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Monday Recommendation: Armen Donelian

May 5, 2014 by Doug Ramsey — [Leave a Comment](#)

Armen Donelian, *Sayat-Nova: Songs Of My Ancestors* (Sunnyside)



Alone and with a trio, Donelian plays works that inform his sense of who he is and confirm that great music is timeless and universal. The music of the Armenian composer Sayat-Nova (1712-1795) is redolent of Middle Eastern values, but as we become accustomed to musical idioms of the world melding, it would sound astonishingly modern even without the jazz and classical sensibilities that Donelian applies to it. Some of the solo pieces, notably “Without You, What Will I Do?” could have been written last week. Others prefigure Chopin. The trio performance of the minor “My Sweet Harp” with bassist Dave Clark and drummer George Schuller has profundity and sadness that Leos Janáček refined a century later. This two-CD album is certain to be regarded as one of 2014’s best. The invaluable 15-page booklet that can be downloaded from the CD should have been included in the package.

