



GREAT HONOR FOR TURKISH MUSICIAN

Bülent Güneralp, a Turkish artist who lives in Boston, received a grant from the Natick Cultural Council for an opera and Broadway concert he will present. The Massachusetts State Senate honored our artist with a citation in recognition of his success.

Bülent Güneralp received the Senate Citation following his performance at the Natick Cultural Council's 6th Annual Grant Reception this past March, which was covered by local TV stations. The artist, who also participates in activities presenting Turkey in the Greater Boston Area, most recently gave a performance this past March at the Mayor's Office in Boston. The event was organized by the Office's Cultural Awareness Committee and the Turkish American Cultural Society of New England.

In January 2009, Bülent Güneralp received the “Omaggio al Bel Canto” Best Interpretation Award at the Stelle dell'Anno Nuovo Festival organized for the Boston Opera Collaborative members by the Dante Alighieri Italian Cultural Center of Massachusetts and the Consulate General of Italy. The event was aired by Italy's RAI International TV, and news about the event appeared on different internet sites. A local station, Cambridge TV, also aired a program during the month of March about the life and career of Turkish artist Bülent Güneralp, who has a reputation in the music scene of the Boston and Massachusetts region. The feature program, which Güneralp opened with *Yemen Türküsü (Lament of Yemen)*, was aired on many TV channels and internet sites throughout the month. Erkut Gömülü, the Honorary Consul General of Turkey in Boston and the President of the Turkish American Cultural Society of New England was among the guests in the program with his wife Ferhan Gömülü, the Secretary General of the Society.

Güneralp comes from an artistic family. He was raised in Üsküdar, Istanbul, by his grandmother Perihan Güneralp, who played the piano and first led him to music at an early age. His uncle Hayrullah Tiner, who Güneralp says is an inspiring example for him, graduated from the Painting Department of the Istanbul State Fine Arts Academy in the 1950s as a student of Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu. In the same years, he also sang as soloist in the TRT (Turkish Radio and Television) Turkish Folk Music Chorus, which was formed by Nedim Otyam. Güneralp began his vocal training with his mother Aysel Tunalı, who graduated from the Painting Department of the Istanbul State Fine Arts Academy first in her class, and is also an opera artist, a dramatic coloratura soprano. Güneralp continued his studies with soprano Suna Korat, a [Turkish] State Artist. Subsequently, he studied at the Istanbul University State Conservatory as a student of mezzo soprano Çiçek Kanter. In 1998, following his performance as soloist in Beethoven's 9th *Symphony* under the direction of American conductor William Thomas who was on a concert tour in Istanbul, he won a full scholarship from Longy School of Music in Boston, and was invited by Mr. Thomas to sing in Japan as soloist in Handel's *Messiah Oratorio*. In the following years, he studied at and graduated from the Boston Conservatory on a full scholarship.

Güneralp has been performing in such diverse genres as lied, opera, oratorio, folk, spirituals, Broadway, and pop. In 2006, he performed songs by Ferit Hilmi Atrek at Boston University with the Musica Anatolia International Contemporary Music Ensemble formed in Boston by Turkish composer Koray Sazlı. He sang as soloist in the world-première of *Missa Patri Pio* by Leonardo Ciampa. In 2008, he created the role of Jewish Man in the world-première of Delvyn Case's dramatic opera, *The Prioress's Tale*, which has a deep message about understanding and peace. In the same year, he gave a concert at the Boston Turkish Culture and Art Festival. On October 29th, he sang *Lament of Yemen* to open the ceremony held in front of the Boston City Hall to commemorate the Turkish Republic Day, and sang our National Anthem as our flag was raised. He sang our folk songs in the reception that followed.

In 2006, Bülent Güneralp formed La Scena concert duo with pianist Eunyoung Kim. Güneralp is also a member of Boston Opera Collaborative and Enterprise Opera. The performance recordings and future performances of our artist, and detailed information can be found at www.bulentguneralp.com.

Article by Cahit Oktay
