

Arev Ensemble and Zulal Trio Perform for Shared Building A Healthy Armenia Project

By Sossi ESSAJANIAN

BOSTON, MA - On January 24, Shared's Building a Healthy Armenia Project hosted a benefit concert featuring the Arev Armenian Folk Ensemble and Zulal a capella singing group at the Tsai Performance Center in Boston.

The Brookline-based Shared NGO works to improve global health by increasing the availability of essential medicines and vaccines in impoverished countries through partnerships with private and public organizations. The two Armenian folk ensembles generously volunteered to donate the proceeds of the concert to the Building a Healthy Armenia Project.

The Zulal trio began the evening by presenting a repertoire of original arrangements of traditional Armenian folk songs. With their flowering melodies and harmonies, Teni Apelian, Yeraz Markarian, and Anais Alexandra Tekerian captivated the audience. Before each song the group members explained its story or meaning, taking the listener back in time to the traditional Armenian village and its everyday life.

Following this trio, the Arev Ensemble took the stage to entertain the audience with its traditional Armenian songs. With songs from the region of Taron (Mush and Sasoun), medleys by Sayat Nova, and the Lisbon Five song, Arev excited the audience and even got them clapping along.

'At different times during the concert, Arev and Zulal shared the stage for a few songs, combining their talents and efforts to sweep the audience into a whirlwind of Armenian music. By the end of the show, the audience was on its feet demanding more.



Since launching its Building a Healthy Armenia campaign, Shared has held several fundraising events and networked with members of the Armenian community. Fundraising began in September with a benefit concert by the renowned cellist Suren Bagratuni, which was attended by Armenian Health Minister Norayr Davidian.

In October, Shared sponsored a weeklong exhibit at the Armenian Library and Museum of America of the work of local Armenian artist Sara Ashodian. The exhibit concluded with an afternoon concert by the Arev Ensemble.

The group has also met with community members and various organizations to discuss the project and to seek input to make the work more successful for the people of Armenia. Groups such as the Armenian Health Alliance under the leadership of Dr. Carolann Najarian and the Armenian Medical Association and its President Armineh Mirzabegian, have been extremely helpful in providing guidance and suggestions.

As part of a program sponsored by the Cambridge Yerevan Sister City Association, Shared also led a presentation

and discussion with a group of public health professionals visiting from Gyumri in November. The exchange of perspectives and ideas was extremely beneficial in identifying the needs of Armenian healthcare providers.

Shared has also been working closely with its partner organization, John Snow Inc., and its representative in Armenia, Jim Bates, to put together a training program that will provide the skills most needed by Armenian healthcare providers.

Shared President Elizabeth Ziemba was pleased with the response to the concert. "We at Shared are very happy with the concert and greatly appreciate the generosity of the members of Arev and Zulal for donating their talents, time, and energy to support the work we are doing in Armenia," she said.

Ziemba was very grateful for the interest and support of the Armenian community. "Our fundraising efforts have met with growing support from the Armenian community as our organization and its mission have spread," she added.

"Dr. Carolann Najarian has been an invaluable source of guidance and information, as have other members of the medical community. We believe that we are on track with the type of program we are offering, and we continue to pinpoint our focus," noted Ziemba.

Shared is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization, and donations are tax-deductible. For more information, visit www.healthshares.org.