

the
Armenian
DUDUK

An Instructional Book For Beginners

Instructions Written by
Dr. John Vartan

Additional Text & Edited by
Ara Topouzian



Published By American Recording Productions

© 2000 All Rights Reserved Unauthorized reproduction of this booklet is prohibited.

Contents

Armenia	Page 2-3
An Outline of Armenian Music	Page 4
Introduction To The Duduk	Page 5
The Duduk: Its Design	Page 5
Holding The Instrument	Page 6
The Reed	Page 6
Duduk Fingering	Page 7
Duduk Fingering Chart	Page 8
Scales	Page 8-9
Rhythms	Page 9
Modes	Page 10
Caring For The Duduk	Page 10

© Copyright 2000 All Rights Reserved. Published by Ara Topouzian, American Recording Productions

Duduk Instruction Written By: Dr. John Vartan

Additional Text and Edited By: Ara Topouzian

Photographs By: John Vartan and Ara Topouzian

Duduk Fingering Chart Illustration By: Armen Topouzian

Special thanks to Raffi Kajian for use of his historical information. Visit his informative web site at www.cilicia.com.

No portion of this book (photo or text) may be reproduced without expressed written permission from the publisher. Unauthorized usage of this booklet and its contents are a violation of copyright law.



DR. JOHN VARTAN

John Vartan is an artist of uncommon skill who specializes in the performance of twenty-two Middle Eastern musical instruments, including the Duduk, Tar, Oud, Kernenche, Saz, Sring, Zurna and Kaval. He collected most of these while traveling in the Middle East, namely to Armenia, Greece, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and Morocco. John sings, and plays Armenian folkloric music on each instrument. He has made six albums and has recorded on more than eighteen others, including television advertisements and shows, and on movie sound tracks. Dr. Vartan received his doctorate from New York University in January, 1984. He has been working at Kean University in Union, New Jersey since 1980.



ARA TOPOUZIAN

Ara showed an interest in music in early youth. He played the cornet through the public school music program. In college, he began studying Armenian and Middle Eastern classical and folk music. In 1991, he formed American Recording Productions (ARP) with the intent to record and preserve this type of world music. To date, his record label has produced over twenty recordings of Armenian and Middle Eastern music. ARP products are distributed nationwide in most major retail outlets and the internet. He has performed at several Armenian and world music concerts and festivals throughout the country. Ara's music was featured in a PBS documentary entitled *The Armenian Americans*, which was produced in 2000.

Armenia by Raffi Kojian

Armenians are an Indo-European race, whose origins are not clearly known. Specialists speculate that the Armenians migrated to the Armenian Highland via the Balkans or the Caucasus. At that time the area was inhabited by the Urartians, who seem to have



assimilated very quickly and absorbed the language of the newcomer Armenians. An advanced Urartian nation existed at the turn of the first millennium before Christ, later replaced by the first Armenian kingdom in the sixth century B.C.. This kingdom united the tribes of Hayasi and Armen.

Armenia was independent on and off starting in the ninth century, BC. At times it was splintered, at other times engulfed temporarily by neighbors, but until the Armenian genocide

in 1915, large numbers of Armenians lived throughout the Caucasus and Anatolia, from the Mediterranean, to the Black and Caspian seas.

At its largest, the Armenian Empire encompassed that entire area under the rule of Tigran the Great, shortly before the time of Christ's birth. The work of the apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew in Armenia after Jesus' crucifixion set the stage for the official conversion of Armenia in 301 A.D. to Christianity, the first country to officially do so. Traditionally, it was Saint Gregory the Illuminator who's prayers healed the king, causing the pagan king, and country to become officially Christian.

A century later the monk Mesrop Mashtots invented the Armenian alphabet in order to translate the Bible. As large parts of Armenia became parts of the Persian and Byzantine Empires, the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia was born on the Mediterranean coast in 1080. It existed for hundreds of years and was very helpful to the crusaders. Eventually it was conquered by the Mameluks 1375.

In 1047, Seljuk Turks invade Armenia for the first time and by the 1300s were ruling large parts of historic Armenia in Anatolia. At the same time the Persians were ruling Eastern or Caucasian Armenia, which caused the political separation of the Armenian people. Even as Persian rule over Caucasian Eastern Armenia gave way to Russian rule, the political separation of the Armenians did not change, and along with the mountainous terrain caused a large overall rift in the eastern and western Armenian dialects, and other associated differences.

As the concept of nationalism reached Armenia, new international Armenian organizations were formed, and new Armenian literature crossed borders, desires for an end to the separation spread.

Brief History of Armenia *cont.*

Unfortunately, a virulent form of nationalism was adopted by the leadership of the Ottoman Empire before the beginning of the first world war. As they saw their European holdings disappearing, and saw a national consciousness forming among Armenians, they began formulating a plan to rule all of the Turkic peoples across Anatolia, Caucasia, and Central Asia. The Armenians were the only nationality between Anatolian Turks and the eastern Turks, so the Ottoman rulers, primarily Talaat Pasha decided to eliminate them completely so that they could never threaten the heartland of this new empire.

The mass killings began in 1915, and by the time Mustafa Kemal formed the Republic of Turkey and expelled all of the remaining Armenians in Anatolia in the early 1920's the Armenian population went from 2 million to virtually zero in Anatolia. A fledgling Armenian Republic was born in Caucasia with the collapse of the Russian Empire which was attacked by Mustafa Kemal's forces which resulted in the annexation and depopulation of Armenians from Kars and Ardahan as well. This Armenian Republic was attacked by Soviet forces which were repelled once, but not the second time.

The policies of glasnost and perestroika were first tested on a revolutionary scale by the one million strong peaceful Armenian protests demanding the union of Karabakh with Armenia in February, 1988. These protests shocked the world and led to outbursts of nationalism throughout the East Bloc countries and eventually splintered the Soviet Union in December, 1991. The last few years of the Armenian SSR saw the most destructive earthquake it had known, the start of a brutal war in Karabakh, and a suffocating blockade of Armenia by Azerbaijan and Turkey. The fighting ended in 1994, but a peace treaty has not been signed to this day. This meant that in addition to privatizing the economy, forming a new government, and dealing with the collapse of the heavily interdependent Soviet factory system, landlocked Armenia had to spend much of its budget on the military, and develop entirely new supply systems over the long windy mountain roads linking to Iran, and the uncontrolled streets of Georgia.

Today Armenia's economy is growing again with tourism, information technologies, and other fields of business rapidly expanding. Throughout history Armenian art and culture have been influenced by far off places due to its location in the middle of the silk road.

At the same time a uniqueness has been preserved in the architecture, music, khachkar carvings, and illuminated manuscripts that have left a rich legacy for today's Armenia, and which in turn have influenced art in Europe and Asia as well.

There is much more that can be said about Armenia and its people. For further information, it is recommended that you search the internet for more information or visit the following web sites: www.cilicia.com www.arpmusic.com

An Outline of Armenian Music *by Ara Topouzian*

There are many forms of traditional Armenian music ranging from music composed by Armenians in Turkey to composers in Eastern Armenia. For the purpose of this publication and its relevance to the duduk, I will discuss the music of Eastern Armenia detailing a few important aspects of the history.

Armenian music is part of an ancient culture that was partly created many centuries ago when the *khaz* notation was developed by **Hambardzum Limondjian**, a scholar of Armenian secular music of the 19th century. This notation is still utilized today. Several important Armenians composed beautiful music that can still be heard in Eastern Armenia and the United States.



One of those composers was **Sayat Nova** (1712-1795), born in Tiflis, Georgia. He was a court musician to King Hercules II and was considered a *Ashough* (or Troubadours). Ashoughs were musician/poets that travelled the countryside gathering and exchanging songs. This professional minstrel representative was notable for his Armenian vocal writings of that particular period in Armenia.

Another proponent of Armenian music was **Komitas** (1869-1935) who collected more than 3,000 folk songs ranging from Armenian to Persian material during his lifetime. Komitas played a major role in the music heard in Armenian churches today. He was arrested by the Turks on April 24, 1915 and deported to a prison camp, driven mad by the sight of the his fellow Armenians being slaughtered. He was put in an asylum a year later and eventually died in Paris, France. The instruments used in Armenia have passed through several countries and are continued to be used throughout Armenia, Turkey, Greece, and Iran. Instruments such as the oud (lute) and the kanun (harp) appear in Armenian manuscripts dating back to the 10th century.



Komitas Vartabed

Between the 12th and 13th centuries musical instruments such as the duduk, dhol (drum), zurna (oboe) and kemenche (violin) were introduced in liturgical manuscripts.



The **OULD** comes from the Middle East and is commonly used in Armenian, Greek, Arabic and Turkish music. This pear-shaped instrument typically has eleven strings.



The **KANUN** also comes from the Middle East and is commonly used in Armenian, Greek, Arabic and Turkish music. With over seventy four strings and 24 courses, this instrument is played like a laptop harp.

Introduction To The Duduk

The duduk is an Armenian wind instrument. It originated before the time of Christ, and has maintained its basic design throughout the centuries. Today, it continues to be played as a classic folkloric instrument in the music ensembles of Armenia. Neighboring countries and cultures play a very similar instrument, called "mey"* and "balaban" but the style of playing and the tone of those instruments are markedly different from the sound of the duduk.

The duduk has become quite popular here in the USA in recent years. It can be heard in the background of several television shows and movies. Armenian musicians such as Djivan Gasparyan have made the duduk popular within the Western music world. It's beautiful mellow tone is very much like the quality of a human voice, and its timbre and range transude a deep warmth which is extremely appealing and relaxing.

The tone of the duduk is somewhat similar to that of a soprano saxophone. However, the duduk is much smaller in size and is a double-reed instrument, whereas the soprano saxophone is a single reed instrument with a higher range of tones.

The mey has been portrayed by some as exactly the same as the duduk. This is untrue. The mey and duduk are different instruments made in different countries. An authentic duduk is solely made in Armenia and the mey has been produced in Turkey and other Middle Eastern countries. The mey and duduk are very similar in design but there are some subtle difference. The differences are mainly the type of wood used for the body of the instrument and the design of the reeds.

The Duduk: *Its Design*

Most duduks are made from a hard fruit wood (usually of apricot wood). The wood is dark brown in color, typically has eight holes on the visual side and one left-hand thumb hole on the under-side.

Traditionally, duduks have neatly carved, parallel lines, or circles, all around the barrel for aesthetic design. One end of the barrel is widened to accept the double reed, know as "Khamish." This reed is most unique in the world of reeds since it is so much larger than the oboe or bassoon reeds -which are also double reed instruments.

The size, or length in inches of a duduk reed varies with pitch and size of the duduk. One may use a different duduk for a variety of pitches or keys. The range of the duduk is approximately one octave or eight to ten tones/notes.



Holding the Instrument

The instrument is held with the left hand above the right. Instead of using the tips of the fingers, duduk players use the center of each of the fingers. When placing the instrument in the mouth, tuck both the lips under both sets of teeth.



The Reed: *armature, blowing, breathing techniques*

The armature is made up of the muscles surrounding the lips. With practice, the armature strengthens, so it does take a while before sweet tones are able to be developed. *(Be patient! This is difficult, practice makes perfect.)*

Before blowing into the reed, be certain that the reed is well-soaked. *(Be careful - too much moisture on the reed will expand the opening of the reed too much and will prevent you from playing the duduk properly).* The timing of this procedure depends on the particular reed, it could be anywhere between three and eight minutes. You will notice that each reed comes with a "cap" and a flattened ring tuner. The cap is to keep the tip of the reed together and not widen excessively, and to protect it from splitting or getting cracked. The flattened ring is to tune the reed and to prevent the reed from opening too wide.

Blowing pressure will vary according to the texture desired. After some time, perhaps as much as six months, the player should develop a strong enough armature and tone quality to produce a pleasing vibrato. A featured technique commonly used by duduk players is continuous breathing. This is when the player is able to blow air continuously through the mouth while breathing through the nose-non-stop. The way one can accomplish this technique is to practice blowing into a straw in water. You store the air by forcibly inflating your cheeks. Without interrupting the flux of wind coming out of the duduk, you should simultaneously deflate your cheeks and compress the air in them and at the same time you take in air from your nose, and continue blowing. This is not an easy technique and professional wind players discourage this technique for amateurs because of the risk involved

When one hears a professional recording of an Armenian duduk piece, you will always hear two players, one playing the melody and the other sustaining a drone. A drone is a long, sustained humming sound. This accompanying drone enables the player to both stay on pitch as well as create a relaxing, soothing mood. The drone is also commonly used in the East to fill the air with musical sound, and as a reference point for the listener and musician. For the majority of songs in Armenian music, this drone is the ending tone where the piece of music ends. In most cases the reed does not have to be shaved down for tuning. You can develop your armature by practicing at least 15 minutes a day.

Duduk Fingering

Begin by placing all fingers covering all holes. The thumb is always held down except in two cases, that is, for the two tones "a" and "b." It is best to look into a mirror while doing this. Maintain the style of duduk players by using the center of each finger to cover the holes.

Release, or lift up the right little finger, while still holding down the other three fingers on the right hand. For most duduks this will be the note "A." This tone should be verified with the corresponding pitch on a piano, tuning fork, or pitch pipe.

Lift the right hand ring finger, and this will be the note "B."

As you lift the next finger this will be "C." In several cases, the right-hand ring finger has to cover its hole so as to correct the pitch of the "C."

The "D" is played by holding down all the fingers of the left hand.

The next tone up is "E," or the thumb and three fingers.

The next tone is "F" and this is the thumb and two fingers.

Going further up the scale is "G" or thumb and the index finger.

The last tone in this octave scale is "A" or a release of the thumb and simply holding down the left index finger.

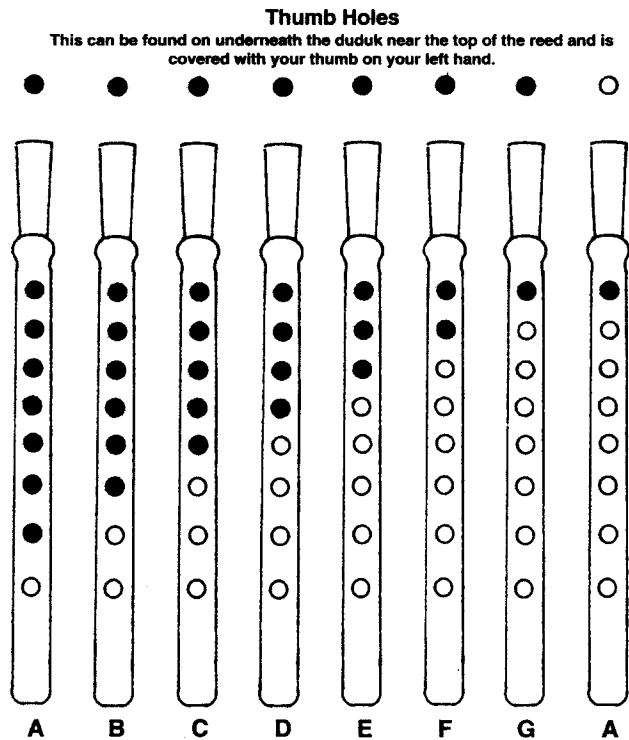


Front look on how to initially hold the duduk, note the placement of fingers

In order to develop a means of understanding music, the ability to communicate about music, and to read music these positions must be memorized. They form the basis for further expansion of ones knowledge of the modes played and of music itself. Please refer to the photos showing the various fingerings. The other hole at the bottom of the instrument is there for intonation (instead of having a bell).

The player fingers a sharp or flat most often by using half-holes. In some cases, that is, for a few notes "trick fingering" is used. Trick fingering is covering a different combination of holes than that which is used normally. So, for example, to play 'A': is to hold the Right Hand ring fingers down (with all holes above it covered). To play 'B' lift the Right Hand ring finger (with all holes above it covered). To play 'C' lift the middle finger (with all holes above it covered); here, it is often necessary to hold the ring finger down at the same time to achieve a 'C' that is in tune. This is an example of the "trick fingering" used for whole and half tones. Should you wish to hit a C#, you would role the index finger towards her or himself to cover half the hole.

Duduk Fingering Chart



○ - Open Key
● - Closed Key

©2000 Illustration By: Armen Topouzian

Scales

We can begin with A minor, since nearly everyone knows the alphabet from A to G. There are a series of eight tones that correspond to these eight letters, that is, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and A again. (This is known as an octave.)

Tones in between these eight tones are referred to as half-steps or half-tones. It is necessary to learn these notes so that one can communicate music terms with another. The beginner should go up and down this scale (A minor) to develop perfection.

You might check the accuracy of each note by playing it against a piano or pitch pipe. Using the same pattern of going up and down the scale by lifting each finger in succession, the student should play the G major scale. Begin with all fingers down, covering all holes, this is "G." Climbing the scale in the same fashion as the A minor scale we have: G, A, B, C, D, E, F# and G again. The F# (F sharp) is accomplished by playing half the hole under the middle finger of the left hand.

Scales *cont from page 8.*

Trick fingering may be used in some cases, but most often half holes must be used for the half tones. Half tones are referred to as flats (noted here as b) and sharps (noted here as #). Recommended practicing techniques include playing scales and exercises within the scale, such as, A,C,B,D,C,E,D,F,E,G,F,A,G,B,A and go down in that same fashion.

Rhythms

2/4 Rhythm

It is simply counted as 1, 2, 1, 2, and so on.

3/4 Rhythm

This is the same time signature as the waltz, counted as 1,2,3..1,2,3..1,2,3.

4/4 Rhythm

This is a universal tempo with which every nation in the world is familiar, probably because of our walking paces and our beating hearts. It is counted simply as 1,2,3,4..1,2,3,4 and so on.

5/4 Rhythm

This is counted as 1,2,3,4,5..1,2,3,4,5, or as : 1,2,1,2,3..1,2,1,2,3 to accentuate the two down beats.

6/8 Rhythm

This is an extremely popular tempo for Armenians and for other nations of the Caucasian region. It is counted in a straight forward fashion: 1,2,3,4,5,6..1,2,3,4,5,6 and so on. There are usually three descriptive speeds, slow, medium, and fast.

7/8 Rhythm

This is a highly valued tempo in the Balkans as well as Greece and Armenia. It is typically counted as 1,2,3,1,2,3,4..1,2,3,1,2,3,4, etc.

8/8 Rhythm

8/8 is very much like 4/4 and 2/4 since they have the same derivative. One can simply count 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 for each measure of music.

9/8 Rhythm

It is most often counted as 1,2,3,4,1,2,3,4,5..1,2,3,4,1,2,3,4,5. This tempo is used for the popular dance Tamzara.

10/8 Rhythm

It is easiest to count it as 1,2,3,4,5,1,2,3,4,5. This tempo is referred to as "the Bar" (the dance) by American Armenians, and helps to distinguish Armenian music from other cultures, or nations, of the Middle East. This tempo is widely played at Armenian events and dances, while it is rarely heard at other Middle Eastern country events or dances. These are the primary tempos played in Armenian music. Sometimes Armenians will write melodies that use several of these tempos in one piece of music.

Modes

There are many modes that are described by writers on this subject. However, it has been my experience in working with musicians from many Middle Eastern countries, that only the fundamental terms are used. I recommend that students become very familiar with the following modes and use them to understand Armenian and Middle Eastern music and to be able to communicate to other musicians. The modes shown here are mainly utilized for folk and classical music of the Middle East. Most music of the Middle East is arranged in *makam*, (Middle Eastern term describing the modal system) which are comparable to Western music's scales or modes.

1.	Rast:	D E F# G A B C# d
2.	Nihavent:	D E F G A Bb C# d
3.	Hijaz:	E F G# A B C# D E
4.	Huseyni:	E F# G A B C# D E
5.	Ushak	A B C D E F# G A
6.	Chataraban:	A Bb C# D E F G# A
7.	Shenaz:	A B C D# E F# G A
8.	Sabah:	E F# G Ab B C D Eb F# G
9.	Huzzam:	F# G A Bb C# D F F#

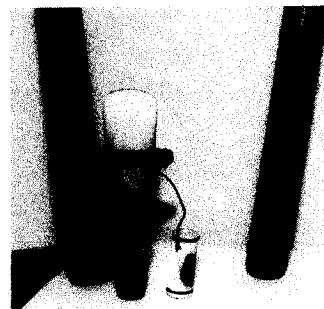
Caring For The Duduk

As with any wooden wind instrument, clarinet, oboe, piccolo, the wood should be cared for by swabbing and an occasional light oil to keep the instrument from cracking. The oil preserves the wood from warping and cracking, and also gives the instrument a nice and professional look.

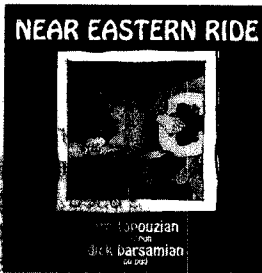
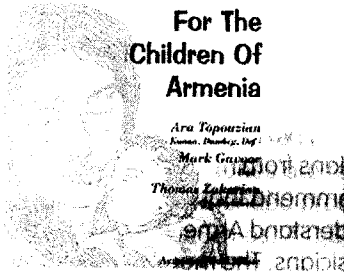
The cap that is tied to the bridle should be placed on the reed whenever the instrument is not being played. The cap serves a few purposes - to protect the reed and to keep the reed from staying wide open. Be careful with the bottom portion of the reed that is tightly wrapped with string.

The string is glued on and should not unravel. If the string does unravel, simply put a little amount of glue and wipe it on the end that is loose. This portion of the reed fits in the duduk (the wide end of the instrument) and the wrapped-string acts as a grip to keep the reed snug in the instrument.

Please keep in mind that this is an entirely handmade instrument which takes several hours for makers to produce a fine product. Care for it as you would any delicate product.



Shown here is the reed and the bridle wrapping around the reed along with the cap which is attached to the bridle.



www.arpmusic.com

**Producers and Distributors of Traditional
Armenian and Middle Eastern Music**

**For More Information on the
Authentic Armenian Duduk
go to: www.armenianduduk.com**

Call for a FREE catalog

1-800-322-8340

