



Serouj Kradjian.

collect folk music a few years before the Armenian genocide at the beginning of the 1900s. “Every Armenian is familiar with his music and by recording his songs on a major record label, I hope to bring international attention to his music,” Kradjian says.

A recent project conceived by Kradjian also shows how he takes pleasure in revealing music to his audience in unexpected ways. His latest CD from CBC Records is a collection of music that reveals the influence of the tango on other cultures, which include Finnish, German, Arabic and even Armenian scores. Alongside Argentinean classics, many of the pieces, especially the European tangos, are pre-war compositions, but the Armenian tango known as “Tcheknagh Yeraz” is a little different. Written by a classical composer for symphonies, Arno Babadjanian, the Armenian tango first appeared in a Russian movie of the 1960s or 1970s. Kradjian feels his arrangement will be very interesting to Armenians because even though they may have heard the song in its lyrical and movie form, they have not yet heard it as it was originally meant to be: a tango.

Versatility and the future

Kradjian’s flexible attitude has brought him recognition from within the musical community such as when the well-known AMICI ensemble who, after a long search, recently asked him to step in and fill the place of founding member

and pianist Patricia Parr, who retired. While many chamber ensembles sustain themselves for only a decade, the AMICI ensemble is celebrating its 20th anniversary. Kradjian says that the AMICI ensemble is also unusual in that aside from the core musicians who always perform, the group invites other musicians to collaborate on performances, which lead to “musical friendships” and musical diversity. This makes the group exceptional, he says, because it doesn’t limit its programming to certain instruments.

While Kradjian will join the ensemble for the 2008–2009 season, he remains firm in his endeavor to maintain his artistic versatility, which continues to lead him into new aspects of concert piano such as composing. However, his experience with orchestras, ensembles and musical arrangement also causes Kradjian to believe that each aspect of his concert pianist life offers its own challenges. In the case of the soloist, Kradjian says that there is more pressure to be an impressive virtuoso, while in the case of accompanying a singer, a pianist must observe and listen to the vocalist for each breath he/she takes and be wary for anything they might do spontaneously on the stage.

While Kradjian says that it’s im-

portant to balance solo work with chamber music, and composing with arranging, his solo work still continues to take him all over the world with upcoming recitals at the Tuscan Sun Festival in Cortona, Italy, with the Bangkok Philharmonic in Thailand, the Dilijan Chamber Music Series in Los Angeles, and as part of a series of three recitals in Spain. In regards to his repertoire, Kradjian says that he has always enjoyed playing Beethoven, Brahms, Liszt and Rachmaninoff, and as of recently, he has an especial interest in Spanish piano composers like Enrique Granados and Isaac Albeniz. Of Liszt in particular, Kradjian says he admires him because he was a very versatile composer. “While it’s true that you have to technically be a very strong performer [to play Liszt], he’s also a very serious composer. His compositional output is so large that he’s a bit underestimated. He has many pieces that are very deep.”

But in the end, Kradjian continues to take life as it comes and to find inspiration from many sources, especially his Armenian heritage. “My Armenian culture is a part of me,” Kradjian says, “and it enriches and inspires me as an artist.”

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Atom Egoyan scheduled to shoot “Adoration,” featuring Arsinée Khanjian, this month

Cinematic golden boy Atom Egoyan is set to shoot his next film, starring his wife and muse Arsinée Khanjian, Rachel Blanchard, Scott Speedman, and Devon Bostick in a matter of weeks.

The film, shooting in Toronto, is said to be a drama that “deals with teens navigating this brave new world and how people can invent themselves, or re-invent themselves, through technology.”



Filmmaker Atom Egoyan. Photo: Photolure.