

# On the couch with Nora Armani

ARMENIAN. EGYPTIAN. AMERICAN.  
SINGER. DANCER. POET...



**PRESENTATION PACKAGE**

[www.noraarmani.com](http://www.noraarmani.com)

*...smoothly polished and truly fascinating theatre piece. Armani gives herself the freedom to actually be herself.*  
—Talk in Broadway

*...great actress...amazingly natural...great presence.*  
— Online Review London

*Her persona is as inviting as the couch of her title, radiating warmth and understanding. Still, her ingrained optimism doesn't prevent her from vividly describing the Armenian genocide.*  
— Theater Mania

**WITH HUMOR AND NOSTALGIA, NORA TAKES US BACK TO THE BOSPHORUS AND ISTANBUL, TO PRE-1915 ANATOLIAN SUMMERS, ALEXANDRIA AND ITS PORT, NASSER'S POST-REVOLUTION EGYPT, HOLLYWOOD AND ITS FOLLIES. NOW, IF SHE COULD ONLY FIND HERSELF...  
A TRUE ARMENIAN DIASPORA STORY!**

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# On the Couch with Nora Armani

*Written and performed by*  
**Nora Armani**  
*Directed by*  
**François Kergourlay**

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## PRESS CLIPS

...fluid and engaging... Frequently humorous and always humane... a self-penned script that delivers on a number of levels.

THE  
**STAGE**  
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An insightful piece of theatre. The lyrical language...reflects her linguistic talents. Armani manages to fill the stage and gives an enlightening performance.

**Camden New Journal**

...the deft, bedazzling Armani creates textured characters and substantial momentum...

**Los Angeles Times**

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Nora Armani has performed the play in its English and French (*Sur le divan avec Nora Armani*) versions on tour (alphabetically) in **Boston, Caen (France), Cairo (Egypt), Chicago, Connecticut, Detroit, Geneva (Switzerland), Houston, London (UK), Los Angeles, Lyon (France), Montreal, New Jersey, New York (Workshop Theatre), Paris (France), Philadelphia and Washington D.C.** directed by François Kergourlay. The French version of the play was broadcast live on **Aligre FM Radio in Paris**. The English version was filmed for broadcast on **CUNY-TV New York** and is now available on DVD. The play is up for publication in an anthology of 5 plays by Middle East-born American women writers, edited by Dalia Basiouny, Stanford University Press. Ms. Armani was interviewed on **KUHF Houston Public Radio** by Front Row Host: Dean Dalton. Other radio/TV interviews include: **BBC, RFI (Radio France Internationale), Turkish Radio, Abu Dhabi Satellite TV, Joey Reynolds New York, Voice of America Washington, D.C.** (full list at end of press kit).

*Photos and additional information on*

**[www.noraarmani.com](http://www.noraarmani.com)**

*Press contact*

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**4 Stuyvesant Oval, 5C, New York, NY 10009**

## Director's Note

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Nora makes her entrance and greets us.

We are the friends she has invited tonight to whom she will recite her favorite poems and sing her favorite songs. She intends to make this evening warm, friendly and unforgettable.

She does not know that by casting her net wide, she has exposed herself to an unpredictable incident that is going to shift the course of the evening.

I will let you discover this 'coup de theatre' when you see the play.

This incident forces the actress to tell us her personal story; going back to her ancestors, her childhood and her peregrination through the different countries where she has toured and in which she has entrenched herself or grown roots.

She disregards the initial purpose of the evening.

We, her friends, become witness to a series of confessions and intimate revelations.

Nora had invited us to hear her favorite poems, instead she herself becomes the poem.

The memories that resurface along with their share of pain, revelation and regeneration, are presented in the form of a performance piece; their epic proportions mixed with the scents and spices from the old bazaar of Cairo.

The couch becomes the family couch, her grandmothers' couch, the couch of intricate words lost in the buzz of History.

And ... a journey begins, that takes us on a promenade from Cairo to New York,

From Giza to the Scottish Highlands;

From Turkey... to Armenia

The words navigate

The voice tightens then is freed

A tune erupts

And Nora narrates her spirit.

I staged this play with the curiosity of someone permanently in quest of the fine line between fiction and reality. Theatre is illusion. Nora Armani is real. But is she a real person or a character in a play? Who can tell with certainty at the end of the performance? And does it really matter for us to know? After all, theatre is but a reflection of life and therein comes its rule: to avoid all conventions or rather to reinvent them. And if Nora plays herself, it is because she has come to realise that this margin between what constitutes life and what forms a dream is no longer her concern. Or rather, it concerns her only in as much as being able to better define her identity and image today, through her life-experiences, love, disillusion and true happiness. She lives and she plays.

— François Kergourlay

## Bio Notes

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### Nora Armani

Born in Egypt of Armenian parents Nora Armani was educated in England. She lived and worked in Los Angeles from 1981-1993 earning critical accolades and awards for her performances, especially *Sojourn at Ararat* with Gerald Papasian. After 12 years of dividing her time between London and Paris, she now calls New York home since 2005.

Her repertory includes Shakespeare, Shaw, Beckett, Hammerstein and Guitry while her own creations ***Sojourn at Ararat, Nannto, Nannto, On the Couch with Nora Armani*** and ***Snowflakes in April*** have earned her extensive international tours and many accolades on four continents in over twenty cities including Paris, London, Edinburgh, Venice, Avignon and Sydney.

Invited to Armenia to star in the films ***Deadline in Seven Days, Last Station*** and ***Labyrinth***, she becomes cultural ambassador promoting Armenian Cinema worldwide. She has interpreted lead roles in American, French, Czech, Armenian, Lebanese and Egyptian films on screen and on television. Between March 1991 and December 1993, she represented the Ministry of Culture of Armenia as a spokesperson for the promotion of Armenian cinema world wide.

She has guest appeared on ***Casualty*** the BBC-TV series in the UK, and in London she has appeared as Volumnia in Mehmet Ergen's production of ***Plebeians Rehearse the Uprising*** by Günter Grass at the Arcola Theatre, Gerald Papasian's production of Shaw's ***Arms and the Man*** at the Young Vic Theatre, and ***On the Couch with Nora Armani*** at the New End Theatre.

In Paris her stage credits include Fatima Gallère's ***La Fête Virile*** at the Cartoucherie – Epée de Bois, as well as ***Couples du Monde*** and ***Nannto Nannto***. Her French film credits include Catherine Corsini's ***La Nouvelle Eve***, Laurent Dussaux' ***Le Coeur à L'ouvrage***, Daniele Stro's ***L'Ame Soeur*** in the title role, Isabelle Ouzounian's ***Le Neflier: journal d'une chomeuse*** also in the title role, Malik Chibane's ***Residence Mozart*** with Anémone.

In New York she appeared on stage as Mrs. King in ***Beyond the Veil*** directed by John Chatterton and on screen as Nisreen in Antonio Albagli's film ***Kanikaze***. as Mme Jeunet in David Onota's film ***The Doors of Denis***, and in the Disney feature ***Enchanted*** starring Susan Sarandon.

She has also directed plays Off-Broadway, in Los Angeles and in France.

**Prizes include: Best Actress Award** twice in Armenia (Stage and Screen) and two ***Drama-Logue*** awards in Los Angeles. ***The California Motion Picture Golden Star*** award–1985–Los Angeles. She is an Honorary Member of the National Theatre of Armenia since 1992. Her most recent award was that of ***Best Actress*** for her lead role on ***Labyrinth*** at the ***Siunik Film Festival***. She holds an M.Sc. from the ***University of London*** and a B.A. in Sociology and Theatre (Acting and Directing) from the ***American University Cairo*** and ***UCLA*** (Los Angeles).

### François Kergourlay

François Kergourlay was born in Suresnes - France to a theatrical family. His father is an actor-playwright and his mother an actress-dancer. In 1982, he is offered a place at the ***National Superior Conservatory of Dramatic Art*** at that time under the directorship of Jacques Rosner. He later studies masks with Mario Gonzalez for three years. In 1991, he creates the ***François Kergourlay Theatre Company***, and in 1995 he is appointed Artistic Director of the Firmin Gémier Theatre in Antony; a post he occupies for five years.

Among François Kergourlay's productions are Cahit Atay's ***The Onlooker*** in his own translation with Mehmet Tepe starring Philippe Demarle. ***The Potocki Parades, The Tic-tac of the Pendulum*** based on Daniil Harms' work, Léonide Andréiev's ***The Thought*** with Olive Combed in a translation by Lily Denis and Gogol's ***The Inspector General***. He has also directed plays by Molière, Goldoni, Marivaux, Tchekhov, Maeterlinck, Feydeau, Filippo, Kohout, Prévert, Valle-inclán, the Venezuelan Mariela Romero, Yeats, Sylvie Laporte and Natacha Cashman, and, by special invitation of the State Theatre of Ankara, a Turkish translation by Lütfü Ay of Dostoyevski ***Eternal Husband*** from Victor Haïm's French adaptation of the work.

His professional peregrinations have taken him from Paris and its suburbs to Rennes, Limoges, Béthune, Avignon, Brest and Lorient and his productions have been seen in Central Europe, Turkey and the Middle East.

# OFF BROADWAY

Not Your Grandma's Theatre

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## On the Couch with Nora Armani

Theatre Review by Matthew Murray

[...]

[...Armani proves herself an extremely natural actress and a superb storyteller, more than capable of carrying an evening. She has an air of quiet, unassuming sophistication that gives her an otherworldly, yet approachable girl-next-door quality that allows her to cut a commanding stage presence. Her knowing, expressive eyes are generally her preferred method of communication, and they explain much about her, seeming to smile or weep independently of her face, but the presence or absence of her gleaming white smile also assists her in captivating with the simplest of thoughts.]

[...Armani imbues stories about her grandparents meeting, her own immigration to the United States, or any number of other subjects with such a personal quality that she ensures she'll keep your attention once you give it to her.

[...smoothly polished and truly fascinating theatre piece.]

[It's that style - combined with the star's innate likeability - that allows *On the Couch with Nora Armani* to function at its intriguing, enveloping best; ]

[...rewarding moments of crystalline clarity ... Armani gives herself the freedom to actually be herself.]



For full review go to:

[http://www.talkinbroadway.com/ob/07\\_20a\\_04.html](http://www.talkinbroadway.com/ob/07_20a_04.html)

*On the Couch with Nora Armani*

# NORA ARMANI

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"...absolutely superb, exquisite and virtuoso performance.."

**DramaLogue** – Los Angeles – Steven Zeller

"... the deft, bedazzling Armani creates textured characters and substantial momentum."

**Los Angeles Times** – Ray Loynd

"...brilliantly performed by...Nora Armani, one is reminded that magic can still exist on the stage. Powerful, moving impressive and entertaining."

**Herald Examiner** – Los Angeles – Clifford Gallo

"...excellent work from Nora Armani..."

**What's On in London** – Sophia Veil

"...Moving... a long applause..."

**Le Monde** – Christophe Deshoulières

"...The beautiful Nora Armani..."

**Weekly Variety** – Emmanuel Levi

"Armani speaks her words clearly and with passion."

**Daily Variety**

"...knows how to blend her gorgeous voice and expertly trained body to create theatrical magic.."

**LA Weekly** – Pick of the Week – Tom Provenzano

"A spirited and spiritual journey....gifted actor..."

**The Boston Globe** – Patti Hartigan

"...performance which stirs the imagination.."

**Pasadena Weekly** – John C. Mahoney

"...extraordinary and moving performance."

**Daily Bruin** – UCLA – Tony Tran

"Splendid show."

**The Scotsman** - Howard Purdie

"[delivered] with force and emotion."

**Le Provençal**

"Nora Armani occupies the stage as a true professional."

**Le Dauphiné** - Olivier Grozelon

"Talented actor..."

**Drama-Logue** - Polly Warfield

"Appealing and skilled actor... slender Natalie Wood like beauty..."

**Glendale News Press** - Alan Raeburn

"From the Heart's Core."

**Ararat Literary Magazine** - Judy Ellis

"Extremely talented creator-performer."

**Star News Today** - Francis Baum Nicholson

"Highly polished performance. Linguistic flexibility."

**The Gazette** (Montreal)

## Notes from Nora Armani's Guest Book

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- This is an insightful and sensitive portrait of an Egyptian-Armenian-Hollywood-Parisian world-eye-view of life with a diasporic identity. Issues of belonging and not belonging, of being and of discovering are brought to life through laughter and tears. Social scientists should consider this to be part of their course - a delightful part. **Eileen Barker**, FBA, OBE, Professor of Sociology, LSE (London)
- Great Performance! **Sossi Kevonian** (Northridge, California)
- Such a genuine way you have to make me laugh and cry all at the same time. Thank you for this beautiful experience that I was so thrilled to be here for. You are a beautiful soul and a wonderful artist. **Aline Kutan** (Internationally acclaimed Opera Singer – Montreal)
- You're an amazing talent and I wish you continued success in your endeavour. **Vivianne** (Los Angeles)
- Your performance was exquisite. We love you all the way from LA. **Avo Yermagian** (20)
- I've been inspired once again by you. I wish you continued bursts of creative flow so I can be inspired as well. **Lara Suri** (20)
- Nora Armani's performance is a tour de force: an attempt at collective introspection over difficult times and spaces. It is rare for Armenians to introspect, even more difficult to do so collectively. Well, Nora has done it. **Prof. Gerard Libaridian**, (Historian-Boston)
- I was very proud of your performance as a woman. You are daring, genuine, soulful and very bright on the stage. **Siroon Yeretsian**. (Artist-Los Angeles)
- I saw that you followed your dreams. I hope to follow my dreams and become a singer. **Marina** (11)
- Nora it was great! **Prof. Levon Marashlian**. (Historian-Los Angeles)
- Enchanting. **Ara Y.** (Chicago)
- The journey we took with you tonight was great! **Ani Tokat** (Chicago)
- Your performance was an inspiration. **Peter A** (Detroit)
- The Chicago audience will never forget you. **Maro Bedrossian**
- Great! Wow! That was wonderful. I hope you were talking to me cause if you weren't I was making a complete idiot of myself. Thanks! **Annie T** (13)
- That was a great show. I hope to become a great actress like you. I hope you come back to Detroit. **Lori P** (13)
- You touched so many hearts in so many ways. **A spectator**
- Bravo! Such a graceful public confession. **Fr. Vertanes Kalaydjian**. (Washington)
- A beautiful memorable journey through the decades of our lives. **Alex Ashod Dadourian** (Los Angeles)
- I am so thrilled I came to hear your wonderful 'On the Couch with Nora Armani'. You were wonderful. By the way I am Armenian. **Ojia Brose** (London)
- Congratulations. A tour de force! **Nick Reese** (London)
- An incredible journey and story about finding where you are. **Joanne Morgan** (London)
- Sparkling! **I. Robinson** (London)
- What a feat to have done-to hold and captivate an audience for over an hour is something very few actors can claim. Congratulations. **Sévan Stepan** (London)
- Nora, you make me proud. **Vic Tablian** (London)
- Thank you for your present and your 'joie de vivre' over the last three weeks. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with you. **Paul** (New End Theatre- London)
- Nora, Excellent! **Hasmig & Armenag Topalian**
- It was so good that I had no reason not to cry! **Sheila** (London)
- Nora, you are superb! **Hüseyin Poyraz** (London)
- Fantastic! Resonated many themes for me. Brilliant! **John Nassar** (London)
- She immediately brought me right into her story and I



## *On the Couch with Nora Armani*

### The North American tours and the London performances in the media:

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- BBC Radio – World Service (Interview and Excerpts) 'Awraq' (Papers)
- Diaspora Music Village (London)
- Egyptian TV- Channel I
- Abu Dhabi TV (Feature story, clips and live interview via satellite)
- Le Progrès Egyptien (Egypt)
- Al Ahram (Egypt- International Edition) 3 articles
- Al Sharq Al Awsat (London)
- Sayedati (Women's Monthly Magazine – London)
- The Egyptian Gazette (Egypt)
- The Armenian Mirror Spectator (USA)
- Aligr FM Radio (France)
- UGAB Magazine (France)
- Abaka (Canada)
- Nor Or (USA)

## *Awards*

- Golden Star Halo Award from the Southern California Motion Picture Council, presented by Geraldine Saunders of TV's 'Love Boat'
- DramaLogue Critics' Award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatre: for Creation and Performance.
- 'Encore' DramaLogue Award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatre: for Creation and Performance

## *Radio*

# Interviews, Talk Shows, Poetry and Various Readings

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RADIO Méditerranée -- Paris, France  
RADIO Monte Carlo - Paris, France  
CAIRO Radio - Cairo, Egypt  
FRANCE CULTURE - Avignon, France  
RADIO NOSTALGIE - Avignon, France  
EUROPE 1 - Avignon, France  
RADIO McGill - Montreal, Canada  
CKGM - Montreal, Canada

KPFK (Mario Casseta) - Los Angeles  
KCRW (ARTS LA) - Santa Monica, CA  
HARC Radio - Detroit, USA  
RADIO Montmartre - Paris, France  
RADIO Ayp FM - Paris, France  
AUS-Australian Radio - Sydney, Australia  
CCB Cambridgeshire - Cambridge, UK  
BBC Cambridge - Cambridge, UK

## *Television:*

# Interviews, Talk Shows, Guest Appearances, Performances

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CHANNEL 2 - ACTION NEWS - Los Angeles  
CHANNEL 18 - Los Angeles (numerous appearances)  
ABC TV - Los Angeles  
NBC TV - Los Angeles  
NILE-TV – Egyptian Satellite TV  
LBC- TV - Lebanon  
LEBANON TV - Lebanese TV Channel  
CAIRO TV - Channel One Egyptian TV

AL ANBAA - Egyptian TV News Channel  
ROTTERDAM TV - Actress of the Day - The Netherlands  
SARAJEVO TV - Yugoslavia  
YEREVAN TV - Armenia (numerous appearances)  
OSTANKINO - Moscow  
TELE ARMENIA - Los Angeles (numerous appearances)  
TELERAMA - Montreal – Canada  
ABU DHABI TV - Profile program

## *Representation:*

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## In the media partial list

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### **USA:**

- Los Angeles Times–Friday December 9th, 1988
- DramaLogue–April 28th 1987 & December 8-14, 1988
- Hollywood Reporter
- LA Business Journal–Week of September 2-8 , 1991
- LA Weekly–Week of April 24-30th, 1987
- Daily Variety–December 8th, 1988 & Friday June 19, 1992
- Los Angeles Herald Examiner–Thursday December 8th, 1988
- Pasadena Weekly–December 1988
- Smithsonian–May 1988
- Star News–Monday December 5th, 1988
- The Boston Globe–Week of April 17th & Monday April 24th 1989
- The Oregonian–Wednesday February 24th & Tuesday March 2nd, 1993
- AIM–Armenian International Magazine, Aug-Sept. 1991, June 1992, Nov. 1999
- ARARAT–Summer 1989
- California Courier–May 3rd, 1990, January 28th, 1993, December 5th, 1996
- Daily Bruin–Wednesday April 6th, 1988
- Mirror Spectator–November 30th, 1996
- News Press–Wednesday December 7th, 1988

### **UK:**

- BBC World Service–June 2002
- The Stage–July 2002
- The Camden New Journal–June 2002
- On Line Review London–June 2002
- Abu Dhabi TV–Satellite & Cable–interview and reportage 2002
- Asharq El Awsat & Sayedati–International Arabic Language Press 2002
- BBC 4 Interview–May 2000
- The Scotsman–Thursday August 28th, 1986
- Time Out–November 1995
- BBC Cambridgeshire–July 1995

- Cambridge Film Festival Daily–July 18 - 22, 1995
- Cambridge Radio–July 1995
- Echo–October 1978
- Moving Pictures–Rotterdam Daily–Thursday February 2nd, 1995
- Riverside Studios–May 1989

### **FRANCE:**

- Le Monde–June 1990
- L'Officiel–February, 2000
- Le Quotidien de Paris–Thursday July 25th, 1991
- Echo Republicain–February 27th, 1996
- Le Meridional–July 1991
- Le Provençal–July 1991
- La Marseillaise–July 1991
- Les Echos–July 1991
- L' Olivier Festival D'Avignon–15 & 17 July 1991
- Le Dauphine–Drome/Ardeche - December 19th, 1989
- Les Nouvelles–Rambouillet - 31st January 1996 & Tuesday February 27th, 1996
- Les Nouvelles d'Armenie–April 1995 & April 1997
- Liberation–Friday 18 October 1996
- Pariscope–April 1994 & October 1996
- Gamk–February, 2000
- Achkhar–April 1st, 1995 & February 2000
- Premiere–October 1996

### **INDIA:**

- The Hindu–India's National Newspaper–April 2000
- New India Express–April 2000
- Deepika–April 2000 (front page)
- Malayalam Daily–April 2000 (front page)
- AsiaNet–Indian TV - April 2000

### **HOLLAND:**

- Moving Pictures Daily–Wednesday February 1st, 1995
- Festival Daily–Thursday February 2nd, 1995
- Rotterdams Dagblad (Rotterdam Daily)–Thursday February, 2nd, 1995

### **ITALY:**

- La Repubblica–May 1994
- La Stampa–June 1998

## In the media partial list continued

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### **CANADA:**

- Radio CKGM–McGill - April 2000
- The Gazette, Montreal, Friday September 23rd, 1988
- Radio McGill–September 1988
- La Presse–Montreal, Wednesday September 21st, 1988
- CKGM–Radio - September 1988
- Abaka Weekly–19th August 1991

### **EGYPT:**

- Akhbar El Nogoum (Stars' News)–December 1996, December 1997 & Sept. 1998
- Akhbar El Yom (Daily News)–9 December 1995, 9 & 14 December 1996
- Al Ahram (The Pyramids - Daily)–9 December 1996 & 15 December 1997
- Al Cinema Wal Nas (Cinema and People)–January 3rd, 1998
- Al Folous (Money Magazine)–November 1997
- Al Gomhoureya (The Republic - Daily)–13 December 1996
- Al Wafd (The Party - Daily)–December 8th, 1996
- Al Wasat (The Milieu)–March 10th, 1997
- ART (Arab Radio & Television)–January 1998
- Channel 1, 2 & 3 Egyptian TV–December - January 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998
- Hawaa' (Eve-Women's Weekly)–January 3rd, 1998
- Le Progres Magazine–Sunday 15 December 1996
- Nile TV–Satellite Television-December 1996, December 1997
- October Magazine–March 1997
- Sot El Kahera (Voice of Cairo - Radio)–December 1996 & December 1997

### **LEBANON:**

- Al Hayat (Life)–June 1996
- Al Watan (The Homeland)–June 1996
- Ararat–Friday, May 24th 1996
- Aztag (Sign)–1975
- Khosnag (Messenger)–1975
- LBC–Lebanese TV–January 1996
- Zartonk (Renaissance)–December 1st, 1996

### **TURKEY:**

- Hurriyet–May 2000
- AGOS–August 8th, 1997, November 1997 & December 1997
- Jamanak–August 1997, November 1997 & December 1997
- Marmara–August 1st, 1997, November 1997 & December 1997

### **ARMENIA:**

- Azg–Yerevan - February 1991, March 1991, May 1992, July 1993 etc.
- Ecran Magazine (Cover)–March 1991
- Gegharvesd–May 16-31, 1991
- Hayastani Hanrabadoutiun–February 1991
- Housharar–April 13th, 1991
- Radio Yerevan–February 1991, May 1992
- Respublica Armenia–23d May 1992
- Yeregoyan Yerevan–February 1991, May 1992

### **BULGARIA:**

- Yerevan Weekly–February 6th, 1997

### **TUNISIA:**

- Le Temps (Time - Daily)–March 3rd, 1996