

RC QUARTERLY

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# RCQ

ROBERT COLLEGE ALUMNI MAGAZINE



## THE MUSIC ISSUE





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# Valizinde Pabbler'a yer ayır, yurtdışında gezdikçe para kazan!



**RC1** kodu ile kayıt ol,  
%15 fazla kazan!

The cover of the Music Issue was created by one of our own, Kayansel Kaya RC L12 03. Kayansel has a distinct, abstract and witty style, suitable to kicking off the new year: "Being a new artist brings a lot of self-doubt, but seeing people relate to my illustrations is mesmerizing." Read more about Kayansel on p. 65.



Alumni Journal published periodically by the RC Development Office for approximately 10,000 members of the RC community: graduates, students, faculty, administration, parents and friends.

## In this issue



Who amongst us does not go back to a high school memory, as soon as the first notes of the beloved Robert College song are heard? Robert College offers such a wealth of musical experiences to its students. In this issue of RCQ, we delved into music education at Robert College, as well as the plethora of music-related co-curricular activities.

The love of music that Robert College plants in its students is strong, and it is no surprise that there are so many alumni, doing interesting things both professionally and as a hobby in the music field. RCQ checks in with some of these alumni to find out what they have been doing.

For the scientific-minded, Alpar Sevgen RA 66, Professor Emeritus of Physics at Boğaziçi University, has written an essay on the physics and mathematics behind music.

The diversity of accomplishments in the RC community never ceases to amaze. This issue is full of news of awards, books, exhibitions and community projects. As always, we would love to hear from you. If you have any comments or would like to share news, please write us at [alumni@robcol.k12.tr](mailto:alumni@robcol.k12.tr)

May 2020 be full of joy, love, and music! Happy reading!

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## RC NEWS

- 4 Head of School Adam Oliver Envisions a More Connected Future
- 5 Celebrating the Many Legacies of Leyla Aktay RC 72
- 6 The Class of '19 Heads Off Into the World
- 8 RC Club Sets Sail for Success  
Eczacıbaşı Gym is Thriving
- 10 Robert College Social Entrepreneurship Festival: Sil Baştan  
Trustees Host NY Alumni  
What's On at RC
- 12 Much to Celebrate at the 2019-20 Annual Giving Kickoff Dinner

## GIFTS

- 14 RC 09 Raises Full Scholarship for their 10<sup>th</sup> Reunion  
Honor Friends and Family With a Gift to RC

## CIP

- 16 Sharing CIP Best Practices Through the RC Network
- 17 International Team of Students Sets Up Observatory in Romania  
Carrying on the CIP Tradition in Keşan

## ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (RKMD)

- 18 A Lively Summer and Busy Fall at Bizim Tepe

## UNIRC

- 20 UniRC Reloaded

## RC IN AMERICA

- 21 Boston Alumni Meet with Adam Oliver  
The RC Spirit is Strong in the Bay Area

## GRADS IN THE NEWS

- 22 Marsel Meşulam RA 64 Recognized for Lifetime Achievements

## COVER STORY

- 24 Music at RC
- 32 A Stroll Through Different Musical Paths With RC Alumni
- 36 Alumni Reminiscence About Music at RC
- 37 The Music Business is a Labor of Love and Passion

## ONES TO WATCH

- 38 Yağmur Konuk RC 19 Creates Exemplary Art Portfolio
- 39 Ömer Ekin RC 19 Puts the Ball in Your Court  
Azra Haseki L12 Commended for Research

## AROUND THE WORLD

- 40 Birding In Bhutan

## ARTS

- Arter Has a New Home 44
- Sibel Horada RC 98 Highlights Environment in Exhibitions 45
- Ayşe Erkmen RC 70 ex Shows Dream-like Works
- Film Buffs Rejoice: Başka Sinema Ayvalık Film Festivali 46
- Mehveş Lelic RC 09: On Adornment

## BOOKS

- Belma Baskett ACG 50 and Gönül Pultar ACG 62 Explore  
Immigrants and Expatriates 47
- Şevki Pekin RA 66 Pens Guidebook for Young Turkish Architects
- Nazlı İnönü RC 81 Examines Logic in the Middle Ages 48
- A Nostalgic Stroll through İzmir with Uğur Belger RC ENG 61
- Mustafa Pultar RC ENG 60 Authors E-book on  
Environmental Design
- A New Book of Stories from Sedef Betil ACG 66 49
- Gökçe Günel RC 2000 Examines Abu Dhabi's Spaceship in the  
Desert
- A Year of Books for Can Çiftçi Göknil ACG 66 50
- Short Stories by Aziz Gökdemir RC 85 Examine Modern Life

## RC REACHES OUT

- Payda: Bringing Together Students from Across Turkey 52

## ESSAY

- The Science Behind Music 101 54

## REUNIONS

- Homecoming 2019 56
- ACG 69: 50 Events for their 50<sup>th</sup> 59
- A Memorable 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion for RC 69 60
- RC 79: Celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> Reunion 61
- RC 94: Sharing Joy and Laughter at Their 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion 62

## ALUMNI NEWS 63

## FACULTY & FRIENDS NEWS 67

## OBITUARIES 68

## FACULTY AND FRIENDS OBITUARIES 72

# Head of School Adam Oliver

## Envisions a More Connected Future

**I** “Education should serve the needs of people and the planet.”

**Adam Oliver** joined Robert College as Head of School in July 2019. As he approaches the end of his first semester, the RCQ caught up with him on his perspective on education, his vision for RC, as well as his impressions so far.

### **How has high school education evolved, and what is its role in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?**

Education has come so far since my own schooling that much of it is unrecognizable. During my time as a student, all writing was done on chalkboards, and the few rare teachers who used an overhead projector, screening acetate notes, were considered dangerous revolutionaries.

In the past, education has too often serviced the needs of the economy. As I see it, it should service the needs of people and the planet. We need to create young men and women who are mentally flexible, well informed, and brave in their support of the key issues facing the world today – top of which is the environment, and trying

to combat the perilous position we now face.

### **What is your vision for RC over the next five years?**

It is all about connection, about making the right kind of links rather than the wrong ones. Connection with technology goes without saying as a necessary feature of modern life, but there are other types of connection that are being neglected in many schools, and these are even more important.

We need to connect effectively with others, because our social connections will be ever-more important in our working lives, and because our friends and contacts are our greatest support when dealing with the inevitable crises that life brings to us all.

We need to be able to profoundly connect with ourselves. There are more and more pressures on our time, endless distractions that draw us away from the most important educational journey, which is characterized in the

Delphic Oracle’s admonition: Know thyself. Education should be about self-understanding, because without this, on what platform can we build any other kind of understanding?

Finally, we have never had a more urgent need to re-establish our connection with nature. Currently the world has approaching 8 million species. This number is being reduced at the rate of around 200 a day. We are in the middle of the sixth great extinction that Earth has seen, and sadly we are driving this catastrophe. This has to end. What value graduating from RC and a top university only to inherit a dust-bowl?

### **What has most surprised you about RC?**

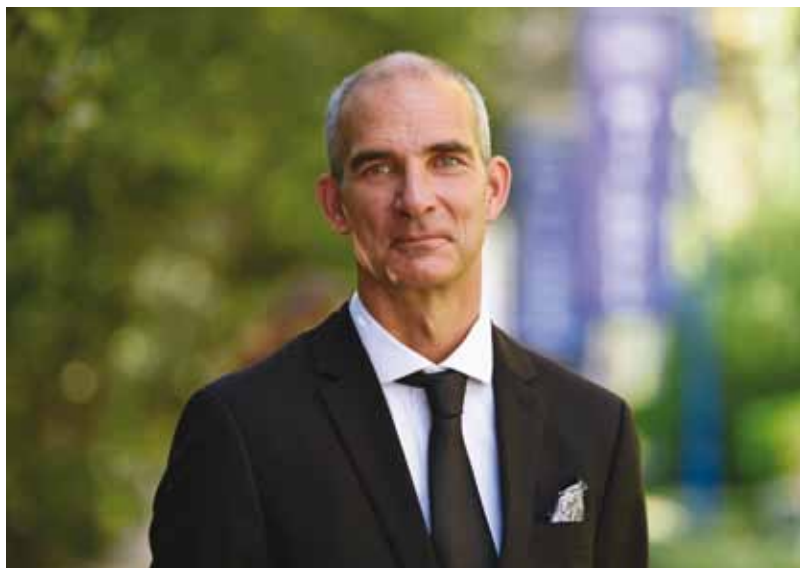
There have been many surprises – most of them good ones! Best of all would be discovering the incredible wildlife on the campus – such as having a big tortoise stroll across the road by the Bridge as I was passing.

### **What is your favorite place on campus?**

I have fallen in love with many parts of the campus already. The library is a wonderful place and I love the rare moments I can get in there to work. Walking the Faralyalı Trail is a great pleasure. The Bosphorus views from Konak Terrace are wonderful...I could list a dozen more. We are incredibly privileged to occupy such a beautiful location.

### **If you could be a student again, which RC club would you join?**

Creative Writing. Ultimate Frisbee. Film-making... I would be interested in dozens. When I was at school myself I was a member of the Debating Society. I also played football (badly) and ran track for the school.



RC's new Head of School Adam Oliver



# Celebrating the Many Legacies of Leyla Aktay RC 72

**Robert College** has benefited from the dedication and leadership of Leyla Aktay RC 72, for the past 37 years. Aktay, who has been the driving force behind the school's advancement function as the longtime head of the Development Office, leading fund raising, communication and outreach, decided to retire in June 2019. Her tireless work has helped build our engaged and supportive modern-day alumni community as we know it.

Ipek Cem Taha RC 85, Trustee and former head of the Advancement Committee, notes, "Aktay has been an inspiration and a compass for RC advancement. The school aims to provide equal access to students from all over Turkey, irrespective of financial means. Leyla has aligned RC alumni and friends around this priority, nurturing relationships with care, finesse, and charm. She and her team, along with the Trustees and the school administration, have built one of the few sustainable philanthropic operations in Turkey - which is also a model internationally."

Margaret Mathews RC 75, Trustee Emeritus, remembers how Aktay started at RC. "In 1983, Leyla was asked if she would take on a newly created position asking RC alumni to support the school with annual gifts. She thought it would be interesting to do for a short time...the rest, as they say, is history. Her love of the school, and her curiosity about our founders and others who came before us have allowed her to share with us a sense of the importance of this wonderful institution."



Leyla Aktay RC 72

Sukey Wagner, Trustee Emeritus, recalls, "It was on-the-job learning for her, and she learned and developed with increasing effectiveness. Leyla's quick wit and sense of humor greased wheels of every caliber and design. On a paper napkin, she and I sketched out the idea for a summer camp during a relaxed lunch. With pride I have watched the camp succeed for these many years."

During her tenure, the school went through major milestones, the 125th and 150th Year Anniversaries, a Building Campaign, and a Major Gift Campaign. The Annual Giving program was established and firmly rooted. Among the numerous events orchestrated, Homecoming, the annual alumni gathering, remains one of Aktay's favorite projects, as it cemented a cross-generational sense of community and identity.

Aktay's magic touch was also instrumental in creating this very magazine! As editor-in-chief she kept the magazine current and diverse in terms of celebrating the many stories RC has to offer.

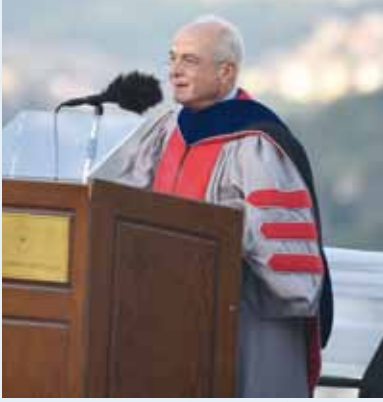
Jim Maggart, Trustee Emeritus and a former math teacher and Headmaster, underlines that it takes a special person to succeed in such a wide array of activities. "When Leyla was a quiet young lady in my math class; I never imagined she would play such an important role in the future of the school. It's amazing how Leyla strengthened the bonds among the entire RC community. Her wry sense of humor, patience and energy have always made things move smoothly."

Çiğdem Yazıcıoğlu, former Development Office member, offers a glimpse into how it was working with Aktay. "Seeing the comic in all situations, always having an anecdote ready to dole out, her doodles and quips were her trademarks. Her visionary outlook and talent to see the big picture, her infectious enthusiasm, as well as her immense love of RC and its students, made Leyla one of RC's biggest assets."

Aktay reflects, "The opportunity to give back in this way has been sheer joy. Serving my alma mater, working along so many wonderful people devoted to the school, has been an honor and a privilege. It is especially rewarding today to witness the dedication of new generations, who increasingly support and carry on RC traditions, transforming lives."

# The Class of '19

## Heads Off Into the World



Commencement speaker Kenan Şahin RA 60



Student speaker Bahar Taş



Student speaker Önder Kaan Köseoglu

**The graduation** ceremony for the 222 members of the Class of 2019 took place on June 18 - a pristine summer afternoon, made even more beautiful with the Bosphorus view from Konak Terrace and the love and excitement reverberating among the attendants.

The ceremony started with speeches from Turkish Director Nilhan Çetinyamaç, followed by Headmaster Dr. Charles H. Skipper, who reflected the shared sentiment among the audience: "For parents it seems that the journey of the last thirteen years simply cannot be ending - it just started. But you are ready to go onto the next phase, it has been a long road, and we know it is time."

RC Board of Trustees Vice-Chair Nihat Berker RA 67 introduced the keynote speaker, RC Trustee Emeritus Kenan Şahin RA 60, who delivered a warm speech. He challenged the graduating class: "Why not do something great, something courageous with your one and only life and change the world?"

Following the awards ceremony, Turkish university and career counselor Mehtap Kaya and students Önder Kaan Köseoglu and Bahar Taş addressed the audience. Kaya reminded the students of the importance of their friendships, looking for balance in their lives, and being cognizant that time is a limited resource which must be used carefully. Önder Kaan Köseoglu addressed the parents: "I want you to remember this

moment, what you have gifted us, the most important of which is each other." Bahar Taş reminisced on her learnings: "Robert was full of contradictions, just like life. Here I learned to love despite dualities. I learned to accept people as they are and loved them as they are. I loved myself, my country, my country's people. I understood that as I make space for love, distress disappears."

It was easy for attendees to imagine the promising new paths of the graduates opening in front of them, as they sang the school song and tossed their caps in the air.







Turkish university and career counselor  
Mehtap Kaya

Robert College 2019 Foreign University Placement	
College	Attending
Amsterdam University College	1
Architectural Association School of Architecture	1
Babson College	1
Barnard College	1
Brown University	1
California Institute of Technology	1
Carleton College	1
Carnegie Mellon University	2
Columbia University	3
Czech Technical University in Prague	1
Dartmouth College	1
Davidson College	1
Drew University	1
Drexel University	1
Emory University	2
Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam	2
Georgetown University	1
Georgia Institute of Technology	4
Gerrit Rietveld Academie	1
Harvey Mudd College	1
Imperial College London	2
Istituto Marangoni	1
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven	3
King's College London	1
London College of Fashion	1
McGill University	4
Michigan State University	1
New York University	1
Northeastern University	1
Oberlin College of Arts and Sciences	1
Politecnico di Milano	1
Pomona College	1
Pratt Institute	1
Princeton University	1
Rice University	1
Sciences Po - Columbia University Dual BA Program	1
Sciences Po - Menton	1
Syracuse University	1
Technische Universiteit Delft	5
The University of Akron	1
The University of Edinburgh	1
The University of Manchester	1
The University of Texas	1
The University of Warwick	2
Tilburg University	4
Trinity College	1
Tufts University	2
Universita Bocconi	6
Universita Degli Studi di Milano	2
(International Medical School)	1
Universita Degli Studi di Milano Bicocca	1
(School of Medicine and Surgery)	1
Universiteit Leiden	2
Universiteit Maastricht	1
Universiteit van Amsterdam	1
University College London	1
University of Bremen	1
University of British Columbia	3
University of California Berkeley	3
University of California Davis	2
University of California Los Angeles	2
University of Chicago	3
University of Groningen	1
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	1
University of Michigan	1
University of Oregon	1
University of Oxford	1
University of Pennsylvania	2
University of Stuttgart	1
University of Toronto Undergraduate Only	3
University of Washington	2
V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University	1
Vassar College	1
Washington University in St. Louis	1
Williams College	1
Yale University	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>117</b>

## Where is the Class of 2019 Now?

Out of the 222 graduates of the Class of 2019, 47% have chosen to continue their education in Turkey. Of the students who took the 2019 YKS exam (university entrance exam), 119 were successfully placed into Turkish universities. 40 were accepted to both Turkish universities and universities abroad.

63 of the graduates are continuing their education at private Turkish universities while 56 are attending public universities. Of the students who are attending private universities, 36 gained placement with scholarship. Of the 133 RC Seniors who have received acceptances from overseas universities, 117 are continuing their education abroad. 50 have been awarded financial aid from the colleges they were accepted by.



2019 Turkish University Results, by Faculty	
FACULTIES	NUMBERS
Faculty of Engineering	45
Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences	23
Faculty of Medicine	18
Faculty of Law	8
Faculty of Architecture	4
Faculty of Communications	1
Other programs (chemistry, physics, psychology, sociology, language, etc.)	20

2019 YKS UNIVERSITY RESULTS						
Name of University		Without Scholarship		With Scholarship		TOTAL
			With acceptance to universities abroad		With acceptance to universities abroad	
BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY	İstanbul	14	2			16
İSTANBUL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY	İstanbul	10	2			12
İSTANBUL UNIVERSITY	İstanbul	6	1			7
MARMARA UNIVERSITY	İstanbul	4	2			6
TÜRKİSH-DEUTSCHE UNIVERSITY	İstanbul	2	1			3
YILDIZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY	İstanbul	1	1			2
İSTANBUL MEDENİYET UNIVERSITY	İstanbul		2			2
TRAKYA UNIVERSITY	Edirne	1	1			2
İSTANBUL UNIVERSITY- CERRAHPAŞA	İstanbul	1				1
DOKUZ EYLÜL UNIVERSITY	İzmir	1				1
EGE UNIVERSITY	İzmir		1			1
KOCAELİ UNIVERSITY	Kocaeli	1				1
GEBZE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY	Kocaeli	1				1
YALOVA UNIVERSITY	Yalova		1			1
<b>PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES TOTAL</b>		<b>42</b>	<b>14</b>			<b>56</b>
KOÇ UNIVERSITY	İstanbul	11	5	13	2	31
SABANCI UNIVERSITY	İstanbul	1		4		5
BAHÇEŞEHİR UNIVERSITY	İstanbul	2		4		6
İSTANBUL BİLGİ UNIVERSITY	İstanbul		1	2	1	4
YEDİTEPE UNIVERSITY	İstanbul	1		2		3
BİLKENT UNIVERSITY	Ankara			2	1	3
ÖZYEGİN UNIVERSITY	İstanbul			2		2
İSTİNYE UNIVERSITY	İstanbul	1		1		2
İSTANBUL OKAN UNIVERSITY	İstanbul	2				2
İSTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY	İstanbul	1				1
ACIBADEM UNIVERSITY	İstanbul	1				1
BEZM-I ALEM VAKIF UNIVERSITY	İstanbul			1		1
ALTINBAŞ UNIVERSITY	İstanbul	1				1
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN UNIVERSITY	KKTC-Gazimağusa			1		1
<b>PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES TOTAL</b>		<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS PLACED</b>		<b>83</b>		<b>36</b>		<b>119</b>

## RC Club Sets Sail for Success

**Shortly after** the school year began, the RC community received the exciting news that the RC Sailing Team had won the Bilgi Cup, a championship race between 16 Istanbul high schools, that took place on October 6, 2019.

RC students excelling at what they do is nothing new. What's novel about this crew is that they were mostly Prep students and were sailing together for the first time - with just an hour to practice as a team before the race. Under the guidance of their coach Gencer Emiroğlu, who shared tactics with the crew throughout the competition, the four team members, Ata Türkoğlu L12, Sarya Kılıç LP, Sadık Ozan Görgü LP and Efe Özbal LP, showed true teamwork and placed first in each round to win the Bilgi Cup.

Inspired by their success, the team - which now has 30 members - is preparing for their next challenges. "Our aim is to promote community sailing and to give students a love of



Ata Türkoğlu L12, Sarya Kılıç LP, Sadık Ozan Görgü LP and Efe Özbal LP (from L to R) competed at Team RC to win the Bilgi Cup'19 and become the Istanbul sailing champions

sailing and the sea," says Emiroğlu. The team is achieving this not only through getting on the water on a sailboat, but also by teaming up with other RC organizations such as the Marine Biology club led by biology teacher Sibel Almas, to give the students a deeper appreciation of the sea. The team's efforts have been bolstered by

a sailing initiative formed by a group of alumni who are supporting the team's needs and activities. If you are an avid sailor, working in a maritime-related field or just love the sea, and would like get on board and help out the RC Sailing Team, please contact Mehveş Dramur at [mdramur@robcol.k12.tr](mailto:mdramur@robcol.k12.tr)

## Eczacıbaşı Gym is Thriving

**RC students** came back to school this fall to find several upgrades to the Nejat Eczacıbaşı Gym which have improved the sports experience at RC.

The most noticeable additions include two climbing walls, more basketball hoops, a field divider curtain which allows the gym to be used for different activities at the same time, and wall panels which improve acoustics as well as protect students from impact injuries. There is also new sports gear including gym equipment, ping pong tables, and materials for PE classes such as nets, balls, hula hoops and rackets.

"I think that we are very lucky to experience PE classes where we get resources that very few schools can provide," says Lise 12 student Sermila Spartaligil about the improvements.

PE department head Liz Molton added, "The PE Department now has enriched facilities, equipment and experiences we can offer our students in the core curriculum and co-curricular programs."

In addition, new chairs used in the gym for various events were purchased, the floor was refinished with a protective

cover, security cameras were upgraded and card readers were installed.

Providing continuous support for the gym, the Eczacıbaşı family funded the recent infrastructure upgrades; the equipment and fixtures were provided by a matching grant from the US Agency for International Development (USAID/ASHA).



New gym equipment in the fitness center and more basketball hoops are some of the improvements made in the Eczacıbaşı Gym





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# Robert College Social Entrepreneurship Festival: Sil Baştan

**RC** Social Entrepreneurship Club had its Social Entrepreneurship Festival with the theme Sil Baştan (Back to Square One) on November 2-3 at Robert College. High school students from all over Turkey, along with some university students, graduates and even middle school students attended the conference to learn more about the pioneers who launched successful social enterprises in Turkey.

Speakers at Sil Baştan had diverse backgrounds such as Eray Erdoğan RC 11, host of 5 Kişi Podcast and the co-founder of Reflect Studio; Hakan Elbir, the co-founder of Istanbul Social Enterprise and Turkcell Dialogue Museum; and İtir Erhart, an Ashoka fellow and the co-founder of Adım Adım. The festival had a rich variety

of workshops. Several workshops were given about entrepreneurship and social innovation along with workshops given about “discovery in dark”, environmentalist entrepreneurship, self-discovery, nonviolent communication, and even vegan cooking. Participants attended two workshops in two days and tried to dig deeper into social issues, self-discovery or entrepreneurship.

Sil Baştan was intended to help future social entrepreneurs who wanted a safe and fun environment to both make new social connections and to learn more about social entrepreneurship. Along with these goals, it also created a place to guide the participants in their journey of self-discovery. With the help of Zorlu Holding, the festival was free.



Eray Erdoğan RC 11 and Hakan Elbir give a talk at the Sil Baştan Festival

## Trustees Host NY Alumni

The **RC Board** of Trustees met with dozens of alumni on November 4, 2019 at a reception at Sip Sak restaurant in New York. Board Chair Jean Manas RC 83 made a short speech and recognized Board Chair Circle donors for their participation in the annual sponsorship program. He then introduced the new Head of School Adam Oliver, who gave an update about RC and spoke of key areas of focus going forward. The evening was a chance for alumni to meet board members and catch up with their schoolmates.



RC Head of School Adam Oliver addresses alumni in New York

## What's On at RC

Mark your calendars! Great events are happening at RC this spring.

**Feb. 20 - 21** • RC Seniors perform Eugene Ionesco's *Bald Soprano*

**Feb. 26 - 28** • The Hamlin Players perform *Fame Jr.*

**March 4 - 6** • Turkish Theatre Club performs Tanık Günersel's *Aşk-ı Memnu*, based on the novel by Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil

**April 1 - 3** • The Acting Club performs Haldun Taner's *Gözlerimi Kapatırım Vazifemi Yaparım*

**April 17 - 18** • Modern Dance Performance

**May 7 - 9** • RC Singers Concert

**May 7 - 9** • RC Theater Company's Greek on the Green

**May 14 - 16** • RC Orchestra Concert

**May 31** • Fine Arts Festival & Berkol Doğan Dance Festival

**June 4** • RC Film Festival

\*Dates are subject to change. Check your email closer to the date of the event for details and tickets.

# MİLYONLARIN SEVGİLİSİ ŞİMDİ YENİLENDİ **ARÇELİK'TEN YENİ TELVE**

İndüksiyon teknolojisiyle tam kıvamında ve bol köpüklü  
Türk kahvesi lezzeti şimdi yenilenen tasarımıyla...



reddot award 2019  
winner

TELVE'NİN MUCİDİ



 [arcelik.com.tr](http://arcelik.com.tr)  
 444 0 888



# Much to Celebrate at the 2019-20 Annual Giving Kickoff Dinner



Ayla Gümüşlügil ACG 55 received special recognition for the percentage of participation from her class.

**Spirits were high** at this year's Annual Giving Kick-off Dinner, with many milestones being celebrated. At the event, held on October 8, 2019 at Bizim Tepe, Robert College thanked dedicated class agents, High Honor, Leadership Circle and College Council donors for helping to make the 2018-19 campaign a record breaking one.

New Head of School Adam Oliver addressed the attendees, speaking about his vision for the school. He mentioned areas to be developed and emphasized that RC's education strategy would evolve in line with cutting-edge research in teaching and learning.

Following his speech, Mr. Oliver recognized the award-winning class agents who worked hard to help make

the Annual Giving Campaign one of the most successful ever, with a record 2641 people participating, raising a total of \$1.8 million for the school.

Also honored during the evening was Leyla Aktay RC 72 - who was present this year as a guest - for helping to start the Annual Giving Campaign, then leading it for 30 years as Development Director.

To see results from the 2018-19 Honor Roll, visit [www.robcol.k12.tr/en/giving/honor-roll](http://www.robcol.k12.tr/en/giving/honor-roll)

To make a gift to the 2019-20 Annual Giving Campaign, visit [giving.robcol.k12.tr](http://giving.robcol.k12.tr)



From L to R: Mert Tarlan RC 89, Okan Atilla RC 90 and Yelda Atilla



From L to R: Sühan Seçkin RC 76, Nahit Seçkin RC 82, Serdar Koçtürk RC 76, Feyha Çınarlı RC 76 and Nedim Ölçer RC 76



It's a team effort! Class agents from every decade helped to make the 2018-19 Annual Giving Campaign a record-breaker.



### LEVEL of PARTICIPATION

#### 1) RC 76 Class Agents:

Yasemin Palanduz Kahya  
Nedim Ölçer

#### 2) RC 91 Class Agent:

Cüneyt Soydaş

#### 3) RC 90 Class Agents:

Okan Atilla  
Aysan Sinanlıoğlu  
Sarmpezoudis  
Mete Tuncel

#### 4) RC 89 Class Agents:

Mert Tarlan  
Zümrüt Alp Yalman

#### 5) RC 00 Class Agents:

Zeynep Kayhan  
Alara Orhon Özşeker  
Esra Yalçınalp

#### 6) RC 88 Class Agents:

Arif Akdağ  
Aslı Berkol  
Mehmet Cemalcılar  
Gülin Yenigün Yücel

#### 7) ACG 69 Class Agent:

Nur Şener Edil

#### 8) RC 09 Class Agents:

Emre Aksoy  
Erol Bozbora  
Lale Tekişalp

#### 9) RA 61 Class Agent:

Y. Aydın Bilgin

#### 10) RC 93 Class Agents:

Can Önen  
İrem Kızılviranlıoğlu Önen



From L to R: Hadi Özbal RA 63, Diane Özbal and Nur Edil ACG 69



From L to R: Tunç Pekcan RC ENG 59, Leyla Pekcan ACG 61, Ayten Meriç Kök ACG 61 and Yüksel Kök RC ENG 64



From L to R: İrem Bilgiç RC 08, Pınar Bilgiç RC 08, Erol Bozbora RC 09 and Ulya Soley



From L to R: Savaş Erkan, Leyla Kandur RC 83, Serra Soysal RC 83 and Melih Önder RC 83

### LEVEL of GIVING

#### 1) RC 97 Class Agents:

Özge Karadağ Çaman  
Emre Hatipoğlu  
Bora Tokyay

#### 2) RC 89 Class Agents:

Mert Tarlan  
Zümrüt Alp Yalman

#### 3) RC 94 Class Agents:

Özen Bozçağa Bezirci  
Nevra Eker Güryel

#### 4) RC 86 Class Agents:

Meltem Tarhan Kayhan  
Özlem Özbek  
Kazım Uzunoğlu  
Zeynep Yalım-Uzun

#### 5) RC 83 Class Agents:

Emine Umur Çobanoğlu  
Pınar Boncuk Dayanıklı  
Serra Mansur Soysal

#### 6) RC 88 Class Agents:

Arif Akdağ  
Aslı Berkol  
Mehmet Cemalcılar  
Gülin Yenigün Yücel

#### 7) RC 93 Class Agents:

Can Önen  
İrem Kızılviranlıoğlu Önen

#### 8) RC 82 Class Agents:

Damla Yaraş Birol  
Nahit Karslı Seçkin  
Yeşim Yağcı Silahtar

#### 9) RC 85 Class Agents:

Oya İnal  
Didem Soylu Muslu  
Bilge Yavuz Rızvani

#### 9) RC 84 Class Agents:

İclal Büyükevrim Özçelik  
İlgin Özden

#### 10) RC 87 Class Agents:

Burak Pekcan  
Gaye Erkuloğlu Tabag

# RC 09 Raises Full Scholarship for their 10<sup>th</sup> Reunion

It has been a longtime wish of the graduates of 2009 to set up a scholarship at Robert College. Being the largest class to ever graduate from RC with an astonishing 246 people, they raised enough for a full annual scholarship, with 83 classmates joining the effort.

The opportunity arose this year: their 10<sup>th</sup> reunion. While they were planning their celebration, the class agents informed their classmates of the scholarship options. After a year of hard work, they managed to set up a full scholarship, becoming one of the youngest groups of alumni to have succeeded in reaching this goal.

Speaking on behalf of her classmates,

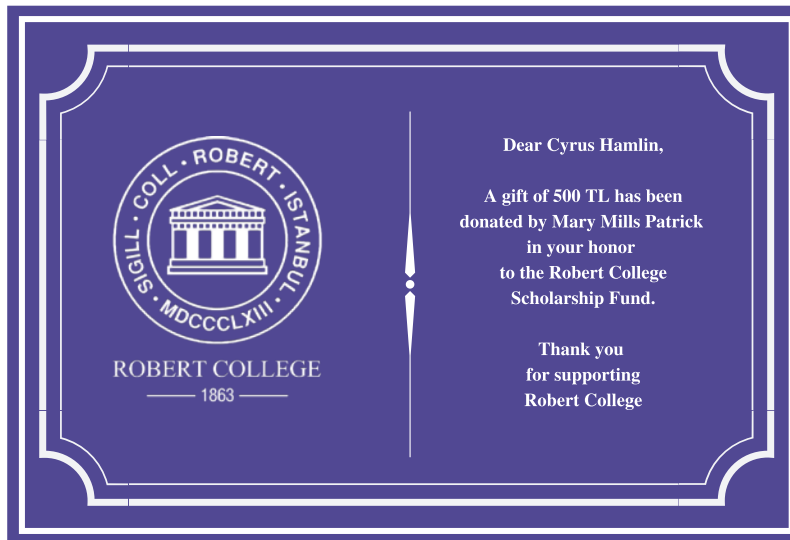


The Class of '09 at Homecoming

class agent Lale Tekişalp says, "We were happy to see how eager our classmates were when we told them we wanted to raise a full scholarship this year. The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our

graduation reminded us of the power of RC 09, 'The Absolute Crowd'. This year was a breaking point for us. We hope to continue increasing participation going forward."

## Honor Friends and Family With a Gift to RC



The donation is registered accordingly. The person being honored (or their representative) is notified via email by Robert College.

Honoring a loved one this way signifies not only the belief in an RC education but also a shared love for RC between the donor and the person honored.

Please contact the RC Development Office by phone or email if you wish to set up an "In Honor of" gift for celebrations such as birthdays, or a tribute gift in memory of a late alumnus.

The act of making a donation to honor another person, or in memory of a deceased loved one, is a powerful celebration of their significance to RC.

The "In Honor of/In Memory of" gift option allows donors to pay tribute to a special person by making a donation in their name.

### RC Development Office

Tel: +90 212 263 4239  
alumni@robcol.k12.tr  
giving.robcol.k12.tr

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# Sharing CIP Best Practices Through the RC Network

By Pelin Tiryaki L11 and Beste Kurufe L11

**During** the first week of July, students from RC brought together students from Nevşehir and Gaziantep College Foundation (Gaziantep Kolej Vakfı, or GKV) for a community involvement project in the town of Avanos to spread the idea and spirit of the Community Involvement Program (CIP) by peer collaboration. Our aim was to create awareness about what a CIP project is and to encourage our peers to start projects of their own. Together we prepared the curriculum for the second part of the project which was a three-day CIP project with elementary students in Avanos.

The three different student groups in the peer-to-peer training actually had an important common denominator: Robert College. The students who came from Nevşehir are supported by Payda, a non-governmental organization whose founders and supporters are mostly graduates of Robert College (see p. 52). Dilbeste Alameddine RC 79, one of the board members of Payda, was a pillar of support for us and our project; whenever we wanted to consult her, she was accessible and willing to help and lead us.

GKV also has a special meaning for Robert College. GKV was established

in 1963 by a group of benefactors from Gaziantep under the leadership of Cemil Alevli, who strongly believed in the significance of contemporary education in line with Atatürk's principles and reforms. Cemil Alevli's daughter, Nüket Ersoy ACG 50, is now the chairman of the board of trustees of GKV. In one of her interviews, she states how her education at Robert College has been her most important guide in life, so she has always been open to development. We are proud to be raised with the same principles as she was raised and hope that we will always continue to grow and be open to new experiences.



Students shared their experience and love for CIPs at the project in Avanos, Nevşehir

# International Team of Students Sets Up Observatory in Romania

By Semiha Bilge Önoğlu L11 and Deniz Ece Aydın L11

In July 2019, we contributed to an international Community Involvement Project (CIP) in Romania to build an observatory in the Carpathian mountains. The CIP emphasized physical work, and this element spoke to our desire to try new things to discover our abilities. Project co-leader Ece Aydın was also considering studying astrophysics at the time, which was another factor for her. The observatory is planned to be part of Tasuleasa Social, a public site where hikers and nature enthusiasts can stay and learn about the mountains. Our group of 28 students - from Robert College, Transylvania College and Cape Henry Collegiate in Virginia - stayed at a camping site in the mountains. We spent the first days working in the forest, laying sod for a



RC students worked with students from the US and Romania on the project

playground for children. On the third day of the camp, we started working on the foundation of the observatory.

Meeting and working with people from other cultures showed us that cultural differences don't matter in helping out people. After all, we all went there to work, and every single person put

all their time and energy into this project. We are very grateful for the opportunity. The ten days we spent in Romania were a chance to exchange cultural values, stay in tents while it was freezing outside, and meet a lot of generous people. Being a part of this cold, tiring but fun journey was really important and eye-opening for us.

# Carrying on the CIP Tradition in Keşan

By Ata Engin L12

In 2018 and 2019 we reached more than 250 kids with the Keşan Community Involvement Project (CIP). Incredibly, just six years ago, I was on the other side of the program, as one of the middle school participants in the Keşan CIP. RC was my dream high school since first grade, and in the summer of 7<sup>th</sup> grade, when I heard that RC students were coming to town to

spend a week with us, I was so happy. It was a sports project, and even though I used to hate sports, I was excited to spend a week with students from my dream school.

My own excitement and happiness from the program six years ago motivated me to organize another CIP in Keşan, at the public school

that I had graduated from. In a CIP project, the most significant element is the ability to empathize with the kids. As a CIP leader or volunteer, you have to think about how you can expand their vision, make them have fun, and prepare a program for them which reflects their social status, opportunities and realities in life. Since I was one of these kids once, it was easier for me to empathize with them while preparing the program.



An activity teaching the power of teamwork

This feeling of sustaining the Keşan CIP is really meaningful for me. Six years ago, I used to walk in the corridors of my middle school, dreaming of Robert College. For the last two years, I walked in the corridors of my old middle school as a Robert College student. Once Robert College students volunteered to touch my life, and now I am one of them. I am very lucky that I have experienced both perspectives.



# A Lively Summer and Busy Fall at Bizim Tepe

The activities organized by the Robert College Alumni Association (RKMD) offer something for everyone. Here are some of the events that have taken place over the past few months

## Post-Homecoming Reception

One of the highlights of the year at Bizim Tepe is Homecoming after-party. With the help of the mellow weather on November 17, alumni arrived after Roll Call

and the assembly on campus, and spent leisurely hours mingling outside!





## Jazz Brunch



On October 20, Bizim Tepe hosted the Akbank Jazz Brunch, as part of the Akbank Jazz Festival for the fifth year in a row. The artists featured this year were the Şenova Ülker Quartet.

## Bizim Tepe Cup '19

This is the second year of the Bizim Tepe Cup, a 10-day tennis tournament held in September welcoming all experienced tennis players to the Bizim Tepe courts.



## Backgammon Tournament

2019 was the first year Bizim Tepe hosted a Backgammon Tournament. Fun yet competitive, the event took place over the first weekend in August. The enthusiasm on display makes it likely that this event will become a tradition at Bizim Tepe.



## Bizim Camp '19



With two sessions of summer camp in July and August, many 4-8 year olds spent fun-filled days swimming, learning about science and playing games. The camps indeed lived up to this year's concept of "Summer Like a Fairytale."

## Bizim Tepe Senior Tennis Tournament '19



This year Bizim Tepe hosted the 29<sup>th</sup> Senior Tennis Tournament in July. With a record-breaking number of over 250 players participating, the award ceremony at the end of the tournament was truly spectacular.

# UniRC Reloaded:

## Focus on Friends and Community

**This year**, Robert College Alumni University Students Committee (UniRC) has a new logo, philosophy, leadership and goals. For the 2019-20 calendar year, UniRC has decided to further emphasize one of its founding principles. Dila Şirin RC 15, RKMD Board Member, UniRC 17-18 Co-Coordinator and UniRC Mentor explains: “The focus of our activities will be our Robert College friends and community. This year, we will try to guide our friends who are in university as much as possible, enriching their university experiences by supporting them with career, education and entertainment activities.”

### UniRC is a collective memory

UniRC volunteers shared their thoughts about how this mission has been accomplished from past to present.

“UniRC is a collective memory that university students could benefit from throughout their university lives. This memory includes a wide range of information from careers to workshops, from social responsibility to entertainment.” - *Damla Ilica RC 15; RKMD Board Member, UniRC 17-18 Co-Coordinator, UniRC Mentor*

“I had the opportunity to produce and implement new projects at a very young age. During these projects, we worked like a professional team with our six-member management board, meeting each week. To get support for our projects, we impressed top executives in companies of various sizes and mobilized a group of 40 members to implement the projects. I am doing an entrepreneurial job right now and I think what I gained from UniRC is very valuable for my managerial career.” - *Banu Berna Sürmen RC 04; McKinsey Academy Manager, UniRC 04-07 Events Coordinator*

“The Robert College community is very special. My advice to university students, especially if you are looking for internship and then job opportunities, working with UniRC and therefore with this ecosystem, will open some doors more easily.” - *Hilmi Karagöz RC 05; Tekfen Procurement Coordinator, UniRC 07-08 General Coordinator*

### A year of exciting events

From this collective memory revised and renewed, UniRC has organized 14 activities for the 2019-20 calendar, focusing on careers, workshops and entertainment.

After UniRC's renowned event GradLive, the first event in this calendar, “Career Talks-Intro to Business Basics” was held at Bizim Tepe on October 19, 2019. Moderated by Uluç Büyükbeşe RC 05, panel members were Ahmet Onur, Founder and CEO of Kolektif House, Pınar Gündüz, Director of Corporate Transformation at sahibinden.com and startup mentor Ozan Dağdeviren RC 06 who joined from London via video conference. Topics that were discussed included what are the most demanding skills and competencies for newcomers, what are the right approaches in job interviews, and what are the common features of unusual careers. Answers were also sought for concepts such as “Corporate or start-up - could the two be together?,” “What does the future look like?,” and “What will companies expect from their employees in the near future?”

To stay informed about upcoming events including career panels, educational workshops and social activities, follow the Robert College Alumni Association account on Instagram @robertkolejmd



UniRC welcomes recent graduates to join them





# Boston Alumni Meet with Adam Oliver

**Members** of the Boston RC alumni group warmly welcomed RC's new Head of School Adam Oliver on December 8, 2019, on his first ever trip to Boston. The attendees comprised of graduates from the 1960's to 2019, representing a wide spectrum of ages and interests. In contrast with the previous years when the RC headmasters visited Boston, the event was organized in a much less formal setting, in a private dining room at a restaurant during brunch.

In addition to being an excellent networking event, the gathering provided a casual and relaxed environment to meet the new Head of School and ask questions. After the President of the RCAA and local host, Alpdoğan Kantarcı RC 86, introduced Adam Oliver and welcomed him to Boston, Mr. Oliver shared his journey on how he came to Istanbul and decided to accept the Head of School position at Robert College. The alumni were very interested in his vision as the first non-American Head in the school's history. Adam



RC Head of School Adam Oliver speaks to alumni in Boston

Oliver emphasized his commitment in keeping Robert College among the top schools globally. He also added his interest in graduating environmentally and socially conscious students, with a level of academic excellence and skills in social sciences, art and music. Building a strong global community of RC graduates and stronger ties with the RC alumni associations

including the RCAA are also among his priorities.

Adam Oliver's visit to Boston marks a new beginning and a stronger engagement of RC alumni in the success of Robert College. The meeting was very well attended and stimulated an outstanding enthusiasm among the members of Boston RC community.

# The RC Spirit is Strong in the Bay Area

**RCAA in the Bay Area** alumni group organizes frequent events throughout the year for RC alumni to meet. Most recently, it hosted a holiday party in San Francisco on December 15, 2019. Over 30 alumni from around the Bay Area showed up to celebrate the New Year with drinks and appetizers. The event was held at the downtown home of RC alumni Eylül Kayın RC 08 and Can Efeoğlu RC 09. Everyone had a great time, as the crowd stayed an hour past the end and ensured that no food was left over!

A couple months earlier, RCAA had a crowded bar night on October 10 at City Beer Store in San Francisco. This was the second of many bar nights

that the RCAA are looking forward to hosting. It was great to see more new faces at this event.

The Bay Area RCAA team - Sanem Alkan RC 90, Hayal Koç RC 98, Neşe Özler RC L12 03 and Can Akçevin RC 09 - organizes regular events for

alumni of all ages to meet. With more alumni moving to the Bay Area, they are looking forward to a growing San Francisco RC alumni crowd.

To learn about upcoming events, join the Robert College Bay Area group on Facebook.



Bay Area alumni celebrate the holidays together



## Marsel Meşulam RA 64

# Recognized for Lifetime Achievements

### Prof. Dr. Marsel Meşulam

received the Honorary Award for Medicine from the Eczacıbaşı Group for his extraordinary contribution to universal science and his support of academic and medical activities in Turkey. Meşulam is a world-renowned scientist for his discoveries in the fields of behavioral neurology and dementia biology and has dedicated his career to researching different forms of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease. Eczacıbaşı Group founded the Eczacıbaşı Group Awards in 1959, and Prof. Meşulam joins this prestigious tradition in its 60<sup>th</sup> year.

Upon graduating from RA, Meşulam went on to Harvard University and built his illustrious academic career in the United States. At age forty, he became one of the youngest professors ever at Harvard University Medical School. His groundbreaking work in behavioral neurology and dementia biology turned him into one of the foremost scientists in the world in these fields. He identified

a separate form of dementia, which became known as Meşulam syndrome. Located at Northwestern University, Meşulam is currently the Director of the Meşulam Center for Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer's Disease, the Chief of Behavioral Neurology at the Department of Neurology, and the Ruth Dunbar Davee Professor of Neuroscience.

The RCQ asked Prof. Meşulam how Robert College impacted his career. "Robert College transformed my life. The setting was enchanting. We would occasionally cut classes just to go and watch the Bosphorus flow. The heterogeneity of the student body, of the teachers, and of the curriculum was remarkable. My classmates included ethnic Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Germans, Bulgarians, as well as Turkish students of various geographic and cultural backgrounds. The mixture was invigorating and gave us an abiding sense of tolerance and relativity. I served as the President of the Student Council and also editor-in-chief of The

Bosphorus. Some of the courses I took during my freshman year at Harvard, especially in the humanities, were elementary compared to the education I had at Robert College."

The Eczacıbaşı Honorary Award for Medicine is the first award Prof. Meşulam has received from Turkey. In an interview he gave to Hürriyet, Prof. Meşulam stated that he misses Turkey still and is very proud of the Turkish trainees who came to work with him and who are now leading their own clinical and research programs in Turkey. As for his advice for students and young graduates who are thinking about going into behavioral neurology, Prof. Meşulam states, "The human brain is the single most complicated device in the known universe. Behavioral neurology is the branch of medicine that investigates the nature of brain function and that serves patients with diseases of cognition and behavior. I cannot think of a more exciting field to pursue."



Marsel Meşulam RA 64 (center), world-renowned scientist for his discoveries in the fields of behavioral neurology and dementia biology, with colleagues at Northwestern University

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# Music at RC

An RC education means an education steeped in music. From Evin İlyasoğlu ACG 66 to Aydın Karlibel RC 76, the sheer number of RC alumni who have excelled in music is amazing. The Music Issue offers a glimpse into how music continues to have a pivotal role at RC and how it enriches the lives of RC alumni well beyond their time at school.

**Music is good** for the brain, and not just the spirit: Science now shows that musical training impacts brain structure and function positively. Indeed there is research that demonstrates musical training

improves long-term memory and makes people more mentally alert. Listening to music may fend off depression, lower stress-related hormones like cortisol, improve blood flow, and even ease pain. It is wonderful, therefore,

that from its inception onwards, music constituted an important component of the Robert College education.



ACG 69 students sing  
"Auld Lang Syne" with  
Dorothy Iz (left)





Founded during the final stages of the Ottoman Empire, Robert College had a student body comprised of different backgrounds and ethnicities. Music served as a great unifier at the school, encouraging students to come together in a joyful way. Music became more pronounced when a music department was formed and music was made a part of the curriculum. The famous Norman, Beard & Co., London-made orgue was bought during those early years as well. A choir was formed, a music club established, and many Robert College songs composed quickly thereafter. In his book *Tepedeki Okul*, Cem Akaş RC 86 relates that concerts at RC at those times were packed, and in fact Russian students at RC who had fled Crimea, took the music performances at the school to a whole other level.

The firm connection of RC education to music and the presence of an orchestra and music groups never let up over the years. From choral and classical music, the interest of the students and faculty diversified over time. For example, in the 1960s, many student music groups were formed, similar to Peter, Paul and Mary, and contests were all the rage. RC always kept up with the times: The lyrics of the Simon & Garfunkel song "The Sound



Charles Köpe with the chorus in the late 1940s

of Silence" were analyzed in English literature classes. Famous musicians from different musical styles were invited to give concerts at the school, such as Bülent Ersoy in 1970s and MFÖ in the 1980s, a tradition that continues to this day.

The library housed a vast record collection that included all kinds of music, a remarkable resource considering that there was no internet, the ability to travel abroad for most students was limited, and access to music was mainly through TRT. In 1974, the first RC Music Festival was

founded, and it continued every year. While at first it was mostly about classical music, soon it began to feature modern work, and in its third year, through dance performances and poetry readings, began to morph into the arts festival that continues to this day.

Musicals and plays with music were also constant components of the music universe of Robert College. In the 1980s, production of musicals gained even more momentum. Ambitious productions of *Evita*, *West Side Story*, and *The King and I* still live



The Goliards performing at the RC Theatre in May 1969. Student music groups were popular in the 1960s.



Students performing a piece from *Les Misérables* at Homecoming in the early '90s

vividly in the memories of the students of the time. *Keşanlı Ali Destanı* and *Fehim Paşa Konağı* were among the Turkish plays staged in the 1980s, that also featured music.

In 1989, Suna Kırac Hall, was built through the generous support of the Koç Foundation and named after leading Turkish businesswoman and RC Trustee Suna Kırac. The hall seats over 500 people, with an expansive stage and state-of-the-art sound and lighting rig. This facility, supported by Suna and İnan Kırac Foundation over the years, catapulted RC music productions to a whole other level.

The liveliness of the music scene at RC continued to grow over the decades and has arrived at its formidable

current diversity. From playing instruments to vocalizing, from putting on shows to participating at concerts and festivals, what enables so many diverse musical avenues to be pursued so successfully at RC is of course the strength of the music program.

#### RC's Conservatory-level Music Program

Looking at the current music program at RC, the set-up seems nothing less than a conservatory!

For starters, music classes are mandatory for Lise Prep students. The Prep music class has four units: rhythmic composition, Turkish music, western musical history, and melodic composition. Prep students learn to write lyrics, compose, arrange, and

perform songs, and some of these songs seem better than those on pop charts. Creation of their own piece of music endows students with problem solving skills in an entirely fresh way.

Moving on from Prep, there are currently no music electives for Lise 9 and 10 students, as per MEB guidance. However, thanks to the MEB 2023 vision, moving forward there will be an arts elective in Lise 9, once the new program is introduced. In Lise 10, students have one elective choice, with Practical Music and Orchestral Composition offered.

Practical Music is for beginners. Amazingly, a student can pick whichever instrument they want to learn. Students are often advised to attend a club for the instrument as well, since outside specialists, almost all of them top musicians in their fields, are called in to school for clubs. It is entirely possible for a student to decide to learn to play saz, and have a saz expert working with them in the Saz Club. The program allows for such targeted support.

Orchestra is, in fact, a university-level course and is equally as advanced as an AP Music course. Students learn traditional four part harmony and how to write piano music in different styles, and effectively compose at the end of the course.

Progress is fast in almost all musical classes. For example, in the



The brass section is one of the highlights of the RC Orchestra



Musicianship club, by the end of six months students have finished Grade 5 theory, something that normally would take two years. Guitarists and pianists are most successful with these, but drummers, ney and tamburi players also are able to advance quickly. Students who aim to take the Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music Theory exam, are taken from

Grade 1 to Grade 5 within six months. In the tough, competitive environment Lise students face in terms of university entry, the music department offers students with musical affinities a sanctuary, a place to breathe. Even if students are not taking the music-related classes, there are so many groups and activities to explore their musical proclivities. And those

students who are not performing learn to appreciate music, learn the pleasures of being an enthusiastic audience, just like many them in previous decades.

Music has the power to accompany and enrich one's life well beyond the school years. And what a kickstart Robert College gives in the right direction.

## RC Is Always Full of Music!

### Here Is a Sample of Events and Activities

**RC Orchestra** includes over 50 members playing a variety of instruments from wind to string and percussion to piano. The annual performance is in the spring.

**RC Singers** is the award-winning acapella choir, which performs at festivals abroad, various events around campus, and at their annual concert on campus in the spring.

**Lise Live** is a musical outlet for students, where they can showcase their talents, regardless if they are studying music or not. Teachers often perform together with students. The event was first organized in 1999 by Art Department Head Merrill Hope-Brown.

**Homecoming** includes a musical performance after Roll Call which has become an inseparable tradition that alumni look forward to each year. In recent years, the crowd has been

delighted by performances by the RC Orchestra, the RC Singers and surprise alumni musicians.

**Grad Live** is a spin-off of Lise Live, featuring alumni musicians. The event is organized by UniRC.

**Music on Mondays** lunchtime concerts offer a venue for students and faculty to perform, and give the community a chance to enjoy a musical performance in the middle of their busy days

**Hamlin Players**, started in 2015, is a musical theatre group that was originally for Prep students. Participants loved it so much, they have continued and the cast now includes singers from every class.

**Music Master Class** held each fall is a platform for RC student musicians to learn tips and tricks from professional musicians. Recent Master Classes

have been led Point Two, Donovan Mixon, Darius Brubeck and Timur Selçuk.

**Dance Evening** is the RC Modern Dance clubs' opportunity to show off their year-long efforts each spring.

**Fine Arts Festival** is held on campus at the end of the school year, the festival features performances for student groups and surprise professional guests.

**Akbank Jazz Workshop** coincides with the Akbank Jazz Festival in the fall. Festival musicians hold a workshop with students. The most recent one featured Ercüment Orkut, Volkan Hürsever and Ediz Hafızoğlu.

**Radyo Robert** is RC's own radio station, run by students and hosted on the PowerFM PowerApp. Programming includes music and interviews. (see RCQ 53, p. 14)





Music teacher Koray Demirkapı (far right) working with members of the RC Singers



## The Fab Four of the Music Department: 82 Years of Experience Between Them



**Margaret Halıçoğlu** is now in her 29<sup>th</sup> year at RC. She is currently teaching Creative Arts music classes to all Prep students, and advising the Musicianship club which prepares students for the ABRSM Grade 5 theory exam).



**Merril Hope-Brown** is a music and art teacher who came to Robert College in 1998 after teaching many years in the UK. She has been Art Department Head since 2006, and has taught art and music to all levels. Founder and director of the bi-annual Lise Live concert, she also runs Fine Art Studio Club, organizes Music on Mondays lunchtime recitals, as well as various other music and art events at school.



**Deniz Baysal** has been working for 18 years at RC and teaches Lise Prep music, Practical Music and Orchestra (Advanced Music). He is also the conductor of the school orchestra. He has composed music for movies and theater, as well as songs. Baysal has also been a keyboard player in a rock band and a studio musician. He is interested in the relationship between the brain and music, and follows research in this area closely.



**Koray Demirkapı** has been with RC for 13 years. He was the music director of several musicals performed at RC. He was also the composer and music director of the 2011 musical *Harem* - an original production that was a teacher-student collaboration. He is the founder of the RC Singers, the school's polyphonic choir, which competes in international choir competitions and has received several awards.

## Margaret Halicioğlu Recalls Musicals



Margaret Halicioğlu joined RC in 1991 as the Director of Music. Who better than her to recall the legacy of musicals at RC and productions past?

### What were your observations about musicals when you joined RC?

When I came to RC, students had to pick a club for the year. There was a Musical Activities club, and it always filled up fast. Students had to try out for parts. Lead characters would be chosen from Lise 3s (today's Lise 12s) - something students are unable to do now because they are usually busy preparing for university examinations. Rehearsals were held after school and at lunch, for a period of eight weeks. There already was a strong tradition and system in place, so I simply built on it.

### How would you summarize your experience with musicals?

Producing musicals is emotional. It is a long journey. We had fun, but there was also an element of fear. There is a lot going on: singing, choreography, acting, and also the technical aspects like microphones. It is about taking risks, but also about supporting everyone well, being well-prepared. The musicals I have worked on were a huge investment for everyone involved, and they were one of the highlights of the school year, with at least three to four performances to a full house.



Maria and the Von Trapp children in the 1999 musical *The Sound of Music*. From L to R: Emre Çiçek RC L3 03, Aylin Sezer RC L12 03, Rina Onur Şirinoğlu RC L3 04, Aysu Uygur RC L3 03, Sevinç Yüksel Tavarez RC 02 and Betigül Onay Özman RC 02

### What is the draw of musicals? Why are alumni who worked on a musical unable to forget that experience?

Musicals are all about a team effort. There might be a lead role or two, but the chorus is also really important. If one person is off, it messes up everything. Everyone feels important. Many of our students did things they never thought they would be able to do. Musicals built really strong memories and friendships. The preparation and performances developed the students' self-confidence and enabled them to feel pride in what they did. I am really proud of what the students achieved.

### Through all these years, can you recall some people or events that stand out?

The first musicals I helped stage were *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Grease*. I have so many wonderful memories. I remember Sibel

Kutman Oral RC 92 as Chacha in *Grease*. The next year was *Fiddler on the Roof*. *Sound of Music* was staged the first year that we had the new Lise, with a mixture of new and old Lise students. Aylin Sezer RC L12 03 played Maria even though she was a Prep, and Betigül Onay Özman RC 02 played Liesl. Who could forget Burak, entering from the roof of the theatre by rope for the beginning of *Working*?

When we put on *South Pacific*, right before the performances, the theater was struck by lightning, and the entire sound and light system was gone. Pelin Seyhan RC L12 03 had to have blackened teeth for her role, and Arif Karaca RC L12 04 was dressed in a grass skirt and a coconut-shell bra. Also all the boys went down to the barber in Arnavutköy to get a #1 haircut to be like sailors.

Lale Erdem Atılğan RC 00 who was in *Calamity Jane* was remarkable. She recently told me that she can still remember all the words of the songs she sung.

The lyrics of the musical *Harem* were written entirely by Vehbi Değer Turan RC 12 - an amazing feat.

All the students who were in the musicals had something special about them. These are but a handful of memories that spring to mind.



The production of *West Side Story* in 1986 included Neşe Sabuncuoğlu Çelebi RC 88, Aslı Erkanlı Olcay RC 88 and Zeynep Karaarslan Başaran RC 88





Eliza Doolittle (renown Turkish actress Nevra Serezli ACG 65) is presented by Prof. Higgins (Erhan Yaşar RC YÜK 67) in the 1964 production of *My Fair Lady*



Music is just as important a part of dorm life today as it was in the 1950s



Charles Estes playing the organ in the 1920s



A 1950s production of *The Mikado*. Students have staged the Gilbert and Sullivan opera several times over the years.



The 1968-69 ACG Chorus





Renkler at Homecoming in 2019. The iconic band, made up of RC 69 alumni, began playing together as students in the 60s



The Lise Live concert gives students a venue to show off their musical talent



Musical Theatre has taken on a new dimension with the Hamlin Players. Their latest performance was *Mamma Mia!*



The award-winning RC Singers polyphonic chorus always offers a colorful program at their annual concert



RC gives students the facilities to explore their musical interests



One of the highlights of the year is the RC Orchestra concert

## A Stroll Through Different Musical Paths With RC Alumni

Some of the RC alumni have chosen to pursue music professionally, some as a life-enriching hobby. The RCQ asked alumni from different decades about their paths in music, their advice, and current playlists!

“Having a balanced life with hobbies, is not only important, but also necessary.”

Hakan Binbaşgil RC 79, executive board member and CEO of Akbank



**You were given an award in 2012, “musician businessman of the year”. What does this phrase mean for you? How can one’s professional life and hobby go hand-in-hand?**

That was a great honor for me. Being presented this award from Ian Paice, the long-time drummer of the legendary rock group Deep Purple, which I used to listen to a lot during my youth, was an incredibly memorable moment.

I believe that having a balanced life with hobbies is not only important, but also necessary. Such balance also contributes to a sustainable performance at work.

**Which instruments do you play? What are your favorite genres in music?**

I play the piano. I began when I was six or seven. I was influenced by one of our neighbors, who was a professional rock musician. My parents also supported me heavily to develop my musical skills. I played different genres initially, but in recent years, I’ve been more into jazz. These days I try to improvise and create my own music. Here I have to thank Seda, my wife, who hired a jazz tutor for me as a 40th birthday present.

**How has RC influenced your interest in music?**

RC provides an outstanding environment for its students to excel in their hobbies. This inspirational atmosphere is what makes RC unique. During my time at RC, I tried to benefit



Hakan Binbaşgil RC 79

from this environment extensively. I played a variety of team sports and also had a chance to improve my music. Playing the grand piano in Gould Hall with my friends is a very joyful memory. I still remember my first experience, and the sound of the harpsichord in the Music House.

**Who or what are you listening to these days? Any recommendations?**

I listen to many genres, but enjoy contemporary jazz the most. I am particularly taken by musicians who improvise and create their own unique sound. Keith Jarrett, Brad Mehldau,

Esbjörn Svensson, Gonzalo Rubalcaba are a few of my favorites.

**What would you recommend to alumni who want to get more seriously involved with music as a hobby?**

Finding the right musician who strengthens your fundamentals is the first key step. And for further enhancement, listening, thinking about music, practicing and playing with others are important. Having an inspirational environment also contributes significantly. I have been very lucky in all these aspects.



## “You never, ever get bored with jazz!”

Seda Binbaşgil RC 79, instructor, host of *Esintiler* on Açık Radyo

**You had a career in marketing and then music seems to have taken over your life. What have been the pivotal moments for you as your relationship with music deepened?**

Music has always been an important part of my life, as my parents and my brother had a keen interest both as players and dedicated listeners. In our

home, there was always good music in the air, be it classical, jazz, rock or pop.

My interest in jazz deepened when I went for my master's to a college near New Orleans, the hotbed for jazz. Upon my return to Istanbul I started doing a weekly show on Açık Radyo, called *Esintiler* which has been on the

air for more than 20 years now. Every Tuesday at 10 pm, I present a new jazz album and sometimes host local jazz musicians. I will always be thankful to Ömer Madra RA 64, the editor-in-chief and “everything” of Açık Radyo, for giving me the chance that turned out to be such a precious key to open various doors into the wonderful realm of jazz. Fast forward a few years, and I got an offer from Bilgi University to teach a weekly after-hours seminar in jazz. It didn't take me long to understand that teaching indeed was “my thing.” So, a year later I found myself teaching at Simya Gallery, an arts and cultural center in Ortaköy, and two undergraduate courses at Boğaziçi University, both of which have been continuing ever since.

### Why jazz?

Because of its improvisational nature. You never ever get bored!



Seda Binbaşgil RC 79 with her students at Boğaziçi University

## Music, Electronics, and Neuroengineering

Burak Güçlü RC 92, professor at the Institute of Biomedical Engineering, Boğaziçi University

**How did you become interested in music? What was RC's role?**

I have seen pictures of myself “playing” music and “fixing” radios before going to school. My grandparents were amateur musicians, and one was also a keen electronics hobbyist. I learned to read music early at primary school and started taking piano lessons. I also delved into electronics and computers by teaming up with friends from the neighborhood. After entering RC, I gained access to a wealth of resources. With RC buddies, we used to spend endless hours at band practices.

Meanwhile, I built sound effect circuits such as distortion and wah-wah units, amplifiers, and other electronic music gadgets for fun and use in our band. I tried to follow all musical activities at RC, attended choirs and bands, and



Burak Güçlü RC 92

played in hard rock concerts at the Fine Arts Festivals. I have been fascinated with music theory and harmony since taking the Advanced Music course, and still do reading, studying, and composing as I find time.

### What is the relationship between music and your career as an engineer?

My interest in music and hands-on electronics skills were very useful in my engineering and scientific research career. Processing sound signals by hardware and software has similarities with processing brain signals. I currently work in an EU consortium to design novel neural interfaces for movement and the sense of touch. My ultimate goal is to help a neuroprosthetic user play the piano and feel the keys with an artificial hand.





“It was my childhood dream to be in musicals at RC.”

Aylin Sezer RC L12 03, award-winning opera soprano

### What was your connection to music at RC?

When I was in middle school, I was taking vocal lessons, and when I got into RC, the first question I asked was, “When can I audition for musicals?” My mother Maria Sezer is an art teacher at RC and used to work on musicals. She often took me with her to rehearsals. It was my childhood dream to be in musicals at RC, and I got to realize that by performing in several musicals and plays.

### Why opera?

I chose and love opera because it brings together different branches of art, and emotions totally dominate during an opera. My favorite is Verdi’s *La Traviata*, probably because it has all the vocals and acting that a soprano would want to perform.



Aylin Sezer RC L12 03

### What are your recommendations for people getting into opera for the first time?

First discover the style of music you like. Handel, Mozart, Verdi, Stravinsky. All of them wrote opera, but each has a different style.

Read the story beforehand and watch the performance with subtitles. Nearly every work has both a classic and a modern interpretation. For instance, Richard Eyre’s *La Traviata* is a classic version, whereas Willy Decker has a modern version. While Youtube or Mezzo are great to watch part of an opera, it is best to listen to opera live, in an opera hall and to feel the vibrations of the vocals in your body. Do not reach a judgement on opera without having had this experience.

“I Consider RC Orchestra To Be The Start of My Career.”

Cemre Necefbaş RC 13, jazz vocalist, founder of Cloud Seven



Cemre Necefbaş RC 13

### How did your interest in music develop?

I have always loved music and grew up loving to sing. RC Orchestra was the main reason I wanted to get into

RC because I had watched my brother Can Necefbaş RC 10 perform there. I graduated from The New School in 2018 with a dual degree, BFA in Jazz Voice and BA in Contemporary Music. Since then, I’ve been performing with various jazz bands all over NYC. I’m also working on Cloud Seven, a 7-piece indie band that performs my original compositions and arrangements.

### What is your advice for RC students and alumni considering a career in music?

My advice is to be sure of yourself and this decision, so that people around you can fully support you. Listen to a lot of music, go to a lot of concerts, including concerts of your peers. Make sure to practice in a group setting as much as you practice on your own. Be patient, as honing your craft takes time. Make sure to take each rehearsal and performance seriously, and in

turn you’ll earn the respect of your fellow musicians. It is important to be on good terms not only with your band mates, but also with the technicians or the venue managers, so that people want to collaborate with you again and again.

### Your current favorites?

My current favorite songs to sing are the jazz standards “Almost Like Being in Love”, “On the Street Where You Live,” and “Best Things in Life Are Free.” I am listening to Michael Kiwanuka, Sufjan Stevens and Cécile McLorin Salvant.





## “The Atmosphere of the Music Department Was Something Else!”

Sirma Munyar RC 09, vocalist and producer

### How did RC impact your career in music?

I considered applying to the conservatory. However, I changed my mind when I got into Robert College. Deniz Baysal took me under his wing from early on. I joined the RC Orchestra thanks to him. He also steered me towards jazz theory and jazz vocal lessons. The atmosphere of the music department was something else, even the conversations we had there proved to be life-changing. If I hadn't been in the Orchestra, I wouldn't have considered applying to Berklee.



Photo: Bao Ngô

Sirma Munyar RC 09

### What are you currently working on?

I worked as a sound engineer at first. I did vocals for commercials and still do. I publish my own music in alternative electronic pop style, as SIRMA. At my tiny apartment, I have a professional vocal cabin, as well as a production studio. I write music, I arrange, produce and record it: I even do the mixing and mastering myself. Also, I've been teaching music production, songwriting, and arranging, at an internet-based school named Soundflys. Occasionally, I publish academic articles. Most recently, I've created the entire content for a 6-week online course named Modern Pop Vocal Production. It's amazing that I get to teach a class I've made in my 20s- I never thought something like this would happen this early on in my career. My double single “On/24 Hours” was released on digital platforms in December.

### What is your advice for budding vocalists?

I think vocalists that close themselves off to other areas in the music industry stand little chance in this

sector. After graduation, while I worked at non-music jobs, I continued to improve myself in areas such as music production and mixing. As my capacity increased, so did my work options. If you have that ambition and passion in you, you will be successful. It may not be in the way you initially envisioned, but you will find your way. Some of my friends from Berklee went back to college to study other things or started a career in real estate. This life is not for everybody!

### Who do you listen to these days?

My friends from the RC Orchestra, Deniz Taşar RC 09 and Ahmet Ali Arslan RC 10, have been releasing music, and it's been a joy to witness what they've achieved so far. Flume, ROSALIA, ODESZA, HANA, Grimes, KUCKA, Maggie Rogers, Clairo, Nilüfer Yanya, BANKS, Lauv, FINNEAS, FKA twigs and AURORA are among the other artists I listen to currently. Find out more about Sirma Munyar and her music at [www.sirmamusic.com](http://www.sirmamusic.com), @sirma on Instagram, and @sirmamusic on other social media channels.

## Evin İlyasoğlu ACG 66

As a renowned music critic, writer, radio and TV program producer, professor and Boğaziçi University Albert Long Hall music director for over twenty years, Evin İlyasoğlu has devoted her life to education and making classical music widely accessible. She says, “The term ‘classical’ is just like a classical jacket in your wardrobe or a classical armchair in your living room. It always stands there as a reference point and never goes out of fashion.”



## Aydın Karlıbel RC 76



Acclaimed concert pianist, composer and author, Aydın Karlıbel, received the Cemal Reşit Rey Honor Award from the Semiha Berksoy Opera Foundation in the summer of 2016. A career in music means a life of complete dedication, hard work, total commitment and passion. The aspiring serious musician must be a kind of Ulysses, as in Tennyson's aponymous poem, who must “strive, to seek to find and not to yield”.

## Alumni Reminiscence About Music at RC



The RCQ asked alumni about some of their favorite music-filled memories while at Robert College. The result is a lively trip down memory lane, and, not surprisingly, RC teachers play a huge role!

### Erdem Helvacioğlu, RC 94

Gerard Kennedy's "Guitar Club" used to meet once a week. Kene - short for Kennedy - came to class with lyrics and chord sheets and handed them out. The first song was "The House of the Rising Sun". Only a free spirit, great teacher like "Kene" would want his students to play a song with lyrics about gambling, getting drunk and living in misery. How cool that was for a twelve-year-old boy! I still keep those chord sheets. I teach music technology at The New School, New York, producing albums, composing film music. I do not even touch a guitar for days, but the moment I start playing, "Kene" reappears with his free spirit.

### Esin Uslu, RC 80

My deep love for music all started at RC with an English teacher, Mr. Shepard Harder. He sometimes played guitar after lessons. He asked one day if I wanted to learn how to play, so I enrolled in the Music Club. Within months, to my surprise, I was able to accompany him. It was mostly American folk songs and ballads. I enjoyed this so much that, later at Boğaziçi University, I was also in the Music Club and was a member of a band and a big chorus. I chose different paths in my career later in life, but have always been closely connected to art and music scene.

### Seda Binbaşgil RC 79

RC not only had a very good record collection in the library, but it provided the students with various instruments to practice at the Music House. Also, one of the main rooms in Gould Hall had a grand piano where we gathered to listen to our musically gifted friends like Hakan.

### Burak Güçlü RC 92

Mrs. Halicioğlu was preparing a band



Members of the Music Club practicing in front of Gould Hall. From L to R: Catherine Avak RC 79, Tülin Almas RC 79, Karen Gorştayn RC 79, Peri Ataman Holden RC 78, Esin Uslu RC 80 and English teacher Shepard Harder

for the Grease musical. Around that time, I was experimenting with a bass guitar's neck and had removed some of the frets to get a portamento effect for feeding into electronic circuits. After jokes and warnings at several rehearsals, I agreed this instrument was not appropriate for Grease and bought a new bass from a fellow student.

### Cemre Necefbaş RC 13

I got on stage during my prep year at Lise Live for the first time with my classmates Oğul Girgin and Elif Kınlı. Later we joined the orchestra and played music together for five years. Our final Lise Live performance was our farewell song to RC: "One day baby we'll be old, oh baby we'll be old and think of all the stories that we could've told." At the end of the song, it was pure happiness to see the entire audience on their feet, applauding.

### Sırma Munyar RC 09

For my first performance with the RC Orchestra. I had planned on walking among the audience. I made an

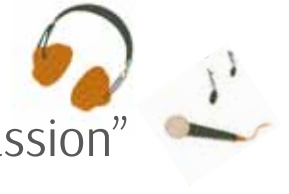
impulsive decision though, and jumped off the stage instead of walking down the stage stairs... and fell! Twisted my ankle, in fact. I hurt myself, but I went on; moments like this has molded my perspective on being a musician full time.

### Ahmet Uluğ RC 81

There used to be dances in the Gould Hall. I remember DJ'ing in my senior year and getting a compliment from Dave Phillips about the musical selection. "Could You be Loved," was the song that really caught him. In 1993, almost 15 years after graduation, I DJ'ed as a hobby at Pupa, the legendary reggae and African bar in Arnavutköy. Dave Phillips was always among the regulars. The Robert College, Arnavutköy, reggae and Dave Phillips triangle was maybe not a coincidence.

The Barış Manço concert, held in the gym (now the library) was the first live music concert I experienced. I was excited and enchanted. I remember checking out all the production details and being curious.





## “The Music Business is a Labor of Love and Passion”

Ahmet Uluğ RC 81, cofounder of Babylon, Pozitif and Doublemoon Records

The Music Issue of RCQ would have been incomplete without the story of three graduates, Ahmet Uluğ RC 81 Mehmet Uluğ RC 78, and Cem Yegül RC 78, who founded Babylon, Pozitif and Doublemoon Records, and thus changed the music scene in Istanbul forever.

After graduating from RC, the trio studied engineering but realized early on that the corporate world was not for them, so they turned their love of music into a business they felt passionate about. Pozitif started off organizing jazz and world music concerts. Through Pozitif, Istanbul music lovers had the chance for the first time to see live performances of Black Eyed Peas, Rihanna, Manu Chao, and Iron Maiden to name just a few artists. Doublemoon record label was created to promote quality Turkish music abroad and published the works of artists like İlhan Erşahin and Brooklyn Funk Essentials. The trio had also wanted to launch a venue, but finding the right place took time. They finally found a carpenter shop in Asmalımescit, named it Babylon, and the rest is history. After more than two decades, the group sold their enterprise to Doğu Holding in 2013. Unfortunately, the same year Mehmet Uluğ passed away. The music institution of Istanbul, Babylon, lives on, as do Pozitif and Doublemoon.

The RCQ recently caught up with Ahmet Uluğ about the story of Babylon and his memories of RC.

### When you think of RC in relation to music, what springs to your mind?

I think of dances in Gould Hall, a Barış Manço concert, and listening to late night radio in the dorm. The influence of Robert College was subliminal but strong. We were three partners, and all of us were graduates of RC, so definitely there is something. I often



Ahmet Uluğ RC 81, Cem Yegül RC 78 and Mehmet Uluğ RC 78 changed Istanbul's music scene through Babylon and Pozitif

get remarks from close friends that we are enthusiastic but also competitive. I think more in terms of being goal-oriented and an achiever.

### What were the challenges you faced when creating Babylon?

We had the know-how but limited capital. We had a global vision and wanted to present top international names to Istanbul, but the finances never worked, so we had to find sponsors to make it feasible. Moreover, we designed a venue centered around the stage, the only gimmicks being sound and light. We always avoided being trendy. We were very liberal with our curation; we only presented music that we liked, eventually turning more demand-oriented acts within reason.

İstiklal Caddesi between Galatasaray and Tünel was totally dark in 1999,

so we were not sure if people would come to that beautiful but dark corner of Pera. There was no car traffic to our side street, and we had no valet service. You had to walk to Babylon. We never did any selection at the door. Your status or money did not get you in; your enthusiasm did. The women came first, and it was always a comfortable place for women. Most of the time, we kept ticket prices reasonable, so that young people could come. We had student tickets.

The most satisfying aspects of creating Babylon were to experience Babylon transform the whole neighborhood, become an Istanbul institution, to be chosen by Downbeat magazine as one of the top jazz clubs in 2001, to be covered in the New York Times with the title “The Sound of Istanbul is Universal,” and to become a favorite brand with the young and creative crowd of Istanbul. In short, to be a well-love brand and to be a global brand.

### Do you have any advice for young alumni who want to be professionally involved in music management/music event management?

I advise them besides getting a proper education, to get as much hands-on experience as possible. Any kind of internship, volunteer work, or anything to give you experience and connections is essential. The music business is more than anything a labor of love and passion, that involves lots of sacrifice and stress.

## Yağmur Konuk RC 19

### Creates Exemplary Art Portfolio

**Yağmur Konuk** did Robert College proud when her AP Studio Art portfolio was selected as the high scoring sample for the College Board website for 2019. Her work was chosen from over 50,000 submissions from all over the world, it is one of the highest honors one can receive as a young artist. Her portfolio was part of a traveling exhibition and appears on the College Board's website as an inspiration to other AP Studio Art applicants.

Yağmur says both her grandfather and father were into photography, so she was tinkering with cameras from early on. When she got into RC, she was excited to shape her path in art: "The art program at RC encouraged me to explore my strengths outside

of academics. I took two photography classes with Mr. Downs. I couldn't have asked for a better mentor; he helped me find my own voice. I learned that there is no single right path in art, and that it is more about the journey you go on as an artist and a person that matters at the end."

RCQ asked Yağmur the story behind her AP portfolio: "During the college application process, I took a stroll through Eminönü's streets with my grandfather's film camera. When I processed the film from that trip, I found that it had not advanced all the way on one of the photographs, resulting in the superimposition of a photo of the interior of a store on the photo of the street outside. This led me



Yağmur Konuk RC 19

to question what creates the borders between interior and exterior spaces. Going through my work I discovered that I had a considerable number of encounters recorded through windows or window-like surfaces. My work culminated in the idea that my camera served as my portable window. It allowed to me to capture the world as I see it, thus, acting as the border between my interior world, my mind, and the exterior where I exist."

Yağmur currently studies biochemistry at Vassar College, where she has already taken part in a photo exhibition.



The photos in Yağmur Konuk's AP Portfolio are an exploration of borders and windows

## Ömer Ekin RC 19 Puts the Ball in Your Court

Ömer Ekin brought together entrepreneurial spirit and social good in his project Top Herkeste (Have a Ball) and is off on an exciting journey.

Ömer was a member of the RC Varsity Basketball team in his junior year in Robert College, when he volunteered to become a sports ambassador in the Artık Top Sende (Your Turn to Play) sports program organized by the United States Consulate General in Istanbul. While participating in this program, he observed that many people who went to outdoor basketball courts did not bring their basketballs because quality basketballs were expensive and not convenient to carry. Based on this observation, he created his Top Herkeste project that aims to build sports equipment vending machines to provide people with basketballs at outdoor



Ömer Ekin RC 19 received an award from Tufts University for his Top Herkeste project

basketball courts. In a wonderful turn of events, Top Herkeste received its initial \$2500 funding from the US Consulate General in December 2018.

Ömer is currently a freshman at Tufts University studying Cognitive and Brain Sciences and planning to minor in Entrepreneurship. There, he applied to the Montle Prize for Entrepreneurial Achievement competition with the project name Have a Ball and received a further funding of \$5000 to launch a pilot program.

With this new success under his belt, Ömer plans to manufacture the first basketball vending machine and launch the pilot program in Istanbul in summer 2020.

Ömer says, "I believe that basketball is a very unifying sport, and it should be available to everyone." He is currently looking for possible teammates and investors to roll out the project.

## Azra Haseki L12 Commended for Research

During the summer of 2019, Azra Haseki conducted a research project at MIT through the Center for Excellence in Education's Research Science Institute (RSI). Her research paper was selected among the top five. The RCQ caught up with Azra, as she gets ready to head off to college in a few months.

### What was your project about?

My project was titled "Investigating the Origins of Life: the Role of UV Light in Prebiotic Chemistry". I characterized the UV conditions in Earth's waters before life started, in order to assess the viability of chemical pathways theorized for the formation of life.

### How did you join this project?

The project was through RSI, which is held every summer at MIT. This year there were 82 students, and each year two students from Turkey are chosen to attend - one girl and one boy. I was very honored both to be chosen for the program and to be the first person representing Turkey who was selected to present with a top five paper.



RC student Azra Haseki L12 (center), poses with other 2019 top five oral presentation award winners, CEE Trustee Dr. Ross Grossman, and keynote speaker Greg Gunn (RSI '86) on the left

### What was the experience like?

Both the research process and RSI itself was amazing. The program is six weeks, and matches every student with a mentor for them to conduct research and then present their results. I worked with Dr. Sukrit Ranjan at MIT, but the project was a collaboration between MIT and Harvard. Research is necessarily a repetitive process, but analyzing and choosing which next steps to take after a preliminary result is as rewarding as it is difficult.

Knowing that this is not a problem you can look up the answer to, but that you're actually generating new knowledge is extremely exciting.

### What is next for you?

I plan to continue working on the project remotely, as I was a part of the theoretical side. In a more general sense, I plan to study chemical engineering at university and then continue to do research to find ways chemistry can improve our lives.



# Birding in Bhutan

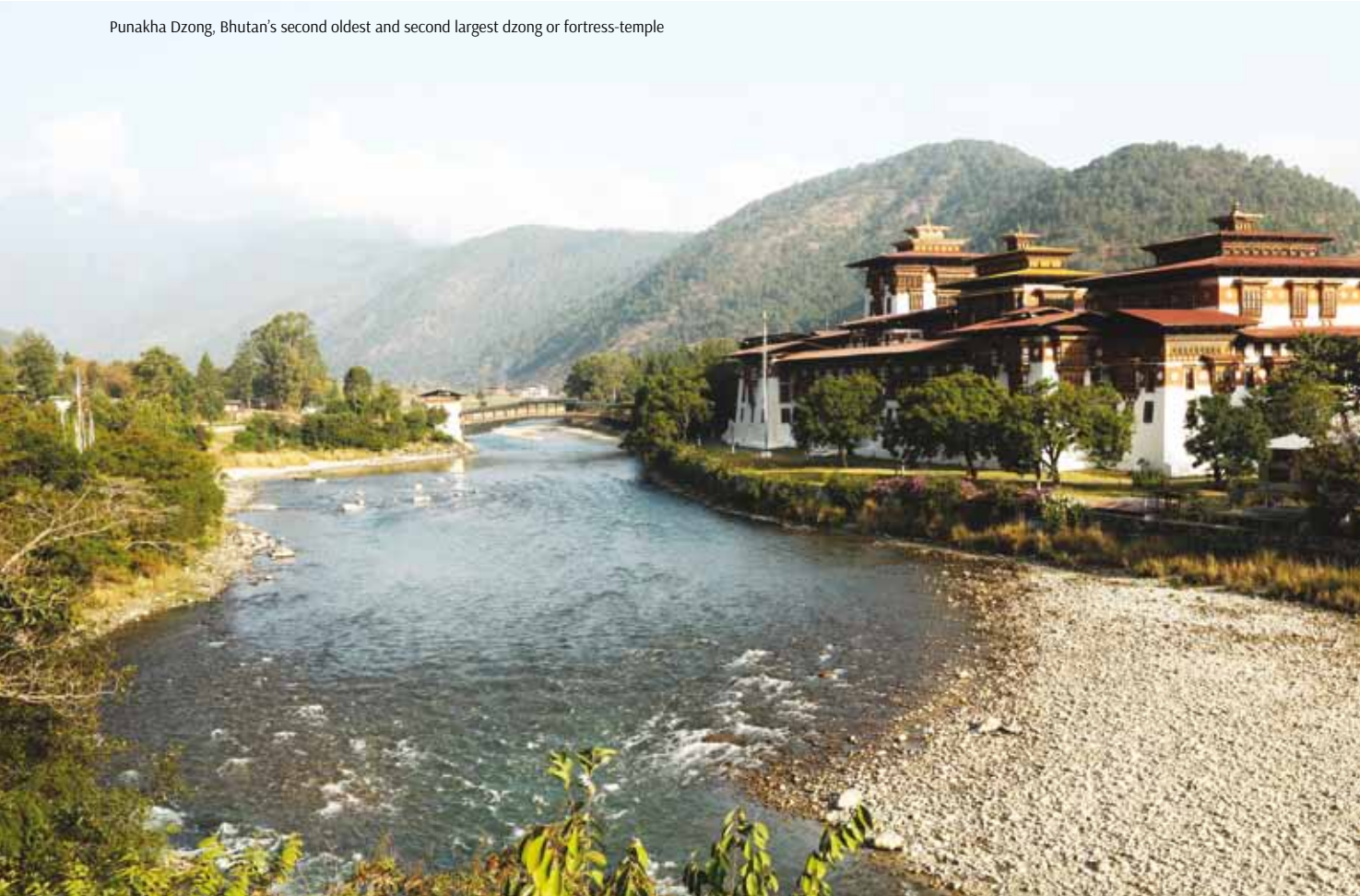
By Barış Karadoğan RC 90  
Photos by Çağan Şekercioğlu RC 93

Çağan Şekercioğlu RC 93, Professor of Ornithology at the University of Utah and a National Geographic Explorer, has been a birder for 35 years – since before he started studying at RC. Barış Karadoğan RC 90 has been a birder for 12 years and is a technology executive in Silicon Valley. They both share a passion for biology and nature that germinated at Robert College, and has taken them to all corners of the world, most recently to the tranquil country of Bhutan.

**Bhutan** is a small and mysterious country on the slopes of the Himalayas. Landlocked between China and India, it is sparsely populated, with only 800 thousand people living in a country 1/20<sup>th</sup> the size of Turkey. Little

is known about Bhutan and even less about its wildlife, which made it a perfect destination for us. Not only was Bhutan's nature breathtaking, equally impressive was how happy and calmly the people live. This was a land with no stress

Punakha Dzong, Bhutan's second oldest and second largest dzong or fortress-temple





Barış Karadoğan RC 90 and Çağan Şekercioğlu RC 93

and no aggressive feelings at all, even with our constant demand to see more bird species!

We entered Bhutan from Guwahati, Assam, India, and stayed a few days at Samdrup Jongkhar. Bhutan charges tourists a per-day fee, and assigns a mandatory tour guide and driver who arrange all hotels and meals. Both were excellent. Our bird guide knew every bird by sound, and our driver was adept enough to change a damaged brake pad on the spot. Birding started as soon as we entered the country. Hornbills are the big flying birds of old-world tropical forests, and on our first day we saw a great hornbill, and a threatened rufous-necked hornbill. The latter shows its age by the number of lines it has on its beak, highly rare for a bird.

We could immediately see from the way people lived that this was a different country. They measure GNH, gross national happiness, more than they measure GDP. Education - including college - is free, healthcare is free, by mandate 60% of the country has to remain forest (currently, 71% is forest), killing any animal is a sin, and everybody has a job. They believe that if you have a job, you will be happy,

so if somebody is out of work, the government gives land for that person to work and live on. Simple isn't it?

#### 400 bird species in two weeks

During our two-week trip, we saw about 400 bird species, from spectacularly colored monal pheasants to little brown fulvetas. Our days started with a 5:00 a.m. alarm each morning. We had to be at the prime birding sites around 6:30 a.m., since most birds are active by sunrise. This meant a quick breakfast on the mountain slopes after we reached the birding sites. We walked about five hours in the

morning, took a few hours for a lunch break, walked five hours more in the afternoon, and then had dinner. After dinner it was time to look for owls and other night birds.

Night birding is intense in Bhutan. There are many different kinds of owls, nightjars and frogmouths - a small nocturnal bird related to nightjars, that is in a separate family (Podargidae) and has a distinctively flat and wide mouth, much like its amphibian namesake. Night birding requires an acute sense of hearing. In pitch dark, we played the call of a bird hoping that one would hear it and call back or fly in for territorial defense. At that moment, we shined a flashlight and looked for the eyeshine, a reflection back from the bird's retina pinpointing its location. We were extremely lucky to see a Hodgson's frogmouth and a Himalayan owl, both rare, elusive and among the top birds of our trip.

Bhutan's cities are curious at night too. First and foremost, they don't have traffic lights. They had one in the whole country, and they took it out because it caused stress. With no stop and go, traffic flows better with roundabouts. It is less stressful. Cars don't turn on their headlights until they absolutely need to, and streetlights turn on way later than in the western cities. As a result, there

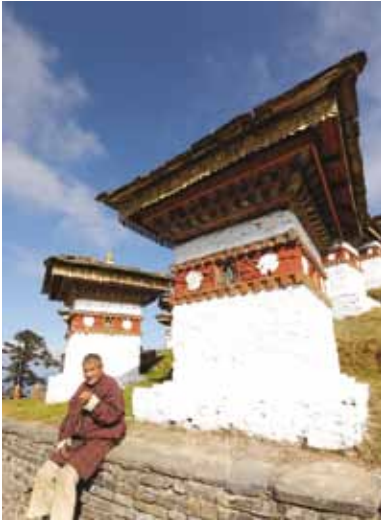


Two black-necked cranes wintering in the Phobjikha Valley





Magnificent birds thrive in the Himalayas, such as the male blood pheasant (left) and the iridescent male Himalayan monal (right)



Mr. Tshewang Tshewang in the traditional Bhutan gho, a visitor at Druk Wangyal Chortens, which are the 108 memorial stupas on the Dochula Pass

is little light pollution. Your eyes get used to the low light and you realize how much you can see at night when there are no artificial lights. Cars drive during dark hours with no headlights, and people have no problem seeing or driving, something that is impossible to witness anywhere else in the world.

Walking the Himalayas felt like swimming in a sea of mountains. There are mountain peaks as far as the eye can see. The habitat alternated from deciduous to coniferous to grassland depending on altitude, but we did see one of the few deciduous conifers, the larch tree, which sheds all its leaves at one time. Dear Erol Altuğ, wouldn't that make a great biology test question - which of the following is a deciduous conifer?

### Two weeks of tranquility

During our two weeks in Bhutan we did not have any aggressive feelings. There is no stress, because there is

no reason to fight anything. Most animals are stressed when they are in close proximity to their own species. After all, the biggest harm to a human does not come from plants or snakes, but from other humans. In Bhutan there are not many other humans. A sparsely populated country means there is enough space for everybody, and that makes a huge difference. As a result, your mind clears. You quickly come to a state where there are little or no thoughts in your head. You don't have to do much to get there, it just happens during long walks on the mountains.

Food is scarce in the mountains, so many mountain birds are nimble and opportunistic, most of them small in size. The aptly named sultan tit, beautiful nuthatch, fire-tailed myzornis, great parrotbill, laughingthrush, minla, minivet, babbler And yuhina are all characteristic birds of the Himalayan mountains. They are hard to see and even harder to photograph because most of them don't stand still; in cold mountain habitats, that's not a good idea.

However, the top prize birds in Bhutan were not the small ones. They

were the big colorful pheasants. With not many land-dwelling predators, they thrive in the Himalayas. Some of them in flocks of twenty or more gave us good views of their magnificent iridescent plumage. Two of the most amazing birds of the trip were the Blood Pheasant, and the Himalayan Monal.

No article on Bhutan can be complete without mentioning the calm Buddhist lifestyle embodied so clearly in their Dzongs (fortresses). While originally built for defense, they are now mainly used for meditation and reflection. They are structures of strength and serenity. Though not a Dzong, the Paro Taktsang, is the most awe-inspiring structure of them all. It is a monastery whose name means tiger's nest. The legend is that a monk riding a flying tiger came to the mountain's edge and started the monastery. It is a steep three-hour hike to get to it, but it is well worth every step.

It gives us great pleasure to share our trips with our fellow alumni. We look forward to many more.

*This article is dedicated to our dear principal, Ayfer Yeniçağ.*



Çağan Şekercioğlu's wife Tanya Williams (right) admiring the 54-meter Buddha Dordenma statue at the capital city of Thimpu



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## Arter Has a New Home

**Arter**, an art institution that is part of the Vehbi Koç Vakfı, moved from İstiklal Caddesi and opened the doors of its new building at Dolapdere on September 13, 2020. Chairman of the Board of Arter is Ömer M. Koç RC 80, renowned for his patronage of the arts. The opening of Arter's new building kicked off a vibrant art season in Istanbul, as Koç Holding continued to be the main sponsor of the Istanbul Biennial, and the *İçimdeki Çocuk* exhibition, curated from Ömer Koç's personal art collection, ran at Abdülmecid Efendi Köşkü.

At the opening ceremony of the new Arter building, Ömer Koç underlined that creativity and art are among the most basic human needs, and that they make human existence safe, tolerable, and satisfying. In line with Koç's remarks, Arter's vision is "to be a sustainable, vibrant cultural hub, making its broad range of programs

accessible to everyone." Indeed Arter embraces and celebrates today's art in all forms and disciplines.

Arter Founding Director is one of RC's own: Melih Fereli RC ENG 70. The RCQ had the opportunity to ask Fereli about Arter's new home - a remarkable building and a manifestation of Arter's vision: "Arter's new building is conceived as a versatile space, presenting multi-layered possibilities to discover, enjoy and engage in a closer dialogue with art. The building consists of physically intersected spaces in a strong visual dialogue with the city. The building features two performance halls. Both halls offer multiple seating options, which allows them to host large-scale installations or projects that require multi-channel panoramic projection."

When asked about the plans to create young art enthusiasts and to build

relationships with schools, Melih Fereli stated, "Arter provides dynamic learning opportunities that seek to provoke curiosity, inspire and facilitate debate around art. By offering a platform for everyone to enjoy creative processes, Arter's Learning Program aims to build lasting connections between artists, audiences and stakeholders. The Learning Program presents processes and activities that aspire to interpreting our times through art. To accommodate these activities, our new building has a dedicated learning studio with flexible modular layout, a hands-on production studio for users who would like to engage in artistic production themselves and a digital lab area."

For more details on this tremendous resource for art lovers, visit [arter.org.tr](http://arter.org.tr)

Arter's new building in Dolapdere



Melih Fereli RC ENG 70, Arter Founding Director



## Sibel Horada RC 98 Highlights Environment in Exhibitions

As part of the *Deep Current* group exhibition at Halki Seminary on Heybeliada from August 25 to September 22, 2019, Sibel Horada RC 98 showcased efforts to regenerate coral reefs in the Marmara with her work "Migration Wave."

The exhibition was organized by ADYSK, a foundation established by divers who work around the Princes' Islands. Horada had been following the underwater rescue projects of ADYSK, whose efforts focus on reviving the Marmara Sea. Divers witnessed the mass death of the corals on the reef around Yassiada, as it underwent major construction activity. ADYSK started taking cuttings of this imperiled coral and planting them on the reef around Neandros Island. Their efforts have had both literal and metaphoric meaning for her, and Horada's work in the exhibition attempted to make

this relocation effort visible in order to question the conditions that condemn otherwise immobile animals to exile.

Horada's most recent project is hosted by SAHA Studio, a working space for artists and curators in Cihangir. "My current installation is inspired by Taksim," she explains. "Taksim means to divide; the name comes from the Maksem - a water division system at the end of İstiklal Street. Inspired by the channelization, flow and interruption of water, I look at Taksim as a series of attempts for the control and the division of resources: the flow and interruption of people, traffic, time, memory and currency."

Horada's art focuses on collective and personal histories with an interest in urban, archaeological and ecological cultures.



Sibel Horada RC 98

## Ayşe Erkmen RC 70 ex Shows Dream-like Works

The latest project by Ayşe Erkmen, *Whitish*, opened in September 2019 as one of the first exhibitions at the Arter space. *Whitish* brings together work Erkmen has created since the 1970s with new works conceived and produced especially for this exhibition.

Erkmen is one of Turkey's foremost visual artists. Her work invites the viewer to think about place and space, often reconfiguring objects and our relationships to them. While not presented as a retrospective, *Whitish* still offers many of Erkmen's past works that help viewers discover the artist's enchanting point of view. Her site-specific new works are also thoroughly memorable and engulf the viewer in a mesmerizing experience.

The RCQ asked Erkmen about the source of inspiration for this project: "My inspiration was the space in general, the fact that this is a new



Ayşe Erkmen RC 70 ex

museum, that my exhibition would be one of the inaugural exhibitions, and that the building is new. I wanted to make something fresh and bright. The curator said he was imagining a white exhibition. This remark led me to the title: *Whitish/Beyazımtrak*; not quite white but a pale, dream-like exhibition where works are displayed as if sliding into each other, as if there is a very



Works from Ayşe Erkmen's latest exhibition, *Whitish*

slow, ghostlike movement." Regarding her source of inspiration in general, Erkmen says, "I can find inspiration in everything and any moment and every occasion that is lacking in itself or exceeding itself, that needs to express or hide something, or in thoughts that have become issues or problems for me, through things I've seen, read, or thought about."



## Film Buffs Rejoice: Başka Sinema Ayvalık Film Festivali

**Sami Kariyo RC 77** and Dürin Ababay established the Kariyo & Ababay Vakfı (KAV) in 2013 to enrich social and cultural life, particularly in the areas of culture, art, education, and science. The foundation's support enabled the launch of Başka Sinema (Another Cinema), delighting film buffs all over Turkey. Başka Sinema is an independent distribution network founded in 2013 to serve a fundamental need: To watch art films on the big screen. The need was so great that in just a short time, Başka Sinema was able to spread to 33 movie theaters in 16 cities, uniting film lovers with the films they want. With the slogan, "for us, every day is a festival", Başka Sinema decided to organize its own film festival on its fifth anniversary.

The Başka Sinema Ayvalık Film Festival is a total original. It aims to open up new debates and raise questions. To that end, it eschews typical categorizations in its program, and panels, workshops, and talks are an integral part of the festival. The festival also revives the



Sami Kariyo RC 77 (right) presents Emin Alper with the Director of the Year Award

tradition of summer outdoor cinema with open air screenings. It does not have a competition element. Yet to support creativity, the Kariyo & Ababay Foundation Director of the Year Award is presented. The festival also collaborates with universities to enable student participation. Organizers view the attendance of youth as vital. After all, art in general, and festivals like this one in particular, cultivate hope, and the second Başka Sinema Ayvalık Film Festivali, held

between October 4-9, 2019, did just that.

Sami Kariyo states that though they have ambitions for the festival becoming international, its starting principles will not change: The festival will always put quality first, and it will always educate and engage viewers in dialogue. Kariyo says KAV's efforts are a way of giving back and expressing gratitude.

## Mehveş Lelic RC 09: On Adornment

**A photographer** and teaching artist, Mehveş Lelic ponders modernity and heritage, belonging, making a home, and the resulting relationship with the environment. She has been very busy over the past year. She showed her conceptual work at multiple venues, such as Cosmos Arles during the Recontres d'Arles photography festival in France; the Rotterdam Photo Festival; the Biggs Museum of American Art in Delaware; Filter Space in Chicago; and China Hutch Projects at Washington College in Maryland. Most of the work has been from *On Adornment*, a series she has been working on for the past year.

*On Adornment* explores the relationship between adornment and selfhood and its inherent visual symbolism(s). Lelic explains, "The series came out of an interest in



Mehveş Lelic RC 09

looking, gazing and reflecting - I am intrigued by the physical signifiers that are often interpreted as the longing for and the rejection of a gaze, and the modern mitigation of the two opposing sentiments - on social media, in photography, art history - especially Orientalist painting and its legacy. Cumulatively,

it pictures the complexities of the female self-image, selfhood, and material and spiritual belonging."

Mehveş Lelic is currently working on a portrait of a place - Ocean City, Maryland. "It is a resort town that is completely deserted in the winter and one of Maryland's most populated cities in the summer," notes Lelic. "Its entire point of existence is recreation. All the action is on a narrow strip of land and few people actually live there full-time. I've been creating these cityscapes that try to distill that sense of domicile nowhere and depict the dormant vacation architecture." In addition to her artwork, Lelic also teaches photography as an adjunct professor. Often her practice plugs into her classroom work and interests, so she tries to cast a wide net in terms of what she consumes visually.

## Belma Baskett ACG 50 and Gönül Pultar ACG 62

### Explore Immigrants and Expatriates

Belma Baskett and Gönül Pultar first met at Bilkent University where they shared an office in the Department of English in the early 90s. Their paths crossed again in Istanbul in the mid-2000s. Since then they have collaborated on various literary activities and conferences. Their last joint venture is a book: *The Turkish-American Conundrum: Immigrants and Expatriates between Culture and Politics* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing), co-edited with Louis Mazzari, Professor of History at Boğaziçi University from 2004-2016. The collection of essays discusses various aspects of the experiences of Turkish immigrants in the United States, and of US expatriates in Turkey.

The publication of *The Turkish-American Conundrum* constitutes a

milestone, as it heralds in print the birth of a new discipline, Turkish-American Studies. The study of the “Turkish” element in the US is a fascinating subject. The poly-ethnic nature of the Ottoman Empire, and then Turkey, found itself reflected on US soil during the early stages of the immigration from what is now Turkey to the US. In the last two decades, political and cultural developments in Turkey have been replicated in the Turkish-American social fabric and mores. Meanwhile, the saga of the American expatriates in Turkey, such as James Baldwin who authored some of his best novels while living on the Bosphorus, presents yet another absorbing tale.

The cover has one photograph from New York, and a larger one from



Gönül Pultar ACG 62 and Belma Baskett ACG 50

Istanbul, taken by the late Ergun Çağatay RC 58. His photograph depicts the Robert College campus (now Boğaziçi University).

## Şevki Pekin RA 66

### Pens Guidebook for Young Turkish Architects

Şevki Pekin published *Yirmibirinci Yüzyıl İçin Mimarlık Tarihi* (History of Architecture for the 21st Century; Ofset Yayınevi), which aims to inspire and provide direction to youth interested in architecture. The book collates many different perspectives from the last fifty years.

The RCQ asked Pekin how the idea for his second book came about: “After publishing our first book, based mainly on executed works of my office, the idea of writing a second book enhancing my architectural thoughts emerged in 2018, after receiving the Mimar Sinan Büyük Ödülü of which I am the sixteenth recipient. It is a lifetime achievement award given by the Turkish Chamber of Architects,” says Pekin (see RCQ 52, p. 22). “Writing and publishing this book has also



helped me immensely in recovering from a serious illness that I am still going through. I have deliberately used solely the Turkish language in order to give hope to and illuminate the path for the young architects of

Turkey. I hope to guide them to benefit architecture and also our community during their practice in the twenty-first century. Young and future Lise graduates choosing architecture as their profession should bear in mind that, like all professions, architecture is deeply dependent on the way you perceive this profession, your personal future and life.”

Pekin says his years at RA were an important influence on his architectural career: “The Bebek campus was an extraordinary experience, with all the buildings situated around the football and athletics field, accompanied by the terrace area and the Kennedy Lodge. The magnificent library was very encouraging for all studies, and there were many books and periodicals on architecture.”

## Nazlı İnönü RC 81 Examines Logic in the Middle Ages

By Seda Çaykara Şen RC 96



Prominent Associate Professor of Logic, Nazlı İnönü has published her new book *Mantık Tarihi – Ortaçağ (History of Logic – Middle Ages, Boyut Yayın Grubu)*. The book follows

her previous work on the subject, *Mantık Tarihi – İlkçağ (History of Logic - Ancient Times, Boyut Yayın Grubu)* and gives a detailed study on the history and teachings of logic, as part of philosophy during the Middle Ages. İnönü currently teaches at Istanbul University's Department of Philosophy; the book is composed of 10 years of her notes from history of logic classes.

The book studies the period in two parts, Islamic logic and logic in the West. In her words, although the Middle Ages are considered to be the dark ages where we expect all scientific work to come to an almost

complete stop, the book shows us in great detail that this has not been the case for philosophy and logic. Taking the reader through the work of all philosophers of the era in a chronological line-up, the book is interspersed with general information on the study of logic within the time period.

While being a comprehensive study on the subject which might be a go-to reference book for anyone working on logic, it is also formulated in such a manner that it is a work for anyone interested, both professionally and nonprofessionally.

## A Nostalgic Stroll through Izmir with Uğur Belger RC ENG 61

By Seda Çaykara Şen RC 96

Uğur Belger, who has previously published four works of nonfiction under his name and seven books of poetry under the pseudonym Umur Bilge, takes us on a personal journey in his latest work *İngiliz İskeleyi'nden Gündoğdu'ya (From English Pier to Gündoğdu)*. The book is published as a part of the Izmirim series by Heyamola Publishing. Uğur Belger takes us through the streets of Punta, currently known as Alsancak, from the



1940s to the 1960s. Being an engineer himself, Belger has a vast knowledge of the city structure and architecture, and the book brings alive the streets of an Izmir that has been forgotten. Enriched with historical events, *İngiliz İskeleyi'nden Gündoğdu'ya* is a memoir and a mirror on the cultural and family life of those years in Izmir. The poems included by the author are a very surprising bonus of the book.

## Mustafa Pultar RC ENG 60

### Authors E-book on Environmental Design



The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK)

has recently published Mustafa Pultar's e-book *Çevre Tasarımında Araştırmaya Giriş (Introduction to Research in Environmental Design)*. It is intended to introduce graduate students of more than a hundred university departments in architecture and environmental design in Turkey to basic methods of primary and secondary environmental design research.

A professor at Bilkent University's Department of Interior Architecture and Environmental Design, Pultar has

been teaching the research methods course for more than 25 years, most recently online using the Moodle software. He decided to write the book when TÜBİTAK asked for bids to author academic e-books and says he greatly enjoyed not only finally putting his lectures together but also learning to do it using the intricacies of coding in xhtml, JavaScript and the epub format.

The e-book can be downloaded for free from TÜBİTAK's bookshop [esatis.tubitak.gov.tr/ekitap.htm](http://esatis.tubitak.gov.tr/ekitap.htm)



## A New Book of Stories from Sedef Betil ACG 66

By Seda Çaykara Şen RC 96



Sedef Betil is back with her third book of stories, *Parçalar ve Zereler* (*Parts and Particles* - İletişim Yayınları) published in September 2019. Once again, she gives her readers a glimpse into the daily lives of ordinary people. Her stories have an honest, regular quality that makes the reader feel as if they were reading about themselves. This stylistic choice also helps the reader establish an almost intimate connection with the writer, because the stories also feel as if they could just as easily be from a private journal. Betil uses strong metaphors and wordplays to raise the seeming ordinariness of these stories to another level.

The RCQ asked Betil about her new book. “The stories are again quite short. Compared to my previous two books, the characters are less remarkable,” she says. “These are stories about ordinary people. I am trying to get snapshots from their lives. I like to capture a moment in a day and hope the reader will empathize with them and stroll in the story for a while.” Betil has been working on social responsibility campaigns passionately for many years, and through her stories, one gets a chance to look at her humane and empathetic nature.

## Gökçe Günel RC 2000

### Examines Abu Dhabi’s Spaceship in the Desert



In 2006 Abu Dhabi launched a striking project to construct the world’s first zero-carbon city: Masdar City. Gökçe Günel, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Rice University, has written about it in *Spaceship in the Desert: Energy, Climate Change and Urban Design in Abu Dhabi* (Duke University Press).

Günel states that her writing broadly analyzes how humans imagine urban life at a time of climate change: “In Masdar City, I observed how science fiction movies serve as a shorthand for cities of the future. Most of these movies are set in bounded cityscapes where life proves impossible outside technologically supported zones. For instance, an engineer working with Masdar City said that they’d like to reproduce *Blade Runner*, without considering how *Blade Runner* is a critique of totalizing environments. As the climate emergency becomes harder to ignore, I find it important to understand how humans can develop more egalitarian and more inclusive urban forms that address environmental challenges, and which do not harken back to *Blade Runner*.”

Günel has been studying the emergence of technologically complex green urban infrastructure in the

Arabian Peninsula for the past ten years. Now she wants to explore how energy-poor countries satisfy urgent power demands. Currently, she is conducting ethnographic fieldwork on new energy infrastructures in Ghana. Some of the energy producers in the country are Turkish firms, so she is also learning about Turkish investment in Africa and getting to spend more time in Istanbul.

She considers her experience at RC life-changing: “RC always rewarded curiosity and gave me the confidence and the foresight to ask complicated and unusual questions. I learned that it is okay to nurture and follow these questions – to, in fact, build a whole career around them. My friends from RC continue to inspire me intellectually.”

## A Year of Books for Can Çiftçi Göknil ACG 66

Prolific artist and writer Can Çiftçi Göknil graces the pages of RCQ once again- this time with four new books.

Three of these books are aimed at youngsters. *Komşu* (Neighbor; Yapı Kredi Yayınlar) is a hard cover picture book, about Kom & ŞU who eventually learn to be good neighbors. *Kimi Uçar Kimi Koşar* (Some Fly Some Run; Desen/ Tudem) is a hard cover silent book allowing space for young readers to make up their own stories. *Ressam Masalı* (A Painter's Tale; Bozlu Art Project) is also intended for children. However, uniquely, it is about Turkish art history. Can Göknil relates the story of the book: "Ressam Masalı has been a unique experience for me. I was asked to make a book for children about Turkish art history. I panicked! How can I make art history interesting



for children? Once I decided to narrow down and concentrate only on our painters the rest came naturally. I wrote the book in tekerleme (nursery rhyme) style and was pleasantly surprised at my own ability to write humorous verses about Osman Hamdi, Şeker Ahmet Pasha, Fikret Mualla, İbrahim Çallı, Mihri Müşfik, Aliye Berger and many more."

Finally, *Can'lı Yolculuk* (Travels with Can/Travels with Life; Can Yayınları) contains twenty short stories with illustrations. It constitutes Can Göknil's fourth venture into grown-up literature.

Fueling flights of imagination for all ages, these books would be a welcome addition to any library, in particularly those of art lovers.

## Short Stories by Aziz Gökdemir RC 85 Examine Modern Life

By Seda Çaykara Şen RC 96



Aziz Gökdemir's latest book, *Yangından Sonra* (After the Fire – Can Yayınları), is a story collection that is more than a story collection. It is an overstory about a core family of six, where each story focuses on one member of the family and functions as a building block to tell us their history over 15 years. At the same time the stories are about modern times in Turkey, recent history, politics and how contemporary events have been shaking lives to the core.

It is a story of alienation, love, defeat and pain of loss, but the strong penmanship takes us through these tough feelings in a breeze, underlining the fact that these are an unavoidable part of life. The characters are all very

real, they come alive to the reader as if they were telling their own stories in person.

Many of Gökdemir's books are story collections. When asked why he writes in this genre, he says, "I enjoy pushing the boundaries of the short story; not just in terms of length (a lot of my stories are pretty long, which is fairly common in American literature but not so much in Turkish), but also in the way that the stories I write are often tasked with painting a coherent picture when read as a collection.

A lot of people have called *Yangından Sonra* a novel because of that."



# KORUMA KALKANI DEVREDE



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# Payda: Bringing Together Students from Across Turkey

by Peri Ataman Holden RC 79 & Dilbeste Sağlam Alameddine RC 79

Founded in 2009 by RC alumni, Payda brings together people from different backgrounds from all over Turkey with the aim of increasing interaction and communication. In recent years, they have been working with RC students and teachers to make a difference in even more people's lives.



Payda has partnered with RC to bring students from around Anatolia to the Umut Halkası summer camp since 2017

**Payda** was founded 10 years ago and has a strong RC connection with over 30 graduates, ranging from RC 78 to RC 97 among its founding members, active volunteers and supporters. Payda's mission is to increase interaction, communication and understanding between different regions and groups within Turkey by bridging communities that have become distant from each other as a result of various circumstances. To this end, Payda has set out to support projects that unite people through shared interests. Payda was a grassroots approach by an idealistic group of RC graduates who felt Turkey had become too divided and

wanted to do something proactive and constructive to bring people together. Just to name a few of the key RC graduates active within Payda: Sinan Ceylan RC 78, Aylin Türel Tankut RC 79, Serra Akıncı RC 79, Feza Aksu Güvenal RC 80, Nüket Ünal Germirli RC 80, Berrin Orhon RC 80, Berna Elmastaş Cambier RC 84, Bora Tokyay RC 97, Anıl Atılğan RC 97, not to mention over 20 RC donors and volunteers.

Given the RC contingency within Payda, doing joint projects with our alma mater came naturally - we share key values and goals, such as our belief in the importance of education, our desire to connect

students and schools to support each other by sharing resources, and ultimately facilitating closer ties and understanding within Turkish society. With RC having a strong culture of education, the projects we partnered on all had an educational element.

Over the past six years, we have been running three exciting and interactive projects with RC's Community Involvement Program (CIP) and Social Entrepreneurship teams.

The first project, Payda Okullar Konuşuyor, linked RC students with students at Mardin Fen Lisesi through weekly video calls which

helped students in Mardin practice their English, but, more importantly, helped both sets of students to learn about each other's lives - challenges, pressures, joys, favorite music, writers, films - and in the process find out that they had more that united them, than separated them. It was a heartwarming revelation for both groups. This project now runs between other paired schools.

RC International Model United Nations (RCIMUN) was a natural follow-on. RC's MUN Club trained and fully supported Mardin Fen Lisesi students to participate and compete in the RCIMUN conference hosted annually at RC. RC students embraced our Mardin students with incredible warmth. Not only did Mardin Fen students do extremely well at the conference, they started an MUN Club at their school and have attended the RCIMUN conferences for three consecutive years. In 2019, Tesan Fen Lisesi participated as a second school from Payda.

Umut Halkası Summer Camp is the project that we are most proud of and



Payda was instrumental in the Model United Nations cooperation between RC and Mardin Fen Lisesi

that truly excites us. Umut Halkası is a week-long residential summer camp held in Yeni Şakran near İzmir. The program includes a wide range of activities, arts and crafts, sports, social responsibility, entrepreneurial skills and lectures from visiting educators on a variety of topics, plus a sightseeing trip to Pergamum. The camp brings together high school

students from different backgrounds and regions across Turkey. At the 2019 camp, we had students from Mardin, Diyarbakır, Batman, Nevşehir and Malatya alongside students from RC and Korkmaz Yiğit Anadolu Lisesi from Istanbul. The camp provides an intensely busy, active and full-on experience where the days start early with yoga/meditation by the sea, followed by back-to-back activities, with family-style meals in between. Everyone stays on the premises, and the camp is an immersive experience that joins people instantly. Discovery, learning, friendship, fun, mosquitos, learning to swim, seeing the sea for the first time, flying on an airplane - there are many shared experiences and many "firsts" for all of the students. The only way to describe it is as magical.

To watch a short film from the 2019 Umut Halkası project please scan the QR code



What brings us together and what we share is so much greater than what separates us. We work and hope for an inclusive, connected society for a better future. Join us, support us! [info@paydaplatformu.org](mailto:info@paydaplatformu.org) [www.paydaplatformu.org](http://www.paydaplatformu.org)



Payda members, from L to R: Dilbeste Sağlam Alameddine RC 79, Peri Ataman Holden RC 79 and Serra Akıncı RC 79

# The Science Behind Music 101



Professor Emeritus Alpar Sevgen RC 66 from the Department of Physics at Boğaziçi University lays out the fascinating physical and mathematical dynamics that allow us to enjoy music. For the scientific-minded, here is a capsule lesson that will enrich the listening experience!



**How pleasant** it is to relax with the sound of music, or to enjoy a concert. Have you ever wondered about the physics underlying all this?

## The medium that carries sound

The sound waves that come to your ear are travelling through a medium, air - a gas 80% nitrogen and 20% oxygen. The characteristics of this medium enable the formation of sound waves. Nitrogen and oxygen in the air are dumbbell-shaped molecules, each composed of two atoms, hence called diatomic molecules. Under standard conditions (20°C, one atmosphere pressure) they move roughly at speeds of about 500 meters each second. These molecules collide with each other more than a billion times per second. This means they go a distance of about 1250 times their molecular size without making a collision, a route called the mean free path. The reason these molecules stay intact after a billion collisions each

second is due to the stability of their quantum structure.

## All about sound waves

Sound is the compressions and rarefactions of air mass that travel at the sound of speed, about 340 meters per second. Sound waves are longitudinal waves, meaning these compressions and rarefactions proceed in the direction of the propagation. The reason music comes to the ear undistorted by the medium is because the wavelength of musical sound is about a million times greater than the mean free path of the air molecules. This compression and rarefaction mean pressure is varying above and below the atmospheric pressure, but these pressure variations are tiny compared to the atmospheric pressure, and furthermore cover a wide range. Sound waves can diffract, and interfere, namely exhibit typical wave phenomena. Our ears are incredibly sensitive detectors. They can detect

sound from 10 different octaves whereas our eyes are single octave detectors, from red to blue. For music, important properties of sound waves are their reflections and absorptions. In a concert hall, reverberation is an important factor because even after you receive the signal coming directly from the source, you still receive sound reflected off the walls, thus the note sort of hangs in the air while decreasing in intensity, a phenomenon called the reverberation. It is an art to design concert halls, an endeavor much helped by basic physics.

## Instruments and sound

Now a few words about the physics of musical sound generated by musical instruments - strings, woodwind, brass and percussion. Although the basics of the underlying physics is understood, musical instruments are extremely complicated, and producing them is an art. Physicists have applied all their powerful techniques to figure out a





Stradivarius violin but failed, although they have learned quite a bit along the way. Musical instruments produce sounds characterized by a specific harmonic structure. Each instrument has its own way of building up sound and letting it decay. And let us not forget that the most precious musical instrument is the human voice. Synthesizing music by computers and using AI is a vibrant area of research.

### Sound is organized by musical scales

The organization of musical sound is through musical scales. Historically, the Pythagorean scale was generated by the ratio  $3/2$  (perfect fifth), and resulted in a scale WWSWWWS, where the whole tone W is  $W = S + \delta$  where S is the semitone and  $\delta$  is the chromatic semitone. This scale proved problematic, and, after many attempts through centuries, was finally superseded by the equally tempered scales where  $S = \delta$  and which we still

use. Let me point out that equally tempered scales have many interesting mathematical properties. For example, if you define the complexity of a scale by summing the number of sharps and flats in it, the major scale family (C, D-flat, D....B) has complexity 36 and is the least complex scale structure. Cyclically permuted scales (modes) and mirror image scales have the same number of sharps and flats, and complementary scales like major and pentatonic scales have their numbers of sharps and flats interchanged. A fun game is the key labels, E-flat major for example has the scale label  $L = 3 \times 7 - 2 \times 12 = -3$ , here 3 indicates that E-flat major is three semitones higher than the C-major scale, 7 indicates the number of notes in the major scale and 12 is the number of semitones. Minus 3 indicates that the E-flat major scale has three flats. You can proceed for all the 12 major scales in this fashion.

### We owe our existence to primordial sound

Between the first hours and the year 380,000 there were no stars, no galaxies, but only a baryon-photon fluid, composed of light, protons, Helium nuclei and electrons, against the background of dark matter. Whenever dark matter density increased above its average, then the baryon-photon fluid rushed into the center of attraction, only to be pushed back out by the photon pressure. This is called baryon acoustic oscillations, which is similar to the oscillations of air in a musical instrument like a woodwind or an organ pipe. Around the year 380,000 after the Big Bang, the universe cooled enough so that neutral H and He atoms could form, and the photons escaped. We detect these photons or light particles as microwaves now (CMB), and the fluctuations in that radiation indicate the hotter and colder spots existing back then, which over eons developed into the galaxies, stars and huge voids of our universe. Indeed English poet Dryden, writing back in 1687, was not far off the mark when he claimed "From harmony... this universal frame began."

So when you listen to a nice piece of music, I hope you take a moment to muse about the physics underneath, which may well increase your enjoyment.



# Homecoming 2019

Alumni from eight decades came to campus on Sunday, November 17 for Homecoming 2019.

Alumni from the classes of 1944 through 2019 came back to campus on November 17 to reminisce with classmates, catch up with former teachers and visit favorite spots around campus. In addition to Roll Call which included special performances by the RC Orchestra and the RA 69 group Renkler, graduates and their families enjoyed watching and playing in the traditional soccer tournament on the Dave Phillips Field, having lunch in the Murat Karamancı Student Center, visiting the İbrahim Bodur Library and hanging out in the RC Commons.







İclal Refiğ ACG 52 signs her name on the Look Who's Here wall



The most senior graduates attending this year were Demir Karamancı RC 48 (left) and Gülgen Üstüdağ ACG 44 (right)



The 50<sup>th</sup> reunion Class of '69 showed up in full force



RC Head Adam Oliver meets with Ayfer Neyzi, Dilek Orbay and Gülen Sünget at the ACG 49 and RC 49 70<sup>th</sup> reunion luncheon in the old girls' cafeteria - now the teacher's lounge. The event was organized by Güner Fansa ACG 49 and Haldun Dormen RC 49.



Head of School Adam Oliver gives a warm welcome to alumni at the assembly



Soccer teams from different classes enjoyed competing on the Dave Phillips Field during the traditional Homecoming Soccer Tournament



Alumni of all ages meet with classmates on the steps of Gould





History in the making! History teacher Hafize Değer (center) poses with Ismet Müstecaplıoğlu RC 80 (left), who was her student when she first came to RC, and Mete Müstecaplıoğlu RC 06 (right), Ismet's son, who also had Hafize Hoca as a teacher



Graduates enjoy catching up over lunch in the Murat Karamancı Student Center



"High above the Pontic Current..." Mehmet Baler RC 51 lead the audience in singing the Boys' Song, accompanied by Mahmut Hortaçsu RA 62 (left) and members of the RC Orchestra



Former Turkish teacher Adil İzci, computer science teacher Colin Edmonds, and former stewardship and donor relations manager Çiğdem Yazıcıoğlu catch up on the steps of Gould Hall



## ACG 69: 50 Events for their 50<sup>th</sup>

By Oya Erenli Sezer ACG 69



ACG 69's gathering on campus was one of 50 events organized for their 50<sup>th</sup> reunion

“Finally, the long anticipated 50<sup>th</sup> Year program is ready! It will be heart-warming to share time with our classmates and cherish old memories.”

This was what we had announced and finally it was realized. Our aim was “planning 50 events on our 50<sup>th</sup> reunion year”, and we made it come true. All through the year, we went to bazaars, exhibitions, concerts and luncheons, building much closer relations and feelings. We enjoyed them so much that we started asking, “Where and when do we meet next?” The feeling of sharing beautiful moments was exhilarating.

Finally, June arrived, and we started celebrations on a boat on the Bosphorus. The next day our excitement reached its peak at our dear school, when our memories of the past 50-60 years were revived under the purple wisteria. We were like joyful school children, posing for an everlasting photograph with purple balloons on the steps; eating the famous Ali Paşa Pilav, lingering

with our ACG 69 bags and cutting the 50<sup>th</sup> year cake. The next evening was a beautiful summer night under the full moon and celebrations continued at Eftalya Restaurant on the Bosphorus. The real “spark” of the night was our “togetherness”.

In 1969, we had graduated with a class of 88 students, six of whom we lost since then. On our 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion the participation was 68%, which was fabulous. Friends coming from outside of Istanbul made this gathering so meaningful.

Another June event took place in Cunda, Ayvalık, with a small group, having great fun. Again, our “togetherness” brought joy and meaning to our lives. The September meeting was at Oya Erenli Sezer’s summer house at Ereğli, Karamürsel. The potluck party turned out to be a feast with a wide range of delicious dishes.

The last activity before Homecoming took place in Bodrum. The three days’ entertainment was very colorful due to our friends who live in Bodrum

and who joined us for the occasion from various destinations. The large group of participants enjoyed dining and wining, strolling and chatting, while these three days swiftly flew by. Parting was such sweet sorrow.

Homecoming was our day of pride and glory. We feel very privileged to share our 50<sup>th</sup> graduation anniversary with other alumni. On this special day, we prepared a surprise song for our schoolmates. On our graduation day in ’69, we had adapted the lyrics for “Hello Dolly,” singing, “Goodbye students, goodbye teachers, it’s sad to leave the place where we belong.” After 50 years, we repeated “Hello Dolly” revising the lyrics: “Hello old friends, well hello classmates, It’s so nice to be in a place where we belong”.

We extend our gratitude to our dear alma mater for giving us the support and guidance that made us who we are today. In the coming days, our “togetherness”, attracting each other like a magnet, will continue, enjoying places and events because together everything is beautiful.



## A Memorable 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion for RC 69

By Davut Ökütçü RC ENG 69



Diploma ceremony in the former Van Milligen Library, now the rectoral conference hall



Reminiscing about school days at Kennedy Lodge



The Class of '69 together again

I was met with the same excitement and enthusiasm when I shared my idea of organizing a memorable 50<sup>th</sup> year reunion with a number of classmates. It was almost the end of July 2018. The organizing committee was soon formed, a roadmap drawn and regular bi-monthly meetings at Kennedy Lodge started.

Collecting updated contact info for the 150 RC 69 graduates from all departments and disciplines took almost three months. Electronic invitations, mail, phone and social media were employed as and when needed.

The 50<sup>th</sup> year logo and certificates were designed, and memorabilia items produced. A 250-page book *50 Yılın Hatırası (50 Years of Memories)*, about graduates' school memories and short life stories after school, went to print by April.

After 11 months of preparations the big day had finally arrived. On July 2, RC 69 graduates - including those from overseas, their spouses and the relatives of classmates that had passed away - gathered on the Boğaziçi University campus, formerly the Robert College Yüksek Okulu

where they originally studied.

The reunion was a big success. A diploma ceremony was held at the rectoral conference hall (former Van Milligen Library). Current and past rectors, administrators and professors had all donned their gowns. It was a formal yet very joyful ceremony.

At the end of the ceremony there was a cocktail dinner at Kennedy Lodge and a Bosphorus dinner-dance boat trip on July 3.



## RC 79: Celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> Reunion

By Dilek Diltemiz Vanden Eynde RC 79

After more than a year of meticulous planning by Birgül Tepeköylü, Dilek Diltemiz, Miryam Reyna, Mustafa Köprülü and Serdar Gökcan, 85 classmates got together with Ms. Nisco, Mrs. Çıkvaşvili and Serap Hoca in front of Gould Hall on the beautiful evening of July 6, 2019. Our motto for this very special reunion “40 yılın hatırı var” (40 years of memories) was reflected in the logo created by Serra Akıncı.

We truly enjoyed seeing our classmates who came from all over the world as well as from different cities in Turkey. It was so much fun catching up with each other and reminiscing about our RC days while sipping away on our aperitifs and listening to nice music played by a trio. The traditional class

photo was followed by a toast to the 40<sup>th</sup> Reunion and our friendship.

As the sun was going down, we slowly moved towards the Maze where we had our graduation ceremony 40 years ago on May 20, 1979. We’ve never seen the Maze looking this romantic with elegantly furnished tables, glimmering candles and beautiful flower arrangements. While watching a slide show from our school days, we enjoyed the delicious food and each other’s company. After speeches about our school days given by a couple of class members, it was time for *köpüklü türk kahvesi* and the highlight of the evening: a film produced and acted by the organizing committee plus Hakan Karahan and Okan Altıparmak. The film made us

all laugh and realize once more how lucky we are to be “Robertli.”

The evening continued with great music from the 70’s and lots of dancing till it was time to move to the Plateau where we chatted away under the stars till the early hours while devouring *sucuk ve köfte ekmek* and drinking our *demli çays*. The night came gradually to an end but our class spirit was very much alive and kicking, looking forward to many more joyful reunions.

As a final note, we are very happy to say that we could donate a significant amount, contributed by 97 classmates who initially intended to attend the reunion, to the Dora Aksoy fund created in the memory of our beloved classmate.



RC 79 celebrated 40 years of memories

## RC 94: Sharing Joy and Laughter at Their 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion

On July 13, 2019, the Class of RC 94 met in front of Marble Hall and celebrated our 25<sup>th</sup> year Reunion. After four hours of continuous chatting, eating and dancing, we all had the energy to go to Konak Terrace. It can never be the same as the real Plateau but the long-missed view of the Bosphorus was awesome. Accompanied with snacks, we patiently enjoyed Arda Arkun's three-hour long quest for the truth about "the day".

The ones who slept at the dorm were very lucky and grateful to be served with Alka-Seltzer by Zeynep. Although the night continued until dawn, we were excited to meet at a brunch at Bizim Tepe, where the ones who had

to babysit the night before enjoyed a sober chat with each other.

Thanks to all who made the effort to come from all over the world: Germany, Canada, US, UK and of course Turkey. And also special thanks to Özen, Şebnem and Nevra, who organized the event.

*Shared innocence is one of the unchanging forms of life; you come to acknowledge this fact when you see familiar faces which provide you with the assurance that even the flaws of character of once upon a time are mended with the enlightenment of understanding and unconditional love.* – Müge Serin on behalf of all RC 94 who attended the reunion.

*One of the few days I wished we never grew up.* - Selim Berent

*The best crowd to enjoy the 90's music with! Staying at the dorm was a great idea.* - Başak Cüneray

*Reminiscing about old memories and seeing our now 'grown-up' versions was quite emotional.* - Şebnem Demirel

*Even though 25 years has passed, sharing the joy and laughter is the same.* - Özen Bozçağa

*It felt great to be able to dance freely and comfortably 'eller havaya' like we were 15, even 25 years after graduation.* - Nevra Eker



Members of the Class of '94 came from around the world to celebrate their 25<sup>th</sup> reunion



## Gülay Yurdal-Michaels ACG 64 Pens Poetry Book

Gülay Yurdal-Michaels has published her latest book of poems, titled, *Söylenceler* (Legends). The book is a body of work that explores multiple themes from the point-of-view of a sensitive soul who can be indifferent neither to the beauties nor the struggles in the world. The RCQ asked her about her interest in writing. "I started getting interested in reading and writing poetry by studying haikus

at first, when I stayed in Oregon as a guest student, initially through American Field Service. Poems were a good for understanding others and the world, ultimately practicing life experiences for myself. I received a prize of 50TL in 1964 for my poem, which won the RC Spectrum magazine literary contest. Poetry for me is the best way to comprehend the prevalent violent situation in the world today."



Gülay Yurdal-Michaels ACG 64 with her grandson Phoenix (left)

## Hayat Alp RC 80 Serves Up Healthy Goodness



The importance of mindful, healthy eating becomes more obvious, as daily life becomes more complex. Medical doctor Hayat Alp RC 80 created Hayatın Sofrası in January 2018 to address this exact need. After medical school, Alp founded and ran a medical communications agency. Over time, she became interested in healthy food, and this interest gave birth to Hayatın Sofrası. Hayatın Sofrası offers catering and delivery of lunch boxes, as well as breakfast and food service at the restaurant in Yeniköy. It has strict rules such as fish from the sea caught

daily, meat from grass-fed animals and no chicken.

Alp ties her new venture to her years at RC: "Throughout my life, I have looked at everything with the idea of how it could be made differently. Routine and uniformity has always bored me. I think this is the reason why I could change careers, and I think my courage to do that comes from my years at RC as well as my personality." Hayatın Sofrası is a new resource of healthy living for RC alumni. For details see @hayatinsofrası on Instagram.

## Prof. Mehmet Vural RC 82 and Mentee Rüya Ustamehmetoğlu Meriç RC 09 Elected Heads of Pediatric Associations

Mehmet Vural, Professor of Neonatology in the Department of Pediatrics at Istanbul University, has been elected President of the Turkish Pediatric Association for the second time. He also represents Turkey in the European Paediatric Association as General Secretary. Rüya Ustamehmetoğlu Meriç is one of his students, doing her pediatric residency in Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Medicine. She was elected as the first President of the European Young Pediatricians Association (EURYP) in June 2019. EURYP aims to encourage



Rüya Ustamehmetoğlu Meriç RC 09 and Mehmet Vural RC 82

communication, facilitate pediatric education, promote online educational sources, symposiums, summer schools, exchange programs, and international collaborative research. When asked about her education at RC, Meriç says, "Our experience at RC taught us not to be afraid to do things which may seem impossible, to be capable of evaluating not just the next step, but much further steps in our decisions." Both Vural and Meriç, as professor and mentee, are proud to be leading prestigious pediatric associations at the same time.

Do you have news to share with the **RC Community**?  
Send a short write-up along with a photo to  
[alumni@robcol.k12.tr](mailto:alumni@robcol.k12.tr)

## Yeşim Erez RC 85 and Oya Christie-Miller RC 96 Establish Education Consultancy



Oya Christie-Miller RC 96

Yeşim Erez and Oya Christie-Miller are the founders of Admittance Education, a US and Europe based independent educational consultancy that delivers customized college preparation and



Yeşim Erez RC 85

entrance strategies for university bound students from Turkey and other countries. The company was established after years of experience Christie-Miller had developed in the

field, together with the managerial and marketing experience Yeşim had developed working for major global corporations. The two sisters wanted to provide a data-driven approach where a student's college list is not limited based on familiarity but is driven by their selection criteria and by data mining hundreds of options. As a result, they have had success, especially in finding merit scholarships. Yeşim Erez resides in LA and Oya Christie-Miller lives in London, and with a global team of consultants, including one in Istanbul, they use technology to conduct their daily work and, at the same time, retain the ability to stay connected with universities where they each live.

## Hüma Gruaz RC 85 Turns to Yoga in Her Next Life Chapter

Hüma Gruaz, was recognized as one of the most influential Turkish women in the US by Turk of America Magazine as founder and CEO of her marketing communications company, Alpaytac Inc. In 2016, she sold her company and made a career change, getting certified as a yoga instructor under leading medical doctors, yoga therapists and visionary pioneers in the yoga world, as well as studying at Loyola Marymount University's Advanced Clinical Yoga Therapy Program. Hüma has E-RYT 200 accreditation (Experienced Yoga Teacher) from Yoga Alliance and currently teaches at some of the top studios in Southern

California. Gruaz's specialty is working with individuals who are in need of stress management, as well as individuals with health issues such as chronic back conditions, anxiety issues and diabetes.

Gruaz will be leading a wellness and yoga retreat in Costa Rica, between March 8-13, 2020. The retreat's theme is "Rejuvenate, Recharge, Renew" and is designed to enhance the wellness of participants through 6 days of dynamic and restorative yoga practice. Hüma Gruaz is offering 10% discount to all RC alumni interested in participating in the retreat. For

more information go to:  
[www.humarealyoga.com/retreats](http://www.humarealyoga.com/retreats).





## Özgen Berkol Doğan Sci-Fi Library and Cultural Center

The RC community was deeply shaken by the untimely loss of Özgen Berkol Doğan RC 98 in a tragic plane crash in 2007 (see RCQ 33, p. 58). A promising physicist, Doğan had many interests including art, film, literature, and photography. Science fiction was his passion as well. That is why his parents decided to create The Özgen Berkol Doğan Science Fiction Library and Cultural Center in his memory.

The library opened in 2012 and is the first and only thematic science fiction library in Turkey. Its aim is to offer all science fiction, fantasy, and



horror books published in Turkey. The library also houses books in 25 other languages. Campaigns are ongoing to gather Harry Potter series, Lord of the Rings series, and Ursula Le Guin's Dispossessed in all the available languages. The library is a lively space with literature and science talks, film screenings, and workshops. This year Evin İlyasoğlu ACG 66 will be hosting "Evin İlyasoğlu ile Bir Müzik Akşamı" there one Tuesday night every month. The Doğan family invites all RC students and alumni to visit and contribute to this meaningful space at Safa Sokak No: 20, Moda - Kadıköy.

## Zeynep Oktay Uslu RC 02 Appointed Assistant Professor

Zeynep Oktay Uslu has been appointed Assistant Professor at the Department of Turkish Language and Literature at Boğaziçi University. She is a specialist of Sufism, Alevism, and medieval and early modern Anatolian history. Zeynep graduated from Dartmouth College with a degree in comparative literature. She completed her MA in classical Turkish literature at Boğaziçi University. She obtained her PhD in Islamic civilization at Sorbonne University's École Pratique

des Hautes Études in Paris. Her dissertation entitled "The Perfect Man in Bektashism and Alevism" focused on the earliest written texts of the Alevis dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Between 2014-2016, Zeynep worked as a research fellow on the research project "The Islamization of Anatolia, c. 1100-1500" based at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, UK. Zeynep says that her interest in Sufism stems from the courses she took at RC.



## Kayansel Kaya RC L12 03 Takes the Leap in Barcelona

Kayansel Kaya worked in advertising for more than 10 years in Istanbul and recently had a career change. She obtained her MA from Elisava Design School Barcelona on illustration and comics and became a full-time artist, illustrator and a designer.

RCQ asked her why she made this change: "I took all the art classes in RC. I remember running to the art studio even during lunch time to check the ceramic kiln. RC is where I fell in love with every kind of art. I took photography classes, film and literature, and acting. I decided to study industrial design in college, but somehow started working



in advertising, after I graduated. Advertising is very poisonous, ecstatic and challenging. I've learned a lot about the consumer mind, buying behavior and storytelling for which I'm grateful, but something was missing: The vulnerability of being myself. I just wanted to tell my story in my own words, in my own style. And also I couldn't stop drawing anymore."

Kayansel Kaya's work can be viewed at [www.kayansel.com](http://www.kayansel.com).

## Levent Tüzün RC 07 Selected as Rockefeller Fellow



Levent Tüzün has been selected as a David Rockefeller Fellow for the 2019-2022 triennium at the Trilateral Commission, a non-governmental,

policy-oriented forum that brings together business, government, academia, media, and civil society leaders to find solutions to geopolitical, economic and social issues. In 2013, the Commission created the Fellows program “to honor the Commission’s founder and to benefit from the views and experiences of a generation of young leaders”.

Levent Tüzün currently works as a Principal Economist at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). He focuses on investments and policy dialogue

with clients and policymakers in financial services and capital markets, including fintech and private equity/venture capital. A graduate of Yale University, he was a Weidenfeld-Chevening Scholar at the University of Oxford and completed the Master of Public Policy degree at the Blavatnik School of Government. Tüzün’s areas of interest in policymaking include foreign relations, macroeconomics, education, and science and technology. He is an active follower of advancements in consumer-facing technologies, and is trained in media content production.

## Başak Anıl RC 07 and Mehmet Ali Anıl RC 07 Welcome Baby

Devin was born on October 9, 2019 to proud parents Başak and Mehmet Ali Anıl. He was 3385 grams and 49 centimeters at birth. These days, Devin’s favorite activities are sucking on his newly discovered hands and making cute little sounds to mommy and daddy’s funny faces. Devin was born in the Netherlands where his



parents currently reside. In Eindhoven, Başak and Mehmet Ali run an electronics design company named Grus, which specializes in application-specific machine learning hardware. They also organize events and workshops around their interest areas in order to create a machine learning hardware community in Europe.

## Ceren Aydın RC 11 and Hakan Kızılkum RC 10 Tie the Knot



Ceren and Hakan first met during the summer of 2008 at an RC Community Involvement Project in Nevşehir. After many years of friendship, they started dating in 2016. Their wedding was on June 22, 2019 in Istanbul in the presence of their loved ones and many classmates from RC. Ceren finished medical school at Cerrahpaşa

Faculty of Medicine and is currently studying for her residency in radiology at Ankara City Hospital. Hakan has a law degree from Koç University and is currently working as a senior advisor to a member of parliament at the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Prior to that he was running his own law firm, Kızılkum Attorney Office.

## Kardelen Sönmez RC 15 Creates New Fashion Brand

Kardelen Sönmez studied business administration at Koç University and handbag design at Vakko Esmod Fashion Academy before founding the brand Mare Atelier, a line of stylish, versatile bags that can take women from day to night. Sönmez’s interest in fashion goes back to childhood, when she used to sew dresses for her dolls, along with her sister, Cemre Sönmez RC 18. She credits Robert College for always pushing her to be open-minded

and to look from another perspective, thus fostering her creativity. Her chief source of inspiration is the sea, thus the brand name Mare, Italian for sea. Having grown up in Muş, Sönmez was always fascinated by the sea, and its infinite simplicity. Indeed a simple, timeless design aesthetic informs most of her models. Kardelen Sönmez is now joined by her sister Cemre in her endeavors.





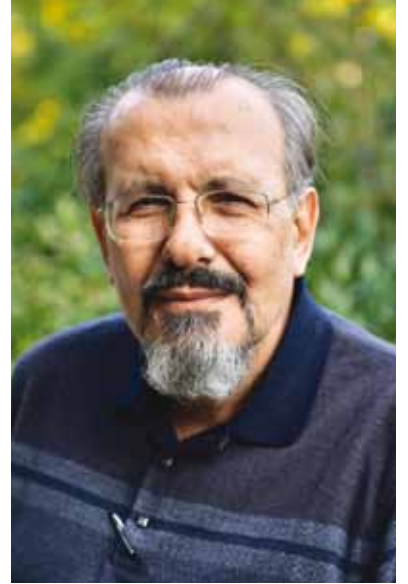
## Adil İzci Publishes Two New Books

Adil İzci retired from RC as a Turkish literature teacher after 30 years, but it is impossible to say he is retired! He has just published two new books, with more in line for 2020.

*Mavi Kitap* (İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları) is an homage to Turkish literature. İzci states that 2018 was his 50<sup>th</sup> year as a dedicated reader, and this fact triggered the book. "I wanted to show my love and respect to all the poets and writers who gave me such happiness over the years," he explains. "The poets and writers covered in the book are mostly my friends, and I reached out to the rest through their close circles. The initial list included 150 names, but then I had to narrow it down to 62." Among the writers

covered are Talat Halman RC 51 and Hikmet Hükümenoğlu RC 89.

İzci also published *Hayvan Dostları* (Kırmızı Kedi Yayınları). His seventh children's book, it includes his recollections and impressions about all the animals he has observed, cared for, and befriended over the years. "I see our world as a whole with all its creatures," he says. "We live together with plants and animals, and they make our lives more beautiful and happier. We should not deprive ourselves of them. Just like our human friends, we should have animal and plant friends. Sometimes we see a tree that is so majestic that we want to hug it. Birds chirping create joy. I wanted my book to invoke such emotions in its readers."



## Commemorations for Kadir Şan Tarhan

By Mehmet Uysal, Turkish Language and Literature Department Head

Robert College teachers, staff and alumni commemorated our friend Kadir Şan Tarhan, who passed away in March 2019, with a concert at RC on October 16, 2019. Kadir Şan Tarhan touched everyone in the 33 years he worked at Robert College and has a place in the hearts of all, not only as the switchboard operator, but also a talented musician who founded and played with groups such as Ezginin Günlüğü and İncesaz.

Many people helped make this memorial concert happen. We are grateful to the groups (Hakan Yılmaz Trio, İncesaz, Önder Focan / Şenova Ülker, Teneke Trampet, Ezginin



RC Head Adam Oliver and Turkish Director Nilhan Çetinyamaç at the memorial concert for Kadir Şan Tarhan

Günlüğü), who enthusiastically took part in the concert. The evening in Suna Kırış Hall was full of love and emotion for Kadir. We shared our memories of him, listened to his songs and reaffirmed the feelings we share for him.

On November 8, a small ceremony was held, attended by his wife Asuman, to place a plaque in memory of Kadir Şan Tarhan next to the Robert College Bridge. We thank each of our many friends who have contributed in numerous ways to this commemoration. We will remember Kadir Şan Tarhan with thankfulness and gratitude.

## Melahat Muhaddisoğlu Kınöğlu ACG 44

Melahat Muhaddisoğlu Kınöğlu passed away on June 15, 2019 at the age of 94. She was the love of late Dr. Cezmi Kınöğlu, her husband of 70 years. She was an inspiration and role model to her family and friends for her strong principles, vision, and grace. Always stylish, she was the queen of her kitchen, and a fabulous host. She was an iron lady, strong-willed and stubborn at times; with cotton-candy hair and a warm heart. She authored *Bir Ömür, Bin Tutam Lezzet* (One Lifetime, a Thousand Pinches of Flavor), including her



famous recipes and memoirs. Always proud of being an ACG girl herself; with the earnings, Melahat funded scholarships for girls at Robert College. In 2013, her book was awarded the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards for Fund Raising and Charity. She is survived and very much missed by her two children; Alim Kınöğlu RA 68 and Mehveş Pisak, her three grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

*Contributed by Aslı Kınöğlu*

## Selma Kural Sabuncuoğlu ACG 47

Selma Sabuncuoğlu, beloved wife of Fadil Sabuncuoğlu RC ENG 46, passed away at the age of 94 on April 11, 2019. Selma and Fadil met at RC, married in 1947, and moved to the US in 1956. They lived in the Bay Area until their last decade, when they joined their daughter, Mine, in Virginia. Always thinking of others before herself, Selma was known for her gentle nature. She loved children and taught pre-school in Palo Alto and was also a docent at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

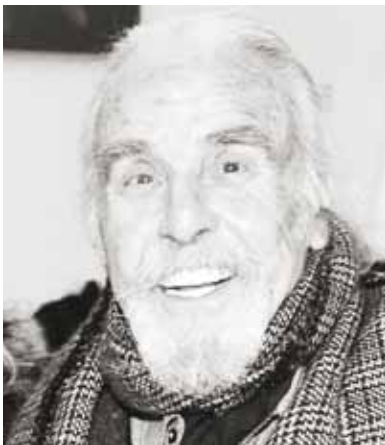
Selma was a very devoted mother. Elegant and gracious, she loved art, classical music, reading and playing guitar and balalaika. Selma and Fadil always kept their RC friends close to their hearts and passed their lifelong love for Turkey to their family and friends in America.

Selma is survived by her daughter, Mine, and grandchildren, Oran and Ayla.

*Contributed by Mine Sabuncuoğlu*



## Nisa Özdemir Nutku RC 50



Prof. Nisa Özdemir Nutku passed away on November 8, 2019 in Izmir. Özdemir Nutku graduated from Robert College in 1950. He started a jazz quartet in the 1950s and became renown as a jazz pianist. He became interested in theater during his years at Robert College. He played his first professional role in Franz Lehar's operetta *Tarla Kuşu* during the 1946-1947 season.

Nutku graduated from Ankara University and went to Germany. There, he staged plays at various

private theaters and attended advanced music seminars. He returned to Turkey and took up a post as assistant at Ankara University's Theater Institute.

Özdemir Nutku founded the Department of Theater at Dokuz Eylül University. He wrote and published 78 books, including 37 plays, 22 translations, 4 poetry, 12 adaptations, 2 scenarios, and 1 children's book.

## Alev Ersoy ACG 53

Alev Nüket Ersoy was born in Istanbul to Rikkat Hanım and İhsan İpekçi on May 12, 1934. She passed away peacefully at her home in Istanbul on August 13, 2019. The poems and short stories she wrote in her years at Robert College were published in the school magazine. After graduating from ACG, she studied English philology at Istanbul University. She married Ali Ulvi Ersoy, a political cartoonist for Cumhuriyet newspaper. While her husband worked as a poster artist at 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox Studios, she worked in a tourism office in New York, and her



first child was born there. Returning to Istanbul, she continued to work in tourism before retiring. She is survived by her sons Azmi and Tarık Ersoy, and her granddaughter Yaz. Alev Ersoy was also the elder sister of Turkey's late foreign minister İsmail Cem RC 61, and the aunt of İpek Cem Taha RC 85, a member of the Robert College Board of Trustees.

*Contributed by daughter-in-law  
Melda Ersoy*

## Solmaz Tarhan Turnaoğlu ACG 56

Our dear classmate Solmaz Tarhan Turnaoğlu passed away on October 10, 2019. Among her friends she shall be remembered as one of the best loved members of the Class of '56.

Dear Soli, with her witty character, brought joy to our monthly social gatherings. Yet, at times she was far too sensitive. To debate the contrary of what she believed is right was almost not possible. Solmaz was much engaged in political discourse. She was deeply devoted to her country and had a strong sense of love for Atatürk. She

was also very much attached to the members of her family, especially to her husband Dr. Faruk Turnaoğlu who died a few years ago. She is survived by her beloved daughter Aytül Turnaoğlu Yanıkoğlu RC 81 and grandson Cem.

The loss of Solmaz was a deep stroke to all of us. We shall remember dear Soli with fond memories.

*Contributed by Esin Kantoğlu Küntay  
ACG 56*



## Önder Malik Evrenol RC ENG 57

Our beloved Önder Malik Evrenol passed away on April 8, 2019. In his RC years, he was awarded the Most Athletic Student Cup and many medals in sports competitions. A leading engineer, he had a passion for learning and innovation. He was co-founder and partner of Yesa Construction Company with Türker Karamızrak for 55 years. Önder was humble, humorous and caring, loved and respected by everyone who knew him. He was also a passionate sea man and happiest in his boat MEY 1, sailing with his family and grandchildren. Many of his family



are proud RC and ACG alumni - his mother Berceste Selek Anter ACG 31, his brother Alp Evrenol RC 59, and his sister Ülkü Evrenol Kolatan ACG 52. He is survived by his wife İpek Fatma Çalapala Evrenol and three daughters and sons-in-law - Yasemin and Tosun Sütüncü, Melis and Rafael Alaluf, and Ebru Evrenol. He will be greatly missed by his family and loving grandchildren Murat, Eda, Melda, Lerin, Bora, and Lara. May his soul rest peacefully in blue waters...

*Contributed by his daughter Melis*



## Gönül Epirden Müderrisoğlu ACG 60



Gönül passed away on June 14, 2019, after a very long battle against cancer. She was a good student at school. When we think of her, we remember a pleasant and sweet girl, friendly with everyone, who had an ever positive attitude towards life. When we all got together and discussed any subject, she would join in and always had something to say. She studied one year in the US, as she was awarded an AFS

scholarship. She is survived by her two daughters, Berna and Serra and her life-long friend Eray who always stood by her side. We shall always miss our dear friend Gönül. May she rest in peace.

*Contributed by Şeyma Bilimer Arsel  
ACG 60*

## Revza Özil ACG 60

Revza passed away on July 12, 2019, after her long struggle against cancer. She had been my classmate in primary school, at the English High School and finally at ACG. She was always an excellent scholar. She continued her studies to become an archeologist and an expert of restoration and conservation of historical monuments.

had integrity and was a serious and reserved friend. However, she also had a great sense of humor. At College she used to hang out with Suna, Ayşegül, Çiğdem, Hale and Şerifnaz. May she rest in peace.

*Contributed by Şeyma Bilimer Arsel  
ACG 60*

Her colleagues considered Revza as one of the best in her profession. She



## Korkmaz Haktanır RA 61



Korkmaz Haktanır passed away on May 14, 2019 in Ankara. He graduated from Robert Academy in 1961, then from Ankara University, Faculty of Political Sciences in 1965, and was offered a post at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the same year. Following a number of positions in the ministry, he was appointed as an ambassador to Iran and later on, to Poland. Afterwards he served as Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Deputy Undersecretary for

European Affairs, and as Ministry of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary. He was appointed Ambassador to the United Kingdom from 2000-2002, then as Ambassador to Egypt. During his term at the Embassy in Lefkosia, he undertook important tasks for the resolution of the Cyprus issue.

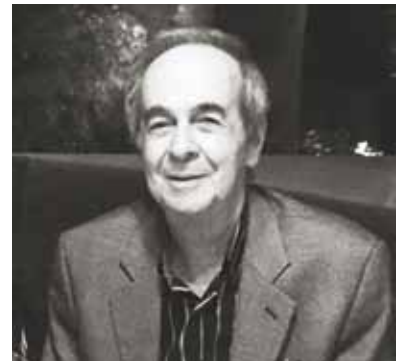
Korkmaz Haktanır was married to archeologist Handan Ünlü Haktanır and has two children.

## İsmail Haluk Yücelir RA 64

İsmail Haluk Yücelir passed away on September 19, 2019. He was born in Istanbul in 1943. He often mentioned and cherished his time as a student at Robert Academy. He took pride in his alma mater. During his time as a student he surrounded himself with friends whom he kept in touch with years after their graduation. He continued his education in economics at Istanbul University. He pursued a career in banking and was one of the pioneers

of credit card establishment in Turkey. During his lifetime Haluk always lived by his own principles and he brought joy to every room he was in. His life will forever be remembered through his family, friends and colleagues. He is survived by his beloved wife of 51 years Nurten, his children Banu and Bora, and his granddaughter Naz.

*Contributed by his granddaughter Naz  
Uzunhasanoğlu*



## Sezen Sayiner Tezuçan ACG 67

Sezen Sayiner Tezuçan passed away on September 6, 2019. Dear Sezen, We don't know why you had to go, one Gümüşlük night, so unexpectedly, without any warning. You were a busy bee all through your life, taking care of your beloved family and friends, teaching English to hundreds of students, holding out your hand to all



those who were in need of help. You brought joy to every life you touched. We will miss you deeply Dear ACG Girl. But be sure that you will always shine in our hearts and memories with your special smile, bright and warm.

*Contributed by Gülçin Ülgezen ACG 67*

## Durdu Genç Teymen RC 73



Durdu Genç Teymen passed away on September 20, 2019, in Adana. She is best remembered among her RC friends as a champion basketball player. After RC, Durdu earned her BS in industrial engineering at Çukurova University. She married Orhan Teymen. She was a committed mother with two daughters, Aslı and Seden, and a beloved grandmother to her three grandchildren. She played bridge, she loved jigsaw-puzzles. She created her own handcrafts that she generously

gave away as presents. "Our years together at the dorm were nothing but the most colorful part of our shared history. She was the sunshine on a gloomy day," her friends say. She was full of life and laughter, a blessing for all who knew her. She stopped young as her name suggested. She will be missed greatly by her family and friends.

*Contributed by Yasemin Alptekin RC 73 and Vedia Uydan Yüce RC 73*

## Mehmet Ergelen RC 85

Mehmet Ergelen passed away on August 14, 2019, all too soon, in a vehicle accident in Mississippi on his way back home to New Orleans from one of his routine business trips. Mehmet, (Memos) was born in 1968 in Istanbul. At RC, he tasted fame with the title role of Oliver, the musical. He was also a wizard designer of model airplanes. He graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a BSc in aerospace engineering. He

also attended the Rochester Institute of Technology and studied industrial design. His first job was at Procter & Gamble. After residing in various cities, he finally moved to New Orleans where he set up his own company, Bluebag. There, he also met his wife Kandise. Mehmet is survived by his wife, his mother Sümer and elder brother Ahmet Ergelen RC 79.

*Contributed by Viktor Bensusan RC 85*



## Ahmet Giray Ertaş RC 88

Giray "Aka" Ertaş left us on December 4, 2019, through a tragic car accident. Giray started out as a boarder, and even when he no longer was one, he stayed on campus so late that he was pronounced an honorary boarder. Even this incident shows Giray's strong ties to RC and to his friends. Giray built strong individual friendships, supportive to his friends in times of need, ready to have fun at any time, sincerely curious about everyone's own unique path. Giray travelled all over the world, often



with his RC classmates. His love for soccer, Galatasaray and Barça were legendary, and he adored all things feline. He is survived by his parents, Ayşe and İsmail Ertaş, his sister Emel, his partner Zeynep, and his beloved cat Zorro. We are all deeply saddened by this untimely loss and will always remember Giray's piercing blue eyes, sharp wit, and wide smile.

*Contributed by his family and RC 88 friends*

## Selin Başbüyük Şen RC 10



Selin Başbüyük Şen passed away on October 29, 2019, after her brave battle with cancer. She was a graduate of Robert College and Boğaziçi University. Selin was born on September 1, 1991.

She was an amazing daughter, sister, wife and friend. She touched and influenced many lives with her elegance and strength. She was bright, hardworking and had a great sense of humor. She was much loved by her family, friends and colleagues.

We miss her every single day.

*Contributed by Elif Özoğul Oruç RC 10 and Burcu Soysal Altuncu RC 10*

## faculty and friends obituaries

### Charles S. Hoppin



Charlie Hoppin, Trustee Emeritus, passed away unexpectedly, on December 18, 2019, at the age of 88. During his 32 years on the Board, 1979-2011, Hoppin contributed to RC in many significant ways, including serving as Vice Chair. His judgement and foresight, together with that of his fellow board members, protected and guided Robert College to the position of prominence and financial stability the school enjoys today. He will always be remembered with gratitude. Charlie graduated Summa Cum Laude in 1953

from Harvard College. He graduated 2<sup>nd</sup> in his class from Columbia Law School where he was Notes Editor of the Columbia Law Review. He spent most of his long career specializing in bank financing and debt restructuring at the international law firm Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP, where he was a Partner and Senior Counsel for over 50 years. He is survived by Nancy, his wife of 39 years, his son David, daughters Ashley and Margot, and four grandchildren.

### Şefik Yalçınmani

Şefik Yalçınmani, beloved Turkish literature and language teacher at Robert College from 1955 until his retirement in 1988, passed away in Istanbul on October 4, 2019, aged 96. He was such a kind, gentle soul who devoted his life to his students and never regarded them differently from his own child. He was always very proud of their success and lived with the memories of them and his life at RC.

He was a respected teacher and was so loved by his students that he was nicknamed "Baba Şefik". He was a lover of literature, theater, nature and sports. At RC he staged many plays in the theater, played football and always aimed to be a good role model for his students. He will be missed for his positive attitude and his inspiring words that are still remembered after so many years. He is survived by his daughter Ayşegül Yalçınmani.



To share news of a deceased RC community member please send a notice in English of no more than 150 words to [bonayozman@robcol.k12.tr](mailto:bonayozman@robcol.k12.tr)

Longer notices will be edited due to space restrictions.

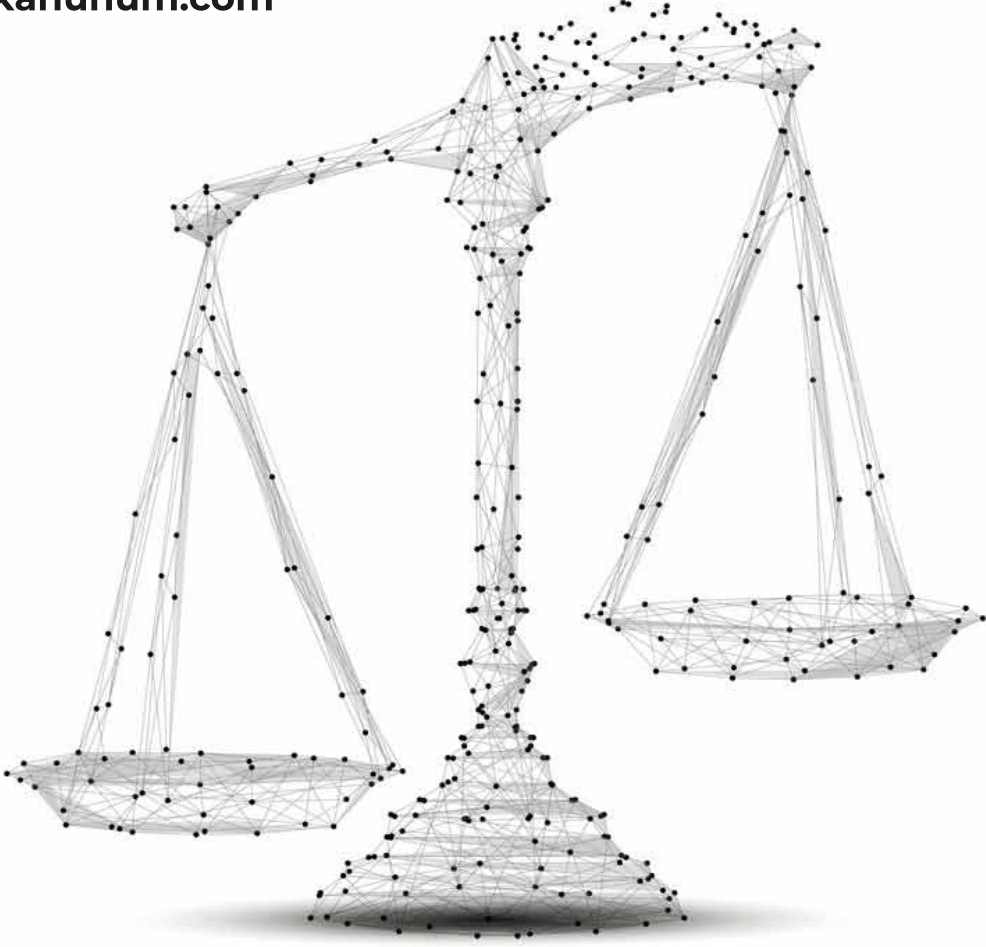
*Please include a high resolution (minimum 700 x 700 pixels) photo of the deceased.*



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