

ARMENIAN SPIRIT

„Avantgarde – Folk – Jazz“

Classifying "Armenian Spirit" musically is a challenge, one would almost have to invent a category of its own to be able to aptly characterize this ensemble. Ethno-Jazz? World Music? Multi-cultural band? Possible paraphrases, which, however, would shorten the multi-faceted sound of the "Armenian Spirit". The point of departure is the soul of Armenian music, which for the mastermind of the ensemble, Karen Asatrian, is a never-ending source of surprising inspirations.

He is Armenian, but now lives in Austria. The singer, Rita Movsesian, has also Armenian roots as well as Juan Carlos Sungurlian, the Oud and Bouzouki player. Lastly, in such an ensemble the woodwind instrument Duduk, which is typical for Armenia, should not be missed. It is played by Emmanuel Hovhannissyan, who is apparently following the footsteps of Djivan Gasparyan, the famous Armenian Duduk-doyen. He is the only member of the ensemble who lives in Armenia, in the capital Yerevan.

They all have Armenian roots, yet have found their own ways (see profession profiles) of expression in dealing with the most diverse cultures. That's what makes this specific Spirit special: to be open to suggestions from other cultures and styles, to be inspired by them and to interpret your own musical tradition that has shaped you in a new and contemporary way. Especially in the context of the history of Armenia, which has driven many into the diaspora, this has an identity-building effect without excluding others. It goes without saying that this ensemble also includes non-Armenians like saxophonist Wolfgang Puschnig, bassist Ante Jurinovic and drummer Reinhardt Winkler. Thus, "Armenian Spirit" brings together people who share their enthusiasm for openness, transculturality and love of music.

They came together for the first time in 2003. Each and every one of the group can look back on their own musical careers and experiences inside and outside Armenia, which they bring into the ensemble, contributing to the specific sound of the ARMENIAN SPIRIT. It is fed by classical elements, often taking over the rhythm of jazz and is devoted to topics from the Armenian musical tradition, a.o. Folk songs, such as those collected by the famous Komitas. This leads to powerful yet tender explorations in faraway and nearby musical worlds, supported by melancholic and at the same time exciting harmonies, and conducted by the composer, pianist and singer Karen Asatrian, from whose "Feather" arise these cross-cultural masterpieces.

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