

# komitas vardapet

the inward peace we usually call courage

- a live multi-site concert
- dedicated to Komitas Vardapet
- Jerewan • Vienna • Venice
- planned for 2020

A cooperation between the National Research and Education Networks (NRENs)  
**ASNET-AM (Armenia), AConet (Austria), GARR (Italy),**  
and international venues and artists.

Our aim is to define contemporary partnerships  
between art, science and technology  
for the future.

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Komitas Vardapet (1869 – 1935)

## about komitas

Komitas Vardapet (Sghomon Sghomonian, 1869 – 1935) was an Armenian composer, musician, ethnographer, scientist, conductor, singer, teacher, publicist and poet, and founder of Armenian classical music and Armenian composing school.

Born in 1869 in Kütahya, he studied in Etchmiadzin, Tbilisi and Berlin. He lived in Paris, Venice and Constantinople, among other places. Without any doubt, he deeply influenced his environment wherever he was. His students, his audiences and his colleagues adored him equally.

*“If Komitas had written only ‘Antuni’ that would be enough to regard him as a great musician.” (Claude Debussy)*

Komitas Vardapet dedicated his life to Armenian spiritual and folk music. He published numerous and highly regarded articles in specialist journals. His work as a musicologist, choirmaster, arranger and composer was accompanied by countless press releases and announcements in international newspapers.

Komitas was a priest of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Even though his equal love for church and folk music led to controversies, he never tired of teaching against disdain and prejudice towards peasant music (at that time considered weak and sinful). As a skilled teacher and lecturer he rather tried to teach connecting elements, and to explain the different cultural influences in melodies and songs.

As a choir director he succeeded in forming choirs of several hundred singers. These choirs also supported and included female singers, which was not a matter of course for the church music of the time. Their acclaimed tours led them through the Ottoman Empire and Europe, and they also followed an invitation to Alexandria.

However, his brilliant creative period ended abruptly in 1915 with the Armenian Genocide. He survived, but not only his physical condition worsened extremely. From 1916 until his death he spent his time in various psychiatric institutes in Constantinople and France, where he died in 1935.

## about net:art

“Performing arts over advanced networks” is the generally accepted definition of net:art – a form of presenting performing arts that has the potential of becoming an art form in its own right.

A fully-fledged international community has sprung up that devotes itself to this matter. In Vienna – with our production series "near in the distance" – we are in the process of building up the net:art coordination center in order to introduce a wider audience to this ground-breaking technologies.

We are a core team of artists, producers, developers and technicians that expands according to the specific requirements of each production (i.e. the number of remote places or the challenges of the respective art content).

We share one dream: to connect artists performing at various locations all around the globe in real time and interactively, to transform physical absence into presence.

- We offer our audiences multiple accesses to art – online and offline.
- Connecting artists who are located on different stages around the world, enabling them to interact audio-visually within milliseconds – live, in real time – is quite a challenge.

Now we are eager to use our expertise and technical opportunities to honour the inspiring human being and artist Komitas Vardapet.

When we read about Komitas and listen to his compositions, we are sure that if he were alive, he would be thrilled to explore these possibilities in order to overcome artistic, cultural or physical boundaries in every perspective.

## the multi-site concert

The repertoire of Komitas Vardapet as a composer and arranger offers great opportunities to present a diverse program of art songs, folk songs, liturgies, polyphonic choral singing and church music.

The transmission of signals (mostly uncompressed) between different places in order to create multi-site performances in real time is one thing. Beyond that, there must be an added value for the artistic content.

If we cannot avoid transmission latencies, we have to integrate them – this applies not only to musical expression but also to all other forms of performing art. The state-of-the-art technologies are incredibly fascinating. Working with (and not against) the internet opens exciting challenges for creativity and new approaches to the interpretation of artistic themes.

Our NREN colleagues from Italy (GARR) and the Czech Republic (CESNET) will join us to develop a truly multimedia audio-visual concept.

- We will bring international musicians together in order to honour Komitas Vardapet and to celebrate his spirit, his soul and his courage.
- We will learn from his music and once more surprise our audience with the experience of the artistic and technical challenges of live music events in real time at distributed locations.

If financially feasible, we will produce a live-stream to reach as many audiences as possible around the globe.

## partners

### Jerewan | Armenia

- **venues:** Yerevan State Conservatory | Music Hall or National Academy of Sciences of Armenia | Main Hall (both venues are able to host several hundred people and are conveniently located at the center of Yerevan)
- **artists:** musicians of the Yerevan State Conservatory
- **remote places:** Vienna, Venice
- **NREN (National Research and Education Network):** ASNET-AM
- **in cooperation with:**  
IIAP – Institute for Informatics and Automation Problems  
of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia

IIAP and ASNET-AM will provide the network and technical support.  
ASNET-AM has LOLA equipment available.

**Additional intentions:** The realization of this project will contribute to the intensification of Armenia's internal (between Armenian organizations) and external (between Armenian and European organizations) cooperation. It will also help to deepen the practice of using modern AV streaming technologies in Armenia, which will open new horizons for Armenian musicians, artists and scientists in the future. These are very important impetuses for the mentioned Armenian organizations to actively take part in the realization of the proposed Komitas project.

In 2019, Armenians around the world are celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Komitas.

Even though the anniversary year is 2019, we will act in the spirit of Komitas Vardapet and perform the concert only under optimal conditions. This applies not only to the venues and the technical requirements, but also to the participating artists. For this reason we will not implement the planned project before 2020.

## partners

### Vienna | Austria

- **venues:** ORF Radiokulturhaus or Museumsquartier Wien (tbc)
- **artists:** musicians, visual artists (tbc)
- **remote places:** Jerewan, Venice
- **NREN:** ACOnet (net:art coordination center)
- **in cooperation with:**  
mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna

**Additional intentions:** ACOnet – in collaboration with many partners – has already accomplished three very successful productions in the field of performing arts over advanced networks that have gained international recognition. All details on these productions can be found at <https://www.netart.cc/>.

While our colleagues of the Italian and the Czech NREN are responsible for the development of the required low latency technologies (LOLA and UltraGrid), ACOnet draws on the resources of the Austrian art and culture scene to contribute to this intriguing topic.

The idea of jointly realizing a project about Komitas Vardapet was born during the international “Network Performing Arts Production Workshop” in April 2019 in Prague.

With Alexander de Goederen, we have a profound expert on the life and work of Komitas Vardapet at our side.

In addition to the Armenian Apostolic Church, Vienna is also home of the Armenian Catholic Church, which is closely associated with the Mekhitarist congregation. Members of the Armenian Apostolic Church have been living in Austria since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Today there are about 7000 Armenians in the country.

## partners

### Venice | Italy

- **venue:** tbc
- **artists:** musicians (tbc)
- **remote places:** Jerewan, Vienna
- **NREN:** GARR

**Additional intentions:** LOLA is a low latency audiovisual transmission technology which has been developed by Conservatorio di Musica “Giuseppe Tartini” in Trieste in collaboration with GARR. The impulse to develop this low latency tool came directly from musicians who are often involved in geographically distributed activities.

In 1907, Komitas visited and studied in Venice for three weeks. San Lazzaro degli Armeni, a small island in the Venetian Lagoon, accommodates the headquarters and, as such, one of the most important cultural centers of the Mekhitarist congregation. Here you will also find the death mask of Komitas Vardapet.

Venice culturally benefits from the influence and extensive collection of Armenian art and culture, which has been preserved in the monastery for centuries.

For organizational reasons we will nevertheless choose a venue directly in Venice.



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