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The young son of the rich man, who steals the daughter of the working-class chick - pea seller, with his prized possession, in his dad's luxurious mansion.



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The bride - to - be must be kept a virgin at all costs until the wedding-day. She can only sleep with the groom's ... sister, who has befriended her.

### Gariné

Screenplay	L. Gharakiozian, Ye. Manarian
Director	A. Manarian
Cameraman	M. Varjapetian
Sets	V. Potpomokov

Cast: L. Haroutiounian, A. Katchvorian, A. Kotikian, V. Varderesian, J. Avetissian, T. Levonian, J. Srapian, V. Karapetian, Ye. Manarian

Opera Singers: K. Gasparian, K. Poghossian, T. Levonian

1967

A charming musical, pioneering and unique in the history of Soviet cinema, a history not keen on Musicals (the same is true about Soviet theatre). The genre of course is an American invention, unless one links its genesis with the operetta, which in turn goes further back to the opera. The director, Manarian, had emigrated to Soviet Armenia from Istanbul (historically, Constantinople). He seems to have preserved his knack for re-creating the immediate past of this time Western Armenian life traditionally centred there, where an Armenian opera-composer of genius, Choukhajian (often compared with Verdi) wrote the first Turkish operettas. One of these, *The Chick-pea seller*, *Hor-Hor Agha* has served Manarian with the recipe to re-create the Bourgeois society of the nineteenth century Istanbul. The composer's original libretto is fiercer, stronger in class-consciousness, more aware of social inequalities; it tells of the abduction of a chick-pea seller's daughter by the idle son of a rich man, echoes the plot of Verdi's *Rigoletto*, but without the deep tragedy of the end. Instead, *Gariné* ends happily.

Choukhajian's birth-date is a matter of some controversy, 1837, according to M. Mouradian, *History of Armenian Musical Culture* (in Armenian), Vol. 2. Armenian Academy of Sciences Publication, 1970, p. 138. He died in abject poverty in 1898.

The sound track of the film includes one of the most beautiful coloraturas of Soviet opera, Kohar Gasparian, who sings the role of *Gariné* herself, played by the director's actress-wife with innocent charm and freshness. Incidentally, her mouthing of the songs is perfect.

"They say, one must listen to an opera, but this one, you wish to see

it first, for, it is pure cinema. The colours here are musical, harmonious, and literally enchanting. If I have to use two words to describe the nature of the creative effort involved, I must say, High Culture."

L. Ribak

From

## armenian cinema

A Source Book

Hovhanness I. Pilikian

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