



**ARMENIAN
INSTITUTE**
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Armenian Institute

Bulletin

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CELEBRATIONS Christmas Festival & Vernissage

6 December at N Gulbenkian Hall

This year's Festival was particularly cosy as we were without electricity (with the whole



neighbourhood) for most of the day. Candles and small lanterns helped to create a warm atmosphere as people adjusted their eyes to the "romantic" lighting inside. As always, an enjoyable time was had by all and delicious home-made Armenian foods and other Middle Eastern specialities were shared around tables together. A number of new craft stalls brought more variety to the original gifts available while the books and CDs were very popular. We are grateful to Tania Tidianian and Annie Youshie who once more provided opportunities for children and young people to create Christmas presents for friends and family. A big thank you to all those who volunteered their time, delicious foods, and talents, including Jakobs Deli of Gloucester Road.

This is the third 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.

FILM CLUB Short Films by Tina M Bastajian

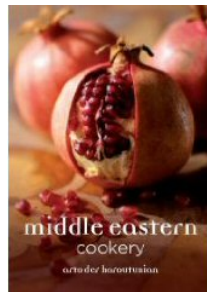
9 October at Pushkin House

Tina Bastajian, media artist, showed a series of short films and answered questions about her work. Bastajian is recognised as an exciting, provocative observer, often exploring a multiplicity of voices. A Los Angeles-born film/video artist, curator, and currently a PhD candidate at the University of Amsterdam, Tina Bastajian's research revolves around strategies of documentation, preservation and re-presentation of filmic performative works. Themes of the fragment, translation are intrinsic to her own work within experimental film. Currently she is teaching film history and theory at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam while developing other projects. Bastajian's films screened this evening included "Pinched Cheeks and Slurs in a Language that Avoids Her" and "Jagadakeer... between the Near & East".

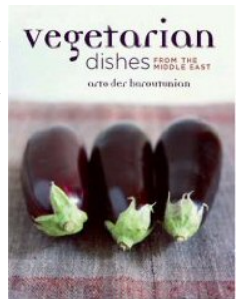


BOOK LAUNCH Middle Eastern Cookery & Vegetarian Dishes from the Middle East by Arto Der Haroutunian

2 November at Nevart Gulbenkian Hall



The Armenian Institute welcomed the re-issue of two of the favourites of the late Arto Der Haroutunian's many cookbooks, published by Grub Street. Artist, musician and poet, Arto Der Haroutunian became most widely known for his unique writing style and delicious recipes, authoring a large number of cookbooks. Arto's wife, Frances, presented the books to a large attendance and talked about the man and his passions, the restaurants they had run together, and her own introduction to Armenian foods. Their son Raffi was also present and the evening continued with conversation between old friends and a sampling of delicious foods made by Frances from



recipes from Arto's books. We are grateful to Frances and Raffi for their generous contribution of the wonderful food this evening.

COOKERY CLUB Anooshabour & Choereg With Gigi Dunaians Young

23 November at St Stephens Church Hall

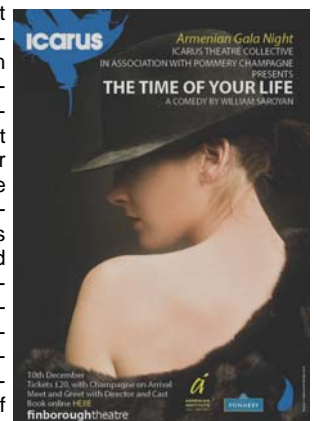
A group of enthusiastic participants joined Gigi Dunaians Young in the afternoon and learned to make the traditional Armenian Christmas and New Year dessert, *anooshabour*. A cooked pudding, stuffed with varied dried fruits and nuts, *anooshabour* is a staple holiday dish loved by all. *Choereg* is also a favourite. Rival of the French brioche, this fragrant holiday bread is served most often at Easter but also enjoyed on other festive occasions. Then in the evening family and friends joined Young and her fellow chefs for a light dinner of Armenian lentil soup, *boereg*, salads and, of course, *choereg* and *anooshabour*, served with wine or soft drinks.

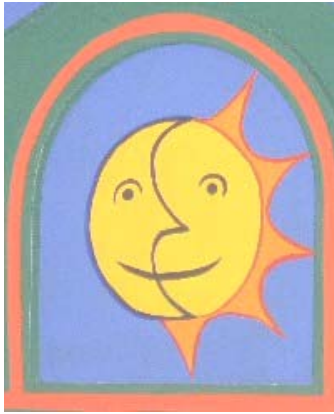
THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE A comedy by William Saroyan

10 December at Finborough Theatre

The Icarus Theatre Collective in association with the Armenian Institute presented an **Armenian Gala Evening** to honour the great

Armenian-American playwright William Saroyan. Guests received a glass of champagne on arrival and met with the cast and director following an exclusive viewing of Saroyan's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, his best-known and loved work. In intimate surroundings at the celebrated Finborough Theatre, a top-notch cast presented vivid and finely-wrought production of Saroyan's play.





PUPPET CLUB

Animals Galore!

11 October at Gulbenkian Hall

Storyteller and accordionist **Natalya Ribeaux** led an exciting session with her own version of the traditional story, *The Musicians of Bremen*. She then guided participants in making puppets and scenery to create their own story ending with a short performance, watched by parents, crowning the morning's work. Ribeaux spent some years as a performer in Germany, using costumes and stilts to create a range of characters to interact with the public. She has run costume-making and circus skills workshops



and is now a playworker, further expanding the realm of fantasy and practical creation into the world of children's play. She has also been a musician of Bremen!

"The Rich Farmer" with Vergine Gulbenkian

8 November at Gulbenkian Hall

This session began with Vergine Gulbenkian telling the story of *The Rich Farmer*, a timeless folk tale which has been passed down through many generations. A lively crowd of young people and their older assistants then created puppets, a scenario and backdrops to bring the story to life in another form. Parents, friends and family watched the performance of the story staged with much enjoyment and zest by the children at the end of the session. (*For information about Vergine Gulbenkian, please see next article*).

Lecture & Storytelling

Armenian Folk Epic "Daredevils of Sasun"

By Dr Azat Yeghiazarian with Vergine Gulbenkian, storytelling

15 October at Armenian House

Dr Yeghiazarian discussed the mediaeval Armenian epic "Daredevils of Sasun". He also explored an early cycle of epic songs preceding the epic by centuries, of which only the remnants are found today. The epic which emerged was based on new, mostly Christian, moral values and a novel representation of the world. Yeghiazarian discussed the originality of Armenian mediaeval epic as well

as its general features which connect it with other epics around the world.

A scholar of Armenian literature, Dr Yeghiazarian was until recently Head of Department of Modern Literature at M. Abeghyan Institute in Yerevan.

Vergine Gulbenkian has performed traditional tales and epics in major venues, schools, museums, festivals and clubs around Great Britain. She has conducted

research into Armenian storytelling and Armenian folk songs are an integral part of her performances. She is currently touring a new commission "The Cradle of Life", and developing education programmes with museums in Oxford. Vergine has been telling "Sasuntsi Tavit" in English for over ten years, exploring ways to bring this wonderful epic to life for present-day audiences.

ARMENIAN THROUGH SONG ԵՐԳՈՎ ՀԱՅԵՐԵՆ – YERKOV HAYEREN

With Dr Mark Grigoryan

13 November at Nevart Gulbenkian Hall

In this series, our speakers will present an Armenian song or genre of song, exploring its cultural and historical context. The speaker will use both Armenian and English, providing an opportunity for those who wish to improve their listening skills and vocabulary. The

series began with Dr. Grigoryan presenting in Armenian and English "That's how we live in our beloved town" (2004) (Հենց այսպես էլ ապրում ենք մեր սիրած քաղաքում). The piece by **Forsh** is a cheerful song about Yerevan and people known in the artistic circles of the city. The author introduces each one with a short description,

portraying the town as a theatre or a museum. Some of the characters join the singer in describing the town and the way the people live there, singing the refrain together - "That's how we live in our beloved town".

Mark Grigoryan, journalist, was born in Yerevan and now lives in London where he is a producer for the BBC World Service.

LECTURE Armenian Women Writers in Turn-of-the-Century Constantinople

By Dr Victoria Rowe

20 November at Armenian House

Three prominent writers — **Srpouhi Dussap** (1841-1901), **Sibyl** (1863-1934), and **Zabel Yessayan** (1878-1943) (pictured) were the focus of this talk. Their lives, careers and texts reveal the ways in which the urban environment of Constantinople facilitated the publication of Armenian women's writing and reflect how a diverse group of Armenian women responded to and shaped contemporary discussions on women, human rights, and Armenian identity.

Dr. Victoria Rowe specialises in Armenian literary history and gender studies. She is the author of A History of Armenian Women's Writing, 1880-1922 and has numerous published articles in Armenian studies.



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