

# F I D O F

*FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES ORGANISATIONS DE FESTIVALS*

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September 12, 2008

NEA National Heritage Fellowships  
Folk & Traditional Arts  
National Endowment for the Arts  
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Rm 720  
Washington, DC 20506-0001

Re: John Bilezikjian NEA NH Fellowship Nomination

Dear Selection Committee:

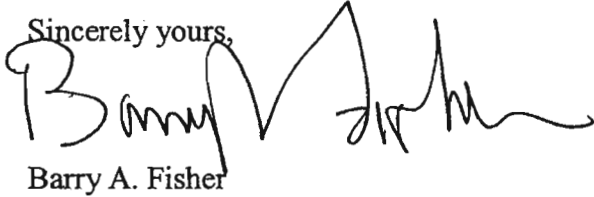
I nominate John Bilezikjian, 24632 Saturna Dr., Mission Viejo, California 92691, for a 2008 NEA National Heritage Fellowship. John, a foremost Armenian music authority, is a world-concertizing master folk and traditional oudist who has lectured and worked widely in world music, often exploring the intersections of Armenian music with the music of many other peoples, including Romani (so-called Gypsies), Sephardic Jewish, and other peoples who have lived in diaspora throughout the world. John is an articulate, creative teacher and he is a gifted composer of much music, including composition used in many theatre and film productions. He is an inspiration to fellow musicians, students and the many audiences who greatly appreciate his preservation of the traditional music he learned from his grandparents and parents

I am a musician, concert producer, ASCAP member, have served as a judge at music competitions around the world, and am a human rights lawyer on behalf of ethnic, religious and other minorities as set out in my enclosed bio. I have also enclosed a page on a world music ensemble I lead, Ellis Island. John and I have collaborated on music presentations and lectures for nearly 40 years ranging from student days ethnomusic concerts at UCLA Schoenberg Hall to cross cultural performance in Italy. In addition to the oud, John plays violin and several other instruments and sings in several languages, including Armenian, Ladino, Turkish, and Greek. Most recently we presented world music at UCLA's Royce Hall and other venues along with Romani and Yiddish specialists in a three day program co-sponsored by the UCLA Department of Ethnomusicology. Programs in which I have participated with him include several exploring the music immigrant Sephardic and Armenians brought to Mexico in the early 20<sup>th</sup>

Century, and concerning Sephardic and Latino music intersections and commonalities.

Unquestionable, John Bilezikjian rightly deserves NEA recognition for his lifetime achievement, artistic excellence, and contributions to our nation's traditional arts heritage.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry A. Fisher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping tail.

Barry A. Fisher