

**F**ollowing on the heels of last spring's two extremely successful events, this fall, "Live at the Diocese" returns to Kavookjian Auditorium for a new season of talk, music and fabulous entertainment. These programs, highlighting a cornucopia of Armenian-American talent, are cast in an informal yet intimate setting offering you a chance to become familiar with these virtuosos.

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**Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate**

**Produced by: George Maksian  
 Directed by: Alex Aliksanyan**

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A Night at the Opera II	Oct 22nd	
All That Jazz	Nov 5th	
Christmas with Anita Darian & Friends	Dec 10th	

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**FRIENDS OF "LIVE AT THE DIOCESE":** Your tax-deductible gift is needed to help defray the real costs of our programs. Enclosed is a contribution for:

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OCT 22

Friday, Oct. 22, 8:00 pm

Another unforgettable evening featuring the renowned Metropolitan Opera basso Ara Berberian and an array of young operatic virtuosos. Come hear your favorite arias, listen to revealing backstage anecdotes and marvel at a touching scene from the classic Armenian Opera, "Anoush".



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Anoosh Barclay  
Maro Partamian  
Curt Peterson  
Alexander Vartanian  
Host: Loren Toolajian

AT THE DIOCESE  
LIVE!!!

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Host: Loren Toolajian  
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DEC 10

Friday, Dec. 10, 8:00 pm

You are cordially invited to attend Anita Darian's intimate Christmas gathering filled with musical goodies, yuletide memories and, yes, Christmas carols. All in all, an evening of fabulous entertainment full of good cheer and lots of SURPRISES!



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or at the door up to 1/2- hour before performance.

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**Donation: \$20 each program  
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This dual premiere of "Live... at the Diocese"  
is being presented under the auspices of  
**The Diocese of the Armenian Church of America**  
Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate

Produced by George Maksian  
Directed by Edward Setrakian  
Video production/Advertising: Alex Aliksanyan  
Opera Consultant: Anna Marie Verde

LUCINE  
**AMARA**  
LILI  
**CHOOKASIAN**  
VAHAN  
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LOREN  
**TOOLAJIAN**

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AT THE DIOCESE

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ANITA  
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HARRY & MAGGIE  
**GOZ**  
MICHAEL  
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**MAY 7th  
A NIGHT AT THE OPERA**

**LUCINE  
AMARA**

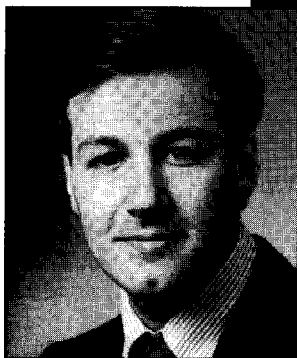


**VAHAN  
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**LOREN  
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**LIVE...AT THE DIOCESE**

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**A NIGHT AT THE OPERA  
Friday May 7, 1993 · 8 pm**

An operatic powerhouse. Appearing together for the first time, three stars of the world-renowned Metropolitan Opera: **Lucine Amara**, soprano; **Lili Chookasian**, contralto; and **Vahan Khanzadian**, tenor. In song or conversation, a memorable and not-likely-to-be-repeated evening awaits you.

Guest Host: **Loren Toolajian**, former Program Director of the New York classical music station, WQXR.

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Thursday May 20, 1993 · 8 pm**

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Guest Host: **Mark Simone**, noted radio personality of the legendary New York pop music station, WNEW-AM.

See back panel for ticket information

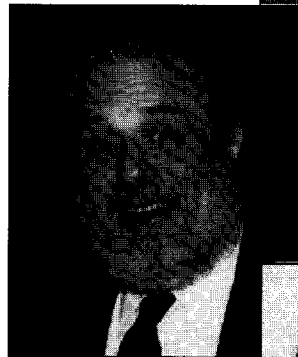
**MAY 20th  
A LITTLE 'LITE' MUSIC**



**KAY  
ARMEN**

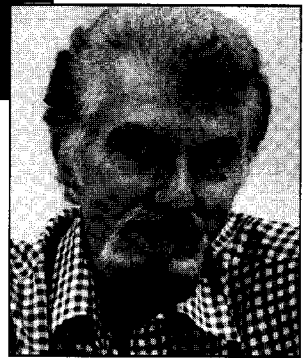


**ANITA  
DARIAN**



**MICHAEL  
KERMOYAN**

**HARRY  
GOZ**



Serpagan -

Fyl

Re-Arlene

Francis

George

George -  
Per your request -  
Ted

# LIZ SMITH



## Barbra Shows She's All Heart

**T**HERE IS no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, and no tonic so powerful as expectation of something tomorrow," said O.S. Marden.

ONCE THE applause had stopped, once the high emotion abated slightly, the audience packed into the Roundabout Theatre last Sunday for a benefit reading of Larry Kramer's "The Normal Heart" was nearly unanimous in agreeing that Eric Bogosian should have the "Larry Kramer" role of Ned Weeks when this work finally makes it to the screen later this year.

All the performers participating in this special event, which raised funds for the Treatment and Data Committee of ACT UP, were superb. But Bogosian, in a role that suited his famous confrontational brashness, really caught fire. Also singled out for particular praise were Hollywood's Harry Hamlin, who gave a tremendously moving performance — especially in recalling the terrible death of his lover — D.W. Moffett, as Bogosian's lover (a role he originated back in 1985) . . . David Drake, stealing every scene as the campy "Southern bitch" activist . . . John Turturro as the activist horrified by the notion that the sexual revolution he fought for was partly responsible for the spread of AIDS . . . and the great Stockard Channing, as Dr. Emma Booker, whose final, furious monologue — raging against indifference, stupidity and homophobia — practically tore the roof off.

Based on Stockard's performance, many now suggest she take the role of Emma in the film version. However, I think it's a "given" that Barbra Streisand, who has battled for years to bring "The Normal Heart" to the screen, will play the part of the doctor. She'll also direct and produce, for Columbia Pictures.

As for Miss Streisand, who made the evening's introductory remarks, she grows in stature, grace and composure with every public appearance. She certainly is the person any organization, any cause, would want on their side. She brings tremendous glamor, star power, and media attention. But she cuts right to the bone when speaking — clearly, directly, without gooeey, cloying sentiment, pretension or self-importance. As she stood in the harsh glare of the stage lights — a million years away from the young woman who once wouldn't enter a room because "the lights aren't right" — one could only think that she looked and sounded the way we imagine truly good politicians should, but never do. (At the play's end, standing with author Kramer and the cast, Streisand wept unashamedly, as she had during much of the show's harrowing second act. The audience did not stop applauding and bravoying until everyone finally left the stage, a full five minutes after the show had ended.)

PEOPLE ARE Talking About: Cher's impending move from Malibu. The star has put her home on the block for \$5.2 million. (She is asking another

\$3.5 million for an adjacent lot, where she had planned to build another house.) Cher says she has "had a nice rest in Malibu," but now wants to be closer to the industry action — perhaps find a place in Santa Monica or Brentwood. Cher insists she wants back in the movie action, and intends to make "meaningful" films.

Well, meaningful or not, I just want to see Cher in the movies again! She has terrific screen presence, and has been away far too long. She never really capitalized on her Oscar win for "Moonstruck," preferring to make records and concertize.

\*\*\* ARE

PEOPLE ARE Talking About: Cher's daughter Chastity Bono. In June, Chastity and her good friend, Chance (the girls call themselves "Ceremony" in tandem), release their first album, from Geffen Records. It's called "Hang On to Your Poetry." Won't it be interesting to hear what Chastity sounds like? Has she inherited her mother's famous throaty tones, her father's croak, or something completely her own?

PEOPLE ARE Talking About: Mercury Records' holdup on the release of Billy Ray Cyrus' second album, confidently titled "It Won't Be the Last." It's said they want to squeeze another hit from Billy's first effort, "Some Gave All." That album has been near the top of the charts for eons, with only one single released from it, the immortal "Achy, Breaky Heart." The title track is coming next.

HERE'S A bittersweet story I wish I did not have to write. Arlene Francis has been New York's own leading lady for years. This vivacious, gracious, adorable star was a formidable presence through all her years on the Broadway stage and as a highlight of the long-running TV hit "What's My Line?" and many other TV and radio outings. (Arlene began her career at age 16, carried around by a gorilla in Bela Lugosi's movie "Murders in the Rue Morgue.")

The other day, Peter Gabel, the son of Arlene and the late actor Martin Gabel, flew into NYC to check on his mother. She was bedridden from a fall and suffers from Alzheimer's. Says Peter: "She is now just a little old lady, but there are still flashes of the old humor."

Peter and his wife are taking Arlene back to San Francisco. We're all going to miss her.

WE DON'T wish to make light of a terrible situation — the deaths in NYC of Prince Teddy Khedker and his wife, Princess Nenescha — but I must say that the steamy love note written by actress Ruth Warrick to the late prince was certainly inspiring! Miss Warrick, who was in "Citizen Kane" with Orson Welles, and who has reigned as a daytime soap diva on ABC's "All My Children" for many years, is 77 years old. And brother, is she ever the living proof that after the Middle Ages comes the Renaissance! More power to Ruth and to all women who don't give up after the first or second bloom of youth fades.



Eric Bogosian  
A perfect Ned Weeks?

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NY

NEW YORK NEWSDAY, TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 1993

## Basso Ara Berberian's "Enchanted Evening" of Music & Talk, Fall Opera Opener Debuts Rising Stars

By Brunelle Arakelian

NEW YORK, NY - A capacity crowd enjoyed a delightful evening of music and chat on the evening of October 22 at the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America. "A Night at the Opera - Part 2" was the premier outing for the fall season of the **Live...At the Diocese** series, which combines musical performance by major and rising talents with informal "backstage" interviews -- sort of an Armenian version of the Johnny Carson show.

This latest offering -- the sequel to an Opera Night which debuted last spring -- was an absolutely glorious bit of showmanship, featuring a major Armenian-American talent, Ara Berberian. The evening's host was Loren Toolajian, formerly of WQXR radio and an accomplished musician himself, who brought not only warmth and humor but also tremendous knowledge and personal insight into his role as interviewer. Granted my experience of Armenian events is limited, but the **Live...At the Diocese** shows mark the first time that I have ever seen Mr. Toolajian's considerable talents: the series producer, George Maksian, certainly made a shrewd "discovery" when he asked Mr. Toolajian to be the ringmaster of these programs.

Of course, the highlight of the evening was the music, and we were treated to a feast of operatic and lighter fair. The opening piece was a dramatic scene from the classic Armenian opera "Anoush." Baritone Alexander Vartanian, of the Yerevan State Opera, and coloratura soprano Anoush Barclay performed in full costume a scene between a tragic young woman and her humiliated and murderous brother, which was reminiscent of the climax of "West Side Story." Maria Chil-Gevorkian accompanied on piano.

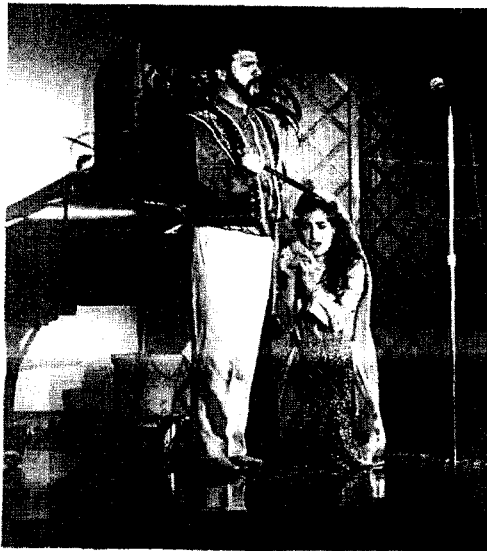
Later, the two returned separately to give solo performances. Mr. Vartanian (who with an appearance in the previous Opera Night show is quickly becoming a **Live...At the Diocese** regular) sang an aria from Rachmaninov's "Aleko," and finished with "Horovel" by Gomidas Vartabed.

Ms. Barclay touchingly sang Puccini's "O Mio Babbino Caro" as well as "Anoush Karoon." Ms. Barclay's performances showed real stage presence, and her ladylike reserve in her interview segment was just charming. How wonderful to see such a budding Armenian talent in the early stages of such a promising career!

One artist who had been scheduled to perform -- Maro Partamian -- unfortunately was under the weather, and unable to take part in "A Night at the Opera, Part 2." Happily, I've been assured that her lovely voice will be featured in some forthcoming **Live...At the**



(L to R) Loren Toolajian, Ara Berberian, George Maksian, Gayana Avakian, Maria Chil-Gevorkian, Alexander Vartanian, Curt Peterson, Anoush Barclay -- participants in "A Night at the Opera-Part 2" held at the Diocese.



Baritone Alexander Vartanian and coloratura soprano Anoush Barclay in a dramatic scene from the opera "Anoush."

### Diocese effort.

The evening also featured a dynamic young voice from the Juilliard Opera Center, Curt Peterson. Looking every bit the youthful tenor in his roguish goatee, Mr. Peterson mesmerized the crowd with "Una Furtiva Lagrima" from Donizetti's "L'Elisier d'Amore," and followed it up with a spirited rendition of "Maria" from "West Side Story." As an encore, he sang "En Mes Amis" from Donizetti's "Daughter of the Regiment." (Incidentally, Mr. Peterson's "Armenian connection" for this performance is that he is a colleague of Ara Berberian, the two having appeared together this past summer in the Colorado State Opera Company production of "The Barber of Seville.")

Naturally, the "main event" for the night was the appearance by Ara Berberian himself, the great bass from the Metropolitan Opera. Needless to say, Mr. Berberian's selections for the evening were sheer magic. He sang a wonderfully comic "La Calunnia" from "The Bar-

ber of Seville," then switched gears to Broadway and did what must be the definitive version of "Some Enchanted Evening" from "South Pacific." And when he lent that rich, melodious voice to Roubenian's "Oorenie" ("The Willow Tree"), Mr. Berberian brought the house down. Accompanying on piano, Gayana Avakian brought grace and precision to an already outstanding performance.

What came as a complete surprise to me, however, were Mr. Berberian's segments in the interview seat. Ara Berberian is an imposing figure of a man -- he must be at least 6'4" -- and with that powerful singing voice, he can be quite intimidating. The interview segments gave us a glimpse of the inner man -- warm, humorous, a true gentleman, filled with gratitude and love for his parents, his family, his people, and the great operatic heritage.

This is precisely what sets the **Live...At the Diocese** shows apart from the run-of-the-mill Armenian arts pro-

grams: after each of the **Live** productions, I go home feeling like I've received some small insight into the personality of a great artist like Ara Berberian. It's almost like being a guest at an intimate dinner party, where one can eavesdrop on witty conversations and show-business stories. But for the **Live** shows, I would never have the opportunity to be a part of such things, and as a young Armenian I appreciate the chance to get a closer look at some of our more famous personalities.

A special tip-of-the-hat must go to the technical aspect of the production, which perfectly complemented the performances and maintained their high level of professionalism. During last spring's **Live...At the Diocese** shows, I noticed some minor technical glitches -- understandable in such a complex undertaking, but distracting nonetheless. The bugs seem to be worked out, however, because this time out the sound and lighting were smooth as silk. A man with a headset prowling about the back of the auditorium was pointed out to me as the director of the show, Mr. Alex Aliksanyan, who coordinated everything to perfection. It was a total theatrical experience, and the whole package was first-rate.

Lest I forget, a round of applause is due to the force majeure of **Live...At the Diocese**, Mr. George Maksian. Anyone who has met George (and that's practically everybody) knows how infectious his enthusiasm can be. In this project, he's really gone over the top, and his love of the stars and the people in the audience is evident in every minute of every production.

Finally, bravo to the Diocese, for utilizing the enviable space of the Kavookjian Auditorium in such a clever and wonderful way. The St. Vartan Cathedral complex is really the jewel of the American-Armenian community -- easily our greatest achievement as a group within American soci-

ety. It should be the show-place for all that is best in our small-but-accomplished community, and it's great to see this resource used to its fullest. I detected a gleam in Archbishop Barsamian's eye at the close of this marvelous effort, and it is great to see the Cathedral complex serving as a vibrant and living part of not only our Armenian community but of New York City in general.

"A Night at the Opera, Part 2" was the first of three programs to be presented this fall on the season's **Live...At the Diocese** series, and no one will want to miss the remainder of the season. The second presentation on Friday, November 5, will be "All That Jazz," featuring the great jazz pianist-composer Armen Donelian, along with trumpet players Barry Daniellian and John Walsh, and vocalists Datevik Hovanesian and Kim Nazarian. (This ought to be a terrific show for young people -- the producers are even offering discount tickets.) "Christmas With Anita Darian and Friends" will bring down the curtain for the fall season on Friday, December 10.

Photos by J.K. Hovhannes

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# DAILY NEWS

NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

Wednesday, October 20, 1993

EXTRA

## **HOT STUFF**

**'LIVE ... AT THE DIOCESE' KICKS OFF ITS** fall season with "A Night at the Opera, Part 2," which will play Friday at 8 p.m. at 630 Second Ave. Sponsored by the Armenian Church of America, the show will feature famed Metropolitan Opera basso Ara Berberian. Other singers will include Maro Partamian and Anoosh Barclay. Future evenings will include jazz pianist/composer Armen Donelian (Nov. 5) and Broadway performer Anita Darian (Dec. 10). Tix are \$25. (212) 686-0710.





DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA  
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Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate

May 19, 1994

Mr. George Maksian  
35 Rock Road  
Englewood Cliff, NJ 07632

Dear Mr. Maksian:

"Live At The Diocese" was an extraordinary series of programs that not only showed the importance of Armenian performers to the community, but gave an opportunity for community fellowship on a regular basis.

It was because of your efforts that the series was such a success in providing quality entertainment to the Armenian community at large. It is with regret that we had to discontinue the series, but I am hoping that this is only temporary, and that in the near future we may once more provide our people with fine entertainment here at the cathedral.

Thank you for your unselfish dedication and for the time you spent making the shows "come together" through the enlistment of talent, recruiting the others who helped produce the shows and for being at the forefront of gathering an audience for the series. You were the center of all the activity, and I want you to know that I appreciate your willingness to put forward the tremendous effort on behalf of the Diocese.

Thank you again for your leadership and good taste.

With prayers,

*Atbp. K. Barsamian*

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian  
Primate

Loren:

Here are few notables who'll be attending tonight's show:

1. Alan Mirabella, a columnist for Crain's New York Business.
2. Paul La Rosa, a producer for CBS' 48 Hours news-magazine.
3. John Cardinale, head of the jazz dept. at WKCR-FM.
4. Marlin Swing, the longtime~~er~~ producer of the Walter Cronkite specials.
4. Don Nelsen, the well-known~~x~~ jazz and theater critic.
5. Robert Dominguez, the author of the "Que Pasa " column for the New York Daily News.
6. Roslyn Kay, the head of public relations for Ch. 13.
7. Our own Kay Armen, who delighted audiences with her charm and singing last spring with A Little Lite Music.
8. And last but certainly not least, the very popular morning man of WABC Talk Radio---Curtis Sli<sup>(</sup>wa.

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from the office of the  
**Diocese of the Armenian Church of America**

630 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, tel: (212) 686-0710

# news:

Contact: Christopher H. Zakian  
(212) 686-0710

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **LIVE...AT THE DIOCESE RINGS DOWN THE CURTAIN ON ITS FALL SEASON WITH A DELICIOUS YULETIDE TREAT**

**Lucine Amara, George Mgrdichian, Harry and Maggie Goz and Mark  
Simone Lend Sparkle to "Christmas with Anita Darian & Friends"**

**By Helen L. Baronian**

"Come into my living room," cooed Anita Darian to the audience, and we were immediately caught up in her web of song, humor and talk—all part of the Live...At the Diocese presentation, "Christmas with Anita Darian & Friends."

Anita provided a great start to a wonderful Christmas season, which ranked up there with a trip to the New York City Ballet to see "The Nutcracker." Where else but at the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America in the greatest city in the world could you enjoy such festivities for a glowing yuletide season?

This Christmas show on Friday, December 10, was the final show of the Live...At the Diocese 1993 calendar—and what a joy it was. Miss Darian came out in her turquoise blue gown to a packed, star-studded audience. Special guests included Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America; Archbishop Nersess Bozabalian, Chancellor of the Holy See of Etchmiadzin in Armenia; David Hedison, star of the original film of "The Fly," the classic sci-fi TV series "Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea," and currently seen on the NBC daytime drama "Another World;" filmmaker and three-time Emmy Award-winner Ara Chekmayan; and Kay Armen, star of stage, screen and radio.

The stage was set to look like Miss Darian's living room, complete with Christmas tree, wreath and all the trimmings. The charming hostess began by enchanting her audience with the song "Then I'll Be Tired of You," by Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz, accompanied by the excellent pianist Barton Spero. She also sang the beautiful "Baubles, Bangles and Beads" from "Kismet"—music by Alexander Borodin.

Philip Der Margosian, the promising young baritone, played Anita's butler throughout the show, and introduced the various guests as they

—more—

arrived for this Christmas party. The first to arrive were Harry and Maggie Goz—the longtime Broadway actors who had previously lit up the Live...At the Diocese stage during last spring's "A Little Lite Music." Together with their son Michael and his new bride Susan, the four were billed as the Goz Family Singers.

After a brief chat with their hostess, Harry and Maggie sang the duet "Wanting You," from Sigmund Romberg's operetta "New Moon." Then Maggie, in her lovely soprano voice, sang "Ay Vart," the traditional Armenian folk song. Harry followed with "Come Back to Sorrento," in honor of the family's dear friend and mentor Tony Di Leva.

Michael Goz—who is presently appearing as Big Julie on Broadway in "Guys and Dolls"—sang "Luck Be A Lady Tonight." Michael has a superb bass voice, one that we should be hearing more of. Then the whole family came together to sing a few Christmas carols, including "Angels We Have Heard on High," and "Silent Night" in both English and German versions.

The next guests to be introduced were George Mgrdichian, the great oud virtuoso, accompanied by Dennis Koster, a flamenco/classical guitarist. They performed "Memories of the Alhambra," a magnificent piece played magnificently by two of the foremost artists in their fields. "Oudspaña," a piece written by George Mgrdichian, was also a show-stopper, bringing the capacity audience to its feet. It is such a pleasure to hear great music played by great artists.

A running gag throughout the show had the butler vocalizing offstage whenever there was a lull in the performances. This little bit of hijinx came courtesy of Philip Der Margosian, who dropped these musical hints that he could do more than just domestic service. After about the third time this happened, a nonplused Anita Darian called Philip onto the stage invited him to sing—which Philip eagerly did. He sang "Christmas Waltz" by Jule Styne in his sweet and powerful baritone voice, followed by Irving Berlin's "White Christmas" and Rodgers and Hart's "Where Or When." Since the last time I had heard him, Philip's voice has matured and improved dramatically and it was a pleasure to hear him.

Anita once again took center stage, singing Meredith Willson's "Till There Was You," from "The Music Man." The sparkle in Anita's eyes matched the sparkle of her necklace and earrings, and her voice had the same éclat. She then sang the traditional Armenian folk song, "Goghpa Yaili," and finished with "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas."

Another little Christmas surprise occurred when Charles Welch came on stage. The name may not be familiar, but Mr. Welch is none other than the Pepperidge Farm Cookie Man—star of about a million TV commercials, and a longtime friend of Anita. Charlie came out in full regalia—straw hat,

apron and all—carrying three large bags of Pepperidge Farm cookies over to Anita and her guests. His whole routine was a sheer delight, and a tremendous hit with the crowd.

Mark Simone was the next guest on the slate, who weathered a rainy Friday night like a trooper so he could deliver a Christmas present of his own to the Live...At the Diocese crowd: a special "enhanced" reading of "'Twas the Night Before Christmas." Mark's rendition was quite simply one of the best comedy bits we have ever heard; he had us in stitches with his sharp-witted ad libs, which reminded me of Robin Williams. Mark is so quick that the reading was seamless. It was a great comedic interlude in the show.

As if this were not enough good cheer and fun, one more guest remained to be announced: the great opera diva Lucine Amara. Anita reminded everyone that this was the lady who got to the top, who sang at the Met, took on the Met and won, and who is still singing in top form. Is there anyone who sings Puccini's "Vissi d'Arte" from "Tosca" like Lucine Amara? It just sends shivers and tingles up one's spine. Her magnificent voice is a superb, finely honed instrument. She sang Johann Strauss's "Tales of the Vienna Woods" arranged by Eric Korngold, and "Erepuni," which brought the whole house to its feet roaring with delight.

Miss Amara's excellent accompanist, Allison Voth, also accompanied the Goz family and Philip Der Margosian. As always she was superb.

As a grand finale, the whole ensemble came together to sing Christmas carols, including "Deck the Halls" and the logical closer, "We Wish You a Merry Christmas."

We can only say "Thanks a Million" to the entire Live...At the Diocese crew: George Maksian, who has produced these great shows; director Alex Aliksanyan; stage manager Cathy Haig Bonjukian; Diocesan public relations officer Christopher Zakian; and to Lynn Beylerian, president of the Treasure Island store chain, who provided the beautiful Christmas tree for the stage setting. Thank you all, and we hope 1994 will provide more of the same wonderful evenings at the Diocese.

Live...At the Diocese has been a treat throughout. Next season, George Maksian has plans to present three all new programs—one with sports figures, one devoted to the music of Aram Khachaturian, and one devoted to the life and work of William Saroyan. Watch for the announcements—you won't want to miss any of these shows.



from the office of the  
**Diocese of the Armenian Church of America**  
630 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, tel: (212) 686-0710

# news!

Contact: Christopher H. Zakian  
(212) 686-0710

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## KICK OFF THE CHRISTMAS SEASON WITH "ANITA DARIAN & FRIENDS"

Broadway Showstopper Will Weave Her Musical Charms  
During the Fall Season Finale of Live...At the Diocese

By Helen L. Baronian

Anita Darian, that bundle of energy, talent and joy, will be entertaining all her fans during the Live...At the Diocese performance of "Christmas with Anita Darian and Friends," on Friday, December 10, at 8:00 p.m. Anita will be inviting us all into her "living room," where she will regale the audience with stories, songs, musical goodies, yuletide memories, Christmas carols and some terrific surprises. This is a performance not to be missed.

For your enjoyment Anita will be sharing the stage with George Mgrdichian, the guru of the oud; Mark Simone, of disc-jockey fame; the Goz Family Singers, straight from cabaret and Broadway; and special guest star Lucine Amara.

And *then* come the surprises! You won't want to miss them—or this intimate fun-filled party just for your Christmas pleasure.

Anita has been entertaining audiences since she was a youngster. She grew up in Detroit, with the best of talent around her. Her mother had a beautiful singing voice, although she did not have the opportunity to pursue a vocal career, and her father possessed a good light baritone. Among her friends while growing up in Detroit were the Berberians—you guessed it: the family of Metropolitan Opera bass Ara Berberian. Ara spent many hours listening to young Anita rehearsing with his sister, Alice—which encouraged him in his own musical career.

With the support of her mother, who sensed Anita's own vocal talent, Anita launched into a dramatic and singing career. Her first public performance took place when she was six years old, singing "Lazy Bones" on the radio. But she quickly graduated to other things. In those days, movie houses had amateur hours, offering prizes ranging from \$25 to free movie tickets for a whole year. Anita noticed that the prize-winners invariably sang the loudest and ended in a crescendo; imitating this tactic, she wound up a winner herself.

—more—

Anita's formal musical training began in Detroit. Although her mother was hardly the classic "stage mother," she did take Anita for lessons—and to every show in town. She did a radio program for James Jewell, the man who was responsible for "The Lone Ranger," "The Green Hornet," and other radio programs. Because of Anita's lovely voice, Jewell personally picked her to perform on "The Children's Theater of the Air."

The "captain" of her show was Billy Roy—the same pianist who now plays for Julie Wilson. Anita would be given a script and music, which she would memorize in one week before the final live broadcast. Anita's quick memory and versatility (she not only sang and read music, but could also play the piano) made her a rare and valuable commodity, and a much-sought-after performer on a host of radio shows. She was still a young girl when she landed a soloist position in the Don Large Chorus.

After her radio days—while Anita was a student in Detroit's Cooley High School—Anita's talents caught the attention of the head of the school music department, Fern Robinson. Miss Robinson encouraged Anita to continue with her musical education, and was certain that Anita could qualify for a full scholarship to a major school of music. Anita, however, was not so confident: she told her teacher that her parents would not want so young a girl—and an only child—to go to school so far from home.

But Miss Robinson had other plans. Anita auditioned for Wayne University and Albion College, and was accepted by both on scholarship. Miss Robinson, however, felt Anita could aim even higher, and submitted her to the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. After much cajoling by Robinson, Anita and her mother were persuaded to audition for the Curtis school. Within a month Curtis accepted Anita—with a full scholarship. Still, mom, dad and grandpa—a formidable trio—remained to be reckoned with. They naturally wanted Anita to remain close to home, but Miss Robinson insisted that they let her go to Curtis, and Anita's mother took her daughter's side.

Anita studied at Curtis for five years, and the very first person she met in the magnificent entry hall was Gregor Piatigorsky, the world renowned cellist, who was on the Curtis faculty—along with Rudolf Serkin, Gian Carlo Menotti, and most of the leading lights of the music world.

From Philadelphia, where she was sheltered, adored and generally protected from the world, Anita went to New York—light years away from Philadelphia. Here she was asked if she could sing loud, if she could sing big—not a word about the talent she had nurtured. A typical episode occurred during an audition for a director at the City Center, then the home of the New York City Opera. The director said "My dear, you have a lovely voice; it's not really big enough for opera, but tell me, would you consider covering "Tosca" for the Company?" Anita replied, "If in one breath you tell me my

voice is too small for opera, and in the next ask me to cover for "Tosca," I don't want to sing with this company."

Disenchanted after this kind of treatment, Anita looked for other avenues. For two years she sang nowhere, and became a bookkeeper for a ticket-broker who allowed her to go on auditions. It was during her audition for the TV series "Chance of a Lifetime" that Anita got her big break. Now the opportunities and offers came at a quicker pace. At one point, she even had to choose between two competing engagements: skating on the stage of the Roxy Theater, and Arthur Godfrey's "Talent Scouts."

Anita sang with the Sauter-Finnegan Orchestra, which was looking for a replacement for their soprano. She sent them a demo-recording and received back a telegram telling her to "Learn the book—we open in Pittsburgh in two weeks." This launched her career nationally, and she was on the road with them for a year, going as far as California. After that she did radio and television shows, and got to sing with the inimitable Ella Fitzgerald.

One of the highlights of Anita's career was singing in Mark Bucci's "Koncerto for Kazoo," with Leonard Bernstein conducting, at Carnegie Hall. Bucci was having a difficult time finishing the work, and in a spirit of helpfulness, Anita offered to play the kazoo part. They made a demonstration-recording, and sent it to Bernstein, who sent a telegram telling Bucci the third movement would be played at Carnegie Hall—with Anita Darian and New York Philharmonic.

After seeing Anita on "Tonight Show with Jack Paar," the great Richard Rodgers tracked down Anita and signed her up for his Broadway musical "Flower Drum Song." It was shortly thereafter that Oscar Hammerstein asked her to play Lady Thiang in "The King and I." Anita went on to represent the United States for a National Public Radio world tour, during which she sang the part of Bess in a concert version of George Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess." The recordings of these performances have been all over the world.

Anita has also performed for Julius Rudel, Director of the New York City Opera, when he directed "Seven Characters in Search of an Author." She also sang for Jean Carlo Menotti in "Bleeker Street," and opened the Lake George Festival of Opera, where she played all four female leads in "The Tales of Hoffman," as well as roles in "Tosca" and "La Triaviata."

Anita recorded an album called "East of the Sun," which includes a few Armenian songs. Her other recordings include "Showboat," "The King and I," "The Student Prince" and "Four Dialogues" by Ned Rorem.

Anita has plans to do another album, and would like to lecture on singing. However, she only likes to teach people who are genuinely serious singers. She feels that young people today do not have the same discipline,



because of the widespread use of amplification equipment. "Amplification ruins technique; neither singers nor actors today know how to project. At the expense of the story and good music we are given a lot of theatrics. But the truth is that the classics will endure. "Carousel," "The King and I" and "My Fair Lady" are eternal. Eventually, today's theatrics will disappear."

As if this is not enough, Anita has also sung in cabarets and clubs like Brothers and Sisters on West 46th Street in New York, and sang with Gordon MacRae for three years—he wouldn't have anyone else.

And in case anyone thinks that Anita sings and does nothing else—think again. She is a gadget freak and can fix just about anything. As a matter of fact, she does VCR repair for Long Beach TV. So, if you need a good VCR repairwoman who also sings...oh well, it might make a good movie script.

So, if you want to have a great evening of fun and entertainment, with a most versatile and talented hostess, who will bring you right into her living room and lavish good music and cheer upon you at the start of the Christmas season, make a date—Friday, December 10, 1993, at 8 p.m.—with Live...At the Diocese for an evening with Anita Darian and Friends. You'll love it.

The show promises to be another sellout, so call the Diocese at (212) 686-0710, for ticket information and reservations.

—11/22/93

# ALL THAT JAZZ Shines, as the Latest Star in the "Live... At the Diocese" Constellation

By Helen L. Baronian

NEW YORK, NY -Entertaining, ecstatic, wonderful, superb -- uttissimo adjectives to describe an uttissimo show. Everyone who attended Friday night's performance of "All That Jazz" -- the second in the fall series of Live...At the Diocese produced by George Maksian, impresario extraordinaire -- was amply rewarded. Armen Donelian and his trio, (Armen on piano, Ratzon Harris on bass, and Matt Wilson on drums) kept the audience in a constant state of euphoria and excitement. The music was inventive and interesting, and the shouts of glee and admiration all evening long attested to the brilliant playing of the artists.

Datevik Hovanesian, who first came to America in 1975 with the Armenian State Jazz Ensemble, and Kim Nazarian of the New York Voices jazz quintet, regaled the audience with their inimitable jazz singing styles. Datevik has to be the greatest exponent of scat this side of Ella Fitzgerald. She is a smooth performer with a velvet voice and brings great warmth and feeling to her music. Kim Nazarian is also a top jazz performer, showing a bright and eclectic style, charming and capturing her audience. When the two sang together on occasion, it was sheer bliss.

Trumpeters Barry Danielian and John Walsh were the icing on the cake. They made their instruments hum and sing; from sweet and mellow, to brassy and big sounds, they ran the gamut.

Armen Donelian, of course, was the master of the piano -- improvising wonderful music with a great back-up up on the bass and drums. (The drums, of course, were Zildjian -- nothing but the best.)

The whole evening was nothing but the best. Whoever came out for this great show got their money's worth in spades. I don't remember having so much fun at a jazz concert in ages. These seven artists provided an evening of music wizardry.

Alex Alikanyan, the director of the show, introduced Loren Toolajian, the excellent M.C., who opened the show with a few words on jazz and the Armen Donelian trio. Then the trio opened with Lerner & Loewe's "Almost Like Being in Love." During Loren's interview with Armen (the interview couch was set up on stage left) they discussed Armen's classical background and how he approached jazz.

Trumpeter great Barry Danielian next played "Andorinha" by Antonio Carlos Jobim and Armen Donelian's own composition, "New Blues." Barry, too, started taking lessons when he was 8 years old, and continued on the trumpet until his braces got in the way. His teacher then gave him other instruments to play until the braces came off, which is



Seen in performance of Bobby Troupe's "Route 66" are (l. to r.) Datevik Hovanesian, Barry Danielian, Kim Nazarian, John Walsh and Matt Wilson. Photos: J.K. Hovhannes



Trumpeters Barry Danielian (left) and John Walsh team up to play duet, Wayne Shorter's "United."



(l. to r.) pianist Armen Donelian, record producer George Avakian, M.C. of "All That Jazz" Loren Toolajian.



Producer George Maksian (left) with host of newspaper, television and radio personalities. Fourth from left is TAR Int'l. Senior Editor Edward K. Boghosian.

why Barry is so versatile. Incidentally, Barry will appear on **The Arsenio Hall Show** on Monday, November 15 on Channel 9 in New York, so don't miss this terrific trumpet player.

Datevik Hovanesian sang the traditional Armenian song, in scat style, "Antsrevn Egav," followed by Duke Ellington's "I Ain't Got Nothin' But the Blues." Kim Nazarian and Datevik followed up with another Ellington classic, "I'm Beginning To See The Light." And then Kim sang the Fisher-Drake-Higginbotham tune "Good Morning Heartache" but changed it to "Good Morning Holiday" for Billie Holiday.

The Trumpet came into play again, this time with John Walsh (Armenian on his mother's side), a wonderful trumpet player who came to New York a few years ago and has done very well for himself. He played the traditional "Siretsi Yars Daran"; then John and

Barry played a trumpet duet, Wayne Shorter's "United." The audience screamed their delight and clamored for more.

Donelian and his trio brought the audience to its feet with Donelian's "Stargazer" and "Metropolitan Madness." These two works were show-stoppers (as was just about everything else on this program) and were a fitting introduction to Loren Toolajian's interview with one of the real heroes of jazz, George Avakian, who regaled the audience with stories of some of the great jazz artists he had worked with. George was one of the founders of the Grammy Awards' National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, and discovered the great pop artist Johnny Mathis. He discussed where jazz was going and how it was changing. He recalled how he produced the very first jazz album 54 years ago -- called "Chicago Jazz" for Decca Records.

These Live...At the Diocese shows have developed a reputation among non-Armenians too: a whole group of newspaper, TV and radio personalities made sure they attended "All That Jazz." Among the group Loren Toolajian introduced were Alan Mirabella, columnist for **Crain's New York Business**; Paul La Rosa, a producer for CBS's "48 Hours" news magazine; John Cardinale, head of the jazz department for WKCR-FM; Marlin Swing, the longtime producer and aide to Walter Cronkite; Don Nelsen, well-known jazz and theater critic, with his lovely wife, business writer Ricki Fulman; Roslyn Kay, the director of program publicity for WNET/Channel 13; Martin Blair, head of publicity for WCBS-TV/Channel 2; Kathy Larkin, the popular society columnist; Ted Faraone, president of the PR firm Faraone Communications; and two of our own celebrities: seven-time Emmy-winner and Oscar-nominated film-maker Ara Chekmayan, and Kay Armen, who delighted the audience here last spring with her charm and singing in "A Little Lite Music."

The great asset of all these shows is that each is different and each is fantastic. There has never been one Live...At The Diocese performance that was not satisfying and original -- and we look forward to the next and last one of the fall season, "Christmas with Anita Darian and Friends," on Friday, December 10, at 8 p.m. Miss Darian's intimate Christmas gathering will feature George Mgrdichian, Mark Simone, the Goz Family Singers, and special guest Lucine Amara. Sounds like an evening of fabulous entertainment, full of good cheer and lots of surprises. Don't miss this one -- see you at Kavookjian Auditorium at the Diocese on December 10.



Datevik Hovanesian



Kim Nazarian

The finale, Bobby Troupe's "Route 66," was a powerhouse to top all shows. The whole group participated -- Armen on piano, Ratzon on bass, Matt on drums, Datevik with scat, Kim in her own vocal style, and the two trumpeters, Barry and John. Anyone who missed this show really missed something unique and spectacular -- it has to be one of the great all-time productions in the Armenian community. George Maksian outdoes himself every time, and when we just about think that nothing can compare with the last show -- the next one does.

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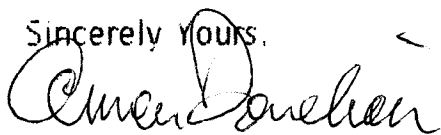
Thursday, November 11, 1993

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate  
Armenian Diocese  
630 Second Avenue  
New York, NY 10016

Dear Archbishop Barsamian.

Please accept my sincere apologies for any offense You felt as a result of my letter to You. By opening my heart to You, I had hoped to express my gratitude for the opportunity to serve the Armenian community through my chosen artistic field. I hope that You and the Armenian Community were not displeased by the nature of the musical offering we presented. Thank you.

Sincerely Yours,



Armen Donelian





DIocese OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA  
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Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate



November 10, 1993

Mr. Armen Donelian  
37 Overlook Avenue  
West Orange, NJ 07052

Dear Armen:

Thank you for your note of November 6; it was a pleasure to hear from you. The response to the "All That Jazz" performance has been unanimously positive and enthusiastic. I feel that I should be offering my gratitude to you for bringing such an exciting and innovative evening of music to our church community.

Unfortunately, the weekend of the performance was a terribly busy one which took me out of New York. I admit I was genuinely disappointed to miss the performance, in part because I have enjoyed all of George Maksian's efforts in the "Live at the Diocese" series, but mostly because I was looking forward to hearing the music itself. You are correct that one does not usually associate "Armenianness" with jazz; but then again the Church, of all institutions, is based on the principle that above and beyond our particular ethnic or cultural origins, there is a universal human nature which can appreciate beauty, goodness, and truth in whatever form they are expressed.

While I personally have always loved all of the particular expressions of our Armenian identity, I believe that our culture is really at its best when it appeals to these human principles. For this reason, I feel that our heritage and national experience have something valuable to say not just to ethnic Armenians, but to people in general. This is something that we Armenians can be genuinely proud of.

In any event, thank you again for your wonderful performance and your kind letter. I appreciate your theological reflections on your attraction to jazz, and truly admire your desire to offer "old wine" in a new bottle--or in "new wineskins" as Christ said.

I look forward to another opportunity to hear your music and to speak with you in person.

May God bless you and your talent, and give you a healthy long life.

With prayers,

*Abp. K. Barsamian*

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian  
Primate



from the office of the  
**Diocese of the Armenian Church of America**

630 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, tel: (212) 686-0710

# news!

Contact: Christopher H. Zakian  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## AN EVENING OF MUSICAL WIZARDRY

### "All That Jazz" Shines as the Latest Star in the Live...At the Diocese Constellation

By Helen L. Baronian

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—11/8/93



# ARMEN DONELIAN

11/6/93

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian  
Armenian Diocese  
630 Second Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10016

Dear Father Barsamian,

God bless you and keep you in good health  
and spirits!

This is just a short note to say "thank you"  
for the opportunity to perform in the "Live at  
the Diocese" series last night. I have  
appeared at many functions over the years at  
the Diocese, but surely none was more  
personally joyful and rewarding than this.

My whole life (now almost 43 years) has  
been devoted to music, and particularly  
jazz, which is obviously not idiomatic to  
Armenian culture, language or religion.  
Therefore, I salute your openness and  
inclusiveness to agree to a jazz performance  
at the Diocese.

(over)

As an American of Armenian descent, I have grown up with both cultures, and it has taken me many years to feel comfortable with my dual identity. I have been alternately proud and ashamed of my ethnicity. Music has been a vehicle for discovering who I am, which is the sum total of all the influences - Armenian, American, European, African, Asian, past, present - and of accepting what I discover through that process. What I have discovered is that there is something universal which transcends all divisions of race, creed, culture and sex, all it love, light, spirit, God, Buddha, Brahma, or whatever - my purpose, it seems to me, is to be a messenger of this universal love through the medium of music. That is why when people ask me, why do I play "jazz"? , I try to make them understand that the music I play is much deeper than the style. Much as the bottle is only the container for the wine inside, jazz is the container for the music I play.

Thank you once more for your graciousness,

Sincerely,  
Armen Dowler



from the office the  
Diocese of the Armenian Church of America

630 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, tel: (212) 686-0710

# news:

Contact: Christopher H. Zakian  
(212) 686-0710

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## ARA BERBERIAN PROVIDES AN "ENCHANTED EVENING" OF MUSIC AND TALK DURING NIGHT AT THE OPERA

Autumn Season Premier of Live...At the Diocese Features  
Stellar Performances by Established and Rising Stars

By Brunelle Arakelian

A capacity crowd enjoyed a delightful evening of music and chat on the evening of October 22 at the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America. "A Night at the Opera—Part 2" was the premier outing for the fall season of the Live...At the Diocese series, which combines musical performance by major and rising talents with informal "backstage" interviews—sort of an Armenian version of the Johnny Carson show.

This latest offering—the sequel to an Opera Night which debuted last spring—was an absolutely glorious bit of showmanship, featuring a major Armenian-American talent, Ara Berberian. The evening's host was Loren Toolajian, formerly of WQXR radio and an accomplished musician himself, who brought not only warmth and humor but also tremendous knowledge and personal insight into his role as interviewer. Granted my experience of Armenian events is limited, but the Live...At the Diocese shows mark the first time that I have ever seen Mr. Toolajian's considerable talents; the series producer, George Maksian, certainly made a shrewd "discovery" when he asked Mr. Toolajian to be the ringmaster of these programs.

Of course, the highlight of the evening was the music, and we were treated to a feast of operatic and lighter fair. The opening piece was a dramatic scene from classic Armenian opera "Anoush." Baritone Alexander Vartanian, of the Yerevan State Opera, and coloratura soprano Anoosh Barclay performed in full costume a scene between a tragic young woman and her humiliated and murderous brother, which was reminiscent of the climax of "West Side Story." Maria Chil-Gevorkian accompanied on piano.

Later, the two returned separately to give solo performances. Mr. Vartanian (who with an appearance in the previous Opera Night show is quickly becoming a Live...At the Diocese regular) sang an aria from Rachmaninov's "Aleko," and finished with "Horavel" by Gomidas Vartabed.

—more—

Ms. Barclay touchingly sang Puccini's "O Mio Babbino Caro" as well as "Anoush Karoon." Ms. Barclay's performances showed real stage presence, and her ladylike reserve in her interview segment was just charming. How wonderful to see such a budding Armenian talent in the early stages of such a promising career!

One artist who had been scheduled to perform—Maro Partamian—unfortunately was under the weather, and unable to take part in "A Night at the Opera, Part 2." Happily, I've been assured that her lovely voice will be featured in some forthcoming Live...At the Diocese effort.

The evening also featured a dynamic young voice from the Juilliard Opera Center, Curt Peterson. Looking every bit the youthful tenor in his roguish goatee, Mr. Peterson mesmerized the crowd with "Una Furtiva Lagrima" from Donizetti's "L'Elisir d'Amore," and followed it up with a spirited rendition of "Maria" from "West Side Story." As an encore, he sang "En Mes Amis" from Donizetti's "Daughter of the Regiment." (Incidentally, Mr. Peterson's "Armenian connection" for this performance is that he is a colleague of Ara Berberian, the two having appeared together this past summer in the Colorado State Opera Company production of "The Barber of Seville.")

Naturally, the "main event" for the night was the appearance by Ara Berberian himself, the great bass from the Metropolitan Opera. Needless to say, Mr. Berberian's selections for the evening were sheer magic. He sang a wonderfully comic "La Calunnia" from "The Barber of Seville," then switched gears to Broadway and did what must be the definitive version of "Some Enchanted Evening" from "South Pacific." And when he lent that rich, melodious voice to Roubenian's "Oorenie" ("The Willow Tree"), Mr. Berberian brought the house down. Accompanying on piano, Gayana Avakian brought grace and precision to an already outstanding performance.

What came as a complete surprise to me, however, were Mr. Berberian's segments in the interview seat. Ara Berberian is an imposing figure of a man—he must be at least 6'4"—and with that powerful singing voice, he can be quite intimidating. The interview segments gave us a glimpse of the inner man—warm, humorous, a true gentleman, filled with gratitude and love for his parents, his family, his people, and the great operatic heritage.

This is precisely what sets the Live...At the Diocese shows apart from the run-of-the-mill Armenian arts programs: after each of the Live productions, I go home feeling like I've received some small insight into the personality of a great artist like Ara Berberian. It's almost like being a guest at an intimate dinner party, where one can eavesdrop on witty conversations and show-business stories. But for the Live shows, I would never have the opportunity to be a part of such things, and as a young Armenian I appreciate the chance to get a closer look at some of our more famous personalities.

A special tip-of-the-hat must go to the technical aspect of the production, which perfectly complemented the performances and maintained their high level of professionalism. During last spring's Live...At the Diocese shows, I noticed some minor technical glitches—understandable in such a complex undertaking, but distracting nonetheless. The bugs seem to be worked out, however, because this time out the sound and lighting were smooth as silk. A man with a headset prowling about the back of the auditorium was pointed out to me as the director of the show, Mr. Alex Alikanyan, who coordinated everything to perfection. It was a total theatrical experience, and the whole package was first-rate.

Lest I forget, a round of applause is due to the *force majeure* of Live...At the Diocese, Mr. George Maksian. Anyone who has met George (and that's practically everybody) knows how infectious his enthusiasm can be. In this project, he's really gone over the top, and his love of the stars and the people in the audience is evident in every minute of every production.

Finally, bravo to the Diocese, for utilizing the enviable space of the Kavookjian Auditorium in such a clever and wonderful way. The St. Vartan Cathedral complex is really the jewel of the American-Armenian community—easily our greatest achievement as a group within American society. It should be the showplace for all that is best in our small-but-accomplished community, and it's great to see this resource used to its fullest. I detected a gleam in Archbishop Barsamian's eye at the close of this marvelous effort, and it is great to see the Cathedral complex serving as a vibrant and living part of not only our Armenian community but of New York City in general.

"A Night at the Opera, Part 2" was the first of three programs to be presented this fall on the season's Live...At the Diocese series, and no one will want to miss the remainder of the season. The second presentation on Friday, November 5, will be "All That Jazz," featuring the great jazz pianist-composer Armen Donelian, along with trumpet players Barry Danielian and John Walsh, and vocalists Datevik Hovanesian and Kim Nazarian. (This ought to be a terrific show for young people—the producers are even offering discount tickets.) "Christmas With Anita Darian and Friends" will ring down the curtain for the fall season on Friday, December 10.

—10/25/93

# DAILY NEWS

NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

Wednesday, October 20, 1993

EXTRA

## **HOT STUFF**

**'LIVE ... AT THE DIOCESE' KICKS OFF ITS** fall season with "A Night at the Opera, Part 2," which will play Friday at 8 p.m. at 630 Second Ave. Sponsored by the Armenian Church of America, the show will feature famed Metropolitan Opera basso Ara Berberian. Other singers will include Maro Partamian and Anoush Barclay. Future evenings will include jazz pianist/composer Armen Donelian (Nov. 5) and Broadway performer Anita Darian (Dec. 10). Tix are \$25. (212) 686-0710.



DIOCESSE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA  
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Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate



October 15, 1993

Mr. & Mrs. Edward Peters  
22 Hillcrest Drive  
Great Neck, NY 11021

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Peters:

I wanted to add my wholehearted thank you for your donation to the "Night at the Diocese" program. The meal and fellowship was very enjoyable. Also, thank you for your beautiful gift which I will keep and use as a sign of our friendship.

Your dedication to the work of the Church and to Armenians is one of the finest examples of Christian stewardship I know. Your contribution of \$19,500 will provide the Armenian community with a memorable night of entertainment that will long be remembered.

Thank you again and God bless you and your loved ones.

With prayers,

*Abp. K. Barsamian*

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian  
Primate



from the office of the

**Diocese of the Armenian Church of America**

630 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, tel: (212) 686-0710

# news:

Contact: Christopher H. Zakian  
(212) 686-0710

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## LIVE...AT THE DIOCESE FALL SEASON REVS UP WITH THREE ALL-NEW PRODUCTIONS

**Opera Virtuoso Ara Berberian, Jazz-great Armen Donelian, and Broadway Showstopper Anita Darian are Headliners in Talk-Variety Shows**

"I cried! I laughed! I haven't had such a good time in years!" So said Arthur Schwartz, the noted food critic who is heard on WOR-Radio and whose twice-weekly restaurant column appears in the New York Daily News and other papers around the country.

Mr. Schwartz was referring to one of the Live...At the Diocese shows he recently attended at the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America. The live talk-variety series was launched last May with two pilot programs, "A Night at the Opera" and "A Little 'Lite' Music," which were presented as part of the Diocese's 25th anniversary celebration.

Now, Live...At the Diocese is returning this fall with three all-new productions, while still retaining its original, popular intimate talk-show format.

The opening show will be "A Night at the Opera II," which will be presented on Friday, October 22, at 8 p.m. Heading the cast will be the renowned Metropolitan Opera basso Ara Berberian.

He will be joined on the program by contralto Maro Partamian, lyric coloratura soprano Anoosh Barclay, lyric tenor Curt Peterson and baritone Alexander Vartanian.

Mr. Berberian will introduce Mr. Peterson. Both starred this past summer in a highly-praised production of "The Barber of Seville" in Colorado. Mr. Peterson is presently a Young Artist at the prestigious Juilliard Opera Center. Mr. Berberian is in his 16th consecutive season with the Metropolitan Opera. Another highlight of the program will feature Ms. Barclay and Mr. Vartanian in a poignant scene from the classic Armenian opera, Anoush, which tells the "Romeo and Juliet" story of two star-crossed young lovers.

Ms. Barclay graduated with a master's degree from the Manhattan School of Music, and has studied master classes with the famed Mignon

—more—



Dunn and Birgit Nilsson. Mr. Vartanian is a former star of the Yerevan State Opera in Armenia and has starred in three Armenian operatic movies. Ms. Partamian has performed in concert halls worldwide and was the grand prize winner in the first Aram Khachaturian Voice Competition in 1980.

The season's second presentation will be "All That Jazz," on Friday, November 5, at 8 p.m. This will feature the great jazz pianist-composer Armen Donelian and a host of other jazz musicians.

Included will be trumpeters Barry Danielian and John Walsh and vocalists Datevik Hovanesian and Kim Nazarian. Datevik was known as "The First Lady of Jazz" in the former Soviet Union; Ms. Nazarian is a member of the popular musical group, New York Voices.

George Avakian, who headed the pop albums department of Columbia Records for many years and is a noted jazz authority, will be a special guest.

Both "A Night at the Opera II" and "All That Jazz" will be hosted by Loren Toolajian, the former program director and on-air personality of WQXR, the classical music station owned by The New York Times. Mr. Toolajian now heads his own music production company called Hum This Music.

The fall season's final show will be "Christmas With Anita Darian & Friends," which will be showcased Friday, December 10, at 8 p.m. The show will have an intimate Christmas setting, with Ms Darian tossing a festive party for some of her friends.

Joining Ms. Darian on the program will be her longtime Broadway stage colleagues, singers Harry and Maggie Goz, and two of their three children, who are also stage performers. Young Michael Goz is a member of the cast of the smash hit Broadway musical, Guys and Dolls. In addition, the program will feature George Mgrdichian, the famed oud virtuoso; and radio personality Mark Simone, who has been heard filling-in for various talk show hosts on WABC-Radio.

Metropolitan Opera soprano Lucine Amara, a longtime friend of Ms. Darian's, will be a special guest star. There also will be several surprises that Anita won't let out of the bag until showtime.

All three programs will be held at the Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium in the Diocesan Complex, 630 Second Avenue, New York City. Tickets for any one performance are \$25; or you can take advantage of the special rate of \$65 for tickets to all three shows. Tickets are available by mail or at the Diocesan Complex and, if available, at the door up until a half-hour before showtime. But the Live...At the Diocese shows sell out quickly, so eager ticket-buyers should act quickly to ensure their place. Call (212) 686-0710 for more information.

june 22, 1993

Dear Surpazan:

Harry thought I should pass  
this on to you, as well.

Please excuse the bad typing. I  
transcribed it myself.

Arthur Schwartz is the rest-  
aurant critic for the Daily News. We  
take our publicity from where<sup>ever</sup> we  
can get it.

Best regards

*George*  
George

P.M. I miss being on the ground floor.

*Also enclosed is copy of letter  
from Mr. Manosian.*

Following is a transcript from the Arthur Schwartz radio show broadcast over WOR Friday, May ~~21~~<sup>21</sup> 1993 (12:15-1 p.m.), the day after "A Little Lite Music" ~~premiered at the Diocese~~ premiered at the Diocese:

"I had the most entertaining evening last night, and it wasn't even in a restaurant. I went to a performance ~~called~~<sup>a</sup> called Live at the Diocese--the Diocese being the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America<sup>?</sup> at St. Vartan's Cathedral on Second Ave. You must know that building. It's really <sup>a</sup> hands ~~ome~~<sup>ome</sup> <sup>building</sup> with a peaked gold dome.

"Well, Kay Armen, whom you all must know because she calls the show all the time, And I talk to her all the time. She was one of the big attractions. Also, Anita Darian, who is a wonderful, wonderful mezzo soprano and had a very serious career. She was on Broadway; she did the Bell Telephone Hour, and I'm sure you remember her from TV in the 50s and early 60s. She still has a wonderful voice. But, even better than her voice, she is an incredible actress. She has incredible taste in music. She sang wonderful songs that made me cry, as did Harry Goz and Maggie Goz. Harry is a very well-known character actor. In fact, they showed some clips of him performing <sup>on</sup> on various TV series early in the evening.

"But <sup>?</sup> then Harry and Maggie got up first, and sang excerpts from ~~FIDDLER ON THE~~ Fiddler on the Roof. They starred in Fiddler on the Roof on Broadway for a long time--over 1,000 performances, and then went on the road with it all over the place, playing Teyve and Golda. They made me cry, too.

(more)

Schwartz----2

"And then there was a tribute to Michael Kemoyan, the very famous actor, who also did many Broadway shows, as well as movies ~~and~~ and TV, and finally my friend Kay, who I have never seen look more glamorous than last night. She came out in this incredible slinky black and brown gown with a ~~turquoise~~ <sup>turquoise</sup> boa, which she ~~me~~ explained she stole from Phyllis Diller when she did a show <sup>with</sup> her ~~once~~. Kay tells a lots of stories about her Armenian mother and show she fractured <sup>s</sup> the language. She calls Phyllis Diller, ~~Phyllis Diller~~ <sup>is</sup> Phyllis Diller all the time. So, she wore Phyllis Diller's boa and Kay had everyone in stitches. I mean people were nearly on the floor. She is one of the funniest raconteurs in the world. She was very, very popular on the talk show circuit, and had a radio show for a long time. I don't give Kay enough time on the air. I think we're going to have to get into the studio to keep us in stitches for 45 minutes.

"And then after she told all these wonderful stories about Frank Sinatra, Ed Sullivan and her mother. Unfortunately, some of them had punch lines in Armenian. So, I felt like I was up in the Catskills when I was a kid and the comics would tell these great jokes in English and then the punch line <sup>s</sup> would be in Yiddish.

"Kay is sort~~a~~ of an adopted Jew, too. As she says, Armenians are so much like Jews. Anyway, Kay was ~~just~~ <sup>ju</sup>st incredible. Kay deli~~ver~~vers a song like nobody else, makes it look totally effortless. She was a sensation! It was really a <sup>g</sup>reat evening.

more)

schwartz----3

"It was to benefit the Archdiocese, to benefit the Cathedral of St. Vartan. And it was all produced by my old friend, George Maksian, who was the radio and television columnist for the Daily News for centuries. George won't want to hear that. But everyone was in great, great gratitude to George for putting this together.

"As I said, all this talent ~~was~~<sup>is</sup> in our own local Armenian community, and it took George to put it all together and to put it up on the stage. It was a thrilling evening.

##



Alex Manoogian  
32 WINTHROP PLACE  
GROSBE POINTE FARMS, MICH. 48238

June 1, 1993

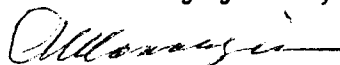
Mr. George Maksian  
Diocese of the Armenian  
Church of America  
630 Second Ave.  
New York, NY 10016-4885

Dear Mr. Maksian,

The sudden loss of my dear wife Marie left my entire family in deep grief. During this sad period in my life, my family and I were consoled by the sincere words and deeds of many relatives, friends and colleagues who attended the funeral services, sent flowers or donations in lieu of flowers, sympathy cards, condolence messages, or paid personal visits and warmed our hearts when we needed most to share our sorrow.

My family joins me in extending to you our sincere thanks for sharing our grief at the time of our bereavement.

Sincerely yours,



A. Manoogian

## Noted Baritone Alexander Vartanian Added to Stellar Lineup of "A Night at the Opera" Dual Premier of "Live...at the Diocese Series Expected to be a Sellout

NEW YORK, NY - Alexander Vartanian, a leading baritone soloist with the Yerevan State Opera Company in Armenia, has been added to the starring cast of "A Night at the Opera," the first of a dual premier in the Live...At the Diocese series, to be presented under the auspices of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

Mr. Vartanian, 36, is visiting this country for the first time, and has agreed to make his U.S. singing debut on the program. "A Night at the Opera" will be performed Friday, May 7, at 8 p.m., at the Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium, 630 Second Avenue, at the 2nd Avenue entrance (near 35th Street).

The program is expected to be a sellout. To date, more than 75% of the tickets have been sold. Donation is \$20. Some tickets are still available and may be secured at the Diocesan headquarters at the same address. For more information about tickets and their availability, call (212)686-0710.

Mr. Vartanian will join Metropolitan Opera stars Lucine Amara, Lili Chookasian and Vahan Khanzadian. Loren Toolajian, the former program director and on-air personality of WQXR-FM, the New York Times classical music station, will be the host.

Mr. Khanzadian will open the show, and will talk about his January debut at the Met in the lead role of Gustav in "A Masked Ball." Then, Mr. Toolajian will introduce Miss Chookasian, who will have a surprise for the audience.

This will be followed by Mr. Vartanian. He will sing two Armenian arias, and if the audience clamors enough, may even sing a Neapolitan song or two. "I sing all the popular Italian love songs," said Mr. Vartanian in a recent interview with George Maksian, the producer of the Live...At the Diocese series. "I have also



ALEXANDER VARTANIAN

performed in all the classic operas: *La Boheme*, *Carmen*, *Madame Butterfly*, and others -- most of the time in Russian."

The handsome young baritone has also starred in the Armenian film versions of the classic operas, *Anoush*, *Arshag* and *Almast*, playing the lead role in all three. He has won numerous awards, including three grand prizes in international competitions in Armenia and the former Soviet Union.

He also has made several concert appearances, many with his wife, Zovina Mnazakian, who is a singer, pianist and concertmaster of the Yerevan State Opera. The Vartanians have two children, Alexander, 11, and Vahagn, 7, who also have appeared in children's roles in several operas in Armenia.

"My dream is to sing at the Met one day," said Mr. Vartanian. "That's every singer's dream. And I pray my dream will come true."

Mr. Vartanian, who has been described as "the new Mario Lanza," graduated from the Armenian Music Conservatory in Armenia in 1985, and

has been with the Yerevan State Opera ever since. His teacher was the renowned Tat-evik Sazandarian.

The singer's father is now deceased, and his mother resides in Yerevan, Armenia. Mr. Vartanian has two older sisters and an older brother, all of whom are married and have children of their own.

"My father was a school teacher," noted Mr. Vartanian in his native Armenian tongue. "But he was also interested in music. He had a great, booming voice, and played the tar (an ancient string instrument)." Mr. Vartanian's mother also was a singer. "Music runs in the family," said Mr. Vartanian. "It's in our veins."

"A Night at the Opera" is the first of two programs in the Live...At the Diocese series. The second program -- "A Little 'Lite' Music" -- featuring Kay Armen, Anita Darian, Harry and Maggie Goz and Michael Kermoyan, will be performed Thursday, May 20, at 8 p.m., at Kavookjian Auditorium. Tickets are \$20.

### Spring Dance for Mr. & Mrs. Club

By Malvina Stepanian

NEW YORK, NY - On Saturday evening, May 15, in the colorfully decorated John Pashalian Hall of St. Illuminator's Armenian Cathedral, 221 East 27th Street, here, the Mr. & Mrs. Club, an active auxiliary of the Cathedral, will sponsor their Annual Spring Dance. Music, for your dancing and listening pleasure, by the talented and international entertainer "Moshe," with his unusual talent in playing Armenian, Middle Eastern and melodies of many languages, will have you hand clapping, toe tapping and enjoying the evening to the fullest.

A sumptuous and delectable assortment of "mezzas" and deserts, prepared by the ladies of the Mr. & Mrs. Club, will be served for the enjoyment of our guests.

The winter snows have gone, spring has sprung and so do join us for an evening of friends having fun. The date is May 15, at 9:00 p.m. til ????. The cost is \$20.00 per person. Table reservations may be made by phoning Jack Odian after 7:00 p.m. at (718)736-3279 or Sonny Bonjuklian, (201)307-0035.

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## Prelacy Mother's Day Luncheon & Fashion Show Expects Large Turnout

NEW YORK, NY - Those who haven't made their reservations for the annual Mother's Day Luncheon and Fashion Show sponsored by the Prelacy Ladies' Guild yet, better not delay. According to Guild members, a sell-out audience is expected at the event which will take place Tuesday, May 4, at The Plaza, Fifth Avenue at 59th Street, here. The reception begins at 11:30 a.m. in the Baroque Room with luncheon served at 12:30 in the Grand Ballroom.

Mrs. Siroon Hovannisian from Fresno, California will be honored as the Mother of the Year, surrounded by many members of her family from coast to coast. Mrs. Hovannisian is the mother of four sons, 14 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren. One son, Richard, is the well-known historian, writer and lecturer at the University of California, Los Angeles. A grandson, Raffi, served as the first Foreign Minister of the new Armenian Republic.

Fashions by Gitobet Couture will be featured, as well as shoes and accessories by Georgio's and hair by Vidal Sassoon.

Ticket donation is \$60 per person. For information contact the Prelacy (212)689-7810.

## St. John's University Forms Armenian Law Students Association

JAMAICA, NY - Although law students of Armenian descent have conducted informal activities at the St. John's University School of Law for many years, the Armenian Law Students Association (ALSA) began in earnest in Fall 1992 with its official recognition and funding by the School's Students Bar Association.

Membership currently consists of a small nucleus of energetic students, but ALSA is gaining momentum and expects to conduct even more activities in the future. ALSA projects to date have included letter-writing campaigns with respect to the Azeri/Turkish blockade of Armenia, sponsorship of on-campus film presentations relative to Armenian

affairs, and fund-raising for relief efforts in Armenia.

During the 1992-93 academic year, Talar Iskanoglu served as Treasurer and Chris Parnagian served as President. Recently, Haig Najarian and Pete Haytaian were elected to succeed Talar and Chris, respectively, for the 1993-94 academic year. Other ALSA members include David Bagdasarian, Shant Chalian, and John Tutunjian. School of Law Assistant Dean, and Registrar Mary Selvinazian is the ALSA Advisor.

For information about the St. John's School of Law in general or ALSA in particular, please contact Chris Parnagian at (718)990-6643.

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(212)643-7273 or Fax/mail resumes to (212)643-7201.  
Korban International Investment Corp.  
6 W. 32nd St., New York, NY 10001  
Attention: Isaac

## Kirikian Armenian School of St. Thomas Plans Benefit Art Auction

By Madlen E. Setian  
TENAFLY, NJ - An exciting Art Auction is being planned to benefit the Kirikian Armenian School of St. Thomas Armenian Church. It will be held on Friday evening, June 4, at Mekhjian Atrium and Saddle Hall of the church here.

The recently formed benefit Art Auction Committee consists of mothers of students who attend the school. They include Hersik Allaverdian, Lucienne Aynilian, Rima Amirsaleh, Vesna Markarian, Anush Nazarian and this writer.

The committee has already begun working diligently to plan a delightful and glamor-

ous evening for this occasion. The event will include a champagne reception with hors d'oeuvres, musical entertainment and, of course, an exhibition of paintings and works of art which will be auctioned to benefit the Kirikian Armenian School. The auction will include works executed by prominent contemporary Armenian artists.

So whether a serious art collector or simply a person intent on browsing, interested supporters of the school are invited to set the date aside on their calendar. Additional details about the Benefit Art Auction will be forthcoming in subsequent articles.

MARTIN BOOKSPAN  
155 West 68th Street  
Suite 1414  
New York, N. Y. 10023

Mr. George Maksian  
Diocese of the Armenian Church  
630 Second Avenue  
New York, N. Y. 10016

May 12, 1993

Dear George:

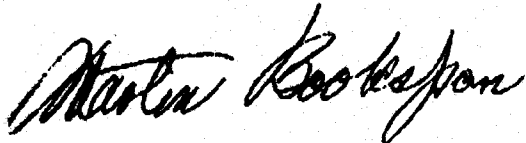
You organized one TERRIFIC evening! Live... At the Diocese was glorious and joyful, with a contagious sense of community and camaraderie.

The evening will live long in our memories. Janet and I are delighted you were gracious enough to invite us--we look forward to more!

Seeing you again after a long hiatus was an added plus!

With all best wishes,

Yours,



Martin Bookspan



870 U.N. Plaza 18-D  
New York NY 10017-1819  
May 8 1993

Dear George:

I couldn't find you after last night's "Night at the Opera - live at the Diocese," — you must have been very busy, like them — so I am writing to thank you for having me there.

I enjoyed it all — the music, the interviews, and the people. Many of those attending spoke to me in the most generous way.

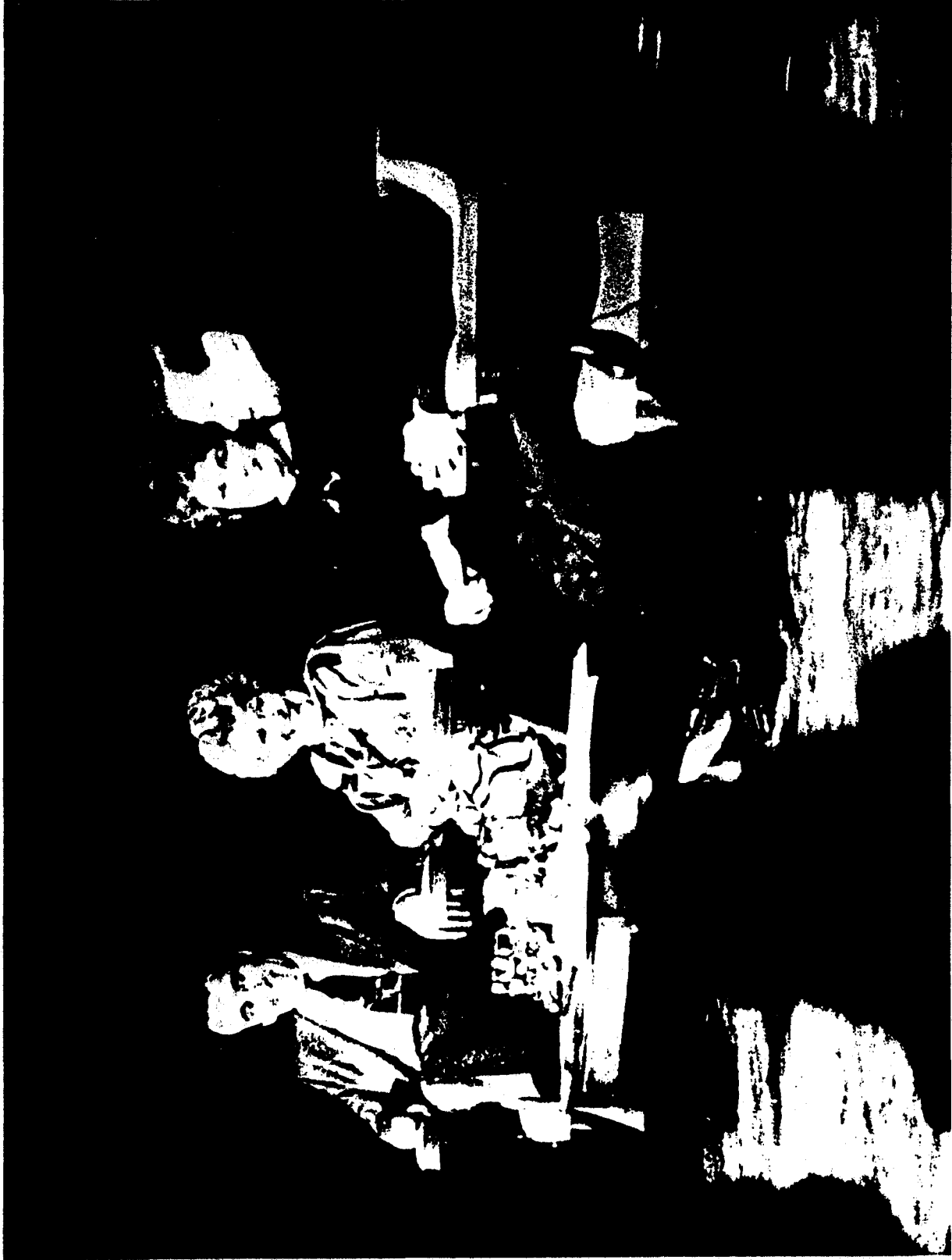
You are to be congratulated on a splendid achievement, which will surely be the first of many.

There was another source of pleasure — seeing you again.

All the best, and once more — thanks.

Sincerely,

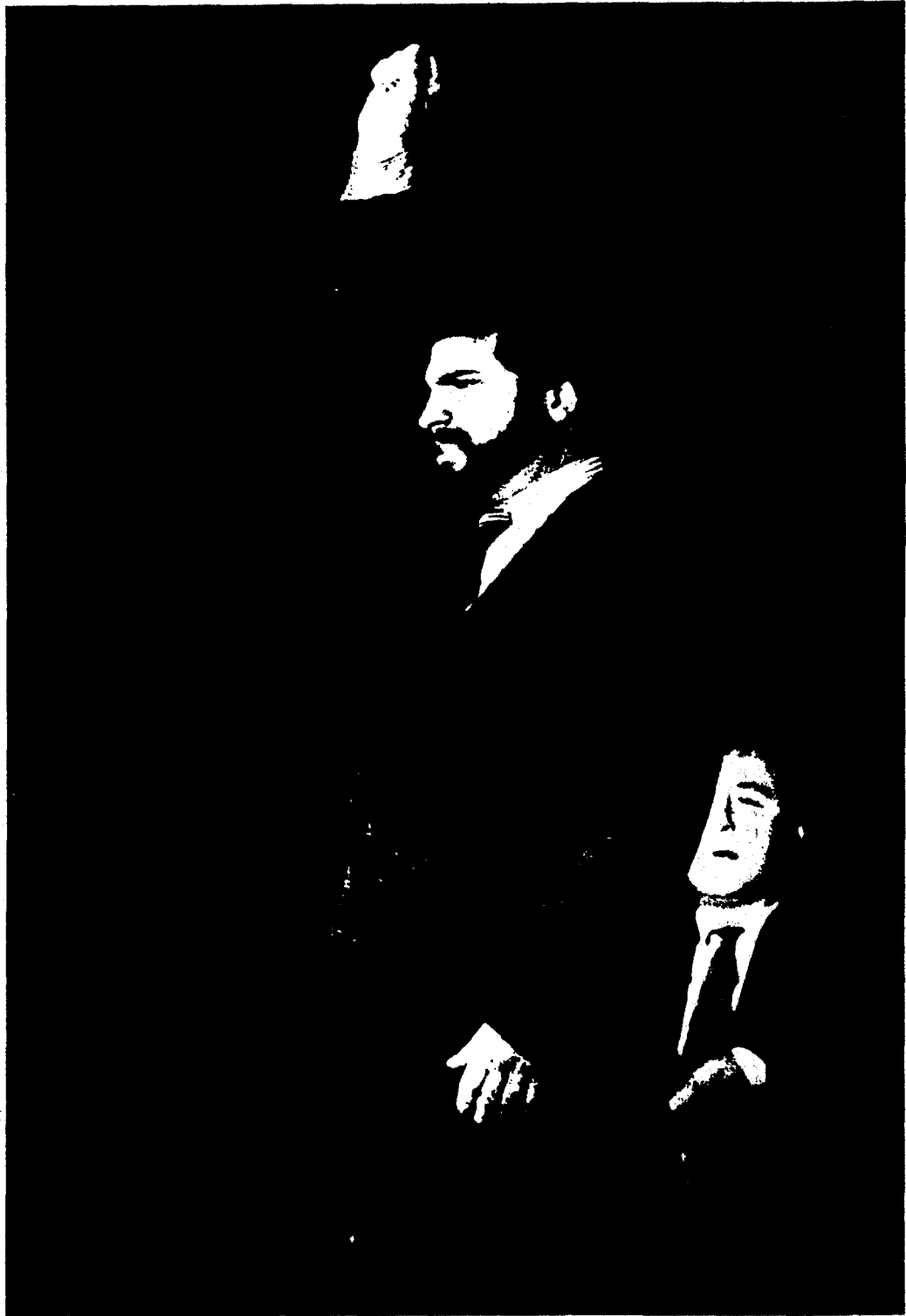
Ed Newman



3 met Opera & John Toolafian  
Stars



Father  
Charles Archbishop  
Eduin Newman  
Marten  
Books PAW



Alexander Vartanian



from the office of the

**Diocese of the Armenian Church of America**

630 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, tel: (212) 686-0710

# news:

Contact: Christopher H. Zakian  
(212) 686-0710

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ANOTHER FIRST AT THE DIOCESE:  
"A NIGHT AT THE OPERA" KICKS OFF LIVE...AT THE DIOCESE  
TALK AND ENTERTAINMENT SHOW**

By Helen L. Baronian

George Maksian, the producer of Live...At the Diocese, has pulled off the coup of the decade. On Friday evening, May 7, 1993, he presented the first talk and entertainment show, "A Night At the Opera," starring Lucine Amara, Lili Chookasian and Vahan Khanzadian, three lambent artists of the opera stage, in conjunction with the 25th Anniversary of the St. Vartan Cathedral.

In attendance, beside a capacity audience, were luminaries of the media—Edwin Newman, NBC correspondent-commentator- emeritus and an ardent opera buff; Martin Bookspan, the voice of the New York Philharmornic and Live at Lincoln Center; Bill Zakariasen, noted classical music critic; and all the stars appearing on the May 20th show, A Little Lite Music: Kay Armen, Anita Darian, Harry and Maggie Goz, and Michael Kermoyan.

George's concept has produced a sparkling talk show *cum* entertainment with several surprises. In addition to hearing anecdotes of behind-the-scenes activities at the Met, that glorious opera house that showcases great talent, the audience was treated to a surprise rendition by Lili Chookasian of the 10th century version of "Groong," which brought her a standing ovation.

Lucine Amara, always the consummate artist, sang four songs: "O Del Mion Amato Ben" by Daunady, Marietta's Lied from Die Tote Stade by Erich Korngold, the aria "Vissi d'Arte" from Puccini's Tosca, and "Non ti Scordar di Me" by Ernesto de Curtis, which brought the house down.

Ed Setrakian, the director, welcomed the audience to Live...At the Diocese. He noted that it was George Maksian's dream to bring together Armenian-Americans to enjoy a series of multicultural events. He presented Loren Toolajian, the interviewer and moderator of the program. Loren brings a wealth of information and background to his work. He was a serious student of music, and has been associated with opera, jazz, pop music and all

—more—

the classics. He grew up in a musical home—his father, the late Vahan Toolajian, was a classical singer, and his cousin, Michael Kermoyan, is no stranger to the performing arts.

Loren, during the late 1980's was the youngest executive ever to serve as program director for New York's premier classical music station, WQXR, which is owned by the New York Times. He headed his own interview show on Saturdays and Sundays. Today, Mr. Toolajian has his own music production company called Hum This Music, which is based in the Graybar Building in New York City.

Loren noted that he loved opera and cherishes the singers who are the most important part of any opera production. His first guest, Vahan Khanzadian, made his debut rather late in this past January's Metropolitan Opera production of Un Ballo in Maschera as Gustav.

Mr. Khanzadian noted that he had had a promising career as a singer, but left it to teach music, and finally after a 10-year interval, came back to his first love. He noted that it was after he sat in for Michael Kermoyan to work with Diana Der Hovanessian, that he determined to find his voice at the Met. He called the Met and asked for an interview, and shortly after that he was called in to sign a contract. The rest is history.

Lili Chookasian, charming and lovely as ever, was greeted with cheers and bravas as she entered the stage for her interview with Mr. Toolajian. Dressed in beautiful blue dress with a yellow and blue scarf, yellow stockings and shoes, she was ever the picture of the confident, successful opera star. This gracious lady told the audience that she is now exactly where she wants to be in life. She is a professor at Yale University, teaching master classes, and is learning from her experience as well.

She said she had no trouble making the transition from performing artist to teach, and has loved every moment. She told the audience how Thomas Schippers searched to find her after hearing a tape recording of her voice, and delighted them with stories about Richard Yardumian's Mass which was perfect for her voice, as well as tales about Richard Tucker, Franco Corelli, and Eileen Farrell, as well as the renowned Rudolf Bing. Lili's opera debut was, surprisingly, in Little Rock, Arkansas, where she sang the role of Analgesa in Norma.

But Lili had two surprises for the audience. She had not been scheduled to sing, but sang the 10th century early version of "Groong," bringing many a tear and tremendous ovation from the house. Her second surprise was her student, Kimako Trotman, a remarkable 19-year-old bass-baritone who plays both the piano and the cello and has perfect pitch and this year was chosen to join the ranks of the Whiffenpoofs, Yale's chorus which

sings all over the world. He sang "Evening Star" from Wagner's Tannhauser, and an aria from the Marriage of Figaro.

Mr. Trotman is from Brooklyn and attended the Fiorello H. LaGuardian High School of Music and the Performing Arts. He also sang "Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho" as an encore, which prompted an immediate comparison to the great Paul Robeson. Ms. Chookasian then remarked that she had been inducted into the Opera Singers' Hall of Fame, and then sang, *a cappella*, the song which she calls her mainstay, "Groong."

Another surprise of the evening was a performance by the fantastic Alexander Vartanian, a 36-year-old baritone from the Yerevan State Opera. Besides being exceedingly handsome, he has been blessed with a powerful, mellifluous voice. He sang two Armenian songs, Arshag's aria, "Oh, My Beautiful," from Arshang II by Tigran Choukhajian, and David's aria, from David Beg by Armen Tigranian. As a special tribute to George Maksian, he sang "O Sole Mio," to the great joy of everyone present. Mr. Vartanian can be heard every Sunday morning at the St. Vartan Cathedral, where he sings with the great Maro Partamian, soprano, and the tenor Philip Der Margosian.

Following this presentation, the fabulous Lucine Amara was introduced. There can be no one quite like Ms. Amara. Her voice has remained superb, which she attributes to hard work and constant practice, and teaching by her coach, Bobbi Tillander. But, of course, all this notwithstanding, if the talent and voice were not there, no amount of intervention could prevail. Ms. Amara is a phenomenon in her own right, bringing the house down with her fantastic renditions.

Having heard her in Tosca with Placido Domingo, I can truly say that her rendition of this aria on Friday night was magnificent and moving. She is indeed, one of the greats of the opera world. She also recounted her wonderful anecdotes about a trip to Alaska in frigid weather, her journeys to Armenia in 1965 and 1991, when she finally got to actually see the magnificent monuments and churches there.

Her story about Rudolf Bing was a real treasure. Mr. Bing had been after her through the years to repeat her role as the Celestial Voice in Don Carlo, but she never would do so. Finally, as he was retiring, he again approached her to sing the role, and Ms. Amara, said, "All right, as long as this is really your last year." Opera Quarterly devoted its entire October 1992 issue to Lucine, such is her fame and talent.

Miss Amara was beautifully gowned in black palazzo pants, with a dramatic and stunning red and black topper. She was every inch the diva. She was accompanied by the excellent Allison Voth at the piano.

As the evening drew to a close, flowers were presented to the stars: Ed Setrakian to Lucine Amara, George Maksian to Lili Chookasian, and Ara Chekmayan to Allison Voth.

The next Live...At the Diocese program is entitled "A Little 'Lite' Music" and will star Kay Armen, Anita Darian, Harry and Maggie Goz and Michael Kermoyan. So remember the date, Thursday, May 20, 1993 at the Diocese of the Armenian Church, 630 Second Avenue, NYC. The guest host on this occasion will be Mark Simone, noted radio personality of the legendary New York pop station WNEW-AM.

Getting back to the opera show, although there were a few glitches with the microphones, the evening was enjoyable and very much worth seeing and hearing. Credit goes to George Maksian, the producer; Ed Setrakian, long-time member of Actors Studio, as director; Alex Aliksanyan, videotaping, advertising and promotion; Ara Chekmayan, videotaping consultant; John Dolbashian, stage manager; Ted Faraone, public relations consultant; Anna Maria Verde, opera consultant; Rose Kasparian, advertising; and A. J. De Florio, makeup. All of these people brought off a "First" in this community, and we all look forward to the future.

—5/11/93



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### TELECOPIER COVER LETTER

TO: DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA

ATTN: ARCHBISHOP KHAJAG BARSAMIAN

FAX #: (212) 779-3558

FROM: DR. PROF. BOBBI TILLANDER

DATE: 10 MAY 1993

TIME: 3:45 P.M.

THIS TRANSMISSION HAS A TOTAL OF 1 PAGES WHICH INCLUDES COVER PAGE.

If there is a problem with this facsimile or if all pages are not received, please call (212) 874-4892.

### MESSAGE OR DESCRIPTION OF ITEMS SENT

Dear Archbishop Barsamian:

The event on Friday evening, May 7, was wonderful. I did miss seeing you, however. I look forward to seeing you on May 14.

Respectfully yours,

Dr. Prof. Bobbi Tillander

Personal Representative/Voice/Drama Teacher for LUCINE AMARA  
 President - TILLANDER ENTERPRISES



# *"A Night at the Opera,"*

GRAND DEBUT OF "LIVE AT THE DIOCESE"

BY FLORENCE AVAKIAN

SPECIAL TO THE ARMENIAN MIRROR-SPECTATOR

NEW YORK---The long-awaited debut of "Live at the Diocese" took place on Friday, May 7, with more than 450 in attendance. Under the auspices of the Diocese of the Armenian Church, and the Primate, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, the unique evening of ~~the Diocese~~, in a talk show format, was produced by George Maksian, and directed by Edward Setrakian.

The evening which was initiated and tirelessly developed by Maksian, a former long-time TV columnist with The New York Daily News, had in attendance several critics of American publications, as well as Martin Bookspan, the well known commentator from the New York Philharmonic, and Edwin Newman, NBC-TV commentator for many years.

Hosted by Loren Toolajain, former program director at WQXR-FM classical music station, and now a free lance music writer, the program featured famous Metropolitan Opera singers Lucine Amara, Lili Chookasian and Vahan Khanzadian. Also on the program were Erevan State Opera baritone Alexander Vartanian, and Kimako Trotman, a highly gifted Yale University student.

Tenor Vahan Khanzadian who made his Metropolitan Opera debut in January, 1993, singing the role of Gustav in Verdi's "Un Ballo in Maschera" (The Masked Ball), has had a professional singing and teaching career since 1968. Currently, a "player" (understudy) for several major roles at the Met, he related that he simply called the Met and asked for an audition. A contract quickly followed. Unfortunately, at this performance, Khanzadian chose not to sing, depriving the audience of his talent.

## THE STAR STILL SHINES BRIGHTLY

Lili Chookasian's debut at the Metropolitan Opera in 1962, launched a remarkable 25-year career with more than 500 appearances in various roles on the Met stage. Inducted into the Opera Hall of Fame, she currently teaches opera, voice and song literature at Yale University.

"I left the operatic and concert stage when I decided I wasn't as good as I could be," she modestly revealed, but her superb acappella rendition of the seldom-heard 10th century Agana Groong belied her statement. The purity, warmth, and velvety beauty of her singing for which she is celebrated, has never faded. And the audience showed its appreciation with a standing ovation.

In a special surprise, Ms. Chookasian presented one of her most talented and accomplished students, Kimako Trotman, a 19-

*End of Her Opera  
Focuses*

with Allison Voth at the piano,

year old pianist, cellist, and singer who hails from Brooklyn, NY. The young bass-baritone, with a commanding presence, thrilled the audience with the "Evening Star" from Wagner's "Tannhauser", the "Non Più An Rai" aria from "The Marriage of Figaro", and the stirring "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho".

Called a "young Paul Robeson", Kimako explained that his Japanese name means mushroom. "My mother who was taking a Japanese course, wanted me to be more than the usual, to excel," he explained disarmingly.

Alexander Vartanian who has sung many leading roles at the Erevan State Opera, as well as starred in the Armenian film versions of "Anoush", "Arshag II", and "Almast", made his American singing debut at this performance. Accompanied by Roy Kelegian at the piano, he delighted the audience with arias from Tigranian's "David Bek", and Choukajian's "Arshag II", followed by a rousing acappella "O Sole Mio", dedicated to George Maksian. His commanding presence and powerful delivery should take him places.

AN AMERICAN SUCCESS STORY

Lucine Amara's career is what singers dream about. Since making her Metropolitan Opera debut in 1950, she has sung in more than 1000 operatic performances, including 40 leading roles, and hundreds of concerts in 22 countries, ~~to her credit~~, in addition to television and radio appearances, and recording contracts. And she still studies twice a week with her voice teacher, Professor Bobbie Tillander to whom Ms. Amara paid tribute for "preserving my voice".

And what a voice she still has. The Grande Dame of Opera, accompanied expertly by Allison Voth, electrified the Friday night audience with Dounady's "O Del Mio Amato Ben", "Marietta's Lied" from Korngold's "Die Tote Stadt", "Vissi d'Arte from Puccini's "Tosca", and the Neapolitan favorite, "Non Tiscordar Di Me". It was obvious why the former Metropolitan General Manager Rudolf Bing, more than two decades ago, praised "the absolute grandness of her artistry".

As bouquets of red roses were presented to the lady performers, the audience responded to the evening of exquisite musical nostalgia and touching reminisces with a standing ovation lasting several minutes. However, the evening's performance was marred by a sound system that kept breaking down, thus preventing half the audience from hearing the interviews. The first requisite for a talk show is making sure that the sound is in top shape. This technical feature should have been tested several times before the performance.

Many attendees expressed disappointment that Vahan Khanzadian chose not to sing. And for this reviewer, more music and less talk would have been ideal, even though the anecdotes were interesting and humorous, especially by Ms Amara and Ms Chookasian. In the end, it is always the music which captivates, and the music on Friday was superb.



from the office of the  
**Diocese of the Armenian Church of America**  
630 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, tel: (212) 686-0710

# NEWS:

Contact: Christopher H. Zakian  
(212) 686-0710

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## **NOTED CLASSICAL MUSIC CRITIC BESTOWS KUDOS ON LIVE...AT THE DIOCESE'S "NIGHT AT THE OPERA"**

By Bill Zakariasen

On Friday, May 7, the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America sponsored "A Night at the Opera" in the Diocese's Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium. Most of the singers were Armenian or Armenian-American; the auditorium was packed, and if the evening was longer on talking than singing, the latter, when spotlighted, proved mainly most enjoyable.

The concert got off to a somewhat puzzling start, however, with tenor Vahan Khanzadian, who, though fresh from a very successful debut earlier this year at the Metropolitan Opera in Un Ballo in Maschera, chose not to sing for reasons apparently known only to himself. This was strange, considering the rave reviews he got (i.e: Opera News said "He delivered huge, ringing tones when needed, and acted engagingly"), and though his narration as to the circumstances of his debut (virtually last minute) was engaging indeed, one wished to hear what the fuss was really about.

Two distinguished Armenian-American veterans of the Met Opera roster, soprano Lucine Amara and contralto Lili Chookasian, were likewise on hand to deliver anecdotes as to their professional and personal lives in opera, but they also managed to warble a bit.

Amara, who still sounds amazingly fine for a woman pushing—whoops!—sang solidly as ever in "Vissi d'arte," "Non ti scordar di me," Donaudy's "O del mio amato ben," and especially one of her specialties, the Lute Song from Korngold's Die Tote Stadt.

Chookasian tantalized the crowd with but one number, probably to underline the fact that she has retired from active singing to teach voice at Yale University. The number, though, was a real treat—an unaccompanied Armenian song, "Groong" (The Crane), delivered with such creamy tones and total emotional commitment as to make it worth the entire evening.

Chookasian took the opportunity to showcase one of her Yale students, 19-year-old Kimako Trotman, who sang arias from Tannhauser and Figaro, as

—more—

well as "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho." The contralto compared Trotman's voice to the late Paul Robeson's, but not surprisingly, a 19-year-old larynx could hardly match the boom of that legendary singer. Let's say at present he should be compared more to the late Roland Hayes. At his age, Trotman is more of a good second tenor. Withal, his voice is pleasant and so is his personality.

Special excitement was provided by guesting Alexander Vartanian, a star baritone with the Yerevan State Opera, who made his U.S. debut in this concert. Vartanian's inability to speak English precluded his addressing to the audience at any length, which probably was all to the good, considering his thrilling vocalism in two Armenian operatic arias and a surprisingly idiomatic "O sole mio," proving he's definitely of international caliber. By the way, Vartanian dedicated the last number to George Maksian, who put the whole program together.

*—Bill Zakariasen is a noted classical music critic.*

—5/18/93



from the office of the  
**Diocese of the Armenian Church of America**  
630 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, tel: (212) 686-0710

# news!

Contact: Christopher H. Zakian  
(212) 686-0710

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## **NOTED BARITONE ALEXANDER VARTANIAN ADDED TO STELLAR LINEUP OF "A NIGHT AT THE OPERA"**

### **Dual Premier of Live...At the Diocese Series Expected to be a Sellout**

Alexander Vartanian, a leading baritone soloist with the Yerevan State Opera Company in Armenia, has been added to the starring cast of "A Night at the Opera," the first of a dual premier in the Live...At the Diocese series, to be presented under the auspices of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

Mr. Vartanian, 36, is visiting this country for the first time, and has agreed to make his U. S. singing debut on the program. "A Night at the Opera" will be performed Friday, May 7, at 8 p.m., at the Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium, 630 Second Avenue, at the 2nd Avenue entrance (near 35th Street).

The program is expected to be a sellout. To date, more than 75% of the tickets have been sold. Donation is \$20. Some tickets are still available and may be secured at the Diocesan headquarters at the same address. For more information about tickets and their availability call 212- 686-0710.

Mr. Vartanian will join Metropolitan Opera stars Lucine Amara, Lili Chookasian and Vahan Khanzadian. Loren Toolajian, the former program director and on-air personality of WQXR-FM, the New York Times classical music station, will be the host.

Mr. Khanzadian will open the show, and will talk about his January debut at the Met in the lead role of Gustav in "A Masked Ball." Then, Mr. Toolajian will introduce Miss Chookasian, who will have a surprise for the audience.

This will be followed by Mr. Vartanian. He will sing two Armenian arias, and if the audience clamors enough, may even sing a Neopolitan song or two. "I sing all the popular Italian love songs," said Mr. Vartanian in a recent interview with George Maksian, the producer of the Live...At the Diocese series. "I have also performed in all the classic operas: La Boheme, Carmen, Madama Butterfly, and others—most of the time in Russian."

—more—

The handsome young baritone has also starred in the Armenian film versions of the classic operas, Anoush, Arshag II and Almast, playing the lead role in all three. He has won numerous awards, including three grand prizes in international competitions in Armenia and the former Soviet Union.

He also has made several concert appearances, many with his wife, Zovinar Mnazakanian, who is a singer, pianist and concert master of the Yerevan State Opera. The Vartanians have two children, Alexander, 11, and Vahakn, 7, who also have appeared in children's roles in several operas in Armenia.

"My dream is to sing at the Met one day," said Mr. Vartanian. "That's every singer's dream. And I pray my dream will come true."

Mr. Vartanian, who has been described as "the new Mario Lanza," graduated from the Armenian Music Conservatory in Armenia in 1985, and has been with the Yerevan State Opera ever since. His teacher was the renowned Tatevek Sazandarian.

The singer's father is now deceased, and his mother resides in Yerevan, Armenia. Mr. Vartanian has two older sisters and an older brother, all of whom are married and have children of their own.

"My father was a school teacher," noted Mr. Vartanian in his native Armenian tongue. "But he was also interested in music. He had a great, booming voice, and played the *tar* (an ancient string instrument)." Mr. Vartanian's mother also was a singer. "Music runs in the family," said Mr. Vartanian. "It's in our veins."

"A Night at the Opera" is the first of two programs in the Live...At the Diocese series. The second program—"A Little 'Lite' Music"—featuring Kay Armen, Anita Darian, Harry and Maggie Goz and Michael Kermoyan, will be performed Thursday, May 20, at 8 p.m., at Kavookjian Auditorium. Tickets are \$20.



DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA  
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Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate

April 21, 1993

His Excellency  
Ambassador Arzoomanian

Dear Ambassador:

We would be greatly honored to have you and your guest attend our two Live at the Diocese functions on May 7th and May 20, as our guests.

The two programs feature several prominent Armenian-America artists from -both the Metropolitan Opera and the Broadway stage.

Mike Connors (Mannix) has already agreed to attend, also as our guest.

Let me know if you can attend- and I'll be happy to make the ticket arrangements.

Sincerely,

George Maksian  
Producer

*Sevazan - FYI -  
also sent similar invite  
to the U.S. Ambassador  
Shugartian in Washington  
George*





from the office of the  
**Diocese of the Armenian Church of America**  
630 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, tel: (212) 686-0710

# news:

Contact: Christopher H. Zakian  
(212) 686-0710

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## **MUSIC MAVEN LOREN TOOLAJIAN TO HOST "A NIGHT AT THE OPERA"**

### **Gathering of Opera Stars Marks First Outing of New "Live...At the Diocese" Series**

Music has been an integral part of Loren Toolajian's life ever since he was a child growing up in his native San Francisco.

His father, the late Vahan Toolajian, was a classical singer, and Loren himself has been associated with opera, jazz, pop music and all the classics.

So, it's fitting that Mr. Toolajian has been designated to be the host for "A Night at the Opera," the first of a dual premiere of a new talk-entertainment series, entitled "Live...At the Diocese," to be presented under the auspices of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

"A Night at the Opera" will be performed Friday, May 7, at 8 p.m., at the Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium, in the Diocesan Complex, 630 Second Ave., at the Second Ave. entrance (near 35th St.).

Guests are Lucine Amara, Lili Chookasian and Vahan Khanzadian, all past and current members of the world-renowned Metropolitan Opera. There will also be one or two surprises.

"I grew up as an Armenian," said the youthful, 34-year-old Mr. Toolajian, whose mother, a registered nurse, is of Polish decent. "My grandparents (on his father's side) died when my father was 12 years old," he recalled. "So, my father went to live with his cousins, Art and Michael Kermoyan.

"We've been close relatives ever since and that's why I call Michael, Uncle Mike. Art ran the largest photo lab in Northern California, and Michael, of course, went on to great success on the Broadway stage."

(Mr. Kermoyan will join Anita Darian, Kay Armen, and Harry and Maggie Goz as the featured guests on the second of the "Live...At the Diocese" presentations, "A Little 'Lite' Music," to be held Thursday, May 20, at 8 p.m., also at Kavookjian Auditorium.)

Being Armenian has remained a strong force in Mr. Toolajian's life. "I went to Armenian school in San Francisco when I was 16 years old," said the music aficionado, who during the late 1980s was the youngest executive ever to serve as program director for New York's premier classical music station, WQXR, which is owned by the New York Times.

"I was in a class which consisted mostly of 9- and 10-year-old students," said Mr. Toolajian in a recent interview with George Maksian, the producer of the "Live...At the Diocese" series. "It was a bit awkward but I wanted to learn some of the Armenian language."

It was music, however, that remained the major part of Mr. Toolajian's life. "I used to go to all of my father's concerts," he said. "My father sang with all the great orchestras and conductors, of the time, including the renowned Sir Thomas Beecham.

"He sang more than opera. That's why I refer to him as a classical singer. He did oratorios and other forms of music. The first thing I remember hearing at a concert as a child was Bach's "B Minor Mass." I used to bring all the scores with me to the concerts. I loved doing that."

Mr. Toolajian said he once got to meet the great composer Igor Stravinsky at one of his father's concerts. "It was like meeting Beethoven," he said. "It was so exciting. I grew up with classical music, but I also got involved with pop music, and studied jazz with a family friend, Earl Zindars, the noted Armenian-American composer of both classical and jazz music."

Today, Mr. Toolajian has his own music production company called Hum This Music, which is based in the Graybar Building on Lexington Ave., and 44th St.

The firm produces music for television, film, radio and the theater. Recent projects include music for Showtime Networks, Nickelodeon, the Phil Donahue Show, and the Signature Theater Company's production of Lee Blessing's "Two Rooms." The company was founded with his partner, Mike Unger, in 1987. They also produce a band called Kuru, which plays acoustic pop music.

Mr. Toolajian continues to study piano and composition with master pianist and composer Jack Reilly, and lives in Summit, N.J., with his two greatest loves, wife Anne, and their three-and-a-half year old son, Joshua.

Why did he accept to host "A Night at the Opera"? "It wasn't because of the guests' celebrity status," he said.

"I've met and interviewed hundreds of celebrities. That doesn't faze me. This is a chance to work with artists whom I have grown to know and respect for a long time. They have performed at the highest level of their profession, not only at the Met, but all over the world. That's exciting to me. I want to work with quality people."

"Also, I want to stay connected to the Armenian community. Armenian has been a major part of my life. How do you turn your back on that?"

Tickets for both the May 7 and May 20 programs are available at the Diocese of the Armenian Church, 630 Second Ave., New York City. Donation is \$20 for each program; \$35 for both. Call (212) 686-0710 for more information. The series is being presented, as part of the 25th Anniversary celebration of the consecration of the St. Vartan Cathedral.

—4/15/93

March 25, 1993

Mr. Mark Maluso  
Columbia Artists Management  
Zemsky - Green Division

Dear Mr. Maluso:

As per our conversation today, here is the information you requested regarding Gegam Gregorian.

I understand that he'll be appearing at Carnegie Hall on May 2. We at the Armenian Diocese would be greatly honored if he could also take part in the Cathedral's 25th anniversary celebration.

More specifically we'd like Mr. Gregorian to become part of the program, "A Night at the Opera," will take place at the auditorium in the Diocesan complex on Friday, May 7, at 8:00 p.m.

We already have three Metropolitan Opera stars on the bill: Lucine Amara, soprano, Lili Chookasian, contralto, and Vahan Khanzadian, who just made his Met debut a month ago in the role originally slated for Luciano Pavarotti in "The Masked Ball."

Loren Toolajian, the former program director of classical music station WQXR, will be the guest host for the evening. The format is talk-entertainment. The guests will chat with their host and sing two or three songs.

Gregorian is very familiar with the Armenian Church.

We'd be willing to pay any expenses involved in the matter, as well as an honorarium.

Thanks for your help in this matter.

Sincerely,

George Maksian  
Director of cultural events

P.S. Enclosed is a copy of the brochure that is being prepared for the event.



DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA  
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Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate

February 17, 1993

Dear

As you probably know, I have left the Daily News after 44 years. I have now embarked on a new project for the Diocese of the Armenian Church.

I'll be producing a weekly or bi-weekly talk-variety show, tentatively titled **Friday Night...Live at the Diocese**. It will be comprised of opera, jazz, pop music, lectures and other aspects of the arts and entertainment world.

The series will be launched in May with two specials, slated to roughly coincide with the St. Vartan Cathedral's own 25th anniversary celebration (which will occur on May 14, 15 and 16). In the fall, we'll start offering the shows on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.

The first show, on Friday, May 7, will be "A Night at the Opera"; the second show, on Thursday, May 20, will be a "Pop Music Festival." Ed Setrakian will be the director of our enterprise. Mr. Setrakian, of course, is well known for his association with the Actors Studio.

The goals for the production are to showcase Armenian talent and to make their achievements known to the American community. Our aim is to make the best use of our own facilities—the Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium at the Diocesan Complex in Manhattan; however, I can foresee times when we will break format to originate a show from some other location.

We hope you will be part of one of our May specials. I'll be in touch with you presently with more details; until then, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

George Maksian



DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA  
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Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate

February 17, 1993

Dear

Thank you for attending the first meeting on February 10 for our new project, **Friday Night...Live At the Diocese** (our working title), sponsored by the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

We'll be launching the show with two specials in May, before embarking on a full season schedule in the fall. The first show on Friday, May 7, will be "A Night at the Opera" (working title); featured artists for the evening might include Lucine Amara, Lili Chookasian, Ara Berberian and Vahan Khanzadian—all Met stars—with someone like Beverly Sills or Peter Allen as the host. Naturally, it's all subject to their availability.

The second show will be a "Pop Music Festival;" possible guests would be Harry and Maggie Goz, Anita Darian, Kay Armen and Michael Kermoyan. The host would be Mark Simone or Jim Lowe. We had originally planned for this performance to take place on Friday, May 21, but that has had to be rescheduled, tentatively, to Thursday, May 20.

The two shows will be part of the broader commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the St. Vartan Cathedral. The diocese will be holding a special weekend celebration of its own on May 14, 15 and 16.

The format of **Friday Night...Live** will be talk-variety. There will be interviews with the guests, along with performances. Members of the audience will also be able to ask questions. Admission will be about \$15, with refreshments following the show.

The shows will be taped (by Alex Aliksanyan) to be held in reserve as the basis for a weekly half-hour TV show (say, on Channel 47 or cable) which the Diocese is interested in starting at some point. Selections from the tapes will be included in the TV program.

That's the way things stand as of now. We are currently in the midst of lining up guests, and setting up the auditorium (stage, sound, etc.). Anna

Marie Verdi has already consented to write any notes needed for the opera gala. The notes will include the host's introduction of the stars, and some proposed questions. We need someone to do the same for the pop stars.

Also, if you would like to do an interview with any of the performers, please let me know. This would be used for publication in the Armenian newspapers and also in the church publications. Someone to handle the general releases would also be helpful. All the mailings and flyers, etc., will be handled by the Diocese.

John Dolbashian will be our stage manager, and attend to the renting of the studio equipment. He will assist Ed Setrakian, the director, in this matter.

We also need someone to take care of advertising, plugs in columns, calendar-of-events listings, etc.

So, keep this in mind until our next meeting. I'll be in touch about the date. Thanks again, and good luck to all.

George Maksian

# METROPOLITAN OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA ASSOCIATION, INC.  
LINCOLN CENTER PLAZA

RUOLF BING  
GENERAL MANAGER

NEW YORK, N. Y. 10023


June 8, 1970

Miss Bobbi Tillander  
Development  
Metropolitan Opera Association, Inc.

Dear Bobbi:

This letter to you is not for the files because of its personal Content and nature. I understand that you are planning to resign your position in the Development Department. This is upsetting to me since I brought you on staff here. I know that you have not been happy in the Page environment but I thought you could at least work it through as a favor to me. Of course, if you do go to Sweden, you will secure a place on the artistic staff if the announcement regarding the new man is made. This brings me to another point; actually, another favor before you finalize your plans. I expect a complete turnover in this house when I leave. I am getting disparaging remarks from the Board. They blame me with the strike and other problems. This leads me to think that there will be artist changes on the roster. I would like for you to go into personal management and take over Lucine Amara's career. She is going to need someone who understands her personality and artistry. Max and I have understood and we have tried to guide and protect. I am going to sign Amara for three years. This will protect her into the next administration. Amara is a very great artist and I do not believe that the Metropolitan Opera will survive too long without her type of artistry and dedication. I am afraid great artists will get lost in commercial glitter. I advised Amara once against accepting a movie contract. I do not regret that. There will be those who will not understand the absolute grandness of her artistry. You will for you have that same type of artistry. I am sorry that you have not considered singing for the Metropolitan. I do hope you will consider this favor about personal management. Let me know soon your decision. Now it is off to the June Festival for me. Be discreet with this information.

Sincerely yours,



Rudolf Bing

RB/mds