A black and white photograph of organist Berj Zamkochian, wearing glasses and a dark suit, seated at the console of a large pipe organ. The organ's pipes and console are visible, and the background is dark with some light reflections.

Organ Concert

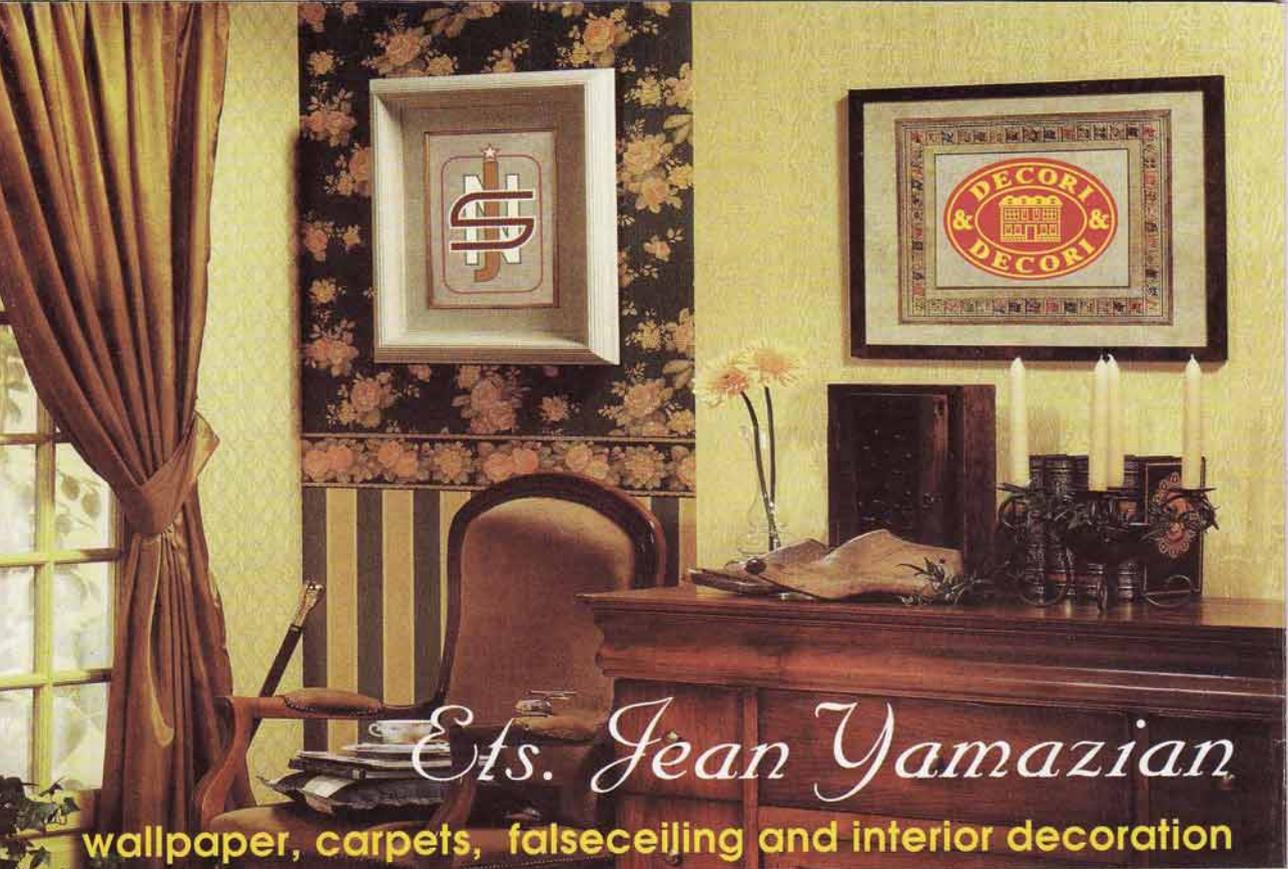
Organized by
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Congregation
and The Armenian
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in Lebanon

Performed by

Berj Zamkochian

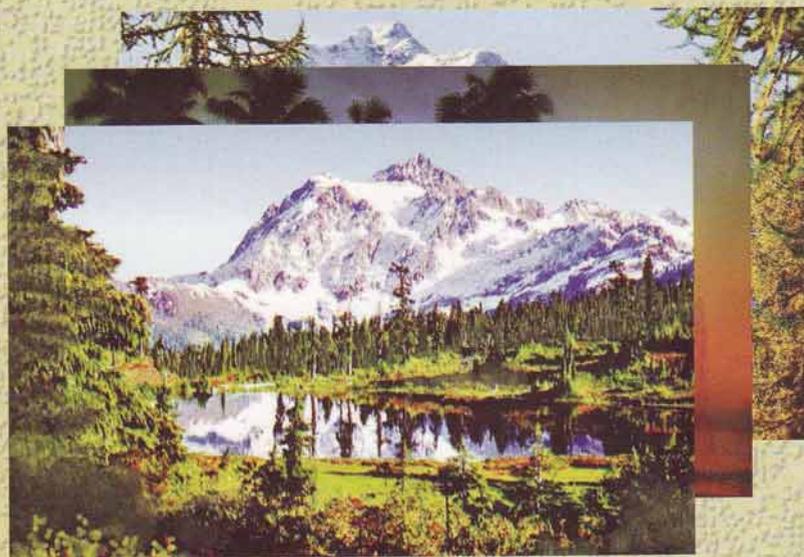
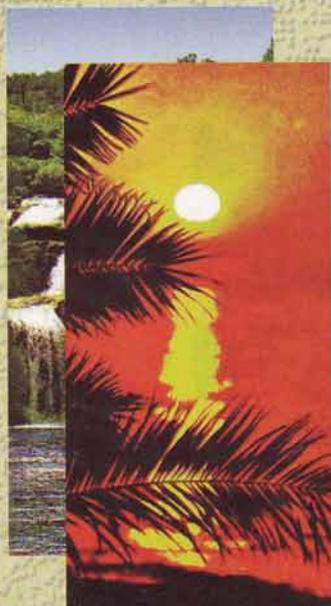
*Organist of The Boston
Symphony Orchestra*

Friday, November 19, 1999
8:00 p.m.
at AUB Assembly Hall



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ORGAN CONCERT
IN MEMORY OF
ABBOT MEKHITAR (founder of the Mekhitarian Order)
1676-1749
250th ANNIVERSARY

Mekhitar was an Armenian vardapet (=monk) from the city of Sebastia (1676-1749). While in communion with his people he came to realize, empirically, its plight and to the conclusion that ignorance was the greatest obstacle to its spiritual and mental recovery and ascent. At the age of twenty he envisioned the establishment of a body of men with scholastic and clerical temperaments, through the recruiting of disciples; the presumable aim being the raising of the intellectual and moral standards prevailing among the Armenians. Mekhitar saw himself as bound into an inseparable union with his tormented nation, and to the end of his life his sole preoccupation was to be beneficent to his people.

In a letter he wrote, 'May God grant me the ability to establish a permanent monastic order that could disseminate all the practicable and utilitarian knowledge to a nation; a community whose purpose would be to provide for the spiritual and intellectual requirements of a nation.'

Mekhitar possessed a strong character; he was an idealist and a patriot. He dedicated himself entirely to his nation's culture. In pursuit of his vision he travelled to Istanbul, Garin and again to Istanbul where at the age of twenty five, he founded the institution of his dreams, with the fellowship of nine disciples (after his death the institution was named the *Mekhitarian Order*).

From that day on, Mekhitar's predominant aim in life was the training of capable vardapets (=monks)- both spiritually and intellectually- so they may spread mental light and knowledge among the Armenian people, who were suffering under political tyranny, class inequality and intellectual darkness; in a period of the nations history when its spiritual, intellectual and culture bearing faculties had ceased to replenish the age old treasury of Armenian culture.

After being persecuted by antagonistic compatriots and the Ottoman Turks, Mekhitar left for Greece and then to Venice in 1715 and officially established himself on the *island of Saint Lazar* in September 1717, with twenty vardapets (=monks) of the Order he founded. From then on, as all authoritative researchers of Armenian literary and cultural history have unanimously affirmed, *the monastery of the Mekhitarians in Venice became the most vital center of the eighteenth century Armenian Renaissance*.

A modern historian, Leo affirms: "We now come upon a truly great man, who embodies an entire century... Mekhitar's role in Armenian history is very great... It can truly be said that within the context of the history of our intellectual development, the entire century during which he dispensed light and learning can be called the **MEKHITARIAN CENTURY**. The great school he founded operates to this day according to his plan and his covenants".

Venice, due to the presence there of the Mekhitarian Order, became for the Armenians, the first established link in their intercourse with Western civilization in Europe, through which they acquired classical and modern thought, the scientific method and the histographical aesthetic.

Mekhitar's literary work is comprised of twenty publications the most reputable of which is the "*Haygazian Pararan*" (+Armenian Dictionary) published in 1749, three weeks after his death. It required a labor of twenty five years. A contemporary Armenian historian asserts, "Even if Mekhitar Sepasdatsi had produced nothing other than the magnificent, incomparable and ageless Haygazian Pararan, the greatest Armenian literary monument of the eighteenth century, his name would still be immortalized".

Another reputable work published by Mekhitar was the "*Asdvazashounch*", the Armenian bible of antiquity.

The linguist and historian Hratchiah Ajarian likened Mekhitar's religious, etical, literary and editorial work to a luminous star "*shining on the Armenian horizon*".

Consequently, Mekhitar Sepasdatsi, through his efforts not only founded a religious institution, but also initiated a movement with literary, cultural, educational and academic dimensions the nature of which was such that it consistently flourished and spread; and by the nineteenth century it practically succeeded in its mission of inculcating a strong national spirit and perception, a sense of reverence towards the nation's historical and cultural treasures, and the faith to begin a new era through the flourishing of the intellect and literature.

The great services that Mekhitar's followers rendered in the areas of history, archeology, topography, ecclesiology, patristics, theology, linguistics and literature were always done with great resolve, in implementing Mekhitar's directives.

THE MUSICAL HERITAGE OF THE ABBOT MEKHITAR

In the manner of the great religious reformators, Mekhitar of Sebastia (1676-1749) was also a creative chapel master. A considerable musical heritage was left to the Congregation founded by himself. This Congregation in its turn, guarded meticulously and transmitted this treasure, which was constituted of:

* **A capital fund of Armenian musical tradition:** the regular practice of ritual chants for all circumstances, during the whole liturgical year, and the theoretical knowledges summarized, in his manuscript entitled: "*The Mathematics*".

* **Poetical-musical works:** three canons = sharakans (an anthology of 24 hymns) and some others not published yet, all in the metric system used by Nerses Shnorhali, and medieval composers. All these chants are sung according to traditional melodies.

* **Para-liturgical canticals:** six in number, composed in classical armenian, on soft and calm melodies, in simple and popular structure.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Berj Zamkochian is a native born Bostonian. He is a graduate of the new England Conservatory of Music, where during his years of graduate study, he served his appointment as a member of the Organ Faculty.

At the age of 24, he made his debut recital in Boston's Symphony Hall, and the Boston Herald hailed the event with : '...this young Bostonian stands well among the top Organists of the day...' Since that time, Berj Zamkochian has actively concertized throughout the world. He represented the Organists of the United States at the Third World Congress of Sacred Music, in Paris, and in 1965, became the first North American Organist to tour the Soviet Union.

Berj Zamkochian actively tours the United States and Canada each Season with regular visits to Europe and the Far East. In November of 1989 he made his first World Tour playing Concerts in Hong-Kong, Japan, the Russia, Armenia, Germany, and Italy.

In 1957, the late Charles Munch appointed him Organist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and that same year, Arthur Fiedler announced his appointment as Organist of the Boston Pops Orchestra. In 1971, Berj Zamkochian was appointed Organist of the World Symphony Orchestra representing the Boston Symphony Orchestra. With the World Symphony Orchestra he played the Dedicatory Concerts for the openings of the Kennedy Center, Washington, DC and Disney World in Orlando, Florida. Zamkochian's recordings with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Boston Pops Orchestras have won for him an International Acclaim. His recording of the Saint-Saens Organ Symphony, and the Poulenc Organ Concerto remains a legend. The recent re-release by RCA of both works on a single CD was hailed by the New York Times as : '**...one of the 50 most important recordings of all time...**' It remains a best seller today

Berj Zamkochian has appeared as Organ Soloist with the major Symphony Orchestras of the World, including, the Tokyo NHK Orchestra, Osaka Symphony, Moscow Radio Orchestra, Erevan State Orchestra, Bamberg Symphony, Koln Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Washington Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Minnesota Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, and the Phoenix Symphony.

Berj Zamkochian has been called upon to play the Dedicatory Recitals of the great Organs of our time, from the Cathedral Churches of St. Joseph (Hartford), Shrine of the Immaculate Conception (Washington), Sts. Peter and Paul (Providence), St. Peter (Cincinnati), Sacred Heart (Gallup) and the Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin (the oldest Christian Church in the World). In 1983 Berj Zamkochian dedicated the largest Organ in the World, at the Temple of the Shinji Schumei Kai in Shiga, Japan for an audience of 40.000. In Brauweiller, Germany he played for the rededication of the Organ in the 12th Century Abbey Church of Saint Nicholas.

On October 23, 1990 Berj Zamkochian dedicated the new Organ in the Monastic Church of the Armenian Mekhitarians on the Island of San Lazzaro, Venice, Italy.

Berj Zamkochian has played Command Performances for 6 Presidents of the United States, the Royal Family of England and the Imperial Family of Japan. During the first Papal visit of His Holiness John-Paul II to the United States he served as Papal Organist.

Distinctive honors have been bestowed upon him by the Pope Paul VI, the late Cardinal Aghagianian, and His Holiness Catholicos Vasken I. In 1980 Zamkochian became the first non-native born son to be received into the Armenian Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in 1983 the Government of Armenia presented him with the Bedros Atamian Award for Excellence in the Performing Arts.

In October of 1991 the Armenian Mekhitarians of Venice bestowed upon him Honorary Membership in the Order of the Mekhitarian Community, and presented him with the Gold Medal of the Founder Abbot Mekhitar of Sebaste.

In the spring of 1991, The Armenian Ministry of Culture elected Berj Zamkochian, People's Artist, and Honorary Soloist of the independent Republic of Armenia.

In May 1999, Berj Zamkochian was in Misono (Japan) to celebrate with the Shinji Shumei Kai his 15th anniversary of the dedication of the world's largest organ in Founder's Hall, performing in front of an audience of 40.000 people. The program was repeated on the next successive 2 days.

In November he will present Concerts in Europe, and return to Beirut, Lebanon for a special Concert marking the 250th Anniversary of the death of Abbot Mekhitar, the founder of the Armenian Community of Mekhitarian Priests. This performance will be the 25th Anniversary of Berj Zamkochian's first performance in Beirut.

In A. Hermet's recent book "Sixteen Centuries of History, Legends and Contributions to the Cultural Life of Venice" there is a reference made to Berj Zamkochian with the following:

"Armenians continue to make contributions to enrich the cultural life of our venerable City of Venice in this 20th century. The American-Armenian Organist, Berj Zamkochian who comes regularly to play in Venice, and who thrills us with his soulful and virtuoso performances on the the organ of the San Marco Basilica, has presented to the Monastery Church of the Mekhitarian Fathers, at San Lazzaro a very beautiful and most unusual Organ from the United States".

Berj Zamkochian has recorded on RCA, DGG, Melodya, GIA and ZC labels. In 1987 he was awarded the Grand Prix du Disque for his recording of the Reubke Sonata on the 94th Psalm.



BERJ ZAMKOCHIAN - ORGANIST

Berj Zamkochian came to St. Joseph's Cathedral last night, and performed the dedication recital on the new great organ. The Cathedral was filled to capacity. Last night we witnessed an uncommon achievement - a superb musical performance on a splendid new instrument. For the artist played the organ so devotedly, and musiciantly, coupled with a sensitivity for the real nature of the instrument and its tremendous resources. Throughout his performance Mr. Zamkochian projected a vivid stylistic intuition, particularly in regard to melodic-rhythmic relations, phrase closings, and tempo alteration. His playing emphasized musical content. And yet there were other marvels. Zamkochian has a pedal technique that would surely put a sliver to many a colleague's foot.

- HARTFORD TIMES

Berj Zamkochian presented a brilliant recital at the cathedral of St. Peter in Chains, to an overflowing audience. A brilliant technician, and a melodramatic stylist, this young Bostonian literally shook the rafters.

- THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

Berj Zamkochian, organ Soloist with the Indianapolis Symphony is a crashing Success.

- INDIANA TIMES

Berj Zamkochian is a virtuoso performer, a thorough musician, and a skilfull assembler of programs. Last night he returned to Providence to play another fine recital to a large, cordial audience.

- PROVIDENCE JOURNAL

... Berj Zamkochian, organ soloist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, is a virtuoso performer. He and the orchestra together send off sparks of dynamic excitement.

- HIFI / STEREO REVIEW

SUPERB RECITAL BY ZAMKOCHIAN

Zamkochian closed with the Liszt Variations on themes of Bach, almost a half hour of torrential virtuosity. He Managed to maintain the long line throughout this most diffuse of all Liszt's scores, never losing the thread as he vaulted manuals and pedal board, pushing pistons all the while in a whirlwind of stop changes.

- WASHINGTON EVENING STAR

Zamkochian is an exceedingly rare type: a romantic organist. He does it all well, of course. No concert organist could make it in this day and age without firm grip on Bach and the other baroque masters. But he shines like a beacon in the great romantic works: Liszt, Franck, and Reubke. He also has an approach to the moderns which breathes life into what could otherwise be all angles and acidity.

Romantic artists are sometimes considered fair game by proponents of less subjective viewpoints. This is of no consequence to Zamkochian, who knows what he is doing and who long ago made up his mind to get on with doing it as best he know how. No one else does it better.

- TOLEDO TIMES

... Yesterday afternoon at Symphony Hall a most able Boston organist Berj Zamkochian, once again brought out the great scope and musical styles possible on that instrument, from the supreme master Bach to the modern Messiaen and Dupre. And a very rewarding afternoon it was.

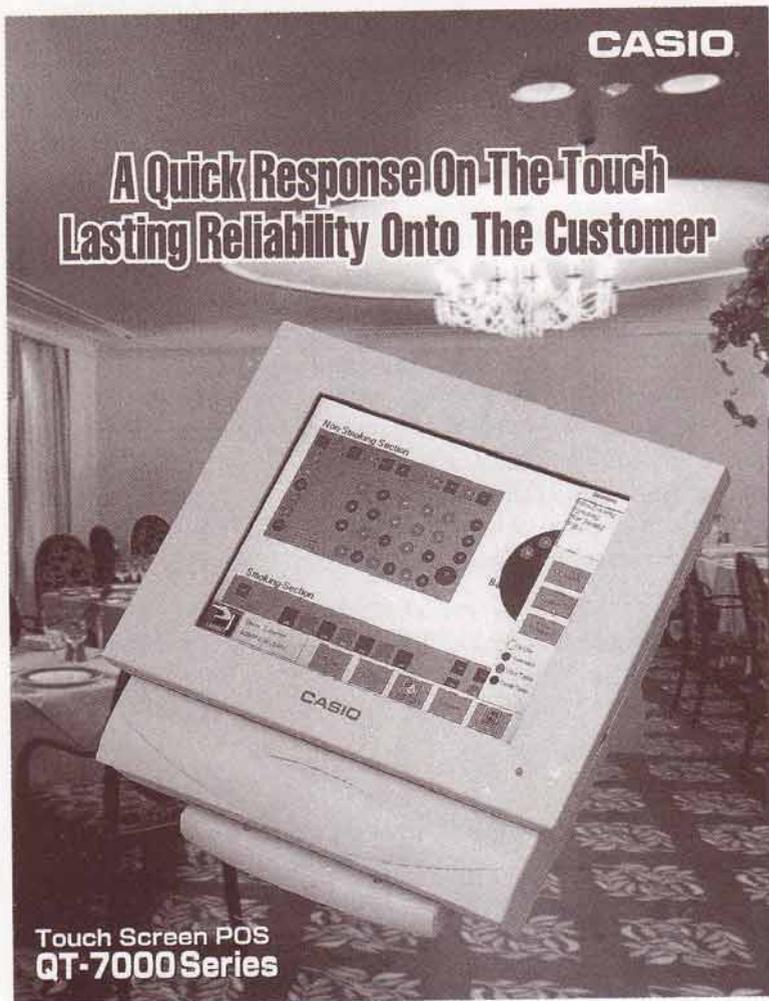
- THE BOSTON GLOBE

Mr. Zamkochian stepped forth brandishing organ color and dynamics in each fist.

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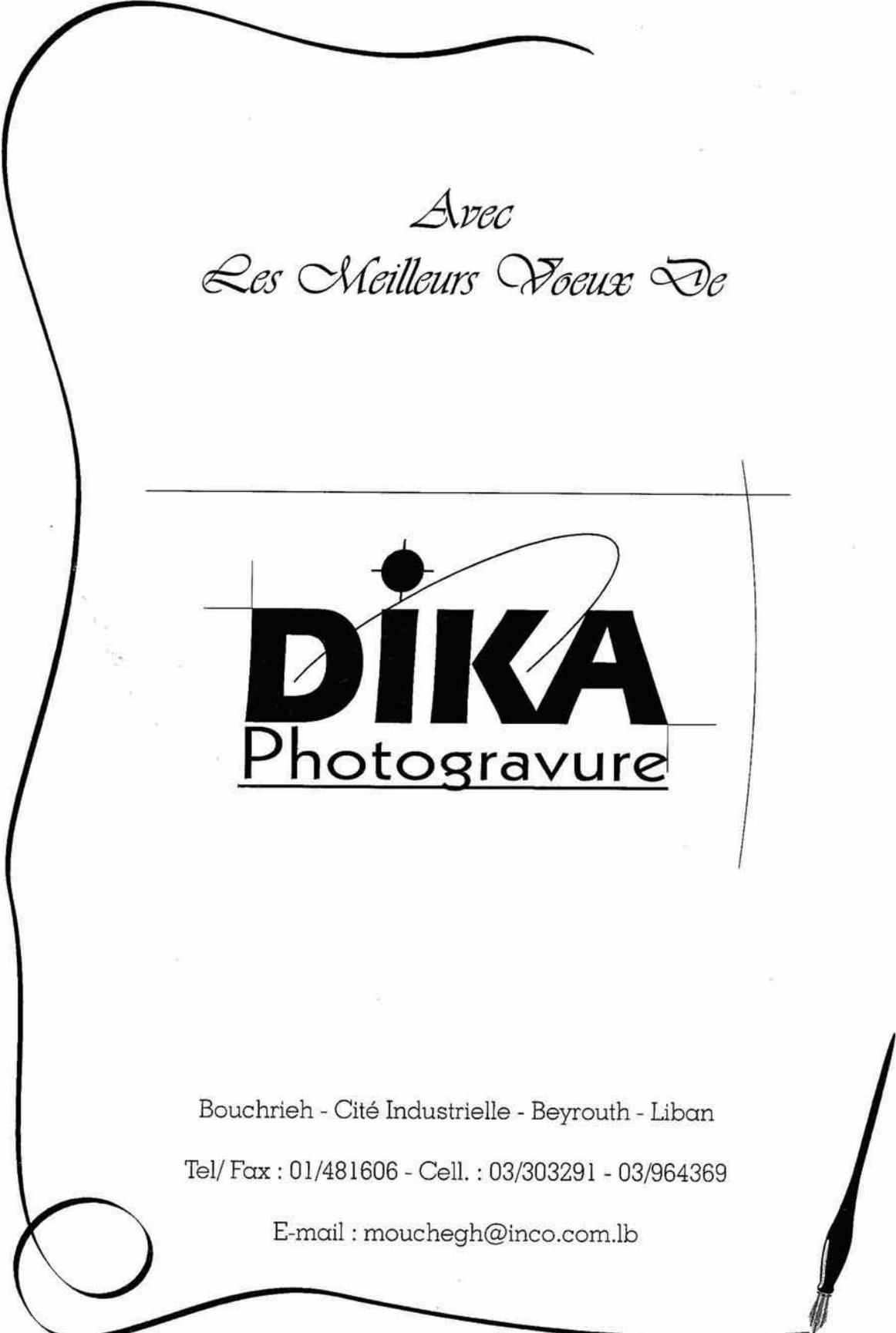


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GRAM

Selections of Armenian Liturgical Music
(to be announced)

Tribute to Abbot Mekhitar of Sebaste
on the 250th Anniversary of his death

Tommaso ALBINONI

- Adagio
arranged for Organ by Berj Zamkochian

Jeffrey BRODY

- Introduction and Passacaglia

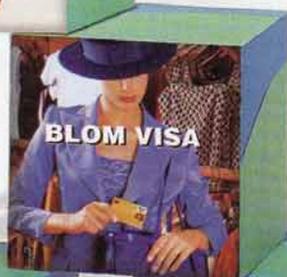
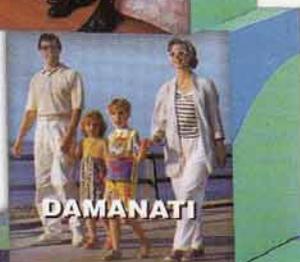


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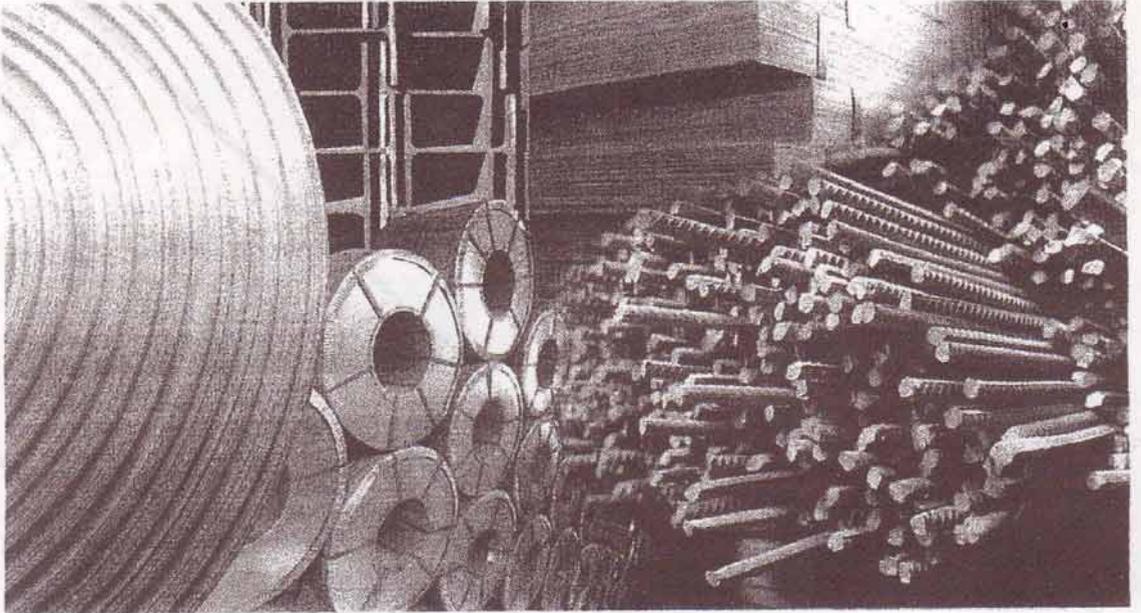
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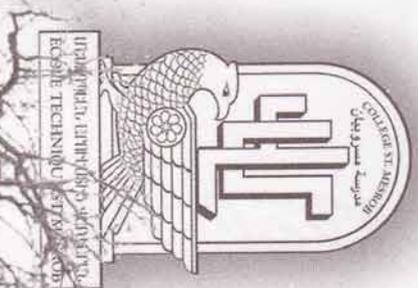
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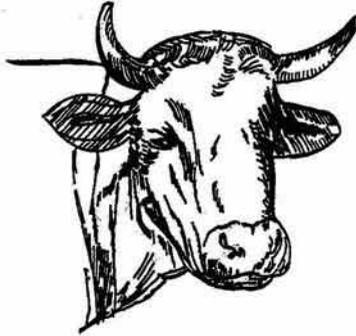
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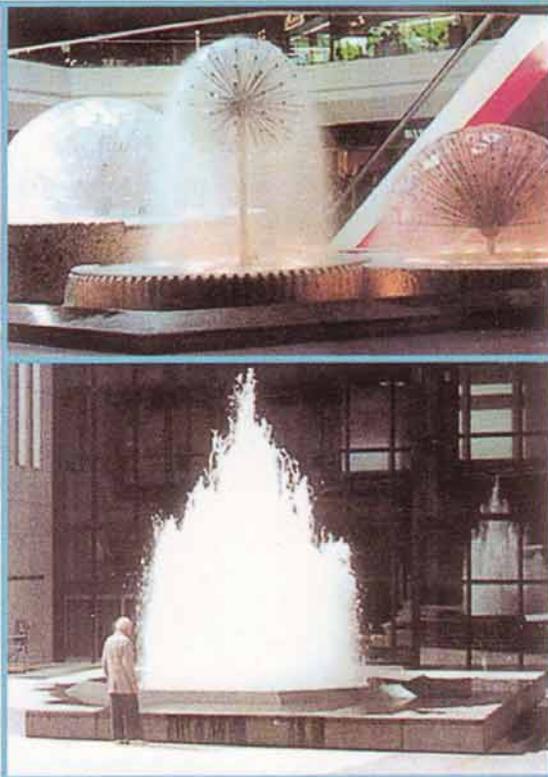


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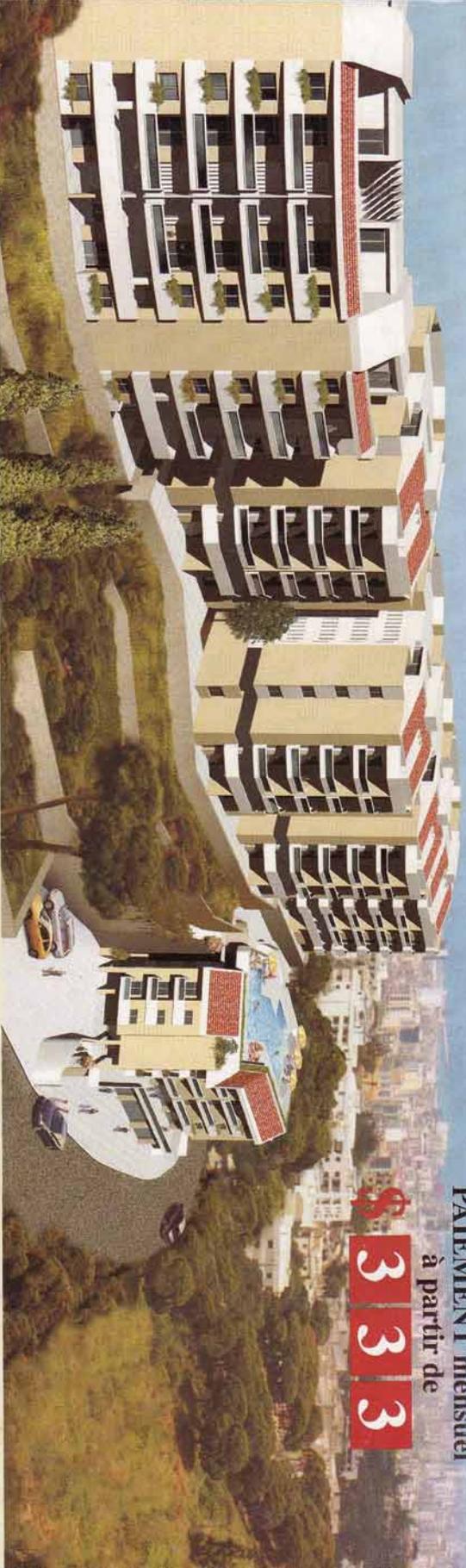
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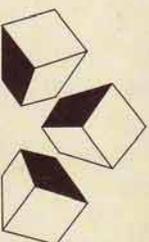


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