



Sergey Smbatyan conducts the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra in the 13th Armenian Composing Art Festival, celebrating the nation's musical legacy across three concerts in March

Established in 2010 by the Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra, Sergey Smbatyan, the annual **Armenian Composing Art Festival** features major orchestral, choral and chamber works by Armenia's most revered composers. On 23rd, 26th and 30th March, the festival will take place at the Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall in Yerevan, Armenia, directed by Smbatyan.

As one of Smbatyan's many ground-breaking projects focusing on the musical heritage of his homeland, the festival will feature seven Armenian composers and premiere Martin Ulikhanyan's *Armenian Dances*. Aiming to bring Armenian classical music to a wider global audience, the festival also concentrates on audio and video recordings, digitalisation, and archiving scores for future performances elsewhere. This archive is an especially useful resource as much of the music has not been performed for many years.

Continuing Smbatyan's focus on introducing new repertoire to the classical canon, there is strong emphasis on new work. Since its inception, more than 170 pieces of music have premiered at the festival. Afterwards, the music will be introduced to foreign orchestras to increase knowledge and performance of Armenian music abroad.

Formerly, the festival was dedicated to a different Armenian composer every year, highlighting their important work. The 2018 festival was dedicated to Grigor Yeghazarian and the 2019 to Avet Terteryan. The Armenian State Symphony Orchestra have since decided to dedicate the festivals to anniversaries of Armenian composers. Last year's was for the separate anniversaries of Alexander Spendiaryan, Adam Khudoyan and Arno Babajanyan. But this year marks the centenaries of **Edvard Baghdasaryan** and **Ohan Durian**, and so there are two compositions by the former and one by the latter programmed for the last concert of the festival.

Both Baghdasaryan and Durian are deeply respected Armenian composers, born in 1922. The repertoire on offer here represents some of their finest work, composed under the artistic

restrictions of the Soviet Union in the second half of the 20th century when Armenia was a satellite state.

Their music and that of their compatriots is rarely heard. The **Armenian Composing Art Festival** is an exceptional opportunity to hear it performed by the dynamic state symphony orchestra of their homeland.

Smbatyan said:

"I am thrilled to announce the 13th Armenian Composing Art Festival, showcasing Armenian classical music by major composers from its rich tradition. This year we celebrate the centenaries of Edvard Baghdasaryan and Ohan Durian, two of Armenia's most respected composers, as well as performing music from five other Armenian composers. Performing music from my homeland means a great deal to me as a musician and ambassador for Armenian music – I'm keen to demonstrate the cross-cultural power it has to transcend geographical and linguistic borders."

Concerts

Wednesday 23 March, Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall

Armenian State Symphony Orchestra

Sergey Smbatyan, conductor

Arus Adjemian, piano

Vardan Adjemian: *Piano Concerto No. 2*

Martin Ulikhanyan: *Armenian Dances*

Saturday 26 March, Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall

"Heroic Ballade"

Armenian State Symphony Orchestra

Sergey Smbatyan, conductor

Jean-Paul Gasparian, piano

Arno Babajanyan: *"Heroic Ballade" for Piano and Orchestra*

Martin Vardazaryan: *Symphony*

Wednesday 30 March, Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall

Armenian State Symphony Orchestra

Vag Papian, conductor

Karen Shahgaldyan, violin

Vahram Davtyan, trombone

Eduard Baghdasaryan: *Rhapsody for Violin and Orchestra*

Eduard Baghdasaryan: *Nocturne for Violin and Orchestra*

Noubar Aslanian: *Trombone Concerto*

Ohan Durian: *Komitasiana*

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Notes to Editors

About [Armenian Composing Art Festival](#)

The Armenian Composing Art Festival was established by Sergey Smbatyan in 2010 and was fuelled by his calling to uphold the traditions of Armenian classical composing school with the remembrance of the musical legacy of great Armenian composers. Multiple orchestras, choirs and chamber ensembles of Armenia have performed the gems of our musical heritage and magnified their recognition in Armenia and worldwide. Each year the festival is dedicated to one of the renowned Armenian composers and highlights their well-recognized musical masterpieces (Ghazaros Saryan (2010), Arno Babajanyan (2011), Tigran Chukhajyan (2012), Romanos Melikyan (2013), Avet Terteryan (2014), Edgar Hovhannisyan (2015), Edvard Mirzoyan (2016), Haro Stepanyan (2017), Grigor Yeghazarian (2018), Avet Terteryan (2019).

A crucial part in the scope of the festival are audio and video recordings, digitalization and storage of musical scores as well. Over 70 musical scores have been digitalized and 200 works recorded from the onset of the festival, while more than 170 musical masterpieces have been premiered with the involvement of a large number of musicians, including young talents.

About [Sergey Smbatyan](#)

Armenian conductor Sergey Smbatyan is the Founding Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra and Principal Conductor of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra.

Smbatyan has presented the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra and the Malta Philharmonic throughout Europe, Russia and the United States. Performances include Vienna's Musikverein, the Berlin Philharmonie, Salzburg's Großes Festspielhaus, London's Barbican Centre, the Gasteig Munich, Rudolfinum in Prague, Grand Hall of the Moscow State Conservatory and New York's Carnegie Hall where he made his debut at the age of 28.

A winner of multiple European conducting and violin competitions, Smbatyan has developed an international reputation that includes guest conducting engagements at the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Russian National Orchestra, Dresden Philharmonic, Sinfonia Varsovia, and many others.

Smbatyan's discography is rich and includes many recordings for ArmSyphony Records including Khachaturian's Symphony No. 2, *The Bell*, which was made to celebrate the Armenian Symphony Orchestra's 15th anniversary. A particular focus of Smbatyan's recording activities is contemporary music which he primarily records with the Armenian Symphony and Malta Philharmonic orchestras, alongside other orchestras such as London Symphony Orchestra.

Future performances include his debut with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and a European tour with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, including concerts at the Berliner Philharmonie, the Musikverein in Vienna and the orchestra's first UK tour.

"The conductor led the orchestra with an uncommon attention to detail, skillfully guiding the musicians through the whole performance. His hands were clear and precise; this was a performance

of great dignity and nobility. A highly successful and passionate performance!" Hessisch Niedersächsische Allgemeine