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Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble from New York on Stage in Yerevan

Yerevan, June 20, 2008 – We are pleased to announce that the Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble in New York City will make its third trip to Yerevan and celebrate its 15th anniversary at the Opera house on Thursday July 3, 2008 under the auspices of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund.

50 dancers and vocalists among them Hovig Krikorian, Hermine Amirian, Armen Hovannesian, Sosie Mardirossian, Salpi Mailian, will perform for the Armenian audience. Also featured will be the Vahakn Drum Ensemble of Yerevan directed by Araz Ordinian. Vagharshak Ohanyian and Leila Saribekyan are among the performers. The concert program also includes poetic recitation by Anahit Ishkanyan.

The ensemble will also give an open-air performance for the military force based at Nubarashen, Yerevan on July 6.

The Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble, under the auspices of the Saint Vartan Cathedral in New York City, came into existence in 1992 as a small, young cultural group when a few teenagers wanted to familiarize the non-Armenian community with Armenian history, culture, and traditions. On the occasion of the 3rd anniversary of the liberation of the ancient capital city “Shushi” in Karabagh in 1995, the group adopted the name “Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble.”

Today, fifteen years later, the group has flourished to 110 dancers, consisting of elementary, high school and college students, and young professionals. Most of these dancers are American born and represent Armenian youth from various parishes in the New York/New Jersey area. The group meets each week to practice, under the leadership of Seta Paskalian-Kantardjian, Choreographer and Artistic Director of the group, who is well-respected for her meritorious career in dance, and tremendous dedication to teaching Armenian dance, in various venues.

Seta Kantardjian's astonishing dancing ability has emerged from a young age when, as a teenager, she started to perform in Lebanon. She continued dancing after immigrating to the United States. The artistic director of the ensemble for years now, Seta Kantardjian is the one who inspires her students to dance and love it. The dances the ensemble performs are vivid reflection of the love the dancers have for their homeland and its culture.

The ensemble traveled widely in the USA and abroad. They have had several concerts in the homeland – Armenia and Karabakh. To name a few, Shushi performed at Khor Virab in July of 2000 for an international audience of 3000 youth in honor of the 1700th Anniversary of Armenia's adoption of Christianity. As a result of this performance, Shushi was featured in the March 2003 issue of The National Geographic. In May 2005, Shushi commemorated the 90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide with the renowned musician Ara Gevorgian. In July 2005, Shushi performed in Yerevan, Armenia, and in July 2005, in Stepanakert, Karabagh.

In September 2007, Shushi Dance Ensemble kicked off its 15th anniversary by joining two renowned Armenian superstars, Shushan Petrosyan and Tigran Petrosyan at the Millennium Theatre in Brooklyn, NY. In October 2007, Shushi was one of the highlights at the 15th anniversary celebration of the Armenia Fund USA at the United Nations in NYC. Also in October, Shushi performed at Columbia University's second annual Armenian Festival and at Fordham University when Vehapar made his pontifical visit to NY.

Hayastan All Armenian Fund invites everyone to enjoy the spectacle the ensemble will create on July 3.