

KAREN ASATRIAN

Heartfelt Jazz and The Spirit of Armenia



Asatrian's Musical (Herb)-Garden

"Whenever I'm in Armenia, I take a seed with me, which I sow in my garden," enthuses Karen Asatrian about his Armenian souvenirs with their incomparable taste. His compositions conduct themselves in a similar way. They show the whole width of his musical tastes. Classical piano tones interspersed with dabs of folk music, his creations frequently go back to the roots of this wonderful country in the Caucasians. It is a combination of basic Armenian ingredients with jazzy spices that have found their way into his head from all over the place and onto the black and white keys.

At the same time, he is always open for everything that might spring out and delight him, such as a sweet apricot. "I'm the happiest man in the world whenever I go out in the garden and harvest fresh fruit and vegetables." His musical world reveals itself as being just as fresh, light, lively, though sometimes melancholic too.

The piano man in a Cap has been sharing his musical herb-garden with his enthusiastic companions for some twenty years now. They are happy and curious to master many a challenging piece. At the end of the day, they all know how jazz in the Asatrian home tastes. "When we set out, a kind of common Armenian spirit arises," Karen Asatrian is pleased to feel about the blind trust and the mutual esteem that the group of musicians carries around even after decades. His fellow musicians originally come from Uruguay, Iraq, Croatia and Austria. "Special and unique dishes are concocted," promises the pianist. Sufficient fertilisation is provided by frequent social evenings with fresh ingredients from his Armenian herb- garden. In this way the concert evenings also become special moments, in which the joy in playing music together can be felt.

Asatrian already won the "Armenian Music Award" in the category "Best Jazz Album" with his first album "Pathway" in 2007. The CD "Dervish" followed in 2009 and again showed how his music radiates and joins together. In addition to his teaching duties at the University for Music and Live Arts in Vienna, he organises numerous concerts and tours for his ensemble and composes for choirs and orchestras. In 2018, his third public work, "Noor" (Armenian for pomegranate) appeared. With the symbolic pomegranate he wanted to place a clearly visible sign for peace and understanding in the Caucasus. Plus sow seeds, of course. May his seeds grow and bear rich fruits.

Biography

KAREN ASATRIAN | Pianist & Composer

Born in 1972 in Yerevan, Armenia; Karen Asatrian received his first education in classical Violin and Piano at the Tchaikovsky Music School in Yerevan. He then continued his studies of both instruments as well as in composition at the Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan. In 1999, he moved to Carinthia, Austria, where he finalized his Jazz-Piano studies under the direction of Dr. Prof. Harry Neuwirth, with distinction. In 2001, Karen successfully graduated earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Instrumental (Vocal) Pedagogy Studies receiving the state teaching certification for jazz piano.

Significant highlights throughout the musical career of Karen Asatrian have been the initiation of the "Brahms Project" (Jazz-Trio with Chamber Orchestra) and the presentation of his original compositions with the Norbert Artner Chamber Choir. His success was marked through collaborations with The Bruckner Symphony Orchestra, Samul-Nori (Korean percussion Ensembles), Dee Dee Bridgewater, George Garzone, Jamaaladeen Tacuma, a.m.m.. Performances within the "Three Nights of Jazz"- Festivals in Saalfelden (Austria), Jazz Festivals Wiesn in Vienna, Sziget Festivals in Budapest. Rearrangement and performance of J. Brahms compositions; numerous studio productions, live performances, Radio- and TV-appearances with several Jazz formations in Austria, Korea, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Armenia, to name a few of his international and multifaceted activities. In 2007, Asatrian received the ARMENIAN MUSIC AWARD in the category of Best Jazz Album for his CD PATHWAY.

Asatrian demonstrates his attachment to his roots and his passion for the Armenian musical tradition through his Avantgarde-Folk-Jazz Group "Armenian Spirit" that he founded in 2013.

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