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Andy Nercessian. *The Duduk and National Identity in Armenia*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2001. v, 141 pp.: transcriptions, appendixes. ISBN: 0-8108-4075-8. \$35.00 (cloth).

An instrument's invention, survival, death, and possible revival depend upon many cultural determinants. To withstand the test of time, an instrument must be flexible enough to accommodate fresh repertoire, compete with new technologies, and adapt to changing contexts. Sometimes an instrument and the events connected with it are suppressed or controlled by political or religious forces, but the instrument's sound and image persist in secret or reemerge as defiant emblems of resistance, survival, and identity. The latter situation is documented by Andy Nercessian, whose fieldwork during the 1990s forms the basis for his dissertation-like book, *The Duduk and National Identity in Armenia*. Nercessian, using a historical and sociocultural approach, attempts to explain how the duduk (pronounced *doo-dook*), a conical double-reed instrument similar to others found in West and Central Asia, became "the most 'Armenian of all instruments' " (p. 3).

The book is divided into four interrelated parts that sequentially build an explanation for how Armenians selected the duduk, its sound, and its image as embodying the national experience. Part 1, "Preliminaries," the first four chapters, sets the stage with information about the author and his previous exposure to the instrument; a cursory description and history of the duduk; a survey of problems in organological theory concerning interpretation of context and meaning(s); and an overview of Armenian history, including factors such as religion, nationalism, genocides, and *Korenizatsia* (Soviet cultural policies) that have shaped national identity. Here Nercessian grapples with the idea of a polysemous approach to studying an instrument: context may prompt so many meanings that the preeminence of one or other of these within society needs to be explained. He suggests that musical instruments and their meanings should be analyzed through a "trialectic" that takes into consideration the instrument's physicality, its context(s), and its audience.

Part 2, "The Centrality of National Identity to Perceptions of the Duduk," focuses on the duduk's history beginning with the 1920s, since—with the exception of some archeological evidence—there is a lack of earlier performance data and actual instruments. This invites the question of whether the current practice is based on an older tradition or if it is an invention influenced chiefly by centuries of Russian rule and

cultural influence and manipulation. Building upon ideas advanced by Theodore Levin, Nercessian illustrates how Russian influence was intensified and redirected by Marxist-Leninist *Korenizatsia* policies. Soviet-imposed practices included three main elements: Europeanization (establishment of conservatories, formation of ensembles of folk instruments, use of notation) as a means of “cultural advancement”; elimination of cultural forms which distinguish class differences or a folk-classical dichotomy; and “preservation” of “national” elements by standardizing and “improving” indigenous instruments. Using this scheme, a somewhat artificial, nationally unifying culture was conceived. Likewise, broadcasts and recordings of newly created folk ensembles and orchestras using new arrangements, and the introduction of notation, the diatonic scale, and duduk studies in conservatories contributed to a duduk consciousness as Armenia moved from the agrarian society associated with the instrument to an urbanized one. Recordings and films featuring the duduk, the rise of virtuoso performers such as Djivan Gasparyan, the instrument’s occasional use at political demonstrations during the 1960s, and its promotion by pop artist Brian Eno raised the instrument’s status to that of a “symbol of Armenianness.” During the post-Soviet decade, Gasparyan incorporated the duduk into other types of music, recording with well-known Western orchestras and taking a prominent musical role in the film *The Last Temptation of Christ*. These syncretic styles established Gasparyan as an international artist and as a musical representative of Armenia who promoted the melancholic sound of the duduk. This use of the instrument differs from the traditional one, which is the focus of the book’s third section.

Part 3, “Context as Prime Determinant of Meaning,” chapters 7–9, reveals various contexts in which the duduk is found. Describing his fieldwork and taking the musician’s point of view, the author guides the reader through the musical process of an Armenian funeral, from hiring the *dudukahars* (duduk players) to their final performance at the grave. Nercessian points out that this is the strongest traditional association of the duduk for Armenians. This tradition, revitalized after the Soviet era, reinforces Armenian sentiments that the duduk is an instrument that, although used on happier occasions, best expresses sadness and melancholy. This concept is supported by Aram Khachaturian, Alan Hovhannes, and other composers, who feel that the instrument’s sound embodies the history and pathos of a people long oppressed by a series of conquests and subjugations. The author suggests that it is this attitude

held by the Armenian people that empowers the duduk to make listeners feel deeply, and thus raises the instrument's status.

Other contexts such as solo competitions and national celebrations represent a return to traditions lost during the Soviet era. Alongside these more time-honored forms, the folk orchestras established as part of Soviet policies around 1926 continued to provide musicians with employment opportunities. Such ensembles, incorporating non-traditional duduk concertos, offer musicians an opportunity to play uniquely Armenian music, and the international exposure of these ensembles, through television, recordings, and live concerts, has become a way of representing Armenian culture to others. This context also provides musicians with a channel through which they can achieve national and international status and "allows for an interaction with the transcendental idea of nation, the provision of cultural substance to a large community" (p. 71).

The final chapter discusses the distinction between a real and perceived past and questions the concept of cultural memory as embodied by music and an instrument within changing contexts.

Six appendixes follow: transcriptions; a detailed description of the duduk and its playing technique; a statement about the repertoire; measurements used in duduk construction; an Armenian chronology; and the worldwide distribution of Armenians for 1988.

The complex and highly commendable case study presented in *The Duduk and National Identity in Armenia* does not represent a culturally rare phenomenon. Rather, it highlights one culture and its construct of identity, as embodied by the physical presence and sound of the duduk. And it provides a useful model for other scholars who might wish to carry out similar studies on the creation and maintaining of symbols. Organologists constantly deal with issues of context as part of their interpretive method; it is context that defines the meaning of the object within the culture. But Nercessian seems to voice the general perception that organologists only concern themselves with description and construction details and that they should follow his lead by presenting a contextual analysis. Certainly, many ethnomusicologists have for years been trying to present more holistic studies of music and instruments and their role in society. In Alan P. Merriam's 1964 book *The Anthropology of Music* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press), we are advised to ask: "Is there present in the society a concept of special treatment of music instruments? Are some revered? Do some symbolize other kinds

of cultural or social activity? Are particular instruments the harbingers of certain kinds of messages of general import to the society at large? Are the sounds or shapes of particular instruments associated with specific emotions, states of being, ceremonials, or calls to action?" (Merriam, p. 45).

The foreword to Nercessian's book, which was pasted into my copy, reflects a notion that many musicians perpetuate concerning museums and curators. Written by composer Benedict Mason, it accuses curators, Western ones in particular (I do not know why), of condemning instruments to "become artifacts, rather than living things that can be restored or remade and given a continued life." He implies that instruments should be played and repaired. But curators have learned through experience that such activities wear out the instrument and destroy evidence—it eventually ceases to be part of the historical record for researchers like Mason, who constructs instruments, and loses its documentary value to someone like Nercessian. This unfortunate and misinformed attitude, presented at the start of the book, made me wonder about the author's understanding of the field, if he was familiar with museological standards, and if he actually knew any curators in major collections.

While the book's information is compelling, revealing, and useful for understanding the variable dynamics at work in the production of a symbol, its lack of technical drawings, photographs, recordings, and a discography—more or less standard features in a work of this type—limits its usefulness in achieving a fuller understanding of the duduk as an instrument.

J. KENNETH MOORE
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Murray Campbell, Clive Greated, and Arnold Myers. *Musical Instruments: History, Technology, and Performance of Instruments of Western Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. x, 510 pp.: 45 black-and-white plates, 91 figures, 4 tables, 32 musical exx. ISBN: 0-19-816504-8. \$230.00 (cloth).

First, the price: Although this volume is dense with data and handsomely produced, its publisher can hardly have expected many buyers to pay the full retail price either in dollars or pounds. Even at a 30 percent discount for on-line purchases, the book's cost puts it out of reach of most individ-