

## **GEGHARD Vocal Ensemble**

Formed in 2001 as a choir at Geghard Monastery (IV-XIII cc.), by the conductor and soprano Anahit Papayan, the Geghard Vocal Ensemble started broad concert activities. Since 2020 the ensemble represents the Komitas Museum-Institute as well. The artistic director is Dr. Mher Navoyan, Professor, medievalist-musicologist, Honored Worker of Arts of RA.

The program of the Ensemble mainly includes Armenian sacred and secular traditional monodies in original versions or in classical and modern arrangements, works by Armenian and foreign composers. Having an objective to spread Armenian music Geghard Ensemble had numerous concerts in Germany, Austria, Finland, France, Czech Republic, Belarus, Poland, Italy, Belgium, Lebanon, Russia, Sweden, Georgia, Hungary.

Among the remarkable international festivals in which the Geghard Ensemble has participated are the renowned “Salzburg Festival” (Austria, 2016, 2022), the “Caucasus” festival in world-famous Elbphilharmonie (Hamburg, Germany, 2018), the “Moscow Easter Festival” (Russia, 2015), the International Academy of Sacred Music in St. Petersburg (Russia, 2014), “Al Bustan” in Beirut (Lebanon, 2013), “Musica Sacra International” in Marktoberdorf (Germany, 2012), “Des voûtes célestes” (France 2011), “Musicfest” of International Bachakademie in Stuttgart (Germany, 2009) and many others. In 2010 “Geghard” was given the first prize at “Hajnowka’s Days of Orthodox Music” competition (Poland), and won the Grand Prix in “Kolozhski Blagovest” Orthodox Music Festival in Grodno (Belarus). In 2021 the “Geghard” Vocal Ensemble participated in The 11<sup>th</sup> World Peace Choral Festival in Vienna and earned 2 Gold Awards and Grand Prix in the category of vocal ensembles under the direction of Anahit Papayan, who received an “Excellent Choir Conductor” award.

Since 2002 a fruitful collaboration was established between the association “Kuratorium Weltkulturdenkmal Lorsch” and Geghard Ensemble, in the frame of the partnership between two UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Sites, Geghard Monastery in Armenia and historical Lorsch Abbey in Germany. In 2018 the Geghard Ensemble was officially appointed as Honorary Ambassador of the Foundation “Stiftung UNESCO-Weltkulturerbe Kloster Lorsch”

The ensemble has released six CDs which include choral arrangements of Armenian sacred and traditional songs: “Armenian Music” (2002), “Armenian Altar” (2005), “Mystery Deep” (2013), “Voices of Armenia: Armenian Sacred & Secular Music for Female Voices” (live concert in Maulbronn Monastery, Germany 2018), “Nanik Nananik” (2021), which includes Komitas’ arrangements for female choir and “The Light of Geghard” (2022) presenting arrangements by Daniel Yerazhisht dedicated to Geghard Vocal Ensemble.