

YUVAL RON ENSEMBLE CONCERT TOUR TO ARMENIA and GEORGIA,

September 25 – October 7, 2018

DAY 1, Tuesday, September 25, 2018

Depart to Tbilisi the capital city of the country, Georgia in the Caucasus region in the intersection of Europe and Asia.

DAY 2, Wednesday, September 26, 2018

TBD am ~ Arrive and Meet in Tbilisi International Airport, Georgia

Our tour guide and tour operator will wait for you at the Tbilisi airport to greet you and bring you to your hotel to settle in and rest from your journey, while our group arrives throughout the day. In the early evening we will have **an orientation meeting** led by **Yuval Ron and members of his Ensemble** followed by dinner at the hotel and a night driving tour of the beautiful old city, known for its distinctive architecture, which reflects the city's storied past and comprises an eclectic mix of Medieval, Neoclassical, Art Nouveau, Stalinist and Modernist structures.

DAY 3, Thursday September 27 2018

After delicious breakfast at the hotel, our tour bus will drop us off at the **Metekhi Church** in central Tbilisi, the point where the city's history started. We will wander through the historic streets as our guide provides engaging narrative about the city's landmarks and highlights. We will cross the Metekhi Bridge and head for the natural hot springs, one of the city's most popular attractions. Then a stop at the Tamada sculpture to learn about its significance as a symbol of the town's toast making and wine-making traditions. A visit to, the **Sioni Cathedral**, and the **Great Synagogue**. At Freedom Square, our tour bus will pick us up for our lunch destination at a local restaurant. Taste the traditional Georgian specialties, such as **khachapuri** and **khinkali**, homemade wine, salads, listening to our guide detail how the local wine is made. After lunch, Enjoy a demonstration of **folk music traditions of Georgia, witness and participate in a spontaneous jam session** with the **local master musicians** and the members of the **Yuval Ron Ensemble**. In the evening have a nice dinner, followed by rest in the hotel.

DAY 4, Friday, September 28, 2018

In the morning visit the a monument to the great Armenian poet and bard **Sayat Nova** and his tomb at the **Sourb Gevorg (St George)** Armenian cathedral church and enjoy **an exclusive presentation with live music by Yuval Ron and master duduk player Norik Manoukian of the music and poetry of Sayat Nova**. Followed by a visit to the colorful **Dry Bridge Market** and the stunning **open air Dezertirebi Bazaar**, the best, if not most chaotic food market of Tbilisi. After a lunch at a local restaurant, escort the **Yuval Ron Ensemble** on **a visit to a local school** and witness their presentation for the children. Enjoy the children singing traditional Georgian songs as well as the offering of the Yuval Ron Ensemble and join in for the conclusion sing along. In the evening have a delicious dinner **with a musical kabalat Shabat** celebration led by Yuval Ron and his Ensemble, followed by rest in the hotel.

DAY 5, Saturday, September 29, 2018

After breakfast, we will depart Tbilisi for a day-long visit in the wine region of **Kakheti** to explore Georgia's wine making heritage. Along the way, we will visit at 11th-century **Alaverdi Cathedral** and the **Gremi Fortress**, local wineries and cellar-tunnels nestled beneath the imposing Great Caucasus Mountains, and sample some of the fine wines for which the region is famous. After lunch we will explore **local markets in Telavi**, and enjoy fine views over the **Alazani Valley**, travel through **Gombori Pass** and return for dinner and a relaxing evening in our hotel in Tbilisi.

DAY 6, Sunday 30, 2018

After breakfast, we will check out of our hotel and depart in our tour bus to Yerevan, Armenia. Our road trip will take us through stunning natural scenery of Georgia and Armenia. Yuval Ron and master woodwind player Norik Manoukian will entertain us with musical offerings and share recollections of their first chance meeting and their numerous musical collaborations worldwide since 2000. On the way we will stop for a visits at beautiful **Armenian Monasteries** of **Haghpat** and **Sanahin**. Then we will have a lunch at the local restaurant before arriving at our comfortable hotel in Yerevan, the capital city of Armenia.

DAY 7, Monday, October 1, 2018

Breakfast at the hotel.

Following an orientation bus tour around the city our tour bus will pick up us for our private lunch destination at a **local family home -restaurant**. You will learn **how to make**

some traditional Armenian specialties and taste the Armenian homemade wine, salads and traditional famous **Dolma**. After the lunch we will arrive at the rehearsal studio of a group of master dancers for **an exclusive traditional Armenian dance presentation and workshop** where we could learn about the art of the Armenian folk dance and even try some of the movements ourselves.

In the early evening we will return to the hotel for a short rest, followed by a great **exclusive feast at Norik Manoukian's older brother and master Duduk player Yeghish Manoukian's restaurant**. We will meet some of Norik and Yeghish Manoukian colleagues who will entertain us with a **tantalizing musical jam session with members of the Yuval Ron Ensemble**, while we drink and dine the delicious authentic traditional food of Armenia.

DAY 8, Tuesday, October 2, 2018

Today we will venture to the famous biblical **Mount Ararat**, the mount on which Noah's Arc landed at the conclusion of the biblical Flood. After an hour drive we will arrive at **Khor Virap**, a place of pilgrimage for Armenians all over the world. According to history annals, Armenian pagan king Trdat imprisoned Saint Gregory the Illuminator in a cave, which became known as Khor Virap. He was the first Patriarch of all Armenians. From here one can enjoy the majestic view of mount Ararat. We pay a visit to **Etchmiadzin Cathedral**, the oldest Christian temple in Armenia that was founded in 301 and is one of the first churches in the Christian World. As the main shrine of religious Christian Armenians worldwide, Etchmiadzin has been an important location in Armenia not only religiously, but also politically and culturally. After lunch we will return to the hotel for the short rest and prepare for the evening dinner at the local Tavern-restaurant where we will enjoy **Armenian traditional live music, folk dance and song**.

DAY 9, Wednesday, October 3, 2018

After delicious Armenian breakfast, we will depart to a local school to witness a **presentation** by the **Yuval Ron Ensemble** for the **school assembly** and a presentation of the **music of Armenia** performed by **the children**. We will then have an **exclusive visit a musical instrument maker who specialized in building the magical Armenian woodwinds, Duduk and Shvi**, which Norik and Yeghish Manoukian have made famous all over the world (See Duduk solo by Norik Manoukian in the soundtrack of Sean Penn's *Dead Man Walking*, and many of Yuval Ron film scores, see the album *Film Music of Yuval Ron: 20 years of Innovative Scores* and Ensemble albums). After Lunch, escort the Yuval Ron Ensemble to the **TV studios of Yerevan to witness and support Yuval Ron and the Manoukian brothers** as they appear on TV to promote the up coming historic concert of the Ensemble and the Manoukians in Yerevan, later that week. In the evening, enjoy dinner and a relaxing evening in the hotel.

DAY 10, Thursday, October 4, 2018

In the morning we will be visit the ancient and beautiful **Garni temple** that was devoted to Mitra, one of the Armenian pre-Christian Divinities. We will enjoy the inspiring landscapes of **Garni canyon** and continue to the **Cave Monastery of Geghard (Ayrivank)** – one of the important pilgrimage places of Armenia. Along with the impressive monastery complex the **Avazan church** is carved right into the solid rock and is an incomparable work of art. It leads to a rectangular portico and then to another church deeper in the rock. Its walls have sheltered many scholars and it was revered throughout Armenia as one of the greatest spiritual and cultural centers in the country. Surrounded by the stunning views of the Monastery with hundreds of **khachkars** (cross-stones) and caves you will be treated to **an exclusive performance of sacred Armenian music performed by master Norik Manoukian on the Duduk**, a traditional Armenian woodwind instrument. Following a delicious lunch in a local restaurant we will return to Yerevan for an **exclusive presentation on the history of Armenian music with live music demonstration at the home of master Yeghish Manoukian**. Later we will have dinner and a restful evening at the hotel.

DAY 11, Friday, October 5, 2018

In the morning will be visit **Zvartnots**, a complex of structures erected in the middle of the 7th century near Echmiadzin, is of extreme architectural value. Zvartnots, built as Armenia's main cathedral in 641-661, was to suppress Echmiadzin Cathedral by its grandeur and extraordinary artistic splendor.

Then we will have a lunch and visit to the **Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Armenian Manuscripts** commonly referred to as the **Matenadaran**. It holds one of the world's richest depositories of medieval manuscripts and books which span a broad range of subjects, including theology, philosophy, history, medicine, literature, art history, and cosmography in Armenian and many other languages.

After dinner, depart the hotel to hear your favorite ensemble from Los Angeles perform in **Philharmonica Hall with a special program featuring the brothers Norik and Yeghish Manoukian**, among the greatest master musicians of Armenian in the last 50 years. Both brothers have been members of the Yuval Ron Ensemble since 2001 and have recorded and toured with the Ensemble extensible worldwide. Yuval Ron has been among the major presenters and promoters of Armenian music in the USA since 2001 and has lectured about Armenian music in numerous universities and schools throughout the world. This night is granted to be emotional and moving events for many on stage and in the audience, as this night the Yuval Ron Ensemble will be performing with the brothers in their homeland of Armenia for the first time!

DAY 12, Saturday, October 6, 2018

Following a breakfast, we will visit **Vernissage** the famous **open market** near the Republic Square. Here you can find **artworks by famous and not so famous Armenian artists**, as well as **carpets, embroidery, posters, old collections of coins, jewelry, and books**. Enjoy a free day for last minute **shopping and exploration of the markets** of Yerevan in Armenia.

DAY 13, Sunday, October 7, 2018

Following check out from our hotel and depending on your departure time, our bus driver will transfer you to the Airport three hours before take off. Our guide will assist you through check in and customs to make sure that you are well on your way home.

Please note: This is a draft itinerary for planning purposes and is still subject to changes between now and our travel dates.