



***PRESS RELEASE***  
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**First Lady of Azerbaijan awarded a UNESCO Medal**

At the annual meeting of UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors on March 4, 2005, the Director-General Koichiro Matsuura presented a medal to First Lady of Azerbaijan Mehriban Aliyeva, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, President of the Friends of Azerbaijani Culture Foundation and of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation.

Addressing the meeting, Mr. Matsuura highlighted that Azerbaijan possesses abundant historic monuments, culture and music. He gave a high appraisal to Mrs. Aliyeva's contribution to preserving and promoting Mugham (national folk music) as well as to her work on assisting the sick and orphan children. He also invited the First Lady of Azerbaijan to an international exhibition to be held in Nagoya, Japan, under the UNESCO auspices in June, adding that a group of Mugham masters will perform at the event.

First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, speaking of the assistance provided by UNESCO for the perpetuation of Azerbaijani music, pointed out that Mugham had been included in the Organization's cultural heritage list.

A concert featuring Azerbaijani music was held at the Lodauyen saloon of Paris following the meeting of UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors. The famous musician Mstislav Rostropovich, speaking at the event, said he was proud to be originally from Baky. The maestro expressed his admiration of Azerbaijani music, particularly Mugham.

**First ever Old City Festival to be held in Baky**

UNESCO and the World Bank will hold a three-day event in the Old City of Baky late in April, 2005, which will be similar to the famous Rio de Janeiro Carnival. Attending the festival will be prominent figures such as the Council of Europe Assistant Secretary General on Culture, Mod de Buer Bukikkio, Assistant Principal of the US Smithson University Richard Kennedy, President of the New York Foundation for Protection of Historic Monuments Tack Brynn as well as UNESCO and WB executives.

A number of foreign embassies accredited in Azerbaijan have offered assistance in holding the event. A well-known puppet theater from France and the Spinning Dervishes from Turkey are expected to arrive in Baku. Among carnival activities are ancient competitions, an exhibition of Azerbaijani artists, a Mugham concert, a fashion show and many more.

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