

RC QUARTERLY

WINTER 2023

ISSUE 61

RCQ

ROBERT COLLEGE ALUMNI MAGAZINE

Dramatics



the theater issue



Penti Regl Destek Külotu
“GAYET NORMAL”
GÜNLER İÇİN

Penti

Theater has been celebrated in many ways over the years, including in yearbooks like this page from the 1927 Record illustrated by Memdough Mazloum RC ENG 28.



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

As the cover illustration taken from an RC Record from the 1920s attests, RC has a long and colorful tradition of theater. Many Turkish theater luminaries are alumni; and most in the RC community have been and continue to be avid followers of this art. The RCQ's 61st issue puts the spotlight on all things theater in RC's past and present. The photos and memories will bring back many of the unforgettable performances that have graced the stages of RC and ACG.

In this issue

As ever, the RC community has been busy in the second half of 2022. The news of current RC students' many accomplishments energize the pages of the RCQ. For alumni, apps and businesses have been launched, books written, awards received. The RC community continues to be vibrant and connected and is ready for 2023!

- Hearing from you keeps the RCQ current and lively. If you have any comments or would like to share news, please write! rcq@robcol.k12.tr

Here is to a happy, healthy, productive new year!

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Your feedback on the RCQ matters! Did you enjoy this issue? Write us at: rcq@robcol.k12.tr

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1,100+
Projects

15
Global
Awards

📍 ISTANBUL HQ

📍 ANKARA

1,000+
Engineers

📍 DEN HAAG

1,500+
Employees

📍 LONDON

📍 HYDERABAD

YOUR GLOBAL PARTNER

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*RC '87



Message from the Head of School

Adam Oliver



There is something electric

– and electrifying – about great theater. An energy that makes us scream with laughter or shudder with revulsion, shiver in fear, shed a tear or sing in unison with each other. The shared warmth of a comedy and the *joie de vivre* of a musical are powerful experiences. And perhaps nothing surpasses the crackling sensation up and down the spine as terrible events, inevitable and unavoidable, consume the characters in a tragedy. As Jean Anouilh put it: “The spring is wound up tight. It will uncoil of itself. That is what is so convenient in tragedy. The least little turn of the wrist will do the job . . . The rest is automatic.” Across the decades for more than a hundred years, Robert College graduates have been winding that spring. We have been Turkey’s great font of directors, actors, and writers for the theater and its modern cousins: cinema, television, and the internet.

My own memories of theater in my brief time at Robert College are already rich and full of wonder, running from *Shrek*, *Jr. to Shakespeare* to *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. The following pages share the journey of our stars, old and new, and of the dedicated educators who taught them. I am sure you, like me, will enjoy a peep behind the curtains at RC theater.

With best regards,

Adam Oliver
Head of School

Outdoor Adventure Learning

Helps Students Connect with Nature

A key element to raising students who will protect and care for the environment is helping them connect with nature. With pervasive screen use, urban living and the heavy pace of academics, students have little opportunity to experience the natural world. To help them connect to nature, themselves and each other, a new outdoor adventure and environmental learning program has been created at RC.

“It is our responsibility to create a positive shift in school culture towards students becoming more active in environmental issues,” says Head of Adventure and Environmental Learning and PE teacher Kieran Pearson. “Current generations of students are becoming more and

more separated from the natural world, and this situation must be reversed if young people are to have any chance of falling back in love with, and therefore preserving nature.”

Pearson interweaves his experience as a green beret into his lessons. “High challenge and working outside of your comfort zone, while at the same time learning lots of valuable skills, is the approach and philosophy of our program.”

The first student camping and activities trip took place in the fall. Students learned camp craft skills and took part in a challenging high ropes course, orienteering, a forest zip coaster and a night hike. As the



Head of Adventure and Environmental Learning
Kieran Pearson

year moves forward and the program develops, Pearson is planning trips to Uludağ mountain, treks on the Lycian Way and a multi-activity trip to Cappadocia, with each trip including high levels of adventure, challenge and reward.

RC Business Society Members Get a Head Start



The RC Business Society visited Akbank headquarters in fall 2022

The Robert College Business Society was founded in 2014 by RC 15 students Törehan Çağrı Kara, Canberk Koparal and Fırat Geyik. The plan was to link to the old Robert College Business Society that had existed in the 1950s and 1960s and which had continued at Boğaziçi University. While the club initially connected to Boğaziçi, over time the Business Society has morphed into what it has become today: a venue for discussions and presentations, visits to companies,

and the famous “Heritage Room Talks” in which speakers engage in a conversation with members of the club and other interested students. The club also has an intermittent publication, The Boss.

Over the years, the venues visited have ranged from Merrill Lynch - Bank of America to Eczacıbaşı Holding to the most recent visits, Akbank's Headquarters and Tekfen Holding. During each visit, students have been

able to interact directly with members of the company's leadership, often including RC graduates such as the CEO of Akbank, Hakan Binbaşgil RC 79. Visits have been complemented by Heritage Room Talks, the most recent with Ozan Korman Tarman RC 90 from Deutsche Bank.

The students get a great deal out of the club with one saying, “What we do in the Robert College Business Society is not only about finance. We also aim to gain familiarity with professional life and working environments. With our frequent trips, we get to see what being part of a management team might look like. Also, during our club sessions we do presentations in English, which helps members get familiar with formal language and economics terms.”

Overall, RCBS acts as a venue for its 35 members to explore a future that likely awaits them.

Classes Honored at the 2022-23 Annual Giving Kickoff Dinner



Guest speaker Çiğdem Yazıcıoğlu

Class agents, high honor donors, Trustees and Trustees Emeriti were delighted to gather on October 16, for the 2022-23 Annual Giving Kickoff Dinner at Bizim Tepe.

This year's guest speaker was RC's own Çiğdem Yazıcıoğlu, who people fondly know from the many years she spent working at the RC Alumni & Development Office. Her talk focused on how making the right choices and having the right attitude have helped her throughout her life, most recently while recovering from an accident in 2021 (see p. 60).

In her speech, she honored the alumni in the audience by saying, "Your attitude towards your alma mater has been one of unwavering loyalty, tireless engagement with your schoolmates, responsive and enthusiastic effort to engage them too. RC has been and will continue to be an institution of

learning that has helped teach many of us, not only students, but also faculty and staff members how to make good choices and have the most constructive and positive attitudes towards whatever life throws at us."

She added, "We are all connected with strong bonds of community and if one of us thrives so do the others which is why I believe that if RC thrives so do our students and so do we."

The awards ceremony that followed recognized class agents listed on the following page for the outstanding participation and performance of their classes during the 2021-22 campaign year. RC 76 class agents Nedim Ölçer and Yasemin Palanduz Kahya once again received the First in Participation award, and the First in Giving award went to RC 91 class agent Cüneyt Soydaş, which was accepted on his behalf by his classmate Beste Ortaç.



Class agents who were recognized for outstanding performance and participation during the 2021-22 campaign year

LEVEL of PARTICIPATION

1| RC 76 Class Agents:

Nedim Ölçer

Yasemin Palanduz Kahya

2| RC 91 Class Agent:

Cüneyt Soydaş

3| RC 00 Class Agents:

Zeynep Kayhan Kantaşı

Alara Orhon Özseker

Esra Yalçınalp

4| RC 90 Class Agents:

Okan Atilla

Aysan Sinanlıoğlu

Sarmpezoudis

Mete Tuncel

5| RC 73 Class Agents:

Rezan Benatar

Nevzat Fresko

6| RC 92 Class Agents:

Murat Aslan

Doğan Kaşıkçı

7| RC 78 Class Agents:

Semih Aksu

Selma Şaşmaz Somer

Haluk Şardağ

Doğan Şenocak

8| RA 89 Class Agent:

Mert Tarlan

Zümrüt Alp Yalman

9| RC 61 Class Agents:

Y. Aydın Bilgin

10| RC 87 Class Agents:

Burak Pekcan

Aylin Barlas Sarıcı



The Class of 91 show off their award accepted on behalf of class agent Cüneyt Soydaş for being top in Level of Giving and second in Level of Participation



From L to R: Melih Önder RC 83, Leyla Kandur RC 83, Pınar Boncuk Dayanıklı RC 83, Serra Soysal RC 83, and Murat Dayanıklı



From L to R: Okan Atilla RC 90, Meltem Ince Okvuran RC 90, Hande Türker Sarantopoulos RC 90, Hüsnü Okvuran RC 90 and Aysan Sinanlıoğlu Sarmpezoudis RC 90



From L to R: Basak Tekin Özden RC 93, Güzde Kocabayoğlu Arghan RC 93 and İrem Kızılıranlıoğlu Önen RC 93

LEVEL of GIVING

1| RC 91 Class Agent:

Cüneyt Soydaş

2| RC 92 Class Agents:

Murat Aslan

Doğan Kaşıkçı

3| RC 82 Class Agents:

Damla Yaraş Birol

Dilek Özoklav Mutuş

Nahit Karanlı Seçkin

Yeşim Yağcı Silahtar

4| RC 95 Class Agents:

Melis Alemdar

Fulya Çanakçı Güçlü

Memet Ünsal

5| RC 96 Class Agents:

Orhan Ayanlar

Erez Navaro

6| RC 87 Class Agents:

Burak Pekcan

Aylin Barlas Sarıcı

7| RC 89 Class Agents:

Mert Tarlan

Zümrüt Alp Yalman

8| RC 88 Class Agents:

Arif Akdağ

Aslı Berkol

Mehmet Cemalcılar

Gülin Yenigün Yücel

9| RC 90 Class Agents:

Okan Atilla

Aysan Sinanlıoğlu

Sarmpezoudis

Mete Tuncel

10| RC 94 Class Agents:

Özen Bozçağa Bezirci

Nevra Eker

Trustees Welcome Alumni in NYC

Alumni of all ages enjoyed meeting up at the annual RC Trustee reception, which was held this year on November 21, after a long break due to the pandemic. The evening took place at Pera Soho, owned by Burak Karaçam RC 92. Head of School Adam Oliver gave a brief talk about the school year to date and shared some of the upcoming activities for the centennial of the Turkish Republic and the 160th anniversary of Robert College. Attendees mingled throughout the evening and enjoyed being in each other's company once again.



Alumni enjoyed being together again. From L to R: Moris Roso, Banu Tansever Roso RC 89, Tolga Vural RC 82, Emin Gün Sirer RC 89 and RC Trustee Çağan Şekercioğlu RC 93

RCSummer and RCS Academy Programs are Back!



After a two-year hiatus, the RCSummer and RCS Academy programs returned, with a record number of participants. The theme for the 2022 program was "In It Together," and kids aged 8-16 were excited to be able to join inspiring activities with friends again on campus.

RCSummer hosted more than 640 participants ages 8-14 who enjoyed the RC campus and special off-campus activities including a beach trip, a hiking trip, campouts and community exploration. It was a great opportunity to hone their English skills

while living the values of the program: honesty, empathy for one another, sportsmanship and the caring of others and the environment. They also gained many skills from over 100 activities that were offered by the counselors, in addition to various special events. Participants were introduced to new sports and had a chance to challenge themselves.

The nearly 200 RCS Academy participants, ages 12-16, were able to practice their English as well as expand their interest in different areas covering technology, math,

the humanities, art and drama. Ten courses were offered by RC faculty members and co-curricular advisers, which gave participants a head-start in a variety of fields. The courses included: A Gentle Introduction to Artificial Intelligence, Future Life: An Experience-based VR Journey, Cryptography: The Math of Secret Codes – HYB, Fine Arts 101, Drama Academy and Outdoor Leadership Training & Adventure.

Please check out www.rcsplus.org for more information and the programs for 2023.

Leaving a Lasting Legacy to RC

RC community members have been supporting the institution since the early days through planned gifts. One of the most popular ways is through a bequest.



Photo: Christine Butler

Catherine and David Cuthell joined the Elizabeth Dodge Huntington Clarke Society in 2022

For David Cuthell, making a bequest to Robert College is a way to honor the institution that has been a big part of his life. "I spent many years at Robert College. I attended Robert College Community School as a child growing up in Rumeli Hisar, and I ended my career as a Trustee. The people at RC are wonderful. It's a great place."

David and Catherine Cuthell joined the Elizabeth Dodge Huntington

Clarke Society when they informed the RC Institutional Advancement office in the fall of 2022 of their planned gift of \$250,000. As strong supporters of education, the Cuthells want to ensure that their legacy will help RC thrive in the future. David Cuthell said, "I hope students will learn the importance of a school like RC in Turkey. I also hope they will appreciate the outstanding faculty and education."

Another member of the RC community who wanted to leave a lasting mark on RC is Haluk Kilimci RC 50 (see obituary on p. 61). Kilimci was a strong supporter of education who gave to his alma mater generously throughout his life. He joined the Elizabeth Dodge Huntington Clarke Society in 2010, and when he recently passed away, he left \$75,000 to provide a scholarship for a student over five years.

How to Make a Bequest to Robert College

The Elizabeth Dodge Huntington Clarke Society was established to recognize those who have made commitments of financial support to Robert College in their wills or estate planning. The Society honors the memory of a woman who was devoted to the School and sought to ensure its future by providing Robert College with its largest bequest, a sum over \$2,087,000 (see RCQ 50, p. 12).

To discuss making a bequest, please contact Burcu Berent in the Institutional Advancement Office in Istanbul at +90 212 359 2289 or bberent@robcol.k12.tr



Melahat Kınolu ACG 44

Get Cooking and Support Scholarships

Bir Ömür Bin Tutam Lezzet (One Lifetime, a Thousand Pinches of Flavor) contains lifelong memories and recipes that the author, the late Melahat Kınolu ACG 44, gathered from family and ACG friends. This book makes a great gift for those who savor food and stories that surround a life full of love. Proceeds from the book go to the Robert College Scholarship Fund to support girls' education.

The book is available at Bizim Tepe: Remzi, Patika, Pandora, Luxuria and Beymen Home.

RC CIP Project

Puts the Lens on Climate Change



RC students worked with students from Avanos Anadolu Lisesi

During the 2022 fall break a group of RC students went to Avanos to explore the issue of climate change via the CIP project Climate Change Through Our Lenses. The students had planned the project for several months and worked with students at Avanos Anadolu Lisesi. The aim was to discuss, examine and learn about the causes and effects of climate change.

The group arrived at their destination by train and bus, a trip that proved to be bonding. They stayed in Avanos for six days and became a well-integrated team with the Avanos students, sharing feedback about the different parts of the project. Amid the busy schedule,

they had activities like debate and Model United Nations on climate change, discussions, trips to nearby sites, and photography sessions to document the effects of climate change. They also collected garbage and sent it to be recycled.

The students say that the experience led them to question their daily routines that silently affect the environment. Critical thinking and exploration were an important part of the experience which helped them develop self-control connected to nature.

Commenting on their experience, students Hasan Mert Özarslan L10 and Begüm Mustu L11 recall striking

details: “During our journey in Avanos, we were able to see a lot of different effects of climate change. The one that caught our attention the most was the drought. We learned from the locals that the river that goes through Avanos had a lot more water than it does now. They said that the water levels reach the town in winter. The reason why it doesn’t have that much water was the lack of rain and water in Avanos. Over the years, Avanos started to get less and less rain. They told us that in the fall, they usually have snow, however when we were there, there wasn’t even rain. Throughout our project, we saw a lot of empty and dry rivers that passed through the town. Seeing these and taking photos was a really different experience.”

The student photos were exhibited on the poster panels at Avanos Anadolu Lisesi: “We grouped the photos in different documents according to their subject and printed out QR codes for each one. We also wrote a small description of the activities we did and our thoughts about the subjects. There was also a main panel that included a manifesto where we wrote about why we did this project and our reflections and thoughts about it.” The students hope to create the same exhibition at RC soon, to inspire other students to become part of the change.



Water pollution is one of the issues the area is facing



Students Melis, Ayşe Su, Hasan Mert and Elif learned about how the environment has changed over time from Avanos resident Türkan Öztürk

Special Olympics CIP: Play Together, Live Together

Playing basketball with a friend has never been so fun! RC students and intellectually disabled athletes trained together at the RC Gym over the course of eight Saturdays during the fall 2022 semester. They played in pairs, supporting each other, learning from each other, laughing together and sharing ice packs when they got hurt during their training.

This CIP project is a special one since RC students are unified as equals with athletes training for the Special Olympics.

One RC athlete pairs up with one special athlete to form a unique sub-team within the team. They keep each other focused, and they listen to and



RC students trained with Special Olympics athletes throughout the fall 2022 semester

understand each other deeply. Hence one-to-one partnership within a team makes the whole team stronger.

RC students were in tears as they poured water on the ground as the service bus was leaving the campus,

wishing that before the water dries their partner athletes will come back. The CIP Office wishes to thank Gonca Gürsoy Artunkal RC 85 for initiating RC's collaboration with Special Olympics and for her support throughout the project.

Volunteers Inspire Students to Keep Giving Back



Zeynep Arslan L11 meets with Asmin Kaya RC 22 and Ceren Demirci RC 18 to learn about the Düşlerim Gerçekleşiyor project

On December 5, the CIP Office and CIP Advisory Board celebrated International Volunteer Day by inviting volunteers from several NGOs to meet with students to share the value of volunteering and collaboration. Every

year this day is celebrated by the UN and this year's theme was "Solidarity through Volunteering."

PAYDA and KODA, both founded by RC alumni, joined the event as did Mert

Soğancıoğlu RC 19 who represented the CIP program at Sabancı University, as well as Ozan Geyik RC 19, Asmin Kaya RC 22 and Ceren Demirci RC 18 who showcased the Düşlerim Gerçekleşiyor (My Dreams Come True) project which facilitates summer camps for socially disadvantaged youth in Turkey.

"The aim of our International Volunteer Day event is to not only bring NGOs and RC students together, but also to open a space for NGOs to meet each other and collaborate," says Elif Sönmez, RC CIP Office Coordinator. "Although CIP projects are mandatory, many of our students and graduates continue to volunteer throughout their lives beyond RC. We hope that by meeting with these volunteers, our students will be inspired to continue engaging with the community beyond RC in new ways."

Bizim Tepe Entices With Colorful Events

RC alumni found numerous reasons to hang out at Bizim Tepe and create new memories over the summer and fall.



Gradlive

RCAA hosted the legendary annual Gradlive event in Bizim Tepe on August 27 and welcomed RC graduates' music bands. During this joyful and memorable event, seven different bands, namely, Bit Odd Innit, KAOS, Heavy Balls, Zifiri, Makara Sahne, Yara Band-ı and Eddie's, took to the stage to put on their best gigs for the guests. It was a night full of music and unforgettable memories.

Autumn Vibes

RCAA kicked off a new event series with the Summer Vibes Party last June. The second event of the series took place on September 23 with the Autumn Vibes Party. Aiming to bring together alumni for a night of dancing thanks to DJ Burak Ssy RC 90, Autumn Vibes cemented the Vibes series as occasions where alumni can enjoy a vivacious night.

32nd Akbank Jazz Festival

@ Bizim Tepe

Hosting the Akbank Jazz Festival at Bizim Tepe is one of RCAA's beloved, most anticipated and traditional activities, and this year was no different. Bizim Tepe attracted jazz lovers once again during the 32nd Akbank Jazz Festival, as one of the festival highlights, Fatih Erkoç Jazz Project took to the stage on October 2. Fatih Erkoç was accompanied by Uraz Kivaner on piano, Ozan Musluoğlu on double bass and Ferit Odman on drums. The open-air setting and wonderful weather helped create a special ambiance for the beautiful music.





RCAA Homecoming After Party '22

After Homecoming '22 on November 6, RCAA hosted all the alumni at Bizim Tepe for the Homecoming After Party '22. It was a time to reconnect and reminisce about the good old days spent on the RC campus and an opportunity to catch up with classmates while enjoying food, drinks, and music.



Connecting RC Alumni in the Law Profession

RCAA aims to connect alumni across generations and different career paths, while fostering a lifetime of rewarding friendships. There are many RC graduates who work at different areas of law, and on November 19, RCAA hosted them to help them create a strong network. RCAA will continue to facilitate new RC Graduate Networks in the coming months.



Bizim Tepe Open Senior Tennis Tournament

This year marks the 31st anniversary of the Bizim Tepe Open Senior Tennis Tournament, which took place between September 22 - October 2 with the participation of a record breaking 444 tennis players in more than 20 different categories. TEB was the main sponsor of this year's tennis tournament, and along with co-sponsors, helped turn this year's tournament into a success. As ever, RCAA extends its heartfelt gratitude to all sponsors.

Welcome to the USA Awards Turn 30

For three decades, new RC graduates attending college in the US have had the opportunity to receive an extra boost, courtesy of the Robert College Alumni Association of America (RCAAA). Founded in 1959, RCAAA's main goal is to support the RC community by keeping alumni and friends in touch with the school and one another, as well as by supporting the efforts of Robert College Trustees. The Welcome to the USA Awards started in 1993 to help ease RC students' transition into their first year of college by providing select incoming university freshmen with a "happy landing check". Since then, over 100 young alumni have benefited from the award.

RCAAA President Cengiz Hatiboğlu RC 81 explains that the awards are given to students who are in need and who have strong academic achievement: "Every year we receive the applications around April via the tremendous help of RC's College Counseling Office. When it's time to pick the awardees, our selection committee is faced with the most daunting task. The applicants have such great resumes and achievements in their young lives

that we feel each and every one of them deserve the award."

Tamara Türeli and Merve Ashaboğlu RC 91, co-directors of the RC College Counseling Office (CCO), are delighted to work closely with RCAAA helping with the facilitation of the Welcome to the USA Award application process: "The enthusiasm and dedication the RCAAA board shows to RC and its young graduates, and the time they put into this program are inspiring. The process has worked smoothly for many years: Students who've completed a short application ask their counselors to submit a recommendation with their insights for the RCAAA's review. With many qualified applicants who'd be wonderful ambassadors of RC in the States, we appreciate how hard it must be for the final selections to be made. The monetary award attached to the RCAAA recognition has allowed many of our scholarship students to subsidize various costs associated with moving abroad."

Many of the past recipients of this award are well into their successful careers in the US. Övül Sezer RC 06 recalls being a recipient of Welcome to USA Awards as one of the finest

memories of her first year in the US: "Being recognized for this award at the RC graduation ceremony and sharing it with a few of my classmates was a wonderful moment. As a new graduate, it gave me a great feeling that there is an amazing RC Community in the US through RCAAA. The award was very helpful. I got a new computer, printer, and similar things with this award to create my workstation at my freshman dorm. More importantly, this award also taught me how I am part of a much bigger family. I am in my 16th year in the US, and anytime I show up at an RCAAA Bar Night or Brunch, I still see the same amazing family I found far away from Istanbul."

To mark the 30th year, RCAAA increased the number of awards given from 3-4 in past years to 8 this year. Hatiboğlu states, "This past year we felt we needed to support more students as economic conditions in Turkey became more challenging." The increase in the number of recipients in the 30th anniversary befits the wonderful spirit with which the award was set up and which continues to make students feel supported by the RC community.



Former RCAAA President Ahmet Inal RC ENG 61 presented the Welcome to the USA Awards to this year's recipients at Graduation in June 2022

Fall Bar Night Brings Together NY Area Alumni

RCAAA's traditional Fall Bar Night was held on September 27, 2022, at the newly opened Pera Soho. Owner Burak Karaçam RC 92 generously hosted the event free of charge, serving delicious appetizers from Pera's kitchen. About 50 RC grads from all age groups had a great time on a busy weeknight catching up with friends well into the late hours of the evening.



Brunch Gathering for Philadelphia Area Alumni

RC alumni got together in Philadelphia on October 30, 2022, for a brunch after a couple of years of separation due to Covid. There seemed to be new faces in town although perhaps they have been here a while without a chance to meet due to lockdowns.

This was a pleasant reunion where alumni from ACG 61 to RC 19 shared their Philadelphia experiences and enjoyed a Sunday morning together.

If you'd like to find out about events around Philadelphia, please contact Nesrin Young ACG 69 at nesyoung1@gmail.com.



Bay Area Alumni Celebrate the Holidays

RC alumni in the Bay Area gathered on December 18, 2022, at the Menlo Park home of Barış Karadoğan RC 90 to celebrate the holidays with a potluck afternoon party. Itir Clarke RC 91 co-hosted this event featuring delicious appetizers, meatballs and dessert brought by the guests. Among the highlights was professional chef Sayat Özyilmaz RC 04 and his chef wife Laura's creative dish made with squash and goat cheese. Several alumni had just moved to the Bay Area from cities like San Diego and Boston – and this was their first event with the RC group in this area, which has grown substantially in the past ten years. Now that the pandemic is over for the most part, similar events are planned for 2023 and beyond.



Connect with RC Alumni in the US

Do you want to find RC alumni in your area or learn about upcoming events? Contact RCAAA through one of the following:

Message:
www.rcaaa.org/contact

Instagram:
[@rcaaa_alumni](https://www.instagram.com/rcaaa_alumni)

Facebook:
Robert College Alumni Association of America group



RC Alumni in the Netherlands Keep Connections Strong

The first RC Alumni gatherings in the Netherlands began in 2015 through the initiative of a few graduates, who went in search of fellow alumni in the region and formed the WhatsApp and LinkedIn communities. Especially in recent years, the group has grown to around 115 people with the addition of alumni that relocated to the Netherlands through work and study. The WhatsApp group that includes all members has become a

medium where questions are asked and answered, life experiences are shared, and all alumni keep in touch. The LinkedIn group, Robert College Alumni – Netherlands, includes about 65 members, where RC graduates keep in touch for jobs and work-related exchanges.

Due to the pandemic, there haven't been too many gatherings in recent years, but a meet-up finally was

planned for October 30 in Amsterdam. Around 35 people attended with a wide age range. Everyone shared their experiences about work, life and stories on how to adjust to Dutch culture. A picnic was also announced for summer 2023. We are hoping to gather more graduates and enjoy the green scenery of the Netherlands.

Contact the group at
robertcollegealumniinl@gmail.com

Fall London Bar Night

RC graduates welcomed new alums into the London community at an event in Mayfair on October 19, 2022. The reunion presented a unique opportunity to see familiar faces and to make new acquaintances. The event brought together around fifty alumni from different graduating classes, giving very recent graduates as well as graduates from ACG a chance to mingle and reminisce about their alma mater. The event was also a good testimony to the lifelong bond RC graduates share.

RC alumni can connect with the Robert College Alumni Club of London at www.facebook.com/groups/rcalumnicluboflondon/. If you want to get involved in organizing future events or have any questions regarding the Robert College Alumni Club of London you can get in touch with İrem Günay RC 06 at iremxcgunay@gmail.com

Şirin Tekinay RC 85 Wins Prestigious Engineering Education Award

SEFI, the European Society for Engineering Education, is the oldest and globally largest network of collaboration in engineering academe. The SEFI Fellowship Award recognizes meritorious service to engineering education worldwide, and Prof. Şirin Tekinay is among the recipients this year - the first Turkish person to receive this accolade. Tekinay has participated in all aspects of higher education, as a professor, dean, vice rector, and rector. She has also been the president of Global Engineering Deans Council and a board member of European Society for Engineering Education.



Şirin Tekinay RC 85

Tekinay sees engineering as a tool to solve global issues: "The to-do list to make life on Earth sustainable, healthy, safe, and joyful is captured in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The list includes

complex challenges in need of multidisciplinary solutions all with social, economic, and environmental components. Myopic piecemeal, short-term solutions that don't consider the high complexity of interactions within and among social, natural, and human-made systems have caused more

problems. Therefore, even those that sound like social issues to ears trained in disciplinary silos of the 20th century, like how to combat poverty, hunger, gender inequality and inequality in general, require engineering methods and tools to converge on timely and sustainable solutions."

Tekinay holds dear the goal of re-defining professional identity to be inclusive of all kinds of diversity, e.g., disciplinary, generational and gender: "Engineering education, globally, is suffering from a lack of full participation, especially of girls, access to advanced tools, and full support from governments, and employers. For over a decade now, I have been working on morphing engineering education towards a student-led, convergence and problem-based, technology-supported, design-oriented system."

RC Friends Find Success with Agave Games

Oğuzhan Merdivenli RC 14 jumped into the mobile gaming industry in 2018 and quickly convinced Burak Kar RC 15 and Baran Terzioğlu RC 14 to do the same, seeing the sector's potential. A few years down the line in 2021, Alper Öner RC 15, who was working in consulting in the US at the time and Merdivenli brewed up the idea of Agave Games, as Öner relates: "Ulaş Nuhoglu, a software engineer from RC 13, joined the team a few months after founding the studio. Later, we convinced Emir Kotil RC 15 to join us as well, who was someone we had wanted from the start. Burak and Baran, who were impressed by the ambition and progress that we achieved in the time between, finally started to seriously consider moving to Agave. After adding them as co-founders, we now have no doubts that we could be a global leader in the industry."



Agave Games was founded by RC friends (from L to R): Ulaş Nuhoglu RC 13, Oğuzhan Merdivenli RC 14, Alper Öner RC 15, Burak Kar RC 15, Emir Kotil RC 15 and Baran Terzioğlu RC 14

500 Istanbul, of which another RC alumnus Rina Onur Şirinoğlu RC L3 04 is a partner, proved to be the right address for fund raising given their vision, mentorship, and global connections. Agave Games received \$7 million from 500 Istanbul, Felix Capital,

and Balderton Capital in 2022. Alper states they have high ambitions: "We will focus on the casual puzzle genre for at least three years, but after that, we might consider tackling different genres. Our goal is to become a global leader in every genre we penetrate."

Aydın Karlibel RC 76

Says Goodbye to iDOB With Concert

Composer and pianist Aydın Karlibel spent 35 years of his remarkable artistic life at the Istanbul State Opera and Ballet (iDOB). iDOB's 35th Anniversary Concert, organized on the occasion of Karlibel's retirement, took place on September 27, 2022 at Kadıköy Süreyya Opera Stage.



Aydın Karlibel RC 76

One of the last students of Cemal Reşit Rey, Karlibel worked as a correpetitor, choir and orchestra conductor and concert pianist at iDOB. He composed opera, symphony, oratorio, piano and violin concertos, chamber music works and marches, bringing together universal elements and the original colors of Turkish aesthetics.

Karlibel credits RC with providing profound musical experiences that

influenced his career: "I was a regular performer at RC's musical events besides performing with the Istanbul Symphony orchestra under Cemal Reşit Rey's baton and trying my hand at concerto and song composition. I received the kindest support from our

Headmaster the late John Chalfant, who had me play our National Anthem at assemblies and gifted me musical scores. I am deeply grateful to our music teacher Miss Jean Strommer for her support of our RC band, and the late Grady Hobson's generous private teachings. Each and every one of our teachers provided the seeds whereupon I could compose works like the *Yahya Kemal Oratorio*, *The Ayubites*, *Lady with the Lamp* and *Piri Reis* operas. Mr. Chalfant's numerous contacts with Cemal Reşit Rey culminated in Rey's memorable speech given on our Graduation Day."

Karlibel has been invited by Mimar Sinan Conservatory to teach and will continue to contribute to Turkey's musical progress.

Dr. Alpdoğan Kantarcı RC 86 Working on Game Changer Cancer Treatment

A group of researchers at the Forsyth Institute lead by Dr. Alpdoğan Kantarcı have discovered a way to stop cancer growth, making the disease easier to treat and the treatment healthier for the patient. In the study, published in the *American Journal of Pathology*, Kantarcı and his team were able to show that an Omega-3 fatty acid derivative called Resolvin E1 reduces inflammation and kills the center of the tumor, stopping the spread of the disease and making the tumor easier to remove.



Dr. Alpdoğan Kantarcı RC 86

Kantarcı, who is a dentist, says the mouth has one of the most complex forms of inflammation, and that inflammation pathways are the same throughout the body. Inflammation is necessary for health, he states, but also plays a key role in cancer.

"Most cancer forms spread as a result of prolonged exposure to inflammation. Resolvins can redirect inflammation, so that something that has been chronic becomes an acute inflammatory pathway, and disease is more easily handled by your body

with no side effects. These compounds actually reprogram the inflammation." The study focused on an aggressive form of lung cancer. The group is now looking at other forms of cancer such as oral cancer and colon carcinoma. Kantarcı also studies the link between oral health and Alzheimer's disease.

Alpdoğan Kantarcı credits his parents and RC for arriving at this point in his career: "Robert College is about innovation, following your dreams, and free and critical thinking. I still use my chemistry teacher Mr. Mallinder's formulas. Mr. Eşref Sakarya, my biology teacher in Orta I, taught us to follow our curiosity. We never had traditional history classes with Hafize Hoca. It's impossible for me to repay my debt for all the years I was at Robert College."

Selim Suner RC 82 Develops Highly Practical Medical App

Selim Suner is a professor of Emergency Medicine, Surgery and Engineering at Brown University and an international expert in emergency preparedness and disaster medicine. After RC, Suner studied engineering at Brown. He graduated from Brown Medical School, after completing a master's degree in bio-medical engineering.

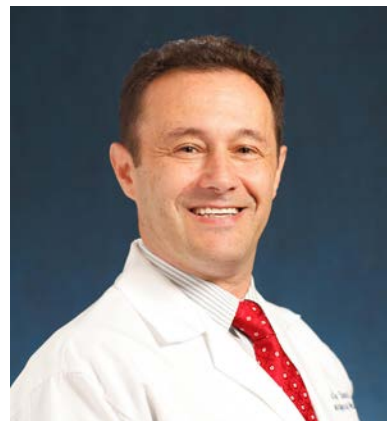
Suner combined his engineering mindset and medical expertise to develop an app – eMoglobin - that identifies a patient's hemoglobin levels through the photos of that patient's eyes, useful in emergency situations and countries that lack the necessary equipment.

Suner states that the idea came to him when he was working in emergency

rooms, where blood samples usually need to be drawn: "In some countries it is difficult to analyze blood samples. They lack the necessary equipment and facilities. This app will also help in emergency situations. Let's say there has been an accident, and the patient is in the ambulance. Results will be obtained immediately." The app will be submitted to the FDA for approval for widespread use.

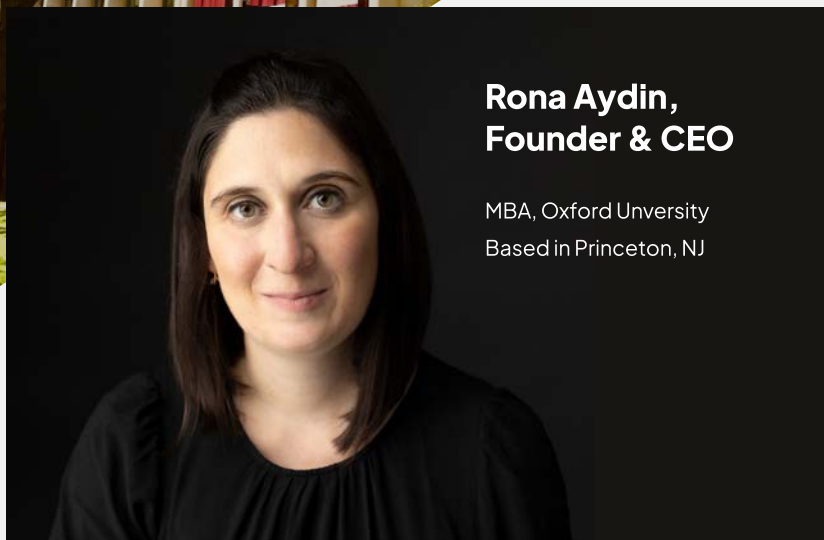
Suner is also involved in projects related to remote vital sign monitoring; touch-less temperature monitoring and developing platforms for drones for remote monitoring during disasters.

Suner sees RC as having a great influence in his career: "The seeds for the love of science were planted at RC. I owe a debt of gratitude to the teachers



Selim Suner RC 82

who encouraged me and assisted in my acceptance to Brown University. Involvement in athletics at RC taught me the importance of teamwork and gave me the building blocks to create and be a part of a team."



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Theater at RC: A Sumptuous Feast for the Imagination

Theater constitutes one of the most enriching aspects of a Robert College education. Over the decades, RC productions turned many an ACG and RC student into an avid follower of the dramatic arts for life, as well as launching professional actors, directors, playwrights, and dramaturges. The theater tradition at RC and the RC theater community are still going strong in many interesting directions.



Turkish Society year-end play
Kahramanlar Köyü (Heroes
Village) in 1939



RC Freshman Play in 1917 with members of the Class of 1920

The RC archives show theater activities as early as the very beginning years of ACG and the early 1900s at RC. The defining impetus in those early years happened when the Hisar Players were formed in 1919. As related in the book *Tepedeki Okul* by Cem Akaş, the Hisar Players were a serious-minded bunch, comprised of students

and teachers. They were even asked to perform at Darülbeydi, the state conservatory of the time. In 1924, the Robert College Players was launched, and they started the tradition of a class play every year. In the 150th exhibition catalog, *Anatomy of a Tradition*, *Spreading the News*, a play about rural Ireland by Lady Gregory, as well

as various comedies are cited as the plays performed in the Players' first year. During the 1920s, not only were many plays staged, but also a detailed critique of each play was always penned. Mostly non-Muslim students and teachers were the actors, and female parts were played by the male students. Theater was taken seriously from the very start, and the respect for the discipline established it as one of the pillars of the RC experience through the decades.

In the 1930s plays in German and French, as well as English, are known to have been performed, and student-written plays were also staged during this time. The very first Turkish play at RC was also performed in the 1930s by the Turkish Society: *Fermanlı Deli Hazretleri* by Musahipzade Celal. Legend of Turkish theater Muhsin Ertuğrul himself expressed his gratitude to RC, whose productions he viewed as a service to Turkey. He was particularly impressed by a 1931 production of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. On the ACG front, an official Dramatic Association was formed in this decade, although



Illustration for the Dramatics section in the 1925 Record



ACG students from 1917's production of *Pygmalion & Galatea*



ACG Dramatic Club members staged *Prunella* in 1931

ACG records show there was some difficulty in getting plays approved. Charles McNeal was a pivotally involved member of faculty at the time, and both he and Hilary Sumner-Boyd, who would join RC in 1943, put a lasting stamp on the RC theater tradition with their contributions over the years.

Indeed it is the 1940s, when the theater scene at RC fully bloomed. Starting

with this decade, there were myriad productions in both English and Turkish in both RC and ACG. The two schools happily cooperated in casting. Faculty Ekrem Yirmibeşin, Şefik Yalçın, and Vildan Tarhan came on board for the productions in Turkish. Some of the students performing in the 1940s, such as Haldun Dormen RC 49, Şirin Devrim ACG 46, Tunç Yalman RC 44, Refik Erduran RC 47, became pioneers

and stars in theater; others, like former prime minister Bülent Ecevit RC 44 or former mayor of İstanbul Ahmet İsvan RC 44 became political figures. Writer Cevat Çapan RC 53 also frequented the stage in the 1940s.

The vibrancy of the theater scene at RC and ACG continued in the 1950s. By this time, along with monthly class plays, four major English and four



Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance* was performed in 1932

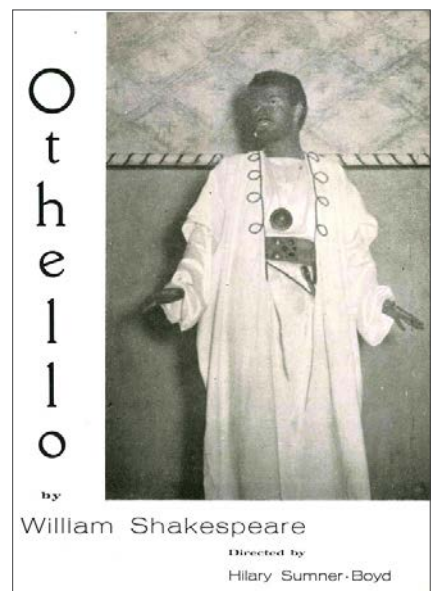


The members of the 1935-36 RC Players

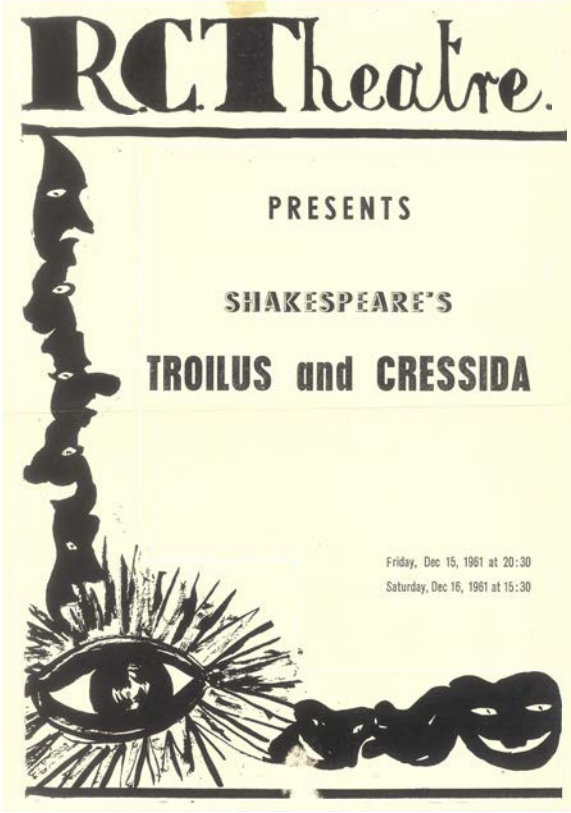
major Turkish plays were performed every year. This decade welcomed future heavyweights, such as Göksel Kortay ACG 55, Engin Cezzar RC 55, Özdemir Nutku RC 50, Ülkü Tamer RC 58, Genco Erkal RC 57. Oya Kaynar Başak ACG 55, who went on to become a professor of English at Boğaziçi University, also took to the stage in the 1950s. It is a testament to the dynamic cultural

and educational environment at RC that so many of its students explored the arts and acquired some of the skills and curiosity that empowered them to trailblaze in the arts, during their time at RC. Indeed in the RC Alumni Magazine dated 1983 Ayşe Kulin ACG 61 directed the question "Did your alma mater have any influence in your choice of career?" to Engin Cezzar RC 55. He answered "Our

teacher and advisor Hilary Sumner-Boyd has a great influence on my generation in choosing theater. My last school play was *Othello*. I was the lead. By the final curtain I had made my choice. After watching the play, Mina Urgan convinced my father who until then had opposed my desire to be an actor that I could be successful. I was sent to Yale to study theater arts. The College definitely influenced me in my choice."



English teacher Hilary Sumner-Boyd had a great influence on actors at RC, including the cast members of the spring 1948 production of *Romeo and Juliet* - clockwise from L to R: Raymond Pizante RC 48, Züleyha Kocaolçum ACG 51, Anna Phillips, Hilary Sumner-Boyd, and (seated) Nur Yalman RC 50 and Aptullah Kuran RC 48 - as well as Engin Cezzar RC 55, who played the title role of *Othello* in 1955



Pınar Kür RC YÜK 63 and Kiril Kirof RC YÜK 67 in the title roles of *Troilus and Cressida* in 1961

The 1960s at RC also brought forth stars: Çiğdem Selşik Onat ACG 60, who played in Cocteau's *The Human Voice*, among other plays, went on to become a renowned actress. The first role ever for Nevra Şirvan Serezli ACG 65 was Christine in Strindberg's *Miss Julie*. Beloved writer Pınar Kür RC YÜK 63, was Cressida in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*. Ali Taygun RA 61, Ahmet Levendoğlu RA 64, Yavuzer Çetinkaya RA 65, Meral Taygun ACG 65 and Beklan Algan RC 53 all went on to become fixtures of the Turkish acting scene.

The 1970s were a turbulent time in Turkey politically. The switch to the general university exam and student adjustment to this new system, as well as the general political climate, including curfews, put somewhat of a damper on theater activities. The joining of RA and ACG created new energy, although it meant that the assembly hall used for theater productions at ACG had to be re-purposed as a gymnasium, leaving

most productions no choice but to perform on a makeshift stage for the next two decades. One of the highlights of this decade is the production of the first musical written by a student in 1978: Ali Özen's *The Wheel*.

In the 1980s, the Orta musicals helped fire up the dramatic scene once again. *The King and I*, *Evita*, *West Side Story*, and *Cabaret* were among these

ambitious productions. Işık Lisesi theater stage was hired for some of the musicals; the rest were performed at the gym. The *Cabaret* production was attended by Engin Cezzar RC 55 and Gülriz Sururi, who were themselves performing it at the time. Didem Sezer Manecolo RC 90 recalls this period with affection: "Watching *South Pacific* and *West Side Story* mesmerized me as an Orta student, so when I became a Lise



Çiğdem Selşik Onat ACG 60 in *Mother Courage* in 1958

student, I auditioned and made it! I was part of the chorus girls in *Cabaret*, one of the three lead girls in *Sweet Charity* and one of the lead roles in *Delusions*, a play written by my classmate Kerem Deren. Staying late for rehearsals, working on the choreographies, trying on the costumes, doing our makeup are memories that will stay with me forever... In *Sweet Charity*, the song "Rhythm of Life" was really difficult to perform. We failed and failed until we got it right in the final rehearsal, and I still remember that moment of bliss when we were all screaming "we did it!" with tears in our eyes. I am very proud to have worked with Yeşim Özsoy and Kerem Deren, my classmates who have actually chosen this path as careers. Now that I work at a high school as a college counselor, whenever I watch the students performing musicals on stage, a part of me is with them, soaking in the spotlight and singing along."



Can Özbal RC 88 and Oğuz Karakaş RC 88 in *Karaların Memetleri*



The unforgettable performance of *West Side Story* in 1986 included Aslı Erkanlı Olcay RC 88 in the role of Anita. The production even received national media attention.

The Orta school was also quite active with Turkish plays during the 1980s: Cevat Fehmi Başkut's *Ölen Hangisi*, Cahit Atay's *Karaların Memetleri*, Haldun Taner's *Keşanlı Ali Destanı*, were all staged by Orta students with the support of Turkish teachers such as Bilgi Haner at this time. Renowned actor Nedim Saban RC 86 turned in a stellar performance at Turgut Özakman's *Fehim Paşa Konağı*. Most of these plays were performed at Bingham 1. Oğuz Karakaş RC 88 recalls what playing at Bingham Hall entailed: "In *Karaların Memetleri*, Cahit Atay illustrates the suppression of local cultural traditions and the duality they impose on the people in the stories of three characters named Mehmet. Because there were no changing rooms at Bingham Hall, I had to change into my traditional costume in the P.E rooms at Gould Hall and walk



RC Trustee Suna Kırac ACG 60 (right) attends an event in the newly opened Suna Kırac Hall with (from L to R) RC Trustee Feyyaz Berker RC ENG 46, Inan Kırac and RC Board Chair Rodney Wagner



The Suna Kırac Hall was inaugurated with the spectacular gala event *The Show Goes On*, featuring illustrious RC alumni actors. Standing from L to R: Dorothy İz, Nedim Göknil RC YÜK 65, Genco Erkal RC 57, Göksel Kortay ACG 55, Engin Cezzar RC 55, Can Gürzap RA 62, Ali Taygun RA 61 and Esin Eden ACG 54, Seated from L to R: Nüvit Özdoğan RC 46, Nevra Şırvan Serezli ACG 65, Oya Başak ACG 55, Haldun Dormen RC 49 and Yağız Tanlı RC 59



Aida, performed in 2009, captivated audiences

across center court in full costume.” RC continued to generate influential figures for the Turkish drama world, such as Yeşim Özsoy RC 90, Nedim Saban RC 86 and Haluk Özenç RC 88 during this decade.

A key development was inarguably the inauguration of the Suna Kırış Hall, named after RC Trustee Suna Kırış ACG 60. With its 500-seat capacity,

expansive stage and state-of-the-art sound and lighting rig, it brought the theater experience at RC to a whole other level. RC students and faculty thrived on these resources, as productions became both varied and more ambitious over time. Some of these included *Deli İbrahim* in 2001, *7 Kocalı Hümmüz* and *Celebration of Broadway* in 2004, *Of Mice and Men* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

in 2008, *Aida* in 2009, and *Romeo and Juliet* in 2010, and, unforgettably, *Gizlenmiş Gölgeler Senfonisi* in 1998, written by Kadir Şan Tarhan, RC’s beloved switchboard operator from 1985 to 2017, in which members of the whole RC community performed.

The spirit of RC theater did not take a hit even during the pandemic. Members of the RC Theatre Company turned their screens into their stage and wrote an original TV series with original music by the students that included a news parody, a game show parody, a Socrates trial and a whodunnit podcast.

Another testament to the impact that Robert College has had on theater in Turkey is the Turkish Theater Festival – TIFES. Started in 2003 by RC 07 graduates Özge Onur, Nilüfer Çetinkaya and Lale Alpar, TIFES was organized by students and brought together participants from different schools with a goal of making students develop a sensitive approach toward the captivating world of theater.



The cast of *Amadeus*, staged in 2008

RC Theater in the 21st Century

The traditions, environment and allure created in the first century of RC's theatrical history proved to be the wings that let RC theater continue to soar in the 21st century. Currently, RC boast three key associations: RC Theater Company with director Jake Becker, Turkish Theater ran by Hande Akat, and RC Musical Theater Company: Hamlin Players, directed by Caitlin Dunne. A modern drama elective is also offered, and a Turkish drama elective is in the works. These outlets give students and faculty ample opportunity to flex their dramatic muscles and provide the RC community with the opportunity to re-connect to a beloved experience, as they come to RC productions as an audience. RCQ interviewed faculty involved in theater in the past and present for the key highlights of this experience, that is ingrained into the RC community's lives, as professionals, academics, and enthusiastic, appreciative audience members.

RC Theater Director Jake Becker Explains How Theater Endows Students With New Skills

"Re-kindling the love of play is essential."

Jake Becker has been Theater Director at RC since 2015. He teaches creative arts for Lise Prep as well as the modern drama elective.

What skills do you aim to instill in students?

Especially since Covid, a comfort in expressing themselves with their bodies and a return to valuing their imagination as a tool for thought and play; in short, a re-kindling of the love of play. Other than these, composition on stage, scene preparation, comfort in taking risks and stepping outside of themselves, moving their bodies



RC Theater Director Jake Becker

in ways they find funny, playing with their voices, finding something exciting about any scene and playing with it.

In the modern drama elective in particular, students who were never in theater have a chance to experiment and become comfortable and confident on stage. Veteran actors get a chance to more consciously reflect on what they are doing and try new styles. All get access to contemporary texts and a variety of approaches to acting and the theater.

Overall, a chance to move and behave differently during the day shocks their systems and pushes their brains to work differently. Especially for the Preps, I see them take a break from the stress of the prior year of exams. In our first classes you can see shy smiles and giggling as they get into the work.

What is the process like of putting a play together?

In RC Theater, students generally want challenging content and concepts. Every play is different and can offer different approaches, and that is where the creativity comes in, no matter if it's *The Bacchae* or *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. We read together as a company, discuss the spine of the play, what motivates the characters' actions, and difficult and exciting moments to play. We look at what we want the audience to take from the play. We let students make a lot of the choices on their own and the vision and feel of the play can change as we're working on it. We use music during rehearsals to inspire and inform. In fact, we've featured original music written by students. In *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* Bora Arsan RC 22 and Kaan Güçyetmez RC 21 composed the songs. In *The Bacchae* this March, a student - Sinan Tokemci L12 - is contributing two soundscapes.

What are the most memorable plays you've directed?

All of them in their own way have unforgettable moments. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* was flipped and RC 18 grad Rosa Mizrak's Chief Bromden killing McMurphy was as powerful a scene as I've ever seen. RC 15 alumni Selin Özülkölü and Ali



RC 15 alumni Selin Özülkölü and Ali Sarılgan in *The Glass Menagerie*



The 2017 performance of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* was powerful

Sarılgan in *The Glass Menagerie*, Azra Haseki RC 20 in *Women and Wallace*, Evren Çiçekli RC 22 as a traumatized boy in *Game*, Ali Çataltepe RC 18 in *Renewal*, Selis Yaltkaya RC 20 in *Bald Soprano*, Deniz Vural RC 15 in *Almost, Maine* and so many more. Each night characters develop as the students feel emboldened to make precise choices in their characterizations.

Performing on stage after the Covid absence and finishing the night with a song we wrote was a sweet way to acknowledge the road all of us took to get to that point again. It really built community. We also really enjoyed our Zoom TV shows.

Hande Akat, Director of Turkish Theater, Finds That Challenges Cause Students to Thrive

"As with all forms of art, theater transforms a person."

Hande Akat ran the Turkish Theater Club between 2014-2017. After moving to Germany for a bit, she returned to

RC and is the Director of the Club once again. Akat, with her colleagues, has restructured the Turkish drama elective, which will be available next year. She also plans after-school workshops with Görkem Örskiran RC 13.

What are the skills theater instills in the students?

Theater helps students understand themselves and the world. As with all forms of art, it transforms a person. When preparing for a role, improvising, doing vocal or movement exercises,

one focuses on oneself and her relationship to her environment. She hears herself, feels, empathizes, observes, lives the moment and reflects it on a behavior. One creates a new character that has remnants of one's own personality. This is the power and effect of theater: One knows oneself through this journey.

Our students in the club take responsibility, develop their leadership skills within the group dynamic. They analyze the characters and the cultural context in which the characters exist. They learn to balance their theater work with their academic work.

Any memories that stand out?

The last play I directed with Özlem Kanar was *Katil Kim? (Clue)*. We worked on it for two months but had to give it up due to changes in the cast. The students kept their motivation and searched for another play, despite the hardships of the pandemic. They even translated the play we chose into Turkish. The search for Turkish idioms or the right cultural references were a lot of fun.



Turkish Theater Club Director Hande Akat



A scene from the Hamlin Players' 2019 dinner theater performance of *Mamma Mia!*

Hamlin Players Director Caitlin Dunne Invites Preps into the Fold of Musical Theater

"We are perfectly imperfect."

English teacher Caitlin Dunne is the director of the Hamlin Players which she launched in 2016. They are going strong with musical theater productions, some of them in the tradition of dinner theater.

How has the Hamlin Players evolved since it started in 2016?

When the Hamlin Players first started, I focused on Preps to give them a chance to be center stage. But over the years they continued, so now the club is made up of students from all levels, with a third of them being Preps. It is important that Preps get the chance to perform in English and explore the art of musical theater.

At first we did variety shows, but these past few years we've been putting on full productions of musicals. Last year we staged *Shrek Jr.* which, with the pandemic protocols still in place, we performed in the Maze rather than our



Hamlin Players Director Caitlin Dunne

usual dinner theater set-up in Bingham 1. This year we performed in Suna Kırış during December. I love the quirkiness of our dinner theater tradition where we have the students interact with the audience in character and serve the various courses of the dinner menu. We can't do dinner theater in Suna Kırış, but we allowed for in-character interactions with the audience.

What do you hope the participating students get out of the performances?

A sense of fun. I love watching students take ownership and develop their skills. We are not a conservatory, we most

definitely won't be perfect; in fact, I tell my students that we are "perfectly-imperfect," but we have a blast on stage. So much of the traditional school system is set up so that students develop great ways of being successful as individuals, but they lack skills that would have developed through working together with others. Being a part of the Hamlin Players gives them these skills which benefit them as they move beyond RC to university and the working world.

Any anecdotes you'd like to share?

I have to give a shout-out to my student-leadership team who, for our performances in December, took charge and taught the choreography, designed costumes, and created props and a cool animated digital backdrop for a pivotal scene. This is the manifestation of everything I have ever hoped for Hamlin Players: a show that, while I am technically the director, is a student-centered and student-facilitated group that comes together from all corners of the school community to co-create a performance and share their joy in the form of musical theater.

Turkish Literature Teacher Mehmet Uysal Reminisces on Legendary Productions

"Theater is a relay, and I am lucky to have carried the baton for a period."

Mehmet Uysal, the head of the Turkish Language and Literature Department, ran the Turkish Theater Club between 1986-2002. Turkish Theater Club has always been one of the most active clubs in RC, and Uysal has many fond memories.

What do you see as the role of Turkish Theater Club at RC?

Turkish Theater Club is an important instrument for our students to delve deeper into Turkish literature and in particular Turkish theater literature. Through comedies and historical plays in particular, our students immersed themselves in the theater of the Republic. Of course, theater has also contributed immensely to students' social and emotional development, sometimes instigating our students to become professionals in this field.

What memories continue to shine through the years?

I started working with the Turkish Theater Club in 1986. The students offered me to do it, and I immediately accepted because of my love for theater and the fact that I was a Turkish literature teacher. Our first play was *Ah Şu Gençler* by Turgut Özakman- a social critique that centered on youth. Our cast included RC 86 students, such as Cem Akaş, Erdoğan Abacı, Umur Hatipoğlu, Selin Kibar, Bülent Özgönenel. From 1986 to 2002, we put on stage one or two plays every year, comprising over 20 plays.

One of the plays I cannot forget is *Bir Kilo Namus* by Refik Erduran RC 47. We played it at the gym, now our library. For theater they say, "iki kalas bir heves" (two planks and motivation). Our stage design was exactly that. We created a platform made of wooden cubes. Our carpenter Şaban Bey put two planks on it, and that was the stage. Our internal services director İbrahim Bey gave us two rugs, which we used to cover the cubes. On



Mehmet Uysal led many memorable productions when he was head of the Turkish Theater Club

opening night, the playwright and our alumnus Refik Erduran took his place in front. Cevdet Şamikoğlu RC 89 and Mirey Ovadiya RC 88 were in the play. In one scene, Cevdet was chasing Mirey. Before I could say "be careful," Cevdet stepped between the wooden cubes and dismantled the whole stage, toppling it down. We continued under a thunder of applause. We also put on a play written by Hikmet Hükümenoğlu RC 89, who is now an award-winning Turkish author.



The cast of *Nesin?* performed in 2012

After the Suna Kırac Hall opened, we had access to extraordinary facilities. One of the unforgettable plays we put on stage there was Haldun Taner's *Ayışığında Şamata*. The director, Haluk Özenç RC 88, is a professional of theater, cinema and TV now. Other plays at Suna Kırac Hall included *Resimli Osmanlı Tarihi* by Turgut Özakman, *Nora Bir Bebek Evi* by Henrik Ibsen, *Bahar Noktası* by Shakespeare (the Can Yücel translation), and *Düdüklüde Kıymalı Bamy* by Memet Baydur.

The real success and achievement belong to my students. I learned with them and was happy. We contributed to the school spirit. It is a relay, and I am lucky to have carried the baton for a period.

Charlotte Şamlı Recalls Striking Moments in RC Productions, From Shakespeare to the Student-Written Musical Harem

"Death and the Maiden, a hard-hitting modern play about corruption and abuse, was superb and left me feeling that I had achieved all that I wanted with RC Theater Company."



Former RC Theater Director Charlotte Şamlı



Berk Çoker, Leyla Levi and Türker Bulut in the RC Senior's performance of *Death and the Maiden* in 2015

Charlotte Şamlı was a drama teacher at RC from 1992-2012 as a member of the Creative Arts team, but when she became the Theater Director in 2007, she created a group of students of mixed ages and gender who would participate in a range of productions throughout the year; not just aim to be the "star" of one show but part of a supportive group taking on a variety of roles throughout the year.

Which play or plays that you worked on stand out most in your mind? Any stories that you'd like to share?

Some of the productions which stand out in my mind are *Amadeus* which included multiple performers of both genders playing the part of Mozart and enabling us to showcase some of our students who could sing opera beautifully. *Frankenstein* in which we were able to link stem cell developments in science with some of the ideas behind the play and in which the lead role was played by someone who was struggling with English but was brilliant in his performance, all combined with an exciting recycled

set design which I loved. Shakespeare performed all over the school grounds in which the audience moved from scene to scene was also one of my favorites, culminating in *Romeo and Juliet* on the front entrance to the school. The student written musical *Harem* in which we collaborated with the music department was both demanding and rewarding and has to go down as one of my favorites. Last and not least *Death and the Maiden*, a hard-hitting modern play about corruption and abuse, was superb and left me feeling that I had achieved all that I wanted with RC Theater Company.

When I first joined RC, Drama Club consisted entirely of girls. I was able to get the balance back and had a healthy number of both boys and girls who wished to participate! All in all it was a most rewarding experience, and I was happy to leave all we had built in the safe hands of Jake Becker with whom I had worked on many projects and loved his fresh take on theater.

Dorothy İz: A Theatrical Legacy for the Ages

RC English teacher Dorothy İz, was a critical figure for RC theater, following the tough acts of Hilary Sumner-Boyd and Charles MacNeal with panache. Having graduated from Oxford University with a degree in English Literature in 1951, she joined ACG in 1956. She was instrumental in increasing the number of plays put on stage, as soon as she joined the school. Indeed one of the plays she wrote generated great revenue in ticket sales and helped fund more plays in the years to come.

When the two schools merged in 1972, the auditorium where the plays had been staged was re-purposed, leaving the drama community at school in a difficult spot. Mrs. İz, as she was known to her beloved students, was undeterred and continued to put on plays at the newly-minted gym. *Pass the Butler* by Eric Idle and *Art and Eros* by Iris Murdoch were among the plays performed at this period.

When Suna Kiraç Hall opened its curtains in 1989 how thrilled she must have been, when she saw RC finally acquire a new level of production capability. Mrs. İz took to the stage at Suna Kiraç Hall with many renowned RC graduates, before she retired in 1991. Although Mrs. İz left a lasting legacy in the RC theater tradition, she was also a beloved English teacher, always engaging, innovative, and interactive, teaching the challenging World Literature elective, as well as English, in the final years of her illustrious teaching career.

Here Emre Azizlerli RC 88, senior producer at BBC Worldwide, illustrates the far-reaching impact of Mrs. İz: "Mrs. İz was an ambitious woman. She picked



Dorothy İz

some incredibly tough texts for us, then just teenagers, to perform on stage. But enthusiasm is contagious. She believed in our commitment and intellectual curiosity to think big and take risks. We were inspired by her energy and encouragement. When she handed us *Art and Eros* for a first reading, a philosophical conversation between some real, some fictitious characters from Ancient Greece, exploring the idea of why we need art and what purpose it serves, I remember feeling both elated, and lost. It was dense. This was my first introduction to the writing of Iris Murdoch, English novelist and philosopher, and an old friend of Mrs İz from her Oxford University days. Perhaps because I had a deeper voice than other cast members, I was assigned the role of Socrates, who argued with five other characters, including Plato,

on the significance of beauty. *Art and Eros* was not meant to be a play - hence it had no stage directions. For days on end we discussed the text, the philosophy behind it, and transformed the dialogues into a theatrical spectacle. Mrs İz later sent a video recording of the play to Mrs. Murdoch, who was pleasantly surprised to see a dramatized version of her text, only intended as dialogues to be read on the page. I still keep a copy of the letter the author wrote back to our drama club, thanking each and every one of us. Looking back at the stage photographs of the play, I see a young boy in a toga, his hair brushed with talcum powder to give an aged look, trying to bring back to life a long dead philosopher. Since then, my hair now naturally looks the part. And I still think it is worth to ponder - does beauty lead us to truth?"



Donated to the RC Archives
by Nimet Erenli ACG 43



The 1943 production of *Elektra* included many cast members who would go on to become prominent actors, including Sara Ertuğrul ACG 43, Tunc Yalman RC 44 and Şirin Devrim ACG 46



The cast of the 1937 production of *Turnadut*



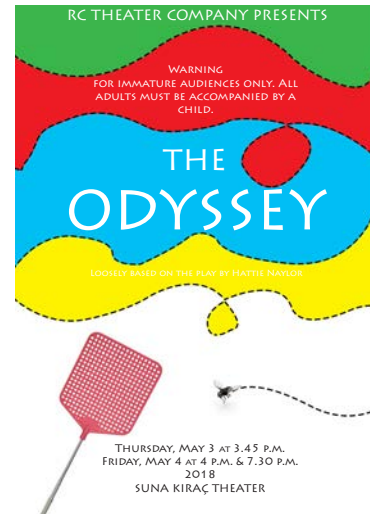
An illustration for the drama pages of the 1932 Record



The cast of the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta *Patience* staged in connection with the 75th Anniversary Celebration at RC in 1938



The Turkish Theater Club performed *Üç Kuruşluk Opera* (*Three Penny Opera*) in 2013



Poster for *The Odyssey* in 2018, an interpretation of a play based on the epic novel



Katil Kim? (*Clue*) staged by the Turkish Theater Club in 2022 was one of the first shows in the theater following the pandemic



Prep students perform "Jellicle Cats" during the first Hamlin Player's show in 2016



All the campus was a stage for *Shakespeare on the Green* in 2010, with acts from the bard's works played in the Maze, the Forum and in front of Gould Hall

All the World is a Stage for RC Alumni:

RC alumni have trailblazed for decades in Turkish theater. They take us both to critical moments in Turkish theater history, as well as unforgettable performances on RC stages.

Haldun Dormen RC 49: The Gentleman of Turkish Theater



Haldun Dormen is an actor, writer and director who has significantly contributed to the modernization of Turkish theater with a prolific body of work; he continues to perform, lead and inspire to this day.

Dormen transferred to RC from Galatasaray Lisesi in Orta, already bitten by the theater bug. He remembers that all he wanted was to be involved in theater. Therefore, he applied to the Theater Club, as soon as he arrived at RC. The president of the club at the time was Refik Erduran RC 47, who went on to become one of the foremost playwrights of Turkish theater. It was Erduran who convinced the members of the club to let the newcomer in, so that “he would see how difficult theater was and learn his lesson.”

Soon enough Dormen was on stage with roles such as Olivia in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*. Dormen’s memory of another production, *Campus Follies*, gives an indication of what was ahead for him as a director: “The boys wore sheets and pretended to be women for the female parts. At that time, we were supervised by Prof. Dean Allen. When angered, he would shout ‘Go home,’ and freely hand out penalties. It occurred to me that it would be interesting to involve him in the play, so I offered him a part. He accepted on the spot. At one point in the play, as we were dressed up in sheets singing, Prof. Allen would dart onto the stage and shout ‘Go home’ to dismiss us. We loved the joke, and it made us laugh for some time to come.”

Haldun Dormen went on to Yale University to study drama. Tunç Yalman RC 44 was already there and directed Dormen in *The Myrmidons*. Dormen was the first Turkish actor to perform in Turkey after studying abroad.

Shortly after his return to Turkey, he started the Cep Theatre which lasted for several years. In 1957 he founded the Dormen Theatre where he put on such successful plays as *Papaz Kaçtı* (*See How They Run*), *Şahane Züğürtler* (*Tovaritch*) and *Sokak Kızı Irma* (*Irma la Douce*), which was the first western musical production in Turkey.



Haldun Dormen worked in TV and radio broadcasting and as a journalist for *Milliyet* newspaper. He also taught at the Theater Department of Istanbul University State Conservatory for many years. He was instrumental in establishing the Afife Jale Theater Awards in 1977, and it still constitutes one of the most prestigious awards in Turkish theater. He revived one of the Turkish theater classics, the *Lüküs Hayat* (*Luxury Life*) operetta in 1984, which went on to become a huge success and was on stage for over 25 years.

In several schools, Haldun Dormen has taught nearly 1000 young people who became important people in the Turkish theatre.

Göksel Kortay ACG 55: Multi-Faceted Contributions to Turkish Theater



Göksel Kortay as Eftalya the Mermaid in the TV series UNUTUL-MAYAN- LAR

Göksel Kortay is one of the beloved greats of Turkish theater. Although her father wanted her to attend a French school, Kortay refused. Due to this disagreement, she almost missed the ACG entrance exam. Luckily, she passed the exam with flying colors and was given the chance to take another exam to complete the two-year Introductory Class in one year, and, thus, began her love for RC.

Kortay's first role on the RC stage was as Mazlume in Reşat Nuri Gültekin's play, *Taş Parçası* (A Piece of Stone). Kortay underlines that her RC education was multi-dimensional, covering a wide range of subjects, from history to cultural studies. The

library was a critical resource, giving the students access to books that were not available elsewhere in Turkey at the time. While a junior at ACG, she met Haldun Dormen, who had by then returned from the US, and that meeting cinched her intentions for a life in the arts.

Following ACG, she took the Fulbright exam and got a scholarship to study theater, the only person to receive it in the field of art at the time. Kortay got her master's degree in theater and television from Boston University, completing the three-year program in three semesters. After having worked at semi-professional and professional theaters, and at NBC in production for 3.5 years, she returned to Turkey. Her first professional role was at Kenter Theater in Bertol Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*. After that she performed in many prominent companies in Istanbul, as well as in numerous TV series and cinema films over the years. One of Kortay's most significant contributions to Turkish theater are the numerous plays she translated into Turkish, all of them staged. For many years, she worked as a program specialist at TRT, where she directed radio plays and produced programs. She is realizing her 59th consecutive year on stage this



year. She has acted in various roles in numerous plays until today, the latest one being Moliere's *Kıbarlık Budalası* (The Bourgeois Gentleman), which staged 670 performances over 12 consecutive years. She is a teacher, acting coach, actor, director, translator and dubbing artist.

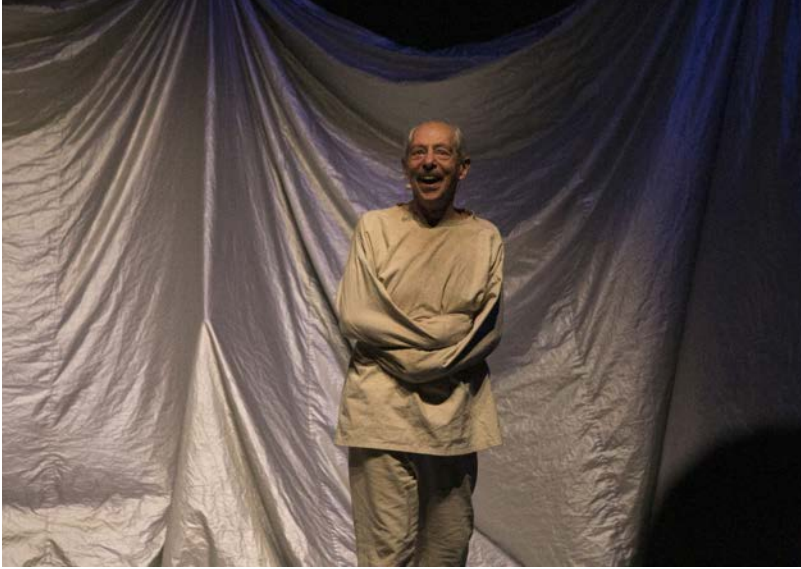
Kortay's activism is also noteworthy. She has advocated for actors' rights from the very beginning of her career. She was chosen as the President of the Turkish Actors Association for 15 years and was the head of the jury for the Afife Jale for five years. She also worked with many associations that create social impact. Another way which Kortay has given back is through her teaching: Most of the successful young actors seen on stage and screen have been her students, a fact that underlines Kortay's passion for this aspect of her career.

Kortay says that she has always been grateful for her education at ACG, as it gave her the self-confidence and strength to take her life in a direction that she did not even dare think of before. In an interview she gave to RC students in 2009, Kortay credited RC with giving her the vision and knowledge to proceed with her life and career. She has always done her best to represent RC well in every platform. She sees the friendships she made through ACG and RC as the greatest enrichment of her life.



Haldun Dormen and Göksel Kortay in *Kıbarlık Budalası*

Genco Erkal RC 57: An Unwavering Voice in Turkish Theater



Genco Erkal performing *Diary of a Madman* on the RC stage in 2018

Genco Erkal is one of the most important and vocal actors in Turkey. He made his debut on the RC stage in 1953 as Lorenzo in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. During the next four years, he had roles in eight productions, in English and Turkish, and was the president of

the Robert College Players. He directed two Moliere plays and took them on tour on the Aegean coast during the spring break of 1956-57 school year. He often shared the stage with Engin Cezzar RC 55 during his time at RC. Erkal came back to campus after his graduation to produce Jean Cocteau's monologue, *The Human Voice*, with Çiğdem Selişik in the lead, during the 1959-1960 season.

Erkal got his BA in psychology from Istanbul University after RC. His parents had not wanted him to study acting, so he studied his second choice, but the love for theater was already in him. Erkal recalls Hilary Sumner-Boyd and Charles MacNeal as the RC teachers who had the most influence on him and helped him channel his natural tendencies to theater.

Following stints at prestigious private theater companies, he founded Dostlar Theater, of which he is the artistic director to date. He directed plays by Gorki, Brecht and Havel, as well as

Vasıf Öngören, Haldun Taner, Nazım Hikmet and Refik Erduran RC 47. He has won numerous awards, including for his movie roles. He frequently collaborates with other artists, such as Fazıl Say and Zülfü Livaneli and is currently performing Nazım Hikmet's *Yaşamaya Dair (On Living)*. In fact, he has performed the poet Nazım Hikmet's work throughout his career and states he first came across the poet's work during his college years.

In the autobiographical film *Genco: Tiyatroya Adanmış Bir Yaşam (Genco: A Life Dedicated to Theater)*, Erkal states, "Every moment on stage was a joy for me and I enjoyed it as if I would never be able to do it again. My time on this earth passed with this joy and I hope it continues the same way because my journey continues." Erkal has often credited his time at RC as solidifying his passion for theater. Erkal's advice for budding artists and actors is to study all kinds of art and literature, to be involved in cultural events and also to become well-versed in subjects as diverse as politics, economy, and philosophy.



Erkal gave an interview to the Bosphorus Chronicle before his 2018 performance at RC



Genco Erkal (center), President of the RC Players, with Vice President Özger Arnas RC ENG 57 (left) and Secretary Nuri Tirpan RC ENG 58 (right)

Çiğdem Selişik Onat ACG 60: Educator and Actor

One of the greatest actresses of her generation, Çiğdem Selişik Onat was on stage often during her time at ACG. In Shakespeare's *Othello*, she was Bianca, while Engin Cezzar RC 55 played the titular character. She also shared the stage with Genco Erkal often. She played Lydia Languish in *The Rivals* by Richard Brinsley Sheridan and the leading role Hedda Gabler Tesman in Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*. During the 1959-1960 academic year, Selişik took over the drama activities of ACG. In the same year, she won high recognition with her role in Jean Cocteau's play *The Human Voice*, which Erkal came back to school to direct. Selişik's eloquent Turkish and English and her talent carried her forward.

Following ACG, Çiğdem Selişik Onat studied at Istanbul University's Literature Faculty. She founded Genç Oyuncular and also performed with

ACG Dramatic Association



Çiğdem Selişik Onat (center), President of the ACG Dramatic Association in 1960, pictured with Secretary Zeynep Rona ACG 61 and Vice President Bilge Onguner ACG 60

Kenterler Theater and Ankara State Theater. She obtained her master's in drama from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Not only did she act in and direct numerous plays in the US, but she also taught for

many years at Lincoln Center, North Carolina School of Arts, and the New York University Tisch School of Drama. She also taught at Koç University and continues to act in Turkish films and TV series.

Ahmet Levendoğlu RA 64: A Prolific Theater Veteran



Ahmet Levendoğlu was quite active in theater in his years at RC, working on

the board of the Drama Club as well. In fact, he experienced the phrase "the show must go on" firsthand at RC. He recalls that he was playing Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller, when word about JFK's assassination reached everyone right after Act 1. There was an impromptu crisis meeting, and the directing teacher told the students, including Levendoğlu, that the show must go on. Levendoğlu states that up until then, the expression was merely words, and the meaning hit him fully right then and there. He also states he was much too young for this role, but with the license of amateur theater and the audacity of youth, he went for it!

Ahmet Levendoğlu appeared frequently on stage while at Robert Academy, performing in plays such as Franz Kafka's *Duruşma (The Trial)* and as Sergeant Charles Baker in *Son Dakika (Time Limit!)*, written by Henry Denker and Ralph Berkey.

Levendoğlu graduated from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in England, after RC. Upon his return, he took to the stage at Ankara Devlet Tiyatrosu. He is a prolific theater professional as an actor, director, author, teacher, and translator. He founded Tiyatro Stüdyosu in the 1990s. He is regarded as having impeccable command of both Turkish and English that brings much esteem to his translations for theater.

Nevra Şirvan Serezli ACG 65: The Fair Lady of Turkish Theater



Professor Higgins (Erhan Yasar RC YÜK 67) presents Eliza Doolittle (Nevra Serezli ACG 65) at the Embassy Ball in *My Fair Lady* in 1964

Nevra Serezli is an acclaimed actress in theater, cinema, and TV. When she was a prep at ACG, she was given a role in a play so that she could practice English. She was intrigued and acted in many plays through the years. Her debut on RC stage was as Christine in Strindberg's *Miss Julie*. However, it was *My Fair Lady* at RC that put her under a bright spotlight at a young age.

Serezli appeared in seven productions at RC. In an interview she gave to RC students, Serezli recalls that she spent every moment outside of class with legendary drama teacher Mrs. İz. Mrs. İz put on two or three plays every year at those times, and Serezli acted in all of them. She recalls that rehearsals would last well into the night, and that she and Mrs. İz were virtually inseparable. She states that students were so into theater that they would follow teachers around to convince them to put on certain plays. She also underlines that in order to be

allowed to be in plays, one's academics also had to be good, and Serezli was diligent about class work!

Following her graduation, Serezli worked in various theater groups and also founded her own with Metin Serezli, Altan and Füsün Erbulak in the 1970s. In the 1980s, she was unforgettable in the musical *Hisseli Harikalar Kumpanyası* (*The Wonderland Company With Shares*) written by Haldun Dormen RC 49, as well as through her performances in *Devekuşu Kabare Theater*. In the 1990s, her work in plays such as *Yolun Yarısı* (*Halfway Down the Road*) and *Çılgın Sonbahar* (*Mad Fall*) gained tremendous popularity and garnered awards. Her return to theater in 2020 with *Ağaçlar Ayakta Ölür* (*Trees Die Standing Tall*), directed by Nedim Saban RC 86, was met with enthusiasm by the audiences who had missed her presence on stage.

Serezli thinks her years at ACG were a true milestone in her life, shaping her confidence, personality, and ethics.



Nevra Serezli ACG 65 (right) with her beloved teacher Dorothy İz

She recalls signing the honor code during Orta exams, a commitment that affected her deeply emotionally and constituted a guiding light throughout her life. She also remembers her role in *My Fair Lady* fondly and wishes that she had had a chance to play it professionally as well: "The way Eliza Doolittle progresses in that play is so fun to play. I love such changes in a character, and they always captivate the audience."



Nevra Serezli ACG 65 and Nedim Saban RC 86 at the RC Turkish Culture and Literature Symposium in 2013

Kerem Kurdoğlu RC 81 Creates With Versatility

“Don’t ever stop doing theater’ may be the most important sentence of my life.”

Kerem Kurdoğlu pursues a dual career as a visual effects artist and playwright/director. He worked on many Netflix and Disney Plus productions recently, and his version of *Richard III* premiered at the IKSİV International Theater Festival in November 2022.

How did your experience in theater at RC influence your career?

RC is the main reason for all my important career choices in my life including university: I chose Boğaziçi University because I thought their drama club was the best. In my first year at RC, I managed to get a role: the son of a housewife, played by Perihan Mağden. We arranged for Ali Erdemci from the Bosphorus University Drama



Club to direct the play. After the play, someone came to me and said, “you’re so good, please don’t ever stop doing

theater.” It might be the most important sentence that formed my life.

Of all the performances at RC, which stand out the most?

In my senior year, I became the president of the Drama Club. Trying to decide which play to produce, a friend of mine said her neighbor was a playwright: Bilgesu Erenus. I went and asked for advice. She said young people should write their own plays about their own problems. I told my friends that I wanted to direct my own play, and they agreed. We told our decision to our advisor, Dorothy İz, and she accepted. Now, seeing many young playwrights trying to stage their plays, I see how lucky I was.

Nedim Saban RC 86 Appreciates the Intellectual Openness of RC

“RC formed my artistic background.”

Nedim Saban is an actor, director, producer, and founder of Tiyatrokare. He started out in children’s theater, and to this day is a prolific theater professional, with many accolades and awards.

What role do you think RC had in developing so many actors of your generation?

A theater career requires self confidence, also the quest of having something new and original to say. The intellectual openness, broad research possibilities and encouraging innovation are RC’s contributions to the potential artist. RC’s history shows that the theater flourishes in spite of the lack of a theater space. When the political, social oppressions are felt, the theater productivity is withdrawn. The competition and time restraints



are also factors. Theater becomes a social activity helping the individual instead of a push to the artist.

Did RC influence your career?

I was not a good student and didn’t feel a sense of belonging. I was involved in professional theater, and school seemed an obstacle. Now that I look back, I understand that RC was a very safe cultural environment in which I subconsciously participated; it formed my artistic background.

Any memories you’d like to share?

My first interview in a daily paper was at age 15. The photographer wanted to take advantage of the beautiful garden of the school. I fully enjoyed these moments and was late to class. The article was published during my weekend detention! I comforted myself, believing that the choice of a career as an artist will always require a price. Looking back, it surely did!

Haluk Özenç RC 88 Stayed With RC Theater Beyond Graduation

I “This is not an easy career, but I am smitten.”

Haluk Özenç is an artist of many talents, and predominantly a screenwriter. He will soon be seen in a new digital series as both screenwriter and actor. He is also starring in Ray Cooney's *2 in 1*.

How has RC influenced your career?

RC gave importance to art, as well as academics, perhaps the only school to do so. Bilgi Haner, Mehmet Uysal and Mrs. İz always pushed me towards the stage. I acted in both Turkish and English plays. I spent my time in plays more than in classes. In 1990, I came back to RC as advisor to the Theater Club. In 1994-1997 I was the Turkish Theater Director. I believe I have the record in terms of the number of plays I was involved in, before and after



graduation. This is not an easy career, but I am smitten.

Which performances stand out?

Ölen Hangisi (Who Died) in Turkish theater; we had a great cast. In English, *Sarcophagus*, a play about the Chernobyl disaster. After graduation, we staged Lorca's *Blood Wedding* as a musical and did the music with Kadir Şan Tarhan and Erdem Helvacıoğlu RC 94. Our production of *Lüküs Hayat* made waves and was attended by State Theater players. One of my own plays, *Şebek*, had a 40-minute video projection: We innovated a lot! Finally, the Suna Kırış Hall launch: I lent it technical support and helped turn it into the unforgettable night that it was.

Yeşim Özsoy RC 90 Fondly Remembers Not Having a Stage

I “Courage, freedom, and power were integral parts of RC as values.”

Yeşim Özsoy is the founder and artistic director of GalataPerform. She is also the President of the Theater Cooperative.

What about RC influenced your career?

Two things: the freedom and space for exploring and finding your own voice and the fact that we had to build a stage to perform each year because Suna Kırış Hall didn't exist at the time. I found the courage, the freedom and power to be able to do all that I do, and these values were an integral part of RC. Building a theater has always been my passion. For years we did Visibility Project in Galata where the streets, abandoned buildings and shops became our performance space.



Photo: Volkan Erkan

Of all the performances you were involved in at RC, which ones stand out?

In our last year we performed Kerem Deren's *Delusions*, and I was the president of the musical club. During *Delusions* I was making sure that everything ran smoothly which became a habit for me later in my life. Kerem kept losing his scripts, as he was still writing when we were rehearsing, and I was trying to keep him on track. I remember that as a fun and a little bit painful experience. Later on Kerem became an important screenwriter, and he became a planner and a disciplined writer. And in my life I wrote many plays for stage, but I always kept it together because I was producing and/or directing the play too.

Leyla Levi RC 12 Views Theater as a Way of Saying the Personal is Political

I “Theater is a tool of world building.”

Leyla Levi is in the final year of her directing MFA at Yale School of Drama, with her thesis production scheduled to open in January 2023: a new play called *Marys Seacole* by Pulitzer prize winning playwright Jackie Sibbles Drury, about the global unequal distribution of care labor.

What have you been up to recently?

Last May, I closed a production of *Romeo and Juliet*. It has been an incredible gift to work with visionary artists and teachers like Liz Diamond, Yuri Kordonsky, Lileana Blain-Cruz, and most recently, the Russian director in exile, Dmitry Krymov.

How did your experience in theater at RC influence your decision to pursue your studies in drama?



My theater life started as an actor in Suna Kırac Hall and in Bingham, working with Charlotte Şamlı and Murat Ersan. I studied architecture in college, then ran an educational arts program for many years, but my first directorial experiments all happened at RC. I remember acting in Feride Eralp's play in my freshman year, writing and directing things with my friends, meeting Sarah Kane's work in Ms. Şamlı's modern drama class, acting in my senior year in an incredible 3-hander called *Death and the Maiden* by Ariel Dorfman. That is when I internalized that the theater is a tool of worldbuilding, prefigurative imagination (a beautiful idea from Robin Kelley's book *Freedom Dreams*) and liberation. Doing theater is my way of saying that the personal is political.

Mert Dilek RC 14 Runs the Gamut in Theater

I “RC enabled me to dip my toes into writing on theater.”

Mert Dilek's work in theater includes playwriting, dramaturgy, translation, criticism, and scholarship. He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge and is affiliated with the National Theatre in London. Dilek regularly reviews theater, as well as creating new work as a writer and translator and is developing new projects for stage and screen, both in Turkey and in the UK.

How did you get involved with theater?

I was a keen spectator of theater. I worked on dozens of productions as an undergraduate at Yale in a wide array of roles (except for acting!). Whereas my research and teaching engage primarily with canonical plays of a literary nature, my recent productions have led me to ponder the mechanics of comedies and musicals!



How did your experience at RC and in the Bosphorus Chronicle influence you?

I first felt motivated to pursue theater in concrete ways at RC. I watched every production that was put on during my time there. As a reporter and then editor-in-chief at Bosphorus Chronicle, RC enabled me to dip my toes into writing on theater. Especially Martin McDonagh's *The Pillowman* and Ariel Dorfman's *Death and the Maiden* made strong impressions on me.

Also my play, *Agon*, received a staged reading at the end of my senior year. I was elated that this experimental one-acter had not only won the Jane Page Competition but was shared with the RC community.

Berk Çoker RC 13 Creates Waves in Education Through TeachFX



As co-founder of the app TeachFX, Berk Çoker is helping to transform the edtech industry, and was recognized for his work by making the Forbes 30 under 30 list. TeachFX incorporates AI technology to help teachers learn and grow in their profession by promoting frequent reflections. The app allows teachers to record their lessons so that the learning dynamics in the class, such

as diversity of participation or open-ended questions, can be identified by the app.

Çoker likens TeachFX to an instructional coach sitting in class and providing feedback to the teacher privately: “Research shows that objective feedback and regular coaching help teachers improve, but are often out of reach. Our solution to this challenge is to provide teachers with frequent, job-embedded feedback using artificial intelligence, and give teachers a space for reflection, so they can lead their own learning. Teachers know their students the best and are the biggest leverage points in the system, and we could be leveraging teachers’ knowledge and expertise much more than we currently do.”

Çoker met his co-founder at a mixer he himself was organizing for the Social Innovation Club at Stanford. His co-founder had taught for two years at the high school level and had a lot of entrepreneurial ideas about the teacher development space: “The final version of the idea for TeachFX came about when we started working together. Next thing you know, we had joined an incubator and had raised our seed round funding.”

The results are amazing thus far: “This year, we’ve been working with over 100 schools and districts across the US and have a few state-wide partnerships.

Teachers who use TeachFX increase the amount of student talk in their classroom by about 40%. We recently also had a research group out of Stanford, Harvard and the University of Maryland do a large-scale randomized control trial on one of the insights that’s in our app. The findings show that not only did the teachers increase their use of pedagogical uptake of building on student contributions by 24%, but students rated the course higher, they turned in more assignments and had higher academic achievement. We were awarded a grant from Gates Foundation to promote more research on our work, and also had a new investment round, including investments from Reach Capital and Pearson.”

Çoker states working on TeachFX for the past five years has given him a different lens and a whole other level of appreciation for the hard work that all the teachers at Robert College put in: “I’d like to give a huge thank you to Ms. Şamlı, who took me under her wings when I joined the theater company my prep year, and allowed me to learn and grow throughout high school in ways that I only understand today, challenging me as an actor with wide range of roles in plays, and of course in her brilliant Modern Drama class. Who could have known that years later when I met Jamie, my co-founder, that we would connect over drama.”

Curator Duygu Demir RC L12 04 Takes a Multidisciplinary Approach to Latest Exhibit

Duygu Demir received her BA in Art History and Visual Arts from Columbia University. She decided to become a curator in her senior year: “When I listened to curator Massimiliano Gioni, who described the Berlin Biennial he had curated in detail, I knew that this was what I wanted to do.” Since then, Demir has worked on numerous exhibitions as a programmer for SALT, including retrospectives and a group show titled *I Decided not to Save the World*. She continues her career as an independent curator.

Gözde İlkin’s solo exhibition *Entrusted Ground* at artSümer in September–November 2022 illustrates Demir’s curatorial approach: “The gallerist Aslı Sümer encouraged me to work with the artist. Having seen some of Gözde’s recent experimentation with dancer Aslı Bülbül, I had the idea to

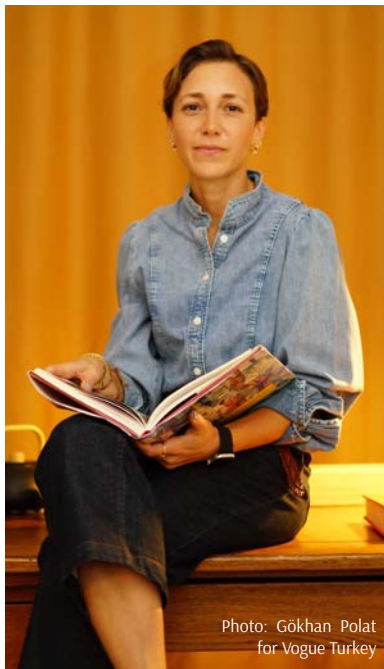


Photo: Gökhan Polat
for Vogue Turkey

expand her usually two-dimensional fabric works into three dimensions. We conceived of the exhibition as a stage, with works to be activated through movement. The process became collaborative; we worked with a choreographer, dancer and a musician. The exhibition and the performance together revolve around the four elements of air, water, fire and earth. Activating all senses, *Entrusted Ground* in essence proposes a mental and physical perambulation through a landscape that theorist Donna Haraway describes as ‘natureculture.’”

Demir views her RC experience as having taught her not to approach life purely pragmatically, but to take pleasure in intellectual and artistic pursuits for the sake of them: “I came to value being a thinker more than a doer while at RC.”

Bahar Kural RC 90 Recognized Through Numerous Photography Awards

Bahar Kural received her first camera as a precious gift from her mother, when she was an 11-year-old prep student at RC. Since then, she has honed her craft and started entering prestigious international photography competitions. Up until now, she has received 106 awards from International Photography, Moscow International, Tokyo International, Budapest International, Prix de la Photographie Paris, Paris International Street Photography, Pollux, Julia Margaret Cameron, MasterPrize in Architecture, Neutral Density and One Eyeland Awards. Most recently, three of her images made it to the 2022 Tokyo International Official Selection, and she won 37 awards from the 19th Julia Margaret Cameron Awards.

Kural states that she has always been a keen observer of her surroundings: “My eye likes to frame and capture stories. I have a passion for history: where people come from and where they are going - which is why I like to document what I see through cityscapes, architectural and street photography. I like to focus on the details of a subject and play with color and light to produce abstract images.”

Kural credits RC’s liberal arts education with shaping her world view: “RC gave me the ability to think critically and made me a confident person - which is key in maneuvering life. Teachers like Phillip Esposito, who was never my teacher, but someone I came to know later in life and respect tremendously, make Robert College a very special institution.”



Pelin Bağcıvan Toğrul RC L12 03 Finds New Calling With Art

Pelin Toğrul left her corporate career behind to go back to school and study interior design. She also started taking art courses and got interested in wall painting: "I found out that I made some paintings unconsciously while making trials on plywood boards. That's when I decided to continue creating in that way." Her work was first shown in a group exhibition that took place in August 2022 at Ataşehir AVM, Cemal Süreya Etkinlik ve Sergi Salonu. She also exhibited in Bodrum and has her first solo exhibition, *Invitation to Art*, till June 2023 at Toro Karaköy Art Gallery.

Toğrul states that her main inspirations are nature and feelings: "The colors, shapes and patterns and all other elements of nature combined with feelings like happiness, sadness



and excitement are the subjects of my paintings. In fact, I'm inspired by anything natural." She adds: "Being in the Thessaloniki International Art Fair and an exhibition in Bulgaria, I tried

to represent Turkey with a different artistic style."

Toğrul's biggest takeaways from her RC years are the importance of self-education and the freedom of self-expression: "The education at RC gave me the skills to think flexibly and originally as well as generate ideas, and encouraged me to progress on my way after my corporate life. I discovered the art of wall painting which excited me after my interior design education, and I'll continue to move forward by developing myself more and learning new skills. The photography class at RC helped me connect more with nature and that in turn helped me set a different vision in my life." See her work on instagram @pt_art_design



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Şant Manukyan RC 93 Sheds Light on Global Markets



Global strategist at İş Yatırım Şant Manukyan distills decades of experience into his book *Global Piyasalar - Dünü Bugünü Yarını* (*Global Markets- Yesterday Today Tomorrow*, Kronik Kitap). The book is vast in scope, as Manukyan explains:

“The first two decades of the 21st century have been unprecedented, taking us through many of the major economic/financial concepts - such as deflation, inflation, secular stagnation, stagflation, recession, bankruptcy, default, boom, bust - and teaching us new ones. No economy or finance book I have mentions section 13-3 of the Federal Reserve Act. Most of us thought financial instruments such as CDS/CDO's were tools for hedging or for more efficient markets. Very few realized they were financial destruction tools.

“In my first book I have tried to provide a summary of the system, debunking hypes, showing how it really functions. I also discuss the future: Crypto assets (not currencies), central bank digital currencies, centralized and decentralized finance, and finally a new world order after the disintegration of the post-WW2 order, namely Bretton Woods. The final chapter is on how to prepare for the ‘Ordo ab Chao’ (order from chaos): Adjusting our cash flows, volatility and safe havens for investment.”

Manukyan credits RC with finding his credo: “RC has given me the foundations of individualism. ‘He travels the fastest who travels alone’ was Kipling’s line I read in the RC Library, and it motivated me to travel fast and far.”

Gül Özseven RC 86 Wins Award With New Poetry Book

On September 3, 2022, the second Altın Kalem Ödülleri (Golden Pen Awards) were given by the Book Culture Art Times newspaper, and Gül Özseven won an award with her new poetry book *Whispers* (Cinius Yayınları), in the category Best Poetry in English. Özseven started writing poetry at Robert College. Ever since her studies at Bryn Mawr College, she has been writing in English.

Whispers is Gül Özseven’s sixth poetry book in English and explores different aspects of love. Childhood fairytales like Snow White, Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty constitute the sources of Özseven’s inspiration: “We live in a very quick-moving age, where love relationships start and end like fast-food restaurant menus. You



Gül Özseven RC 86 receives the Golden Pen Award for her book *Whispers*

devour them and move on, if there is the slightest problem, without patience, depth or endurance. The book’s cover features a frog, inspired by *The Frog Prince* because there are many love poems in this book,

but I don’t want the reader to think that every poem is a dedication to somebody else. We don’t need to kiss many different frogs before we find the correct man, Mr. Right for us, who turns into a prince.”

Suzan Nana Tarabulus ACG 71 Sr. Writes New Oral History Book

Following her previous oral history books *Bir Sabah Galata'da Uyandım* (One Morning I Woke up in Galata, Varlık Yayınları), *Çek Kayıkçı Balat'a* (Boatman Row to Balat, Varlık Yayınları) and *Baba Bize Neden Dönme Diyorlar?* (Daddy, Why Do They Call Us Dönme?, Varlık Yayınları), Suzan Nana Tarabulus continues her work with *Anlatmak İçin Yaşadım* (I Lived to Tell, Varlık Yayınları).

The book focuses on the period between the First and Second World Wars. "This narrative is a family adventure in the triangle of Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey," says Tarabulus. "We learn about the invasion of Greece, Kavala's tobacco, the fashion world of Beyoğlu, and the story of those who could and could



not escape from the Nazis, from the mouth of Mimika, who 'lived to tell.'" Suzan Nana Tarabulus was very impressed by Mimika's family history: "I was shocked and curious about the story of the father's escape and the Greek underground organization Andarte, which undertook it. These insurgents went down in history as revolutionaries and resisters during the war, communists and enemies after the war. During my visit to Ikaria in the north-eastern Aegean last summer, I observed that these insurgents formed a dilemma in the people's memory. The island housed both the Andartes and the fugitives. On the one hand, a monument was built in their memory, and on the other hand, the indecision about whether they are heroes or enemies still remains."

Lale Müldür RC 75 Continues Her Poetry Journey with *Kadınesk*



Lale Müldür's latest, *Kadınesk* (Yapı Kredi Yayınları) is a poetry collection accompanied by paintings by Ercan Arslan. The poems were written in Ercan Arslan's studio over many nights in the course of spring 2016.

Lale Müldür is one of the foremost Turkish poets, known for her deeply erudite and eccentric style. Her fascination with painting is not

recent. Her well-known poetry book *Yağmur Kızı Böyle Diyor* (Rain Girl Says So, Noktürn Kitapları) featured poetry written for French artist Collette Dreble's paintings. In her introduction to *Kadınesk*, Müldür states that she perceives poetry and painting as different media and that she felt like she was handing over music as she was writing these poems.

Aral Sürmeli RC 11 Puts Technology in Service of Displaced People

Aral Sürmeli met with RC students in September 2022 to share his journey from RC's Community Involvement Program (CIP) to medical school and the Harvard University T.H. Chan School of Public Health, to co-founding the Medical Rescue Association of Turkey (MEDAK), which supports medical rescue, disaster response, and healthcare of migratory populations. He is also the CEO and Founder of HERA, a mobile app that helps refugees access healthcare.

Sürmeli credits RC CIP for inspiring him to pursue a career in public health. In his talk he encouraged RC students to participate in CIP projects as early and often as possible during their time at RC to explore their interests and stretch out of their comfort zones. He advised students to “learn to make a real impact and measure it,” and emphasized the power of collaboration.

The RCQ followed up with Sürmeli on the many facets of his work:

How did you become involved with displaced people?

When people ask me where I got started, I always say it was the CIPs at RC. Everything I have been doing since then are different versions of CIPs. MEDAK is the first nonprofit I founded, and I still lead it. We are focused on providing medical assistance in humanitarian crises. Currently our mobile app HERA's program is led by MEDAK in Turkey. Being in service of others is what I love and I have been lucky enough to pursue it as a career.

With the Syrian crisis, seasonal migrant farm workers became a natural target population for my work. Displaced populations also carry vulnerabilities they had prior to displacement, so what we end up seeing is double or



even triple vulnerability. I am the son of an IDP (internally displaced person). My father had to flee his city, while he was in high school and came to Turkey due to concerns about his and his family's life. I feel a connection to displaced populations at a deep level.

What motivated you to create HERA?

MEDAK has been working with refugees, providing direct care in border cities and implementing health literacy trainings. In 2017, I did an internship at Harvard's Global Health Delivery Center in Dubai where my mentor was working on sending reminders for vaccination appointments in low- and middle-income countries. They were extremely cost effective in increasing the uptake of vaccines. I thought about a similar model for refugees in

Turkey. We decided to design a simple app that forms a bridge between the population and the available healthcare services.

Any plans to expand outside of Turkey?

Yes! HERA is fully open-sourced, replicable and modifiable to respond to the local needs in other countries. Displacement is increasing globally, and our health systems are not designed for people on the move, so we need solutions like HERA, which can “move with the person.” We piloted HERA in Nebraska with Afghan refugees in 2022, and we have plans to pilot in Ghana and Ethiopia in early 2023.

For details visit heradigitalhealth.org

Homecoming 2022

Alumni from eight decades spent a beautiful autumn day on campus during Homecoming on November 6, 2022. Classmates enjoyed reuniting on the steps of Gould Hall, meeting with their former teachers and reminiscing about their days at school. The Class of '72 was in

high spirits as they celebrated the 50th anniversary of their graduation with a special luncheon. Attendees convened in the afternoon in Suna Kıraç Hall for the traditional assembly. Following Roll Call led by Head of School Adam Oliver, the RC Singers performed a couple favorites before the entire

crowd joined in to sing the school songs. Mehmet Baler RC 51 took to the stage one final time to lead the audience in the Boys Song, after which the Alma Mater was sung. Following the assembly, alumni enjoyed strolling through campus and taking photos in front of Gould Hall.



Alumni enjoyed meeting on the steps of Gould Hall...



The Class of '72 celebrated their 50th reunion with a special luncheon

...and spending the day together on campus



Mezmet Baler RC 51, who sadly passed away later in January 2023, took to the stage at Homecoming one last time to sing the Boys Song

A Double Celebration for the Class of '62

Members of the class of ACG 62 had twice as much to celebrate in 2022. Not only did they hold their 60th reunion, but they also celebrated their 80th birthdays.

Sezen Koşagan describes their reunion:

Schools, like trees, are fruit-bearing living institutions demanding love, care and loyalty. We, the 1962 graduates of ACG, believe that we made enormous gains of the school. However, our most significant gain was an indiscriminating devotion among classmates. Since our graduation, most of us have attended frequently get-togethers to share and nurture this friendship and loyalty to the school that colored and blended us. Hence, as this year was the 60th year of our graduation, we attended and enjoyed a well-organized and joyful celebration at a historical mansion, Sait Halim Paşa yalısı, on December 14.

Bikem Pastine, granddaughter of Sezen Koşagan wrote about their birthday party earlier in the year:

In the Moda Club party room, I sat with my *nenem* (grandmother) and her classmates who exchanged stories about their mischievous school days and about the parties RC girls attended in their twenties and thirties and forties. These women grew up together and have gone through life together at its best and worst, and at the center of their life-long friendship, is Robert College. One of the friends tells me that her school days were the best years of her life, and she had tears in her eyes.

Printouts of the lyrics to the college anthem were on each table for those guests that didn't remember the words, but most sang the song without a glance at the paper. Despite this, most of the ladies brought a copy of the lyrics home with them at the end of the party with the gifts they exchanged.

Nenem blew out the birthday candles on behalf of the group and in her toast, she expressed how lucky she felt to have been born in 1942. She and her classmates fell in love to the songs of the 1960's and benefited from the technology of the twenty-first century,



Sezen Koşagan and Mine Öker cut the cake at ACG 62's 80th birthday celebration

being able to meet their loved ones -their children and grandchildren - online even when miles away from each other. Most of all, being born in this lucky year, they were blessed with one another.

Following the birthday cake, silly hats and props were distributed and the whole class of 1962 danced together, there were laughs and tears of joy. I could feel all the love the classmates have for each other in the room.



ACG 62 celebrated their 60th Reunion in style: Figen Tecimer Ozan, Şafak Varer Kocacıklıoğlu, Pınar Fındıkoğlu Utlu, Dilek Erim Yürekli, Güneş Çelebi Çakır, Turay Ucal Yardımcı, Birsen Börü Balkır, Sirel Ecer Karakaş, Hülya Kayaacan Avcı, Sezen Oskan Koşagan, Bilge Gürbüzbilek Deliveli, Suzan Yağlıyan, Ayşe Parman, Melek Yalaz Bolak, Ümit Benadam Ağan and Meral Karafakı Müminoğlu

The Class of Robert Academy '62

The Class of Robert Academy '62 celebrated the 60th anniversary of their graduation at Anadolu Kulübü on Büyükdada on October 15, 2022. Nearly all of them are octogenarians yet still quite energetic. The group took long walks on the island and had a nice get together at night. There were some classmates who had traveled from the US to be there. Many of us were together with our loved ones who had also joined our reunions in the past.

We recounted memories of our good old days at the Bebek Campus and our dear companions understandingly smiled - even laughed - at these, although they were listening to the stories for the umpteenth time.

This bunch of ancient relics try to meet every other month at Bizim Tepe and keep contacts alive.



The Robert Academy Class of '62 at their 60th reunion

ACG 70 Meet for Their 50th+2

On June 25, ACG's Class of 1970 finally met for their 50th+2 reunion which had been postponed twice due to the Covid pandemic. The festivities started on campus, continued with a boat ride along the shores of the Bosphorus and blended into the night at the Armada Hotel "neath the towers and the mosques". There was a lot of reminiscing, loads of laughter and rekindling of friendships. The girls left, hoping to reunite many more times in the future.



It was worth the wait for ACG 70, who were finally able to celebrate their 50th in 2022

RC 72 Celebrates Their 50th “Golden” Reunion



One of several events that RC 72 organized to celebrate their 50th reunion

RC 72 celebrated their 50th in style with a luncheon at school and two dinners at Moda Deniz Kulübü. Mehtap Özönat speaks to everyone's excitement prior to the events: "Since we had been overwhelmed with the pandemic, we hadn't been able to get together for the last two years. And, of course, 2022 was our Golden Year."

According to Hülya Vural Özbek, preparations were half the fun: "I honestly didn't think the preparation phase and the event itself would be this fun. Mehtap Özönat being the chairman, Ayşe Utku, Banu Tansuğ, Coşkun Mançuhan, Lale Ekinci, Mete Til, Mustafa Dağdelen, Müjdat Tohumcu, Oğuz Peker and I made up the committee. We created a comic book under the editorship of Müjdat and Banu. Surprises, gifts, a special shooting and video editing, the venue selection, the list of attendees, the preparation of the night's flow... We

were really busy up to November 7. Teoman Taşpınar had mobilized all the employees to make the night perfect at Moda Deniz Club, where he is the board chairman."

The lunch at school was the perfect start, as Murat Nişancıoğlu conveys: "It was 50 years ago when we left this magnificent school with our hopes, dreams and ambitions. And now we were back, in my case for the first time since I emptied my locker in 1972. Familiar faces from the past were beginning to appear in front of Gould Hall on a sunny autumn morning. After we settled at our tables for lunch, headmaster Adam Oliver gave a speech welcoming us back. Students who had given up their Sunday to take care of us with great charm displayed their musical and literary talents. The 'future' were showcasing to the 'past' and they were impressive."

The celebration continued the next night at Moda Deniz Kulübü, where they had first kicked off their reunion on June 16. Lively conversation, jokes, birthday celebrations, speeches and toasts were the order of the day. Other shenanigans included a special video shown on a giant barcoveision, edited to Mustafa Dağdelen's "Reunion Waltz", which soon got everyone on their feet - and on tabletops!

Özönat says The Golden Reunion Night, reminded them of the sparkling times shared: "We continue our journey carrying the memories of our lost friends, and knowing how precious our bonds of friendship are, the bonds enduring 50 years now." Keeping the momentum of the celebrations, RC 72 had a follow-up meeting on December 17, 2022 at Bizim Tepe, to celebrate the New Year of the class.

RC 82 Picks Up From Where They Left Off at Their 40th

"A cup of coffee has 40 years of memory," as the Turkish saying goes. We, the Class of RC '82, have collected many invaluable memories over the years. The evening of September 24, 2022, surely added many new ones to that memory lane as we celebrated our 40th graduation anniversary.

It was a relief that our gathering was not affected by the pandemic and many of us could travel from different overseas locations for the evening. We met in front of Gould Hall where we started the evening with cocktails and a group photo. Reuniting with some friends for the first time after 40 years was exciting and joyous. There were 64 of us and we had a lot of catching

up to do. Dining, dancing, chatting, singing, remembering lost friends, recalling good old days, we had a great evening. It always feels good to be able to carry on from where you left off, with RC 82. Surrounded by the warmth of friendship we did not mind the cold and had a long, fun get-together. We left Bizim Tepe with smiling faces, warm hearts, sweet memories and a small souvenir bag with pictures of the evening inside.

In honor of our milestone anniversary, we were able to establish an RC 82 endowment fund in memory of our beloved friends who are no longer with us. We are grateful to those who motivated us with their seed money and



RC 82 commemorated their deceased classmates at the reunion, and through an endowed scholarship they raised for their 40th anniversary

everyone that contributed to the fund that will enable our class to be remembered for years to come.

Looking forward to new reunions!

Contributed by Nahit Seçkin RC 82



RC 82 classmates enjoyed catching up on the steps of Gould Hall

The 35th Reunion of RC 87

We celebrated our 35 years of friendship on a magical night at Bizim Tepe and what a night it was. We had cocktails, dinner with flowers, a great DJ, dancing and a surprise 35th birthday cake as we quickly went back to our teenage years and finally took a swim in the pool. We crowned our well-deserved Prom Queen and looked through the pages of our "35th Bulletin". We all wore our RC hats and took photos. It was fun, it was different, and it was sincere. The positive vibes flowing throughout

the night and through all of us were unique. We are thankful to our 35th Reunion Committee for making it all happen.

Nothing really compares to being among old friends who have known one another since childhood and share many memories. We laughed and quickly returned to those memories as we watched the video with photos from old Records. It is true that we are stronger and closer than ever as RC 87 since our 30th reunion.

Thanks to whatsapp and thanks to our dedication, we stayed in touch and had regular meetings every first Tuesday of the month for the last five years. This has brought us together and given us a chance to be closer to our old friends and discover new ones whom we simply cannot live without, the ones with whom we will embrace our golden years. We love you RC 87.

*Contributed by Aylin Barlas Sarici
RC 87*



The Class of 87 enjoyed a special evening together at Bizim Tepe for their 35th reunion

RC 92 Gets into the Groove for their 30th Reunion

June 25th was quite an extravagant evening, an evening full of a vast variety of feelings but mostly joy, amusement and amazement, and a little bit of melancholy and nostalgia. As RC 92 we had our class gathering, celebrating our 30th year. Our class had the tradition of gathering at least once each year, but we couldn't get together for two years, due to Covid's isolation and social distancing. As the class agents, we were enthusiastic and keen on getting classmates together at our beloved school, just like the old days. As always, it was an evening of re-connecting, sharing memories and celebrating life. Fifty-one old friends coming from all around the world for the occasion met on the iconic stairs of Gould Hall. There were so many hugs and kisses, astonishment, exclamations as some of us didn't see each other for a long time. Murat Aslan and I made the welcoming speech.

We were excited to announce the launch of the RC 92 Scholarship Endowment Fund which will continue as long as RC stands. Once again, we would like to thank all our friends who contributed



and committed to contribute to the fund, especially the ones in the endowment fund committee; Burak Karaçam, Petek Günay, Tamer Tamar, Serkan Savaşoğlu and Bora Samman.

After the welcoming cocktail, we started to re-live the Lise Balls with food from our cafeteria and music by Burak Susoy,

who used to be one of the DJs of the balls 30 years ago. Lively dances proved we were still in the groove. The night ended on the grass of the Plateau, with all friends promising to meet again soon. Everyone went home with a gift of a "RC 92 Ain't no pipe!" t-shirt.

Contributed by Doğan Kaşıkçı RC 92



RC 92 were excited to be back together again on campus for their 30th reunion

Pars Kibarar RC 94 Turns Passion Into A Lifelong Commitment to Purebred Dogs

Pars Kibarar has been passionate about dogs since childhood. In the 90s, there was neither a kennel club nor an organized body about dogs and fanciers in Turkey. Initially, he started writing articles for the only pet magazine in Turkey. Later, he started organizing some of Turkey's first dog shows.

In 2006, with a small like-minded group, he established Köpek Irkları ve Kinoloji Federasyonu (KIF - Turkish Kennel Club), a registry for purebred dogs. KIF became a full member of the Fédération Cynologique Internationale



(FCI), the largest canine organization in the world. Kibarar is currently the General Secretary of KIF and a member of the native breeds committee which

is responsible for the recognition, research and drafting of the standard of local breeds.

Kibarar recommends to those who are ready to make a commitment to take their time to find a trustable non-commercial breeder and select a breed that is suitable for their family, lifestyle and environment with the right kind of temperament and energy levels. Those interested in KIF are welcome to attend one of the activities announced on their website (www.kif.org.tr) or they can contact Kibarar.

Ayşe Tanyeri RC 98 Creates App Centered on Children's Emotional Well-Being

Ayşe Tanyeri has plunged into entrepreneurship following a "too long Covid" episode in 2020-21. She promised herself that, if she got better, she wanted to work on something meaningful, after a career in financial services, Tesco and Amazon. Seeing her child (and many others around the world) struggle emotionally during lockdowns made her realize she wanted to focus on children's emotional well-being. Tanyeri was selected to join Zinc, a mission-driven

accelerator in London, and made it to the final round of companies to receive funding. Working with mental health practitioners, her early-stage business, Assembly (getassembly.co.uk), teaches parents evidence-based psychology skills to support and boost their children's emotional well-being. If you are passionate about the topic, do get in touch with her via LinkedIn or at ayse@getassembly.co.uk - she knows she needs all the support she can get as a founder!



Çağıl Akçürin RC 05 Founds Kurumsal Ev

The pandemic has acted as a catalyst and accelerated the rate of change of the way we work. The "new normal" standards have started taking their permanent places in everyone's lives. With the office going through a transformation, Çağıl Akçürin built on the experience of his architectural firm, REDA, in A+ office design and construction; he founded the sub-brand Kurumsal Ev.



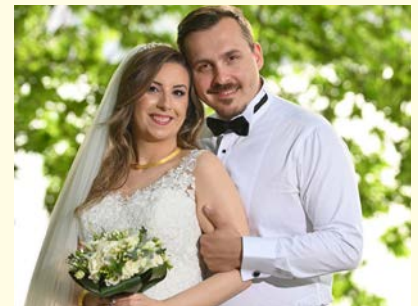
Kurumsal Ev started its journey with supplying the remote workforce of corporate companies with compact working units, in a sense, creating "furniture fleets," similar to corporate car fleets.

"Remote working morphed into hybrid working," says Akçürin. "Companies

are having long-term decisions about how the work will take shape based on their corporate values, workplace options, employee requests and overall satisfaction. As Kurumsal Ev, we guide the companies with data, global trends and tailored solutions suitable for their organizations.

Şeyda Ece Sarıbaş RC 10

Şeyda met Andreas Koumpanis in Germany, where she has been living since 2017. The couple tied the knot on May 28, 2022, in Greece and currently reside in Dortmund, Germany, where Şeyda continues her career as a pediatrician.



Tutku Bektaş RC 13 Selected For International Law Fellowship

Tutku Bektaş joins a select few for the prestigious International Court of Justice (ICJ) Judicial Fellowship Program in The Hague, Netherlands. The ICJ, the main judicial body of the United Nations, offers this fellowship to early career legal professionals each year, providing them with the opportunity to gain valuable experience in international law.

Upon completing the ICJ fellowship, Bektaş will be based in London and will

undergo training as a pupil barrister at the Bar of England and Wales. Bektaş received her law degree from the University of Oxford and her master's degree from NYU Law School. "My time at Robert College, particularly participating in MUN, had an impact on my career in international law," says Bektaş. "I am grateful for the opportunities and experiences I had at RC, and I am thrilled to have the chance to work at the ICJ."



Onur Çelik RC 22 Offers Unique Carpooling Solution

Onur Çelik founded Pooly, a tech start-up seeking to provide a smart, social, and sustainable solution to daily commuting. Pooly aims to unite travelers to the same places, whether they are using a vehicle or not. With social media-like features, AI algorithms that can learn from users' daily routines, a dynamic map that can solve the city's urgent mobility issues by identifying major happening events, and route optimization technologies, Pooly sets



itself apart from other carpooling apps. Çelik started with a question and formulated an answer: "Carpooling is the first alternative in many countries - why not in Turkey? There are companies who give these services. Our difference is, we are using AI algorithms and machine learning to provide better services. We have categorized our users into communities and we're matching people who would probably get along.

faculty & friends news

RC's Beloved Çiğdem Yazıcıoğlu Shines on in New Chapter

Excerpt from the September 2, 2022 article in Oksijen newspaper by Elçin Yahşi RC 79

Known as "Çiğdem Abla" of the Orta Office in the 1980s, Çiğdem Yazıcıoğlu later became an invaluable member of the RC Development Office and worked at RC for 31 years until her retirement in 2018 (see RCQ 52, p. 55). As she started enjoying her retirement through art and travel, her first chapter abruptly ended during a horse-riding safari in Africa. She now chronicles her second chapter in her Instagram account "ikincihayatim" and shines like a beacon of light, hope, and inspiration for the quadriplegic community.

Yazıcıoğlu was thrown off her horse in Masai Mara, Kenya, when the



horse got attacked by a hippo. An experienced rider, she immediately understood she was paralyzed. After a series of operations, a four-month long stay in American Hospital, followed by specialized physical therapy in Ankara, Yazıcıoğlu finally returned home, and that is when she decided

to launch her inspiring and sincere Instagram account:

"I had a lot of time in my hands at the hospital, so I started surfing social media and discovered accounts by people like me. I thought I'd do something similar, as a diary for myself, as an explanation to my acquaintances who are afraid of asking upsetting questions and to show people in my situation that they are not alone. I was a positive person in my first chapter, and I choose to be positive in my second chapter. How can I be negative, when there has been such an outpouring of love and support from all around?"

You can follow Çiğdem Yazıcıoğlu on Instagram at @ikincihayatim

Haluk Kilimci RC 50

Haluk Kilimci, a long-time supporter of Robert College, and owner of İzmir Palas Hotel, passed away on August 8, 2022.

Born in İzmir, Kilimci entered Robert Academy in 1940, following in the footsteps of his older siblings Şükrü Kilimci and Fehime Kilimci Alam. He went on to get his master's from Wharton before returning to İzmir to work in his family's hotel business which included İzmir Palas Hotel, İzmir Hotel and Kilim Hotel.

Kilimci told the RCQ in 2012, "There were so many activities that were happening; I couldn't participate in all of them. I was active in the Student Council, RC Handbook, and I was the General Manager of the Record, for which I was able to raise a lot of money. RC helps you transition to the outside world through participating in such organizations while at school.



You learn how to convince other people and turn ideas into successful achievements."

A boarding student for a decade on the Bebek campus, Kilimci's formative years were shaped through the friendships he built in the dorms. In 2017 the lounge in the RC boys' residence was named after him, in

recognition of his generous support to Robert College over the years.

Kilimci was a dedicated supporter of education, and a life-long contributor to Robert College. Over the years he was consistently one of Robert College's largest donors and made exceptional gifts, including donating his home in Florida and leaving a generous bequest in his will. In the 2012 interview with the RCQ he said, "I give regularly to the Annual Giving Campaign because I feel that the school has contributed to my vision. It's a great school and it trains you to easily adapt to real life through practice and knowledge that you get from books and activities."

Members of the RC community will miss his ever-smiling presence at the Annual Giving Kick-off and Homecoming each year.

Mehveş Sarıca Subaşı ACG 49



Mehveş joined our class in the Freshman year after graduating from the English High School for Girls. She looked noble both in spirit and appearance and was politeness personified. She was always kind, considerate, calm and serene. She took part in cultural activities and was very successful in class plays. Later in life, she represented our country as an ambassador for many years. She always remained close to her friends and

was regularly present at the monthly luncheons of our class.

She passed away in her residence on June 1, 2022, and will be greatly missed. She is survived by her son Suphi, daughter Serra, grandchildren and her sister Ayşegül Sarıca.

Contributed by Güner Fansa ACG 49

Mehmet Baler RC 51

Mehmet Baler passed away on Jan 6, 2023. He was a devoted RC graduate, an active alumnus and a loyal participant at every Homecoming. He arranged class reunions almost every year until very recently. Inheriting his humor, wit and amiable traits from his father Bal Mahmut and his mother Seniha Yazıcıoğlu RC 25, he was full of positive energy. A rare İstanbul Beyefendi'si, he was social and generous, touching everybody's heart. A larger-than-life figure, he was smart, knowledgeable

and very perceptive. An optimist by birth, he was cherished by his family, friends and almost everyone he met especially in Moda (where he spent his childhood and youth), Bodrum and Kandilli. He is survived by his daughter Zeynep Toydemir RC 73, his son Mustafa Baler, and grandchildren. His beloved wife of 68 years passed away only two months ago. May he rest in peace.

Contributed by Zeynep Baler Toydemir and Mustafa Baler

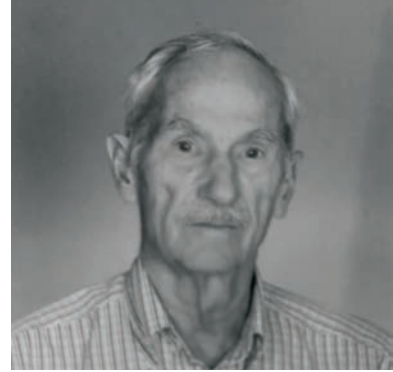


Aydın Tlabar RC ENG 55

Aydın Tlabar passed away in his Walnut Creek, CA home on January 1, 2023. He was 93 years old. An Istanbul gentleman with impeccable character and integrity, Aydın was loved and respected by his friends, business associates and all who knew him. He was a symbol of unselfish behavior, considerate and kind to all. Aydın graduated from Galatasaray High School, and from Robert College Engineering School as a civil engineer. As a senior partner in his Turkish company Aydın designed and oversaw the

construction of numerous dams in Turkey, Asia and Argentina. His reputation as an expert in engineering and constructing water works was recognized and admired by the engineering communities of Turkey, Europe, Asia and the US. He is survived by his wife Mine, his children, Zeynep, Mehmet Ali and Deniz, by grandsons Bora, Alp and granddaughter Nazlı Sienna.

Contributed by Ahmet Taşpınar RC ENG 56



Sündüs Ulusemre Ecder ACG 57

Our dear mother passed away on July 24, 2022. She had a kind and gentle personality, deep intellect, a passion for literature and a life full of books and cats.

Her mother, a teacher, had introduced her to literature even before entering ACG. She had completed reading all the literary masterpieces in her early teens. Her devotion to reading led her to build



a library of several thousand books. Her frequent reminder of a quote by Joseph

Addison has been the inspiration in our journey to academia: "Education is a companion which no misfortune can depress, no crime can destroy, no enemy can alienate, no despotism can enslave. At home a friend, abroad an introduction, in solitude a solace and in society an ornament." We miss her a lot.

Contributed by Ali Ecder RC 80 and Tevfik Ecder

Savaş Arıkan RA 61



Savaş Haşım Arıkan, RA 61, RC 65, and master's from ODTÜ, passed away on

October 11, 2022, in Bursa where he lived throughout his professional life. During his studies at RA and later at RC, he broke many of his friends' fingers but never a heart.

His endless jokes could fill quite a few volumes of books. Thus, many of his friends might have memories of Savaş much more than those of other people in their life span. After his studies as

a brilliant mechanical engineer, he took place among the pioneers of the Turkish automotive industry. He was with Tofaş since its start and worked there until he retired after more than 30 years of hard work as the Manager of Technical Services. He is survived by his only son Cenk. May God rest his soul in peace.

Contributed by Doğan Silay RA 61

Pamir Artam RA 66

Pamir has always been one of the most revered members of RA 65 and 66. Being with him, you would immediately observe the flashes of a sharp intellect with a charming sense of humor. Watching his down-to-earth attitude, humble personality, honesty and candor, it was so easy to love Pamir. He was a gentle soul, a "beyefendi". He loved RA, what it stood for and was very proud of being part of it. He attended Hacettepe University School of Medicine and became an MD. Following his father's steps, he specialized in Obstetrics

and Gynecology. After his long career in Germany he returned home to continue his practice in Turkey. His fierce dedication to his profession with uncompromising principles followed him throughout his career. Pamir will be sorely missed not only by his wife, Nermin, his son Tanil and his classmates but also all those whose lives were touched by him.

Contributed by Osman Baran RA 66 and Ali Candoğan RA 66



Uğur Tüzün RC 73

Uğur Tüzün passed away on December 18, 2021. After RC, Uğur moved to the UK where he studied chemical engineering at the University of Leeds, followed by a PhD from Cambridge. As an active teacher and researcher of particle technology, he spent much of his career at Surrey University where he became Head of Process Engineering until his early retirement in 2011. Following his retirement, Uğur had begun to publish on systems engineering and sustainability. Had he lived, he would undoubtedly have contributed further in



this field. His colleagues at the University of Surrey remember him as demonstrative,

scientifically argumentative, infectiously enthusiastic, always ambitious to do things no-one had attempted before and immensely good fun to be with. Among other things, he was impressively elegant at a time when that was hardly the norm for university staff. He lived well and will be remembered with affection.

Excerpts from The Chemical Engineer article by John Seville FICHEME

Moris Amon RC 73

Moris Amon passed away on October 10, 2022. After graduating from Boğaziçi University, Moris went on to the University of Delaware where he received his PhD in chemical engineering. A holder of numerous patents, he worked as a technical director at companies such as ExxonMobil and Avery Dennison before founding his own consultancy in 2010. Moris was an accomplished violinist and played throughout his life, having learned

when he was a child in Istanbul. He played in community orchestras everywhere he lived and was most recently a member of the Suburban Symphony Orchestra in Ohio for 16 years, up until his death. He was also an avid chamber musician. Moris Amon is survived by his mother Eda Amon ACG 44, wife Terry, sons Avi and Jeremy, daughter Sabrina, grandchildren Noa and Vivian, brother Victor Amon RA 68 and sister Deniz Horada.



Hüseyin Akkoyunlu RC 73

Hüseyin had an indomitable *joie de vivre* even during the most challenging of times. In fact, when he left us after a valiant fight with leukemia on the morning of September 18, 2021, he still had myriad exciting projects in mind. His positive spirit never wavered. Upon graduating from RC, Hüseyin went on to get a degree in industrial engineering at the Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ), where he also completed his graduate work. His disciplined, inquisitive



spirit, his infinite quest for knowledge, his determination and positive outlook, his

love of music and his wish to find creative, practical solutions to daily problems stayed with him throughout his life. For his friends and all who knew him, he was a warm, loving, trustworthy person, a genuine safe haven. He is survived by a son and two daughters as well as, two grandchildren who were by his side. His colorful personality will live on in our minds and hearts.

Contributed by his loving friends

Bozkurt Leblebicioğlu RC 76



Bozkurt was a remarkably kind and soft-spoken person as well as a voracious reader. After RC, he attended

Boğaziçi University's Department of International Relations. He pursued a career in banking after training in Manchester, until he retired in 2012. He continued his studies in history and made contributions to the Library of Alexandria project. Bozkurt was also a photographer, whose exhibited works won acclaim, and a translator of non-fiction texts. Bozkurt's wife Aynur İlyasoglu, a professor of sociology, passed away in 2019. It was only a year later that Bozkurt was diagnosed with a

malignant disease. His sister Dilek, a brain surgeon, and his brother Gürsel, a professor of orthopedics, put their best efforts forward both medically and emotionally, never leaving him alone. He was an active member of our RC 76 Whatsapp Group; we benefitted from his deep insights and knowledge. Always gracious, thoughtful, philosophical; a Stoic, if I could describe him with one word.

Contributed by Nedim Ölçer RC 76

İbrahim Akdemir RC 76

It was with deep bitterness that we heard of the loss of our good friend in May 2022. He will always be remembered with his sincere smile which reflected a personality full of optimism. His positive character provided comfort to all who were lucky enough to know him. Although his frame earned him the nickname "Boss" among his friends, he was so kind as not to take a bossy stance against anyone. He fathered a son

and a daughter by his beloved wife Nilgün, with whom he married in the prime of his youth. Raising his children and witnessing their achievements was his greatest source of joy and pride. A sudden heart attack took him away from his family and friends who will sorely miss him. Our only consolation lays in thinking that he must have reunited with his loved ones who departed earlier. May he rest in eternal peace... Farewell Boss!



Canan Çetinkaya RC L12 04



Canan passed away on December 7, 2021, at age 37. She shall be remembered with great love, fondness, and respect. She graduated from Yeditepe University Medical Faculty in 2010 where she also became a phytotherapy specialist in 2018. She worked as an occupational physician until August 2020, when she was diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer. She worked day and night during the first months of the pandemic. Her family, friends and patients always came first.

Although Canan departed from this earth, she will never truly leave for, those of us, who are lucky to call her a friend, will always keep her alive in our hearts, minds and prayers. She was a successful doctor, a graceful woman and a kind-hearted human being. We wish you farewell in your journey to eternity, Canan. May you rest in light and find peace in heaven.

Contributed by Ceyda Bade Kırallı and Serli (Küçükyan) Canseven RC L12 04

faculty and friends obituaries

Betty Kondayan

Our beloved English teacher Betty Ruth English Kondayan passed away on July 28, 2022, at the age of 92. Born in Mobile, Alabama in 1930, she considered Istanbul as her second homeland. Betty taught at ACG between 1955 and 1970, married RC math teacher Ohannes Aram Kondayan and had her son Haig in Istanbul. Back in the States in 1970 she got a degree in librarianship and worked as a librarian until 1987. Since then, she had been living in Lexington, VA and enjoying, above all, reading but also opera, art history and watching tennis on TV.

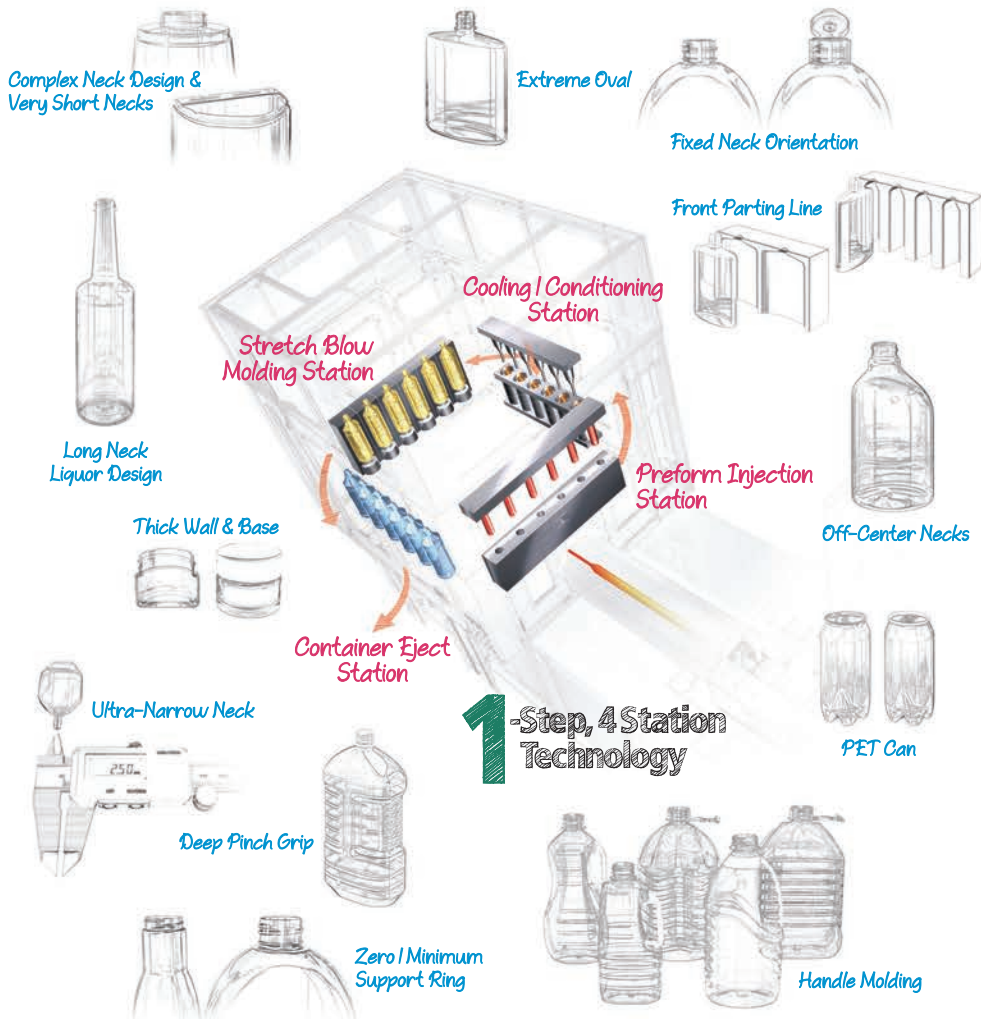


Mrs. Kondayan, as we called her, was the most fascinating teacher our class had ever had. She was highly knowledgeable, very witty, energetic, entertaining but also quite firm on principles. She was a wonderful influence on us in our most formative years.

To read messages from Betty Kondayan's ACG 69 students, visit website.robcol.k12.tr/en/alumni/rc-quarterly/obituaries

Contributed by Nüket Tezcan Esen ACG 69

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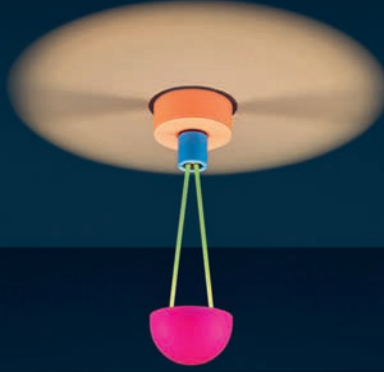
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