



...Culture, arts, & heritage of Azerbaijan & the Caucasus

For Immediate Release

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Washington, D.C. March 10, 2011—The world-renowned Continuum Ensemble brought amazing music of the Caucasus to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. on Thursday, March 3.

The Karabakh Foundation teamed up with the Smithsonian Freer Gallery in bringing the multicultural, New York-based Continuum Ensemble to the District. Karabakh Foundation Executive Director Diana Altman noted that after the Freer Gallery exposes Americans to music of Azerbaijan, as well as Georgia and Armenia, the Karabakh Foundation can offer a broader connection to the region through concerts, art shows, films, radio shows and more.

Karabakh Foundation Board Chair Dr. Adil Baguirov noted, "The Karabakh Foundation's sponsorship of the Continuum Ensemble at the Smithsonian Institution exemplifies many of the Foundation's aims. American concertgoers no doubt will find inspiration in the beauty and range of music from this region. From that moment of revelation, participants we hope will seek to learn more about Azerbaijani, and more widely, Caucasus cultures. That's where the Foundation comes in--as a provider of cultural exhibitions and programs that build bridges between peoples. We are delighted that a diverse audience as well as the composers, musicians, and performers from the United States and the Caucasus region see the leading role of the Karabakh Foundation in making this great event possible, in witnessing the very name of the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan being featured in the leading venues at world-class events."

The Ensemble performed two works from Azerbaijan, three from Georgia and two by Armenian composers. Famed Azerbaijani composers Franghis Ali-Zadeh, whose works have been championed by Mstislav Rostropovich and Yo-Yo Ma, and Oleg Felzer, each wrote music for the Ensemble. Ali-Zadeh's "In Search of Lost Time" evokes a colorful nostalgic atmosphere, featuring soprano and alto flute, triangle, violin, cello, piano, and *zarb*; Felzer's piece, inspired

by the traditional, lyrical Azerbaijani music form *mugham*, is more abstract with clarinet, violin, and piano.

From Georgia came Sul Khan Tsintsadze (“Four Quartet Miniatures”), Josef Bardanashvili (“Metamorphoses for Viola and Piano”), and Giya Kancheli (“Psalm 23, from Exil”). Armenian composers included Alexander Aslamazov (“Napyev (Melody)”) and Suren Zakarian (“In statu nascendi—Seven Miniatures for String Quartet”).

Crowds gather at the Smithsonian’s Freer Gallery’s Meyer Auditorium for the Continuum Ensemble



Karabakh Foundation Executive Director Diana Altman addresses the crowd on the cultural and educational offerings of the Foundation



Azerbaijani composer Oleg Felzer’s “Vestige” features the violin, clarinet, and piano



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. Support also comes from the U.S.-based Allaverdy Foundation. Additional information about the Karabakh Foundation may be found at www.karabakhfoundation.org.

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