

FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE

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**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS THE SHOGHAKEN ENSEMBLE,  
PERFORMING TRADITIONAL ARMENIAN SONG FORMS  
THURSDAY, APRIL 8 AT 8:00 P.M. IN WHEELER AUDITORIUM**

**BERKELEY, March 10, 2004** – Dedicated to rediscovering and preserving one of the oldest known musical legacies, Armenia's **Shoghaken Ensemble** comes to Wheeler Auditorium **Thursday, April 8 at 8:00 p.m.**, part of the group's first tour to the United States. The eight members of the ensemble perform on traditional instruments such as the *kamancha* (a three-string vertical fiddle), the *kanon* (a 72-string lap harp), and the *duduk* (a double-reed flute carved from apricot root dating back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century). Performing in Berkeley are founding member and *duduk* virtuoso **Gevorg Dabaghyan**, as well as **Tigran Ambaryan** (*kamancha*), **Aleksan Harutyunyan** (vocals), **Hasmik Harutyunyan** (vocals), **Karine Hovhannisyan** (*kanon*), **Kamo Khatchaturian** (*dhol*, a double-sided, cylindrical drum), **Grigor Takushian** (*dham duduk*), and **Levon Tevanyan** (the various reed instruments *blul*, *shvi*, *tav shvi*, and *pku*).

**SHOGHAKEN ENSEMBLE**

Armenia, a landlocked country tucked between Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan and Georgia, was one of the smallest republics in the former Soviet Union. While musical traditions from Ukraine to Tajikistan have either faded or disappeared entirely, those in Armenia flourish largely due to the work of the **Shoghaken Ensemble**. Founded in 1991 (the same year Armenia became independent), the Shoghaken Ensemble specializes in music from the geographical area bordered by the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, and the Caucasus Mountains, utilizing traditional instruments. Shoghaken's members began their musical lives in the 1980s as pupils in the Conservatory and State Folk Ensembles, where rigorous training developed their finely honed technique and musicianship. After the fall of communism, the newly-formed group eagerly sought out neglected traditional repertoire and performance styles, relishing the unraveling of the standard, highly formalized Soviet arrangements of folk music and exposing the improvisational, rhythmically dissonant elements of old Anatolian Armenian melodies. An invitation by

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renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma to perform at the 2002 Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C. further solidified Shoghaken's reputation as the premier Armenian folk ensemble.

The ensemble has recorded three CDs for the Traditional Crossroads label: *Armenian Lullabies* (2004), *Traditional Dances of Armenia* (2004) and *Armenian Anthology* (2002). The group also recently contributed to the soundtrack of Atom Egoyan's film, *Ararat*. Having toured extensively throughout the former Soviet Union and Europe, many of the Shoghaken musicians, especially *duduk* player Gevorg Dabaghyan, *kanon* player Karine Hovhannisyan and folk singer Hasmik Harutyunyan, have earned wide acclaim as soloists.

### **GEVORG DABAGHYAN**

"There may be no instrument that can sound as richly inconsolable as the *duduk*," commented *The New York Times* of Shoghaken Ensemble founder and virtuoso *duduk* musician **Gevorg Dabaghyan**, "Mr. Dabaghyan plays right up to the brink of melodrama without ever falling into it." Dabaghyan began studying the centuries-old instrument at the age of 15 and has won prizes at the International Eastern Traditional Instruments competition in 1990 and at the Sayat Nova *duduk* competitions in both 1991 and 1992. A product of the prestigious Komitas State Conservatory, under the guidance of K. Avetisian, Dabaghyan is one of the rare Armenian folk musicians who is also an accomplished classical musician. This duality has allowed Dabaghyan to move Armenian song forms in new directions while preserving the music's cultural legacy. Known for his expressive playing, Dabaghyan is the first to play Armenian sacred music on the *duduk* and the first to use a traditional Armenian instrument to accompany new symphonic and choral works by contemporary Armenian composers, including Vache Sharafyann's *The Sun, the Wine, and the Wind of Time*, which Dabaghyan performed with Yo-Yo Ma and his Silk Road Project chamber ensemble at Cal Performances in April 2002.

Dabaghyan is a much sought-after collaborator, performing recently in concert with the violinist Gidon Kremer and the saxophonist Jan Garbarek and contributing on several film soundtracks including Atom Egoyan's *Ararat* and the Iranian movie *Miss Maria*. His first solo recording, *Miniatures: Masterworks for Armenian Duduk* (2002), received universal praise.

### TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Shoghaken Ensemble** on **Thursday, April 8 at 8:00 p.m.** in Wheeler Auditorium are priced at **\$26.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperfs.berkeley.edu](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu); and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at [www.calperfs.berkeley.edu](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu).

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#### CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

**Thursday, April 8 at 8:00 p.m.**

**Wheeler Auditorium, UC Berkeley Campus**  
Central Campus at Sather Gate, Berkeley

*World Stage*  
**Shoghaken Ensemble**

#### **Program:**

The celebrated eight-piece Armenian folk ensemble brings the folk dances, love songs and lullabies of the Caucasus Mountain region to Wheeler Auditorium.

**Tickets:** \$26.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperfs.berkeley.edu](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu); and at the door.

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