

ARMENIA





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Folk Dance Scene

DECEMBER 1992

Volume 28, Number 7





Pasadena Folk Dance Co.-Op

Presents Its

Winter Festival

January 10, 1993

1:30 - 5:30

Council 11:00


Glendale Civic Auditorium

1401 North Verdugo Rd.

Glendale

(818) 794-9493

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Sponsored by the
Folk Dance Federation of California-South





DECEMBER 1992
Volume 28, Number 8

Folk Dance Scene

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FOLK DANCE SCENE is published to educate its readers concerning the folk dance, music, costume, customs, lore, and culture of the peoples of the world. It is also designed to inform them of the opportunities to experience folk dance and culture in Southern California and elsewhere. In addition, it advises readers as to major developments in the Folk Dance Federation of California, South, of which this is the official publication.

The Folk Dance Federation of California, South, is a non-profit, tax-exempt educational organization incorporated under the laws of California. The Federation is dedicated to the promotion of and education about all international folk dancing and its related customs. Membership is open to all races and creeds, and neither the Federation nor FOLK DANCE SCENE shall be used as a platform for prejudicial material. All proceeds from this publication are used to pay the costs of its publication and distribution.

Views expressed in SCENE are solely the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy of the magazine or the Federation. Neither the magazine nor the Federation assumes responsibility for the accuracy of dates, locations, or other information sent in. The Editors have the right to edit and modify all submissions.

MANUSCRIPTS AND NOTICES. The Editors will attempt to include all news-worthy items which are consistent with the policy of the magazine. News items should reach the Editors by one week before the 1st of the month of publication for inclusion. Potential authors of feature articles should correspond with the Editors prior to submitting their manuscripts.

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ADVERTISING. Current rates and specifications are available from the Editorial Office. All ads must relate to and be consistent with the purposes of the magazine. All ads must be camera-ready and accompanied by a check for the correct amount.

MEMBERSHIP. To join the Folk Dance Federation of California, South, one may either affiliate with a member club or join directly as an associate member by contacting the Director of Membership.

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Our warmest wishes and heartfelt thanks to Susan Ounjian for the inspiration and information for this issue, to Michael Ounjian for putting up with us, and to Sean Macdonald for the beautiful photos.

ON THE COVER: Forehead to forehead, symbolizing the union of mind and body.

Note: Federation events are in bold type.

*** Call to confirm all events

DECEMBER

- 12 **Holiday Party, noon-5 pm. Recital Hall, Balboa Park, San Diego. Free! Exhibitions, food. Info: (619) 238-1771**
- 12 Hungarian Tanchaz Dance Evening. 7:30 pm, teaching; 9 pm, party. Gypsy Camp, 3265 Motor Ave., LA (310) 202-9024
- 26 **Skandia Holiday Ball. Masonic Temple, 9635 Venice Blvd., Culver City. (213) 459-5314**
- 31 **New Year's Eve Party, hosted by Pasadena Co-op. Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1757 N. Lake, Pasadena. Info: (818) 794-9493**
- 31-1/1 **New Year's Camp at Hess Kramer, in Malibu, sponsored by California Traditional Music Society. Folk dance with Barry Glass; contra, cajun dancing. Folk music workshops, performances; singing, storytelling, crafts. Full or part time. Info: (818) 342-7664**

1993

JANUARY

- 10 **Pasadena Coop Festival. Glendale Civic Aud, 1401 N. Verdugo Rd., Glendale. 1:30-5:30. Council meeting at 11 a.m.**
- 17 Ballet Folclorico Nacional de Mexico. Shows at 2 and 7:30 p.m. at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium, Info: (818) 304-6161
- 19 Ballet Folclorico de Mexico, 8 pm. Cultural Center, Port Hueneme. (805) 986-6598
- 27 KODO, the Heartbeat Drummers of Japan at Beckman Auditorium, Cal Tech. Starts at 8 pm. Info: (818) 356-4652

FEBRUARY

- 5-7 **Laguna Festival, hosted by the Laguna Folkdancers. Laguna High School, North Gym, Laguna Beach. Institutes with Atanas Kolarovski, Richard Powers on Fri. nite and Sat. afternoon. Valentine Party Sat, 7:30-11 pm. Afterparties Fri and Sat nites. Sun afternoon,**

Kolo Hour, concert, festival. Info: (714) 646-7082

- 13 Don Cossack Song & Dance Company. Songs, dances & music of Russia. At Pasadena Civic Aud in Pasadena. Info: (818) 304-6161
- 13, 14 World Festival of African-American Cultures at Gindi Auditorium, U. of Judaism, 15600 Mulholland Dr., LA. Includes performances by Djimbe West African Dancers & Drummers, and traditional Brazilian dancing by Lulu Almeida Afro-Brasil. For more info, call (310)476-9777, x-203.
- 26 Preservation Hall Jazz Band performs as part of Cal Tech, Pasadena's 3rd Annual Tribute to African American History. Info: (818) 356-4652
- 27 Folksinger, guitarist Odetta performs as part of CalTech's 3rd Annual Tribute to African American History. Info: (818) 356-4652
- 27 Don Cossacks Dance Company at Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts

MARCH

- 7 **Festival hosted by West Valley Folk Dancers, San Fernando Valley. (818) 368-1957**
- 12 Preservation Hall Jazz Band at Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts
- 14 Krasnayarsk Siberian Dance Co., 2 p.m., Ambassador Aud., 300 W. Green St., Pasadena. Info: (818) 304-6161
- 17 Krasnayarsk Siberian Dance Co., 8 pm. Cultural Center, Port Hueneme. (805) 986-6598
- 27, 28 Klezmer Conservatory Band at the Gindi Auditorium, U. of Judaism, 15600 Mulholland Dr., L.A. Sat. at 8:30 pm, Sun at 2 and 7:30 pm. Info: (310) 476-9777 x-203
- 27 **Lech Lamidbar (Let's Go to the Desert) hosted by China Lake Desert Dancers. 1-4 pm, 8-11:30 pm, Ridgecrest Civic Center, 100 W. California St. Info: (619) 375-4381 or 446-6905**
- 29 Krasnayarsk Siberian Dance Company at Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts

APRIL

- 2-4 1993 Southern California Regional Institute, Royal Scottish Country Dance Society at the Chapman U. campus and the Orange Doubletree Hotel. Teaching, Fri. eve party, Sat. PM ball. For more info, call Rob at (619) 433-3562
- 4 **Westwood Coop Festival, Memorial Auditorium, Culver City, 1:30-5:30. Council meeting 11 a.m.**
- 24 **AMAN Folk Ensemble, 8 p.m. Cultural Center, Port Hueneme. (805) 986-6598**

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

- 12/5 Palomanians FD Party. Info: (415) 593-0517
- 12/6 Treasurer's Ball, 1:30-5:30 pm Veteran's Memorial Building. Info: (707) 833-4181

OUT OF STATE

Indiana

- 5/28-31 1993 Square Dance weekend, Madison, Indiana. Info: Grand Recordings, 1709 Belmar Dr., Louisville, KY 40212-1407

Missouri

- 6/23-26 1993 National Square Dance Convention, St. Louis, MO. Info: P.O. Box 13570, St. Louis, MO 63138

Nevada

- 11/20-12/4 International Dance Festival, Las Vegas. Therese & Burt Scholin. Part of Sands Festival with square, clogging, country western. Info: (714) 337-8628

Ohio

- 12/5 Victorian Christmas Ball & workshop with Richard Powers. Cincinnati. (513) 733-3077
- 12/18-20 Croatian Christmas in Columbus. 4 performances by Zivili at 3rd Ave. Performance Space. Info: (614) 855-7805

Washington

- 1/16/93 Playford Ball, sponsored by the English Country Dance Society, Seattle, WA. 17th-18th Century dress preferred. Info: (206) 329-7289

Wisconsin

- 12/27-1/1/93 Christmas Festival at Folklore Village, Dodgeville. Info: (606) 924-4000

Save The Date!
17th Annual
AMAN INSTITUTE

Saturday, March 6, 1993

with

France Bourque-Moreau

Mihai David

Atanas Kolarovski

Yves Moreau

at the Mayflower Ballroom

For registration information call: (213) 629-8387



**A BULGARIAN SEMINAR
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Friend, how would you like to be a professional dancer in Bulgaria? Rehearse with a State Ensemble? Learn the songs and dances? Wear the costumes? Perform with them in public concert? Well, **now you can**. For 14 days / 13 nights, you may join the folk artists of the: State Ensemble for Folk Songs and Dances "Gabrovo."

Our **dance program** will teach you the inner functioning of a professional ensemble and put you on stage, trained, in costume, in a public concert of Gabrovan, Dobrudzhan, and Shope folklore. Beyond your immediate training in warm-up and dance, you will receive audio and video cassettes, and complete dance notes for the material covered.

Simultaneously, our **context program** will teach you the historic, social, artistic, and political context of Bulgarian folk songs and dances:

- Meetings with neighboring ensembles and ethnographers.
- The opportunity to buy costumes, footwear, and other folk art.
- Tours of important sites: Veliko Tŭrnovo, Bozhentsi, Dryanovo Monastery and cave, Shipka Pass, Sokolski Monastery, Tryavna, Sevlievo, Etŭra Ethnographic Museum, and the World Center of Humor and Satire.



So join us next June 27 in Gabrovo, the geographical and cultural center of the Bulgarian Renaissance, and Industrial and Educational Revolutions. No other Bulgarian town contains so much of interest to you. And the price? Only \$995 for 2 weeks of room, board, and tuition. Spaces are limited. Write now for details: The Society of Folk Dance Historians, 2100 Rio Grande, Austin TX 78705.

ON THE SCENE

The Laguna Festival '93

The 23rd annual Laguna Festival will be held the weekend of February 5-7, 1993, in the North Gym of Laguna Beach High School, at the corner of Park Ave. and St. Ann's Dr. in Laguna Beach. The festival features master teachers Richard Powers and Atanas Kolarovski, as well as dance parties, after parties, and a dance concert.

Richard Powers specializes in American and European vintage dances (late 19th and early 20th centuries). He has been a popular teacher at several folk dance camps in recent years. Atanas Kolarovski, who has not taught in Southern California for several years, will be teaching dances of his native Macedonia. Workshops are scheduled for Friday evening, 2/5, from 7:30-11 p.m.; Saturday morning, 2/6, from 10 am to noon; and Saturday afternoon, 2/6, from 1:30-4:30 p.m.

The Saturday dance party, with live music by one of our local ethnic bands, begins at 7:30 p.m. After parties are from 11 pm to 2 am on Friday and Saturday nights. The Sunday kolo hour, dance concert, and festival dance begin at noon.

For more information, call (714) 646-7082 or (714) 533-8667.

Vintage Dance News -Donna Hurst

A big California welcome to Richard and Melanie Powers, who have moved from Cincinnati to Los Altos! Richard is now at Stanford University. A Bon Voyage Ball was held in Cincinnati on September 18. Richard will return there to conduct a Victorian dance workshop on December 5.

The Stanford Tango Week of 1992 reached a wide range of dancers, including the Argentine community of Northern California. Plans are under way for a 1993 Tango Week at Stanford, perhaps in mid-July.

JADE '93 - International Dance Conference

August 1-11, 1993

Tokyo & Akita, Japan

Asian Dance Today, Town and Country, is the main theme of this dance conference, which will be presented in both Japanese and English throughout. Week 1, going from August 1-7, will be in Tokyo. Topics include: Asian Animal Dances: Monkey & Lion; Comparison of Dance Education in Asia and the West; Dance and Feminism; Dance and Financial Matters; Dance and Medicine/Science; Dance Criticism in Asia Today; Dance History Research-East and West; Dance Notation in Asia; Dance Resources and the Use of Computers; Dance Therapy in Asia; Interculturalism and Dance; Japanese Folk Dance -- an International View; Problems of Creating Dance in Asia; Shamanistic Dance; Sociological Conditions of Asian Dance; and, Transformation of Traditional Dance Forms. Week 2, held in Akita, features a seminar, workshop, lectures and demonstrations on "Adapting Folk Dance to the Stage". Anyone interested in presenting a paper or proposing a panel on any of the above should send a 1-page abstract to the Jade'93 Conference Committee by December 31, 1992.

Running concurrently will be the Festival of Asian Dance, Ballet and Contemporary Dance, featuring dance performances by professional, amateur and school groups, and several special dance events, including an outdoor, firelit performance of Takigi Noh and an International Folk Dance Event. Performing dance groups are invited to present dances at the International Dance Showcase. Also offered are cultural tours of historic sites and folk festivals in Japan, both before and after the conference.

For more information, contact the JADE'93 Secretariat at: 58 Roppongi Int'l Building 7-3-12, Roppongi, Minato-ku. Tokyo 106

JAPAN. (Tel: 81-3-3423-7018 FAX: 81-3-3423-6984)

"Caledonia 1993" Presented by the Scottish Dance Ensemble

The Scottish Dance Ensemble (an RSCDS affiliate) will be holding a two-day event on Saturday and Sunday, February 20 & 21. A workshop with several teachers working with live musicians, will be held on Saturday at the First Lutheran School in Los Angeles. That evening, there is a ball at the Scottish Rite Temple in Pasadena. Sunday's concert, again held at the Scottish Rite Temple, will feature Alasdair Fraser, Muriel Johnstone, Barbara MacDonald Magone and the Scottish Dance Ensemble, with Highland dancing, Scottish National step dancing, and "a few surprises". For more detailed information and schedule, contact Shirley Guthrie at (310) 596-4939.

UCLA Corner

The Department of Dance at UCLA publishes a Calendar of Events, featuring performances of ethnic and other forms of dance, as well as workshops available through the department. Included in the upcoming performances are:

12/1--6 pm; 3/17/93--6 pm: Pau Hana, an informal performance of dances from other cultures by Department of Dance students and faculty. In Performance Space 208, Dance Building, UCLA.

2/12-2/14/93: Dance Ethnology Forum, UCLA's annual national conference, includes presentations of scholarly papers, demonstrations and media presentations on world dance. In the Dance Building, UCLA.

6/4-6/5/93: Senior Concert, UCLA's annual concert of dance works by graduating seniors from the UCLA Department of Dance. In Performance Space 208, Dance Building, UCLA.

All of the above events are free.

Additional concerts include: 3/31-4/4/93: the American College Dance Festival (the annual Southwest

ON THE SCENE

Regional Conference of the American College Dance), which includes symposia, master classes, workshops and performances.

4/3/93--8 pm: American College Dance Festival Concerts, with performances of dance works by faculty and student participants in the American College Dance Festival. Held in Schoenberg Hall, UCLA.

4/23 & 4/24/93--8 pm: the annual UCLA Dance Department Concert, featuring choreographic works by faculty and guest artists of the UCLA Dance Department.

The above events are NOT free. For further information about these events, or to receive your own copy of the UCLA Department of Dance Calendar of Events (updated periodically), call the UCLA Department of Dance at (310) 825-3951.

The UCLA Department of Dance also offers several publications on ethnic and other dance. Available by mail order are Volumes 1-16 of the UCLA Dance Ethnology Journal, the 1991 edition of Dance research: published or publicly presented by the members of the Study Group on Ethnochoreology, representing the research by members of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) Study Group on Ethnochoreology, and Dance Sources, UCLA Libraries and Archives. For additional information on any of the above, contact either Elsie Dunin at (310) 206-1335 or the UCLA Dance Department at (310) 825-3951.

For those of you interested in costume, textiles, and other items of cultural history, a visit to the Fowler Museum of Cultural History is a must! Currently, there is an exhibit on Guatemalan fabric and costume there. For more information or to get on their mailing list, call (310) 825-4361.

Letters Needed!!!

A campaign is under way to prevent UCLA from closing its Center for the Study of Comparative Folklore and Mythology. This research facility is dedicated to the comparative study of cultural expression and identity within American society as well as outside. Among its resources are film archives, the Archive of California Folklore, and the Wayland Hand Research Library (which includes books on folk dance.). Considering the multicultural nature of Southern California, the Center's purpose is more relevant now than ever.

Write to the key administrators and let them know that the Center is NOT dispensable: Daniel G. Calder, Acting Dean of Humanities, 2310 Macgowan; and Herbert Morris, Interim Provost, College of Letters and Sciences, 1312 Murphy Hall. Send a copy to Professor Joseph Nagy, Director, Center for the Study of Comparative Folklore and Mythology, 1037 Graduate School of Management. All are at UCLA, 405 Hilgard Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90024. Mention your involvement in folk dancing.

For more information or to arrange a visit to the center, call (310)825-3962. The contact is Robin Evanchuk, who is well-known in the folk dance community.

10th Annual New Year's Weekend December 31, 1992-January 1, 1993

Beverly and Irwin Barr are planning their annual "New Year's Weekend", slated for Del Mar, California this year. These weekends are very special. Many exciting things are always planned besides the New Year's Eve Party, folk dancing and special dinners. It's more than a weekend away--it's a mini-vacation. If you'd like to join them or get more info, call (310)202-6166 or (310)478-4659.

Holiday Party

The Crestwood Folkdancers (Monday evenings) and the West Los Angeles Folkdancers (Friday evenings) at Brockton School in W.L.A. will be having a holiday party. Call Beverly Barr for date and location. (310)202-6166 or (310)478-4659.

Message from the President

Here comes December with a marvelous array of end-of-year activities, including the RSCDS Hagmanay events, the Hollywood Peasant and Crestwood New Year's weekend jaunts, the CTMS New Year's Weekend at Camp Hess Kramer, the West Valley and Pasadena New Year's Eve parties and the Ojai Contra dance on New Year's Eve. No doubt, I've missed as many dance events as I've mentioned!

As 1992 winds up with a dazzling end-of-year season, I reflect on events of the past year. Most of us, as we dance our most beloved international dances, think of the amazing changes that have taken place in so many parts of the world during this past year. I certainly hope they will prove to be changes for the better. I also hope that our Folkdance Federation will be able to make changes for the better in the coming year.

Such changes will both allow for and require more involvement. We need you, so call Preston Ashbourne, (310) 423-9408, or Eunice Udelf, (805) 499-5600, if you want to help make these changes!

BOOKS/JOURNALS: FOLK DANCE/MUSIC/COSTUME/ETC.

1 Bulgarian; 9 Croatian; 1 Danish; 35 Hungarian; 8 Macedonian; 1 Polish; 1 Russian; 3 Serbian; 3 Swedish (most are not in English); plus 1970's issues of MIXED PICKLES. Prices: \$1-10 each, or package deal. Call Nancy Lee Ruyter (714) 856-7284 or 673-6661.

opa! '93

THE TRADITIONS, DANCE, FESTIVALS AND ARTS

MAY 10 - 30:

Greece-Turkey

ATHENS, THRAKI, ISLAND OF THASSOS. THE LANDSCAPE, TOWNS OF CAPPADOCIA, AND THE WONDERS OF ISTANBUL.

Romania-Hungary AUGUST 2 - 21

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SAVE
the weekend of

february 5-7

for the 23rd ANNUAL

LAGUNA FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL

LAGUNA BEACH

DANCE PARTIES
AFTERPARTIES
Kolo hour
DANCE WORKSHOPS
2 MASTER TEACHERS:



details in
next month's
"folk dance scene"

ATANAS KOLAROVSKI · **RICHARD POWERS**
macedonian dances vintage dances

When I was asked to write an article about the R & S Committee, I asked myself what I could possibly say about R & S, and, in particular, how could I make a subject as dull as research and standardization of folk dances interesting. I failed miserably! So, I decided instead to tell you not only what the committee does, but what I have personally gotten out of the job.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of serving as chairman is the opportunity to work with and get to know the teachers on a professional and on a personal level. When working with them in this way, you have the rare opportunity to learn ever so much more about their dances than just how to do them! When talking with the teachers, asking questions about "background", "source", "styling", "clothing", and all the other where-fores, I have a better chance than the average dancer of peeking into a country, learning more about the people and their heritage.

I have been R & S chairman now for 22 years and just kind of automatically go along and do what needs to be done without thinking much about it. I do really dull jobs like collect and catalog dance notes from southern institutes and camps, as well as anywhere else I can find them. Consequently, I have a card catalog and catalog publications covering several thousand dances. Are there any volunteers out there to help me catalog them? The Federation in Northern California and Bev Wilder have also been most generous in sharing dance information with me...we generally exchange institute and camp notes on a regular basis. With the Federation collection of dance notes as well as my own (I need a bigger house and garage), I fill requests for dance instructions, when I'm able to track them down, for the cost of photocopying and postage.

The committee also keeps a somewhat updated list of how many different times and dance under the same title has been taught by different teachers.

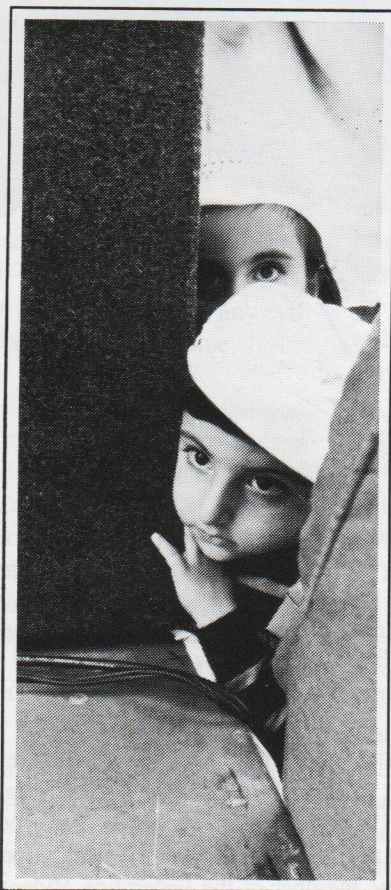
Meet Your Officers -Dorothy Daw- Chairperson, R & S Committee



(Or, at least we try!) At the rate at which dances are being taught today, that's becoming a real challenge. This list will hopefully be updated and published every couple of years in the Federation minutes, and possibly in the Folk Dance Scene.

In addition to collecting dance notes, I collect and produce the master notes for the Federation institutes, correcting them as best I can from their original publication. Of course, they're NEVER perfect! Dance note corrections come from the errata that the committee compiles at institutes and camps, and from the Federation video, to which the R & S chairman (as an automatic member of the Federation Videotape Committee) has access. Writing dance notes is always a challenge, as some teachers regularly change (sometimes deliberately and sometimes not) their dances from teaching to teaching, year to year, and place to place. Dance notation, as I keep reminding people, is *not* an exact science!

ARMENIAN



Held on Sunday, October 6, 1992, on the campus of Los Angeles City College, this year's Armenian Cultural Festival was a true celebration of old Armenian customs and traditions. The theme, "Armenian Village Life", was reflected in all aspects of the event, from the traditional Armenian wedding and the reception following it, to booths exhibiting traditional Armenian arts and crafts, foods, and history.

At the reception following the wedding, several excellent groups performed, including the Tele Armenia Haik Folkloric Dance and Song Ensemble and the Hamazkayin Zuvartnotz Dance Group and Choir of Glendale (recently returned from a trip to Armenia). Costumes worn by members of both groups reflected traditional Armenian wear. The color red predominated, and many of the girls wore strings of pearls, symbolizing the "tears" of the Armenian people. And all of the girls had long, long hair. In the villages of yesterday, everyone wore their hair long, unless they were caught behaving immorally. In that case, the mother of the "immoral" girl would cut off her hair, shaming her in front of the entire village.

Rounding out the day, visitors were encouraged to visit the numerous artisan booths and food booths scattered throughout the grounds. Of particular interest were a booth featuring hand-painted tiles, the rug-weaving booth, and the special children's tent, where young people could learn to make their own pottery, learn to sing Armenian songs and ancient rhymes, or listen to stories and folklore from the Armenian oral tradition. One of the most popular refreshment booths was the Armenian coffee stand, where fortunes were told by reading coffee grinds.

THE GYIMBAR

VILLAGE LIFE



THE VILLAGE

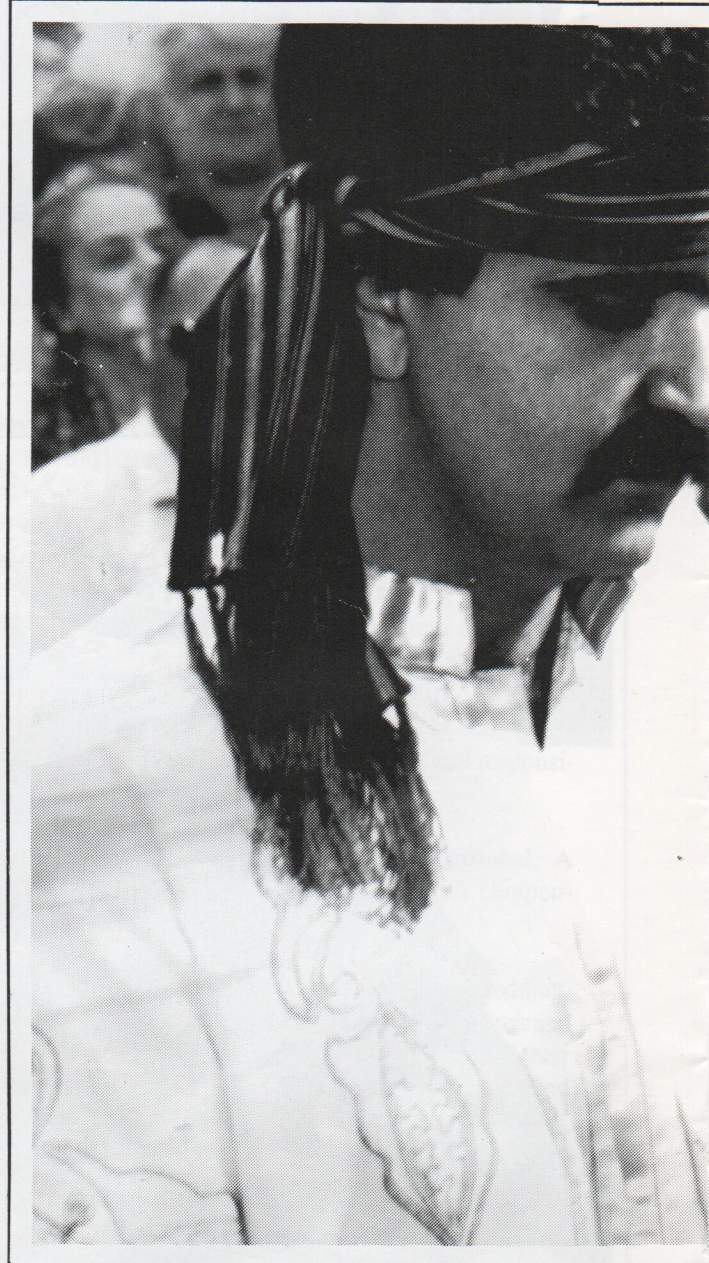
THE ARMENIAN WEDDING

The Armenian wedding was a profoundly important social event. It was not only an alliance between two individuals, but also between groups. The bride would not be just the groom's bride, *hars*, but the bride of both families. And the two families became in-laws, *khnami*.

The leaders of the Armenian wedding were the godfather, *k'avor* and the godmother, *k'avorakin*. They were either the baptismal godparents of the groom himself, or would be the godparents of his future children.

Ordinarily, girls were married young. Girls of 10 or 20 were considered stay-at-homes, *tun mnah*, only good to marry widowers with children, to be sent away to another village. Boys were usually engaged between 15 and 20 years old.

The choice of a prospective bride could occur in several different ways. Early promises between two male friends to marry their son and daughter



WEDDING





to each other when they came of age sometimes occurred as early as when the children were still in the cradle. At times the family hired a matchmaker, *mijnord*. The future bride and groom might or might not know each other before they were betrothed. A youth who had fallen in love might resort to magic to gain the favor of his or her beloved. As a rule, the oldest girl had to marry first, and a younger sister's engagement could last for years if her wedding had to wait upon that of her elder sister.

The two families typically carried out ritualistic negotiations before the engagement. During these, the girl's family served coffee to the representatives of the boy's family. If the coffee tasted bitter, it indicated refusal of the proposed engagement. However, the boy's family usually determined that the proposal would be accepted ahead of the formal proposal. When the girl's father accepted the proposal, the "word was tied" (*khosk' kap*). The boy's representatives then went to tell the prospective groom that they had "received the word". At that point, the female members of both families would begin to exchange visits. The girl's

family's first visit to the boy's home, called "viewing the groom," (*p' esah tes*), initiated inlaw relations which could last from several months to two or three years.

The formal betrothal usually took the form of a party at the girl's home. The boy's family presented the girl's family with a ring or other ornament called a "sign" (*nshan*). The party sometimes lasted for two days, with food, drink, music and dancing. The priest brought the couple before him and had them touch their foreheads together while they held lighted candles. The girl's face was covered with a veil. The boy's mother put a ring or other jewelry on the girl. The boy's godfather held a cross at the end of a long pole over the heads of the couple throughout the ceremony, and the priest instructed them in the joys and responsibilities of Armenian marriage and family.

Ordinarily, the wedding took place within a year after the formal betrothal. A family could not break an engagement without paying the other family compensation for loss of face.

Both the bride and groom underwent special preparations before the wedding. Generally, the young man was readied for his wedding day with much laughter and horseplay. The girl and her family, on the other hand, spent much of their remaining time together lamenting. The groom was taken by his godfather and friends to a public bathhouse or to the public area of the stable, there to be shaved and bathed. It was the godfather's responsibility to bring the barber to the village and to supervise his work, while the other village youths gathered around, shouting encouragement.

On the day of the wedding, the girl's own parish priest arrived at the house to bless the wedding garments before they were worn. The bride's wedding dress was usually provided by her parents. A round, dishlike ornament, sometimes decorated with pearls, rested high on her head and a chain of gold decorations was worn across her forehead. The wedding veil was usually red. Frequently, a "half-wedding" (*kes psak*) occurred at the girl's house, a ceremony that supposedly made it impossible for the girl's parents to substitute an ugly daughter for the promised bride. Following the *kes psak*, the girl is dressed by her godmother in preparation for her final leave-taking from her childhood home. Sometimes the bridal attendants sang throughout, or a village balladeer was brought in for this occasion. More often, the bride herself sang laments to her parents.

Meantime, the groom's boisterous procession, accompanied by drum and horn, had reached the girl's house to claim the bride. If the bride-to-be lived in the groom's own village, his family often called for her by walking to her house. However, if she lived outside the village, they came to claim her in a procession with at least one horse. Often the groom's family and relatives formed this group, while the groom waited for them at the church. Often, the front door to the bride's house was locked, preventing the group from taking the bride out. Only when the godfather rewarded the future brother-in-law with a coin was the door unlocked and the group allowed to enter the house.

With song and rejoicing, the wedding procession went directly to the church in the groom's parish or village. At the church, the marriage rituals of matrimony were performed, usually as part of the Divine Liturgy. The bride's face was covered with a half-veil. First the rings were blessed as a symbol of the couple's commitment to nourish each other, com-



pensating for each other's weaknesses or shortcomings, and contributing to the fulfillment of each other through their common union.

As the priest ascended the great altar and the wedding entourage entered the chancel, the Hum of Joy, *Urakhler*, was sung. Both bride and groom held lighted candles, and the godfather held the cross high above their heads. Blessed ribbons or woven threads (crowns in earlier times) called the *narot* were tied around the forehead of each. The young people stood forehead to forehead, nose to nose, and hand to hand, symbolizing the union of both their minds and their bodies. Probably a remnant of the ancient service of coronation, this ritual symbolizes God's blessing and crowning of the marriage with grace, wisdom, and integrity. The bride and groom in place, a hymn of intercession, *Ov yeranelid*, was chanted, calling upon the first Christian King of Armenia, Trdat, and Queen Ashkhen, to intercede for the stability and holiness of the marriage. The gospel narrating the marriage of Cana, when Christ performed the first of His miracles by changing water to wine, was read. The priest then offered the drinking from the "common cup" to the couple, to impress upon them the knowledge that from that moment on they would share everything in life, joys as well as sorrows. At some point during the ceremony, the bride and groom would exchange coins, symbolizing the sharing of all of the wealth in their household. The final liturgical expression in all services of the Armenian Church, the Lord's Prayer, was then said. In conclusion of the rituals, the couple jumped on a plate to ward off any evil that might come to them or to their home.

Having received the final blessing, the bride was led to her new home by her husband, resplendent with a sword at his side. Relatives and neighbors prepared appetizers, and put them, as well as drink, on tables in front of their houses. The wedding party, en route to the groom's house, stopped and ate and drank at each (considerably prolonging the return of the party to the groom's house).

At the groom's home, the bride's mother greeted them by dancing with two or three thin breads, *lavash*, which she then placed on the bride's head. The bride walked to all corners of her husband's home before removing them. These actions symbolized the bride's role as breadmaker and insured that the newlyweds' home would never lack bread,



the staff of life, and a full table. The mother-in-law would then sing, "You are welcome, you are welcome" (*Bari yekak', bari yekak'*), and place an earthenware plate, jug of water, or jar of candies in the hands of the new bride. The bride was to shatter the item against the threshold. In some areas, the bride was given a ripe pomegranate when she reached the door of the future nuptial chamber. There, she was expected to hurl the fruit against the closed door so that it shattered and scattered the seeds. The more seeds she succeeded in scattering, the more children she could expect to bear. Often, the groom was required to throw an apple at the door with such force that it would break into pieces, perhaps for the same reason, or perhaps to show his strength.

The reception would then begin in the groom's house, with food, music and dance in honor of the new bride and groom. Frequently, the reception did not include the bride's family. They would return to their own home, subdued and teary-eyed, having surrendered their girl to her new family. A master of ceremonies, chosen by the groom's friends from amongst themselves the night before the wedding, presided at the open house. Music, dance and food abounded. Meantime, the veiled bride was led to a corner and left seated there, with a supply of dried fruits, nuts and candies in a bag attached to her waist. These she gave to every relative or guest who approached her, asking to share her good fortune. Often, these "little gifts" took the form of *darosh* or *taros*, candy coated almonds, which symbolized the bitter and sweet of life. While giving out these little gifts, the bride remained silent and never looked on the faces of these supplicants. She was also required to kiss the hand of all guests who approached.

With the wedding ceremony and reception finished, and the bride's honor established, the newly united families began a period of cementing the in-law relationship. Fifteen days after the wedding, the girl's parents came to visit her, bringing her trousseau with them. The trousseau contained outstanding examples of the bride's handiwork, both with the needle and the loom, as well as enough clothing to last her for a very long time. Sometimes the bride also prepared other gifts, such as stockings, scarves, handkerchiefs, gloves, woolen leg wrappings, embroidered aprons for the women, and/or embroidered white pants for the men. There was a small celebration and excitement over the trousseau as everyone examined the items. The girl's parents then returned to their home and, as a rule, did not see their daughter again until she was sent home for a brief stay to visit her mother, usually at Easter.



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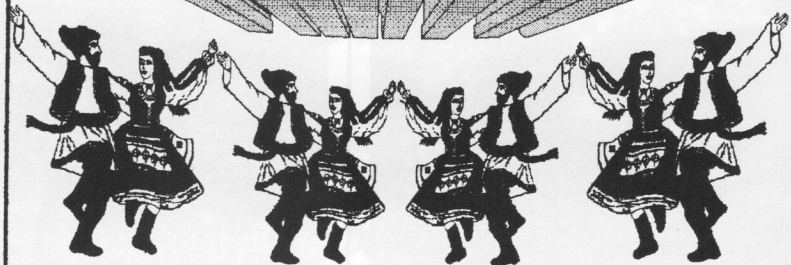
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