

## Gurjjeff Ensemble - Zartir

A new program and album recorded, to be released on ECM Records in 2023: “Zartir”, the title of a song from Paghtasar Dpir, a 17th century Armenian poet and musician, means to wake up from your royal slumber. This new program, from the Gurdjjeff Ensemble, includes new arrangements of G.I.Gurdjjeff’s movements in music, hymns and prayers, as well as culturally significant songs from across three centuries: the Armenian poet and musician Paghtasar Dpir, (17th century), and the ‘ashoughs’ [troubadours] Sayat Nova (18th century) and Jivani (19th century).

Parajanov’s landmark film “The Color of Pomegranates” is based on **Sayat Nova**, a major troubadour from the 18th century. His works are largely secular, full of romantic expressionism and philosophical themes; his influence cannot be understated, having spread through some of the greatest artists in the Caucasus for centuries. Composing in three languages, after his fame spread, Sayat Nova was summoned to the Court of Heracles II, the King of Georgia in the 18th century, who placed him in the service of the Court as Royal Musician and Poet.

One of the most influential spiritual leaders of the 20th century, the musician and choreographer **G.I. Gurdjjeff**’s teachings illustrated that most humans do not possess a unified consciousness and thus live their lives in a state of a hypnotic, not quite awakened sleep. However, his method of self-observation initializes a process of inner change and transformation, which can liberate one from long-standing patterns of behavior and provide an entry to a more conscious state of presence and being. Gurdjjeff’s music has its basis in what he uncovered during his 20 years of travel in Armenia, the Middle East, and many parts of Central Asia, India, and North Africa, where he witnessed a myriad of folk music and dance traditions, as well as music performed in different temples and monasteries.

**Ashough Jivani** (troubadour of the 19th century) was one of the most famous travelling musicians in the Caucasus; his songs reflect different states of the qualities of being human. As one example, jealousy provides the context for one of his greatest songs.

*The pieces of the new program are arranged for traditional instruments by Levon Eskenian. The music conveys mysteriousness, often in a form both rhythmic and energetic, presented on period instruments, sung authentically, with a mixture of bracing beauty and devastating sorrow.*

(In addition to the concert planned: As Parajanov’s film “The Color of Pomegranates” is based on Sayat Nova’s character, it may be illuminative to have the film exhibited as an event accompanying the concert. Also, if agreed to by the Parajanov museum, it may be possible to present exhibits of Parajanov’s works throughout the series of events.

Parajanov’s “The Color of Pomegranates” FILM LINK:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0lqr7l-olSo&t=2s>

# Gurdjieff Ensemble

The internationally acclaimed Gurdjieff Ensemble consists of leading musicians from Armenia playing Armenian and Middle Eastern traditional instruments. The Ensemble was founded by Levon Eskenian to play 'ethnographically authentic' arrangements of the G. I. Gurdjieff/Thomas de Hartmann piano music, then diversely expanding the repertoire that now includes music by Komitas, music from the Middle East, as well as ancient and medieval Armenian folk and spiritual music, troubadours songs from the Caucasus, and works collected by Bela Bartok and compositions by contemporary composers. Their "Music of Georges I. Gurdjieff" debut album and "Komitas" album on the famous ECM records were widely acclaimed and won prestigious awards including the Edison Award in the Netherlands. The ensemble has been touring in nearly 150 cities in 26 countries in Europe, Australia, Russia, the Middle East, North, and South America, among which are sold-out performances at the Holland Festival, the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, the Boulez hall in Berlin, the Bozar Center in Brussels, the Morgenland and Rudolstadt festivals in Germany, the Gulbenkian Hall in Lisbon, the Budapest Spring festival in Hungary, the Sala São Paulo in Brazil, the Albert Hall in Canberra, the Chicago World music festival in the USA and many more.

## Gurdjieff Ensemble

**Levon Eskenian** - arranger, artistic director/ **Emmanuel**

**Hovhannisyan** - duduk, zourna, pku/ **Avag Margaryan** - blul,

zourna/ **Armen Ayyazyan** - kamancha/ **Aram Nikoghosyan** - oud/ **Meri**

**Vardanyan** - kanon/ **Vladimir Papikyan** - santur, voice/ **Davit**

**Avagyan** - tar, saz/ **Mesrop Khalatyan** - dap, dhol/ **Norayr Gapoyan** -  
duduk/ **Eduard Harutyunyan** - tmbouk, cymbals, bell