

Suite (1992)

Alexander Arutiunian

The *Suite* for violin, clarinet, and piano was commissioned by the Verdehr Trio and composed in 1992 in Erevan, Armenia. One notes the vivid Armenian character of the music which is always present in Arutiunian's style. The opening phrases of the *Introduction*, marked *Lento*, create tension with dark intonations in the low registers of the piano in combination with the violin. Though emotionally tense, the prevailing mood in this movement is lyrical. The *Scherzo* is a graceful *fugatto*. Next follows the *Dialog* for violin and clarinet—a short intermezzo between the *Scherzo* and *Finale*. The *Dialog* ends with a transition into the *Finale*. This movement contains the elements of Armenian dance rhythms with their capricious pulse and unexpected irregularities in a freely improvised melodic style.

The world premiere of *Suite* was on October 10, 1992 at a Fulbright Association Convention, Peabody Conservatory of Music, Baltimore, Maryland. It was also performed in Wigmore Hall, London, England.

Alexander Arutiunian (1920–2012) was born in Yerevan, Armenia (USSR) and was one of the best known and highly esteemed composers of the former Soviet Union. He studied composition and piano at the Armenian Conservatory and then perfected his skills with H. Litinsky in Moscow (1946–1948).

Arutiunian's works have won acclaim both nationally and internationally and are performed frequently throughout the world. Perhaps best known for the trumpet and violin concertos, his total output includes operas, cantatas, symphonic and chamber works.

Arutiunian was Head of the Composition Department at Yerevan State Conservatory for many years, and he served as Artistic Director of the Armenian State Philharmony. He was a member of the board of the USSR Composers Union as well as the Armenian Composers Union. In 1949, he was recognized with a Stalin Prize, and in 1970 he was named People's Artist of the USSR. His ninetieth birthday was celebrated with a series of concerts in his honor.