

## Aram Khachaturian

- Biography -

The composer **Aram Khachaturian**, born in 1903 in Tiflis (Georgia) only decided on a musical career relatively late in life. He began his studies at the age of 19, first in the cello class of the Gnessin Musical-Technical School, then as a composition student. From 1930 he attended the Moscow Conservatory, studying with Miaskovsky (composition) and Vassilenko (orchestration).

Each of his teachers imparted a different side of Russian music to him, respectively: through Vassilenko, Khachaturian made contact with "conservative" strivings, whereas in Miaskovsky he encountered a personality who was constantly on the lookout for the new.

A third tendency, coming from his ancestry, was the integration of Armenian folklore. Khachaturian succeeded in connecting the folk music of his Armenian-Caucasian homeland with Russian art music. "I don't think I've written a single work not in some way bearing the stamp of the essence of folk culture and art." Above all, the ballet "Gayaneh" is the expression of this very personal, individual will. The "Sabre Dance" from it has become especially famous throughout the world.

Khachaturian's breakthrough as a composer, however, already occurred in 1933/34 with the world premiere of his First Symphony and the Piano Concerto, a work played today all over the world. In 1951 he became Professor of Composition at the Moscow Conservatory and advanced to Secretary of the Composers' Union of the Soviet Union in 1957. Already many years prior to this he had made a name for himself as a conductor and made guest appearances in this capacity in the West starting in the mid-1970s.

Aram Khachaturian died on 1 May 1978.