



THE BIRD OF
A THOUSAND
VOICES

HOLLAND
FESTIVAL
2024

THE BIRD OF A THOUSAND VOICES

The transmedia music theater piece 'The Bird of a Thousand Voices' is the first of its kind to bring an ancient Armenian folk tale to life. Dutch filmmaker Ruben Van Leer and Armenian composer Tigran Hamasyan have previously worked together and are joining forces again for a new production that will have its world premiere at the Holland Festival in 2024. The mythical bird – whose thousand different songs travel the world to spread harmony – comes to life in an intriguing immersive light installation with shadow play, digitally programmed voices and live music in which improvised jazz and Armenian folklore meet.

The symbol of the mythological bird exists in many cultures, often as the embodiment of resurrection and awakening. In Armenian tradition, the mythological bird brings harmony to a world of crisis with its songs, sung in thousands of languages, which is why Hazaran Havq is called "The Bird of a Thousand Voices." This story, which is still told to children in Armenia as a 'bed-time story', has not lost its symbolic value. The story of Hazaran Havq has been passed down from generation to generation for centuries.

The Bird of a Thousand Voices is – so the myth tells – a journey towards self-discovery and rebirth. Only by taking 'the path of no return' can you find the Hazaran Havq. On this path one is confronted with endless deserts, cold mountain winters, turbulent rivers, judgments, betrayal and forty-headed demons, with the mission to find the forgotten bird and bring it back to the world. With his divine song he can bring harmony to a backward world and make our withered garden bloom again. But only the one who finds the bird and brings it back can make it sing... In this live performance, Van Leer and Hamasyan take the audience on a quest to find this bird and make its redeeming voice sound in music, digital staging, cinema and interactive online.

According to Van Leer and Hamasyan, telling fairy tales is still of vital importance. With childlike imagination they comment on our modern oppression. The innovative scenography is reminiscent of an enormously sized children's lamp that rotates on its axis and shows a play of shadows on all the walls of the concert hall. Two enormous kinetic moving wings appear behind the 5 musicians, including Hamasyan himself behind the piano.

For this project Hamasyan composed his largest work ever: 24 new compositions form the electro-acoustic suite of The Bird of a Thousand Voices. The story of Hazaran Havq is not only sung, but the singer also has a second role as narrator and uses all corners of the concert hall to bring this contemporary story adaptation to life.

Holland Festival is co-producer of this new performance. Hamasyan and Van Leer themselves speak in a short introductory video. Because this video was recorded at an early stage, some parts have now been changed: the preferred premiere location is currently the concert hall 'Muziekgebouw' for optimal technical support and the cinematic aspect of the performance becomes a separate film release that premieres parallel to the live performance world tour.

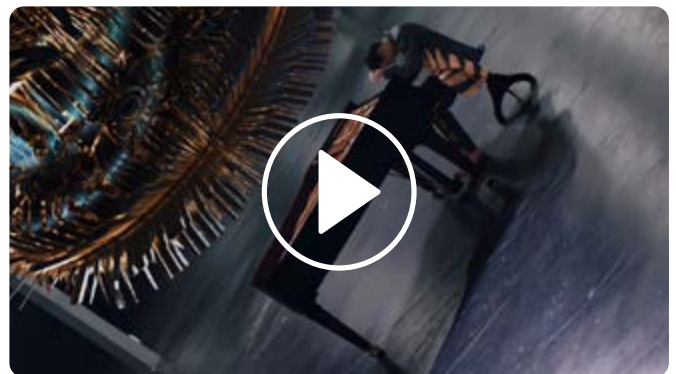
Location: **Muziekgebouw**

Number of performances: **2**

Total number of visitors: **1,450 (100% hall capacity)**



introductory video – The Bird of a Thousand Voices



Tigran Hamasyan & Ruben Van Leer – Cave of Rebirth (2017)

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



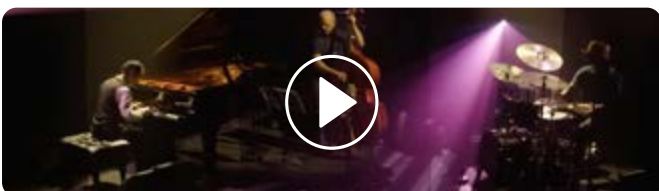
Tigran Hamasyan

Hamasyan fuses his powerful jazz improvisation with the rich traditional music from his native Armenia. His fresh sound is characterized by changing time signatures, charged dynamics and the alternation of acoustic and electric sounds, from an affinity for the grind of heavy metal. Solo album, *The Ancient Observer*, is a collection of written compositions, two of which are based on Armenian melodies. Some pieces are completely written out and others leave room for improvisation. Latest Nonesuch release *StandArt* is his first album of American standards, featuring trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire, saxophonists Mark Turner and Joshua Redman. For the forthcoming album 'The Bird of a Thousand Voices' he immersed himself in an ancient tale and the genre of Armenian folk music categorised as 'epic songs'. Hamasyan says: "For this album I wanted to invoke new melodies which would sound like coming from the depths of the centuries but have a contemporary dimension to them."

www.tigranhamasyan.com



Tigran Hamasyan & Berklee Ensemble – Drip (2018)



Tigran Hamasyan – StandArt live on ARTE (2023)



Ruben Van Leer

Van Leer's award winning films & interdisciplinary works are driven by the interest for movement, embodied experiences and future sciences. His work is not limited to the confines of cinema, dance, music, digital art, avant-garde and popculture, his practices aim to go beyond crossing genres connecting audiences from different backgrounds around the world. Van Leer collaborated with, among others, multidisciplinary artist and opera maker Michel van der Aa (interactive song cycle *The Book Of Sand* 2015) and previously with composer Tigran Hamasyan (music video *Cave Of Rebirth* 2017). Van Leer performed at the Holland Festival together with composer Kate Moore (live music performance with VR installation *Sacred Environment* 2017). This was a co-production by the Holland Festival and Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. Van Leer recently caused a sensation with the short spectacle film *Power Of Water* (2021), which was broadcast worldwide during the Eurovision Song Contest.

www.rubenvanleer.studio



Ruben van Leer & Kate Moore – Sacred Environment (2017)



Ruben Van Leer / Eurovision – Power of Water (2021)

HOLLAND FESTIVAL

In June 2024, the Holland Festival will present a daring program with pressing and contemporary themes, with the mission: to bring performing arts by top artists from all over the world to the Netherlands and make it accessible to a large audience. In 2023, the festival showed 40 productions, including 11 co-productions and 8 world premieres, at 23 locations throughout the city of Amsterdam. Of the more than 80,000 visitors who attended the festival, 67% were new visitors. This edition featured a large artistic scope and a remarkably diverse and generous audience, who were even more part of the festival than ever before.

Holland Festival offers an international stage for Dutch makers and world artists, with the voice of today. The festival is artist-driven and the artistic vision of the makers is therefore paramount. From their own background and perspective, the artists encourage the audience to look from a new perspective and experience other worlds. With innovative and experimental programming – from theatre, dance, music, musical theatre, opera to multidisciplinary performances, digital art, photography and film – the festival continually reaches new target groups. The festival not only continues to surprise regular visitors, but also inspires new generations. Holland Festival distinguishes itself in the cultural landscape by:

- To present performances that cannot be seen in regular theaters and are complementary to the Dutch performing arts offering;
- An international programming in which unique collaborations are created, with cross-pollination between different disciplines;
- Collaborate with other internationally operating institutions, including The Concertgebouw, National Opera & Ballet, International Theater Amsterdam and Frascati;
- Facilitate connections and exchange between international and Dutch makers for the Dutch audience.

In a world where polarization is growing, the connecting power of performing arts is now more relevant than ever and indispensable in the search for rapprochement and mutual understanding. It broadens horizons, increases empathy, encourages people to think about themselves and the world.

Holland Festival as co-producer

Holland Festival takes the initiative to co-produce new work, connecting leading makers, entering into collaborations with other European performing arts festivals and presenting impressive premieres in Amsterdam. Supporting these projects at an early stage is essential for the development of the artists. The festival encourages progressive makers to express contemporary themes and experiences in their new work.

Associate artist 2024

2024 is the sixth consecutive year that the Holland Festival has invited an associate artist as an inspiration for the festival program. The associate artist is always an international maker with a broad view who often works in different disciplines, has interesting artistic practice and makes an important contribution to the festival. Associate artists help the festival team by suggesting certain themes, opening up their network or looking at the world from a different perspective to create an adventurous program.

The associate artist for the 77th Holland Festival in 2024 is the Brazilian theater director, filmmaker and writer Christiane Jatahy (1968). Christiane Jatahy will present Hamlet, a co-production with Odé-on-Théâtre de l'Europe from Paris. Shakespeare's play has a female title role and forms the starting point for thinking about the world we live in and how to change it. Since 2003, Jatahy has been building an oeuvre that explores border areas between different art disciplines. She creates multidisciplinary work, text theater and community theater in which she collaborates with local artists. In addition to her theatrical work, she makes (documentary) films.

Diverse and generous audience

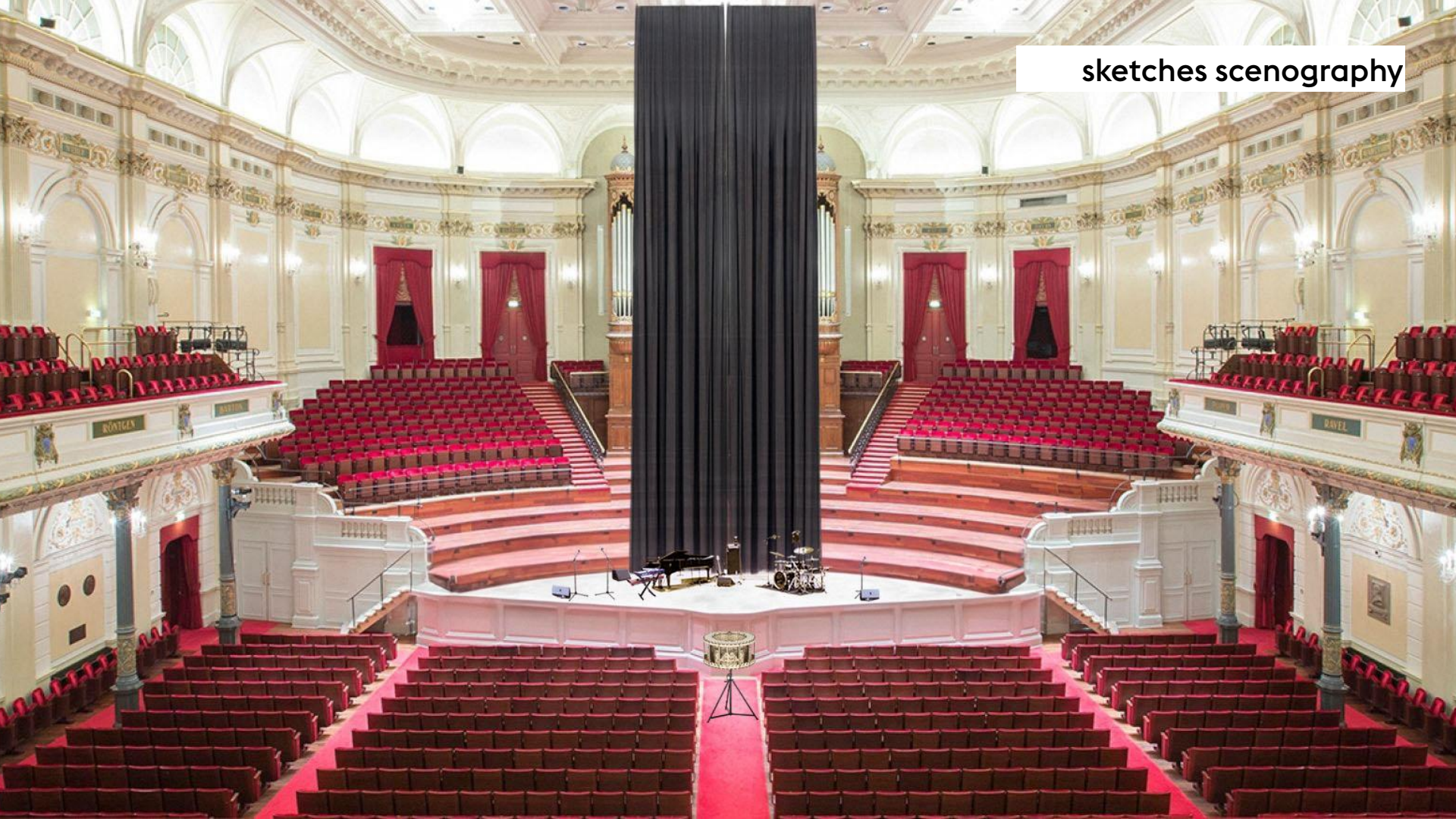
Holland Festival presents performances, exhibitions, installations and talks for young and old, for novice and seasoned festival goers with diverse backgrounds, for different moods. This great diversity was also visible to visitors in 2023: full halls were filled by an increasingly different audience. The fact that they were also remarkably involved in the festival was evident from the good atmosphere at the locations, the attention and concentration, and the many standing ovations. More than once, the audience walked out of the hall singing and dancing, feeling not just a spectator but a real participant.



ATTACHMENTS



sketches scenography

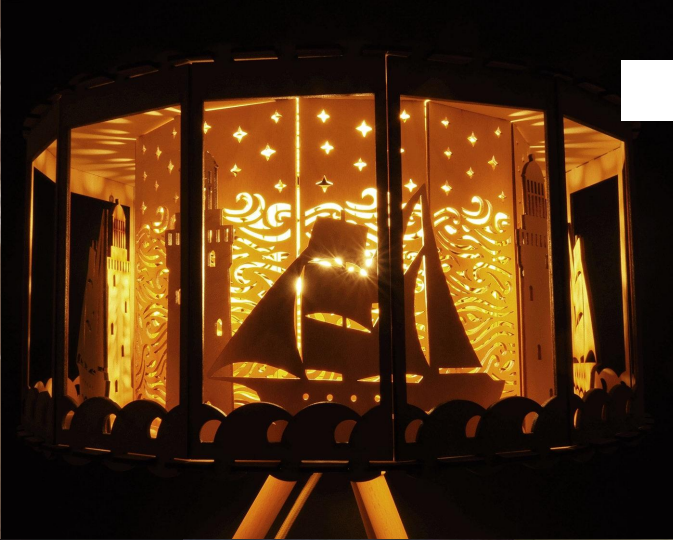


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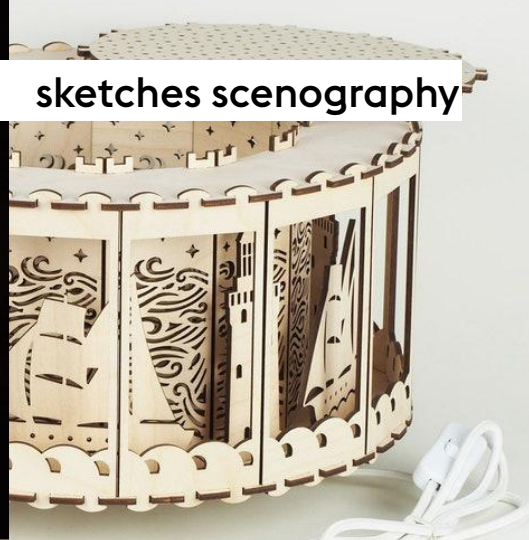


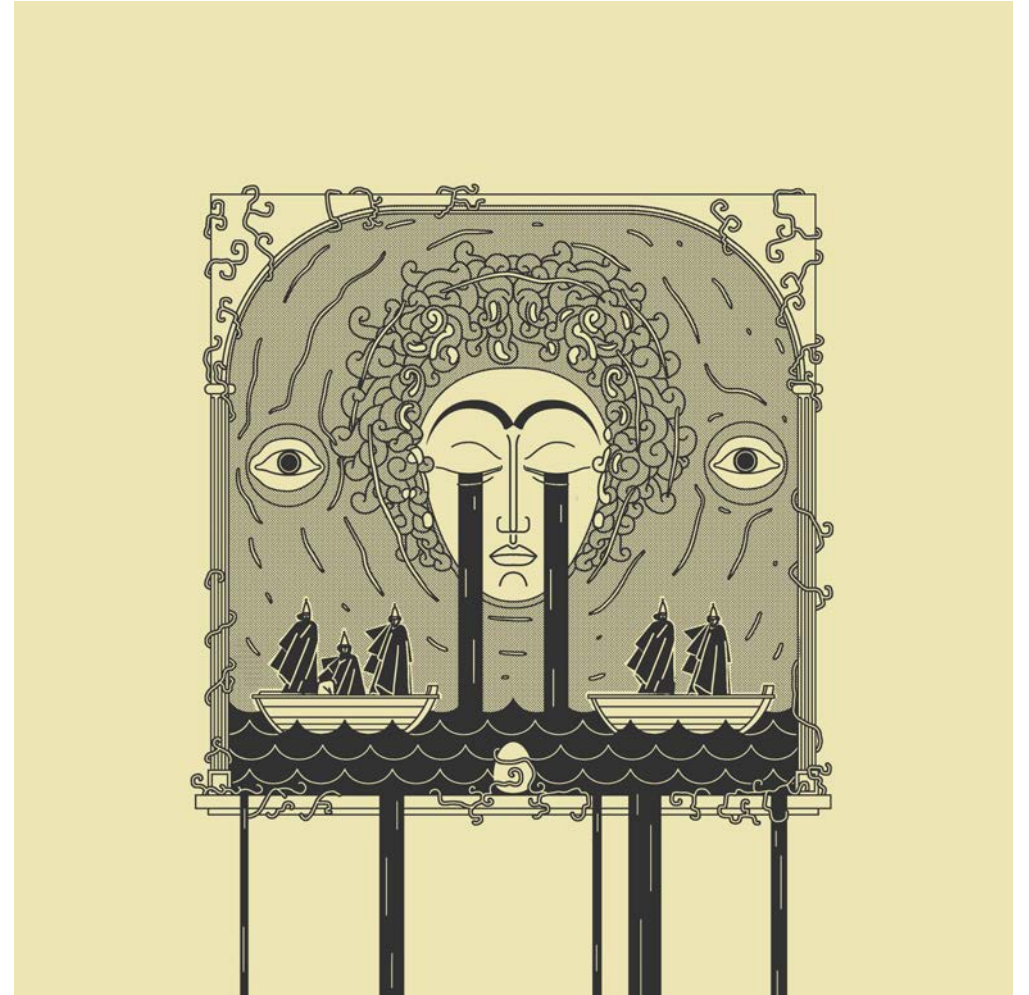
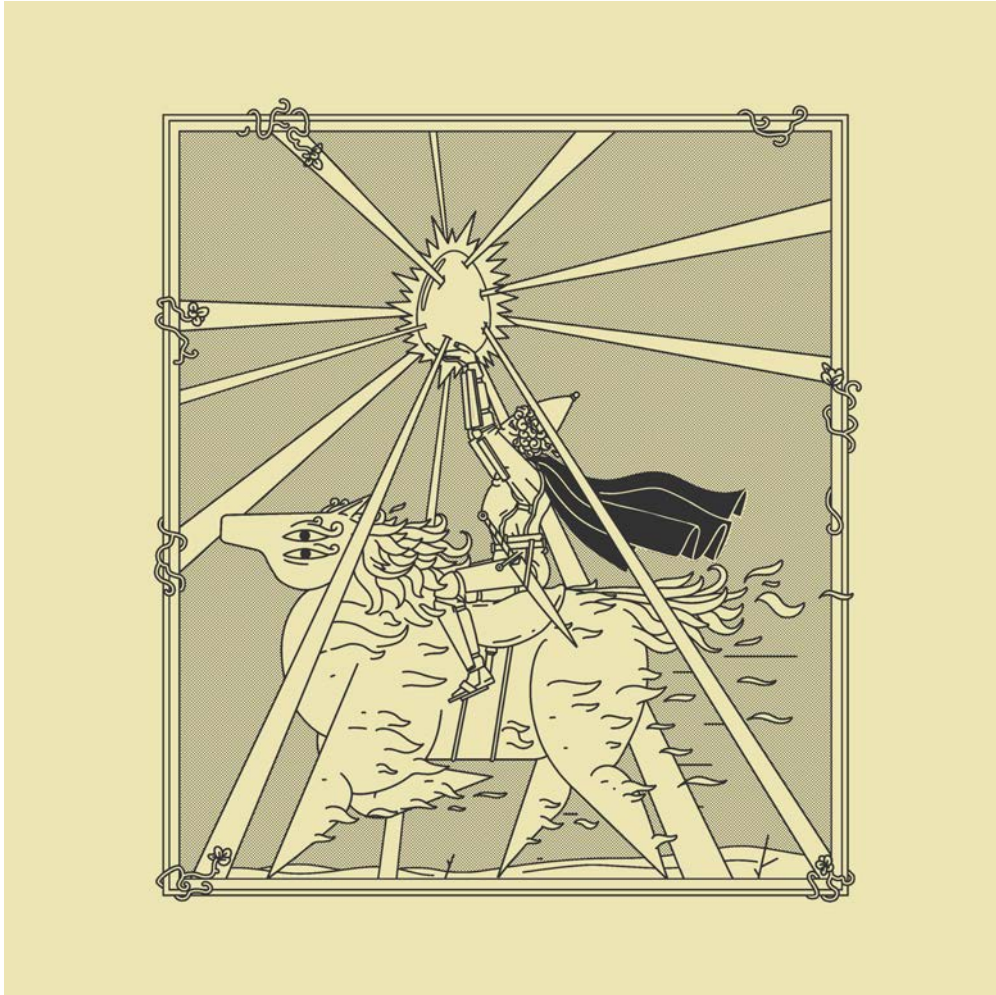
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reference teaser film



The Green Knight

This teaser edit serves as reference for the forthcoming original film production *The Bird of a Thousand Voices*, with footage from the film *The Green Knight* (David Lowery, A24 Films) and original music for the new project by Tigran Hamasyan.