



For Immediate Release

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“The Great Compromiser” Azerbaijani Composer and Cultural Leader Uzeyir Hajibeyov (1885-1948) Celebrated

Washington, D.C. September 10, 2010 More than a composer, Uzeyir Hajibeyov (1885-1948) helped to usher in Azerbaijan’s modern age while preserving centuries-old folk traditions from his native region of Karabakh. The newly founded U.S. 501 (c) (3) Karabakh Foundation will introduce Washington, D.C., audiences to Hajibeyov’s ample achievements and impact in an Azerbaijani Cultural Evening to be held September 23, 2010, 6:30-8:30 p.m., in Washington, D.C.

The spirit of Uzeyir Hajibeyov inspires the activities of the new Foundation just as it continues to pervade the spirit of the Azerbaijani people.

Hajibeyov's success as a cultural leader in Azerbaijan accrued through several dramatic historical transitions. He has been dubbed "The Great Compromiser" for his capacity to keep alive, even dynamic, the nation's cultural legacy during these tumultuous times.

In 1908, at age 23, Hajibeyov created the first Azerbaijani opera, blending the traditional Azerbaijani mugham lyrical musical form within a European musical genre. This 20th-century opera lent a distinctive new Azerbaijani musical stamp to the 1,000-year-old Arabian legend “Leyli and Majnun.”

In 1918 to mark Azerbaijan's role as the first parliamentary independent Muslim republic (1918-20), Hajibeyov composed a National Anthem. After the Soviet Union created the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic, he was asked to compose a new National Anthem. Throughout the Soviet period, he continued to introduce traditional Azerbaijani instruments into Western orchestral productions. In order to ensure the survival of the largely improvisational medium that is mugham, he hired formally trained Soviet musicians to help make a permanent record of the mugham. He also captured the logic and aesthetics of mugham in a published treatise.

Many Azerbaijanis recognize Hajibeyov not only for his many accomplishments in music but also as a founding member of the Azerbaijani Academy of Sciences (1945).

Hajibeyov's genius received acclaim not only from his Azerbaijani contemporaries but also from Soviet leadership. He received the Soviet Union's first People’s Artist of the U.S.S.R. award

(1942). He also was awarded the Lenin Award (1938) and two Stalin awards (1941 and 1946) and served as Deputy of the All-Soviet Parliament (late 1940s).

On the 110th anniversary of Uzeyir Hajibeyov's birth, music lovers worldwide are awakening to the scope of his impact. Jazz, classical, and world music aficionados alike can thank Hajibeyov for the synergy of East-meets-West that he initiated.

About the Karabakh Foundation

The Karabakh Foundation seeks to increase awareness and understanding in the United States of the cultural heritage and traditions of the country of Azerbaijan, the Caucasus area, and the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. While coalescing significant artistic and scholarly talent, the Foundation is nurturing a new generation of artists and scholars toward important accomplishments.

The Foundation serves as a dynamic facilitator and clearinghouse raising the public profile of Azerbaijan, its Karabakh region, and the Caucasus region in general. Main activities include preserving and disseminating cultural content via archival collecting, public programs, publications, exhibitions, speaking forums, international collaborations, scholarly exchange, artistic sponsorship, and related venues.

Foundation support comes primarily from Khazar University, the first private university in Azerbaijan and one of the country's leading institutions of higher learning. Additional information about the Karabakh Foundation may be found at www.karabakhfoundation.org.

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