

## Mp3 Mariam Matossian - Far From Home



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Combining the unique sounds of the duduk, oud, mandolin, guitar and the hypnotic rhythms of the djembe, dumbec and udu with the mesmerizing voice of singer Mariam Matossian, this powerful debut album takes each listener on an enchanting journey to Armenia 13 MP3 Songs WORLD: World Fusion, WORLD: Middle East Details: Mariam Matossian was born in Vancouver, B.C. where the Armenian community is a small one, struggling to be as vibrant and active as the larger communities in Montreal and Toronto. However, despite this obstacle, her culture has remained an integral, precious part of her life. Perhaps it is a result of growing up in a city with few Armenians that her passion for her language and culture has been so strong. Mariam's love for her cultural heritage intensified when she decided to travel to and work as a volunteer in Armenia. She was the first one from her family to ever see the homeland, and this was an extremely emotional experience. Mariam writes: "Hearing my language being spoken in every store, through the loudspeakers at the subway station and on every street corner was surreal. As I worked and ate and laughed with fellow Armenians during the week and then visited the country's treasures -- the ancient churches, monasteries, and even Mount Ararat from afar -- on the weekends, my passion for my culture was deepened all the more." Four years later, Mariam's yearning to return to Armenia was fulfilled when she decided to take a leave of absence from a career she loves -- teaching -- to go back to Armenia with the hope of working with street children. Mariam had first learned about the plight of Armenian orphans while she was volunteering at the local newspaper during her first visit. She knew then that she somehow had to find a way to return to the country and use her teaching and counselling skills to try to make a positive difference in the lives of these children. That dream came to fruition in February 2002. Mariam volunteered with 2 local non governmental agencies in Yerevan, the capital city, and helped develop programs for the children. This was a life changing experience for her.

Mariam writes: "Upon coming home to Canada, I was faced with a difficult decision: return to Armenia and continue my work there or remain in Vancouver and resume my teaching career. I loved both of these options and had a gruelling time trying to decide between the two. Little did I know, however, that the decision had been made for me long ago and that a very different path was about to be revealed to me." She continues: "While I was actively looking for teaching work here and volunteer positions in Armenia, something inside me kept telling me that I had to first complete the album that I had started to work on before I left for this trip. This seemed like an incredibly risky path to take, but however hard I tried, I could not ignore this voice, this strong yearning inside me to communicate my culture's story to a larger audience through our timeless folk songs." But after meeting producer Adam Popowitz, Mariam embarked on what she says has become "one of my most meaningful, challenging, and amazing adventures to date." She goes on to say that "the process of fusing my passion for the Armenian language and my love of music through this album has been an enriching journey. I have had to draw on all my past experiences -- my joys and my pains -- in order to have the courage to begin and complete and now share this album with others." Mariam had the privilege of working with a group of extremely talented musicians including Adam Popowitz (mandolin, guitars, bass), Elliot Polsky (percussion), Andre Thibault (oud, bouzouki, additional percussion), Shannon Rowe (flute), Ruben Haroutunian (duduk) and George Hall (additional mandolin). She hopes that this recording will give a world audience, Armenians and non-Armenians alike, the chance to experience the beauty of her culture's music. She says, "My dream has always been to share the story of my culture with as many people who want to listen. My grandparent's story -- especially accounts of their faith, resilience, and hope despite the many obstacles that they endured -- and more recently, the plight of the street children in Armenia -- the very children who taught me some of the songs which are now on this album -- have inspired me. I long to share these stories with people as I, in turn, learn from what others have to say. And as I pass on this music, these stories to others, I hope that people will be as enriched as I have been." 2004 Far From Home

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