



ARMENIAN  
INSTITUTE

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Armenian Institute

# Bulletin

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## LECTURE

**BYRON VENICE AND THE ARMENIANS AN ILLUSTRATED TALK BY CLARE FORD-WILLE AND PETER SHAHBENDERIAN**  
11 June at N Gulbenkian Hall

This illustrated lecture was rescheduled (Armenian Institute *Bulletin*, vol. 2, no. 2) in order to give more people the opportunity to hear about this exciting topic. Clare Ford-Wille is an independent art historian and a well known lecturer, frequently leading tours abroad. Peter Shahbenderian is an expert on Armenian art and architecture and has led a number of successful tours to Armenia. Their subject was the Armenian monastic community on the island of San Lazzaro in the Venetian lagoon and Lord



I. K. Aivazovsky (1817-1900). *The Arrival of Lord Byron on the Island of Saint Lazarus* (1899).

This is the fifth 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.

## HEAR MY SONG

**A FESTIVAL OF CHORAL MUSIC**

19 June at St Yeghiche Armenian Church

The Armenian Institute held its first concert of choral music on June 19 at St. Yeghiche Church, bringing together 3 very different groups. The choir of the host church, St Yeghiche, directed by its choirmaster, Aris Nadirian, began with a programme of Komitas and Yekmalian, providing a beautiful introduction to Armenian sacred music for the audience. Soloists Louise Vartoukian, Sevan Stephan, and Aris Nadirian each made

very moving contributions. The Maspindzeli choir followed with a programme of Georgian liturgical and festival music, ending with a "toasting song". Though sharing borders, the Georgian and Armenian music provided a fascinating contrast in mood, tone and intensity, particularly with the Maspindzeli's close harmonies. The final group, St Barnabas Choir, Dulwich, presented a programme beginning with a newly-written mass by Tigran Grigoryan, presently a student at Trinity College of Music. Tigran, a member of the St Barnabas choir, was mentored by choir director, Dr. William McVicker, in creating this quite remarkable piece. The choir of some 70 people, from "8 to 80" years old, also sang pieces by Mendelssohn and Wesley, with soloists Vienna Francis-Mullins and Eleanor Wolfe. Riccardo Bonci accompanied on the organ. This is intended as the first of an annual series of choral festivals. The evening also served as an inspiration for the Armenian Institute to finally begin a choir of its own, something that many people have requested over the years. We are fortunate that Aris Nadirian has agreed to direct this choir and anyone wishing to audition should contact him through the Armenian Institute. We are grateful to the Manoogian Charitable Foundation for their generous loan of St. Yeghiche Church, to the Benlian Charitable Trust for financial assistance, and to Tamara Stephan for her invaluable help.



Photo courtesy of Alison Venn

## BECHSTEIN AT THE GULBENKIAN MUSIC SERIES

**CANDLELIT CONCERT BY SARKIS ZAKARIAN**

15 April at N Gulbenkian Hall

The pianist Sarkis Zakarian performed a mixture of Armenian and other classical music including works by Babajanian, Komitas, Haydn, Mozart and Chopin. After graduating from the Royal Academy of Music with the highest distinction, Zakarian has pursued a performing career. In 2005 he gave a highly acclaimed debut recital at London's Wigmore Hall and has since appeared in festivals around Europe. His interest in collaborating with contemporary composers led to the inspiring experience of meeting Estonian composer Avro Part. Since then Zakarian has premiered some of Part's works in London, broadcast on BBC Radio 3. Zakarian's recent concert engagements included a performance of the Schumann Piano Quintet with the Chilingirian Quartet during the March Musical Days Festival in Ruse. Born in Varna, Bulgaria in 1978, Zakarian currently lives in London.

## PUPPET CLUB

**OPEN TO ALL AGES FROM 7-97**

9 May at N Gulbenkian Hall

The Puppeteers revisited the stories from the past year and worked towards a future public performance. During each meeting new puppets and scenery were created, and improvisation was used to practise skills and entertain each other.





## WORKSHOP

### MAKE YOUR OWN FILMS: INTRODUCTORY COURSE ON VIDEO PRODUCTION WITH ADOM SABOONCHIAN

29 April at N Gulbenkian Hall

Adom Saboonchian led an interesting course on film-making for beginners, teaching how to make documentary projects, and better home and travel movies. AI hosted this course hoping that new film-makers would join a team of people documenting the use of video in our ongoing Oral History projects. Each participant made a video project based on Adom's guidance. At the end of the course all film projects were shown in class and were discussed in depth. The course enhanced the film-making techniques of the participants.

## BECHSTEIN AT THE GULBENKIAN MUSIC SERIES JAZZ CONCERT WITH JOHN HODIAN AND BET WILLIAMS

5 May at N Gulbenkian Hall

As part of their European tour, Bet Williams and John Hodian brought the Epiphany Project to London. AI hosted the group's first-ever London appearance as the band performed music from their latest CD, *Hin*



*Dagh*, a work rooted in ancient and sacred texts, set to vibrant and exciting new music. A fearless vocalist, Bet Williams' stunning four-octave-range voice has mesmerised audiences across America and Europe. John Hodian's free-flowing piano playing has been called "impassioned and evocative" and "pure genius" by critics. An Emmy Award winning composer, Hodian's intricate rhythms and haunting melodies reflect his Armenian heritage and his formal classical training, as well as years as a jazz improviser. John Hodian with Nareg Hartounian was a co-founder of Armenian Music Initiative (AMI), a branch of the Naregatsi Art institute in Yerevan.

## BECHSTEIN AT THE GULBENKIAN MUSIC SERIES TRUST YOUR VOICE: VOCALTRAINING WORKSHOP WITH LYDIA KAZARIANS

17 May and 21 June at N Gulbenkian Hall

Quite a few song-lovers regardless of musical or linguistic background attended this workshop, which was a unique opportunity to share and shed one's voice gremlins with like-minded and supportive people. The participants tapped into their vocal potential with fun exercises and best of all, they trusted their voice to explore the enchanting serenity of Armenian choral music and heartwarming popular songs. Following the success of this first workshop, Lydia gave a follow-up session for both old and new participants. Lydia Kazarians began studying voice and music in Vienna and continued exploring different techniques in London. Lydia conducts the student choir at the Kevork Tahta Armenian Sunday School.

## ARMENIAN INSTITUTE CHOIR

DIRECTOR: ARIS NADIRIAN

23 August at N Gulbenkian Hall

The Armenian Institute is happy to announce the appointment of Aris Nadirian as the director of its new choir, assisted by Lydia Kazarians. The choir meets weekly to rehearse and will perform at least twice a year, singing a wide-range of repertoire including traditional, classic and modern Armenian music as well as a variety of other pieces. We have enthusiastic choir members who were chosen by a simple audition. Those interested to join are welcome to contact the Institute.

## ARMENIAN THROUGH SONG ԵՐԳՈՎ ՀԱՅԵՐԵՆ – YERKOV HAYEREN

"HOV AREK SARER" "ՀՈՎ ԱՐԷՔ ՍԱՐԵՐ" WITH DR HRATCH TCHILINGIRIAN

19 May at N Gulbenkian Hall

In Armenian Though Song Series, speakers present an Armenian song, exploring its cultural and historical context, helping to understand the background that gave rise to the song. The series provides an opportunity for those who wish to improve their listening skills and vocabulary. Hratch Tchilingirian presented different interpretations of this well known song of Komitas Vardapet (1869-1935) by a variety of artists over the decades, including an original recording by Komitas himself. The talk was in West Armenian and English. Hratch Tchilingirian is Associate Director of the Eurasia Research Programme at the Judge Business School (University of Cambridge).

## LECTURE

BUILDING MORE THAN "HALF THE WORLD": THE ROLE OF ARMENIANS IN EARLY MODERN IRAN (1501-1722)  
BY DR APTIN KHANBAGHI

12 May at Armenian House

Armenians have been dwelling on Iranian soil ever since Iranian history has been recorded; however, it is only after the advent of Shah 'Abbas that they have appeared in the forefront of Iranian history. No other Iranian dynasty has been more associated with the Armenians than the Safavids, and no non-Muslim community has been able to associate so closely with the Iranian rulers since. Khanbaghi's lecture discussed the role of Armenians in laying the foundations of the emerging modern Iranian state. Dr Khanbaghi is a senior researcher and team leader for the Muslim Civilisations Abstracts project at Aga Khan University and is the author of *The Fire, the Star and the Cross: Minority Religions in Medieval and Early Modern Iran* (I. B. Tauris, 206).



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