



# Kaan Nazlı and the Moon and Stars Project

## Inspiring New Yorkers through contemporary Turkish art and culture

By Müge Mengü Hale, RC 92

As co-director of the Moon and Stars Project in New York, Kaan Nazlı, RC 95, is a familiar face to many people. Since it was founded by Nur Emirgil, RC 72, in 2002, the organization has become one of the city's most vibrant cultural players.

As one of the co-directors of this all-volunteer enterprise, Nazlı plays a big role in bringing the best and brightest of the Turkish art and cultural scene to New Yorkers. He says he owes his support and appreciation of arts to his days at Robert College. "Like many RC graduates, I developed a strong passion for theater and arts as a communication medium, which is at the core of the Moon and Stars Project."

By day, Nazlı is a financial executive. After RC, he studied political science at Ankara University and then received an MA in economy and political science from NYU. On his first day at work, Turkey plunged into a financial crisis and Nazlı was thereby destined to become an expert on Turkish financial markets.

"It's amazing how robust the Turkish economy has gotten in the last few years. In those days, a simple statement by the prime minister could cause the market to crash, but today the country stood resilient even in the face of a massive US financial storm," he says. He currently works as an economist on Eastern Europe and the Middle East for a private consulting company.

The Moon and Stars Project has flourished into an established cultural organization in just a decade thanks to the work of devoted volunteers. "The work is about helping multiple audiences" says Nazlı. "For the artists, it is a platform to reach out to audiences in the US; for cultural organizations, a



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one-stop-shop to collaborate in order to present cultural programs from or about Turkey, and for the viewers, an outlet to see what is going on in the thriving Turkish arts scene."

Be it a traditional or contemporary music concert, a play, an exhibition, or a current Turkish film in the annual Turkish film festival, the Moon and Stars Project brings the best of Istanbul and Turkey's cultural productions to New York. By featuring the works of popular and international Turkish artists, filmmakers and musicians in exceptional venues, the organization showcases the modern face of contemporary Turkish culture. "It is a gratifying experience to be able to meet and work with new people and keep an eye on Turkey's transformation through that of its arts," says Nazlı.

### The Moon and Stars Project

The Moon and Stars Project was founded in 2002 in New York. It is a non-profit organization dedicated to highlighting contemporary Turkish arts and culture and establishing a two-way cultural interaction between the US and Turkey. Growing out of May Fest, a month-long festival first started in 1999, the Moon and Stars Project is now an organization that presents year-round programs which incorporate the visual arts, theater, film, traditional and contemporary music, project sponsorships and grants. [www.moonandstarsproject.org](http://www.moonandstarsproject.org)

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