

## From the Artistic Director

Dear Concert Patrons,

Welcome to *The Ever-Ringing Belfry: The Legacy of Komitas*, a concert of choral music dedicated to the 140-year anniversary of the birth of Komitas, the founder of Armenian classical music. The Ever-Ringing Belfry was a nickname chosen for Komitas by Parooyr Sevak, one of the greatest Armenian poets of the twentieth century in his renowned poetry book of the same title (“Anlreli Zangakatoon” in Armenian.) Tonight you will hear a colorful selection of sacred and secular choral works by Komitas that will cover different periods of his artistic life. There is no doubt that Komitas deserves a more glorious celebration than what we can offer with our limited resources. However, we are paying our tribute by a detailed study of his heavenly music and by doing our best to bring his spirit, through our singing, due to your continuous support and encouragement.

This is the fourth concert of Armenian music that we have brought to the Bay Area since I joined Bay Area Classical Harmonies in 2007. We first sang just a few pieces as part of a larger program, and today, we are presenting a full concert of Armenian choral works. It has been a great delight to observe the growing enthusiasm of the performers and our audience with respect to this music. At the same time, it has been a challenge for the wonderful non-Armenian singers of the Seemorgh Ensemble and myself to prepare a concert of this scale with very limited time and resources. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity and extend my heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated singers of this ensemble for working so hard to learn the music which, according to Western standards, has unconventional melody, harmony, rhythm, and text. We will continue to sing and we are looking forward to seeing the day when the Seemorgh Ensemble has grown to thirty singers and the group has permanent core members, weekly rehearsals, and a packed performance schedule! If you would like to assist with this unique effort in any capacity, please do not hesitate to help us accelerate our progress.

Tonight, we are thrilled to have Maestro Vahan Mirakian amongst us who will mesmerize your ears by singing two of Komitas’ most popular songs. This year he is celebrating the 50-year anniversary of the inception of his professional singing career and the fifth anniversary of the establishment of Vahan Mirakian Foundation. VM Foundation provides help for the development and the growth of arts and culture. The foundation helps young talent receive the necessary training and education by awarding scholarships and other forms of financial aid. Although Maestro Mirakian currently resides in the Los Angeles area, he has shown great interest in being here at this concert to support our efforts. “The Very Best Collection” of Vahan Mirakian is a wonderful set of four audio CDs that is on sale this evening to support the VM Foundation. This organization would like to support our efforts by donating a portion of the proceeds from the CD sale to the Seemorgh Ensemble. I encourage you to consider adding Maestro Mirakian’s outstanding music to your collection and, at the same time, support two organizations.

Thank you for choosing to be here this evening and I hope you will enjoy the concert.

Best wishes,

Artin Der Minassians  
Artistic Director and Conductor

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\* “Ever-Ringing Belfry,” also translated as “Unceasable Belfry” and “Unsilenceable Belfry.”

# *The Ever-Ringing Belfry*

## The Legacy of Komitas

The Seemorgh Ensemble  
Artin Der Minassians, Artistic Director

**Աղերս Թադէոս Առաքեալի**      **Prayer of Thaddeus the Apostle**

**Հայոց եկեղեցու երկու շարականներ**      **Two Hymns of The Armenian Church**  
    Աղօթք Տէրունական      Lord's Prayer  
    Երգ գիշերային ժամու      Vespers Hymn

**An Den Wassern zu Babel (Psalm)**      **By the Waters of Babylon (Psalm)**

Katherine Howell, *Soprano*  
Joel Klein, *Tenor*

**Հայաստան**      **Armenia**

Vahan Mirakian, *Tenor*

**Հարսանեկան երգեր**      **The Wedding Songs**

    Աղօթք      The Prayer  
    Փեսին արդուզարդը      The Bridegroom's Attire  
    Սաղթանք      The Blessing  
    Աղօթք      The Prayer  
    Փեսին գովքը      Praise of the Bridegroom  
    Կատակ      Banter  
    Հարսի հրաժեշտը      The Bride's Farewell  
    Վարդ, գքե չըմ սիրի      The Praise of Thyme  
    Եղնիկ      The Praise of the Bride  
    Շուրջպար      Circle Dance

Felicia Chen, *Soprano*  
Katherine Howell, *Soprano*  
Simoné Müller-Moore, *Soprano*

INTERMISSION

**Նանոր Nanor**  
Երաժ.՝ Բարսեղ Կանաչեան Composer: Barsegh Kanachian

Felicia Chen, *Soprano*  
Andrew Chung, *Bass*  
Katherine Howell, *Soprano*  
Joel Klein, *Tenor*  
Nasrin Salak, *Alto*

**Գարուն ա It's Springtime...**

Vahan Mirakian, *Tenor*

**Անձրին եկա շաղալն Drizzling Rain...**

Felicia Chen, *Soprano*

**Ալազյազ աչերդ Your Blue Eyes...**

**Զար, զնգր Strike the Bell...**

**Յար ջան արի Come, My Sweetheart...**

**Էսօր ուրբաթ է Today Is Friday...**

**Ջուր կուգա վերին սարեն Water From the High Mountains...**

**Էս գիշեր, լուսնակ գիշեր Tonight, A Moonlit Night...**

**Ոհ, ի՛նչ քաղցր բան O, How Sweet...**

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**Bay Area Classical Harmonies** is deeply grateful for the generosity of the following individuals:

Bryan and Valina Agbabian\*, Ernest Cheonis, James and Stephanie Clambaneva, Artin Der Minassians\*, Scott Fable, Mohammed Hooshmand, Dorothy Jay, Michael Jeon, Dimitri Magganas, Ara and Anait Markosian\*, Dr. Allen Odian and Mrs. Erika Odian\*, Reverend Thomas Paris and Mrs. Vaso Paris, Rafik and Shakeh Sarkissian\*, Norma Yaglijian\*, Peter and Ann Whitehead

\* Supporters of The Seemorgh Ensemble

Please silence all watches, pagers, and cellular phones before the concert begins. No audio, video recording, or photography is permitted during the performance.

# Notes, Texts, and Translations

By Artin Der Minassians – Edited by Garineh Avakian and Mark Shattuck

## Prayer of Thaddeus the Apostle

A patriarch once questioned why the Armenian Church praised all the saints except St. Thaddeus (Saint Jude) the Apostle. The response was that St. Thaddeus slipped their minds because he was too far removed in time from them! However, a few days later, they came up with a prayer for him that started with “The illuminator morning of Armenia, Apostle Thaddeus, why have you gone so far?”<sup>†</sup> The prayer was then approved, set to music, and sung. Komitas’ first attempt in composing was to create a choral arrangement for this prayer! However, it is believed that he improved the original arrangement after returning from Berlin. We will open our concert with the first verse of Komitas’ first song.

Առաւօտ լուսաբեր Հայաստան երկրի,	The illuminator morning of Armenia,
Բուրաստան ծաղկախիտ կողմանցն հիւսիսի:	This flower-filled Northern meadow,
Ո՛հ, մանկունք Միոնի,	O, children of Zion,
Պար առեալ ցնծացէ՛ք,	Start dancing and be exulted,
Ի սոյն խնճոյի:	of this joy!
Նախկին լուսաւորիչ, պսակ պանծալի,	The former Illuminator‡, bearer of a shining crown,
Թաղէս Առաքեալ, ընդէ՛ր կաւ հեռի:	Apostle Thaddeus, why have you gone so far?
Ո՛հ, մանկունք Միոնի,	O, children of Zion,
Պար առեալ ցնծացէ՛ք,	Start dancing and be exulted,
Ի սոյն խնճոյի:	of this joy!

## Two Hymns of the Armenian Church

In late 1906 Paris, with the support of the “Armenian Organization of Paris,” Komitas directed a very large-scale concert of Armenian sacred and secular choral music. In this concert, the chorus was comprised of both French and Armenian singers, and Komitas himself appeared as the composer, conductor, and one of the soloists. The event proved to be an astonishing experience for the French musicians, song-writers, and music critiques who attended the concert. It was after one of his concerts that the renowned French composer Claude Debussy exclaimed excitedly, “Brilliant father Komitas! I bow before your musical genius!”

The following two hymns were among the pieces that Komitas composed for that concert and, with his own hand, created enough copies for all the singers in the ensemble! I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my friend, Marine (Arsine) Arakelian, for introducing me to these unheard gems and several other Komitas’ choral masterpieces. I will gradually include all these works in our repertoire.

<b>Աղօթք Տէրունական</b>	<b>Lord’s Prayer</b>
Հայր մեր որ յերկինս ես,	Our father, which art in Heaven,
Սուրբ եղիցի անուն քո,	Hallowed be thy name,
Եկեսցէ արքայութիւն քո,	Thy kingdom come,
Եղիցին կամք քո որպէս յերկինս և յերկրի,	Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,
Զհաց մեր հանապազորս տուր մեզ այսօր,	Give us this day our daily bread,
Եւ թող մեզ ըզպարտիս մեր,	And forgive us our trespasses,
Որպէս և մեր թողումք մերոց պարտապանաց:	As we forgive those who trespass against us.
Եւ մի տանիր զմեզ ի փորձութիւն,	And lead us not into temptation,
Այլ փրկեա ի չարէ:	But deliver us from evil.
<b>Երգ գիշերային ժամու</b>	<b>Vespers Hymn</b>
Յիշեցուր ի գիշերի զանուն քո Տէ՛ր:	We call your name tonight, O Lord.

<sup>†</sup> Manook Abeghian, *History of the Armenian Old Literature*, Vol. 2, 1964, p. 500.

<sup>‡</sup> St. Thaddeus lived before St. Gregory the Illuminator. Hence, he is the “former” Illuminator.

Բիւեցեն սիրոյք մեր զբան բարի,  
 Եւ լեզուք մեր պատմեցեն,  
 Զգործ երկնաւոր թագավորիդ:  
 Զարթի՛ք փառք իմ զարթիք,  
 Եւ ես զարթեայց առաւօտուց, Ալէլուեա:  
 Զարթիր ընդէր ննջես,  
 Տէ՛ր մի մերժեր զմեզ ի սպառ:  
 Զարթուցեալքս ի զբաղմանէ գիշերային հանգստենէ:  
 Յաւիտեանս յաւիտենից, ամէն: Ալէլուեա:

Our hearts emanate good feelings,  
 And our tongues describe,  
 The glory of your heavenly kingdom.  
 Awaken us! My God, awaken us!  
 And I have been awake since morning, halleluiah!  
 Awaken us from slumber,  
 O Lord, don't refuse us for our exhaustion.  
 Awaken us from the night-time rest.  
 For ever and ever amen, halleluiah!

## An den Wassern zu Babel

This piece was completed in October-November 1896 in Berlin, Germany and premiered on December 23rd, 1966 at the Komitas Conservatory in Yerevan, Armenia. This work was Komitas' "term paper" for his Harmony and Composition class when he was a student at the private conservatory of Professor Richard Schmidt. The text is Old High German translation of Psalm No. 137 (of David), which is a deliberate choice by the composer to protest the unjust events happening to Western Armenians in 1895-96. Beginning in September 1895, Armenians were massacred in every major Turkish Armenian settlement from the Bosphorus to the Caspian Sea. In all, more than 100,000 were slain.<sup>§</sup> It is worth noting that Komitas borrows the opening musical motifs of two Armenian urban-folk tunes *Mayr Araksi aperov* (*By the banks of the Arax river*) and *Yes lsetsi mi anoosh dzayn* (*I heard a sweet voice*) for the solo sections and develops the melody to express the German text.

The concluding words of this piece sound disturbing and, initially, I thought to suppress that text. However, we decided against it to remain true to the music and to the composer. This way, "ideally, at least one person in the audience will be reminded of the many cruelties children suffer now – dashing them against stones has given way to car bombs, dynamite vests, and predator drones – and will feel moved to do something about it."<sup>\*\*</sup> In addition, we wanted to be true to our audience as well. Therefore, "it would not be fair to only present the 'nice' aspect of a subject matter, while covering up its 'unpleasant' aspects."<sup>††</sup>

An den Wassern zu Babel  
 saßen wir und weineten,  
 wenn wir an Zion gedachten...  
 Unsre Harfen hingen wir an die Weiden  
 die drinnen sind.

By the waters of Babylon,  
 we sat and wept,  
 when we remembered Zion...  
 There upon the willows  
 we hung our harps.

Denn daselbst hießen uns singen,  
 Die uns gefangen hielten,  
 und in unserm Heulen fröhlich sein:  
 Lieber singet uns ein Lied von Zion!

For they that carried us away captive,  
 asked us to sing a song,  
 they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying:  
 "Sing us one of the songs of Zion."

Wie sollten wir des Herren Lied singen  
 in fremden Landen?  
 Vergesse ich dein, Jerusalem,  
 so werde meiner Rechten vergessen.

How shall we sing the Lord's song  
 in a foreign land?  
 If I forget you, O Jerusalem,  
 let my right hand wither.

Meine Zunge müsse an meinem Gaumen kleben,  
 wo ich deiner nicht gedenke,  
 wo ich nicht lasse Jerusalem,  
 mein höchste Freude sein.

May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,  
 if I do not keep you in mind,  
 if I do not count Jerusalem,  
 the greatest of my joys.

Herr, gedenke der Kinder Edoms  
 am Tage Jerusalem, die da sagten:  
 Rein ab, rein ab bis auf ihren Boden.

Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom,  
 in the day of Jerusalem, who said:  
 "Raze it, raze it, down to its foundation!"

Du verstörete Tochter Babel,

O daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed;

<sup>§</sup> Stephan Thernstorm, Editor, *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, 1980, p. 138.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Conversation with Mr. John Kelly

<sup>††</sup> Conversation with Ms. Maura Sipila

wohl dem, der dir vergelte,  
wie du uns getan hast.  
Wohl dem, der deine jungen Kinder nimmet  
und zerschmettert sie an dem Stein.

happy shall he be, that rewards you  
as you have served us.  
How blessed will be, he who seizes your little ones  
and dashes them against the rocks.

## Armenia

This popular romance was composed in the early twentieth century in Etchmiadsin, Armenia, before heartbroken Komitas left for Constantinople. What is known and performed from this music today is only part of what Komitas composed. The rest was written on another page of his notebook which was lost. This piece has been performed several times in Constantinople, including March 4, 1914 during a concert performed by Komitas' choir at the American embassy.

Հայաստան, երկիր դրախտավայր,  
Դու մարդկայն ցեղիս օրրան,  
Դու և բնիկ իմ հայրենիք,  
Հայաստան, Հայաստան, Հայաստան,  
Ի վեհ անունդ սիրտ իմ, ո՛հ, հույժ,  
Ոգեվորի ի նոր խրախոյս,  
Եվ անձկայրյաց ի քեզ հուսամ,  
Ի քեզ, ի քեզ հույս իմ միայն՝  
Հայաստան, Հայաստան, Հայաստան:

O Armenia, the paradise,  
You are birth-place of the human race,  
And you are my own native country!  
O Armenia, Armenia, Armenia,  
Of your magnificent name, oh, my heart is energized,  
Do encourage me, my new source of inspiration,  
And after so many years I have high hopes for you,  
For you, for you, my only hope,  
O Armenia, Armenia, Armenia.

## The Wedding Songs

The songs of traditional Armenian rustic weddings have been of particular interest to Komitas. In 1905, as part of a lecture in Tbilisi, Komitas mentioned, "They [the wedding songs] are so many and so mysterious. Their number reaches 78 so far... One important group of the wedding songs is called 'Dsaghkots.' These songs are sung by the friends of the bride in which they praise the bride, resembling her life to a tree, a flower, the moon, etc. But other songs are about the groom, mother in laws, the groom's bachelor and married friends, and so on. A few of them are riddles and happy entertaining songs."<sup>##</sup> The first Wedding Song you will hear tonight is the opening song of the Wedding Songs Suite A (composed in Etchmiadsin, Armenia), which follows with the complete cycle of the Wedding Songs Suite B (composed in 1911-12 in Constantinople, Turkey).

### Աղոթք

Երկնից, գետնից սուրբ գորութիւնով  
Այն ծառն ծաղիկ էր.  
Ծառ ծաղկեցաւ,  
Ծառ բազմեցաւ,  
Կանաչ ու կարմիր:

Էջմիածնա սուրբ գորութիւնով  
Այն ծառն ծաղիկ էր.  
Ծառ ծաղկեցաւ,  
Ծառ բազմեցաւ,  
Կանաչ ու կարմիր:

### Փեսին արդուզարդը

Մեր թագվորին ի՞նչ պիտի:  
Մի քաթան շապիկ պիտի:  
Մեր թագվորին ի՞նչ պիտի:  
Մի քիրման գոտիկ պիտի:  
Մեր թագվորին ի՞նչ պիտի:

### Prayer

From heaven and earth, with the holy power,  
That tree was a tender flower,  
The tree blossomed,  
The tree wreathed in,  
Green and red.

With the holy power of Etchmiadsin,  
That tree was a tender flower,  
The tree blossomed,  
The tree wreathed in,  
Green and red.

### The Bridegroom's Attire

What could our king (i.e., the groom) need?  
A linen shirt, indeed!  
What could our king need?  
A beautiful belt (red sash), indeed!  
What could our king need?

<sup>##</sup> Komitas, Articles and Studies, 1941, Yerevan, pp. 12 & 30.

Մի գոյգ լավ գուլպա պիտի:  
 Մեր թագվորին ի՞նչ պիտի:  
 Մի գոյգ լավ կոշիկ պիտի:

A fine pair of socks, indeed!  
 What could our king need?  
 A fine pair of shoes, indeed!

**Մաղթանք**

Գացեք, բերեք թագվորամեր,  
 Որ գա նստե դարպաս անե,  
 Ծնրիկ զարկե սուրբ սեղանին,  
 Հրամե բարին մեր թագվորին:  
 - Աստված շնորհավոր անե:

**The Blessing**

Go and bring the bridegrooms' mother,  
 So she might grace us with her presence,  
 And, kneeling before the sacred wedding table,  
 To wish her best to our king.  
 - May God bless him. §§

Գացեք, բերեք թագվորահեր,  
 Որ գա բանա դուռ մաղազին,  
 Հանե զխաչ փոկ, նոր պահունի,  
 Բերե բաշխե մեր թագվորին:  
 - Աստված շնորհավոր անե:

Go and bring the bridegroom's father,  
 To come and open the door of the cellar,  
 And take out the sash and the finest clothes he's kept there,  
 For the adornment of our king.  
 - May God bless him.

Գացեք, բերեք կաքավ քարեն,  
 Որ գա նստե սեյրան անե,  
 Ծնրիկ դնե սուրբ սեղանին,  
 Աստծու բարին մեր թագվորին:

Go and bring the partridge of the mountain,  
 So he can come, sing and share our joy,  
 And, kneeling before the sacred wedding table,  
 To wish God's blessing to our king.

**Աղոթք**

Օրհնյա լ բարերար Աստված,  
 Կա մքն որհնյալ մեր արարողին,  
 Զուգեցինք, հա՛, թամամեցինք,  
 Զխաչն ի վրեն բազմեցուցինք:

**The Prayer**

Hallowed and gracious God,  
 Blessed be Thy will, our creator,  
 We've dressed him up and decked him out,  
 And laid the cross upon his chest.

**Փեսին գովքը**

Մեր թագվորն էր խաչ,  
 Խաչվառ խաչ ու մաչ,  
 Պսակն էր կարմիր, արևն էր կանաչ:

**Praise of the Bridegroom**

Our king with his cross,  
 And his crisscrossing stripes,  
 His youthful, sunny head, adorned with a crimson crown.

Մեր թագվորն էր խաչ,  
 Հայոց խաչ ու մաչ,  
 Զիուկն էր հրեղեն, թագվորն էր վրբեն:

Our king with his cross,  
 And his Armenian crisscrossing stripes,  
 A fine king he was, sitting on his fiery steed.

**Կատակ**

Էն դիզան, բետ-բետ դիզան, տեսեք էն ո՞րն է:  
 Էն դիզան, բետ-բետ դիզան՝ գեղի ռեսներն է:  
 Ճնճղներ ճվլլալեն, տեսեք էն ո՞րն է:  
 Ճնճղներ ճվլլալեն՝ էն տիրացուքն է:  
 Էն արև, երկնուց արև, տեսեք էն ո՞րն է:  
 Էն արև, երկնուց արև՝ մեր թագավորն է:  
 Էն լուսին ամպերի մեջ, տեսեք էն ո՞րն է:  
 Էն լուսին ամպերի մեջ՝ մեր թագուհին է:

**Banter**

Tell me, what are those big mounting piles?  
 They are none other than our village lords.  
 Tell me, what are those warbling sparrows?  
 They are none other than our deacons.  
 Tell me, what is that radiant sun in the sky?  
 He's none other than our king.  
 Tell me, what is that moon behind the clouds?  
 She is none other than our queen (i.e., the bride).

**Հարսի հրաժեշտը**

Դու՛ն հալալ մերիկ,  
 Եկած կը տանեն սրտեղ դալարիկ:

**The Bride's Farewell**

Oh dear mother,  
 They came to take a green sprig from your heart.

Դու՛ն հալալ քուրիկ,  
 Եկած կը տանեն սրտեղ դալարիկ:

Oh dear sister,  
 They came to take a green sprig from your heart.

§§ When someone brought a gift and showed it to the guests, they would respond with this blessing.

**Վարդ, զքե չըմ սիրի**

Վա ըդ, ըզքե չը մ սիրի, վա յ, վա յ,  
Քյո մերն էլ փուշ էր, վա յ, վա յ:  
Հագա ը որ փուշ էր, վա յ թագուհի,  
Հոտիկն անուշ էր:

Ասմի՛ն, քե չը մ սիրի, վա յ, վա յ,  
Կապուտ ծաղիկ էր, վա յ, վա յ:  
Հագա ը կապուտ էր, վա յ թագուհի,  
Կանաչ խաճեն էր:

Սուսա՛մ, քե չը մ սիրի, վա յ, վա յ,  
Սարեր դրշուշ էր, վա յ, վա յ:  
Հագա ը դրշուշ էր, վա յ թագուհի,  
Հոտիկն անուշ էր:

Սոսո՛ւն, քե չը մ սիրի, վա յ, վա յ,  
Ասա քար կըլներ, վա յ, վա յ:  
Հագա ը ասա էր, վա յ թագուհի,  
Քան հմեն թագա էր:

**Եղնիկ**

Եղնի՛կ, դու ո՞ր սարն ես արծել:  
Ասիս-Մասիս սարն եմ արծել:  
Եղնի՛կ, դու ո՞ր ջուրն ես խմել:  
Սառն աղբյուրի ջուրն եմ խմել:

Եղնի՛կ, դու ո՞ր սարն ես քնել:  
Հայոց Անի սարն եմ քնել:  
Եղնի՛կ, դու ո՞ր ծառն ես քերվել:  
Ծառ խնկենի ծառն եմ քերվել:

**Շուրջպար**

Թագվորի մեր, դո՛ւս արի,  
Տես քե ինչե՛ր ենք բերե,  
Թագվո՛րի մեր, դուս արի,  
Քե ջուր բերող ենք բերե:

Թագվորի մեր, դո՛ւս արի,  
Տես քե ինչե՛ր ենք բերե,  
Թագվո՛րի մեր, դուս արի,  
Քե կով կթող ենք բերե:

Թագվորի մեր, դո՛ւս արի,  
Տես քե ինչե՛ր ենք բերե,  
Թագվո՛րի մեր, դուս արի,  
Քե թաղթ ավլող ենք բերե:

Թագվորի մեր, դո՛ւս արի,  
Տես քե ինչե՛ր ենք բերե,  
Թագվո՛րի մեր, դուս արի,  
Քե գլուխ դմփող ենք բերե:

**The Praise of Thyme**

Rose, I don't like you, alas!  
For your mother was a thorn, alas!  
Although a thorn, my queen, alas!  
It had a scent so sweet.

Lilac, I don't like you, alas!  
Because you were blue, alas!  
Although blue, my queen, alas!  
It was like a green chickweed.

Sesame, I don't like you, alas!  
For you were a mountain shoot, alas!  
Although a mountain shoot, my queen, alas!  
It had a scent so sweet.

Primrose, I don't like you, alas!  
Because you had a stony stem, alas!  
Although a stem of stone, my queen, alas!  
It had a taste so fresh.

**The Praise of the Bride**

O doe, what mount have you grazed upon?  
I have grazed on mount Masis.  
O doe, where have you quenched your thirst?  
I have drunk the waters of the icy spring.

O doe, on which mountain have you slept?  
I have slept on Armenian mount Ani.  
O doe, which tree have you rubbed against?  
I have rubbed against the gum tree.

**Circle Dance**

Groom's mother come out,  
See what we've brought to you!  
Groom's mother come out,  
We've brought a water-bearer to you!

Groom's mother come out,  
See what we've brought to you!  
Groom's mother come out,  
We've brought a milk-maid to you!

Groom's mother come out,  
See what we've brought to you!  
Groom's mother come out,  
We've brought a floor-sweeper to you!

Groom's mother come out,  
See what we've brought to you!  
Groom's mother come out,  
We've brought a head-bumper to you!

INTERMISSION

## Nanor

Among Barsegh Kanachian's choral works, Nanor can be considered the most exemplary, the most beautiful, the longest, and the most Armenian! He composed this masterpiece in 1943 in Beirut, Lebanon. Nanor represents a pilgrimage to Saint Karapet monastery in Moosh\*\*\* and is based on a story by Sooren Babakhanian. St. Karapet was known to Armenians as one of the saints who would grant everyone's desires. Therefore, large groups of Armenians would go to the monastery every year to deliver their prayers. The first few measures of this piece picture the gathering of pilgrims as voices are added gradually one after the other. Voices become more prominent and organized, and induce an impression of a forward-moving crowd. The music then evolves like a motion picture by vocal representation of the scenes one after the other. The pilgrims arrive at the monastery and after a short prayer they culminate their journey with tasting pomegranate wine and joyful dancing. This short musical drama incorporates two distinct elements of a human mind: the sacred element represented by the faithful pilgrims and the secular element represented by the fun-loving drinkers.

### The Pilgrims' Journey

Նանոր, նանոր, հա նանոր,  
Զնկլիկ մնկլիկ հա նանոր,  
Չանկլի դիվան, Սուրբ Կարապետ,  
Քրզի կուգանք խունկ ու մոմով,  
Ոլոր մոլոր ճամփաներով,  
Քրզի կուգանք լուսնի լուսով:

Մուշո Սուլթան Սուրբ Կարապետ,  
Ճուղապ կուտաս ձիավորին,  
Մուրազ կուտաս ոտավորին,  
Գլուխ եղար ճգնավորաց,  
Պարծանք եղար մարտիրոսաց,  
Երեք հարյուր հայրապետաց,  
Սրբոց գլուխ Սուրբ Կարապետ:

Սուրբ Կարապետ բարձր է բոլոր,  
Ճամփա ունի ոլոր մոլոր,  
Քրզի կուգանք ոլոր մոլոր ճամփաներով,  
Լուսնի լուսով:

Խմենք նոան հատ գինի,  
Գունը արուն կը լմանի,  
Խմենք նոան հատ գինի,  
Գինին անուշ, սերն անուշ,  
Սերը սիրողին վայլե,  
Գինին խմողին անուշ,  
Խմենք ասենք շատ անուշ,  
Գինին անուշ, սերն անուշ:

Նանոր, նանոր, հա նանոր,  
Զնկլիկ մնկլիկ հա նանոր,  
Չանկլի դիվան Սուրբ Կարապետ,  
Քրզի կուգանք խունկ ու մոմով,  
Ոլոր մոլոր ճամփաներով,  
Ճուղապ կուտաս ձիավորին,  
Մուրազ կուտաս վոտավորին:

Nanor, Nanor, ah Nanor,  
Dinging, donging, ah Nanor,  
St. Karapet, we come to your tolling tower,  
With candles and incense to praise your power,  
Traveling along twisting and turning roads,  
We come to you in the moonlight.

Sultan of Moosh, O St. Karapet,  
The man on horseback you disdain,  
While the man of foot you give gain,  
For all hermits you serve as guide,  
For all martyrs you are their pride,  
Of three hundred monks and priests,  
You, the forerunner, St. Karapet.

St. Karapet is above all,  
The road to him is twisting turning,  
We come to you through twisting roads,  
In the moonlight.

### Passing the Night

Let's drink the pomegranate wine,  
Crimson like the holy blood divine,  
Let's drink this red wine,  
Wine is sweet, love is sweet,  
Love is worth for a true lover,  
Wine tastes sweet to a true drinker,  
Let us drink up and enjoy this treat,  
Wine is sweet, love is sweet.

### On The Road Again (The Next Day)

Nanor, Nanor, ah Nanor,  
Dinging, donging, ah Nanor,  
St. Karapet, we come to your tolling tower,  
With candles and incense to praise your power,  
Traveling along twisting and turning roads,  
The man on horseback you disdain,  
While the man of foot you give gain.

\*\*\* Moosh is in the historical Armenian province of Taron.

The Arrival

Չանկլի՛ն, Չանկլի՛ն:  
 Չոզ ման կուզանք Մուրբ Կարապետ,  
 Մեր քաջ պաշտպան Մուրբ Կարապետ:

Behold the belfry! Behold the belfry!  
 On foot we come to you, St. Karapet,  
 Our eternal protector, St. Karapet.

Prayers in The Church

«Ալելուեա, Օրթի»  
 Չանկլի, զիմ մուրազը տուր,  
 Զիմ սրտի սիրածը տուր:  
 Նանոր, նանոր, հա նանոր,  
 Զնկլիկ մնկլիկ հա նանոր,  
 Երթամ ու գամ ես հըմնօր:

“Alleluia, Orti.”  
 O, patron saint, grant me my desire,  
 Give me the love that is my heart’s fire.  
 Nanor, Nanor, ah Nanor,  
 Dinging, donging, ah Nanor,  
 I pledge to come and go till I expire.

The Festivities

Պարի միջին շեկ աղջիկ,  
 Պատռիս չառնեմ ես քրզիկ,  
 Կերթամ կառնեմ զալագոյոզ,  
 Զմբիկ զարնե հանե թոզ:

O, fair-haired girl in the circle dance,  
 No matter how you prance, I won’t marry you,  
 I’ll just go and marry the blue-eyed girl,  
 Who raises dust and can kick and whirl.

**Armenian Folklore**

Armenian Folklore is one of the richest in the world. Despite countless wars and constant destruction by foreign aggressors, many songs have survived and have been passed down from generation to generation. The main categories are work-related songs, ritual songs (“Dseesashar”), lyrical love-songs, songs of sorrow and nostalgia for loved ones (“Pandukht”), dance songs, and songs of chivalry and heroism. After returning to Armenia from Berlin, Komitas visited various regions of the country treating and writing down thousands of songs, and started serious scientific research on Armenian folk melodies. He arranged numerous tunes for all-female, all-male, and mixed choirs, as well as solo voice. In some cases, he offers more than seven variations for each song. The last portion of our program will showcase a very small sample of Komitas’ grand works and the treasures he left us.

**Գարուն ա**

Գարուն ա ձուն ա արել,  
 Վայ լէ լէ, վայ լէ լէ, վայ լէ լէ, լէ լէ:

Իմ եարն ինձնից ա սառել,  
 Ախ չորնա, վախ այ եար, չար մարդու լեզուն:

**It’s Springtime**

It is springtime and it has snowed,  
 Vaay le le, vaay le le, vaay le le le le.

My sweetheart has become cold,  
 Akh, I wish for my rival’s tongue to dry up.

**Անձրնն եկաւ շաղալէն**

Անձրնն եկաւ շաղալէն,  
 Ուռու տերն դողալէն,  
 Վա՛յ, լէ, լէ...  
 Հրես եկաւ իմ աղբեր,  
 Ալ ձին տակին խաղալէն:  
 Վա՛յ, լէ, լէ...

Ղուշ մի՛ դառնայ թևաւոր,  
 Դու խաղ կանչի ձևաւոր,  
 Վա՛յ, լէ, լէ...  
 Եարա՛ք, կըլնի՞ են օրը,  
 Որ գաս մեր տուն թագաւոր:  
 Վա՛յ, լէ, լէ...

**Drizzling Rain**

Lightly fell the drizzling rain,  
 And the boughs of the willow trembled,  
 Vay le le...  
 Behold my gallant beau has come again,  
 Riding on a red prancing steed,  
 Vay le le...

Flee not like a winged bird,  
 Just sing your charming little song,  
 Vay le le...  
 O God, will that day ever come,  
 When you come to our house as a king (i.e., groom)?  
 Vay le le...

**Ալագյազ աչերդ**

Ալագյազ աչերդ, կամար ունքերդ,  
 Ուզում եմ հեռանալ չի թողնում սերդ:  
 Աղէ ջան, ջուրն ընկնեմ,

**Your Blue Eyes**

Your blue eyes, your arched eyebrows,  
 I want to go but your love keeps me here.  
 Dear Akeh, I will throw myself into the water,

Մայրիկ ջան, քար կտրեմ,  
Շեկ եարի դարդիցը:

Ես քեզ սիրեցի, որ ինձ եար ըլնես,  
Էրած, վառած սրտիս դեղ ու ճար ըլնես:  
Աղէ ջան, ջուրն ընկնեմ,  
Մայրիկ ջան, քար կտրեմ,  
Շեկ եարի դարդիցը:

**Ջար, զնգը**

Ջար, զնգը, զար, զնգը, թող զնգա,  
Պարենք գիշեր լուսընկա:  
Էս գիշեր լուսնակ գիշեր,  
Ջար, զնգը, զար, զնգը, թող զնգա,  
Ձիւնն եկէր գետին նախշեր,  
Ջար, զնգը, զար, զնգը, թող զնգա,  
Էլի պարը բոլորաւ,  
Ջար, զնգը, զար, զնգը, թող զնգա,  
Եարս միջին մոլորաւ,  
Պարենք գիշեր լուսընկա:

**Յա՛ր ջան արի**

Յա՛ր ջան, արի դու մի առնի էն տղին,  
Թե որ առնես երեք օրվա հարս ըլնես,  
Վո՛ւյ, յարո՛ ջան:

Յա՛ր ջան, արի ձեռ մի զարնի էն ճղին,  
Թե որ զարնես, ձեռըդ կարնես, փուշ ունի,  
Վո՛ւյ, յարո՛ ջան:

**Էսօր ուրբաթ է...**

**Ջուր կուգա վերին սարեն**

Էսօր Ուրբաթ է, պաս է,  
Դեհե, զնգը, զնգը, դեհե, ջան,  
Սրտիկ արծաթե թաս է,  
Դեհե, զնգը, զնգը, դեհե, ջան:

Ջուր կուգա վերին սարեն, սարն ոլորելեն,  
Կը թափի մարմար քարեն, կաթ-կաթ ծորելեն:

Կռունկ կանչեց սարերուն,  
Դեհե, զնգը, զնգը, դեհե, ջան,  
Ղարիբ տղեն երերուն,  
Դեհե, զնգը, զնգը, դեհե, ջան:

Ջուր կուգա վերին սարեն, սարն ոլորելեն,  
Կը թափի մարմար քարեն, կաթ-կաթ ծորելեն:

Սրտի՛կ, մալուվ մի՛ մընա,  
Դեհե, զնգը, զնգը, դեհե, ջան,  
Աշխարհ մարդու չի մընա:  
Դեհե, զնգը, զնգը, դեհե, ջան:

Ջուր կուգա վերին սարեն, սարն ոլորելեն,  
Կը թափի մարմար քարեն, կաթ-կաթ ծորելեն:

Dear Mother, I will turn into a stone,  
From the pain of my blond sweetheart's love.

I want you to be, my sweetheart,  
The remedy of my heartache.  
Dear Adeh, I will throw myself into the water,  
Dear Mother, I will turn into a stone,  
From the pain of my blond sweetheart's love.

**Ring the Bell**

Ring the bell, ring the bell, let it ring,  
Let's dance until the morning comes.  
Tonight is a moonlit night,  
Ring the bell, ring the bell, let it ring,  
It's snowed and decorated the ground,  
Ring the bell, ring the bell, let it ring,  
The circle-dance started again,  
Ring the bell, ring the bell, let it ring,  
And my sweetheart got lost in the crowd,  
Let's dance until the morning comes.

**Come My Sweetheart**

Come to me, sweetheart, don't marry that man,  
If you marry him, it won't last more than three days,  
Alas, my sweetheart!

Come to me, sweetheart, don't touch that twig,  
If you touch it, you will hurt your hand, it has thorns,  
Alas, my sweetheart!

**Today is Friday...**

**Water From the High Mountains**

Today is Friday, a day of fast,  
Com'on my love, hey-ho, hey-ho!  
My heart is a silver bowl,  
Com'on my love, hey-ho, hey-ho!

Water wends its way down the high mountain,  
Meanderingly it flows, babbling over the marble rocks.

The crane called to the mountains,  
Com'on my love, hey-ho, hey-ho!  
The stranger boy was wandering,  
Com'on my love, hey-ho, hey-ho!

Water wends its way down the high mountain,  
It flows, babbling over the marble rocks.

O my heart, be not dismayed,  
Com'on my love, hey-ho, hey-ho!  
In the world all things pass,  
Com'on my love, hey-ho, hey-ho!

Water wends its way down the high mountain,  
It flows, babbling over the marble rocks.

**Էս գիշեր, լուսնակ գիշեր**

Էս գիշեր, լուսնակ գիշեր,  
Վա յ, լէ, լէ ...  
Ձիւնն եկեր, գետին նախշեր:  
Ո՞վ է տեսել՝ սիրած յարը մոռանա,  
Ով մոռանա՝ երկու աչքով կուրանա:

Աչքըդ դեմ արա՝ պաշեմ,  
Վա յ, լէ, լէ ...  
Կեռ ունքեր, կարմիր թըշեր:  
Ո՞վ է տեսել՝ սիրած յարը մոռանա,  
Ով մոռանա՝ երկու աչքով կուրանա:

Դու իմ խօսքին ականջ դիր,  
Վա յ, լէ, լէ ...  
Ես մորդ հավան կանեմ:  
Ո՞վ է տեսել՝ սիրած յարը մոռանա,  
Ով մոռանա՝ երկու աչքով կուրանա:

**Oh, ինչ քաղցր բան**

Oh, ինչ քաղցր բան ըլալ կոնծաբան,  
Կոնծել լաւ գինի, թափառել անբան,  
Լարէ թամպուրը հա հա հա հա հա:

Oh, ինչ դառը բան ըլալ թղթաբան,  
Տարւել միշտ փողը, գլխուն տալ սև հողը,  
Լարէ թամպուրը հա հա հա հա հա:

**Tonight Is A Moonlit Night**

Tonight is a moonlit night,  
Vay le le...  
It's snowed and decorated the ground,  
Who has ever seen that a lover forgets her sweetheart?  
Whoever forgets, she deserves to go completely blind.

Turn your face to me so I can kiss,  
Vay le le...  
What beautiful curved eyebrows and red cheeks you have,  
Who has ever seen that a lover forgets her sweetheart?  
Whoever forgets, she deserves to go completely blind.

You listen to me and do what I say,  
Vay le le...  
I will convince your mother and get her approval!  
Who has ever seen that a lover forgets her sweetheart?  
Whoever forgets, she deserves to go completely blind.

**Oh, How Sweet**

Oh, how sweet to be a drunkard,  
To drink good wine, and be carefree,  
Play that tembur, ha ha ha ha ha.

Oh, how bitter to be a gambler,  
To always lose money, and be forlorn,  
Play that tembur, ha ha ha ha ha.

## Guest Artist

**Maestro Vahan Mirakian's** name belongs to the list of the most excelling and illustrious tenors of our period. An apprentice to the legendary Maestro Jenarro Barra, Mirakian has learned and mastered the secrets of Bel Canto in Italy while studying in the Mecca of Opera Arts, La Scala. He has spent most of his life in Vienna and toured the world performing in the most prestigious opera houses of the world including Arena Di Verona, Royal Opera Houses of London and Liege, Vienna State Opera and the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. The numerous characters created and performed by the Maestro became manifestations of his brilliant talent. His powerful voice and his ability to grasp a variety of vocal art forms satisfy the tastes of the world's toughest critics and exceed the high expectations of a demanding audience. During his artistic life, Vahan Mirakian has fascinated listeners all over the world not only with his fine phrasing and nuances of his grand voice but also with his vast repertory reaching from songs by Schubert and Schumann to the romances by Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov to Russian and Armenian folk-songs. His credits include many prestigious roles in legendary operas such as Radames in Verdi's *Aida*, the Duke in *Rigoletto*, Alfredo Germont in *La Traviata*, Rodolfo in Puccini's *La Boheme*, Edgardo in Donizatti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Don Jose in Bizet's *Carmen*, Pollione in Bellini's *Norma*... and the list goes on and on. He currently lives in Los Angeles, CA where he dedicates himself to the education of young singers in private lessons, workshops, and masterclasses. He is the founder of the LA-based non-profit organization, Vahan Mirakian Foundation, devoted to promotion of arts and culture.

## Musicians of the Seemorgh Ensemble (2009)

**Felicia Chen** (Soprano) grew up in the Bay Area and graduated from UC Berkeley, where she has been a featured soloist in *The Messiah*, *Chichester Psalms*, Mendelssohn's *Symphony no. 2 (Lobgesang)*, and the cover soloist for Mozart's *Requiem*. At Berkeley, she was selected to participate in masterclasses with acclaimed performers Malcolm Martineau, Lucy Shelton, and Christine Brandes. Felicia has sung with the Bay Area Summer Opera Theatre Institute and the SongFest Apprentice Program, performing scenes as Lakmé, Pamina and Papagena (*Die Zauberflöte*), Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*), Countess Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*), and Meg (*Falstaff*). She recently performed in Bay Area Classical Harmonies' production of *Le nozze di Figaro* as Barbarina. Upcoming engagements include Machaut's *Le lay de la fonteinne* and Bach's *Magnificat* with the UC Berkeley Chamber and University Choruses.

**Andrew J. Chung** (Bass) has sung with numerous vocal ensembles including San Francisco's Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, and several University of California Berkeley organizations: the Opera Workshop, Chamber Chorus, University Chorus, Collegium Musicum and Gospel Chorus. He has appeared as one of the aria and recitative soloist in *Passion According to Saint Matthew* by J.S. Bach with UC Berkeley's University and Chamber Chorus. In 1998 he founded the group Bay Area Classical Harmonies (B.A.C.H.) chamber orchestra and chorus and in 2004 he founded the Bakersfield Opera company. As director of this organization he regularly conducts and sings with the ensemble in the San Francisco Bay Area. In 2002 he was chosen conductor of the Berkeley Summer Symphony Orchestra leading Beethoven's 5th Symphony and Berlioz's *Roman Overture*. With Cal Opera he conducted the fully staged opera, *Die Zauberflöte*. He has sung principal roles at North Bay Opera and San Francisco Lyric Opera. Andrew sang the role of Leporello in both BACH and Bakersfield Opera production of *Don Giovanni* and served as the music director for Spotlight Theater production of Steven Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*. He served as the music director at the Claremont Country Club and presently as a music director for the All Saints Lutheran Church in Novato. Recently, he has sung the role of Pallas (Dick Cheney) in Oakland Opera Production of Handel's *Agrippina* and conducted *Le Nozze di Figaro* by W.A. Mozart with Bay Area Classical Harmonies.

**Christine d'Allancé** (Soprano) used to go to sleep by singing to herself as a child. She has never stopped singing since then. In Paris, she sang at Notre-Dame Cathedral, in Berkeley with Pacific Mozart Ensemble, and recently with BACH.

**Matthew Gagliardi** (Counter-Tenor) currently researches set theory as a Ph.D. student in the Logic Group at UC Berkeley. He has studied counter-tenor method over the past four years and focuses primarily on sacred music (of the Roman Catholic tradition for the most part). Matthew continues to collaborate with the music programs of several churches in the Catholic dioceses of Oakland and San Francisco as they work to restore authentic music to their repertoire.

**Katherine Howell** (Soprano) is a fellow of the Scandinavian Foundation and The Hertz Traveling Fellowship of UC Berkeley. She recently appeared as Susanna in the *Marriage of Figaro* with BACH. Her roles include the Countess in the *Marriage of Figaro*, Statue of Liberty in *The Proposal*, and Pamina in the *Magic Flute*. She has sung numerous oratorio solos such as the *St. John Passion* at the San Francisco Conservatory and Faure's *Requiem*, Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, Mozart's *Dauid Penitente*, and Handel's *Messiah* with The UC Berkeley Chorus. She is a graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and UC Berkeley.

**John Kelly** (Baritone) studied organ with John Longhurst and has sung in chamber choruses and church choirs for decades, including several years with Sacred & Profane and shorter stints with the California Bach Society and Pacific Collegium. He studied Javanese gamelan with K.P.H. Notoprojo (also known as K.R.T. Wasitodiningrat) and performs in UC Berkeley's gamelan Sari Raras. He also plays the five-string banjo.

**Michael Kim** (Tenor) became interested in music very early on and sang in school choirs and played oboe in the school band. As an undergraduate at the University of Toronto, he was a choral scholar and also spent a year in Vienna where he heard lots of opera and consumed even more cake. Graduate school took him to McGill in Montréal where he also dabbled on opera at the Université de Montréal. His career in technology has brought him to the Bay Area and he has enjoyed singing with BACH in various productions.

**Joel Klein** (Tenor) grew up in Southern California with a love for music. He has been actively participating in choirs ever since elementary school. He has worked with choirs under the direction of Grant Gershon of the LA Master Chorale, Vance George of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, and Dr. Eph Ehly, conductor of Music Celebrations International. As a graduate of San Francisco State University with a degree in Music Education, he plans to be a choral teacher at the middle school or high school level. He is very excited to be a part of the Seemorgh Ensemble.

**Carson Mah** (Baritone) has sung in various Bay Area choruses for decades, but he is very happy for the opportunity to begin his chorus retirement years singing "Divine Komitas!" In his other "free time" (sparse), he enjoys singing Schumann and Brahms Lieder, as well as Broadway show tunes. His favorite musicians are Yevgeny Mravinsky, Claudio Abbado, Bernarda Fink (mezzo), and Andre Previn (jazz).

**Tamara Miller** (Mezzo-Soprano) started her performing career as an actress and dancer, winning numerous awards including first place at the Los Angeles Shakespeare Festival. She holds a degree in music from the University of California, Berkeley where she studied vocal performance and conducting. While at Berkeley she sang with the UC Berkeley Chamber Chorus and University Chorus, won a prestigious noon concert in Hertz Hall, and was the alto soloist in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the UC Berkeley Summer Symphony. Prior to moving to Berkeley, Tamara sang with Cantiamo! and Ensemble Monterey, singing the alto solos in Bach's Christmas Oratorio, Bach's *Magnificat*, Imant Raminsh's *Magnificat*, Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Duruflé's *Requiem*, and many others. In addition to the Seemorgh Ensemble, Tamara sings with the women's vocal ensemble Musae. She currently studies voice with Susan Gundunas in San Francisco. Tamara is an avid hiker and backpacker. She devours books and loves to garden and talk loudly. Tamara is excited to have just purchased her first house in Oakland, where she lives with her husband and her eight-year-old son.

**Simoné Müller-Moore** (Soprano) was born in Guam, lived in Micronesia until she was eight and finished High school and College in Germany. Music was a big part of her and her family's life and she treasures the memories of singing in different parts of the world. Because of her background in different countries and cultures it was not hard for her to move to South Carolina for her Masters of Music in Opera Theater. Simoné is currently living in Oakland, CA with her husband Richard and her two wonderful daughters Ana (3 years) and Lydia (8 months). She has branched out into performing a wide variety of music and is teaching piano and voice lessons. Simoné is thrilled to continue her cultural experience through living in the Bay Area and singing in the Seemorgh Ensemble.

**Nasrin Salak** (Alto) became interested in music at early age. Following her interest she attended the Music Academy in Tehran where she played the violin. Upon completion of high school she attended Tehran University and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in music. During her college years Nasrin became interested in singing and joined several local choral groups including the Tehran T.V. Chamber Singers and the Tehran Folklore Choir. After her arrival in San Francisco in 1983, she joined the San Francisco Symphony Chorus. She sang with the chorus for fourteen seasons. Her current interests include playing the violin and the guitar, singing in a church choir and traveling.

**Mark Shattuck** (Bass) was born at a very early age and was drawn to music almost immediately. He graduated from babbling to trumpet to piano, eventually ending up here with just his voice. Mark has sung in many strange sounding places, such as Split, Croatia; Herzliya, Israel; and Pecs, Hungary. Mark has sung with the San Francisco Choral Artists and Volti. Mark is a non-profit accountant by day and is on the board of the San Francisco City Guides.

**Maura Sipila** (Tenor) has been singing professionally in the Bay Area since childhood. She received her training in the San Francisco Girls Chorus, and has also performed with San Francisco Renaissance Voices, California Bach Society, the San Francisco Lyric Opera and Ars Cantus, as well as many other groups. She also acts at the Dark Room in San Francisco, as well as co-hosting the highly popular Bad Movie Night there. This season, Maura is also performing with the California Revels. When she's not rehearsing, Maura can be found looking after children and pets, and cooking fabulous dishes to feed her friends and family.

**Jeffrey Sykes** (Tenor) is a Bay Area native and avid choral singer. He has performed with various local ensembles and has been a featured soloist in Mozart's *Requiem* and Bach's *Magnificat*. Jeffrey currently sings with the UC Berkeley University Chorus.

**Emily Wood** (Alto) has been singing with BACH for a very long time and really enjoys the dynamic of this group of singers. She is particularly excited to be a part of the relatively new Seemorgh Ensemble, and loves the challenge posed by this music and the prospect of introducing it to a wider audience. When she's not singing, she's out lindy hopping; so feel free to ask her to dance after the concert!

**Artin Der Minassians** (Artistic Director and Conductor) was born to an Armenian family in Tehran, Iran. He moved to Berkeley, CA in 2001 to pursue his graduate studies at UC Berkeley and received his PhD degree in December 2007. He has been a member of UC Berkeley Chorus and Chamber Chorus during his graduate school years and has been involved in music curriculum as well. He has had the privilege of working with Prof. Marika Kuzma as the choral conducting mentor and Ms. Susan Gundunas for vocal technique. He was the founding director of the Persian Chorus and directed the group with a very successful performance at the Florence Gould Theater of San Francisco's Palace of The Legion of Honor in April 2005. After joining BACH as Artistic Director of the Seemorgh Ensemble, Mr. Der Minassians conducted the Seemorgh Ensemble at San Francisco City Hall in 2006 as part of the celebration for the Persian New Year. He also conducted the BACH Chorus in *European Jewels and Armenian Pearls* and *From Constantinople to Tbilisi: An Armenian Legacy* concerts. He directed *The Forgotten Tales of Armenia* at Pro Arts Gallery in Oakland as part of BACH's Last Friday at Pro Arts concert series. Recently, the San Francisco Girls Chorus invited him to coach Chorissima, their Grammy-winning concert, recording, and touring ensemble for their concert, *Transcendent Voices*.

## About Composers

**Soghomon Soghomonyan - Komitas** (1869–1935), was born in Anatolia, Turkey, in the town of Koutina (Ketaia). Komitas' childhood was joyless and full of deprivations. He lost his mother when he was less than one year old and ultimately become an orphan when he was only 11 years old. "He was a frail, weak, pale boy, always thoughtful and kind. He was dressed poorly," one of his classmates recalled about Komitas. He could sing perfectly, and no wonder in Koutina he was nicknamed "a little vagrant singer."

For his delightful voice Soghomon was also indebted to an event that fundamentally changed the entire course of his life. In 1881 the priest of Koutina had to leave for Etchmiadsin to be ordained a bishop. At the request of the Catholicos he brought the gifted orphan boy with him to study at the Etchmiadsin Church Seminary. Twelve-year old Soghomon was selected out of the other 20 orphans to study at the Seminary. As it was forbidden to speak Armenian at that time the boy spoke Turkish and when being greeted by the Catholicos Gevorg IV, he replied, "I don't speak Armenian, if you wish, I will sing." Then with his fine soprano voice he sang an Armenian sharakan (a church hymn) without understanding the words. Due to his exclusive aptitude, Soghomon overcame all the obstacles in a very short time and learned perfect Armenian.

In 1890 Soghomon was ordained a monk. In 1893 he finished studying at the seminary, then he was ordained a "Vardapet" (priest) and acquired his new name "Komitas" - the name of the outstanding poet of the VII century and the author of sharakans. At the seminary Komitas was assigned to teach music. Along with teaching, Komitas organized a choir, an orchestra of folk instruments, and treated folk songs; he made his first research into the field of Armenian Church music. In the autumn of 1895 he left for Tiflis to study at its musical college. However, when he met the composer Makar Yekmalyan, who had received his education at the conservatory of St. Petersburg, he changed his mind and started studying and taking a course on harmony by that composer. These studies became the original forerunner and the firm basis for his gaining the European technique of composition.

The further events of Komitas' life had to do with the large music center in Europe – Berlin, where he went to study under the protection of the Catholicos, being financed by the largest Armenian oil magnate Alexander Mantashyan. Komitas entered the private conservatory of Professor Richard Schmidt. During these academic years he had an opportunity to "communicate" with European music, continually enriching the supply of knowledge, and engaging in musical criticism. Upon the invitation of the International Music Association he held lectures devoted to Armenian church and contemporary music in comparison with Turkish, Arabic and Kurdish music.

In September 1899 Komitas returned to Etchmiadsin and started his musical activity right away. In a short period he radically changed the system of teaching music in the seminary, organized a small orchestra and perfected the performance level of the choir. He visited various regions of Armenia treating and writing down thousands of Armenian, Kurdish, Persian and Turkish songs. He started serious scientific research work, studied Armenian folk and church melodies, and worked on the decipherment of Armenian khazzes and on the theory of voices. In various countries Komitas appeared as a performer and propagandist of Armenian music.

Komitas focused on the themes concerning folk music and revealing the content of folk songs. No doubt such world outlook had to result in an inescapable conflict between Komitas and the Church. Gradually, the indifference of new leaders, negative attitude of the backward group of church figures, gossip and slander increased so much that it poisoned the life of the composer: the man who remained in the imagination of the contemporaries as an absolutely worldly man. The conflict turned so tense that Komitas sent a letter to the Catholicos begging to release him and let him create and live quietly. This request remained unanswered, and the persecution of Komitas became more obvious. In 1910 Komitas left Etchmiadsin and went to Constantinople. There he expected to find an environment that would understand him, protect him, and encourage his activity; and where he would be able to fulfill his dreams. Komitas wanted to establish a National Conservatory with which he connected the further destiny of his people's music. But the composer failed to accomplish this plan (as well as many others). His inspired ideas were only faced with the cold indifference of the local authorities.

In Constantinople Komitas organized a mixed choir of 300 voices and called it "Gousan". It was very popular. Armenian folk songs constituted most of its concerto program.

During World War I, the government of Young Turks initiated their monstrous program on violent and inhumane extermination of part of the Armenian people. In April 1915, Komitas was arrested together with a number of outstanding Armenian writers, publicists, physicians, and lawyers. After the arrest, accompanied by violence, he was deported far away to Anatolia where he became a witness of the brutal extermination of the nation's bright minds. In spite of the fact that due to the intervention of influential figures, Komitas was returned to Constantinople, the nightmare he had experienced left a deep, ineradicable impression on his soul. Komitas remained in seclusion from the outer world, absorbed in his gloomy and heavy thoughts – sad and broken.

In 1916 Komitas' health deteriorated and he was put in a psychiatric hospital. However, there was no hope that he would recover. The medicine was powerless against the destructive disease. The genius of Armenian music found his final shelter in Paris, in the suburban sanatorium Vil-Jouif where he spent almost 20 years of his life. On the 22nd of October the life of the Great Komitas came to an end. In the spring of 1936 his remains were transported to Armenia and buried in Yerevan – in the Pantheon of prominent art figures. No less tragic was the destiny of Komitas' creative legacy. The majority of his manuscripts were destroyed or lost all over the world...

Source: Virtual Museum of Komitas (<http://www.komitas.am>)

**Barsegh Kanachian** (1885–1967), one of the most illustrious pupils of Komitas, stands out as a unique composer who has continued his master's legacy. Kanachian was born in Rodosto, a small town near Constantinople. Growing up in a politically unstable area during precarious times, he was able to survive by moving first to Bulgaria, then to Romania, and back to Constantinople around 1908, always pursuing his musical studies. It was in Constantinople that he met Komitas and became his pupil for three years. In 1921, Kanachian and four other pupils of Komitas left for Paris to further their musical training. In 1922, he went to Egypt, where he composed his first choral work, *Dalilo*. From 1926 to 1930 Kanachian lived in Cyprus, where he taught at the Melkonian Institute. There, he composed, among others, his masterpieces *Hoy Nar* (choral) and a revised version of *Oror*, originally composed in 1913.

Despite the fact that he never lived in Armenia, he was able to absorb the essence of the Western Armenian musical fountain of Komitas, and infuse it with his own creativity to produce songs of great appeal and charm which continue to delight listeners. Having lived in countries of Middle East with considerable Armenian populations, mostly in Lebanon, he composed with his unique style, a fusion of post-Komitas choral tradition, the Western Art Song (Lied) and his individualism and originality. In the development of his unique musical style, Kanachian enriches the music by inserting choral passages reminiscent to the sounds of orchestral instruments.

In 1932 Kanachian settled in Beirut, Lebanon. His presence prompted the establishment of the Goosan Armenian Musical Society and Goosan semi-professional choral group in 1935. Unfortunately, his eyesight began to fail him in the late 1940s, making his work more and more difficult each year. In 1960, almost totally blind, Kanachian and his wife Kristiné moved to Baghdad, Iraq, where two of their three daughters lived. He passed away in Beirut, Lebanon, where he had come for medical treatment.

By Bedros Alahaidoyan (Translated by Zaroug K. Kabakian)

## Acknowledgements

This concert would not be possible without the support of Arlington Community Church in Kensington, CA and the Persian Center in Berkeley, CA. These two organizations offered us full access to their facilities where we held our rehearsals

Furthermore, we would like to thank the following individuals and organizations who, with their big hearts, supportive advice, encouraging words and attitudes, or even with a simple smile, played important roles in making our musical journey a pleasant experience.

Garineh Avakian, Sylvia Baghdasarian, John Boyer, Felicia Chen, Andrew Chung, Viola Chupak, Hasmig Cingoz, Catherine Clambaneva, Christine D'Allance, Prof. Armen and Nelly Der Kiureghian, Scott Fable, Dan Gleich, Edward Godoshian, Nejdeh Hovanessian, Katherine Howell, Michael Jeon, John Kelly, Michael Kim, Joel Klein, Jim Lucas, Carson Mah, Haig Mekhdjian, Gladys Mercier, Fr. Aris Metrakos, Laretta Molitor, Simone Mueller Moore, Fr. Hovel Ohanyan, Naiyry Sarkis, Mark Shattuck, Maura Sipila, Jeffrey Sykes, Anahid Yeremian, and UC Berkeley Armenian Student Association.

Last but not least, we would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in San Francisco, CA and St. Andrew Armenian Church in Cupertino, CA for hosting our concerts.