

Armenian Folk Elements in Arno Babajanian's Piano Trio in F-Sharp Minor

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ABSTRACT

Armenian music has a rich history. It started as independent, monodic song, and succeeded in keeping its uniqueness from the influences of other countries' musical traditions. During the nineteenth century the great Armenian musicologist and composer Komitas started to travel and write down these songs from Armenian villages. Komitas, who had higher education in Western classical music, was one of the first composers to harmonize Armenian songs and sacred music using Western classical techniques. This was a milestone in the development of Armenian music. Arno Babajanian was a Soviet Armenian composer who, like Komitas, was interested in the combinations of Armenian folk and Western classical traditions. This document provides a formal and harmonic analysis of his *Piano Trio in F-Sharp Minor*, written in 1952. By identifying Armenian folk tunes used in his trio, I will demonstrate that Babajanian achieved interesting results by inserting exotic Armenian folk melodies, harmonies, and other elements into the Western classical sonata form. This document also points out the influence of other composers of the Soviet era on Babajanian's music. By combining Armenian folk and western classical elements in his Piano Trio, Babajanian created a piece that resonates with native Armenians and classical music lovers and deserves a place in the violin repertoire.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	iv
LIST OF EXAMPLES.....	v
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 ARNO BABAJANIAN: LIFE AND CAREER	4
3 ARMENIAN FOLK MUSIC	18
4 ARMENIAN NATIONAL CLASSICAL MUSIC	27
5 A PERFORMER’S ANALYSIS OF ARNO BABAJANIAN’S PIANO TRIO IN F SHARP MINOR: STRUCTURE.....	32
Movement 1	38
Movement 2.....	49
Movement 3.....	57
6 CONCLUSION.....	68
REFERENCES	70

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Diagram of the Introduction Theme	32
2. Diagram of the Movement I	38
3. Diagram of the Movement II	49
4. Diagram of the Movement III	57

LIST OF EXAMPLES

Example	Page
1. a) Folk tune “Garuna” [It’s Spring]	33
b) Babajanian, A. Piano Trio: Movement 1, mm. 1-4	34
2. Babajanian A. Piano Trio: Movement 1, mm. 16-20	34
3. a) Babajanian A. Piano trio: Movement 1, mm. 63-64	35
b) Babajanian, A. Piano Trio: Movement 2, mm. 1-3	35
4. Babajanian A. Piano Trio: Movement 3, mm 71-75.....	36
5. Babajanian A. Piano Trio: Movement 1, mm. 83-85	45
6. a) Komitas: Armenian folk song "Antuni"	51
b) Babajanian, A. Piano Trio: Movement 2, mm. 1-4	51
7. Komitas: Armenian folk song "Antuni"	53
8. a) Komitas: Armenian folk song "Habrban"	54
b) Babajanian A. Piano Trio: Movement 2, mm. 31-35	54
c) Babajanian A. Piano Trio: Movement 2, mm. 35-37	55
d) Babajanian A. Piano Trio: Movement 1, mm. 76-78	55
9. a) Babajanian A. Piano Trio: Movement 3, mm. 1-4	61
b) Babajanian A. Piano Trio: Movement 3, mm.71-78	62

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Armenia has a rich history of traditional music. Beginning as independent, monodic church music and peasant songs, Armenian music succeeded in maintaining its unique characteristics despite the later influences of other musical traditions. Most of early Armenian music was not notated and was improvisational in character. During the nineteenth century, however, the great Armenian musicologist and composer Soghomon Soghomonyan (1869-1935), known as Komitas, began collecting and notating folk songs from rural villages. Having studied at the private conservatory of Professor Richard Schmidt and at Kaiser Frederick William University, both in Berlin, he was the first composer to document Armenian songs and sacred music for preservation. Like Komitas, the Soviet-Era composer Arno Babajanian continued to combine existing Armenian folk and Western classical traditions in his compositions. Babajanian received rigorous training in piano performance and compositional techniques at the Moscow Conservatory. This educational background, as well as his exposure to other Russian and Soviet composers, had a strong influence on his music. These Western classical influences, along with his masterful use of Armenian folk elements, helped Babajanian to create his own compositional style and become one of the most beloved Armenian composers.

Arno Babajanian (1921-1983) is an important national figure in Armenia but is less well known outside of the country. The availability of research regarding his life and legacy is limited and virtually all existing scholarship is written in Russian. In research for this document, I translated source material from books written by native Armenians

about their traditional music as well as from published journal articles, documentaries, live recordings, and interviews found on Babajanian's official website. The website is managed by the composer's son Araik Babajanian, who also created the "Arno Babajanian Fund," which financially supports the spread of Babajanian's compositions and legacy.

In this document I will explore the compositional techniques and outside influences in Babajanian's *Piano Trio in F-Sharp Minor*, written in 1952. This composition is considered one of Babajanian's major works. By combining traditional Armenian musical and Western classical elements in his Piano Trio, Babajanian created a piece that resonates with native Armenians and classical music lovers alike, and deserves a place in the string repertoire. One of Babajanian's most distinguished admirers of his work was none other than Dmitri Shostakovich. After hearing the Moscow premiere of the trio (performed by David Oistrakh on violin, Sviatoslav Knushevitsky on cello, and the composer himself on the piano), Shostakovich stated: "I am truly impressed by the performance of this great piece. I do regret that Arno Babajanian does not perform often enough both his and other composers' works."¹

In exploring the compositional techniques and outside influences on Babajanian's *Piano Trio in F-Sharp Minor*, I will review the history of Armenian folk music through an examination of major milestones and important composers. Additionally, a brief biography of Arno Babadjanian is included, as well as a discussion of his other major works and the composers that influenced his compositional language. Finally, I examine

¹ Seda Tashchian, *Arno Babadjanian* (Yerevan, Armenia: Hayperhrat, 1963), 49.

the form of the *Piano Trio* through a harmonic and structural analysis and will identify the main elements of Western classical music and Armenian folk music that Babajanian incorporated in his *Piano Trio*.

CHAPTER 2

ARNO BABAJANIAN: LIFE AND CAREER

Arno Babajanian was born in 1921. His parents noticed his natural musical talent from an early age. It was during a family vacation to Borjomi, Georgia, that Babajanian heard a symphony orchestra for the first time in his life, the sounds of which fascinated him.² At the age of seven, he entered an elementary school program specializing in music study. His parents first signed him up for violin lessons but soon switched him to piano with Yevgine Khosrovyan.³ He finished fourth grade by performing Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 1* with the orchestra.⁴ Young Babajanian also demonstrated an interest in composing and he completed his first piece, called *Pioneer's March*, at the age of nine.⁵ Thousands of copies of this work were published and labeled as his Op 1 in 1932.⁶

Musical life in 1930s Soviet Armenia flourished with concerts of many guest artists from the Soviet Union.⁷ One of the most important events that influenced the future of Armenian classical music was the opening of the Alexander Spendiarian Armenian National Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet. The opening of the theatre created a cultural center, resulting in the increased interest in the creation of new music and art. The inaugural performance at the theater took place in 1933 and was the

² Seda Tashchian, *Arno Babadjanian* (Yerevan, Armenia: Haypethrat, 1963), 6.

³ Ibid, 8.

⁴ Ibid, 10.

⁵ Ibid, 12.

⁶ Ibid, 13.

⁷ Ibid, 14.

Armenian premiere of the opera *Almast*, written by Alexander Spendiarian. The opera was first performed in Moscow, Russia in 1929 shortly following Spendiarian's death in 1928. The libretto was based on *Tmbkaberdi Arumy* [The Capture of Tmook Castle], a poem written by one of the greatest Armenian poet, Hovhannes Tumanyan.⁸ It describes the historic event in the eighteenth century where the Armenian castle Tmook was captured by Persian Shah Nadir with the help of the Armenian traitor Princess Almast, who in return wished to be crowned Queen of Persia. Instead, she was thrown in Nadir's harem, and, after a failed plot to assassinate the shah, was executed at the end of the opera. The original libretto was in Russian and was translated to Armenian for the 1933 Armenian premiere.⁹

The national musical language used in *Almast*, with its folk rhythmic and melodic elements, profoundly influenced Babajanian, who considered this opera as one of the main musical influences of his youth.¹⁰ His attraction towards Armenian folk music was obvious from this time by his passion for and incorporation of folk music in his own early compositions. After entering the special program for talented children at Yerevan State Conservatory in 1928 (at the age of seven), Babajanian, along with other talented young students, was chosen to study composition with Vardges Talyan, the son of notable

⁸ Khachatur Pilikian, *Opera and the Armenians*, (lecture, Center for Armenian Information and Advice--Hayashen, London, March 3, 2013), 21, accessed March 27, 2016, <http://www.abovian.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/OperaAndArmeniansGBAM.pdf>.

⁹ Ibid, 23.

¹⁰ Seda Tashchian, *Arno Babadjanian* (Yerevan, Armenia: Haypethrat, 1963), 15.

Armenian ashuger¹¹ Sheram.¹² Among his students were Alexander Harutyunyan and Lazar Saryan, who later became important Soviet Armenian composers.¹³ These brief years were critical in the development of Babajanian's compositional style as his teacher Talyan, being an expert in Armenian folk music, inspired a love and interest towards folk music in many of his young composition students.¹⁴ One of the requirements in Talyan's class was the mandatory study of Komitas and Armenian folk song. The legacy of Komitas fascinated Babajanian and influenced his whole compositional career.

Babajanian enjoyed numerous early successes in his study at Yerevan State Conservatory. In 1936, he performed his *Scherzo and Andante in Rondo Style* for a composition studio recital. It was well received by the audience.¹⁵ In spring of 1937, Babajanian won the first prize in a piano competition among the students of Yerevan State Conservatory. Later that same year, Babajanian, along with several other young composers from Talyan's class, was invited by the Armenian cultural center of Russia to perform his new compositions in Moscow.¹⁶ Khachaturian, who was one of the participants and the organizers of the festival, wrote an article in the magazine *Sovetskoe Iskusstvo* [Soviet Art] approving Babajanian's use of Armenian folk elements in his early

¹¹ *Ashugers* were highly trained traveling musicians who traveled throughout the country and performed songs which were mostly based on themes of love.

¹² Seda Tashchian, *Arno Babadjanian* (Yerevan, Armenia: Haypethrat, 1963), 17.

¹³ *Ibid*, 17.

¹⁴ Susanna Amatuni, *Arno Babadjanian: Instrumentalnoe tvorchestvo, Isledovanie* (Yerevan, Armenia: Sovetakan Grokh, 1985), 9.

¹⁵ Seda Tashchian, *Arno Babadjanian* (Yerevan, Armenia: Haypethrat, 1963), 17.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 18.

compositions and comparing his piano performance style with Sergey Rachmaninov's.¹⁷ Babajanian loved Moscow and, at Khachaturian's suggestion, decided to continue his studies there.¹⁸ In the fall of 1937 he entered the Gnessin Music School in Moscow, where he was placed in the most advanced course in both composition and piano, studying composition with Vissarion Shebalin and piano performance with Elena Gnessina.¹⁹ In 1938, Babajanian graduated from the Gnessin Music School and entered the Moscow Conservatory primarily to focus on his piano studies with Konstantin Igumnov. Igumnov's influence on Babajanian both as a pianist and a composer was immeasurable as, according to the composer, Igumnov made him a true musician by shaping his musical taste and explaining the performing style of each composer's music.²⁰ According to Babajanian, another influential piece that shaped his musical style with its deep philosophical thoughts and dense musical language was Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 6*, which he first heard at the Moscow Conservatory.²¹

As he was focused on mastering his piano skills, Babajanian's compositional career was not prolific during his years at the Moscow Conservatory.²² The start of World War II interrupted his education and resulted in his evacuation back to Yerevan in

¹⁷ Seda Tashchian, *Arno Babadjanian* (Yerevan, Armenia: Haypethrat, 1963), 19.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

²² *Ibid.*, 23.

1942.²³ Babajanian became actively involved in serving the community by both conducting the national military orchestra and resuming his composing, with pieces such as the *String Quartet No. 1*, *Piano Sonata*, and *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* written during this time.²⁴ Babajanian wrote that his *Piano Concerto* was influenced by Khachaturian's *Piano Concerto* as according to him, Khachaturian's composition was the second most important Armenian piece after the opera *Almast*, which had initially sparked his interest in Armenian folk music.²⁵

The world premiere of Khachaturian's *Piano Concerto* took place in 1937. It was performed by Lev Oborin, to whom the work was later dedicated.²⁶ It soon gained international popularity. The harmonic language of the concerto was chromatic, with frequent use of cluster chords and polychords.²⁷ Khachaturian also used many distinctive harmonies of triads added with major and minor seconds, which came from Armenian folk music traditions.²⁸ Another element that Khachaturian used in the *Piano Concerto* was frequent meter changes.²⁹ This is also a common technique used in Armenian folk music.

²³ Ibid, 25.

²⁴ Seda Tashchian, *Arno Babadjanian* (Yerevan, Armenia: Haypethrat, 1963), 26.

²⁵ Ibid, 30.

²⁶ Joanna Hyeyoung Kim, "Pedagogical Guide to Khachaturian's Piano Concerto in D-flat Major" (DMA diss., University of Georgia, 2010), 1, accessed on *Theses and Dissertations*, February 20, 2016.

²⁷ Ibid, 2.

²⁸ Ibid, 3.

²⁹ Ibid, 17.

In particular, the early stage of Babajanian's compositional career was strongly influenced by Aram Khachaturian.³⁰ This was predictable given that Khachaturian, by incorporating Komitas's achievements into Western musical traditions, established a national Armenian musical tradition that appealed to many, including Babajanian.³¹ Supervised by Khachaturian in his continued studies in Russia, (1938-1948) Babajanian admired his mentor's compositions and achievements and the influence is very noticeable in the younger man's early opuses. As a talented and successful pianist, Babajanian was also drawn to the compositional style of Rachmaninov with his expressivity and vocally-inspired melodic lines.³² This appreciation was an influence we can see in his *Piano Trio*, where the piano writing is dense with extremely romantic melodic lines in all parts. In Babajanian's *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, written in 1959, one can observe some influence of Prokofiev's and Shostakovich's harmonic language and compositional style.³³ Babajanian, like Shostakovich and other Soviet composers who were living in the time of war, was also fascinated with themes of the heroic fight. Thus, his later classical works borrowed some of Shostakovich's and Prokofiev's extreme mix of emotional musical language. For example, in his *Sonata for Violin and Piano* second movement, the violin plays a beautiful melody accompanied by a short, articulated, and sarcastic-sounding piano part. In particular, Shostakovich's influence on Babajanian's life was

³⁰ Susanna Amatuni, *Arno Babadjanian: Instrumentalnoe tvorcestvo, Isledovanie* (Yerevan, Armenia: Sovetakan Grokh, 1985), 26.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, 10.

³³ *Ibid.*, 67.

significant. As a colleague and friend, Shostakovich was a strong advocate for Babajanian's music and his abilities as a performer and educator, which helped build Babajanian's reputation as a major figure in the Soviet Union's musical life.

Because of his gaining reputation as a promising and talented student, Babajanian was among a group of young Armenian composers chosen by the Cultural Committee of Armenia to study in Moscow with composers such as Aram Khachaturian, Genrikh Litinski, Victor Zukerman, and Nikolai Peyko after the end of the war in 1946.³⁴

Although he continued taking piano lessons with Igumnov at Moscow Conservatory, his reputation as a composer developed steadily.³⁵ In 1947, Babajanian won the second prize in Prague International Competition with his *Prelude, Vagharshapats's Dance* and *Polyphonic Sonata*.³⁶ He completed his *Violin Concerto* in 1949 but it was criticized for its lack of individuality, sharing too many similarities with Aram Khachaturian's *Violin Concerto*.³⁷ Babajanian took the criticism seriously and a year later, in 1950, wrote one of his masterpieces; *The Heroic Ballad for Piano and Orchestra*.³⁸ Being a pianist himself, Babajanian was more successful developing his own unique compositional style in this piece. *The Heroic Ballade* won a Stalin Prize in the same year.³⁹ The Stalin Prize

³⁴ Seda Tashchian, *Arno Babadjanian* (Yerevan, Armenia: Haypethrat, 1963), 33, 34.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 34.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 36.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 39.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 40.

³⁹ *Ibid*.

was the highest award for a single work in science or culture given by the Soviet State.⁴⁰ This was the Soviet version of the Nobel Prize and played a crucial role in the promotion of government sanctioned political and ideological agendas.⁴¹ The Stalin Prize had three class levels which came with a significant (for that time) prize of 100.000 rubles and improved working and living conditions.⁴² From 1941 to 1953 over 1000 Stalin Prizes were awarded in the field of art and culture. Among the other Soviet composers who won the prize were Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Khachaturian.

The award significantly boosted Babajanian's reputation as a composer. One of the French music journals, *Journal Musical Francais*, wrote: "We need to pay attention to this new composer's next compositions."⁴³ In another article Dmitri Shostakovich wrote, "Arno Babajanian is a great musician gifted with compositional talent. His piano performance skills are outstanding. It's necessary to involve him in the pedagogical area, since with his knowledge of both composition and piano performance he achieved many things and can achieve more in his own students' future."⁴⁴

After graduating from Moscow State Conservatory in 1948, Babajanian moved back to Yerevan to teach piano at Yerevan State Conservatory.⁴⁵ The conservatory pay

⁴⁰ Oliver Johnson, "The Stalin Prize and the Soviet Artist," *Slavic Review*, vol. 70, no. 4 (2011): 819, accessed on JSTOR, January 15, 2016.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 820.

⁴² *Ibid*, 821.

⁴³ Seda Tashchian, *Arno Babadjanian* (Yerevan, Armenia: Haypethrat, 1963), 46.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 47.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 46.

was significantly low for his position and Babajanian was upset at not being able to support his family.⁴⁶ His wife Tereza, whom Babajanian met while studying in Moscow conservatory, was a successful pianist herself and served as the main supporter of the family through freelance accompanying.⁴⁷ Tereza Babajanian's role in her husband's career and life was significant, as she supported him by copying his music and advertising his songs and other compositions by sending them abroad.⁴⁸

In 1952, Babajanian finished his *Piano Trio in F-Sharp Minor*. The first performance was in Yerevan, Armenia with H. Vardanyan on violin and A. Matevosyan on cello, two young and enthusiastic musicians.⁴⁹ Babajanian performed the piano part.⁵⁰ Later in 1953, it was performed and recorded in Moscow by David Oistrakh on violin and Sergey Knushevitski on cello with Babajanian once again on the piano part.⁵¹ The premiere was very successful and the piece was immediately deemed an important work in the Soviet chamber repertoire.⁵² The French music community also commented on the work. Rene de Juvene in *Les Lettres Françaises* magazine wrote: "Recently the recording of Arno Babajanian's *Heroic Ballade* in France made the audience talk about the new unique composer who was worth attention. This attention was proved especially

⁴⁶ TV-Russia, "Chertovoe koleso Arno Babajaniana" (video), posted November 28, 2012, accessed February 25, 2015, <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=YwF-ppARBck>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Seda Tashchian, *Arno Babadjanian* (Yerevan, Armenia: Haypethrat, 1963), 49.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

after the audience heard the new great piece, *The Piano Trio in F-Sharp Minor* performed by Oistrakh, Knushevitski and Babajanian."⁵³

Despite the high praise received for his teaching, Babajanian in 1956 ended his professorship and moved back to Moscow to establish his compositional career.⁵⁴ The late 1950s and early 1960s were prolific years for Babajanian's compositional output in classical genres.⁵⁵ Following the trio, Babajanian wrote his next significant chamber piece, *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, in 1959. Well received by the audience, the sonata was dedicated to Shostakovich, for whom Babajanian had great admiration.⁵⁶ At this point in his compositional career, Babajanian became more interested in twentieth-century compositional techniques such as serialism. This can be seen in his later works such as the *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra* and a virtuosic *Shesty Kartin (Six Pictures)* for solo piano.⁵⁷ Along with his use of serialism, Babajanian continued borrowing Armenian nationalistic melodies and transforming them in his works.⁵⁸ For example, in the second movement of *Shesty Kartin [Six Pictures]*, Babajanian borrows the melody

⁵³ Seda Tashchian, *Arno Babadjanian* (Yerevan, Armenia: Haypethrat, 1963), 53.

⁵⁴ TV-Russia, "Chertovoe koleso Arno Babajaniana" (video), posted November 28, 2012, accessed February 25, 2015, <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=YwF-ppARBck>.

⁵⁵ Susanna Amatuni, *Arno Babadjanian: Instrumentalnoe tvorchestvo, Isledovanie* (Yerevan, Armenia: Sovetakan Grokh, 1985), 68.

⁵⁶ Arno Babajanian, *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (Yerevan, Armenia: HayPetHrat, 1963), 1.

⁵⁷ Susanna Amatuni, *Arno Babadjanian: Instrumentalnoe tvorchestvo, Isledovanie* (Yerevan, Armenia: Sovetakan Grokh, 1985), 80.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 81.

from the *Almast* opera by Spendiarian⁵⁹ In the 1960's, Babajanian wrote, in cooperation with fellow Armenian composer Alexander Arutyunyan, another technically challenging work for two pianos and percussion called *Tonakan* [Holiday], also based on Armenian folk elements. In 1976, Babajanian wrote and dedicated his *String Quartet No. 3* (his first two Quartets were written very early in his career and never published) to Shostakovich after his death.⁶⁰ As a sign of respect and admiration, he used Shostakovich's DEsCH signature in his Quartet followed by his own AB.⁶¹ *The String Quartet No. 3* is in one movement and free sonata form. Babajanian also used elements from Armenian traditional folk funeral harmonies called *Voxber* [Cries] in the quartet.⁶² *The String Quartet No. 3* was the last significant classical work Babajanian wrote. Babajanian's career as a serious classical music composer ended with his miniature piano piece called *Elegia* composed in 1980. The theme is borrowed from the great Armenian ashuger Sayat Nova's famous song *Qani Vur Janim*. This melody was one of Aram Khachaturian's most favorite tunes, and Babajanian dedicated the work to Khachaturian after his death.⁶³

Later in the same year that he premiered the Piano Trio, Babajanian, along with several other popular young composers throughout the Soviet countries, left for the

⁵⁹ Susanna Amatuni, *Arno Babadjanian: Instrumentalnoe tvorchestvo, Isledovanie* (Yerevan, Armenia: Sovetakan Grokh, 1985), 82.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 26.

⁶¹ Ibid, 94-96.

⁶² Ibid, 94.

⁶³ Ibid, 98-99.

World Festival of Youth and Students in Bucharest, Romania.⁶⁴ This was the first time he experimented with writing in the popular song genre. His “Bardzr Pahenq Mer Barekamutyán Droshnery” [Let's Keep Our Flags of Friendship], a song that he wrote for the festival, became very popular and successful.⁶⁵ This inspired Babajanian to continue writing popular songs, which eventually brought him his greatest fame throughout the Soviet Union. The first song that earned wide-spread popularity was called “Arajin Siro Ergy” [The Song of the First Love], written for a movie of the same name.⁶⁶

It was during this period that Babajanian began to experience health issues.⁶⁷ In 1959 at the age of 32, Babajanian was taken to a hospital where doctors diagnosed him with sarcoma.⁶⁸ This was kept secret from the composer for many years, as was common practice in Armenian culture. As the illness progressed, the intensive care, expensive medicine, and doctors' care from abroad prolonged the life of Babajanian for another 30 years, uncommon for such a deadly illness.⁶⁹ Although Babajanian was mobile and largely out of hospital, the pain and discomfort did not allow him to concentrate on the creation of large symphonic works.⁷⁰ Babajanian instead turned his attention to

⁶⁴ Seda Tashchian, *Arno Babadjanian* (Yerevan, Armenia: Haypethrat, 1963), 53.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁶⁷ TV-Russia, "Chertovoe koleso Arno Babajaniana" (video), posted November 28, 2012, accessed February 25, 2015, <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=YwF-ppARBck>.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Susanna Amatuni, *Arno Babadjanian: Instrumentalnoe tvorchestvo, Isledovanie* (Yerevan, Armenia: Sovetakan Grokh, 1985), 98.

composing light popular music. As a result, in the period of 1956-58, Babajanian wrote music for five movies, four of which were Armenian and one Russian.⁷¹ His collaboration with one of the best lyricists in the Soviet Union of that time, Robert Rojdestvensky, and a young new rising singer Muslim Magomaev, was very successful, and they soon gained popularity throughout the whole Soviet Union.⁷² Soviets in this post-Stalin era were attracted to new ideas and styles both in music and fashion. Jazz festivals and other contemporary musical styles from Western countries were popular among Soviet people, especially with the younger generation.⁷³ The popularity of this new style of music marked the beginning of the era of Russian popular song or *Estrada* (from the Spanish word “Estrada,” meaning platform, or stage). The subject of these songs was usually love or patriotism and the songs were accompanied by large symphonic orchestra with drums (later with electronic instruments). Famous Estrada singers of the 1960s included Iosif Kobzon, Lev Leshchenko, and Muslim Magomaev and Babajanian composed some of the era’s most famous Estrada songs such as “Arajin Siro Ergy” [The Song of the First Love], “Im Yerevan” [My Yerevan], “Chertovoe Koleso” [The Devil's Wheel], “Blagodaryu Tebya” [Thank You], “Gisherayin Serenad” [Nocturnal Serenade] and “Ororocayin [Lullaby], among many others.⁷⁴ With his growing popularity and success, Babajanian was criticized by some of his fellow

⁷¹ Seda Tashchian, *Arno Babadjanian* (Yerevan, Armenia: Haypethrat, 1963), 55.

⁷² TV-Russia, "Chertovoe koleso Arno Babajaniana" (video), posted November 28, 2012, accessed February 25, 2015, <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=YwF-ppARBck>.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

composers for writing popular and not serious music.⁷⁵ Despite this, Babajanian never returned to classical music composition. He died in 1983 after a prolonged battle with sarcoma and is buried in the Tokhmakh Cemetery in Armenia.

⁷⁵ TV-Russia, "Chertovoe koleso Arno Babajanian" (video), posted November 28, 2012, accessed February 25, 2015, <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=YwF-ppARBck>.

CHAPTER 3

ARMENIAN FOLK MUSIC

Dance and song in Armenian culture are inseparable from each other and both serve as important representations of the culture. Like most cultures, Armenians developed their own traditions, religion, and rituals, and enriched all of these with music, particularly with folk songs. From ancient times, Armenian music, both sacred and secular, was monodic, created without any harmonic accompaniment. Church music in particular was sung by a single male voice up until recent history. The main reason for this was the influence of the hierarchical structure of the Church, which rejected the idea of harmonizing monodic church music by the belief that God is one and so the music should be one melodic voice.⁷⁶ This idea affected the development of folk music as well. Armenian folk song was almost entirely monophonic.

In the fifth century the Armenian alphabet was created, and the result was a large increase in the cultural production of music, literature, and national folklore. This led to the appearance and popularity of gousaners (Armenian troubadours).⁷⁷ The troubadour tradition in Armenia literature developed after Armenia was divided between Safavid Persia and the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁸ These professional musicians and storytellers were

⁷⁶ Harpik Der Hovhannissian, "Armenian Music: A Cosmopolitan Art" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 1956), 61, accessed on ProQuest March 27, 2016.

⁷⁷ Cynthia Kay Wolverton, "The Contributions of Armenian Composers to the Clarinet Repertoire" (DMA diss., University of North Texas, 2002), 5, accessed on ProQuest March 27, 2016.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

beloved by Armenians and would perform at events such as weddings, funerals and festivals. Ashugers came to replace gousaners in the seventeenth century.⁷⁹

The Armenian folk song shares many similar characteristics. Its repertory can be divided into different categories such as work, love, ritual, and dance songs.⁸⁰ The main characteristics of Armenian folk songs are the following: repetitive short motives in sequences, use of free rhythm that leads to a mixed meter, and speech-like singing.⁸¹ Folk songs were monophonic and mostly composed in diatonic modes, with the most popular mode being the Phrygian mode.⁸² The interval range of the melodies is usually a fifth or less.⁸³ Often one note is used as a tonal center with the tune constructed around it. Anticipations are the most common embellishments. The most popular form of Armenian folk song is the variation.⁸⁴ There are a variety of meter types used in Armenian folk music such as simple, compound, or even mixed.⁸⁵ One of the unique characteristic rhythms in Armenian folk music is a 3/8 meter with an accented eighth note followed by quarter note.⁸⁶ In fact, it is characteristic in Armenian dance music to accent the short

⁷⁹ Cynthia Kay Wolverton, "The Contributions of Armenian Composers to the Clarinet Repertoire" (DMA diss., University of North Texas, 2002), 5, accessed on ProQuest March 27, 2016.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Harpik Der Hovhannissian, "Armenian Music: A Cosmopolitan Art" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 1956), 109, accessed on ProQuest March 27, 2016.

beat of the triple time meter. Another specific rhythmic figure in Armenian music is the two sixteenths-eighth note pattern, which also creates the illusion of an accent on the shorter-value notes due to their placement on the beat.⁸⁷ Like most folk music, these songs and dances were passed orally through generations until they were finally written down by the musicologist Komitas.⁸⁸

Komitas was born in Western Anatolia (modern-day Turkey) in 1869.⁸⁹ His mentors noticed he had an exceptional singing voice from childhood. At the age of twelve, Komitas entered Gevorgyan Jemaran (Jemaran is Armenian word for Lyceum).⁹⁰ From his first days of formal study he gained recognition for his great soprano voice and aptitude in music.⁹¹ During the first two years of school, he earned the respect of his fellow students and professors for his outstanding passion and ability to learn.⁹² Young Komitas became interested in choir music and was one of the most active and leading members of the school choir.

Once, while visiting a classmates' village, he heard an Armenian folk song for the first time in his life.⁹³ This event was hugely influential for his later life. Folk music

⁸⁷ Harpik Der Hovhannissian, "Armenian Music: A Cosmopolitan Art" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 1956), 109, accessed on ProQuest March 27, 2016.

⁸⁸ Cynthia Kay Wolverton, "The Contributions of Armenian Composers to the Clarinet Repertoire" (DMA diss., University of North Texas, 2002), 5, accessed on ProQuest March 27, 2016.

⁸⁹ Harry Begian, "Gomidas Vartabed: His Life and Importance to Armenian Music" (Ed.D diss., University of Michigan, 1964), 1, accessed on ProQuest, March 27, 2016.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 8.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid, 10.

⁹³ Ibid, 17.

became his passion. Being at a school with students from diverse backgrounds and geographic locations, Komitas had many sources at his disposal, and he started to notate all the songs he could find.⁹⁴

Prior to this, only Hambardzum Limonjyan (1768-1839) had attempted to notate Armenian folk music.⁹⁵ Limonjyan was one of the leaders of the reformation movement to protect Armenian music from the influences of Turkish "oussoulis" and Arabic "maqam".⁹⁶ "Oussoulis" were modes based on quarter tone intervals and were common in Turkish music. The "maqams" were more common in Persian, Kurdish and Arabic melodies.⁹⁷ Limonjyan studied abroad and was therefore familiar with western music notation.⁹⁸ He realized, however, that, to notate and preserve Armenian music, a new notation system was needed, since Armenian Church and secular music used smaller intervals such as quarter tones (this theory was developed by Sirvard Poladyan in her study *Armenian Folk Songs*).⁹⁹ Therefore, Limonjyan invented a new notational system for Armenian music.¹⁰⁰ It was similar to the Western diatonic scale, except Limonjyan

⁹⁴ Harry Begian, "Gomidas Vartabed: His Life and Importance to Armenian Music" (Ed.D diss., University of Michigan, 1964), 17, accessed on ProQuest, March 27, 2016.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 12.

⁹⁶ Harpik Der Hovhannissian, "Armenian Music: A Cosmopolitan Art" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 1956), 53, accessed on ProQuest March 27, 2016.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 53.

⁹⁸ Harry Begian, "Gomidas Vartabed: His Life and Importance to Armenian Music" (Ed.D diss., University of Michigan, 1964), 12, accessed on ProQuest, March 27, 2016.

⁹⁹ Harpik Der Hovhannissian, "Armenian Music: A Cosmopolitan Art" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 1956), 55, accessed on ProQuest March 27, 2016.

¹⁰⁰ Harry Begian, "Gomidas Vartabed: His Life and Importance to Armenian Music" (Ed.D diss., University of Michigan, 1964), 12, accessed on ProQuest, March 27, 2016.

used old Armenian neumes for notating the pitches and added a few neumes to raise or lower a pitch quarter tone.¹⁰¹

Komitas soon realized that Limonjyan's music notation system, which he learned at the Jemaran, was inadequate for harmonizing the folk tunes, and therefore became interested in learning Western notation.¹⁰² This desire became more obvious when Chrostopher Kara-Murza, an Armenian composer who had received Western musical training at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory and recently returned to Armenia, entered the school as a professor of Choir and Western Notation.¹⁰³ Kara-Murza's high expectations for musical reform, including advocating for dispensing with Limonjyan's inadequate notation system and incorporating Western notation in order to harmonize folk and church melodies, were met negatively by the church.¹⁰⁴ Kara-Murza was fired after only one year of teaching at the Jemaran despite his popularity among students and their effort to advocate for his continued employment.¹⁰⁵ Komitas, being the most advanced and successful student, was offered the suddenly vacant position of Choral Director.¹⁰⁶ He took the position with hesitation, as he realized it would be hard to gain respect from students who were still upset with Kara-Murza's dismissal. Additionally, he

¹⁰¹ Harpik Der Hovhannissian, "Armenian Music: A Cosmopolitan Art" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 1956), 55, accessed on ProQuest March 27, 2016.

¹⁰² Harry Begian, "Gomidas Vartabed: His Life and Importance to Armenian Music" (Ed.D diss., University of Michigan, 1964), 18, accessed on ProQuest, March 27, 2016.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 19.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 19-20.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 20.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 23.

knew that the Catholicos (an Armenian word for the chief bishop of the Armenian Apostolic Church) wanted him to go back to non-western approach and Limonjyan's system of notations.¹⁰⁷ None of these however concerned him from continuing his experiments of harmonizing Armenian folk songs for four-voiced choir and performing them in Jemaran. Catholicos Khrimian, who was fond of Komitas and also is considered as one of the most open minded leaders in the history of Armenian church, soon accepted Komitas' new westernized musical views and later even approved his departure to study in Berlin to further his Western music education.¹⁰⁸ The students soon accepted him as a teacher, acknowledging his passion towards music.¹⁰⁹ Komitas concentrated on teaching monodic folk music.

During this period, Komitas continued collecting folk music.¹¹⁰ He frequently traveled to villages to notate them personally. His presence created challenges at times as the villagers would become shy and self-conscious after realizing that they were being observed. To fight this phenomenon, Komitas would often be forced to observe and notate the singers from a different room or from behind a wall. This shyness was especially true with young girls, who were not encouraged to interact with strangers of the opposite sex due to the conservative religious views of the time.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Harry Begian, "Gomidas Vartabed: His Life and Importance to Armenian Music" (Ed.D diss., University of Michigan, 1964), 39, accessed on ProQuest, March 27, 2016.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 28.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 30.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 61.

In 1895, Komitas began experimenting with harmonizing the folk songs he had collected.¹¹² The same year he published his first anthology of folk songs, which included a variety of genres such as lullabies, work songs, bridal songs, and dance songs. Komitas studied arranging with Makar Yekmalyan, who taught him Western music theory and prepared him to study in a European conservatory.¹¹³ These lessons were highly influential for the future compositional career of Komitas. They also served as the impetus for him to finally accomplish his dream of studying abroad.¹¹⁴

In 1896, Komitas, following the advice of famous violinist Joachim, traveled to Berlin and entered Richard Schmidt's Conservatory and later the Friedrich Wilhelm University.¹¹⁵ While studying, Komitas became a member of the International Music Society and actively lectured about and championed Armenian music.¹¹⁶ In 1899, after graduating from both institutions, Komitas returned to Armenia to continue his work collecting, arranging, and performing Armenian folk songs.¹¹⁷ His concert tours to multiple European capitals in 1907, including Paris, brought widespread recognition to Armenian music.¹¹⁸

¹¹² Harry Begian, "Gomidas Vartabed: His Life and Importance to Armenian Music" (Ed.D diss., University of Michigan, 1964), 58, accessed on ProQuest, March 27, 2016.

¹¹³ Ibid, 36.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 41.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 52.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 56.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 60.

In 1910, Komitas moved to Constantinople, which at that point was the largest center of Armenian culture.¹¹⁹ By directing choirs and lecturing about Armenian music, he tried to stop the mixture of Armenian musical heritage with Arab and Turkish music.¹²⁰ In 1913, Komitas finished his own version of the *Divine Liturgy*.¹²¹ Although Yekmalyan's version of the *Divine Liturgy*, written in the more traditional 3-voice male arrangement, remains the most popular and accepted in Armenian churches today, Komitas's version is preferred among Armenians in the United States and other places where Western music traditions are present.¹²² Komitas' version is acknowledged as the most scholarly written version. It is written for four-voice male choir in contrapuntal style and was first published in Paris in 1933.¹²³

After the end of Russo-Turkish war in 1868, an agreement was reached by the Congress of Berlin by which the Russian troops would leave Turkey and the Christian minorities, including Armenians, would receive protection from Muslims by the Turkish government.¹²⁴ Shortly after this, the newly-formed so-called "Ittihad Society" or Young Turks, who opposed Sultan Abdul Hamid's already shaky "protection" program, started mass massacres and forced exiles of the Christian population, resulting in an Armenian

¹¹⁹ Harry Begian, "Gomidas Vartabed: His Life and Importance to Armenian Music" (Ed.D diss., University of Michigan, 1964), 152, accessed on ProQuest, March 27, 2016.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 153

¹²¹ Ibid, 194.

¹²² Ibid, 195.

¹²³ Harpik Der Hovhannissian, "Armenian Music: A Cosmopolitan Art" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 1956), 65, accessed on ProQuest March 27, 2016.

¹²⁴ Harry Begian, "Gomidas Vartabed: His Life and Importance to Armenian Music" (Ed.D diss., University of Michigan, 1964), 220, accessed on ProQuest, March 27, 2016.

Genocide that took more than 1.5 million Armenian lives.¹²⁵ In 1915, Komitas, along with other Armenian scholars, was arrested in Constantinople and exiled to Changiri, Anatolia. With the help of Henry Morgenthau, the American ambassador to Turkey (at that time the Ottoman Empire), Komitas was able to return to Constantinople from exile in 1919 but was so profoundly affected from the scenes of massacres leading to his exile that he spent the rest of his life in a mental hospital in Paris, where he died in 1935.¹²⁶

Komitas' work serves as an important milestone in the creation of a national Armenian music identity. His research, harmonization of folk songs, and promotion of Armenian music through performances and concert tours paved the way for future generations of composers such as Alexander Spendiarian, Aram Khachaturian, and Arno Babajanian to create unique but distinctly Armenian voices through the incorporation of national folk music in a Western classical music context.

¹²⁵ Harry Begian, "Gomidias Vartabed: His Life and Importance to Armenian Music" (Ed.D diss., University of Michigan, 1964), 220-221, accessed on ProQuest, March 27, 2016.

¹²⁶ Edward Gulbekian, *Armenian Sacred Music and Folk Music* (England: Curzon Press, 1998), 19.

CHAPTER 4

ARMENIAN NATIONAL CLASSICAL MUSIC

Armenia was under constant aggression by Persians and the Ottoman Empire until the end of World War I. After a short period of independence in 1921, Armenia then became part of the Soviet Union in 1922. This brief brush with independence, however, inspired a surge in the country's cultural output.¹²⁷ This was particularly visible in the rise of nationalistic music. Prior to 1921, the long absence of national independence did not allow the development of a nationalistic music school, and the musical culture in Armenia was largely promoted by gousaners and ashugers. After Armenia entered the Soviet Union in 1922, there was more freedom and less discrimination towards Armenians. Prior to this, Armenians had to pay double taxes and lived in fear of the abusive Ottoman Empire government. Once they entered the Soviet Union, however, they finally had a chance to explore their cultural heritage, which allowed for the development of a national music school. The composers of this early Armenian nationalistic movement were the first to incorporate elements from traditional folk music with Western classical music traditions. One of the first composers who combined the study of Komitas, the traditions of ashugers, and Western music was Alexander Spendiarian.

Born in 1871 in Crimea, Alexander Spendiarian, along with Komitas, is considered a founder of Armenian national music of the twentieth century.¹²⁸ After finishing a law degree at Moscow State University, Spendiarian changed career paths and

¹²⁷ Cynthia Kay Wolverton, "The Contributions of Armenian Composers to the Clarinet Repertoire" (DMA diss., University of North Texas, 2002), 8, accessed on ProQuest March 27, 2016.

¹²⁸ Svetlana Sarkisyan, "Spendiaryan, Aleksandr" *Oxford Music Online*, accessed March 27, 2016.

moved to Saint Petersburg in 1896 to study composition with Rimsky Korsakov.¹²⁹ Due to his Russian training and studies with Rimsky Korsakov, Spendiarian's orchestral writing was heavily influenced by Russian national music.¹³⁰ His most popular symphonic works, such as *Three Palm Trees*, *Krimskie Eskizi*, *Etyud na Yevreiskie Temi*, and *Yerivanskie Etyudi*, show the influence of Rimsky Korsakov's interest in oriental and nationalistic music traditions.¹³¹

In *Almast*, Spendiarian composed the first Armenian national opera.¹³² Spendiarian uses Armenian and Persian national folk elements along with a complex leitmotif system, which resulted in a rich symphonic style of writing.¹³³ The opera was hugely popular and the theater that was built and opened for the premiere of *Almast* in 1933 is named after Spendiarian.¹³⁴ He died in 1928, leaving a legacy of new national music that would be studied and continued by future generations of composers.

Aram Ilyich Khachaturian's role in continuing the development of National Armenian Classical music was remarkable. He composed the first Armenian classical symphony that combined traditional Armenian folk and Western Classical elements, his *Symphony No.1 in E minor*. Other popular works, such as his *Violin Concerto in D minor* and *Piano Concerto in Db Major*, were important pieces that influenced many Soviet and

¹²⁹ Svetlana Sarkisyan, "Spendiaryan, Aleksandr" *Oxford Music Online*, accessed March 27, 2016.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

Armenian composers, including Arno Babajanian. In addition to being one of the most famous Armenian composers, Khachaturian is often mentioned as one of the most important Soviet composers of the twentieth century, along with Dmitri Shostakovich and Sergei Prokofiev.¹³⁵

Aram Khachaturian was born in 1903 in Tbilisi, Georgia. After moving to Moscow in 1921, he studied geology at the Moscow University and cello at the Gnessin Music School.¹³⁶ He soon transferred his interest to composition studies, however.¹³⁷ Even his earliest attempts at composition were a success. *Dance*, written in 1926 for violin and piano, and *Poem* for piano from 1927, were published. In his youth, Khachaturian was inspired by the music of Ravel and Debussy and his earlier compositions incorporated elements of French impressionistic music. These elements later disappeared however, as his attraction to native folk music heritage grew.¹³⁸ Despite living far from his native country, Khachaturian learned about Armenia and its culture with regular visits to the Armenian Cultural house in Moscow, where he interacted with many representatives of Armenian intelligentsia.¹³⁹ Most of Khachaturian's early works were performed here, and were later published with the financial aid of the Armenian

¹³⁵ Sima Mannick, "Aram Khachaturian and the Soviet Creative Artist" (MM thesis, University of Southern California, 1947) 7, accessed on ProQuest, February 21, 2016.

¹³⁶ Svetlana Sarkisyan, "Aram Khachaturian," *Oxford Music Online*, accessed March 27, 2016.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Sima Mannick, "Aram Khachaturian and the Soviet Creative Artist" (MM thesis, University of Southern California, 1947) 73, accessed on ProQuest, February 21, 2016.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

community.¹⁴⁰ Khachaturian continued composition at the Moscow State Conservatory in 1929-1934 with Nikolai Myaskovsky. During this time, he wrote his *Military Marches Nos. 1 and 2*, which received wide acclaim, and his *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano*. The trio in particular was accepted with enthusiasm and is considered one of Khachaturian's first important compositions. Khachaturian graduated from the Moscow Conservatory in 1934 with his First Symphony as a graduation piece. *The Symphony No. 1* was dedicated to the 15th anniversary of Soviet Armenia. The folk melodies and improvisational style borrowed from Komitas and Djivani (a famous Armenian ashuger, 1846-1909), as well as a continuation of the Russian symphonic traditions of Borodin, whom Khachaturian admired greatly, made this work appealing with its freshness of harmonic and rhythmic language.¹⁴¹ Khachaturian's next major symphonic work was his *Piano Concerto in D♭ Major*. In 1940, Khachaturian completed his *Violin Concerto in D Minor*. The violin part was written based on a collaboration with the leading violinist of the period, David Oistrakh, to whom the concerto was later dedicated. The premiere was a triumph and won a Stalin Prize. Khachaturian's other major pieces are his *Gayane* and *Spartacus* ballets and the *Symphony No. 2*, written in 1943. The symphony is known by its nickname of "Bell" due to the significant use of a bell in the percussion section. *The Symphony No.2* is also one of many classical works of the time to follow a war theme, portraying the struggles of the people, their hatred towards the enemy, and the sorrow for

¹⁴⁰ Sima Mannick, "Aram Khachaturian and the Soviet Creative Artist" (MM thesis, University of Southern California, 1947) 73, accessed on ProQuest, February 21, 2016.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 92.

lives lost. It is similar to Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 7, Leningrad*, for its philosophical views and ideas.

Khachaturian's music is diverse in genres. His most popular works are mostly symphonic, such as his instrumental concertos, symphonies, and ballet music. He was the first composer in the country who wrote music for movies with sound.¹⁴² Khachaturian was also the first composer who succeeded in introducing Armenian folk music to a wide international audience. The driving rhythmical style and metric diversity in his music come from the Armenian ashugh tradition. This is especially apparent in his *Gayane* and *Spartacus* ballets. The instrumental concertos also demonstrate the influence of virtuosic ashughers in the technical demands Khachaturian places on the soloists. The harmonic language in Khachaturian's music is full of intervals such as minor seconds, perfect fourths and fifths, which are the basis of the tuning system for an Armenian folk instrument called "*Saz*". Overall, he embedded a folkloristic overtone to his works through use of those specific harmonies and imitation of folk instruments.

Khachaturian is one of the first and main figures of the twentieth century to blend the musical traditions of western and eastern cultures. Arno Babajanian, along with his other contemporary Armenian composer colleagues, was highly influenced and even in some ways overshadowed by Khachaturian's influence. As Babajanian matured, however, he developed his own distinctive musical style that set him apart from Khachaturian and other Armenian composers. This will be explored in the following chapter through an analysis of his *Piano Trio in F-Sharp Minor*.

¹⁴² Svetlana Sarkisyan, "Aram Khachaturian," *Oxford Music Online*, accessed March 27, 2016

CHAPTER 5

A PERFORMER'S ANALYSIS OF ARNO BABAJANIAN'S PIANO TRIO IN F- SHARP MINOR: STRUCTURE

Babajanian wrote his *Piano Trio in F-Sharp Minor* in 1952. The work is in three contrasting movements. The first movement, *Largo-Allegro Espressivo*, and the third movement, *Allegro Vivace*, are both in F# minor and in sonata form. The slow second movement, *Andante*, is in the tritone-related key of C Major and is ternary in form. Two special features of this work are its cyclic theme, first presented in the introduction to the first movement and appearing throughout the work, and Babajanian's adaptation of Armenian folk elements. These elements most notably include the incorporation of Armenian folk tunes, the instrumental adaptation of an Armenian singing motive, and the use of mixed modes and other harmonic practices closely aligned with Armenian folk music. Babajanian combines these cyclic and folk elements with traditional forms of Western music, thus creating a distinctive approach to the melding of different traditions.

1st movement:

mm. 1-15: d#m
1-4: D#m
5-8: D#m
8-11: Cm-DM
12-15: DMm

2nd movement:

mm. 51-55: ebm

3rd movement:

(Recapitulation before Coda)
246-257
246-248: CM-E dim.
249-253: Eb-E-D-C#
254-257: Bm (=12=15)

(Recapitulation)

mm. 139-147: Gm
139-143: Gm-DM
144-147: Dm

(Coda)

mm. 213-219: f#m

Figure 1. Babajanian, A. Piano Trio: Introduction theme in all three movements.

The cyclic introduction theme of the Trio is the core of the piece. Based on an Armenian folk song, “Garuna” [It’s Spring], it provides the basic thematic material for virtually all subsequent melodies in the Trio. The theme’s statements are also of structural importance in all three movements, appearing five different times, each usually in a different key. In the first movement, the introduction reappears at the beginning of the recapitulation and again at the very end of the movement, as part of the coda. In the ternary second movement, it occurs briefly before the return of the initial material (A’ section). In the third movement, it appears in the truncated recapitulation instead of the second and closing themes, followed by a brief coda. However, the only times it appears in F# minor, the original key of the trio, is the end of the first movement and in the third movement before the coda. Example 1 provides the folk tune itself and Babajanian’s rendition in the first four measures of the first movement.



Example 1. a) Folk tune “Garuna” [It is Spring] ¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Komitas. *Hay Qnar: Havaqacu Gekhchuk Yergeri* [Armenian Lyre: Compilation of Armenian Peasant Songs]. Paris, 1906.

b)

The image shows a musical score for the first movement of Babajanian's Piano Trio. It features three staves: Violino (top), Violoncello (middle), and Piano (bottom). The Violino part is marked with dynamics *pp* and *Largo*. The Piano part is also marked with *pp*. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs. Red lines above the Violino staff indicate specific motifs labeled 'a', 'b', 'a'', 'b'', 'a''' and 'b'''.

Example 1. b) Babajanian, A. Piano Trio: Movement 1, mm. 1-4 ¹⁴⁴

Babajanian utilizes the elements of the folk tune through motivic borrowing and transformation. For example, the primary theme of the first movement contains the slightly altered beginning motive of the introduction theme (motive “a”) as well as the variations of the motive “b”. Example 2 shows the first appearance of the primary theme in measure 16.

The image shows a musical score for the first movement of Babajanian's Piano Trio, measures 16-20. It features two staves. The top staff is marked with dynamics *mf* and has motifs labeled 'b''' and 'b'''' above it. The bottom staff is marked with dynamics *p* and *Allegro espressivo*. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs.

Example 2. Babajanian A. Piano Trio: Movement 1, mm. 16-20. ¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Arno Babajanian. *Piano Trio in F sharp minor*. Moscow, Russia: Gosudarstvennoe Muzikalynoe Izdatelstvo, 1953.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

There are many similarities in the constructions of the themes. The “a” and “b” motives of the introduction theme are commonly used by Babajanian throughout the piece. The motive “a” is a gap-fill pattern beginning on tonic, and motive “b” is a turn figure (upper and/or lower neighbor notes) on tonic (see Example 1) The “b” motive especially appears in many themes as shown in Example 3.

a)



Example 3. a) Babajanian A. Piano trio: Movement 1, mm. 63-64.¹⁴⁶

b)



Example 3. b) Babajanian A. Piano trio: Movement 2, mm. 1-3.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶Arno Babajanian. *Piano Trio in F sharp minor*. Moscow, Russia: Gosudarstvennoe Muzikalynoe Izdatelystvo, 1953.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Babajanian's use of the neighboring motive in the last example will be discussed in further detail later in the chapter as it is another common element in Armenian folk music traditions. All the varieties of this motive are different in rhythm and structure but are related to the "b" motive from the introduction theme, which again serves to unify the piece.

Another character that Babajanian borrows from the Armenian folk heritage may be seen in the third movement's secondary theme. This melody is related to the main theme, just moved to different scale degrees and inverted. Instead of the minor third moving from tonic to scale degree b3, here it moves from scale degree 3 to 5. He abandons the overall melodic structure of the tune, instead using motivic variation within its original harmonic language and mode. The secondary theme of the third movement thus is in harmonic major with lowered sixth and raised seventh degrees, as shown in Example 4.



Example 4. Babajanian A. Piano Trio: Movement 3, mm 71-75.¹⁴⁸

Babajanian's music in general is very melodic. Even later in his career when he experimented with 12-tone compositional technique in works such as his *String Quartet No. 3*, his melodies retain a close connection with Armenian folk song. One of the reasons for this was his intensive study of Komitas and Armenian music in his early

¹⁴⁸ Arno Babajanian. *Piano Trio in F sharp minor*. Moscow, Russia: Gosudarstvennoe Muzikalnoe Izdatelystvo, 1953.

school years. The themes of the trio are no exception. All of the themes in the piece, with the exception of the third movement's primary theme, have a melodramatic and emotional feel to them. The ends of all the themes except the primary theme of the third movement are similarly constructed with descending last notes. This suggests an Armenian folk technique called "One Breath," in which the singer, for convenience purposes, starts from a higher pitch and gradually descends to lower pitches as they run out of breath. I will discuss this with more details and examples later in the chapter.

Babajanian's trio is rich with Armenian folk harmonies. He achieves this by either incorporating a tune from traditional folk song or through use of the harmonic major-minor modal language found in Armenian folk music. In general, the trio's harmonic language is chromatic, with traditional nineteenth-century practices such as the minor-third cycle, omnibus, and augmented-sixth chords and their irregular resolutions. Particular practices from the twentieth century include the shared-third phenomenon and the octatonic mode. The diagram in Figure 1 shows the diversity of the keys that appear in first fifteen measures of the introduction alone, where the key modulates four times starting in D# minor and finishing in B minor.

Although Babajanian uses the sonata form from western music traditions, he does not directly follow the general practices of the key relations of the themes or the restatement of themes. For example, the first movement's primary and secondary themes are not in the close relative key but rather in more distant relationships, moving from F# minor to F Major. Another example of his departure from traditional sonata form conventions can be seen in the third movement where Babajanian skips the secondary and closing themes and restates the introduction theme instead.

Movement I

Introduction: mm. 1-15

1-4: D#m
 5-8: D#m
 8-11: Cm-DM
 12-15: DMm
 15

15

Exposition: mm. 16-82

P (mm. 16-30)

F#m
 16-20: F#m-Bm
 21-24: f#m-DM
 25-28: f#m
 29-30: Em-BbM

15

T (mm. 31-47)

AM-F#m-GbM
 31-36: AM-BbM
 37-39: F#m-CM
 40-41: F#m
 42-47: F#m

17

S (mm. 48-69)

FM-AbM
 48-52: FM
 53-56: FM.
 57-60: FM
 61-65: AbM.
 66-69: AbM

22

K (mm. 70-82)

GbM-C#m
 70-77: GbM-C#m
 78-82: C#m

13

Development: mm. 83-138

I (mm. 83-109)

83-86: EM
 87-92: AM-FM
 93-109: FM-FBM

27

II (mm. 110-129)

110-113: dDbM-Dm
 114-118: Dm-Ebm
 119-120: em
 121-125: Em-Fm
 124-129: CM

20

Retransition (mm. 130-138)

130-134: GM-D#M
 135-138: Dm-AbM-DbM

9 =56

Recapitulation: mm. 139-189

Intro: mm. 139-147

139-143: Gm-DM
 144-147: Dm
 9

=9

P (mm. 148-162)

139-162=16-30:
 15

T (mm. 163-168)

163-168: f#m
 6

S (mm. 169-177)

169-177=48-56: F#M
 9

K (mm. 178-189)

178-189=70-82: EM-GM-DM
 12 =42

Coda (mm. 190-219)

190-193: Cm
 194-197: Am
 198-201: F#m
 202-212: F#m
 213-219: F#m
 30

=30

Figure 2: Babajanian, A. Piano trio: Diagram of the Movement 1.

The first movement, in sonata form, is relatively proportionate with the introduction plus the exposition, 82 measures, is roughly equal to the recapitulation and coda, 81 measures. The development is shorter at 56 measures. Without the 15 measure introduction theme in the beginning (and its 14 measure reappearance in the recapitulation of the first movement, divided between the beginning and the end), the three sections are slightly more equal: 67: 56: 67. However, without the coda of 30 measures, the recapitulation is somewhat shorter than the exposition at 51 mm. (see Figure 2.)

The movement begins with an introduction theme in D# minor, which is repeated both in the middle (G minor) and the end of the movement (F# minor). The first appearance of the theme, 15 measures, is the longest of any of the theme's restatements in this or in other movements. It is first stated by the violin and cello in unison, accompanied by piano with sustained chords, modulating to B minor when the cello takes over the melody alone. The subsequent appearances of the introduction theme in the first movement are half as long in duration, lasting only nine and six measures, respectively.

As mentioned earlier, Babajanian does not follow the traditional key relationship for sonata form themes. For example, the primary theme in the first movement is in F# minor, which means that the secondary theme should be either in the relative major or at least in a closely related tonality. However, the secondary theme's key in the first movement is in F Major. The relationship between these two keys is called the shared or common third phenomenon, in which the two keys share the same third scale-degree pitch, in this case, the pitch A. This technique is frequently seen in Russian twentieth-century music as well as in the music of Bela Bartok.

Exposition.

As we see from the diagram, the primary theme cadences in seven different keys: four minor and three major. One of the major keys is in fact the relative major of F# minor, A Major, which is one of the few times Babajanian follows traditional sonata form key relations. The whole secondary theme is in major keys: F Major modulating to Ab Major at the end of the section. The closing theme, however, consists of only minor keys (C#, E, G#, A).

Primary theme

As with many of the smaller sections in this work, the primary theme is in two parts; the main theme and its varied sequence, followed by a slightly longer theme that leads to the transition. As mentioned earlier, the primary theme is directly related to the introduction theme and uses both the gap-fill motive “a” and the turn-figure “b.” It is first stated by the cello in measures 16-20 and cadences in B minor, the subdominant of the F# minor. In mm. 21-24, the violin repeats an altered version of the theme harmonized by tonalities a major third below what would be expected based on the pitches of the theme: G Major instead of B minor, and ending in D Major instead of F# minor. In measures 25-28, a melody appears in the piano part beginning on the third scale degree of F# minor (and harmonized by its triad, A minor) that initially utilizes the turn figure (motive “b”) with whole steps instead of half steps. The entire melody could be in D harmonic Major, starting on the dominant pitch, reaching down to the second scale degree, then up to the tonic pitch and down through the flat six scale degree to the third scale degree, F#, our original tonic. Babajanian also harmonizes this melody mostly with harmonies a minor

third apart: A, C, Eb, F#. This melody is then continued in the violin part for two measures mm. 29-30), extending the third G to E back up to A and then moving down through F natural to end on C# and a repeat of measure 16, harmonized by A Major and G minor triads. This begins the transition.

Transition

The transition encompasses mm. 31-48. It consists of short bursts of the first two measures of the primary theme interrupted by triadic outlines in most parts. Babajanian returns to F# minor and the opening measures of the original theme in mm. 37, 40, and 42. This last statement is continued by emphasis on the pitches F# and G in the cello, accompanied by the appropriate triads of F# minor and G minor. An omnibus portion (mm. 45-46, C7-A7) leads to triads Eb and Gb (again the minor third cycle C-Eb-Gb-A), and the Gb minor triad is followed immediately by an F Major triad, which signals the beginning of the secondary theme. This half-step motion is an important characteristic of this piece, and occurs either between shared-third chords (for example Eb minor to D Major in m. 11, or E minor to Eb Major in m. 19), or between two triads a half-step apart in all three notes, i.e., major to major or minor to minor, as here (Gb Major to F Major, a Neapolitan progression). Babajanian uses this chord juxtaposition quite freely, either within a phrase or at a cadence.

Secondary theme

The section encompassing the secondary theme, mm. 48-69, is in two parts, with the second part (mm. 61-69) a restatement of the first part (mm. 48-60) in a different key

and instrumentation. In this theme, Babajanian often uses the lowered sixth and seventh degrees of the scale to mix the major and natural minor's harmonies. This theme is introduced solely in the piano part, and is the second longest rest written for the two string parts in the entire piece. (The longest rest is in the second movement cello part where the first violin plays the theme in A section and the cello rests for 15 mm.). The "legatissimo" indication and the chordal outline with near constant triplets in the piano suggest the contrasting character change. In this section the influence of Rachmaninov's writing is noticeable. Babajanian uses a wide octave range in the left-hand accompaniment, and incorporates harmonies from the romantic era such as augmented-sixth chords. Seen in m. 57 and 59, the first augmented-sixth chord leads to tonic but the second resolves appropriately to the dominant triad in the half cadence in m. 60. Babajanian also uses Neapolitan triads, which often lead directly to tonic as at the beginning of this section.

The theme itself begins in F Major, which shares the third, pitch A, with F# minor, and is only four measures long, mm. 48-51. A one-measure link (m. 52) leads to a varied repeat, mm. 53-56. Another four-measure (2+2) phrase extends the cadence of the theme to conclude on the dominant of F Major in m. 60. This melody begins with a commanding leap from tonic to dominant, followed by minor-third patterns in both directions from the dominant, first a gap-fill pattern to Eb and back to C, then a linear descent from C to A and back. This minor third expansion is derived from the "a" motive of the Introduction theme. In the varied repeat, the leap from tonic to dominant is filled in, and neighbor tones (motive "b") and minor thirds enhance both this filling-in and the subsequent minor third expansion from the dominant. After this cadenza-like statement of

the secondary theme by the piano, the theme is now restated in the violin (accompanied by the cello and piano) in Ab Major and a much higher register, with more leaps. Babajanian repeats only mm. 48-56, eliminating the half cadence, and moves directly to the closing theme. The piano's accompaniment in this section is even wider in register, reaching over three octaves. The register dramatically drops down in the violin (three octaves) at the end of the secondary theme with big interval leaps for the closing theme. The dynamic of the whole secondary theme is soft. The piano starts the theme indicated *mp* and the violin continues in triple piano accompanied by both cello and piano marked again as a triple piano. This suggests a very intimate character and adds a melancholic feeling to the section. The use of only major keys in the section also supports this.

Closing Theme

The closing section in the exposition of the trio is short (mm. 70-82) but very dramatic. The initial theme is only one measure long with a varied repeat, again based on motive “a” of the Introduction theme, with embellishments. Babajanian places it first in the piano (mm. 70-71), then repeats it in octaves in both violin and cello (mm. 72-73). Another two-measure unit played in octaves by the strings, which is also based on the “a” motive, is repeated (mm. 74-77). An extended cadential section concentrates on C# minor in the harmony and the pitch E in the upper voices. The harmonies in this section progress by thirds, tritones, or seconds, never fourths or fifths. However, the first chord in m. 70 is Gb Major and the final chord is C# minor (enharmonically Db), so again a sort of tonic-dominant relationship is seen. However, the C# minor ending dissolves into a

diminished-seventh chord in m. 82 (A#-C#-E-G), which prepares for the E-Major triad of the beginning of the development section.

The section starts in *pianissimo* that gradually crescendos with ascending motion in the violin and cello played in unison. Overall, the dynamics of the section can be described as a big hairpin starting from *pianissimo*, gradually reaching *forte* and, through a *diminuendo* returning back to *pianissimo* to prepare for the development section. Babajanian maintains the use of the continuous motion of the triplet figure throughout the secondary theme as a motor to create dramatic tension along with the crescendo. This motor motion smoothly transfers from one instrument to another, keeping the tension. The theme itself incorporates both regular duple and added triplet rhythms, and as each instrument plays this material, at least one of the other instruments plays a triple or duple opposing rhythm. Again, Babajanian emphasizes the lowered sixth and raised seventh scale degrees in the descending passages.

Development

The development, mm. 83-128, is the most complex and chromatic section of the piece. It is divided into two main sections; the first section (mm. 83-109) is based on the primary theme and the second section (mm. 110-129) on the secondary theme. Each of these sections is further divided within itself by sequential repetition of its main motive. The main key areas are E Major and F Major for portions of the first part and D minor and E minor for portions of the second part.

In the first section, Babajanian develops the “a” motive from the introduction theme as expressed in the primary theme. See Example 5.



Example 5. Babajanian, A. Piano trio: Movement 1, mm. 83-85.¹⁴⁹

The first half of this first section, mm. 83-92, is repeated sequentially in mm. 93-109. In both segments, the “a” motive appears first in the piano part with answering flourishes in the violin and cello parts in octaves or sixths. The first half starts in E Major while its sequenced repetition begins in F Major. The “a” motive appears here beginning on the third scale degree, G# in the first instance, and A in the second, which differs from the tonic pitch opening of the primary theme. The first appearance is punctuated further by the use of the omnibus (mm. 84-86), which ends on a C# dominant ninth chord (m. 86). A small-scale varied repetition in mm. 87-92, with the theme now in the strings, begins in A Major (theme beginning on C#) but returns to the C#9 chord (m. 88). A second small variation in C Major (theme on E) initiates four bars emphasizing either C Major or its Neapolitan Db (C#). The final C seventh chord acts as an altered dominant leading to the following statement of the “a” motive in F Major. In retrospect, the emphasis on the C#9 chord in mm. 86 and 88, followed by the C7 in mm. 89 and 91, creates an elongated augmented-sixth chord to the dominant motion in preparation for the key of F Major that begins the second half.

¹⁴⁹ Arno Babajanian. *Piano Trio in F sharp minor*. Moscow, Russia: Gosudarstvennoe Muzikalnoe Izdatelystvo, 1953.

This second half repeats most of the first (beginning a half-step higher, but continuing a step lower): Measures 93-96 equal mm. 83-86; mm. 97-101 equal 89-92, and mm. 102-104 equal a varied repeat of mm. 89-92. The final phrase, mm. 105-109, begins with a two-measure unit with motive “a” followed by motive “b” with an arpeggiated descending tag; a repeat of these two measures plus a one-bar repeat of the “b” motive ends this half. Initially, the “b” motive plus arpeggio begins with the turn Ab-Gb-Ab, and the following arpeggio follows the F minor triad (mm. 106 and 108). Babajanian accommodates the arpeggio in m. 109 for Fb, and then ultimately Db in mm. 110-112. Arpeggiated or held chords accompany these occurrences. With these measures he creates the beginning of the transition from the first section to the second section of the development, mm. 110-130.

The “b” motive in mm. 110-112 is altered so that it resembles the motive in the violin first heard in m. 91 (over the final C7 at the end of the first half). Essentially the first note of the lower-neighbor figure Ab-Gb-Ab is dropped, with the whole step shortened to a half step, so the motive begins with G-Ab. The remaining motive emphasizes Db and repeats the half-step at the bottom of the arpeggio. Further, it is expressed in two eighth-note triplets, a pattern that continues as accompaniment for the development of the second theme which begins in m. 114. The emphasis of Db in the harmony is changed to a Bb7 in m. 113, which acts as a German augmented-sixth to the following chord D minor 6/4 in m. 114.

The first three measures of the secondary theme are heard in the piano part, with the strings playing the accompanying triplet figure. The next two measures, mm. 117-118, are almost completely arpeggios in all parts and lead to a repeat of mm. 110-118

first a half step, then a step lower. The C half-diminished seventh chord in m. 119 acts as an altered augmented-sixth chord leading to a BM 4/2 in m. 120, which resolves to E6 in m. 121 with a repeat of the same material from m. 114 and following, now in the key of E minor. To bring this section to a close Babajanian again uses the omnibus pattern in C, ending with an F7, which as a German augmented-sixth chord would typically lead to A Major. However, Babajanian substitutes Ab, which leads to a G Major dominant chord of C Major in m. 130 and the “piu mosso” section that serves as the retransition section. This retransition, with a newly introduced rhythm of two rapid sixteenth notes and an eighth-note rest in the strings that is played against dotted rhythms or quarter-note triplets in the piano part, drives towards the recapitulation. A persistent ascending motion and final emphasis on the D-Eb half step in the strings, coupled with descending chordal motion in the harmony, leads directly to the introduction theme in fortissimo in the strings in G minor.

Recapitulation

This section of the first movement, like the exposition, starts with the restatement of the introduction theme. However, this introduction theme is truncated and in G minor, a different key from both the beginning (D# minor) and from the main key of the exposition (F# minor). Babajanian delays a sense of closure in the movement by only returning to the intro theme in F# minor at the end of the Coda.

Babajanian rhythmically shortens the introduction theme to three measures (mm. 139-141), and then, through a one-measure extension, moves directly to an exact repeat of mm. 11-33 in mm. 143-165. This encompasses both the primary theme and the

beginning of the transition, which at six measures is also truncated in this recapitulation. Babajanian repeats mm. 31-33 from the original transition (mm. 163-165), adds a continuation measure of m. 33 in m. 163, and then adds two measures similar to mm. 46-47 to introduce the second theme, which is in F# Major, the parallel major of the main key of the first movement. Babajanian repeats only the second statement of this theme (mm. 169-177 equal mm. 61-69), and continues with the K theme (mm. 178-189 equal mm 70-81). The coda ensues.

Coda

The first portion of the coda consists of an extended omnibus pattern spread out over three similar phrases, which tracks a descending bass from Ab in m. 190 to D in m. 202. Once the D is reached, Babajanian repeats mm. 128-129 (from the end of the development), which lead directly to a restatement of the retransition and the introduction theme, mm. 130-143, but now beginning in C# minor alternating with G Major leading to the final statement of the introduction theme in F# minor. Babajanian's purpose here is to establish the final F# minor key and finish the movement with a strong feeling of arrival.

Movement 2

A	B	Intro	A'
1-27 CM	28-50	51-55	56-76 CM
1-5: CM	28-31:		56-70=1-14
6-9: FM-EM	32-35:		71-72=2-3
10-15: 10-13=6-9	36-39:		73-76: CM
16-21: 16-18=2-4	40-45:		
22-27:	46-50:		

Figure 3. Babajanian, A. Piano Trio: Diagram of Movement 2.

The second movement of the Trio, the shortest of the three movements at 76 measures, is in ternary form, A B A', with a brief statement of the introduction theme (at only six measures, mm. 51-56, it is the shortest appearance of it in the piece) inserted before the return of the A section in m. 57, which forms part of the climax of the movement. Each of the main sections is progressively shorter than the one preceding it: the first A section contains 27 measures, while the B and the A' sections contain 23 and 20 measures, respectively.

The A and A' sections appear in the tritone-related key of F# minor, C Major, the main key of this movement. The tonality of the B section is very chromatic, with some octatonic-related passages, and in some measures does not have a particular key. The A section's musical texture is more relaxed and simple with triadic chords in the piano part. Babajanian includes the introduction theme on the same pitches as initially stated, except enharmonically (Eb instead of D#, etc.) but harmonizes it quite differently so that it sounds more like Eb minor. After a half cadence in measure 54, he restates motives "a" and "b" in Ab minor for two bars, which leads to the return of A section and its key of C

Major. The meter of the movement is mostly in 9/8, with some switches to 6/8 in the two A sections.

A section

The A section is marked *Andante* with no tempo changes until the B section in measure 28. The musical texture begins simply, with the violin solo part in a high register marked *pianissimo*, accompanied in the piano with a rhythmic motive of short-long (eighth note-quarter note), and becomes more complex as the movement continues. The cello restates the theme beginning in m. 16, accompanied by the violin and an arpeggiated texture in the piano. The theme of the A section is related to the introduction theme. Here Babajanian uses an elongated version of the “b” motive and its alteration. Overall, the theme is very melismatic. This is also very typical in Armenian folk music, especially in the ashuger's tradition where the performer would use this technique to have more freedom singing the text.¹⁵⁰ Babajanian uses this element for other purposes as well, such as the harmonization of the key and creation of more drama.¹⁵¹ In Example 6 we clearly see similar embellishments in the following examples from the Armenian folk song "Antuni" [The Migrant's Song], and the second movement of Babajanian's trio. This again suggests the influence of Armenian folk music in Babajanian's music.

¹⁵⁰ Susanna Amatuni, *Arno Babadjanian: Instrumentalnoe tvorcestvo, Isledovanie* (Yerevan, Armenia: Sovetakan Grokh, 1985), 134.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

a)



Example 6. a) Komitas: Armenian folk song "Antuni".¹⁵²

b)



Example 6. b) Babajanian, A. Piano Trio: Movement 2, mm. 1-4.¹⁵³

The theme itself follows a classic Western phrase pattern of antecedent/consequent (4 + 4, mm. 2-9, with a one-measure introduction in the piano.) The consequent version is repeated in mm. 10-13, with altered harmonies in mm. 12-13 that end with an E Major triad in mm. 14-15 harmonizing a high B in the violin. A quick move in the piano part to a dominant-seventh chord in C Major leads to the repeat of the antecedent phrase in mm. 16-18. Babajanian cuts short the antecedent phrase to introduce a new consequent phrase in mm. 19-21, beginning in Db Major, which is then repeated in the violin part in variations in mm. 22-25. Two additional measures provide a cadence that begins with a dominant G Major triad as though preparing for a C Major authentic

¹⁵² Komitas. *Hay Qnar: Havaqacu Gekhchuk Yergeri* [Armenian Lyre: Compilation of Armenian Peasant Songs]. Paris, 1906.

¹⁵³ Arno Babajanian. *Piano Trio in F sharp minor*. Moscow, Russia: Gosudarstvennoe Muzikalynoe Izdatelystvo, 1953.

cadence but that ends surprisingly in a C# Major triad in running arpeggios in all three parts (harmonies a tritone apart being another favorite progression of Babajanian's).

B section

This section, marked *Poco più mosso*, is in two parts. The first part, mm. 28-35, begins with a four-measure theme (mm. 28-31) again based on manipulations of motive "a" from the introduction theme of the first movement beginning with its retrograde (A-B-C-A) and including a direct quote of the motive's exact pitches but displaced between two octaves (last note in m. 28 and m. 29). This theme, first played in the piano part, is repeated at the level of the tritone in the cello part accompanied by the piano in mm. 32-35. In the second part, mm. 36-50, dramatic interplay between the violin and cello in sequences of the retrograde motive "a" culminates in a rhythmically unison statement in tenths accompanied by an omnibus pattern (encompassing the keys C minor and A minor) that ends in m. 45. A gradual crescendo leads to a fortissimo in the final phrase, mm. 46-50, in which the piano joins in the motivic interplay in preparation for the restatement of the introduction theme, marked *Più mosso*.

In section B, Babajanian uses more unstable, chromatic and nonfunctional harmonic language, much of it dominated by chords a minor third apart (from a different minor-third cycle G#-B-D-F). It begins and ends with harmonies from the minor-third cycle C#-E-G-Bb (although Bb is conspicuously absent).

Both themes of the B section have many elements from Armenian folk music. The first theme (mm. 27-31) resembles E harmonic minor, with its emphasis on C and D#, the lowered 6th and raised 7th degrees, which are frequently used in Armenian folk tunes.



Example 7. Komitas: Armenian folk song "Antuni".¹⁵⁴

The second half includes emphasis on D and E#, as though it were in F# minor; however, just as the omnibus ends in m. 45, Babajanian returns to the C-D# pairing but then immediately negates it in the swift climb in both string instruments to the climactic portion anticipating the introduction theme in the next measure.

The repeated sequential nature of the themes, with gradually descending motives, is another Armenian folk element commonly used by Babajanian. As discussed earlier, the “One Exhale” tradition shadows the ashugers phrase endings in which the singer descends in register as they run out of breath.¹⁵⁵ This element is widely used in Babajanian's music. The following Example 8 shows a descending motive from an Armenian folk melody called "Habrban" [A Peasant Song] and both themes of the B section as well as an example from the first movement.

¹⁵⁴ Komitas. *Hay Qnar: Havaqacu Gekhchuk Yergeri* [Armenian Lyre: Compilation of Armenian Peasant Songs]. Paris, 1906.

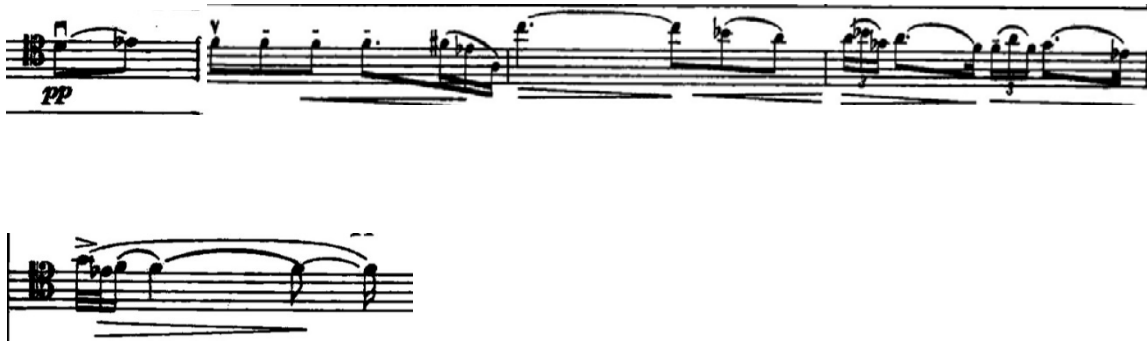
¹⁵⁵ Susanna Amatuni, *Arno Babadjanian: Instrumentalynoe tvorchestvo, Isledovanie* (Yerevan, Armenia: Sovetakan Grokh, 1985), 122.

a)



Example 8 a). Komitas: Armenian folk song "Habrban".¹⁵⁶

b)



Example 8 b). Babajanian A. Piano Trio: Movement 2, mm. 31-35.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Komitas. *Hay Qnar: Havaqacu Gekhchuk Yegeri* [Armenian Lyre: Compilation of Armenian Peasant Songs]. Paris, 1906.

¹⁵⁷ Arno Babajanian. *Piano Trio in F sharp minor*. Moscow, Russia: Gosudarstvennoe Muzikalynoe Izdatelystvo, 1953.

c)



Example 8 c) Babajanian A. Piano Trio: Movement 2, mm. 35-37.¹⁵⁸

d)



Example 8 d). Babajanian A. Piano Trio: Movement 1, mm. 76-78.¹⁵⁹

Babajanian's use of frequent accents in the piano part, an extended crescendo resulting in fortissimo in m. 46 and stretto in m. 49 to create a strong motion to the arrival and culmination of the movement.

¹⁵⁸ Arno Babajanian. *Piano Trio in F sharp minor*. Moscow, Russia: Gosudarstvennoe Muzikalynoe Izdatelystvo, 1953.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

Introduction theme and return of the A section

The introduction theme, marked *Più mosso*, is different from the previous appearances in the first movement. Here, Babajanian uses the motive of the second theme from the B section as an accompaniment in the piano part. The first statement, played by the violin and cello in unison (mm. 51-54), is in Eb minor, the enharmonic equivalent to D# minor which is the key of the original introduction theme of the first movement. The Fb Major triadic chords from the last bar of the B section prepare the arrival of Eb minor, more half-step motion. Babajanian leaves the second statement of the introduction theme unfinished (*Meno mosso*, mm. 55-56) and modulates back to C Major for the return of the A section.

The second appearance of the A Section is 7 measures shorter from the first statement. Babajanian restates the entire violin solo (mm. 57-70 equal mm. 1-14), but eliminates the second theme and gives the cello the first two measures of the theme. The movement ends with the echo-like statement of the A section's first theme's first motive in the piano, followed by two quiet measures matching the opening measure in the piano, all clearly in C Major.

Movement 3

Exposition: mm. 1-130

P	T	S	K
F#m		AbM	
mm. 1-56	mm. 57-71	mm. 72-113	mm. 114-130
1-6: F#m-Em HC	57-71: AM-GM	72-79: AbM HC	114-118: C#m
7-13: EM		80-86: AbM IAC	118-121: Ebm
14-20: C#M-dm		87-91: AbM	122-130: F#m-Ebm
21-28: EM/Octatonic		92-97: AbM-EM	
29- 34: F#m		98-105: BM	
35-41: Ebm-DbM		106-113: BM	
42-57: CM			
56	15	42	17 =130

Development: mm. 130-215

I (P)	II (S+P)	Retransition
mm. 130-171	mm. 172-194	mm. 195-214
130-138: C#M	172-176: BbM	195-198: EM
139-143: C#o7	177-180:bm-Em	199-201: G#m
144-158:Octatonic/stretto	181-184: Am	202-206: C#m
159-162: D	185-188: DM-Am	207-210: EM-G#m
163-167: BM/octatonic	189-194:FM	211-214: Octatonic
168-171: octatonic		
41	23	20 =84

Recapitulation: mm. 215-279

P	(T)	(S)	(K)	Intro	Coda
mm. 215-245:				mm. 246-257	mm. 258-279
215-220: F#m (=1-5)				246-248: CM/E dim.	258-265: F#m
221-227: Ebm -DbM				249-253: Eb-E-D-C#	266-279: F#m
228-245: CM (=42-47ff)				254-257: bm (=12-15)	
31				12	22 =65

Figure 4. Babajanian, A. Piano Trio: Diagram of Movement 3.

In the third movement, *Allegro Vivace*, the key and the form of the movement are the same as the first movement; F# minor in sonata form. It is, however, less proportionate than the first movement. The exposition is 130 measures (the largest section in the piece), while the recapitulation is only 44 measures, roughly one-third of

the exposition's size. The development section is 85 measures, which makes it the second largest section both in the third movement and in the entire piece. The brief Coda, 22 measures in length, finishes the movement (see Figure 4.)

This disproportion results from the omission of everything in the recapitulation except the primary theme and the return of the Introduction theme, which occurs after the primary theme and not before as in previous movements. Thus, like the first movement, the third movement does not strictly follow traditional sonata form. The Introduction theme returns in the second movement's key of C Major, mm. 246-257, and leads directly to the Coda (mm. 258-279).

Another unique aspect of this movement is its meter, which changes far more frequently than in the previous two movements. Although the main meter of the movement is 5/8, with slightly over half the movement (146 out of 279 measures) in that meter, Babajanian changes it in various sections, using different but specific meters to identify each section in the movement. For example, the primary theme of the exposition is mostly in 5/8, while the secondary theme and the closing theme sound in the more rhythmically stable meter of 6/8. The development section is mainly in 5/8 with occasional short returns to 6/8. The Introduction theme is stated entirely in 4/4 as in all of its previous appearances. The Coda starts with 5/8 and 6/8 meters alterations, and ends in 4/4.

The mixture of meter is another common element used in Armenian folk music. Like most of the elements of the folk music, this metric variety in Armenian folk music was developed through the natural lifestyle of peasants by the rhythm of their walking,

working, or other activities.¹⁶⁰ Singing while walking and working with heavy tools especially affected the meter of the melody.¹⁶¹ This serves as a possible explanation of the many mixed-meter melodies in Armenian folk music. Babajanian incorporates this characteristic element by using 5/8 mixed meter (3/8+2/8) in his *Piano Trio's* third movement.

Primary theme

As in the other movements, the primary theme is derived from the “a” motive of the Introduction theme. The basic gap-fill motive is enhanced with an opening descending octave leap on F#, and the gap itself is extended to the raised fourth degree, B#, which creates the familiar augmented second between it and the third scale degree. Babajanian fills in the gap in both directions with G#, first as a step between the initial F# and the B# and then as a lower neighbor during the descending fill, similar to the “a” motive of the introduction theme. The octave actually serves as an introduction, and the melody continues with the leap of the major third G#-B# with the turn motive returning to the tonic pitch, A-G#-A-F# (all notes are eighth notes except the G#-A, which are sixteenth notes). Those two patterns, always placed in an upbeat-downbeat position (two beats up and three beats down, hence the 5/8 meter), are repeated in over half of the measures in this section of the primary theme (26 measures out of 41). Babajanian alternates this pattern with a similar one that incorporates the same lower-neighbor

¹⁶⁰Harpik Der Hovhannissian, "Armenian Music: A Cosmopolitan Art" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 1956), 108, accessed on ProQuest March 27, 2016.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 108.

pattern but begins one eighth note early, so that the first two notes carry the sixteenth notes (see Example 9a.) This latter motive allows him to change pitch levels for the originating motive. Therefore the main statement of the theme, mm. 1-13, alternates between three statements of the original motive and three statements of the derived motive. The original motive occurs first from F#, then from A, and finally from D, all in the strings. A linking measure, m. 13, leads to the statement beginning in the piano, m. 14, in C# Major. The theme, however, is a step lower than it should be, a practice of non-congruency between melody and harmony that Babajanian continues until the original version returns in the piano in m. 29. The character of the primary theme is energetic and dance-like. Babajanian uses a variety of articulations such as dots, dashes, and accents to indicate the strong beats in 5/8. This portion of the theme ends in Db Major, with the theme and harmony in congruence, mm. 38-41. In the closing portion of this section, mm. 42-56, Babajanian continues this theme in C Major, with accented octaves in the piano and triads in each of the string parts. The notions of congruence/non-congruence continue, with the boundaries of the theme C and G (instead of B# and F#) initially over the C-G strong bass, but changing to Bb-G, still over the C-G bass. This powerful and driving section ends abruptly on an A Major triad in m. 57, signaling the transition.

Transition

In the transition the meter becomes even more irregular. Babajanian continues the motive of the previous section but from E to Ab this time, first over the A Major triads, then finally over G Major triads, first *fortissimo* beginning in m. 64, then diminishing to *piano* in m. 68. Fragments of this motive are repeated in the rhythmically complex

section in mm. 60-63, in which Babajanian introduces 2/8 and 4/8 along with 5/8, altering them in every measure. The key of G Major is the flat second of F# minor and the leading tone of the Ab Major, the key of the secondary theme.

Secondary theme

The secondary theme contrasts with the primary theme in that it is more melodic and song-like. This melody is closely related to the primary theme of the third movement, just transposed to different scale degrees and inverted. Instead of having the minor third from tonic to the b3 scale degree, it is from scale degree 3 to the dominant. Also, instead of using the leading tone, which is a half-step below the tonic, Babajanian uses b6, which is a half-step above the dominant.

a)



Example 9. a) Babajanian A. Piano Trio: Movement 3, mm. 1-4¹⁶²

¹⁶² Arno Babajanian. *Piano Trio in F sharp minor*. Moscow, Russia: Gosudarstvennoe Muzikalynoe Izdatelystvo, 1953

b)



Example 9. b) Babajanian, A. Piano Trio: Movement 3, mm.71-78¹⁶³

In the secondary theme, Babajanian follows the pattern of tonality from the first movement. Like the first movement's secondary theme, here Babajanian uses only major keys (Ab, E, B).

The meter, inconsistent at first, alternating between 5/8 and 6/8, eventually settles in 6/8 with only a few returns to 5/8. The secondary theme is stated first by the cello, mm. 72-97, and then by the piano, mm. 98-13. The violin part does not play the theme but merely accompanies for both appearances. The theme is 16 measures long, and is essentially a parallel period, with an internal cadence on the dominant (mm. 78-79), and a final cadence on the tonic, m. 87. In the following ten measures (mm. 88-97), Babajanian seemingly begins with a variant of the theme, mm. 88-91, but then uses the "Descending Sequence" discussed in the first movement, ending with Eb in the melody against D-B in the bass. The second statement in the piano, mm. 98-113, is stated broadly in B Major, with the same parallel period structure as previously.

¹⁶³ Arno Babajanian. *Piano Trio in F sharp minor*. Moscow, Russia: Gosudarstvennoe Muzikalynoe Izdatelystvo, 1953.

Closing theme

In the closing theme, Babajanian slowly transforms a restatement of the second theme, mm. 113-116 in the piano, followed by the violin and cello, mm. 118-121, into a motive that exploits the shared third A between F# minor and F Major, beginning in m. 122. With A as the constant pitch, Babajanian alternates it with either Bb or C, with the Bb enharmonically serving as the raised third in the F# triad accompanying in the piano. The C is used for the alternate harmony, F Major (m 1243). This descending progression from F# to F continues in the piano part, from D minor to Db Major (another shared third pairing) mm. 123-124. Another progression, ascending this time, also from F# minor, accompanies the A-Bb alternation in the strings and reaches Eb in m. 129 before ending abruptly and loudly (*sforzando*) on a C# dominant-seventh chord, m. 130. This ends the closing theme. The whole section is in a stable 6/8 meter.

Development

The development, mm. 130-214, has two main sections. The first section, mm. 130-171, is based on the primary theme, while the second section concentrates on motives from the secondary theme, with references also to the primary theme, mm. 172-214.

This first section begins and ends with passages in the octatonic mode. The primary theme is used, but without the raised fourth scale degree in the theme itself, with the bass encompassing a C# minor-ninth chord and the motive seemingly in F minor with the pitches of F-G-Ab-Bb, (transposition: C#-D-E-F-G-Ab-Bb-Cb-C#), m. 130-138. A transposition of the theme a half step below, mm. 139-143, maintains this same octatonic

mode. A third transposition, mm. 144-147, moves the mode up one-half step (C-D-Eb-F-Gb-Ab-A-B-C). Yet a third non-thematic transposition to the third octatonic transposition, mm. 148-151, overlaps with a “fughetta” starting in m. 150 (C-C#-D#-E-F#-G-A-Bb-C). This four-voice “fughetta” begins in the piano, mm. 150-151, and is continued stretto-style by the violin, cello, and again the piano, mm. 150-158. This fugal passage is not strictly octatonic, in that the opening octave of each statement of the theme (as in the primary theme) generally lies outside the octatonic collection. The initial pitches of this “fughetta” are D, B, D, G, although each statement differs intervallically, as one might expect in a development section. Nine measures (4 + 5) of non-contrapuntal restatements of the main motive, first on D, then on B, lead to another octatonic passage (C-D-Eb-F-Gb-Ab-A-B-C), mm. 168-171, that prepares the second section.

The second section, mm. 172-194, starts with the partial statement of the secondary theme in Bb Major, played by the cello, which is then interrupted by the primary theme stated by the violin, mm. 172-176. This passage is sequenced in mm. 177-179. The derivation of the secondary theme as stated in the closing section (mm. 118-121) is restated in mm. 181-194, divided into three phrases (4 + 4 + 6.) Clarification of the key of A minor through the use of its augmented-sixth chord in mm. 181-183) is followed by a minor third cycle (Ab-B -D-F) and an eventual resettling on the augmented-sixth chord in a minor. This leads to a V7 chord in A minor that serves as the beginning of the retransition. The V7 chord in turn serves as the augmented-sixth chord of G# minor, in which this retransition is mostly set. The retransition gradually brings the 5/8 back with the return of the primary theme in the piano part. In measures 211-214, Babajanian once again uses the octatonic mode (with G#: D-E-F-G-G#-A#-B-C#-D). The

piano part plays the D octatonic ascending scale under the constant repetition of the primary theme's first measure by the strings which leads back to the recapitulation in F# minor.

Recapitulation

The unusually brief recapitulation states only the primary and Introduction themes. However, here the treatment is more aggressive, as befits the final statement. Beginning in F# minor, Babajanian restates mm. 1-5; then while maintaining the structure of the main motives, mm. 220-223, he establishes the key of Db Major, mm. 224-227, with repetitions of the main motive. The aggressive treatment of the primary theme from mm. 42-56 is here repeated, somewhat shortened and with variations. While the bass insistently repeats the C-G of the prior section, the theme now is presented as though it were in Bb minor, with particular emphasis on the Db. A tonic-dominant alternation is in effect in each measure, with the final tonic chord C-G-F-B-Db in m. 239. The C-G bass is continued sporadically even as the introduction theme is reintroduced, mm. 246-249, still over this C-G bass initially, with the theme in double minor thirds in the strings, beginning on pitches E-G-Bb. The cello plays the theme in Bb, and violin in E and G with double stops. This is accompanied by stubborn and accented tonic and dominant unisons in piano part. The second statement starts with another chord, only this time it is a tonic triad (Eb-G-Bb), divided among the three instruments, mm. 250-253, and ends with the often-used half-step cadence, DM-C#M (m. 253). The third statement of the Introduction theme (mm. 254-257) is identical to sections in the first movement (mm. 12-15 and 144-147).

Coda

Babajanian, as in the first movement, once again uses the Coda section, mm. 258-279, to establish the final key of the piece. The last chord of the introduction section of the recapitulation (m. 259) is a German augmented-sixth chord in D Major which prepares the return of the F# minor (3rd degree of D Major). The whole section is based on the primary theme, which is stated in two forms, the augmented-fourth version as at the beginning and the minor-third version on the pitches C#-B-A#-B-D. The first eight measures, mm. 258-265, are devoted to the original version, at the end of which an augmented-sixth interval D-B# resolves to the dominant C#, which accompanies the second version. This C# serves mostly as a dominant pedal for the next twelve measures, punctuated by ascending octaves C#-D-E, harmonized by the harmonies A#-G-A. The final appearance of this triadic progression is continued with G-A#-B, harmonized by G-A#-G triads and ending on A#, with C# in the bass (m. 272). This triad clearly serves the function of a substitute dominant, since it contains both the dominant pitch and the leading tone, and the third note, A#, is a half-step away from the characteristic minor third of the F# minor triad. In the final two measures, a sudden G octave is followed by an A# triad, and final octaves Bb-A-G are followed by the final half-step cadence, G minor-F# minor. The resulting chord in m. 278, the penultimate measure, sounds like an altered augmented-sixth chord (the “Till” chord, famous from R. Strauss’s use of it in his tone poem “Till Eulenspiegel”), and as in Strauss, three of the four notes are one half step away from their resolving pitches, with the C# as the common tone. So a combination of Romantic and twentieth-century harmonies ends the Trio, representing in miniature the

combination of the traditional and newer “functional” chords in Babajanian’s unique harmonic language.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Babajanian's *Piano Trio in F-Sharp Minor* is an excellent example of the composer's unique and distinctive compositional voice. Despite his admiration for and imitation of other Russian and Soviet-era composers earlier in his career, such as Sergey Rachmaninov, Dmitri Shostakovich, and especially Aram Khachaturian, Babajanian's own compositional style developed and matured in his professional life and he left a small but significant collection of works that contribute to the rich legacy of Armenian classical music. Babajanian achieved his unique compositional language through a combination of filtering his own musical ideas through the traditions of other composers and incorporating the traditions of Armenian Folk music.

By following in the footsteps of Komitas, Alexander Spendiarian and Aram Khachaturian in developing a distinctly Armenian national musical voice, and by leaning on the achievements of influential Western and Soviet Classical composers such as Sergey Rachmaninov and Dmitri Shostakovich, Babajanian created in his *Piano Trio* an organic synthesis between all these traditions in a work that appeals to both Armenian folk and classical music appreciators.

There are many reasons why Babajanian's *Piano Trio* remains relatively unknown and therefore unappreciated to this day, especially in the United States. The political and cultural restrictions between the United States and Soviet Armenia during the Cold War certainly contributed. Another factor may be the geographic location and the size of Armenia. The tremendous popularity of Aram Khachaturian's music possibly overshadowed Babajanian's compositional career abroad as well. Finally, most research

of Babajanian's life and career is written in either Armenian or Russian. The only existing English research is mainly about his works for piano and does not including the *Piano Trio*. Despite these reasons, the *Piano Trio* deserves a place in the standard canon of piano trios, both for the richness of its uniquely Armenian voice as well as the rewarding technical and musical challenges for the performers.

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