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The AGBU Performing Arts Department Holds Benefit Concert for Music Schools in Nagorno-Karabakh

On June 14, the AGBU Performing Arts Department held a benefit concert for music schools in Nagorno-Karabakh entitled “What Have You Done for Artsakh?” at the Yamaha Piano Salon in New York. The performers included mezzo-soprano Solange Merdinian; violinist Sami Merdinian; as well as pianist and AGBU Performing Arts Department director Hayk Arsenyan, and boasted a varied program with traditional Armenian pieces and lullabies alongside Argentine tangos and Afro-Cuban dances.

The concert, which raised nearly \$4,000 to purchase instruments for music schools in Nagorno-Karabakh, is part of a series of benefit concerts initiated by the Armenian Ministry of Diaspora and launched by AGBU Buenos Aires in May through the efforts of AGBU Buenos Aires vice president Antonio Sarafian and artistic director of the series, duduk player Gagik Gasparyan. Concerts have been held in three cities across Argentina, the proceeds from which have already been used to buy three school pianos. Concerts are scheduled for São Paulo, Brazil on July 27 as well as Yerevan, Armenia on September 22 in collaboration with the National Folk Instrument Ensemble and the Armenian State Dance Ensemble. During the week of the concert, from September 18 to 23, an art exhibition will be held at Yerevan City Hall to raise money for the cause. The goal of the series is to purchase more than 250 instruments for schools.

“Being part of this incredible project means a lot to me personally. Concerts like this one remind us of how lucky we are to be using our music and passion to contribute to bettering society, to making the world a better place. While I was playing, I felt a stronger connection to my roots and ancestors who sacrificed so much and went through all kinds of hardship so our generation could have a better life. In a way, this concert symbolizes my gratitude to them, to all Armenians around the world, for keeping our identity and culture alive. When we work together, we are stronger. I’m humbled to be a part of this world concert tour and team of musicians who are donating their talent to bring smiles to children and contribute to a brighter future in Artsakh,” said Sami Merdinian.

For more information on the AGBU Performing Arts Department, please visit <http://www.agbuperformingarts.org/> (<http://www.agbuperformingarts.org/>).

Established in 1906, AGBU (www.agbu.org (<https://www.agbu.org>)) is the world's largest non-profit Armenian organization. Headquartered in New York City, AGBU preserves and promotes the Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs, annually touching the lives of some 500,000 Armenians around the world.

For more information about AGBU and its worldwide programs, please visit www.agbu.org (<https://www.agbu.org>)