

# KOMITAS OF THE ARMENIAN NATIONAL DANCE

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By [Gevorg Natali \(Yazichyan\)](#), Yerevan, February 29, 2024

***The below article is a translation of [Հայրց ազգային պարի Կոմիտասը](#)***

On February 6, Gagik Ginossian died suddenly of a heart attack in Yerevan.

Who was Ginossian, whose name became synonymous with the popularization of the Armenian national dance?

He was born in 1966 in the city of Akhaltskha, Javakhk (now in the Republic of Georgia). In 1990, he graduated from the Cybernetics Faculty of Yerevan Polytechnic Institute. Having met Hayrik Muratian, the legendary Armenian song ethnographer in the institute, he was included in the "Van" ethnic song-dance ensemble founded by him. This participation became fateful for him and his fellow Armenians. Gagik loved Armenian songs and especially the dances so much that he devoted the rest of his life to Armenian culture. He delved into Armenian ethnic dances, penetrated the depths of their philosophy, excavated their meanings, engaged in public gatherings, collected (about 40) ethnic dances from the people one by one, and cleansed them. He founded the "Karin" traditional song-dance troupe, which became a dominant name in the field of Armenian ethnic dance.

However, Ginossian's greatest work was popularizing the Armenian ethnic dance; he brought that dance down from the stage and taught it to the people, as an integral part of the national identity of Armenians. Thanks to Ginossian's activities, tens of thousands learned those dances and their deep meanings with Gagik's explanations. Thanks to his scientific research, those dances stopped being just movements but became inseparable from the essence of the new Armenian generation, intertwined with their body, mind, and soul like their skin. The places of the open classes were... the squares of Yerevan or wherever a few dozen people could be gathered. The number of dancers on the squares sometimes reached thousands.

Thanks to Ginossian's long-term efforts, in the 2010s, the Armenian national song and dance were included in the school curriculum of the Republic of Armenia, an enormous achievement.

Gagik Ginossian was also a national ideologist. He adopted [Garegin Nzhdeh](#)'s nation saving guiding ideology, seeing in its implementation the rebirth and bright future of the Armenian nation. And he was a living example of the application of that ideology.

Ginossian participated in two wars of Artsakh. In the first war (1991-1994), he was in the "Liberation Army" commanded by the national hero, martyr Leonit Azgaldian. He distinguished himself by destroying two Azerbaijani armored vehicles with "Fakot" anti-tank missiles. In the second, 44-day war, he participated with the VOMA volunteer group. On the Karvachar front, VOMA and the "National Legion", which I am a member of, were next door to each other. Together in mid-October, when the war was still going on, we came to Yerevan for two days. On the way, I became aware of the martyrdom of Haroutioun Stepanian, one of the dancers of the "Karin" group, who was martyred

in the Martakert region. Before reaching Yerevan, we entered the city of Abovian to bow our heads in front of Haroutioun's remains, and the next day we participated in the hero's funeral. Gagik departed from his beloved student with the martial dance "Yarkhushta". Little did we know that after his sudden death, his students and thousands of loved ones would celebrate him with the same dance on February 8 of this year.

I got to know Gagik about three decades ago. We were ideological friends. Nevertheless, we barely talked to each other for 10 minutes, because he was always on the move, more precisely, running. When we met by chance on our way, he hardly had time to embrace me. Asking for forgiveness, he continued his run, which I can unconditionally call a holy mission.



For some, it may be unacceptable or too daring to call Gagik [Komitas](#) of the Armenian dance. However, he fully deserves to be called that, considering the following similarities with the titan of Armenian song:

- The assembly. If Komitas collected the Armenian songs piece by piece from the Armenian villagers and citizens, Ginossian performed the same with the Armenian national and ethnic dances.
- Komitas filtered and cleansed our songs from foreign elements. Ginossian performed the same with the Armenian dances. For example, he completely threw out squats, the unnecessary movements of various parts of the body (especially the hips), replacing them with real Armenian ones, in particular, spring movements of the knees.
- After all this, as Komitas had done to the Armenian song, Gagik purified and crystallized the Armenian dances, returning them to their owner, the Armenian people. He also taught those same dances to the new generations by all possible means. Today, if the Armenian national dance has wide public support and practice in the Republic of Armenia, we owe it mainly to the selfless efforts of Gagik Ginossian. In fact, he created a nationwide school of Armenian dance, tens of thousands of whom graduated and continue the work of their great teacher.

This is the source of the infinite sorrow, respect, and love that our people showed for Gagik's death.

Thousands of people came to St. Sargis Church at Nor Nork in Yerevan. The next day, people proceeded to Chamber Music Hall in Yerevan, then to [Yerablur](#) to bow at Ginossian's coffin and give this Great Armenian a meritorious funeral.

The bright name of Gagik Ginossian will remain forever in the history of Armenian ethnic dance.

It is my request that visitors to Yerablur bow before the grave of the Great Teacher of Armenian dance and Nzhdehian spirit.

<https://youtu.be/E6xmeZ2BFgw>

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**There are no comments yet.**