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INSTITUTE

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Armenian Institute

# Bulletin

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## A Celebration of Literature in English and Armenian

6 September at Sydney Miller Court

Residents of Sydney Miller Court (W3) and other guests enjoyed an afternoon of poetry and prose recited in English and Armenian by volunteers from the Armenian Institute. Organised by Nvard Stepanian, the purpose of the event was to share a love of literature with those who have few opportunities to attend such events in the community. Along with Stepanian (pictured), Hasmik Hovhannisyian, Emma Kurdian, Anna Mkhitarayan, Susan Pattie, Zhanna Petrosyan and Vazken Tavitian read excerpts. Young volunteers, Vanuhi and Sipan-Dro Petrosyan charmed the audience with their energetic rendition of poetry and song. Maral Ovanessoff organised the serving of tea and cakes to all and Paresk Kathrani recorded the event on video. The AI donated a set of books on Armenian literature, edited by Mischa Kudian, and a beautiful mounted photograph by Silva Keondjian to the residents. We are grateful to the Notting Hill Trust for their financial support of the event.

Nvard Stepanian



This is the second AI *Bulletin* with news of recent events. The *Armenian Institute News* including original articles, reviews and essays is sent to current Friends, Patrons and Benefactors. If you wish to join, please complete and return the form on page 2.

## Bechstein at the Gulbenkian

27 September at Nevert Gulbenkian Hall

The renovation of the 1923 Bechstein piano in the Nevert Gulbenkian Hall provided a wonderful opportunity to extend our musical programme for the Armenian community and friends, aspiring musicians and all music-lovers. Master classes, lecture demonstrations as well as workshops and house concerts will bring together musicians and audiences, learning about technique and repertoire as well as simply enjoying fine playing and singing. Our inaugural day included a **Master Class with Seta Tanyel** and an **Evening Gala Inaugural Event**.



Seta Tanyel coaching Tigran Grigoryan

*Born in Istanbul of Armenian parentage, Seta Tanyel is acclaimed for her distinguished performances around the world. She studied in Vienna and London and was a major prize-winner in important competitions. Since her debut in 1978, she has toured extensively, performing with prominent orchestras and has received countless critical accolades for her recordings. Seta Tanyel is a sought-after teacher with an exceptionally wide repertoire.*

A large crowd attended the Master Class and enjoyed the playing of two talented and accomplished students. Tigran Grigoryan, studying at Trinity College of Music, and Marina Chan, a student of Ms Tanyel,

Following the Master Class, the room was transformed to accommodate the second portion of the evening. A capacity crowd sat around tables and listened with rapt attention as a series of renowned artists performed in the intimate surroundings. Levon Chilingirian introduced the evening's programme and future series of musical events planned by AI. A short concert focussed on the Bechstein piano and included an exciting rendition of Scarlatti sonatas played by Seta Tanyel, and Chopin and Kachaturian played by Sarkis Zakarian. Aris Nadirian (baritone) accompanied by Richard Black, sang a rarely heard aria from the opera *Almast* by Spendiaryan as well as a song by Chouhajian. Mozart and



Sarkis Zakarian, Seta Tanyel and Levon Chilingirian

Beethoven were played by Levon Chilingirian, leader of the Chilingirian Quartet, and Seta Tanyel. The concert ended with Khachaturian's Waltz, a piano duet played by Tanyel and Zakarian. While the audience turned their attention to the delicious food and wine, John Burnett-Hall, a sought-after jazz musician, played a variety of popular pieces in the background enhancing the already special atmosphere of this event.

The Armenian Institute is grateful to Jakobs Deli of Gloucester Road and Rita Koundarjian for their delicious contributions to our feast on the night. We especially thank the St Sarkis Charity Trust for their generous support of the afternoon Master Class and the evening Gala Inaugural Event.



### LECTURE

**ECE TEMELKURAN, author of *The Deep Mountain***

7 May at SOAS

Ece Temelkuran is the most-read female political columnist in Turkey. Writing for *Milliyet*, she is also a contributor to *Le Monde Diplomatique* and writes about political Islam, Armenian and Kurdish issues,

and political prisoners. The author of 9 books, Temelkuran was awarded the Freedom of Thought Prize in 2008 by the Human Rights Association of Istanbul for her courageous articles and essays. Her latest book, *The Deep Mountain*, published in Istanbul in 2008, is being translated into English. Based on interviews with Armenians in Armenia, France and the U.S., Temelkuran was

encouraged by Hrant Dink to begin this complex project in which she questions nationalism on all sides while trying to redefine belonging and the concept of home. Ece Temelkuran read short passages from the book (in English) and discussed the experience of thinking about Armenians as a Turkish writer.

## Language Tuition

Monday and Wednesday evenings at the Armenian Institute Library, N. Gulbenkian Hall

A new season of our successful language tuition classes started in September. Sossi Yeretizian, Rita Koundarjian and Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian continue teaching both East and West variants of Armenian language at all levels, ranging from absolute beginners to advanced learners. All courses emphasise conversational skills alongside reading/writing proficiency.



## British-Armenian Relations: Meet Her Majesty's Ambassador to Armenia

4 June at Armenian House

His Excellency Charles Lonsdale has been HM Ambassador to Armenia since January 2008. He joined the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1987 and has served in Vienna, Budapest and Moscow as well as a variety of positions in London. Many members of the Armenian community took the opportunity to attend and were invited to engage in a conversation with the Ambassador on issues that are relevant to the development of dynamic relations between Britain and Armenia.

## Film Club

**SWALLOWS' NEST: The story of the Tuzla Armenian orphanage, Director: Bülent Arinli**

15 May at Pushkin House

This moving documentary film follows Hrant Dink as he walks around the summer camp of Tuzla and speaks of the meaning it carried for himself and the other orphans who stayed there. He talks also of the struggle he and his friends went through, trying to regain and restore the camp. For over 20 years, Tuzla was an integral part of Dink's life and also the place where he met his wife Rakel. Dr Hratch Tchilingirian (University of Cambridge) led a discussion following the film.

**THE STORY OF MY NAME An Armenian Tale Director: Dorothée Forma June 26 at Pushkin House**

At the age of 19, Alex Luijten discovered his biological father, an Armenian living in France. At 44, he took on his father's family name, Peltekian - a new name with a foreign flavour, and decided to find out the story behind it. After his father's death, papers and deeds emerged revealing that the Peltekians had been a wealthy family in Turkey until World War One. The quest took him via Beirut to Dörtyol in Turkey where his father was born in 1912. Forma's sensitive and moving film follows Alex's journey as it ends with remarkable encounters with the present inhabitants.

**HEART OF TWO NATIONS, HRANT DINK, Director: Nouritza Matossian**

18 September at Pushkin House

**Heart of Two Nations, Hrant Dink** portrays the newspaper editor assassinated in Istanbul last year in private conversations with Nouritza Matossian. Powerful, intimate and prophetic, this documentary was short-listed at the 2008 Golden Apricot Film Festival, Yerevan. The film provides a unique opportunity to hear Dink in his own words on a range of topics from Turkey and the EU, the Armenians in Istanbul, his own childhood and death.

## Book Launch: Democracy and civil society in post-Soviet Armenia by Dr Armine Ishkanian

8 June at Armenian House

This new book considers the challenges of democracy-building in post-Soviet Armenia, and the role of civil society in that process. Based on extensive original research, including ethnographic fieldwork and interviews, it provides a detailed account of democracy-building and civil society-strengthening programmes in Armenia since 1991. In her presentation, Dr Ishkanian examined current developments in Armenia and consid-

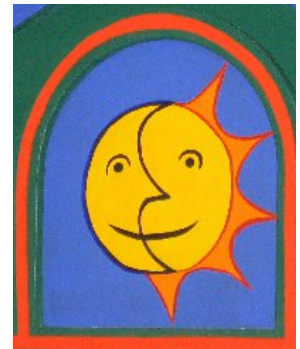
ered the question of whether we are witnessing the reawakening of civil society in Armenia today. Dr Ishkanian is a Lecturer in Social Policy at the London School of Economics (LSE).

## Puppet Club

10 May and 14 June at Armenian Institute Library, N. Gulbenkian Hall

Following the very successful first workshop in April, the Institute started a monthly Saturday morning meeting of those interested in exploring the many ways in which we can use our

new puppet stage. The puppeteers worked on refining old stories and creating new ones. A variety of materials are used to build puppets of all kinds which then inspire new stories as well. We welcome potential puppeteers and artists of all ages at our meetings to discuss future possibilities.



## Open House London St Sarkis Armenian Church

20 September

Through the initiative of the Armenian Institute, the Church of St Sarkis opened its doors to visitors for the fourth consecutive year. Consecrated in 1923, the church was closely remodelled on the bell tower in the monastery of Haghpat in Armenia. Volunteers on hand answered questions and a booklet on St Sarkis and the Armenian Church, commissioned by the Church Trustees and published by the Armenian Institute, was on sale.

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