

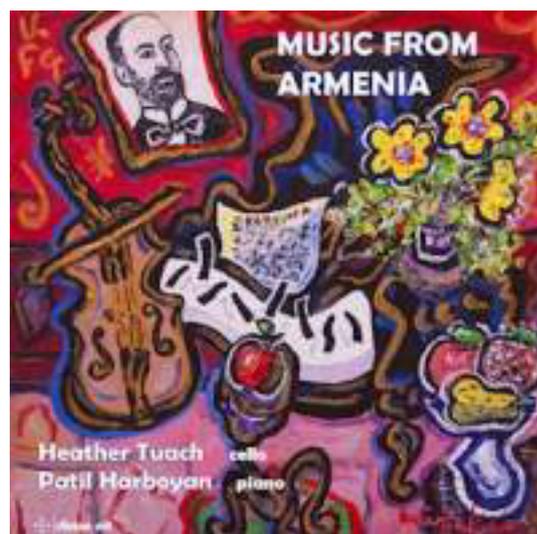
CD REVIEW 111

Music from Armenia for cello and piano
Heather Tuach (cello) and Patil Harboyan (piano)
Divine Art dda25075 (56' 52'')

Alexander Arutiunian: Impromptu
Gomidas: Groung arr Aslamazian
Arno Babajanian: Vocalise arr Talalyan
Haro Stepanian: Sonata for cello and piano Op 35

Gomidas in arrangements by Andreasian, Talalyan and Aslamazian

It's Spring
Striding, Beaming
Tall like a Poplar tree
Apricot Tree
Dances of Shoushig
Strolling
Ah, dear Maral
The sky has clouded
Dear Shogher



Gomidas Vartabed is said to be the founder of Armenian classical music and has kept their musical culture alive and here we have simple arrangements of vocal folk music. He also made a major contribution to the Armenian Church and composed a Divine Liturgy for male chorus. His dates are 1869 to 1935.

The most important work on this CD is the Cello Sonata by Haro Stepanian born in Elizabetpole in 1897 and died in Yerevan in 1966. He studied at the Gnessin School in Moscow and then at the Leningrad university graduating in 1930. He collected folk songs of Armenia and was taken with the beauty of his country for which he had a great love which is shown in much of his music. He was professor at the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory from 1930 to 1934 and chairman of the Armenian Composers Union from 1937 to 1941. He composed opera, three symphonies, four string quartets, cello and violin sonatas and piano music and vocal works based on texts from Armenian poets.



The Cello Sonata shows some Russian influence but it also reveals his love for his country and its beautiful landscapes.

The short pieces by Arutiunian and Babajanian are attractive and not slight.

Both the performers are first class. Heather Tuach is Canadian and a member of the Fitzwilliam String Quartet which has toured throughout the UK, the USA, Canada, Italy, France, Germany, Slovenia, Denmark and South Africa. Among the repertoire are the quartets of John Ramsay and a jazz infusion album of works by Uwe Steinmetz. If I may be allowed a personal comment I think it is a pity when great and 'serious' musicians resort to lesser music.

She has a glorious and beautiful tone and, although I have not seen the music, her performances are attractive and appealing. I would love to hear her performance of Shostakovich's Cello Concerto no 2.

Patil Harboyan is an accomplished pianist, chamber music player and teacher and has worked with many fine musicians and had the advantage of having Gilbert Kalisch as her teacher on a full scholarship at Stoney Brook University in New York. She is a founder member of the Ararat Trio. She has received awards and included in her repertoire is the Second Concerto of Liszt. That she is a fine pianist is clearly evidenced in this recording.

The sound is exemplary and the booklet notes are excellent.

This CD is important and will give deep satisfying pleasure to all who hear it. A real breath of fresh air and let us have some of the major works of Stepanian.

A CD of real joy!

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