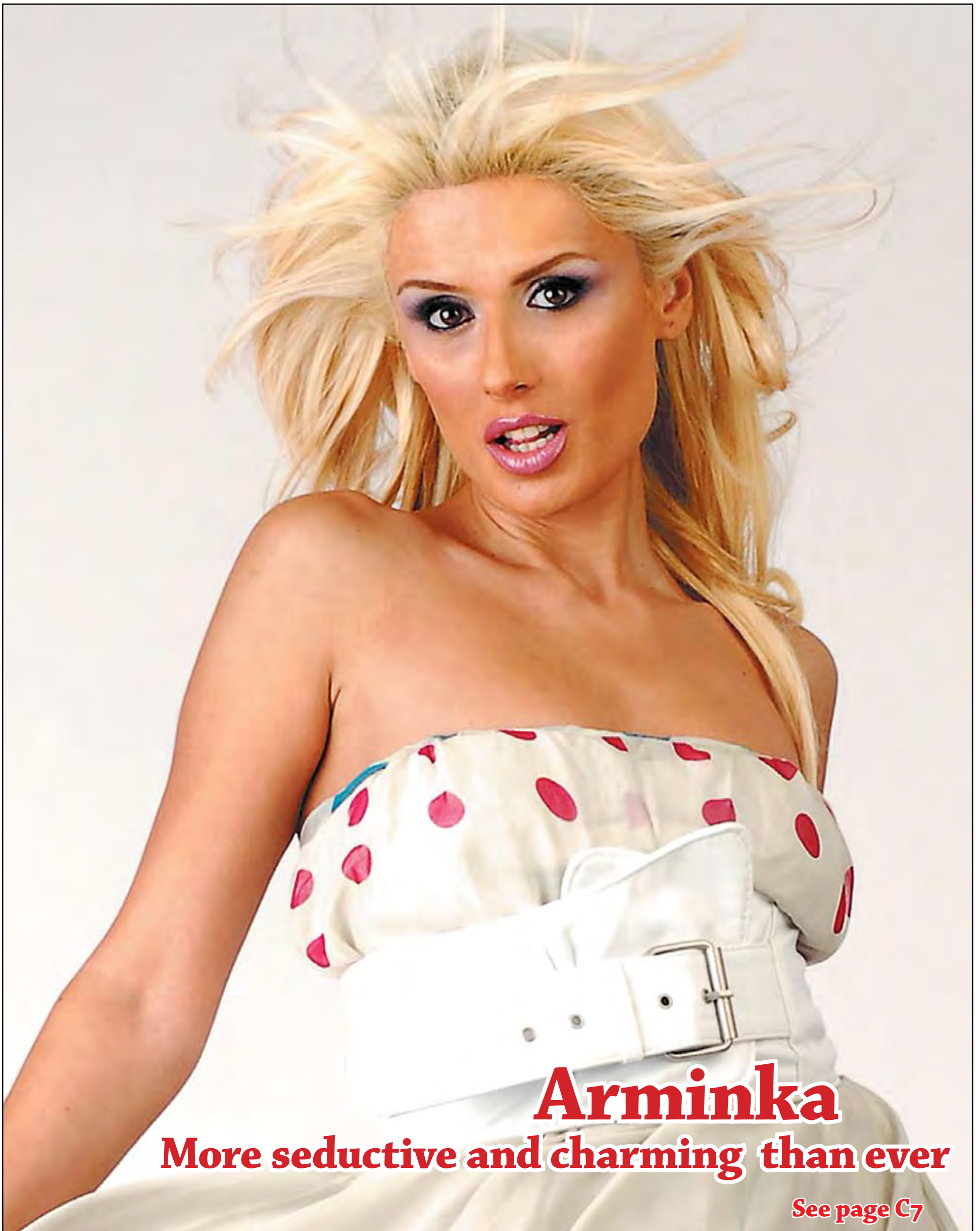


December 27, 2008



Arminka

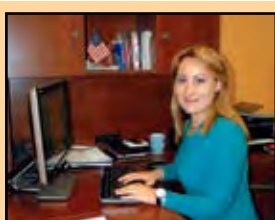
More seductive and charming than ever

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**Restoring
manuscripts**

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**USArmenia
Television sets
new standards**

Page C8

**Don't you dare
touch that
remote!**

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A myriad of wishes for the New Year



by **Lory Bedikian**

Last December I featured the poem “Thankfulness” by Jacques Hagopian and compared the religious, as well as spiritual, quality of the poem to those poems I had studied from poets such as Herbert and Hopkins. Hagopian’s poem seemed a perfect *place* to close the old year and to start the new.

The end of the year is an appropriate time to look back and to reassess our accomplishments as well as our challenges. We can look back at all those squares that quickly passed on the calendar page and either wish we could relive them or give a multitude of thanks that we’ll never have to see those days again.

What seems to be the most inspiring aspect of a new year are the possibilities – the fact that we can make resolutions, do our best to keep them, make some changes according to that new number designated to the year, and hopefully have a brighter outlook on life in general.

At this time of year, I used to sit down and make a list of resolutions, but after keeping this tradition for many years, I realized that I was only setting myself up for some major disappointments. Instead I now make the realistic effort to adopt a new attitude and outlook at the beginning of each year and make resolutions or changes accordingly throughout the year when the need arises.

At this time of year I also look back and give thanks to the poets of the past who gave their time to the written word, despite the fact that it probably gave them no earthly profit. For example, a wonderful poem to start the New Year with is “Prayer for the New Year” by Misak Medzarents.

In the October 4th issue of the *Reporter*, I compared the lyricism of Misak Medzarents to that of John Keats and wrote of the brevity of both poets’ lives. I discussed the musicality of the verse of Medzarents and the fact that he may have been quite aware of his short life on earth.

In “Prayer for the New Year” we see the optimistic speaker in Medzarents – the young man who with magnanimous spirit wishes a specific type of happiness for himself, and even more for everyone who he comes into contact with.

As I’ve mentioned before “prayers” as poems are a common, traditional form which poets use. In his poem Medzarents uses the form of “prayer” as a plea to God to be given “happiness” and “joy.” The speaker in “Prayer for the New Year” asks specifically for “an impersonal joy” and Medzarents makes sure to repeat

this phrase almost like a refrain several times in the beginning stanzas.

It can’t be stressed enough that what makes a poem strong is its balance of generalities with specifics. If Medzarents had solely written about the concepts of joy, happiness, hope, faith and all those good things over and over, we’d probably fall asleep in the middle of his incantation due to the commonness of the wishes. Since Medzarents knew and used poetic tools with much skill, he knew to employ specifics early on in the poem. In the opening stanza, the speaker asks God for happiness “that has no self” and wants to “gather it like flowers / in other people’s eyes.” In our own ways we can visualize this, more than we can visualize the idea of “happiness.” The poet’s job often is to depict these emotions in concrete, succinct language.

Medzarents also gives us other specifics such as “a child’s sparkler.” He creates the simile “like ribbons braided with bells / on each door I pass.” In almost every stanza the reader is given details to hold on to as they move through the poem including “altars,” “cymbals of brass,” “stars dispersed / across the skies,” “loaf upon my plate,” “the sun going west,” “plow” or “rain.”

One of the most memorable parts of this poem is found in the closing simile where Medzarents writes “Give me the grace / to know its true worth / like the sailor on the life raft,” thus showing “having found” such joy is – in a way – like being saved. I thank Medzarents for closing the poem with the desire to “gather” such goodness, but then to “give it back.”

More could be written, analyzed and speculated, but I do think that reading the poem may be enough and that Medzarents has given us one of the perfect prayers to start a year with. And now that I’ve read and enjoyed it so much, I here, give it back. ☞

Prayer for the New Year

Give me, my God, that kind of happiness that has no self. Let me gather it like flowers in other people’s eyes.

Give me, oh Lord, an impersonal joy which like a child’s sparkler tints the onlooker’s face.

Give me, oh Lord, an impersonal joy to hang like ribbons braided with bells on each door I pass.

Let me build altars out of words of those I love and echo them like cymbals of brass.

Give me an impersonal joy to share like the stars dispersed across the skies.

Let it be happiness that does not drown laments of those in pain

*and not the kind of joy confined within my self alone.
Let every loaf upon my plate be blessed*

*with a crossed pair of joys.
And like the sun going west
let me spread sunlight, Lord.*

*Let me lower it on waters
as one lowers nets and plant it
in earth’s furrows like a plow*

*and like the rain
shower it
over the thirsty crowd.*

*And having found it, let me stay
the hunter of the ideal. Give me the grace
to know its true worth*

*like the sailor on the life raft.
Let me gather it from the souls
of common and uncommon man*

and give it back.

“Prayer for the New Year” from *Anthology of Armenian Poetry*, translated by Diana Der-Hovanesian, edited by Diana Der-Hovanesian and Marzbed Margossian, Columbia University Press, 1978. Reprinted with permission.

The Shoes: a Christmas story

Adapted by **Betty Panossian-Ter Sarkissian**

It was close to midnight when Zarmineh opened her eyes wide in the darkness of her bedroom. She remembered that it was Christmas Eve and that their nanny had made them put their shoes by the hearth for baby Jesus to fill them with presents. Then the Christmas stories that her mother had told them came to her mind. The image of baby Jesus born in a stable filled with hay and dried grass, and to whom the aged wise men had offered gold and incense and dressed him in golden gowns was drawn before her eyes. Her mind and soul were filled with the tender stories of Jesus, who opened his arms to children and the poor.

Would he send her a present? What would he give her?

He surely heard all the prayers of good little boys and girls. He surely would have heard the desire of her heart. She had not asked for much – just a doll with gold hair and dressed in blue, one which would say “Mama” and “Daddy.” And she would not break this new one like last year’s clown. She would look after her like she was the light of her eyes, just like her own mother looked after her. Then she would baptize her and give the doll her mother’s name, Lousig. And just imagine the flowers, the ribbons! White. Everything should be white. Suddenly, these bright images were disturbed by the strikes of the clock. Zarmineh counted one, two, three, up to twelve. “It’s midnight already,” she thought. “The gifts must have arrived.”

She sat on her bed, listening to the soft sounds of her sleeping sister and nanny. Zarmineh got up, took several steps with her bare little feet, and pulling together all the courage she had, went downstairs to the living room. She opened the door, but when she entered the room, the silence and the dim light scared her. She stood there for a

second, unable to move for her fear. But soon her curiosity took over and Zarmineh approached the marble fireplace where the shoes were hanging.

What great joy was awaiting for her there. “Oh my dear Jesus!” she cried.

A gorgeous doll had been placed in her shoes, one wearing a blue satin gown with a shiny cloak. The dream of her small life coming true was simply amazing. Zarmineh hugged her doll, caressed the gold locks, and kissed her rosy face. A little violin placed in a basket full of flowers was placed in her sister’s shoes. “Kind Jesus,” Zarmineh thought, “He had brought what everyone had wished for!”

But what was that shabby thing on the other side of the fireplace? Zarmineh got up. It was a pair of old and muddy shoes. With disgust, Zarmineh pushed them away from her soft and clean slippers. At that very second, Nounig, their maid’s little girl who had come from the orphanage to spend Christmas with her mother, crossed her mind. Zarmineh recalled her skinny and scared face, her unkempt hair and the words of her mother ordering a pair of her children’s shoes to be given to her. Nounig had stood by the fireside watching Zarmineh and her sister place their shoes by the hearth. It was interesting to see what Jesus had placed in Nounig’s shoes as her present.

Zarmineh stood there shocked. It was an old toy with broken arms and legs. “Could Jesus, who loved the unfortunate and children deprive this poor girl?” The glaring comparison of the shoes and the toys, brought to life an image of poverty and deprivation. She bent to hold the sad present given to Nounig. To her great surprise she saw that it was her last year’s broken clown!

Zarmineh, her eyes wet with tears, realized then that their presents had not come from heaven. She was pained to the very depths of her soul and shaken by compassion and tenderness. She placed her blue doll in Nounig’s shoes, and the broken clown into hers.

Jesus, who loved the poor and the children, would have forgiven her weak protest to the unfairness of her parents and her nanny. ☞

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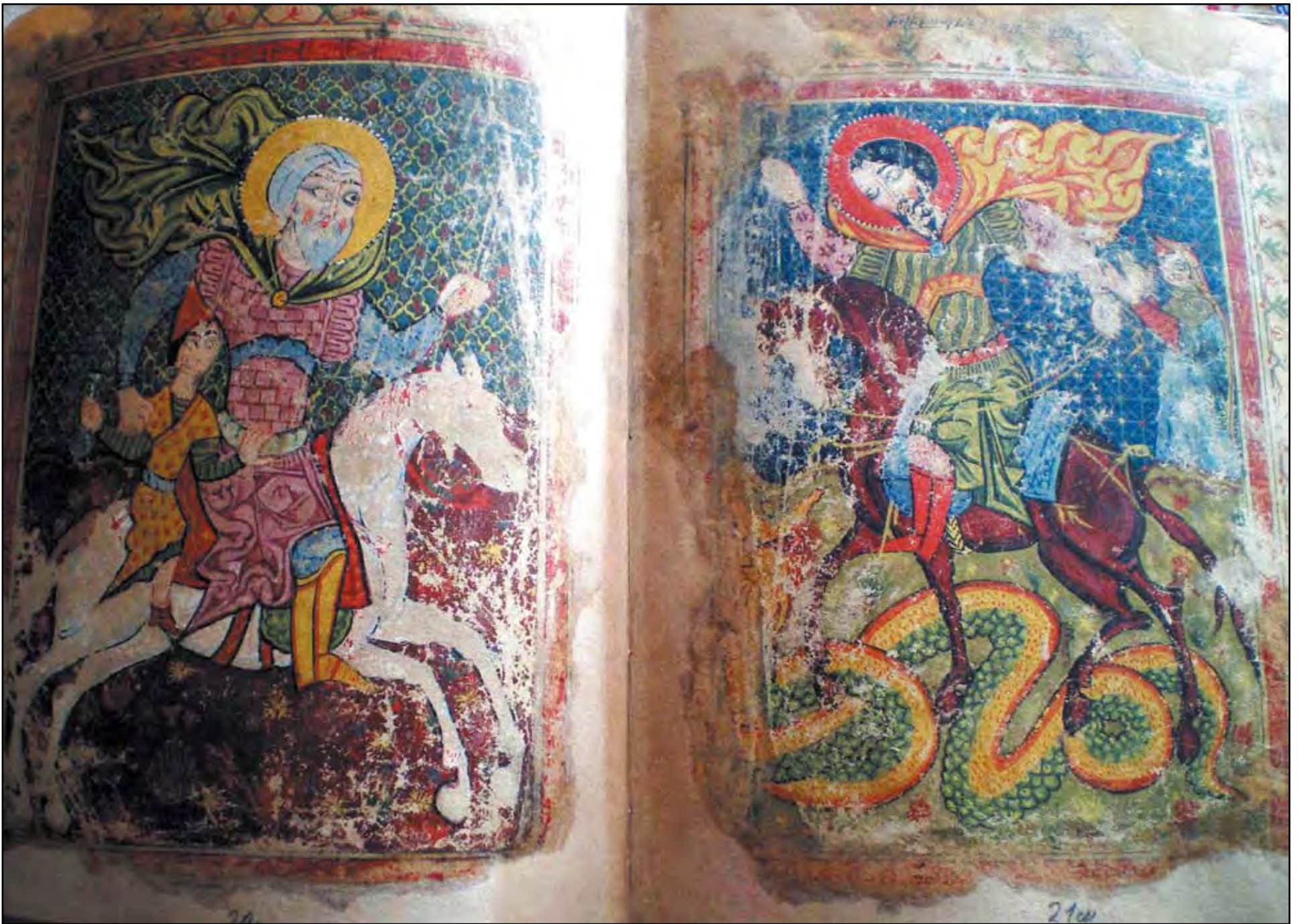
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history alive



Miniatures in the "Four Horsemen Bible" (14th century, Syunik), currently being restored at the Matenadaran. Photos: Nyree Abrahamian.

The Matenadaran: Restoring manuscripts and reviving Armenian history for centuries



by Nyree
Abrahamian

The Matenadaran, located in the heart of Yerevan, is one of the richest book depositories in the world. It has a collection of over 17,000 manuscripts including all areas of medieval Armenian culture and sciences, as well as manuscripts written in many foreign languages. In medieval Armenian, *matenadaran* means 'manuscript store' or 'library'. Many ancient texts whose originals were long lost have been restored in their mother tongues based on their Armenian translations, which were safely stored at the Matenadaran.

The building stands majestically at the end of Yerevan's famous Mashtots Avenue and directly in front of it, there is a huge and imposing statue of **Mesrob Mashtots**, the creator of the Armenian alphabet. While the structure itself has only been around since the 1930s, it's ac-



Covers ready to be repaired.

tually the successor of the centuries old Etchmiadzin Patriarchal Matenadaran.

According to the 5th century historian **Ghazar Parpetsi** the Etchmiadzin Matenadaran existed as early as the 5th century. It gained importance after 1441,

when the residence of the Armenian Supreme Patriarch (Catholicos) moved from Cilicia back to Etchmiadzin.

During the Genocide, when most of the rich book depositories of Western Armenia were ravaged, several thousand



A printed text halfway through restoration process.

precious manuscripts were sent to the Etchmiadzin Matenadaran from important Armenian centers like Van, in the Vaspurakan Region.

Continued on page C6



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history alive

The Matenadaran: Restoring manuscripts and reviving Armenian history for centuries

Continued from page C4

In the 1920s, under Soviet rule, the Matenadaran, which had always been inextricably linked with the Mother See, where it originated, was declared state property. While this was a huge blow for the Church, to which the Soviets had already caused serious damage, it did make room for expansion and further study. Over 4,000 manuscripts that had been sent to Moscow for safekeeping were returned.

Over the decades, the Matenadaran's collection grew, especially with the increase in private donations from around the world, so in 1939, the book depository was moved to its current location. In 1959, the Matenadaran reached the next step in its development. It was completely restructured, transforming from a basic book depository to an institute for scientific research, with specialized departments and a modern cataloguing system.

Today, the Matenadaran's main structure remains largely unchanged from the reforms of 1959. Its main functions are: restoration, research and exhibition. Of course, the latter two would not be possible without the first crucial step of restoring and preserving the manuscripts.

A manuscript hospital

I visited the Restoration Department of the Matenadaran recently, and was amazed by the intensity and thoroughness of the restoration process. "We receive manuscripts from all over the world, that are in various stages of disrepair," said Gayane Eliazyan, Restoration Department Head. "So we act as a manuscript hospital: examining the texts, diagnosing their ailments, and bringing them back to health through intensive care."

The first step upon receiving any manuscript or old book is disinfection. Almost all manuscripts from the Middle Ages and earlier are written on parchment, which is a thin, stretched kind of leather. Leather is an animal product, and over centuries, it can start to get moldy and infected with all kinds of fungi and insects. So when manuscripts first enter the Matenadaran, they go directly to the disinfection closet, where they stay for some time, exposed to different disinfecting agents.

After disinfection, manuscripts are cleaned, page by page, and then based on the degree of damage, they go through various steps of restoration. Common procedures include rebinding, cover repairs, restoring color and repairing torn edges.

The biggest challenge that restorers face has to do with the chemical makeup of medieval inks. "During the Middle Ages, inks were made from several different substances like plants and metals," explained Ms. Eliazyan, "And these substances have varying levels of acidity that over time, can destroy the parchment." Ms. Eliazyan is a chemist, and one of the most important parts of her job in saving manuscripts is assessing



Above: One of the most important steps in the restoration process: rebinding.
Left: This large mechanism presses and cuts pages.
Photos: Nyree Abrahamian.

the acidity of inks used, and counteracting their negative effects.

Once restored, manuscripts must be kept in very specific conditions, in a controlled environment where the temperature is always between 18 and 20° Celsius (64-68° Fahrenheit), with 55-60 percent humidity. If they are kept in drier conditions, they will crumble, and in more humid conditions, they will get moldy.

Eleven people work in the Matenadaran's Restoration Department. When I went there, they were working on a variety of manuscripts from different time

periods. Among them were a beautifully illuminated 300-page parchment text from Malatya, Eastern Anatolia, written in 1057 and a 14th-century manuscript with exquisite miniatures known as the "Four Horsemen Bible", from the Syunik region. While I was in complete awe of the huge wealth of information, history and art that lay in these precious texts, for the workers in the restoration department, it was just another day at the office.

After restoration, manuscripts go to the Research Department, to the archives, or are put on display in the exhibition hall.

While the process of restoring thousand-year-old manuscripts may be just ordinary business for the specialists in the Restoration Department, the magnitude of their work is truly incredible. It may not be glamorous, but by taking ancient, fungus-infested sheets of parchment and bringing them as close as possible to their original state, they revive pages of our history that would have otherwise been forgotten.

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More seductive and charming than ever

Arminka is back with a new album



by Betty Panossian-Ter Sarkissian

YEREVAN – Arminka’s newly completed video clip of the song “Mi Togh,” her first in many years, will soon hit the screens. After a silence of almost a year, the singer made a dynamic comeback with her new album and an alluring new look.

In the past year, Arminka was focused on preparing and releasing her third album. “It seemed that for a long time I was performing only duets,” she says. “I wanted to have a break, disappear from the scene

for a short time, and make a comeback with my new album, with my new songs.”

In late October, she reemerged with her Arminka No. 3. Within a few days, the new songs of the album, along with a fresh crop of videos, were considered her best output yet.

Following months of hard work on the album, several new video clips, and a never-ending series of concerts in Armenia and abroad, Arminka says she desperately needed some rest. “I decided to fly to a place very far from Armenia, a place where I had many good friends,” she says. Arminka spent the summer and part of the autumn in sunny Los Angeles, where her new album was released, by Parseghian Records.

As with her two previous albums – Rain, released in 2003, and Arminka, released in 2005 – the new record is teeming with emotional intensity. “It’s all about my life,” says the singer, revealing that several of the new tracks are autobiographical. Most of the words were written by Armenian National TV host and lyricist Avet Barseghyan (Arts & Culture, December 1, 2007). “Avet really has the ability to penetrate one’s soul,” says Arminka. “He himself has a very delicate soul and can comprehend precisely what you want to sing. And I am not the only singer who can say this about Avet.”

True to Arminka’s style, the new album also offers a variety of genres and moods. “I hope that each of the songs will find its fans,” she says.

Call her Arminka, like her friends

Armineh Nahapetyan adopted the name Arminka several years ago, as she realized that almost everyone in Armenian show business had started calling her by her pet name. “However, I have other names used as much as Arminka by my musician friends, such as Armish, Mish,



Arminka. Photos: Zaven Khachikyan.

Minka, or Minink,” she says with a smile, explaining that Arminka is easy to remember and sounds more artistic. “Now perhaps only one out of hundred calls me Armineh Nahapetyan,” she adds.

Her desire to sing professionally was so strong that soon after graduating high school, young Arminka had to put aside her dreams of getting a university education and enrolled in the Pop-Jazz Studio of the Armenian State Philharmonic, where such legends as Tatevik Hovhannisyan, Arthur Grigoryan, Rouben Matevosyan, and Erna Euzbashyan were teaching. Although pop music is Arminka’s forte, she has a special affinity for Armenian folk songs, which she includes in almost every concert.

The “duet period”

Arminka sang her first duet some five years ago, with Arman Aghajanian, when she was in the United States for a solo concert. A year later, singer Arman Hovhannesian, a close friend of hers, suggested recording a duet with Arminka. “Although I love all

my duets, ‘Momer’ (Candles) with Arman Hovhannesian is my favorite, since it exposed me to a much wider audience,” Arminka recalls.

Arminka’s next duets included a soul song with Araz Dareh, an R & B number with Mech, another with Arsen Grigoryan – for the program “Super Duet” on Armenia TV, with Juice – and one with Saro. “I could not take a break from all those duets to occupy myself with my own songs,” Arminka says. Yet, she adds, there is one more duet she would like to record, with Shprot.

Arminka’s eye-catching and seductive appearance, on and off the stage, is often a topic of conversations. “A well-kept and fashionable appearance may seem lavishness, but for a singer it’s as important as the song and the performance,” Arminka notes. “People attend concerts not only to hear, but also to see. The stage demands culture and attention.”

Arminka was one of the very first singers who had the courage to wear the creations of emerging Armenian fashion designers such as Arevik Simonyan of Zatik Studio. “When I want to dress up for the stage, I want to have my imagination satisfied,” Arminka explains. “For everyday clothes, on the other hand, I prefer comfort: mainly jeans and tops.”

What Arminka would like to do next is to sing in a style that no one ever expects from her. And there’s more up her sleeve. “I want to release a video clip which will surprise everyone,” she says. “I would like to host an interesting TV program. I also desire to play a serious role in a film – a drama.”



television



Lusine Mehrabyan, News. Photos: Stepan Partamian.

USArmenia Television sets new standards

15 hours of original programming for your viewing pleasure

by Shahane Martirosyan

BURBANK, Calif: -- NBC studios in Burbank, California, has a brand new neighbor. USArmenia TV has established residence in the middle of the highest media circuits, and starting in 2009, the channel will be on air with 15 hours of original, non-repeat, free-of-charge programming on Charter cable, Time Warner cable, and GlobeCast satellite, and on over-the-air antenna TV, KSCI, Los Angeles, channel 18.5. This is a feat that has never been realized by any Armenian channel in the diaspora.

As Stepan Partamian says, "USArmenia has changed the Armenian [television] industry" because locally the network offers something very refreshing to the local Armenian community. Armenian cable channels first began to air in the 1970s. According to Partamian, Saki Mouradian made the Armenian television hour a local phenomenon. Partamian considers him to be the godfather of Armenian local channels. In the last several decades, the Glendale/Burbank region, which has an estimated 120,000 Armenians, has been treated to nine television channels. Although many of the local channels have experience with a variety of programming, none has ever been at the level that the new USArmenia TV is.

Beginning in the new year, the Armenian community will receive pro-



Armine Amiryan, News.



Stepan Partamian.

gramming directly from Armenia and from Los Angeles. The programs will vary in content and style. The line-up includes, but is not limited to, reality shows, comedy programs, soap operas and news programs.

The direction that USArmenia is taking leans more toward Western journalism rather than the usual post-Soviet-style programming that many Armenians unfortunately have become accustomed to viewing.

The Armenia TV channel was established in Armenia in 1998. At the time, it provided viewers in the country with eye-opening programs that made the channel the highest rated not only in Armenia, but also in all of the Caucasus. As the ratings went up, so did the quality of the technology and the performances of the professionals in the network.

Ten years later, USArmenia TV was born. In May of 2008, the network was established in Burbank and offered four hours of original programming, which was repeated throughout the day. In less than a year, the channel has turned into a full-blown television station with live coverage and local programming led by Los Angeles favorite Stepan Partamian and former mayor of Glendale Rafi Manoukian.

Partamian, whose shows "The Armenian" and "Bari Luys" has made him into a real celebrity in the Armenian community, is one of the program directors at USArmenia. He has also moved his shows to the channel; six days a week he provides the audience with his usual controversial commentary and call-in programs where he attempts to point out the aspects of Armenian life and existence that he does not necessarily approve of. His opinions have caused a stir in the community while receiving very high ratings and countless phone calls during each showing.

On the other hand, Rafi Manoukian provides more serious programming with a show called "Directions with Rafi Manoukian." The former mayor is also the CEO of operations at USArmenia TV, adding real Glendale flavor to an already existing Armenian network.

Continued on page C9

television



Levon Gavalian, web & graphic designer.



Above left: Razmik Keshishyan, Programming. Above: Armen Ghavalyan, Programming. Left: Robert Khachatryan, Camera operator.

TV currently is very informative and explores, highlights and reports on politics in the Republic of Armenia, the new administration in the United States, the diaspora, cultural events. According to Amiryan the news will also take an in depth look into the identity of the Armenian-American.

Amiryan told the *Armenian Reporter* that the goal of the station is not to compete with other ethnic cable networks. The station hopes to compete with other Western channels. She also added that USArmenia is going to go to full day broadcasts. She stressed that this transition will be easy because of the many years of experience of its sister network, Armenia TV, which has been on the air for 10 years.

One of the biggest advantages is that USArmenia TV will air programming already being broadcast in Armenia, such as highly rated soap operas produced in Armenia and in Latin America. The network will also be airing television shows such as "Deal or No Deal" in Armenian and the "Bernard Show."

USArmenia and Armenia TV have good cooperation with CNN, Warner Brothers and The Associated Press. The relationships with the media giants and Armenia TV has been mutual in providing and sharing information and programming with one another.

"This is the first time an Armenian channel is using Western standards and technical equipment to provide media to Armenians," Amiryan stated. "We try to be the most independent and reliable source for news, most importantly we want to have people's trust." ■

Continued from page C8

Armine Amiryan has been invited from Armenia to join the USArmenia team. She has been part of Armenia TV in the homeland for the past eight years. For a young woman, her resume is just as elaborate as anyone working in a major television station. Amiryan has also worked at CNN and her expertise at USArmenia TV is an incredibly valuable contribution. She is currently the news director. At the moment she

is working tirelessly to provide up-to-date news for the station.

"We want to illustrate the advancement and the problems of the Armenian community and the United States overall while giving feedback of the current social conditions in Armenia," Amiryan stated. "In addition, we are going to work on highlighting the way Armenian-Americans cope with the preservation of Armenian identity."

USArmenia TV promises to provide news with very high standards. As

Amiryan noted, because of the physical location of the station, they feel that they must perform at the same level as other television stations and networks. The news will be aired live in Eastern and Western Armenian, taking into consideration that Armenians living in Los Angeles come from all over the world. The news will also be broadcast in English for those members of the community who don't understand Armenian.

News programming on USArmenia

29 December		30 December		31 December		1 January		2 January		3 January		4 January	
MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
EST	PST												
10:00 PM	1:00 AM	Bernard Show	CLONE (Serial)	CLONE (Serial)	CLONE (Serial)	CLONE (Serial)	CLONE (Serial)	CLONE (Serial)	CLONE (Serial)	CLONE (Serial)	CLONE (Serial)	Bernard Show	
11:00 PM	2:00 AM	Fathers & Sons	Live From America	Live From America	Live From America	Live From America	Live From America	Live From America	Live From America	Live From America	Live From America	Century	
12:00 AM	3:00 AM	Snakes & Lizards (Serial)	When Stars are Dancing	When Stars are Dancing	When Stars are Dancing	When Stars are Dancing	When Stars are Dancing	When Stars are Dancing	When Stars are Dancing	When Stars are Dancing	When Stars are Dancing	Armenia Diaspora	
1:00 AM	4:00 AM	A Drop of Honey	Snakes & Lizards (Serial)	Snakes & Lizards (Serial)	Snakes & Lizards (Serial)	Snakes & Lizards (Serial)	Snakes & Lizards (Serial)	Snakes & Lizards (Serial)	Snakes & Lizards (Serial)	Snakes & Lizards (Serial)	Snakes & Lizards (Serial)	Snakes & Lizards (Serial)	
2:00 AM	5:00 AM	Neighbours (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	
3:00 AM	6:00 AM	Tele Kitchen	Neighbours (Serial)	Neighbours (Serial)	Neighbours (Serial)	Neighbours (Serial)	Neighbours (Serial)	Neighbours (Serial)	Neighbours (Serial)	Neighbours (Serial)	Neighbours (Serial)	Neighbours (Serial)	
3:30 AM	6:30 AM	Mult	Tele Kitchen	Tele Kitchen	Tele Kitchen	Tele Kitchen	Tele Kitchen	Tele Kitchen	Tele Kitchen	Tele Kitchen	Tele Kitchen	Tele Kitchen	
4:00 AM	7:00 AM	Yo Yo	Mult	Mult	Mult	Mult	Mult	Mult	Mult	Mult	Mult	Mult	
4:30 AM	7:30 AM	News	Yo Yo	Yo Yo	Yo Yo	Yo Yo	Yo Yo	Yo Yo	Yo Yo	Yo Yo	Yo Yo	Yo Yo	
5:00 AM	8:00 AM	Bari Luys with Stepan Partamian	News	News	News	News	News	News	News	News	News	News	
5:30 AM	8:30 AM	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Bari Luys with Stepan Partamian	Bari Luys with Stepan Partamian	Bari Luys with Stepan Partamian	Bari Luys with Stepan Partamian	Bari Luys with Stepan Partamian	Bari Luys with Stepan Partamian	Bari Luys with Stepan Partamian	Bari Luys with Stepan Partamian	Bari Luys with Stepan Partamian	Bari Luys with Stepan Partamian	
6:00 AM	9:00 AM	Directions With Rafi Manoukian	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	Unlucky Happiness (Serial)	
7:00 AM	10:00 AM	Bari Louys Hayer	Bari Louys Hayer	Bari Louys Hayer	Bari Louys Hayer	Bari Louys Hayer	Bari Louys Hayer	Bari Louys Hayer	Bari Louys Hayer	Bari Louys Hayer	Bari Louys Hayer	Bari Louys Hayer	
8:00 AM	11:00 AM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
8:30 AM	11:30 AM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
9:00 AM	12:00 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
9:30 AM	12:30 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
10:00 AM	01:00 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
11:00 AM	02:00 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
12:00 PM	03:00 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
12:30 PM	03:30 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
01:00 PM	04:00 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
01:30 PM	04:30 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
02:00 PM	05:00 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
02:30 PM	05:30 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
03:00 PM	06:00 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
04:00 PM	07:00 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
05:00 PM	08:00 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
05:30 PM	08:30 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
06:00 PM	09:00 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
06:30 PM	09:30 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
07:00 PM	10:00 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
07:30 PM	10:30 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
08:00 PM	11:00 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
08:30 PM	11:30 PM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	
09:00 PM	12:00 AM	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	Bari Aravod	

Don't you dare touch that remote!

Armenian soap operas come of age

by Shahane Martirosyan

BURBANK, Calif. – It's the drama. It's the actors. It's the context. It's the location. It's the tense excitement. I'm gripped with. It's everything and anything. In fact, I don't even know exactly what it is that draws me to it.

The "it" is my new obsession with Armenian soap operas. I watch them every day. I discuss them vigorously. I love them as though they were Coppola's newest gift to me.

I grew up watching them during summers at my grandmother's home in Etchmiadzin. There really wasn't much else to do in the tiny city. We woke up, ate breakfast, and watched the soap operas that were imported from Latin America and translated into Russian for our viewing pleasure. There was drama. There was love. There were day-to-day events played out in a kind of emotionally arousing way that I thought would be impossible to witness in Armenian society.

Nearly a decade later, living in one of the busiest cities in the world, thousands of miles away from Etchmiadzin and its nonchalant environment, I find myself glued to the television set every single night before I go to bed, watching soap operas brimming with emotional rollercoasters that make Six Flags rides look like a picnic by comparison. There is one difference, though: these telenovelas that I am completely selling my soul to are on the Armenia TV and US-Armenia TV channels, and they are in Armenian.

Recently, as once again I was avoiding working on a finals-week research paper to watch the newest episodes of my darling shows, I began to think: how did



Above: Hovak Galoyan, seated, and Artashes Aleksanyan in *Destiny's Captives*.
Left: Aleksan Khachatryan in *The Cost of Life*.

this happen? As a college student, the only programs I watched on television were Lakers games. At least that's how it used to be.

Now I watch *The Neighbors* (Harevaner), *Unhappy Happiness* (Dzhbakht Yerjankutian), *The Cost of Life* (Kyanki Gine), *Escape* (Pakhust), and *Destiny's Captives* (Chakatagri Geriner).

First things first. The transition to watching these amazing shows happened accidentally. It was not an intention of mine to fall in love with soap op-

eras that mean, or at least should mean, absolutely nothing to me. Also it wasn't that I had nothing else to do. The truth of the matter is that the soap operas have grown into something of a distraction in my life. At this point, though it is not entirely clear why these shows are so addictive, a closer analysis of them provides me with a variety of reasons for my obsession.

The Neighbors is not really that fascinating. It is about the daily lives of a group of average Armenians in Yerevan.

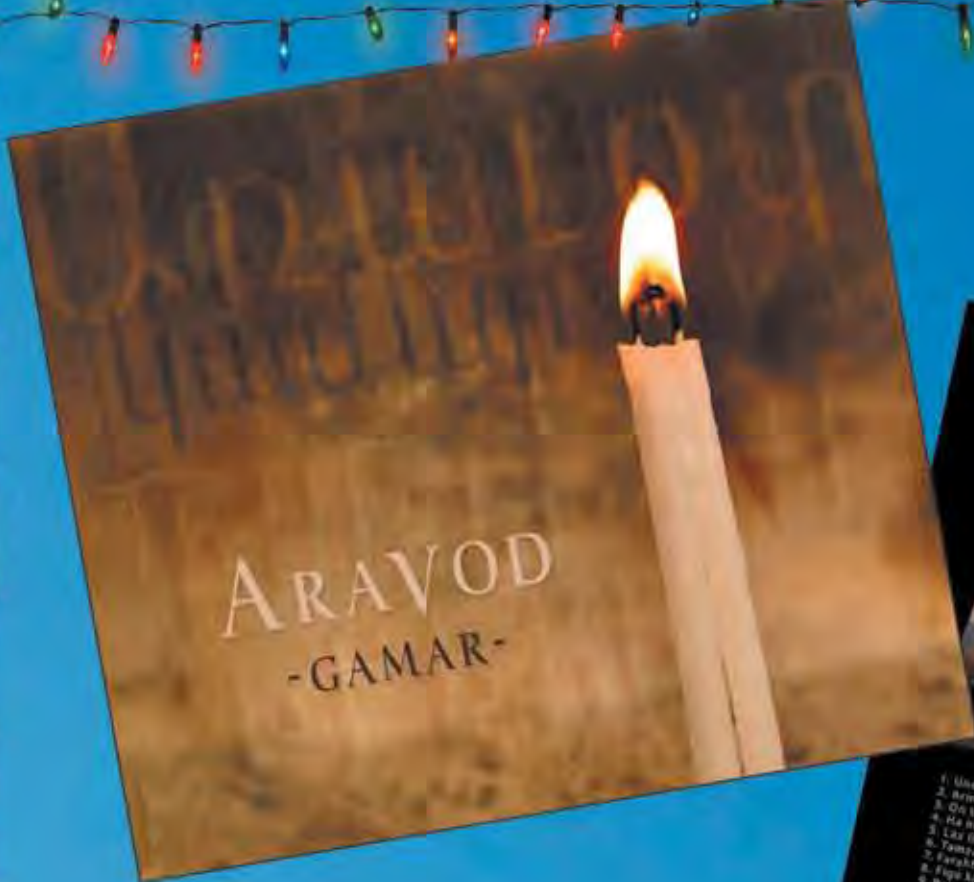
Recently, of course, the show has had some turning points, which landed the main male characters in jail, but that's just the humorous aspect of the show. In fact, they don't even mind being in jail that much. The show has the I Love Lucy-esque factor that drives each character into outrageous and incredibly funny scenarios. Maybe that's the reason that many people in Los Angeles have fallen in love with this particular show. Or maybe it's the core of the show: the neighborly atmosphere that it exudes in each episode.

Indeed, there is that Yerevan feeling in *The Neighbors*: all the neighbors are aware of each other's business and each building has its own gossip lady, who knows everything and is given to sharing her knowledge with anyone over a cup of coffee.

The popularity of *The Neighbors* can be attributed to the fact that many former residents of Armenia now living in Los Angeles remember home when they watch this show. Every time I watch it, I remember our neighbors from the third floor of our apartment building in Yerevan, who would visit my mom every day for morning coffee. In addition, the cast is extremely talented and only adds to the amazing writing.

In *Destiny's Captives*, the actors' talent has become so evident that I have found myself discussing their craft with my Armenian classmates at school. The story is about the members of Yerevan's upper crust, the *nouveau riche*, whose greed for more money and power has driven them into a world where nothing else matters – nothing, that is, except their families. *Destiny's Captives* captures the lifestyle of the Armenian capital's tiny yet bone-chillingly formidable ruling class, focusing on family problems and complications that arise when people have no monetary issues. It is enticing to watch the story unfold as

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