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## **AYSE TASPINAR UNVEILS LIGHT OF ANATOLIA/APRICOT TREE CULTURAL FOUNDATION TO BENEFIT DIVERSE COMMUNITIES IN CALIFORNIA**

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CISION PR Newswire (10 December 2018)

Pianist Dr. Ayse Taspinar has launched Light Of Anatolia/Apricot Tree, a new foundation for the performing arts dedicated to developing cross-cultural understanding and communication between diverse ethnic communities.

"Apricot Tree was born out of a need for cultural connection," said Taspinar. "We want to form a bond between communities used to being defined by conflict." Taspinar is an acclaimed pianist who has performed in Europe, Asia, South America, and North America, and aims to unite diverse audiences through her music.

LOA/Apricot Tree held its inaugural gala fundraiser on Nov. 3rd at the residence of Emine Gülistan, which was attended by an audience of 250 with Vanda Ayrapetyan serving as the Master of Ceremonies. The program included moving performances of classical masterpieces by Ottoman Armenian and Turkish composers played by Taspinar. The line-up also featured Narine Balikjian and Vazgen Barsegian, who performed the folk song, "Sari Gelin," dedicated to the memory of Turkish Armenian journalist, Hrant Dink.

Proceeds from the fundraiser will fund LOA/Apricot Tree's first initiative, a solo recording of rare pieces performed by Taspinar. The project is produced by UCLA music professor Robert Winter and will be released in 2019. The organization's other purpose is to bring together an orchestra of Armenian and Turkish musicians in a unique collaboration. Turkish composer Erberk Eryilmaz is developing a piano composition dedicated to the memory of Dink for the project, while Armenian violinist, Kristapor Allen Najarian will compose a work for the orchestra.

LOA/Apricot Tree also features a youth program to encourage collaborations among young musicians, which will be headed by Akin Orbay.

### **About LOA/Apricot Tree**

LOA/Apricot Tree is an independent non-profit organization that promotes cross-cultural engagement between various communities indigenous to the Near East. In addition to Taspinar, the LOA/Apricot Tree is comprised of other notable musicians on its board, including Grammy nominated musician Brian O'Neal. The organization's mission is to encourage understanding and communication between people and inspire younger generations to build a peaceful future. The organization develops cultural exchange programs based on the performing arts, with an

emphasis on music, to foster empathy between diverse groups.

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/ayse-taspinar-unveils-light-of-anatoliaapricot-tree-cultural-foundation-to-benefit-diverse-communities-in-california-300762438.html>

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