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Eighth Annual AGBU NYSEC Concert Raises Over \$50,000 for Performing Arts Initiatives

Carnegie Hall concert, *Melodies of Hope*, commemorates 100 years of the Armenian Genocide

On December 5, nine performers and hundreds of guests gathered at the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall for this year's AGBU New York Special Events Committee (NYSEC) Performing Artists in Concert. The evening of music, entitled *Melodies of Hope*, was in commemoration of the Armenian Genocide centenary, and raised over \$50,000 for performing arts initiatives worldwide.

The evening's program featured musicians from Armenia, Australia, Canada, China, Germany, Macedonia, Portugal and the United States, all of whom were first-time participants in the concert series. The performers were all recipients of AGBU Performing Arts scholarships, which have allowed them to study at prestigious institutions like the Cologne High Institute of Music, Mannes School of Music, Monash University of Melbourne, Manhattan School of Music and the Shanghai Music Conservatory.

The performers composing this year's international ensemble included: Arpine Azatyan (violin), Sona Barseghyan (piano), Vasko Dukovski (duduk and clarinet), Luke Ratcliffe Khachaturian (piano), Artur Mouradian (viola and violin), Talin Nalbandian, (mezzo-soprano), Astghik Poghosyan (violin), Tamara Sevunts (actress and poet) and Amy Tcheupdjian (cello). After the concert, Sevunts reflected on the importance of bringing young Armenians together: "I cannot express how tremendous it was to be with artists of similar backgrounds from all over the world on such a prestigious stage. I am beyond grateful for this opportunity and excited even more for what is to come. I think there is a

profound understanding in the community now, and among our youth, that the arts and the love and passion with which we give ourselves to them will help pave the progress of the Armenian community.”

Poghosyan also served as the artistic director for the evening and opened the concert with an explanation of the significance of the gathering: “This year’s concert is particularly special, as it is in commemoration of the centenary of the Armenian Genocide. Towards the end of this significant year, we are here to mark this anniversary together, bringing positive spirit, music, and of course, hope, in the essence of all that unites us. Today, you will hear melodies of peace that each of us wishes for, melodies of pride that each of us carries out wherever we are in this world and melodies of hope that will take us to a brighter future.”

The concert was composed of an eclectic selection of Western classical and Armenian music. It was also the Carnegie Hall premiere of the 2015 Sayat Nova International Composition Competition winning piece, “Flowers of Golgotha,” by composer Hovik Sardaryan. In addition, the evening featured readings of poems by Grigor Narekatsi and Daniel Varoujan, pieces by Sharafyan, Shostakovich, Rachmaninov, Saryan and Beethoven, and an interpretation of the traditional Armenian folk song “Tsitsernak,” arranged especially for the evening’s performance by Yang Yi, a student at the Shanghai Music Conservatory, as a gift and symbol of respect in honor of the Armenian Genocide.

Hayk Arsenyan, the director of the AGBU Performing Arts Department (PAD), commented on the special theme of the concert: “This year, we wanted to introduce the audience to our ancient musical tradition, from the medieval period all the way up to the contemporary, to show the continuity of our thriving culture and encourage Armenians around the world to keep creating.”

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 (<http://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 400,000 Armenians around the world.

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