying striking assurance, imagination, artistic approach, and remarkable consistency in the musical integrity and creative insight of her performances. She is also known for her natural musicality, tonal expressiveness, and as a benchmark interpreter of Komitas and Melikian, and has performed in the United States, Europe, Russia, Armenia and China.

Born in 1988 in Bryansk, Russia, Ayrapetyan studied in Moscow, and continues to uphold the performing traditions of the Russian piano school. Her repertoire ranges from the Baroque to the contemporary and includes rarely performed works by Armenian composers. She has given the US, Chinese, Europe, Russian and Armenian premieres of forgotten Armenian piano music, which she rediscovered. It has since become her passion to perform this music on the world's stages.

She actively supports and participates in recordings and concerts for her husband Mikael Ayrapetyan's project, Secrets of Armenia.

Yulia Ayrapetyan has actively studied various musical and pedagogical systems, and in 2012 created and implemented her pedagogical methodology for children, based on accessibility, ease of perception and individual approach.

www.yuliaayrapetyan.com



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ROMANOS MELIKIAN



GENARY KORGANOV



CHRISTOPHOR KARA-MURZA

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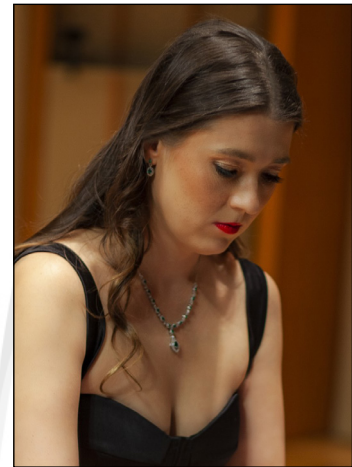


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The music in this collection reflects the spirit of Armenia through dances and songs that have their origins in scenes from everyday Armenian life. Korganov's pictorial *Bayati* is an especially vivid representation, while Kara-Murza's *Pot-pourri sur des airs arméniens* is a significant work, combining Armenian folk music with the Western piano tradition. Melikian's *Emeralds* is one of his famous cycles of romances, hallmarked by a strong sense of poetic narrative and a vivid emotional expressiveness. This album of Armenian piano discoveries is played by Yulia Ayrapetyan, a specialist in the music of Armenia.



YULIA
AYRAPETYAN



SCAN FOR MORE
INFORMATION

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