

## **DJIVAN GASPARYAN**

Armenia

**Djivan Gasparyan** is unquestionably one of Armenia's greatest musicians, a living legend and one of the world's great musicians. He is the foremost virtuoso of the duduk, an ancient oboe-like instrument that is made of apricot wood and capable of sustaining drone notes for long periods of time. It is said that no other instrument is able to convey the emotions of the Armenian people as well as the duduk. In the hands of the master musician the duduk becomes the vehicle for haunting and meditative music that eloquently evokes the Armenian landscape and its people.

Armenia's most famous folk musician was born in 1928, in Solag, a village near the Armenian capital Yerevan. He began to play the duduk at the age of 6 gaining much of his knowledge by listening to the great masters. He won Gold Medals in four world-wide competitions organised by UNESCO in which he competed (1959, 62, 73 80). In 2002 he won the WOMEX award for a lifetime contribution to music. He has the unique distinction of being the only musician to be given the honorary title of People's Artist of Armenia in 1973. A professor at the Yerevan Conservatory, he has prepared many duduk musicians for professional performance. Currently establishing an international school of duduk in Yerevan, he greatly enjoys teaching and it brings him joy to know that, through his efforts the tradition of duduk playing will not be lost.

Gasparyan has toured Europe, Asia and the Middle East. In the US has performed extensively in New York and Los Angeles (where he appeared with the LA Philharmonic). His recording of a selection of Armenian folk songs and ballads entitled *I will not be Sad in This World*, (1989) dedicated to the victims of the Armenian earthquake has received worldwide recognition. He has collaborated with Lionel Richie and has recorded soundtracks for 18 films including *RussiaHouse*, *The Crow*, and Atom Egoyan's film *Calendar*, the American Hungarian television co-production *Storm and Sorrow*, in 1999, *The Siege* (Bruce Willis, Denzel Washington), *Onegin* (Ralph Finnes) *Blood Diamond* (2006) and in 2000 the Oscar winning *Gladiator*.

Djivan Gasparyan's duduk repertoire is primarily comprised of traditional Armenian folk songs. He is also an accomplished singer in the folk tradition and a composer. In addition to his original compositions and arrangements

of traditional songs, he has written love songs based on the poetry of Vahan Derian.

On tour he is accompanied by two duduk players, offering audiences the full range of the duduk( soprano, tenor, baritone and bass) and also a dhol (drum). In addition he sings and plays the flute and the zurna.

## **The DUDUK**

The Duduk is a traditional Armenian wind instrument of apricot wood, defined by Groves Dictionary as "a cylindrical wooden oboe...whose tuning is untempered" (ie microtones are used, or pitches that lie between half tones). The instrument has only one-octave range and its dynamics are controlled by means of lips and fingers. It is generally played to the accompaniment of a second dam duduk, which gives the music energy and tonic atmosphere as it changes scale with the principle duduk.

The duduk has a 1500-year history in which it plays an essential role in Armenian folk traditions. Travelling Armenians have taken the instrument to Persia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, the Middle East and as far as the Balkans where derivatives of the duduk are played. However, it remains a uniquely Armenian instrument.