

Mp3 Bambir - Quake: Avant Garde Armenian Folk Music



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4 Star Rating- ALL MUSIC GUIDE; Armenian Folk music meets Jethro Tull and the Pogues; a wild, accomplished, and daring ride into the core of Avant Garde Armenian Folk Music. 10 MP3 Songs

WORLD: World Fusion, FOLK: Power-folk Details: Bambir Quake " My music is personal imagination, personal experience. I call it avant garde folk- without losing your identity you extend your imagination. I think this is the freest way to characterize it. If you say ' jazz' you're going to think of America, if 'African' Africa, if 'Indian' India, and so on, but if you say 'avant garde folk' you'll belong to everybody. You can be English, Italian, French, Zambian, Armenian, Turkish, and Greek - anything. But my foundation is Armenian culture because I am Armenian " - Arto Tunçboyacıyan (fRoots Magazine; Jan/Feb 2003 Nos. 235/236)

Bambir is a relatively obscure Armenian folk-rock band from the hardscrabble city of Gyumri, Armenia. Undeniably talented, Bambir has had little commercial exposure in their native homeland, let alone the general international world music stage. Robbed of time by the aftereffects of the devastating 1988 Armenian Earthquake, a raging war for Armenian self-determination in Karabagh, and the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, Bambir has had two distinct periods of existence. Their pre-earthquake career brought them modest fame as one of the best folk-rock bands in the former Soviet Union. While touring many former Soviet republics, Bambir's rollicking updated renditions of traditional Armenian folk songs, compositions by Komitas, and medieval sacred music made them modern ambassadors of Armenian music. By the mid 1980's, they were close to becoming musical legends in their country. As the 1990's were coming to a close, Bambir was languishing in Gyumri, Armenia playing for small crowds with an occasional trip to Yerevan for a few concerts. Hardcore fans of Bambir who had left Armenia during the 1990's for cities such as Los Angeles, CA brought the band to the United States for a few concerts which were sparsely attended. When the opportunity presented itself for Bambir to record their first

album, the question was what material were they going to select? Having a vast repertoire at their disposal, picking music representative of their collective persona was a challenge. In 1999, "Quake" was released on their own label (Bambir) and was put into very limited distribution. Available at a few Armenian record stores in Los Angeles and at some of their rare live performances in Armenia, "Quake" suffered the same obscurity as that of the band. The album went on to be nominated for the "Best Armenian Folk" category at the newly formed Armenian Music Awards in 1999 and then shortly after faded away. Well, maybe not. After releasing our first album here on Pomegranate Music, I turned to Gor Mkhitarian ("Yeraz") and asked him if there were any bands in Armenia that maintained a distinct folk quality in their music while still being progressive. Without hesitation he said "Bambir". As I asked more musically informed people in Armenia the same question, the answer was the same, "Bambir". I'd never heard of them or their music. The words and phrases others used to enthusiastically describe the group included "Celtic sounding", "Jethro Tull", "great live performers", "rocking", "amazing flute player", "Armenian Folk", "they play Komitas", "Gyumri-based", and so on. When I wrote all of these catchphrases and words down on paper, I had no idea what to expect. The mystery ended when I was treated to a listen of "Doni Yar" at the Mkhitarian residence in Vanazor, Armenia sometime in February 2002. From that point on, I was hooked. Amazingly enough, I was not able to find a single copy of "Quake" in Yerevan during my three week stay there. Even more astonishing was that no one at the record stores or street-vending locations in Yerevan knew who they were. Back in Boston, the search was on to find "Quake" anywhere I could. After searching high and low, I received a burned copy of the disc from a visiting student from Armenia who happened to have a copy in her possession. A bootleg, if you will. For the next month I listened to "Quake" in amazement. The energy ! The musicianship ! The sheer brilliance ! Albums like these are made once in a generation. Much like the music label I've created, this project was pursued because of my utter frustration at not being able to easily find quality music like Bambir "Quake". So, the process of this reissue was set in motion in the Fall of 2002. Bambir was contacted through Gor Mkhitarian in Armenia and the original master recording was obtained and subsequently remixed and remastered here in the States. Knarik O.Meneshian painstakingly translated the lyrics into English from the Gyumri-dialect Armenian. Emails were sent back and forth through Bambir fan and confidant Arthur Papian in Armenia for details on the band. Finally, expert graphic designer Arsineh Khachikian was brought in to create this booklet. Like the re-release of the great 1967 Luis Bunuel

cinematic triumph "Belle de Jour" or the hunt for a lost piece of rare film in Theo Angelopoulos's "Ulysses' Gaze", "Quake" has been found, restored, and now presented again. It remains an important document for the Armenian people. Raffi Meneshian Founder/CEO Pomegranate Music

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