

Armenian Folk Songs in Modern Orchestral Cinematic Form

By

Michel Agemian

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Table of contents

Introduction

Section 1

Scale System: Tetrachords Without Gaps

Monophony: A Single Melodic Voice

Traditional Instrument - The Duduk

Notation: The Khaz System

Historical and Cultural Context

Komitas Vardapet and the Choice to Remake His Songs

Section 2

Defining "Modern," "Orchestral," and "Cinematic"

Media and Materials

Creative Process

Section 3

The selection of the songs

Explanation on choosing the specific songs

Description and reflection of the changes to the songs

The original versions of the songs and their remakes

Bibliography

Introduction

The origin of Armenian folk music traces back centuries. Folk music is an essential part of the Armenian culture. Although the nation has gone through major challenges like displacement and cultural suppression, folk music survived due to community gatherings, oral tradition, and musicologists and folklorists' preservation and documentation efforts. Traditional Armenian music uses instruments like duduk, and features unique scales, tetrachords, modes, and notation system. Implementing these features in modern Armenian music may help to connect with its roots. This creative project will explain the elements that make Armenian songs Armenian, take old Armenian folk songs, remake them in a modern orchestral cinematic way using digital tools, and add new elements while still remaining true to the original elements of Armenian folk songs. The project will add new harmonies to the original notes, involve new instruments, and mix them together in different ways. In modern digital music creation, only some basic analog equipment like a laptop, MIDI keyboard, audio interface, and speakers are needed to get a high-quality project. The goal of this project is to give new life to old Armenian folk songs. The project is aimed at the audiences outside of Armenia while maintaining the cultural and emotional essence of the songs, all while introducing new orchestral elements, techniques, and digital production styles to create a fresh, immersive experience.

Section 1

Scale System: Tetrachords Without Gaps

The oldest known Armenian folk songs were created and passed down to generations for thousands of years. Armenian folk songs are considered the foundation of the nation's musical culture. They possess specific traits that make these songs explicitly "Armenian."

In this regard, it is important to understand how the scale system works. The songs follow a specific scale system, different from typical Western systems. The typical Western system is based on either a major or a minor key, and the scales are based upon a sequence of whole steps (- like C to D on the piano, skipping a note between them) and half-steps (like E to F). A scale usually covers one full octave (eight notes) , starting and ending on the same note, just an octave apart, and each scale follows a specific pattern. For example, a major scale consists of a whole, whole, half, whole, whole, whole, and half steps, whereas a natural minor scale follows a whole, half, whole, whole, half, whole, whole pattern.

The system in Armenian folk music is different. Instead of using the traditional Western heptatonic (seven-note) scales, the system often based on tetrachords. A tetrachord is a group of four notes, and they are arranged to span a perfect fourth (five semitones, like C to F on a piano) (Kharatyan, 2019). For example, a tetrachord starting from the note C may consist of the notes C, D, E, and F . Several tetrachords can be used in one song, and they are chained together. The note F, concluding the first tetrachord, may simultaneously be the first note of the next tetrachord, consisting of F, G, A, and B flat, and the same pattern may be extended throughout the whole song. Each tetrachord (four notes) hands off to the next, and just as each scale has a different mood (for example, a major key in classical music is typically associated with happiness, and a minor key is associated with sadness), each tetrachord can have a different mood as well. A song can start brightly with G-A-B-C, then climb and darken with F-G-A \flat -B \flat , then descend and settle with E \flat -F-G-A \flat . Most of the time, the last note of one tetrachord is the first of the next in Armenian folk music, and it is called conjunct tetrachords, but sometimes, disjunct tetrachords are also used, where the next one starts on a different note, not the last one.

A tetrachord G-A-B-C (ending on C) could jump to D-E-F-G instead of starting the second tetrachord with C.

Monophony: A Single Melodic Voice

Texture in music is the element that analyzes musical layers in terms of number and function.

There are several typical textures in music, and the most basic one is monophonic. Armenian rural folk and church music is defined by several unique characteristics, one of which is monophony. Monophonic texture has only one layer, a melody. With monophony, it does not matter how many voices or instruments are there as long as they are playing or singing the same thing at the same time. It also does not matter if the voices are playing or singing at the exact same frequency or in different octaves (an octave is the distance between two musical pitches that has a 2:1 frequency ratio). Percussion instruments can also be included in monophonic music as they don't produce specific pitches.

The monophonic structure of Armenian folk music excludes any background voices or chords accompanying the main melodic line, which is common in different music styles. The importance of monophony is in the cultural roots of Armenian folk music, reflecting the simplicity of the style, which made it more convenient to pass the tunes from generation to generation. This proved to be crucial for preservation of the oldest forms of music.

Another form of musical texture, which is common in modern music, is polyphony. Polyphony is when the music has multiple layers played or sung at the same time. In western music, polyphony is common in choral works, ensembles, and symphonies, where, for example, sopranos might sing a melody, and instruments like cellos or violins add different secondary

lines, all played together. This creates a complex and layered sound with harmonies. In contrast, monophonic music relies on just one melodic line.

Monophony in Armenian songs shapes the music's identity. For example, "Kele, Kele", which was notated by Komitas, is a lively tune traditionally performed with a single melodic line, often sung by a solo voice, without harmonic accompaniment.

Traditional Instrument - The Duduk

One of the most popular and commonly used Armenian instruments that defines Armenian music is the duduk. It is a double-reed woodwind instrument made of apricot tree wood which gives the instrument a warm and resonant tone due to the wood's natural properties. It features a cylindrical bore and has seven or eight holes for the fingers, allowing for a range of about two octaves. The player can produce the sound by blowing through the double-reed mouthpiece known as "ghamish", which requires great control to achieve the smooth sound quality. This playing technique allows the duduk to produce a soft, warm sound, and it is most typically in pairs where one of the players is performing the melody, and another is holding a single note known as "dam," which is yet another characteristic of Armenian folk music. The duduk's role in Armenian folk music is not equivalent to that of Western woodwind instruments such as oboe or clarinet, which are often included into orchestra as harmonic support. The monophonic nature of Armenian music emphasizes melody over harmony.

Other popular and commonly used Armenian instruments include: 1. Dhol, which is a double-sided drum usually made of wood with the skins attached to wooden hoops and laced by cords or ropes in a V-shape converted into a Y by metal tuning-rings or other devices (Arakelyan, 2016), 2. Zurna, which is a double-reed instrument with the reed consisting of two blades of cane

(Arakelyan, 2016). The player's lips press on the pirouette (or rosette), a small disc of wood, ivory, mother-of-pearl, or other material, 3. Shvi, which is a woodwind instrument similar to a flute or recorder". It's a small, end-blown flute with a mellow, soft sound (Arakelyan, 2016). As mentioned previously, Komitas, who played a huge role in preserving Armenian folk music, incorporated some Western techniques into his music to attract Western audiences (Davidjants, 2015), but the use of Armenian traditional instruments with those techniques was yet another defining factor for the Armenian music.

Notation: The Khaz System

In the early medieval period, when the notation systems that are used now were not created yet, Armenians used the Khaz notation system. Khaz, according to the Armenian linguist Hrachya Acharyan, was borrowed from the Caucasian languages and means “line, script, hand drawn lines” (Khazer). The system involves using a set of special signs of music notation to transcribe Armenian music. The signs, placed over texts, allow for free variation within a specific scale or musical framework. The signs and symbols placed do not indicate the exact pitch, but only tell if the melody should go up or down, meaning the symbols do not tell the player or singer to sing or play a specific note, but rather if the melody is ascending or descending.

Armenian composer, ethnologist, and priest Komitas Vartapet spent several years studying and analyzing the Khaz notation system. Unfortunately, his research on Khaz notation was lost during the events of the Armenian Genocide. However, in his notations of Armenian folk and church music, Komitas used yet another notation system. Created in early 19th century by Constantinople Armenian musician Hambarzum Limonjian, it uses some of the Khaz notation signs.

Historical and Cultural Context

Armenian folk music dates back to the ancient times, long before there was ink to write (Atayan). There were no notation systems as there are now, and people had to pass the songs and tunes orally.. These tunes had a specific purposes, each of them told a different story about people's daily lives, and they had specific themes, such as love songs and lullabies for babies..

In 301 CE, Armenia became the first country to adopt Christianity as a state religion, and the church started having a big influence on the music. Sacred chants, called Sharakans, came to life. The music still remained monophonic, but the topics of the songs became related to faith. It was a few centuries later when the Khaz notation system came to life, and musical symbols were combined with the song lyrics. Although the symbols were not as detailed as the ones used today, people still were able to sing and perform tunes by reading them.

An important figure who played a huge role in collecting and preserving the tunes that were made and passed down to generations was Komitas Vardapet (1869–1935). Komitas did extensive fieldwork through hundreds of Armenian villages and towns and collected thousands of folk songs; apart from collecting, he analyzed their structures, modes, and rhythms and provided insights into the Armenian musical psyche. Komitas's dedication to Armenian music extended beyond collecting and preserving Armenian folk songs. He formed choirs and performed the tunes created in Armenian villages long ago to international audiences, showing them the Armenian spirit through music.

Komitas Vardapet and the Choice to Remake His Songs

In Armenian music history, one of the main figures who played a significant role in preserving and transcribing Armenian folk music was composer and folklorist Komitas (Soghomon

Soghomonian, 1869–1935). Komitas was born in Kütahya, Ottoman Empire (now Turkey), and he was a musicologist, composer, and priest. He studied in Berlin, where he gained his knowledge of Western music. He had a massive impact on Armenian music because he collected about 3000 folk songs from rural areas and preserved them. In addition, he transformed some of them into classical compositions. Komitas adapted Armenian folk tunes to the standards of European classical music. The main reason was to lay groundwork for Armenian classical music on the basis of the local musical tradition.

The complexity of the Armenian folk tunes that he was collecting manifested itself through their modal structure, complex rhythms, and ornamentation. The modal structure of Armenian songs is different from the traditional Western major or minor scales. Traditional Armenian music sometimes mixes scales and adds new intervals, (Davidjants, 2015). Ornamentation refers to melodic "decorations" in the form of slides, trills, and grace notes that add more complexity and emotional depth to the song. For example, a duduk player can add trills to some notes to create a more expressive sound. These are some of the characteristics that make Armenian music distinctive by allowing it to convey the country's cultural identity, and Komitas transcribed all these features when he was collecting the songs.

One of the main challenges that Komitas faced was the destruction of many manuscripts during the Armenian Genocide, with only around 1,200 of his transcriptions surviving. Witnessing the massacres led to the decline of his mental health. Despite the destruction, his legacy continues, with worldwide recordings and performances, and his influence is seen in the works of later Armenian composers.

Defining "Modern," "Orchestral," and "Cinematic"

The folk tunes that were sung and passed down from generation to generation have specific characteristics that differ from the songs that are created in the modern world. The goal of remaking some of the old Armenian folk songs is to present them in a way that keeps the main characteristics that they had while resonating with contemporary audiences. This process involves using modern production tools, orchestral instrumentation, and cinematic storytelling to transform the old Armenian monophonic tunes into modern orchestral pieces. Modern orchestral cinematic is a blend of themes and genres that acts as a bridge between Armenia's historical sounds and melodies and today's modern styles. The transformation of the songs requires an understanding of the terms modern, cinematic, and orchestral.

Modern refers to the use of contemporary music creation tools, software, and libraries. It involves using production techniques with computers, equipment, and software that offer virtual libraries and audio effects. These tools ensure that the sounds are high-quality, polished, and clear without any muddiness and unwanted sounds. Unlike the oral tradition of old Armenian folk songs, where the tunes had to be sung live without any technological equipment, modern music creation relies on using software or hardware to shape the sounds with precision. Digital Audio Workstations (DAW) such as Pro Tools, Ableton, and Logic Pro are software that allow composers to record, edit, arrange, produce, and mix in detail to achieve the desired sounds. Virtual instruments like Spitfire Audio or Native Instruments provide realistic-sounding samples of instruments, including orchestral strings, piano, brass, percussion, and even Armenian duduk, dhol, and kamancha. These virtual instruments do not only allow the composer to play instruments but also edit, change, and make them suitable for any project and genre. Audio effects and plugins allow for the addition of depth, clarity, and atmosphere. For example, using

an equalizer allows to add or remove any frequency from a sound. This ensures any unwanted and muddy frequency is removed, making the sound clean. Another effect is using reverb on a sound. Reverb (short for reverberation) is when the sound reflects from a surface, sending around sound waves in all directions. It is the sound that's left after the original sound stops playing. Reverb plugins allow to replicate the effect from different locations. For instance, a virtual realistic-sounding duduk can be used in digital software to recreate the melody of an old Armenian folk song. After creating the melody, an equalizer can be added to make sure there is no muddiness in the sound and to make the sound fuller by adding additional frequencies. Then, a compression plugin can be used to make the duduk's soft tones stand out, adding more weight when in a larger mix. Then, a reverb effect can be used to mimic a duduk sound similar to a duduk being played in a church, as the plugin will replicate an identical reverberation as in a church.

Additionally, modern techniques give room for experimentation. The software used allow techniques like tempo adjustments, where the tempo of the song can be altered at certain parts, adding multiple layers of similar sounds to make a choral effect or adding ambient pads from digital synthesizers to evoke a different mood.

Modern tools and techniques maintain the characteristics that the original tunes have, such as the melodies built on a tetrachord and still using Armenian instruments, but contemporary music production allows for these sounds to have a different presentation, aligning more with today's listeners and the music that is produced in recent times.

Orchestral refers to the use of large ensemble instruments. They are typically divided into four sections: Strings (violins, violas, cellos, basses), Woodwind (Flutes, oboes, clarinets), Brass (horns, trombones, trumpets), and Percussion (cymbals, timpanis). In Armenian folk music, the

tunes are monophonic, without any additional accompaniment. Orchestral approach expands this by adding a full symphonic palette. This addition can be used by adding harmonic accompaniment or by using several instruments to play the same melody used in the songs. Even if some of the instruments are used as harmonic accompaniments, the original melody's prominence is still maintained to make sure the focus is on the melody. Using harmonic accompaniment with orchestral instruments makes the songs fuller and richer and adds more texture. For example, a song being arranged in a software with virtual instruments can have the duduk play the main melody of the original tune while having several violins, flutes, and cellos double the melody in a lower volume while trumpets and violas play additional chords and harmonies to add more texture. Combining modern production tools with orchestral elements allows to achieve fuller, more detailed arrangements. Layering several string instruments and using tools such as equalizers and compressions ensures the sounds are fuller and have more depth without any unwanted noise or frequency. The orchestral approach makes the arrangement fuller by adding harmonies and additional instruments while keeping the main melody as the central part of the song.

Cinematic refers to the musical style inspired by movie soundtracks, which are characterized by emotional arcs, swells, and dynamic builds that take the listener on a narrative journey. This style involves structuring tracks so they have clear beginnings, build-ups, climaxes, and outros, which can be achieved by gradually adding instruments, changing tempos, having dynamic sounds, and using various audio effects. These techniques add more emotional depth to the songs, which makes the songs more impactful to the listeners.

It is essential to note the connection between music and emotion because music is a powerful tool for emotional affection. A document called *The Science and Psychology Behind Music and*

Emotion states that emotions are influenced by music both psychologically and scientifically (Gavin, 2010). It is explained in two perspectives on how music evokes emotion. The first is the emotivist perspective, which suggests that certain musical elements bring various emotions (Gavin, 2010). For example, when a song is in the major key, happy emotions are brought up, and when a song is in the minor key, sadder emotions are evoked. The second perspective is cognitivist, which states that emotions can be evoked not by the elements in the music but by making the person remember certain memories or experiences (Gavin, 2010). For example, a certain song might cause happiness to one person by bringing memories of having fun with friends and sadness to another by bringing sad memories. This is not because of the song's scale but because the same song brought different thoughts and memories for each person.

Another article shows that the emotional impact of music on our brains is universal, and it shapes important parts of life. In the world of making music, composers, a lot of the time, do not follow "rules" of music-making and instead rely on a combination of conscious and unconscious thoughts influenced by personal experiences and emotions (positive or negative) (Douek, 2013).

Some of the techniques used in film music are:

1. Rhythm and dynamics - This is the speed and the volume used for intensity and urgency (for example, the Jaws theme).
2. Tension and release - This is used for build-up and release, similar to stories.
3. Pitch - Used to signify size, threat, etc. Generally, higher notes are lighter, while lower notes are more ominous.
4. Leitmotifs - This is when certain characters or situations have their specific theme to help the viewers connect with them. For example, Darth Vader's theme can signal his presence.

Both these articles show that there is a big connection between emotion and the factors that are used in music, and it is essential to include the elements in the remakes of Armenian folk songs that bring emotions in the listener to make the song as impactful as possible.

Combining modern production tools and techniques with orchestral elements and instruments and structuring them in cinematic styles will transform the old Armenian folk songs into a different style while maintaining the characteristics of the original tunes as the central parts of the tracks.

The production tools and software and The process of arranging, structuring, producing, mixing and mastering the tracks

Media and Materials

Different programs and software are used to create, produce, edit, arrange, and mix different sounds together in order to achieve a full track. These softwares include a DAW (Digital Audio Workstation), sound libraries, virtual instruments, mixing tools, AI-powered tools to enhance specific sounds, and reference material, which are the scores and recordings of the original works. Apart from the digital softwares, analog devices are also used and combined with the digital. The analog devices include a laptop, which have all the software, an audio interface, speakers, headphones, and a MIDI keyboard.

DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) - A DAW is the main program used to create, edit, arrange, mix, and master sounds and tracks. In the past, big analog devices were used to create music.

Now, it is possible to achieve identical results with just software, which has all the elements. The DAW that is used to remake the old Armenian songs is called Logic Pro X, which is software created by Apple for musicians and artists. Logic Pro has all the tools to arrange, edit, mix, and master audio. While the program has these tools, third-party software is needed to have sound

libraries and virtual instruments that sound realistic. The virtual instruments that Logic Pro has do not sound realistic, which is why additional software is needed.

Sound libraries & Virtual instruments - Virtual instruments are digital tools used in music production that replicate the sounds of real instruments. These digital tools are integrated into the DAW in the form of plugins and enable producers to have real-sounding instruments, like the piano or the violin, without needing the actual instruments or recording them live. For example, a company called Spitfire has ultra-realistic-sounding virtual instruments, and while these plugins take up big space in the computer, they provide identical-sounding orchestral instruments, and they offer options for how notes are played (e.g., pizzicato, legato, tremolo for strings) to mimic expressive playing. Dynamics (soft/loud) and other techniques like expression (for strings), modulation (for strings), sustain (for piano), and pitch bends (for guitars/strings) can also be controlled to add realism. These tools are essential to get high quality sounding projects.

Mixing tools - Sounds and recordings on their own are not always enough and sufficient to be considered high quality. There are lots of tools to alter audio files to taste. The most popular ones are an equaliser, which is used to reduce or add any frequencies in the audio files, and is needed to avoid audio clashing (muddy/distorted sound), a compressor, to adjust dynamics and keep the audio balanced, a reverb and delay, to simulate reverberation and delay, which is adding an echo, and saturation, which add harmonies to the sounds for more "life". Not all these tools are always essential for every sound, but they are very common. For example, the lower frequencies in a piano might be much more compared to the higher frequencies, in this case, an equalizer is used to reduce those lower frequencies and keep the sound balanced. In another case, the low frequencies of a bass might clash with the low frequencies of the piano, which might cause unwanted distortion. The equalizer makes sure these issues are prevented. Reverb is essential to

make sounds more dreamy, which is a common tool used in cinematic music, to add more emotion. These tools are integrated into the DAW itself as plugins, but there are also several different types of equalizers, compressors, and reverbs that are downloaded separately.

In recent years, AI-powered tools have been created to achieve better sound. These tools are only for the technical parts of the song-making process, ensuring the sounds are of higher quality. For example, a company called iZotope makes high-quality AI-powered plugins that can be added to the DAW and used. One of the AI-powered plugins they have has the ability to remove unwanted background noise from sound. A lot of the sounds contain background white noise, and it is very difficult to remove them manually, but with the help of AI, these unwanted sounds can be greatly reduced, adding quality to the overall project.

Reference material is used to recreate the songs. These include the scores, notes, and chords of the songs. Apart from just the audible part of the old songs, the visual aspect is important too in order to get and capture each note, melody, and chord accurately. In the new versions, variations to the notes are added, but the original chords are still used as a foundation.

A laptop is a must to have all this software and tools. A MacBook is used, which has Logic Pro X, as well as plenty of realistic-sounding virtual libraries, soundbanks, mixing, and reference tools.

Adam Audio speakers are used to create the tracks. High-quality speakers are essential to hear every detail of the sounds. A lot of the sounds may not be audible when listening on a low-quality speaker, which is why good speakers are needed that cover all ranges of frequencies.

Headphones are also used as a secondary tool to create tracks. The main part of the production is done on speakers, but headphones are also important to include variety. It is important for songs

to sound good both on speakers and headphones, which is why both will be used. The brand of the headphones is Beyerdynamic, which is made for mixing and mastering purposes.

An audio interface is used to connect external analog equipment to the laptop. It is a piece of device connected to the laptop via USB, and other equipment, like the speakers, headphones, and the MIDI keyboard, are connected to the audio interface.

A MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) keyboard is a piano-style electronic musical keyboard that has additional buttons like volume, play, stop, etc. The keyboard is connected to the laptop and to the DAW, which allows every sound from the virtual instruments to be played from the keyboard. For example, if a piano plugin is opened in the DAW, the sound can be played from the MIDI keyboard. Similarly, if a string library plugin is opened from the DAW, string sounds can be played from the keyboard. The sounds played from the MIDI can be recorded, and adjusted after recording.

Creative Process

Recreating old Armenian folk songs in modern cinematic styles requires several steps, which include song searching, analyzing, rearranging/recomposing, producing, mixing, and mastering. Each step is done with attention to detail in order to achieve professional, accurate, and high-quality sounding results.

The first step is to search for songs that are collected or composed by Komitas that will be used for the remake.

After finding a song and everything related to that song (musical sheet, score, notes), the arranging part starts, which is where the creative part occurs as there are no specific "rules" in the remaking process. During the rearranging, the key of the song can be different. For example, the original song's key can be transposed to a different key. This wouldn't totally change how the

song sounds, as it would still be as identifiable as before, only with a different mood/vibe.

During this part, some new notes can be added while still keeping the essence of the original song. Adding/removing or changing the position of some notes can make the song sound more unique and different. This should only be done to some extent (for example only varying a maximum of 15% of the notes in order to keep the essence and not make it a different song).

Figuring out the structure of the song is a part of the arrangement. It is important to structure the song in a way so it sounds natural; a typical structure includes an intro, verse, chorus, verse, bridge, chorus, and outro.

After arranging and structuring the project, the production part starts. This includes using various sound libraries and virtual instruments for each component. For example, the chords in the second half of the song can be played with strings while the main melody is played with a piano accompanied by the harp. The production part is also a creative part as there are no certain rules to follow but to try and do what sounds best, and modern while keeping the essence of the song. New elements can also be added, for example, on top of the newly arranged melody and chords, and a new layer of harmony with a different instrument can be a great addition to make the sound richer and fuller.

After the production occurs, the mixing part starts, which is mainly technical. During the mixing, it is important to identify the "issues" in the song. These can include muddiness, distortion, low/high volume of certain sounds, lack of echo (or too much echo), and aspects that are needed to remove/add to the sounds. During the mixing, it is important to focus and listen with different headphones and speakers to ensure the song sounds best on all devices.

The final part of the song remake is the mastering. This is to bring and match the dynamics of the track to mainstream tracks. Mastering is done to ensure the track is "equal" to every other song in

terms of volume and frequency. Mastering typically includes adding/reducing volume, compressing, equalizing, and adding harmonics to the overall track.

Challenges

The main challenge lied in researching and finding accurate information regarding Armenian folk songs. As these songs are centuries year old, and as recording was not available at that time, there was not a lot of information about them. I asked the assistance of American University of Armenian professor Artur Avanesov, who is an Armenian composer of chamber, choral, vocal, and piano works and whose works have been performed in Armenia and abroad. I have checked the research I have done about Armenian folk songs and their origins to make sure they are as accurate as possible.

Section 3

The selection of the songs

All of the songs were collected by Armenian priest, composer, and ethnomusicologist Komitas Vartapet (1869–1935). The songs “Garun a” (Գարուն ա), “Kele Kele” (Թելել, քելել), “Kaqavik” (Կաքավիկ), “Shushiki” (Շուշիկի), and “Hov Areq Sarer Jan” (Հով Արեք, Սարեր Չան), are Armenian folk songs that are collected, arranged, and preserved by Komitas

1- Garun a (Գարուն ա, "Spring")

“Garun a” is a folk tune collected and preserved by Komitas. The original author of the song is unknown. The lyrics describe an unexpected snow during spring and the tragic story of an abandoned girl whose lover “turned cold” to her. Folklorists note that the song became widely known in Ottoman Armenia in the late 19th century, when it became associated with the Armenian Massacre of 1894, which occurred during the spring. The snow is a metaphor

representing the cold massacres during a time when there should have been blossom and growth. The tune is also commonly performed on April 24th, during the Armenian Genocide commemoration ceremonies (Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day).

2- Kaqavik (Կաթավիկ, "Partridge")

“Kaqavik” is one of the few songs Komitas composed himself based on the lyrics of Armenian poet Hovhannes Tumanyan. It is a cheerful song about nature and a little spring partridge who flies when the sun rises. It is a light and playful song with a bright melody, suitable for young voices. It can be performed solo or in a choir.

3- Kele Kele (Զելել Զելել, "Walk, Walk")

“Kele Kele” is another song that Komitas collected that has no known author. The lyrics are more complicated and dynamic compared to other songs. In the central part, two images are contrasted: an energetic, manly figure and a tender, feminine one. The young man praises his “tender dark quail” and admires everything about her.

4- Hov Areq Sarer Jan (Հով Արեգ Սարերի Ջան)

The title of the song literally translates as “Cool me down, dear mountains.” Komitas collected it, although the exact origin of the song is not known. The narrator of the lyrics ask the mountains to appease their worries. The nature is asked for rain to -soothe the mental anguish.

5- Shushiki (Շուշիկի)

Unlike previous examples, this one is not a song, but a traditional Armenian dance tune from the town of Vagharshapat (modern-day Etchmiadzin). The tune blends a sorrowful expression with the joyful, playful rhythmical patterns. It is an instrumental melody with no known lyrics.

Explanation on choosing the specific songs

The five songs that were chosen are ones that I have known since childhood. I have heard them many times growing up and they have stayed with me over the years. I did not choose them based on technical reasons but rather because they are the most meaningful to me. The remakes could be done to any song, but these five songs are the ones I feel most connected to. The goal was to remake the songs in the style I make music which is modern, cinematic and orchestral, as defined. I wanted to take something familiar that's hundreds of years old and present it in a way that feels more current. It was a way for me to bring the music I grew up with into the world I now create in.

Description and reflection on the changes to the songs

Each remake of the songs had a different vision when making them. Even though there are elements that are common in all songs, the structure, tempo, and the overall production is different. "Garun a" starts with a combination of piano and harp playing the first part of the melody while the duduk plays single notes. I wanted to achieve a mysterious sound with the first part before the main melody and instrumentations begin. To make that part bigger, I slowed the tempo right before it goes back for the main part. During the main part, I added several elements including duduk, strings, piano, and bass. It then goes back to just harp and piano with a soft pad in the background. I added many more elements in the final part of the song as I wanted to keep

the hugest part in the end. In addition to instruments that were already present, I added a church bell sound, and several more layers of strings and piano to achieve a full sound.

For “Kaqavik”, I wanted the strings to take the main part of the instrumentation. The piano plays as a background role with the chords and the melody, along with the harp, and the strings play the chords as well as the melody of the song. “Kaqavik” is a happy song, so I chose to add bright and clear sounds, effects, and harmonies instead of dark, sad ones. The harmonies and the melody are all in major key as it is associated with happiness and joy. During “Kele Kele”, I wanted to keep the structure simple but the tempo and rhythm complex. It starts with intro that has piano, harp, and pads with soft duduk sound before it goes into the build up and the main part of the song. Unlike “Kaqavik”, I wanted the piano to take the lead of the song and the strings to serve as the background. This was a preference and not something technical. During “Hov areq sarer”, I used two different pianos. One real sounding, and one artificial sounding that had a long tail to it. The combination of both pianos playing the same notes at the start gave a different feeling. After a bit, the strings are added. I have used a panning technique where each string comes from a different direction, so it sounds fuller and richer. “Shushiki” was the most complex in terms of melody and rhythm. The piano was used as the main lead of the song and the panned strings as background. During the second part of the song, in order not to be repetitive with the melody, I have used a reverb technique on the piano. It sounds the piano sound is coming from far away while slowly moving closer. This effect made the sound more interesting as it added more uniqueness to the track.

One of the characteristics of Armenian folk music was being monophonic, meaning they have just one melody without any harmony. In my remakes, I have added harmonies and extra musical layers to make them fuller, richer, and more cinematic. That said, I kept the original melody as

the main focus in all the pieces. The harmonies are there to support the main melody rather than replacing it. So while the texture is now polyphonic, the core of the song, the original monophonic line is still the most essential part.

The original versions of the songs and their remakes

1- Garun a (Գարունն ա, "Spring")

Original - www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHK7b0v7fYU

Remake - <https://youtu.be/oFp2JTORRIk>

2- Kaqavik (Կաքավիկ, "Partridge")

Original (performed by Chamber Players of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra) -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A71JqcZ3Bx4&t=13s>

Remake - <https://youtu.be/RIE9TCjmqG4>

3- Kele Kele (Զելել Զելել, "Walk, Walk")

Original - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFEyOUXnxN4&t=2s>

Remake - <https://youtu.be/hl7nsx9qfI0>

4- Hov Areq Sarer (Հով Արեք Սարեր Ձան)

Original - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7v09CRYxt8&t=1s>

Remake - <https://youtu.be/NLAAeJTAGas>

5- Shushiki (Շուշիկի)

Original - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHwy6_ZU4YA&t=1s

Remake - <https://youtu.be/5eaCwCVfJ9k>

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