

Armenian **Dances**

Part I

ALFRED REED

INSTRUMENTATION

- Conductor
- C Piccolo (Alternate 3rd C Flute)
- 1st C Flute
- 3 2nd C Flute
- 1 1st Oboe
- 1 2nd Oboe
- 1 **English Horn**
- E Clarinet 1
- 3 1st B Clarinet
- 2nd B Clarinet
- 3rd B♭ Clarinet 3
- E Alto Clarinet 1
- 2 Bb Bass Clarinet
- B Contrabass Clarinet
- 1st Bassoon 1
- 2nd Bassoon 1
- **Optional Contrabassoon**
- 2 1st El Alto Saxophone
- 2 2nd El Alto Saxophone
- Bl Tenor Saxophone 1
- 1 El Baritone Saxophone
- Optional By Bass Saxophone
- 1st B Trumpet

- 2nd B Trumpet
- 3rd B Trumpet
- 1st B♭ Cornet
- 2nd B♭ Cornet
- 1st Horn in F
- 2nd Horn in F
- 3rd Horn in F
- 4th Horn in F 1
- 1st Trombone
- 2 2nd Trombone
- 3rd Trombone 2
- 4th Trombone (Bass Trombone)
- **Baritone**
- **Baritone Treble Clef**
- Tuba
- **String Bass**
- Timpani
- Percussion
- (Snare Drum, Bass Drum)
- Percussion II
 - (Pair of Cymbals, Suspended Cymbal, Tambourine)
- ercussion III
 - (Bells, Xylophone, Vibraphone)

WORLD PARTS

Available for download from www.alfred.com/worldparts

1st Horn in E

2nd Horn in E

3rd Horn in E

4th Horn in E

1st Trombone in Bb Bass Clef

2nd Trombone in Bb Bass Clef

3rd Trombone in B_b Bass Clef

4th Trombone in B_b Bass Clef

(Bass Trombone)

1st Trombone in B, Treble Clef 2nd Trombone in BI Treble Clef

3rd Trombone in B, Treble Clef

4th Trombone in B, Treble Clef

(Bass Trombone)

Baritone in B_b Bass Clef

Tuba in E♭ Bass Clef

Tuba in El Treble Clef

Tuba in B♭ Bass Clef

Tuba in Bb Treble Clef



PROGRAM NOTES

Armenian Dances, Parts I and II, constitute a four-movement suite for concert band or wind ensemble based on authentic Armenian folk songs from the collected works of Gomidas Vartabed (1869–1935), the founder of Armenian classical music.

Part I, containing the first movement of this suite (the remaining three movements constituting Part II), is an extended symphonic rhapsody built upon five different songs, freely treated and developed in terms of the modern integrated concert band or wind ensemble. While the composer has kept his treatment of the melodies within the general limits imposed on the music by its very nature, he has not hesitated to expand the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic possibilities in keeping with the demands of a symphonic-instrumental, as opposed to an individual vocal or choral approach to its performance. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the overall effect of the music will be found to remain true in spirit to the work of this brilliant composer-musicologist, who almost single-handedly preserved and gave to the world a treasure trove of beautiful folk music that to this day has not yet become as widely known in the Western world as it so richly deserves. It is hoped that this new instrumental setting will prove to be at least a small step in this direction.

Part I of Armenian Dances was completed in the summer of 1972 and first performed by Dr. Harry Begian (to whom the work is dedicated) and the University of Illinois Symphonic Band on January 10, 1973, at the CBDNA Convention in Urbana, Illinois.

HISTORICAL NOTES

Gomidas Vartabed (1869–1935), the founder of Armenian classical music, is credited with collecting well over four thousand Armenian folk songs. Born Soghomon Soghomonian in Keotahya, a small town in Anatolia, Turkey, he would later be given the name Gomidas. His exceptional lyric voice led the Prelate of the region to select the orphan Soghomon at the age of eleven to study at the Kevorkian Seminary in Etchmiadzin, Armenia. He was ordained an Apegha (monk) in 1895, at which time he assumed the name Gomidas, after the Armenian architect-musician Catholicos Gomidas. His desire for further musical training led him first to studies with Magar Yekmalian in Tiflis, Georgia, and from 1896 to 1899 to Berlin, where he studied at the Richard Schmidt Conservatory, as well as Frederic Wilhelm University, under eminent musicians of the time. In 1899 he graduated from both the conservatory and the university, receiving his Ph.D. in musicology; his dissertation topic was Kurdish music.

Gomidas was a founding member of the International Music Society (1899–1914), for which he read important papers on Armenian neumatic notation and the structure of Armenian sacred melodies and folk melodies. At the age of forty-six, at the apex of his career, Gomidas was exiled together with other Armenian intellectuals, by the Turks in April 1915, at which time the genocide of one and a half million Armenians took place. He was released within a short time, but the sufferings and atrocities he had witnessed resulted in a complete mental and physical breakdown from which he never recovered. He died in Paris in 1935. His legacy to the Armenian people and to the world's ethnic music is invaluable, and his major contribution lies in his preserving so many centuries-old melodies from obscurity or oblivion.

Part I of Armenian Dances is built upon five Armenian folk songs, which were first notated, purified, researched, and later arranged by Gomidas for solo voice with piano accompaniment or unaccompanied chorus. In order of their appearance in the score, they are: "Tzirani Tzar" ("The Apricot Tree"); "Gakavi Yerk" ("Partridge's Song"); "Hoy, Nazan Eem" ("Hoy, My Nazan"); "Alagyaz"; and "Gna, Gna" ("Go, Go").

"The Apricot Tree" consists of three organically connected songs that were transcribed in 1904. Its declamatory beginning, rhythmic vitality, and ornamentation make this song highly expressive.

"The Partridge's Song" is an original song by Gomidas; it was published in 1908 in Tiflis, Georgia. He originally arranged it for solo voice and children's choir and later for solo voice with piano accompaniment. It has a simple, delicate melody that might perhaps be thought of as depicting the tiny steps of the partridge.

"Hoy, Nazan Eem" was published in 1908 in a choral version arranged by Gomidas. This lively, lyric love song depicts a young man singing the praises of his beloved Nazan (a girl's name). The song has dance rhythms and ornamentation that make it an impressive, catchy tune.

"Alagyaz" (the name of a mountain in Armenia) was first written by Gomidas for solo voice with piano accompaniment and also in a choral arrangement. It is a beloved Armenian folk song, and its long-breathed melody is as majestic as the mountain itself.

"Go, Go" is a humorous, light-textured tune. In performance, Gomidas coupled it with a contrasting slower song, "The Jug." Its repeated note pattern musically depicts the expression of laughter. This song also is in recitative style.

Dr. Violet Vagramian

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NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

Exact tempi, as always, will depend on the size of the performing group, the overall ability of the performers, and the acoustical conditions of the concert room in which the performance is taking place. Therefore, all tempo indications, including the metronome markings, should be considered as guides only, with a slight deviation on either side from the given metronomic setting justifiable as a result of such conditions being present.

The score and parts have been extensively cued and cross-cued not only to provide for replacement of missing or weak instruments but also to permit you to achieve proper balances, if necessary, by increasing or reducing the number of instruments playing any line or part. You should not hesitate to avail yourself of these possibilities in order to ensure the relative strength or clarity of each rhythmic, melodic, or harmonic element throughout the score.

As in other works by this composer, the trumpets are considered the principal upper voices of the "brilliant" brass choir, with the cornets fulfilling the same function for the "mellow." The proportion of trumpets to cornets should be two to one, with two players on each of the trumpet parts to one player on each cornet part. The other brasses, of course, will be grouped in proportion to this division of players and parts accordingly.

The rhythmic feeling in the third section of the music, beginning at 69 and continuing through 184, which is largely in 5/8 (with occasional measures in 6/8 and 3/8 interspersed), must be built on an unscrupulous observance of the eighth note's value remaining absolutely constant throughout, thus resulting in an "uneven two-beat" in all of the 5/8 measures. The shifting accents, which result from the various groupings within each measure (2 + 3) and (3 + 2), as well as the groupings of the measures themselves, in irregularly recurring patterns alternating with regularly recurring ones, must be carefully observed by both players and conductor so that the natural swing of the music can be felt without difficulty or strain and without obscuring the underlying fundamental beats.

Careful attention to dynamics and clarity of attack and phrasing, based on proper tempi, will result in a brilliant performance of this exciting and highly rewarding music.

PERSONAL NOTE

I extend thanks to Dr. Violet Vagramian for the historical notes dealing with the life and work of Gomidas Vartabed and for the descriptions of the songs used in this score based on her extensive research in both areas; to Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, for his graciousness in placing copies of the published works of Gomidas at my disposal during my labors on this score; and finally to Dr. Harry Begian, whose enthusiasm for and belief in this lovely music resulted in the commissioning of this work and whose encouragement and patient understanding during the time it was being written were most gratifying.





Armenian Dances





































































































































