

**Annual
Report
2014**

2014

*Azerbaijani
Culture Alive
In the United
States*



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**Karabakh
Foundation**

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

Expanding Boundaries

Dear Friends,



Since New Year's 2014, the Karabakh Foundation has watched the seeds of our first years take root all over the United States and beyond.

Certainly, witnessing the literal growth and blooming of our donated *khary bulbul*—the Orchid of Karabakh—on Capitol Hill was tremendously satisfying. And watching our American friends become enthralled with the contemporary interpretations of Azerbaijani music in QaraBağ: ZulfıqaRenatuS—our first sponsored CD—that too was fulfilling.

But perhaps the most exciting development this year was the clear elevation of Azerbaijan on the U.S. radar screen—and the awareness that the Karabakh Foundation's programs, publications, and one-on-one outreach has been critical to that increased visibility.

Much of the year was spent updating our research and empowering our cultural ambassadors in the field to organize their own programs of Azerbaijani culture. Attending high-profile meetings in Washington, D.C., writing congressional testimony on Azerbaijan's Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and a statement for the United Nations on women's issues in Azerbaijan—these have been a few of the days that Foundation staff have fulfilled the organization's mission.

This year we proudly added the National Museum of History in Baku to our growing list of partners. That museum's expertise and willingness to partner on future exhibitions will help to define KF activities into our next phase.

We end the year having won a competitive grant from the Council on State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Baku that will enable us to extend our web-based *Azerbaijani Artifacts* exhibition program into compelling new directions.

As always, your support is invaluable to the work we do. Please continue to show your support for our the Karabakh Foundation on social media, via word of mouth, and in your own activities.

All best,



A Baguirov

Adil Baguirov, Chair
Board of Directors

Diana Cohen Altman

Diana Cohen Altman,
Executive Director



Major Milestone of 2014

Outstanding user reviews of the Karabakh Foundation led the organization Great Nonprofits to name us a “Top-Rated Nonprofit”!

The Karabakh Foundation is a



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Testimonials from www.greatnonprofits.org

“Azerbaijan has for too long been forgotten in the shadow of empires, and the unique culture and history of the country deserves a voice in the west. Karabakh Foundation fills a niche in the United States that no other organization does. The work they do is valuable and so necessary. During my time volunteering at the organization I felt respected and my ideas were given a chance to be heard. The staff works incredibly hard and are genuinely committed to their mission.”

—Samantha G.

“Tremendous job in promoting Azerbaijan's culture, history, cuisine and music.”

—Anar G.

“The go-to organization for [culture, history, religion, traditions of Azerbaijan] in the United States..”

—Emre E.

“Dynamic small staff with great zest for innovation and entrepreneurship.”

—Alexander A.

“Flawless efficiency and their constant will to accommodate . . . this behavior should work as a role model for most of the other non-profit organizations.”

—Renato D.

A Wealth of Inspiration...



The Karabakh Foundation imbues our public programs with inspiration from Azerbaijan's great cultural figures. The Foundation's 2014 programs featured references from Azerbaijani literature, folk art, and more.

The Foundation's philosophy is to spark individual curiosity and provide pathways from the web to library materials to public performances, for individuals to pursue their newfound interests.

"My race and lineage thou knowest well,
Effective is my power with all who dwell
Within a thousand homes: my fame is spread
Many a thousand tribes. By all 'tis said
That much and freely to them all I give.
Within my friendship many peoples live."

—Fuzuli (about 1494-1556), Azerbaijani poet
From *Leyla and Majnun*

Azerbaijan on the Map . . .

Critical to the Karabakh Foundation's public programs is helping audiences gain a solid grasp of Azerbaijan's place on the map historically and currently.

The Foundation's 2014 educational programs have incorporated presentations about the Azerbaijani region Karabakh that has been under outside occupation for more than 20 years. Karabakh education addresses culture, geography, history, heritage, and civic society.



In 2014

www.KarabakhFoundation.org

featured new in-depth presentations of Azerbaijani culture, increasing its significance as an English-language research database about Azerbaijani culture. The Karabakh Horse—a powerful cultural symbol—is one of the topics included in the Foundation's Online Heritage Center.

Our Cultural Ambassadors . . .

In 2014 Foundation staff augmented the Foundation's mentorship outreach. Foundation cultural ambassadors wrote about Azerbaijan for school projects, organized public programs, and increased informal opportunities to engage others in Azerbaijani culture.

Longtime KF cultural ambassador Ismayil Huseynov looked to the Karabakh Foundation for advice and display materials in producing Azerbaijani celebrations at the University of Minnesota. The Karabakh Foundation Dancers joined in the celebrations.



The Foundation continues to work closely with cultural ambassadors such as Ismayil Huseynov (center) as they prepare Azerbaijani cultural events independently and with others.

2014 Highlights

Here are some of the public programs that the Karabakh Foundation has published to date in 2014.

JANUARY

9

Executive Director Diana Altman briefs members of the Rotary Club of Arlington about Azerbaijani history and culture.



FEBRUARY

27

In support of the Ahiska Turkish American Community Center (ATACC) in Dayton, Ohio, the Foundation shares a panel exhibition and presentations about the Ahiska story. Members of Congress are among the participants in this tribute to the sanctuary that the Ahiska people have found in Azerbaijan and in the United States.

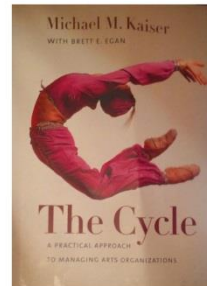


MARCH

14

American Journal of Arts Management publishes Book Review: *The Cycle: A Practical Approach to Managing Arts Organizations*, by Michael M. Kaiser with Brett E. Egan (UPNE/Brandeis University Press: 2013), by Diana Altman.

BOOK REVIEW: *THE CYCLE: A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO MANAGING ARTS ORGANIZATIONS*, BY MICHAEL M. KAISER WITH BRETT E. EGAN (UPNE/BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY PRESS: 2013)



By Diana Cohen Altman
Executive Director,
Karabakh Foundation

Appeared in *American Journal of Arts Management*, April 2014

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The Orchid of Karabakh—the *khary bulbul* known scientifically as *Ophrys sphegodes* (syn. *Ophrys caucasica*)—comes to life as part of the *Orchid Symphony* exhibition on Capitol Hill. U.S. Botanic Garden curators took special measures to bring this rare orchid to life from tubers donated a year earlier by the Karabakh Foundation. Thousands of visitors have the opportunity to view the orchid.



APRIL

4

Karabakh Foundation presents Outside Witness Testimony for FY2015, a Written Statement for the Record to The United States House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs regarding the Turkic world.

“The United States can gain tremendously from being an active participant and player in cultural-diplomacy initiatives involving the Turkic world. Indeed such initiatives afford low-cost, efficient options for addressing cynicism, disappointment, and resentment that tend to fester when left unattended.” . . .

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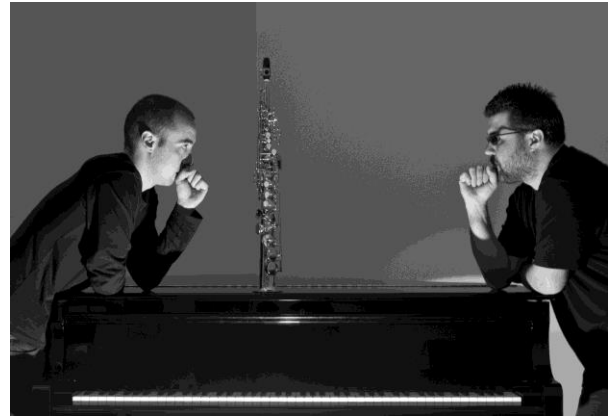
In partnership with the South Azerbaijani Society of America, the Karabakh Foundation participates in G-Fest, the annual festival of the Global Language Network, a Foundation partner. The partners teach about Azerbaijani culture and heritage.



MAY

13

On the anniversary of the death of Azerbaijani musical hero Qara Qarayev, the Karabakh Foundation announces the release of a Foundation-sponsored music CD QaraBağ:ZulfiqaRenatuS. The CD features the works of Qarayev, Zakir Baghirov, and Uzeyir Hajibeyov. The works are reinterpreted for contemporary audiences by the duo ZulfiqaRenatuS, featuring Qarayev's and Baghirov's grandson Zulfugar Baghirov on the saxophone and Portuguese-born colleague Renato Diz on the piano.



22

In a blog interview, the Karabakh Foundation captures insights from Dr. Rustam Rustamov, who has worked in the Azerbaijani technology and aerospace sector for several decades. The interview appears on the Foundation's blog <http://karabakhfoundation.com/heritage-center-online/blog/>



JUNE

Publicity Campaign for QaraBağ:ZulfiqaRenatuS Music CD: Introduce American deejays and media to Azerbaijani music via promotion of the KF-sponsored music cd and arranged interviews on outlets such as Turkish American Television with musicians Zulfugar Baghirov and Renato Diz.



Since we couldn't stop singing this melody everytime we worked on it, we decided to build our entire arrangement around this melody where the 12-note motif is explored in diverse improvised variations. With the exception of the finale where we echoed the original melody one last time, the piece itself was constructed through free improvisation by both instruments using musical techniques such as deconstruction, re-harmonization, transposition, motivic development, inversion, and harmonics achieved through piano strings vibrating to the sound of the saxophone. The richness of the original melody affords almost an unlimited spectrum of musical colors and effects; we believe our effort pulled into relief some of the musical possibilities through our piece.

2 - **Prelude Andantino** from "Miniatures: Andantino," Zakir Baghirov, around 1950s:

Zakir Baghirov's music always stood out from any other music that was composed in Azerbaijan at the time due to its exquisite characteristics: deep melodic lyricism, traditional harmony, and extremely clear structure and form. Anyone who has had the opportunity to meet Mr. Baghirov in person would be able to identify in his music the exact qualities as his personality - saintly kind, idealistic, wise, and sincere - thus listening to his music is almost like looking at Mr. Baghirov's picture.

We selected this piece because we thought it had a very pure melody. The apparent simplicity of this piano prelude couldn't be



Zulfugar Baghirov and Zakir Baghirov, Baku, mid 1970s

JULY

6

The organization Great Nonprofits ranks the Karabakh Foundation as a top-rated non-profit based on outstanding user reviews.



16 AND 17

Op eds by KF Executive Director Diana Altman in *Washington Jewish Week* and *Baltimore Jewish Times* outline the Azerbaijani Jewish communities and the unique Azerbaijani tolerance model.



AUGUST

6

Staff engages in planning session with diversity training expert Gloria Chiantella to determine methods for empowering diaspora practice of cultural diplomacy in mainstream U.S. society. Framework for training is identified and used to plan Global Diaspora Week event.



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SEPTEMBER

20-23

Arrange and lead book tour for visiting author Asif Bayramov, author of *Azerbaijan Jews in Sport*. Visits included U.S. Library of Congress, International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame, American Jewish Committee (AJC), B'nai B'rith International, Jewish Museum of Maryland, and the Office of the Mayor of Washington, D.C. Meet with organization leaders and discussed pertinent aspects of Azerbaijani culture and the U.S.-Azerbaijan relationship. The book is incorporated into the collections of the Library of Congress.



OCTOBER

17

Bringing together experts from several arenas, from diversity consulting to arts management to language training, workshop “Diversifying Your Cultural Portfolio” Session Presented during State-Department-Funded Global Diaspora Week, International Global Diaspora Alliance (IdEA) fosters lively discussion among participants. As a result, a task force based on roundtable participants is charged with developing a definition of “cultural ambassador” and related concepts to present to the State Department.



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As an NGO with special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC), the Karabakh Foundation has submitted a written statement for the 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW59).



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October 21, 2014

AZERBAIJAN: ACTIVITY RELATED TO THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION

Activity Pursuant to Declaration and Platform for Action

“The Azerbaijani Democratic Republic guarantees to all its citizens within its borders full civil and political rights, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, class, profession, or sex.”
--Article 4, National Charter, Azerbaijani Democratic Republic, 1918

In 1918, soon after becoming the first democratic republic in the Muslim world, Azerbaijan granted women the right to vote. Giving women equal political rights with men is a legacy still felt today in Azerbaijan. During the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic’s few short years (1918-20), women’s rights were treated as a fundamental component for ensuring progress in society.

When the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were released in 1995, Azerbaijan had only been independent from the Soviet Union for four years. Nonetheless in 1995 the Republic of Azerbaijan joined the Convention for Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol of the Convention. The republic would do so again in 2001.

In 2006 the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted “On Guarantees of Equal Rights for Women and Men” into the Law of Azerbaijan. In 2010 the republic added “On Prevention of Domestic Violence.” To further the intent and effectiveness of anti-discrimination, Azerbaijan has modified legislative acts and introduced other pertinent actions, pertaining for example to poverty, labor, and disabilities.

The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan organizes training for government officials as well as for women of the country. An emphasis of the training for women is technical-vocational instruction, particularly for women in Azerbaijan’s regions, outside of the capital city of Baku.

Women in Society

Azerbaijani women are active in virtually every sector of society, from the technical professions to Parliament. The First Lady of Azerbaijan, Ms. Mehriban Aliyeva, maintains a visibly active presence, in large part as leader of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation (established in 2004). The Foundation identifies itself as “actively participating in building a new society and contributing to the social and economic development of the country, by implementing various projects in spheres such as education, public health, culture, sports, science and technology, environment, and social and other spheres.” Ms. Aliyeva also is active in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The First Lady supports a number of women’s programs, including a young magazine dedicated to Women and Health.

Karabakh Foundation

P.O. Box 199
McLean, Virginia 22101
info@karabakhfoundation.org - (202) 457-1450

KarabakhFoundation.org

NOVEMBER

4

Executive Director Diana Altman pens “The Khazars and the Mountain Jews: Tales from Jewish Azerbaijan” in the *Jewish Journal* of Los Angeles about the fascinating Khazar rulers who converted to Judaism while ruling the area of Azerbaijan 650 to 969 AD and the Mountain Jews, who have inhabited an area of Azerbaijan since before the Khazars came to power. The article highlights the development of Azerbaijan’s tolerance model over centuries.



6

The Karabakh Foundation participates in Creating Change workshop with leaders of the renowned Discovery Channel that focuses on techniques for modeling positive change.



DECEMBER

The Foundation signs up for AmazonSmile, a program that allows individuals to purchase from amazon.com and designate the Karabakh Foundation as the recipient of 0.5 percent of purchase price from the AmazonSmile Foundation.

amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.



Appreciation

The successes of the Karabakh Foundation rely on the talents and devotion of a remarkable community of individuals and organizations who recognize the significance of Azerbaijani culture.

Board of Directors/Co-Founders

- **Dr. Adil Baguirov, Ph.D.**
- **Prof. Hamlet Isakhanli, Ph.D.**
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Video Committee

- Mr. Jeff Krulik

Interns

- Ms. Mai-Lien Fruge
- Mr. Kamran Məmmədov

Adviser

- Ms. Stephanie Lokmer

Cultural Ambassadors Team

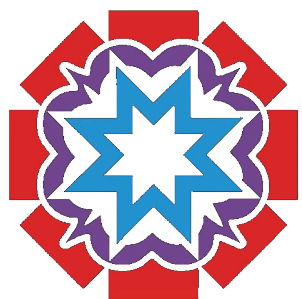
- Mr. Sander Altman
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- Mr. Celil Jalilov
- Mr. Nigar Jalilov
- Mr. Alexander Meikle
- Mr. Samira Topchubashova
- Mr. Karthik Uppaluri

KF in the Press

- “The Khazars and the Mountain Jews: Tales from Jewish Azerbaijan” article by Diana Cohen Altman, *Jewish Journal*, November 4 2014
http://www.jewishjournal.com/culture/article/the_khazars_and_the_mountain_jews_tales_from_jewish_azerbaijan
- “Azerbaijan: Good for the Jews?” article by Diana Cohen Altman , *Baltimore Jewish Times*, July 17, 2014 <http://jewishtimes.com/25590/azerbaijan-good-for-the-jews/>
- “Hollywood Meet Azerbaijan” article by Diana Cohen Altman , *Washington Jewish Week*, July 16 2014 <http://washingtonjewishweek.com/14056/hollywood-meet-azerbaijan/>
- Interview with Dr. Rustam Rustamov about his career in aerospace and technology:
<http://karabakhfoundation.com/heritage-center-online/blog/>
- Russian-language review of QaraBağ: ZulfiqaRenatuS music CD:
<http://azertag.com/ru/node/1237055>
- Azerbaijani-language review of QaraBağ: ZulfiqaRenatuS music CD:
<http://azertag.com/node/1237134>
- KF-produced video about khary bulbul Orchid of Karabakh on Capitol Hill:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRGF3A9bdOY>
- About khary bulbul Orchid of Karabakh blooming as part of U.S. Botanic Garden Orchid Symphony exhibition on Capitol Hill: <http://www.azernews.az/culture/65408.html>
- Book Review: *The Cycle: A Practical Approach to Managing Arts Organizations*, by Michael M. Kaiser with Brett E. Egan (UPNE/Brandeis University Press: 2013), *American Journal of Arts Management*, March 14, 2014, by Diana Altman.

About the Karabakh Foundation

The Karabakh Foundation is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(3) cultural charity foundation that preserves and disseminates the cultural heritage and traditions of Azerbaijan, the Caucasus area, and the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. Main activities include public programs, international collaborations, scholarly exchange, publications, exhibitions, academic partnerships, and artistic sponsorships, as well as archival preservation and artifact collection and curation. Comprehensive information about the Karabakh Foundation may be found at www.KarabakhFoundation.org.



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Partnerships

Karabakh Foundation partnerships include

- partner in the United Nations Global Compact,
- consulting member of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC),
- program presenter of the U.S.-State Department-funded Global Diaspora Forum,
- designated Valued Partner of GuideStar, the organization that provides information about U.S. non-profit organizations
- KF Executive Director Diana Altman is selected by GuideStar to participate in their Advisory Council.



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Contact the Karabakh Foundation at

Karabakh Foundation

1128 16th Street, Northwest

Washington, D.C. 20036

202-457-1450/fax 888-253-7016

info@KarabakhFoundation.org

www.KarabakhFoundation.org

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