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**ԿՈՄԻՏԱՍԸ ՀԱՅ ՆԿԱՐԻՉՆԵՐԻ ԵՎ
ՔԱՆԴԱԿԱԳՈՐԾՆԵՐԻ ԱԶՔԵՐՈՎ**
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ARARAT AGHASYAN

KOMITAS AS SEEN BY ARMENIAN ARTISTS AND SCULPTORS

*Yerevan, «Gitutyun» Publishing House of the NAS RA, 2019, 49 pages + 38
pages with illustrations.*

Symbolic thinking has been a characteristic feature of humanity since the very beginning of its origin. Transformed and disguised, symbols are everywhere: in cave art, dance movements, in the colors of pictures, in the lines of poems, in national traditions, in religious rites, and even in everyday habits. We have turned into a symbol what we could not explain, we have hidden under a symbol what we did not want to voice. Trying to have a trace in the history of mankind and become notable, we choose symbols to make ourselves, our family, our nation, our state recognizable. Sometimes symbols are born.

Komitas is much more for the Armenian people than a composer, folklore collector, pedagogue or researcher. He is the symbol of our history, our culture and our entity. Like his nation, creative and enthusiastic, Komitas shared the fate of his people. The distorted destiny of the Armenians forever cut off Komitas's creative being. But what the Great Armenian had done made him immortal in our history.

Ararat Aghasyan, Komitas as seen by Armenian Artists and Sculptors...

The image of Komitas imprinted in our national memory, has become a symbol and inspires the Armenian writers, composers, artists and sculptors.

“Komitas as Seen by the Armenian Artists and Sculptors”, a book by NAS RA Corresponding Member, Doctor of Arts, Professor Ararat Aghasyan, brings together the Armenian artists who have resorted in their oeuvre to the image of the composer. The book is published on the 150th anniversary of composer’s birthday by the decision of the Scientific Council of the NAS RA Institute of Arts and with the support of All Armenian Foundation Financing Armenological Studies.

Compiling such an album is really challenging, because first of all, the author is faced with the difficulty of which works to include and how to present the selected works briefly and comprehensively at the same time. Ararat Aghasyan has found the solution by giving preference to works that are distinguished both by their artistic merits and by their historical, cultural and documentary value. Like an artist who expresses the main idea depicting in the sketch only the most general and characteristic lines, Doctor of Arts, Professor, RA Honored Worker of Arts Anna Asatryan presents multi-talented Komitas in the brief editorial preface of the book. The 60 illustrations of artworks included in the album, despite the identical thematic axis – that is the image of Komitas, are at the same time very different from each other both in genre and style, as well as in the way of performance and technique. As Ararat Aghasyan records in his speech, it’s understandable that in an introductory article it would have been impossible to analyze every work in detail. However, the author gives an accurate concept of the works through concrete emphasis. In some cases, the art critic refers to crucial issues like raising the problem of exact dating of “Burial of Komitas” by Armen Chilingaryan or suggesting dating for a graphic portrait by Hatik Grigoryan.

The album is also notable for combining both well-known and less famous artworks. Sargis Muradyan’s “The Last Night. Komitas” is one of the most recognized pieces depicting the composer, while Karapet Geokchakyan’s (Geras) “Komitas” can be a full surprise even for art historians. This method of the selection opens new horizons for future researchers.

The sculptures presented in the album also include works outside Armenia, such as monuments to Komitas in Detroit (by Arto Chakmakchyan), Paris (bust by Arshavir Yeghiazaryan, full-size sculpture by David Yerevantsi), Quebec (by Samvel Ghazaryan) and Saint-Petersburg (by Levon Beybutyan).

Mkrtchyan M.

Another peculiarity of the album is that it is completely trilingual (Armenian, Russian, English). This significantly increases the number of readers, making the book valuable for both researchers and art-loving public in Armenia and the Diaspora, as well as for the Russian-speaking and English-speaking researchers.

This well-thought-out book is a kind of tribute to Komitas, a great devotee of the Armenian culture.

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