

Konstantin Orbelian
1928 - 2014

KONSTANTIN ORBELIAN

September 19, 1928 - April 24, 2014

Composer, People's Artist of the USSR and Armenia

Winner of international and national awards

Member of the Presidium of the International Academy of Science, Education and the Arts California.

Honorary citizen of Yerevan and Goris.

A talented composer of classical music (symphony, ballet, chamber ensemble), jazz, and popular

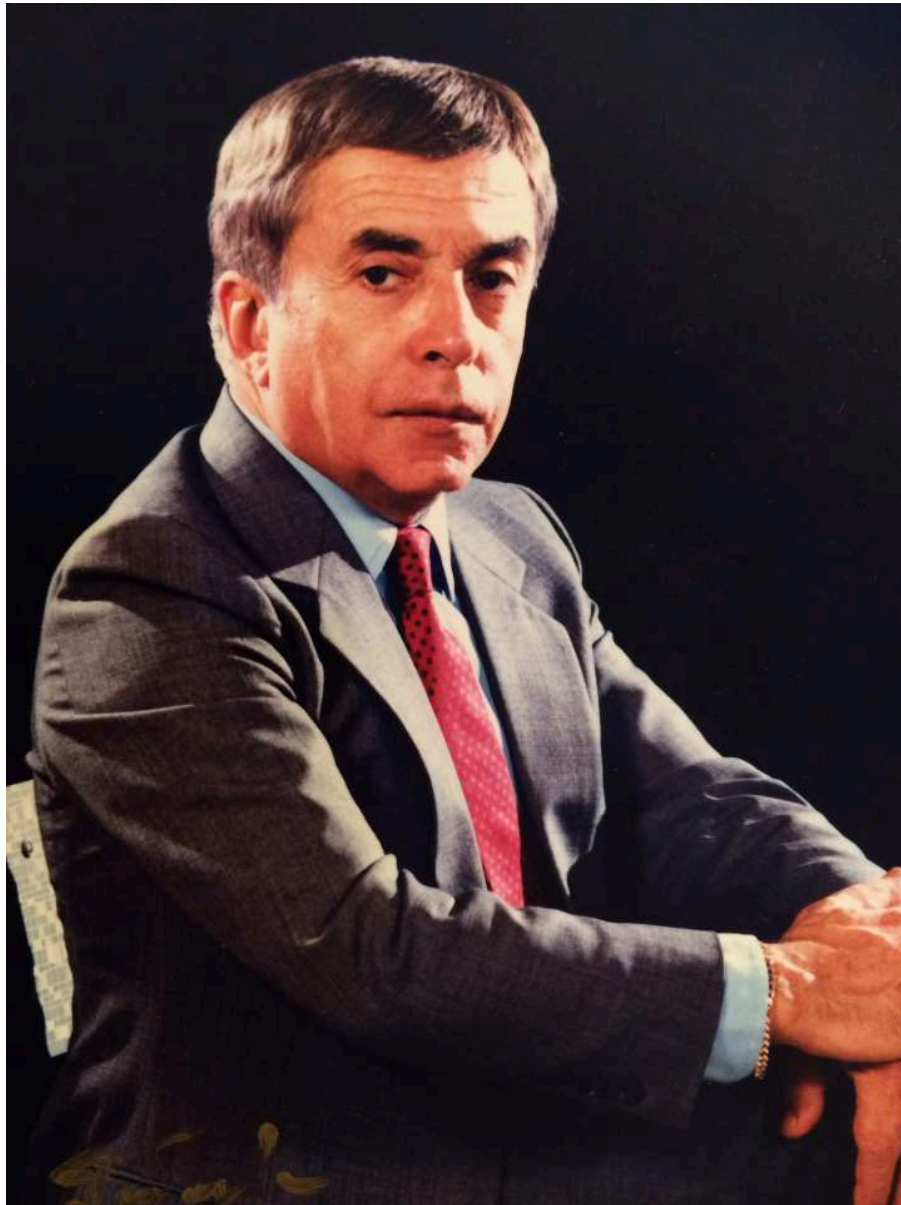


songs, Konstantin Orbelian was one of the brightest phenomena of Soviet and post-Soviet musical culture. He was the recipient of significant awards in the former Soviet Union, the Armenian Republic, and the international musical community. He has

received the highest accolades from the three Soviet presidents: the award "For Services to Labor" from Khrushchev; the title "People's Artist of the USSR" from Brezhnev, and, finally, the "Friendship of Peoples" prize from Gorbachev in 1989.

Konstantin Orbelian has been acknowledged as a pianist and improviser since he was in his teens. At age fifteen, he was invited to perform with the Armenian State Pop Orchestra; and subsequently became its conductor. Under his able direction for thirty-six years, the Orchestra rose to become one of the most accomplished of its kind. As a result, it came to represent Soviet jazz in more than thirty countries in Eastern and Western Europe, the Near East, Africa, and

Southeast Asia. One of the Orchestra's highlights was its American tour in 1975, which included twenty-five concerts in major cities from coast to coast.



Graduating in composition and piano from Edward Mirzoyan's class of composition at Yerevan's Komitas Conservatory in 1963, Orbelian achieved early recognition for his String Quartet, winning the coveted First Prize at the International Competition in Moscow, where the chairman of the Competition's panel of judges was the composer Dmitri Shostakovich. As a result, Orbelian's rising talent and success were noted with great appreciation by the doyen of Armenian music of the time, Aram Khachaturian. Next followed the premiere of Orbelian's First Symphony in Moscow's famous Tchaikovsky Hall by the USSR State Symphony Orchestra. For

this Symphony, Orbelian was awarded the title “Laureate of the All-Union Competition.” His subsequent Celebration Overture achieved the same acclaim. His ballet symphony “Immortality” was composed in 1975 and performed by the Yerevan Opera and Ballet Theater. This work, too, won First Prize in an All-Union Competition devoted to music for the stage.

One of Orbelian’s more recent compositions in the classical idiom, an orchestral miniature with solo piano, was written in memory of George Gershwin, and was first performed by the Moscow Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Orbelian’s nephew, Constantine Orbelian.

Ever versatile in the scope of his repertoire, Konstantin Orbelian has written musical scores for a number of films, including Krkesi Chanaparhin [On the Way to the Circus] and Sirte Yergum e [The Heart Sings]; music for the theater; pop songs; jazz; and scores for stage musicals. Several of these compositions have won prestigious prizes. The subject of two documentary films in Russian, Orbelian was the vice-president of the International Association of the Union of Musicians in Moscow.

For many years maestro was planning to write an oratorio dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. He passed away on April 24, the day when Armenians annually commemorate these atrocities that happened to his people.

Awarded Medals

- “St. Mesrob Mashtots” - 2003, Armenia
- “St. Mesrob Mashtots” - 2009, Artsakh
- “Gold Cross” - Armenian Union of Russia - 2009
- “Friendship of Peoples” - Russia
- “Saints Cyril and Methodius” - Bulgaria
- “Medal of Honor” - Russia
- “Medal of Honor” - Armenia

