The Trumpet Music and Armenian Heritage of Alexander Arutiunian



Alexander Arutiunian
(1920 – 2012)

Presented by:

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Arutiunian's Popular Trumpet Concerto

- Best-known 20th-century trumpet concerto
- 30+ recordings since 1990
- Most trumpeters have performed, studied, and/or listened to this work



2012 Recording
by Reinhold Friedrich

Unknown Context?

- "Influenced by Armenian folk music":
  What does this mean?

- No previous research

- Other works unknown (even trumpet works)

- Unable to answer key questions:

  - Who/what influenced the composer? How?

  - What else did Arutiunian compose?

Festive (1962)

for two pianos and two percussionists

- Co-composed by Arno Babajanyan and Alexander Arutiunian



Alexander Arutiunian, Arno Babajanyan, and percussionists of Armenian Phil.

Where is Armenia?
(Shaded in blue)



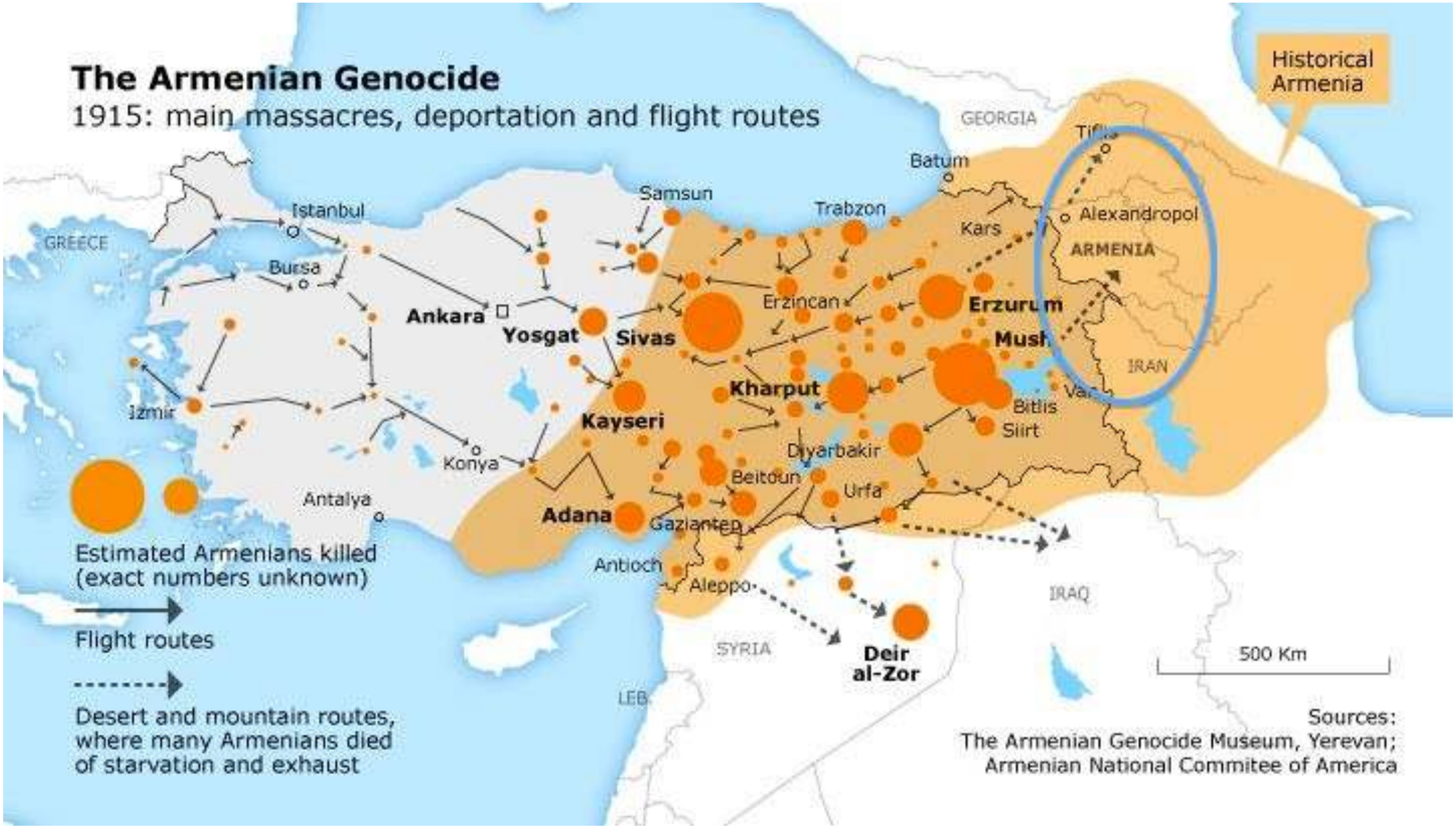
Armenia

Major Ancient Civilization



Armenian Empire at maximum extent (100 C.E.)

Armenian Genocide



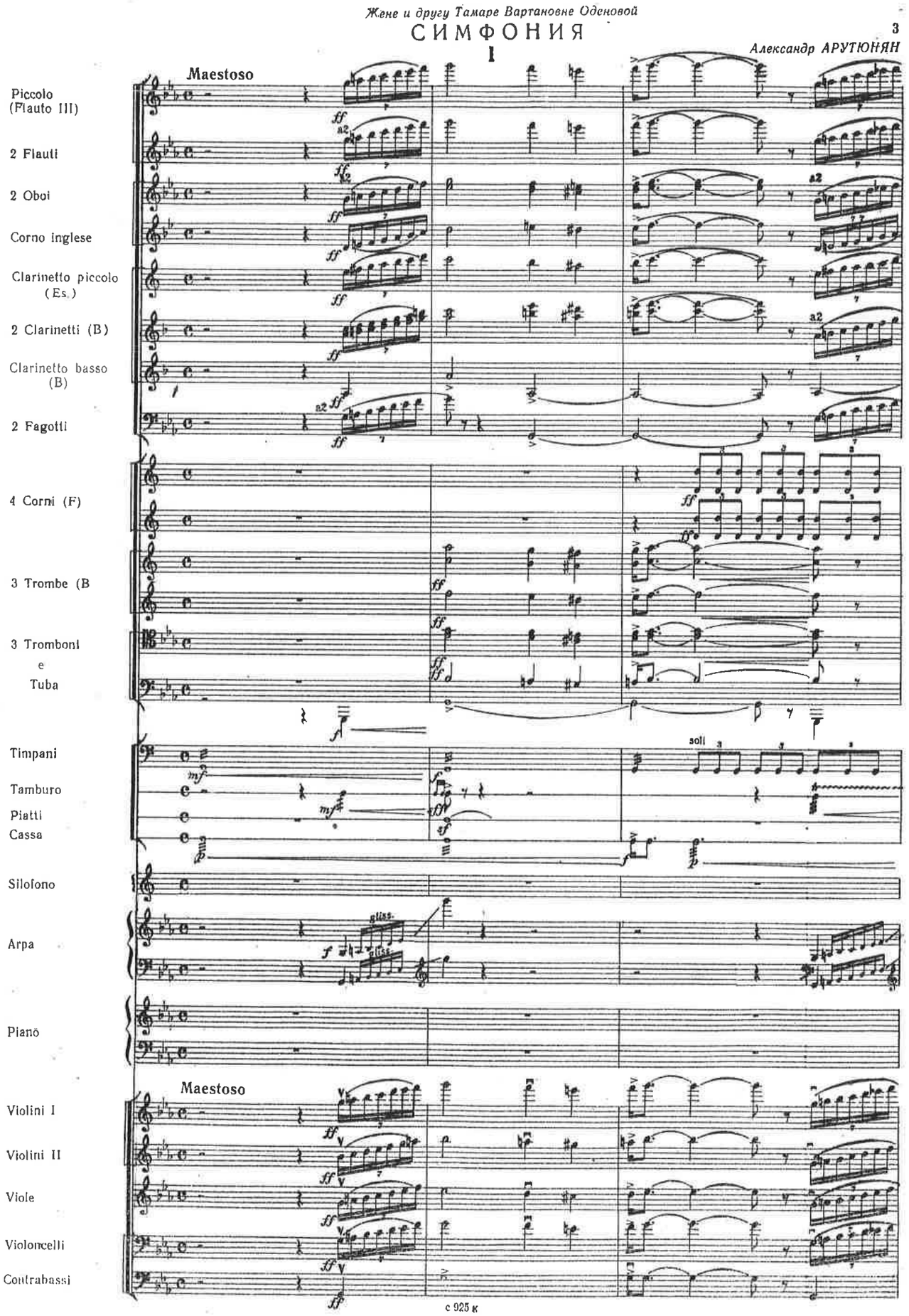
- Armenian Genocide, 1915–1917:
  - 1.5 Ottoman Armenians killed/scattered
- 1920: Establishment of Soviet Armenia

Alexander Arutiunian

(1920 – 2012)



- Leading Armenian/Soviet composer of his generation
- 1954 – 1990: Artistic Director of Armenian State Philharmonic
- 1965 – 2006: Professor at Yerevan State Conservatory
- Board member for Soviet Composers' Unions.
- Active until circa fall of Soviet Union (1991)



125+ Compositions:

18 Concerto
17 Piano
11 Orchestra
21 Chamber
6 Cantatas
35+ Songs & Romances
18 Choral
1 Opera
6 Films
Incidental Music (Theater)
Variety Orchestra

Spelling?

Armenian: Ալեքսանդր Հարությունյան

"Alek-sandr Har-oo-tyoon-yan"

Russian: Александр Арутюнян

"Alek-sandr Aroo-tyun-yan"

French: Aroutounian

German: Arutyunyan

Spanish: Arutjunjan

Official International Spelling:

Alexander Arutiunian

(-iu after the t, -ian at the end)



Genrikh Litinsky

Conservatory Training

- Yerevan: 1927–1941; Moscow 1946–1948
- Armenian Nationalist Style
- Moscow Training with Genrikh Litinsky
- Influence of Prokofiev, Khachaturian



Arutiunian (circle) with Khachaturian

Birth of the Trumpet Concerto (1943–1950)

- Inspired by Armenian Tsolak Vardazaryan
- Student of Mikhail Tabakov (Moscow Conservatory)
- Died 1943 in car accident



Tsolak Vardazaryan

Haykaz Mesiayan

- Dokshizer's predecessor at the Bolshoi Theater
- Prompted Arutiunian to finish the *Concerto*
- Premiere (1950) and premiere radio broadcast recording (1951)



Haykaz Mesiayan

Timofei Dokshizer

- Timofei Dokshizer toured internationally (1959) and introduced *Concerto* to the West

- Wrote cadenza, now published with concerto sometime before 1965

- Famous recording (1969)



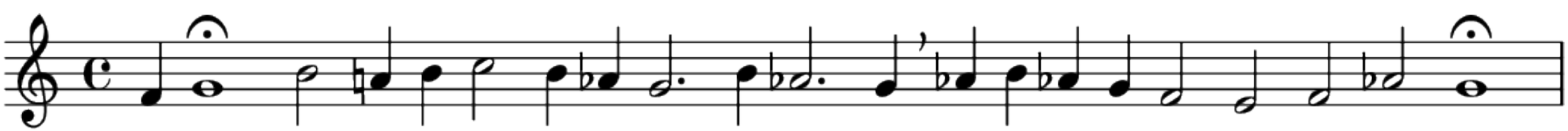
Timofei Dokshizer



Recorded at
the Geghard Monestary

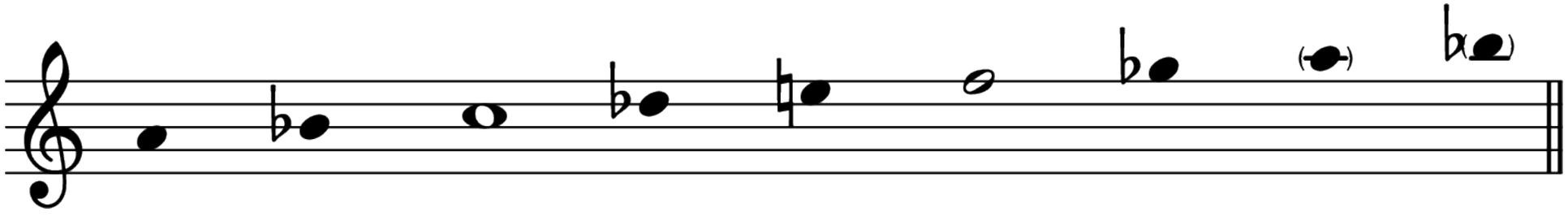
Scales/Modes in Armenian Folk Music

- Monodic: melody only
- Complex mode with key notes, not scale
- Augmented seconds
- Example: 5th-c. Armenian hymn *Yekyalks*



Trumpet Concerto: Introduction

- Armenian "mode" with two augmented seconds



- Imitating Armenian *Ashughs* (folk-singers):
  - Declamatory style
  - Begin in high register, descend and become more lyrical

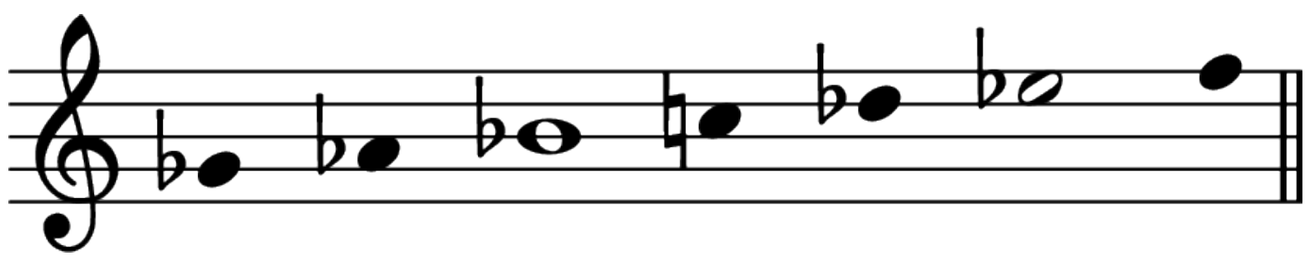
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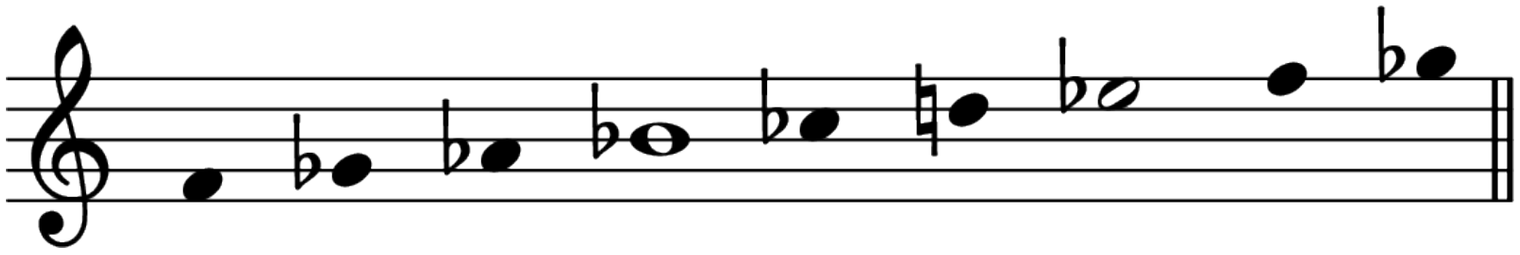
18th century ashugh song



Trumpet Concerto: Lyrical Episode

- Based on another Armenian modal scale, with the key notes being B-flat and E-flat (notes in between modulate)





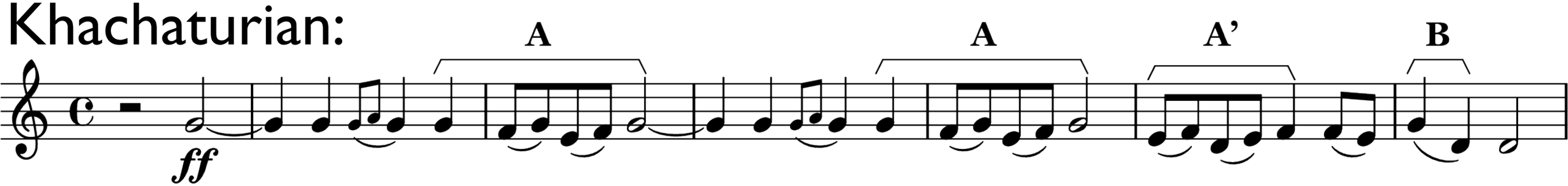
- Ornamentation, phrasing, contour similar to Armenian peasant song

- Example: folk lament *Dle Yaman* (duduk)

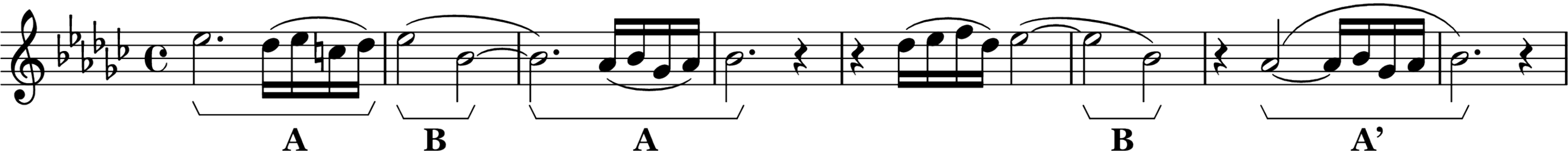
Khachaturian: *Cello Concerto* (1946)

- Lyrical second theme features a 6-note motive (A) and ends with a descending 4th (B)

Khachaturian:



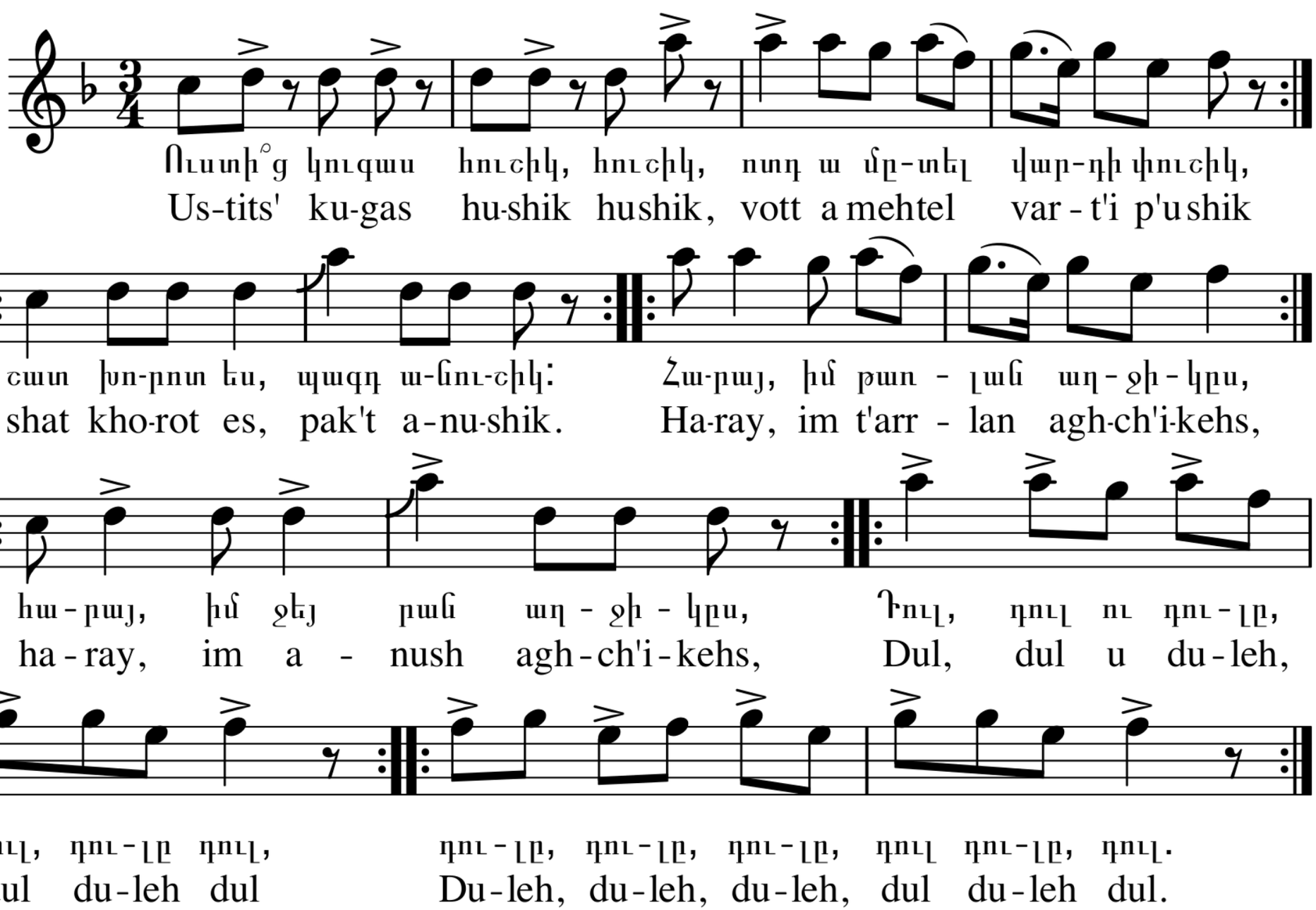
Arutiunian:



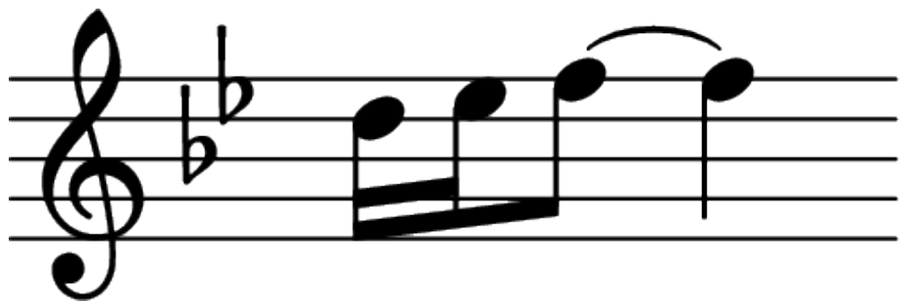


Rhythmic Elements in Armenian Peasant Song

Baby-rocking song: *Trnotsi*



Armenian Folk Motive



- Melodic and rhythmic motive found commonly in Armenian folk dances

- Resembles scale degrees $\hat{3}$–$\hat{4}$–$\hat{5}$ in major

- Example: folk dance *Jeirani pes* [Graceful like a deer]



‘Khachaturian Motive’

- Khachaturian: “*this motive is the leitmotif of my musical life*”
- Modified $\hat{3}$–$\flat\hat{6}$–$\hat{5}$ in main theme of his Piano Concerto (1936)

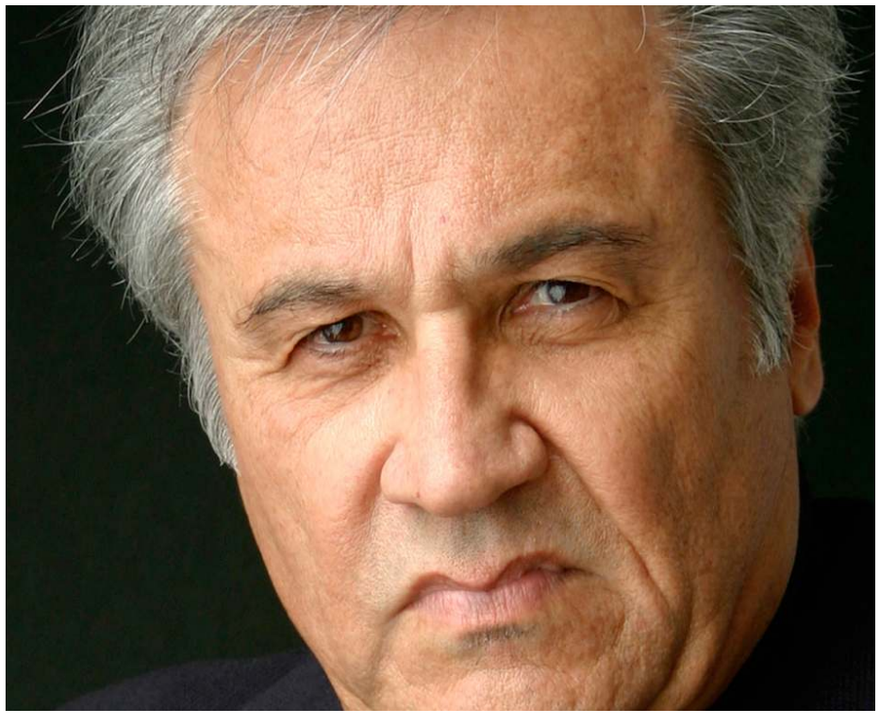
Arutiunian's use of this motive

- Arutiunian: *Festive Overture* (1949), main theme
- Arutiunian: *Concertino for Piano* (1951), main theme
- Arutiunian uses the $\hat{3}$–$\hat{4}$–$\hat{5}$ version throughout the Trumpet Concerto

Elegy (2000)
for trumpet and strings/piano

- Late style period: Rhapsodic, free

- Commissioned by Tom Stevens as an encore in Fresno



Thomas Stevens
(family name originally Stepanian)

About My Friend (1958)

- Armenian war-romance film story set in the siege of Leningrad

- "White Nights" also published as a popular tune



Rhapsody (1990)

for trumpet and wind ensemble

- Late-period style: Rhapsodic, free combination of elements
- Central episode quotes Armenian folk song "Alagyaz"



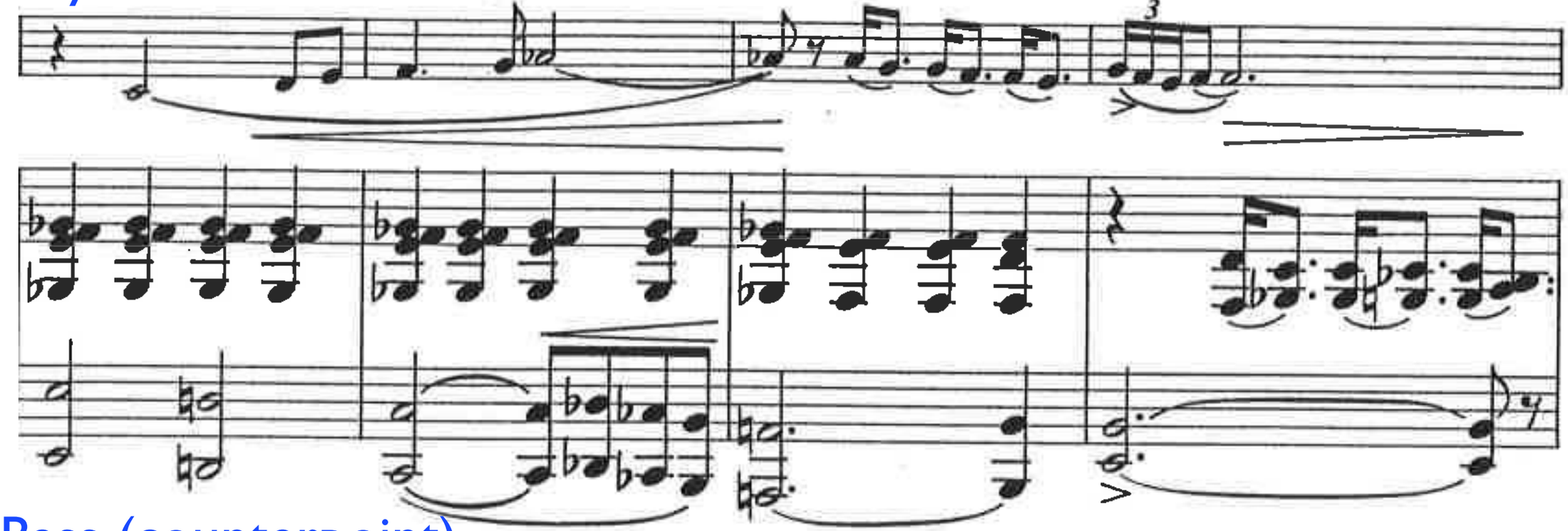
Mt. Aragats, Armenia

Aria and Scherzo (1983)

for trumpet and piano

- Dedicated to Timofei Dokshizer
- Neo-Baroque texture combined with impressionist elements

Melody



Bass (counterpoint)

Scherzo: Imitating the Zurna



- Scherzo movement folk dance style in 5/8
- Muted throughout, imitating the Armenian Zurna

Theme and Variations (1973)

for trumpet and orchestra



- Dedicated to and premiered by Yuri Balyan, principal of Armenian Philharmonic
- Middle period style influenced by Prokofiev & Shostakovich
- Today: Variations III (dramatic) and IV (lyrical)

Concert Scherzo (1955)

for trumpet and piano

- Premiered by Arutiunian and Haykaz Mesiayan in Yerevan

- Romantic style similar to the Concerto

- Arutiunian:
  "You should try my *Scherzo*. It is very fun. Like ice cream!"

Conclusions

- Complex, well-crafted works blend many influences
- Understanding influences and details enhances interpretation
- Six works for trumpet are a substantial contribution



More info:
www.alexanderarutiunian.info

These slides, full media clips, and more:
www.alexanderarutiunian.info/ITG2019

Questions? Ideas? Contributions?
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Read the Dissertation (email me for a copy):
"Antecedents, Forefathers, and the Development Alexander Arutiunian's 'Big Soviet' Armenian Style" (2019)