



KCCA E-Newsletter

Dialog Between Music and Palette

On the 11th June, the Komitas Choir and Cultural Association (KCCA) set out to begin its mission of introducing the richness of Armenian culture to both the community and the general public. A concert-exhibition was organised for this date and it would not be an overstatement to say that the event dazzled the audience. A broad range of solo performances, singing by the Komitas Choir, and the showcasing of Leonie Pilart's resplendent paintings were the order of the day.

The **Komitas Choir** was founded by **Sipan Olah** in 2013 and was established in London with the aim of gathering a band of singers to perform and promote the folk and classical songs of both the Armenian tradition and other cultures. The choir now enjoys an exceptional reputation both in the UK and internationally, having performed at numerous concerts and having cooperated with highly-regarded and well-known professional choirs. The choir has now been formalised as part of the **Komitas Choir and Cultural Association**, which was established this year. Its activities are not only restricted to choir singing, but will delve into all aspects of music and culture in general as concerts, talks, and written pieces are all in the works.

The event on the 11th June took place at St Cuthbert's Church in central London. The musical concert began with a series of solo performances. These comprise a variety of folk songs notated by Komitas, including the famous "Qele, qele", sung by Lithuanian soloist, **Inesa Domracevaite**, and "Shogher jan", performed by Director of the KCCA and tenor soloist, **Sipan Olah**. **Alina Tadevosyan** performed a blissful rendition of Komitas' "Kujn ara" (I've taken a jug) and **Hovhannes**



Arakelyan's powerful voice moved the audience in his performance of "Like a dream" by Vagharshak Kotoya. A couple of entertaining duets were performed by **Hayarpi Yeghikyan** and **Sipan Olah** in addition to a solo performance of "Akh Maral jan" by **Hayarpi Yeghikyan**. Aside from singing, **Leon Aslanov** played "Exprompt" composed by Arno Babajanyan on the piano and he also gave a duet performance along with **Sipan Olah** of the well-known Masquerade Waltz by Aram Khachaturyan.



The soloists then took their seats and made way for the **Komitas Choir** to once again take the stage and for **Sipan Olah** to take his position as conductor. The Choir under the accompaniment of pianist **Emas Au** performed a number of songs that has been in the repertoire for some time, including "Rain has fallen" by Komitas and "Arpa Sevan" by Edgar Hohanisayn. Many of the songs, however, were newly introduced to the Komitas Choir this year a pieces such as "I believe and I don't", a song in jazz style written by Konstantin Orbelyan, were performed for the first ever time in the UK. The concert ended with a bang as a public favourite, "Armenian folk songs" by Stepan Shakaryan, entertained the audience once again.

The attention then shifted to the art **exhibition** showcasing 26 paintings by multitalented **Leonie Pilart**. She gave a heartfelt speech describing her love for Armenia and explaining the connection between her paintings and her homeland. After a rapturous applause for the Choir, the audience was then free to enjoy the art exhibition and the positive atmosphere of this joyous occasion in the beautiful St Cuthbert's Church in the centre of London.

ACCC Armenian Genocide Commemorative Concert

On the evening of 23 April 2017, **KCCA** members attended the concert organised in commemoration of the Armenian Genocide by the Armenian Community Council of the United Kingdom in collaboration with the **AGBU** London branch. The event took place at St Yeghishe Church in Kensington, London. The audience enjoyed the voice of **Tereza Gevorgyan** who sang a series of songs by Komitas as well as a number of arias by Puccini, Abrahamyan, Tigranian, Chitchyan and Rachmaninov. Famous French-Armenian historian, Dr Raymond Kevrokyan, then gave a talk outlining the developments in the study of the Armenian Genocide and in genocide studies as a whole. Of note was his emphasis that there is a growing interest in the study of the Armenian Genocide in the lands where it was committed, in



Turkey. The event came to an end with a speech and prayer given by **Bishop Hovakim Manukyan**, Primate of the Armenian Diocese of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. Members of the **KCCA** were then able to mingle with members of the Armenian community and exchange experiences.

London Symphony Orchestra playing Brahms and Nielsen at the Barbican

On 8 June 2017, the **KCCA** went to the Barbican to watch the famous **LSO** playing the well-known 2nd Piano Concerto by **Johannes Brahms** and the 5th Symphony written by Danish composer, **Carl Nielsen**. Pianist Yuja Wang gave a splendid performance of Brahms' 2nd Piano Concerto, putting exquisite touches to the intimate moments in the pieces and driving the music forward in the more tempestuous movements. The difficulty of making all the leaps and jumps in this piece is not to be underestimated, yet Yuja Wang executed them with great precision and sensitive touch each time. Nielsen's 5th Symphony was a move forward into the expressionism of the modernist period of music, while keeping some of the emotionality of the romantic period. Dissonance, melody and suspense were mixed together to produce a grand work that sought, in part, to express the desperation of World War One and the light of hope that would come after.



“Radamisto” Opera by George Frideric Handel



KCCA was invited by pianist Emas Au from Guild Hall School of Music & Drama to attend a performance of the opera “Radamisto” by Handel on 9th June at Milton Court Theatre. This opera is centred on a **historical Armenia** plot and fields a host of Armenian characters, especially historical figures from the **1st century AD**. The scene is adorned with Armenian ornaments and decorations. **Tiridate**, *King of Armenia*, is married to a downcast Polissena. He falls passionately in love with another woman, Zenobia, who is married to Polissena's brother, Prince Radamisto, from the neighbouring Kingdom. Fraarte and **Tigrane**, Tiridate's brother and ally respectively, tell Polissina of her husband's obsession with her sister-in-law, Zenobia. He declares war on the neighbouring kingdom to quench his thirst for Zenobia. After 3 dramatic acts the opera ends with a celebration of a fortunate turn of events.

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