

Bilkent to Confer Honorary Doctorates on Özlem Türeci and Uğur Şahin

Last Friday, March 5, the Bilkent University Board of Trustees approved the University Senate's proposal to bestow honorary doctorates upon Dr. Özlem Türeci and Prof. Uğur Şahin.

As two of the founders of the Germany-based biotechnology company BioNTech, Dr. Türeci and Prof. Şahin played a central role in the development of a COVID-19 vaccine in less than a year.

Both Prof. Şahin and Dr. Türeci (who are married to each other) are physicians and academics with a research background in oncology and



immunology, as well as entrepreneurs who have founded two companies. Prof. Şahin is BioNTech's CEO, while Dr. Türeci, as the company's chief medical officer, is responsible for clinical research and development. BioNTech, founded in 2008, began

conducting research on a vaccine against COVID-19 in January 2020 during the early days of the pandemic. In cooperation with the pharmaceutical company Pfizer, BioNTech developed the messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) vaccine BNT162b2. It was authorized for emergency use in the UK in December 2020; approval in many other countries followed. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is currently one of the leading vaccines being administered worldwide against COVID-19.

It is planned to hold a ceremony at Bilkent in the near future to confer the honorary doctorates.

University Senate Approves In-Person Midterm Exam Option

As was the case for final examinations last semester, this semester's midterm examinations will be held online, with students logging into virtual "classrooms" to take the exams via Zoom.

Alternatively, as per a decision taken by the Bilkent University Senate on March 5, those students who wish to do so may take their midterms in a physical classroom on campus (with a proctor present), upon the student's request and the instructor's agreement.

Students must make the request to their instructor in advance.

Horizon 2020 to Fund Two Bilkent Faculty Members

Asst. Prof. Ayşegül Dündar of the Department of Computer Engineering and Asst. Prof. Erdiç Tatar of the Department of

Electrical and Electronics Engineering have each been awarded a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Individual Fellowship (MSCA IF) 2020 grant from the European Commission. The grants are funded under the EU's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program; only 14 researchers from Turkey received MSCA IF grants this year.

Dr. Dündar will focus on 3D image



synthesis capabilities powered by deep neural networks. 3D image synthesis is a technology in which objects can be rendered from different perspectives, enabling numerous applications in computer graphics and computer vision. By providing realistic virtual 3D environments, it can provide tools for online (Continued on Page 3)



Music Student's Pieces Win International Recognition

Emre Eröz, a fourth-year student in the Department of Music's Composition and Theory program, recently received first prize in an international competition organized in China. In addition, he was awarded a second-place commission following a global call for scores by a Basel-based music duo, and has also had two pieces published online.

In the Sun River Prize New Music Composition Competition for Students, organized by the International Society

for Contemporary Music and the composition department of the Sichuan Conservatory of Music in China, his string quartet was awarded first prize. The competition was open to all students of any age from around the world; Emre's composition was chosen from among 115 pieces submitted by students in 22 countries.

A call for scores by the saxophone-trombone/euphonium duo Signal attracted 162 entries from 44 countries. Emre's piece "Deus Ex



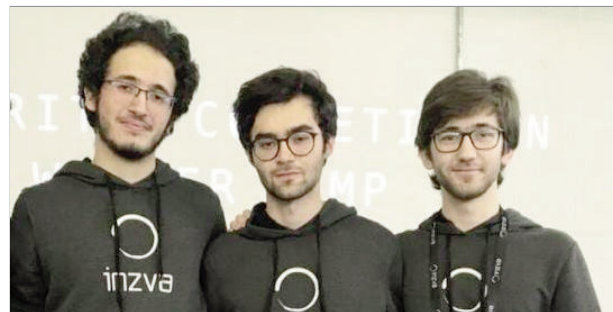
Machina" was chosen second among the four compositions that won commissions for their composers. He is now writing his commissioned piece, which Duo Signal will perform at a concert to be held in Switzerland in April.

"Deus Ex Machina," along with another of Emre's pieces, "Smash of Symmetry," was also published in the University of California Los Angeles's Online Music Library as a result of the Kaleidoscope 2020 Call for Scores, an open access project.

Computer Engineering Students Make Top 10 in Programming Competition

Two teams from the Department of Computer Engineering were among the top 10 finishers in the 2020 Online Programming Competition held by Inzva, an Istanbul-based hacker society dedicated to fostering the abilities of Turkish students, with a focus on algorithms and artificial intelligence.

While a total of 585 individuals from 25 universities applied to enter the competition, 156 teams from 14 universities were deemed eligible to



participate in the qualification round, held on December 12. The top three teams from each of those universities went on to the final round, held on December 26. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the entire event took place online.

A team made up of Bilkent CS students Oğuzhan Özçelik, Yusuf Nevzat Şengün and Osman Uysal took second place. Another team of CS students, with members Ziya Mukhtarov, Yusuf Ziya Özgül and Hasan Yıldırım, came in eighth in the competition.



The TDP Children's Festival Will Go On – Online



Each year, to celebrate National Sovereignty and Children's Day, the student volunteer organization TDP (Social Awareness Projects) holds a Children's Festival on the Bilkent University Main Campus. The volunteers host approximately 400 children from the target groups served by TDP projects, most of them socioeconomically disadvantaged children. The aim is to give them a day where they can have as much fun as possible and that they will remember for a long time.

Unfortunately, the pandemic made it impossible to plan for the event to take place in its usual format this year. But the volunteers were determined that, for the children's sake, it should still go on, and came up with an alternative way – actually two ways – to hold the festival, in part by using the online platform Zoom.

Although the volunteers are calling this year's event the TDP Online Children's Fest, they were well aware while making their plans that not all of the children they wanted to include would have access to Zoom. Therefore, (Continued on Page 3)

OPINIONS & FEATURES



ŞEBNEM TÜRE (PSYC/III)
sebnem.ture@ug.bilkent.edu.tr

The Most Powerful Word You Can Ever Say to Someone

Simple, extremely useful, yet so challenging to say: “No.”

Many people struggle to say this word when they encounter new projects, plans for socializing, requests for help, or even requests to do things they shouldn’t. But saying the word “no” has great benefits; a very important one is the way it helps you set your boundaries. By learning to say no, you’ll be able to set healthy limits for yourself and for what others can demand from you. You’ll feel more confident and better able to communicate your values. You’ll have a better sense of what those values are. Most importantly, you’ll spend your precious time only on what matters. All this undoubtedly provides a more stable life, with much less stress.

If we all agree on the benefits of a simple “no,” why do we struggle to

use this word?
What makes saying no so difficult?
Believing that opportunities shouldn’t be missed

Having this core belief is what makes some of us “overachievers.” We tend to say yes to all the opportunities we encounter, thinking we might not have those chances again. Some are indeed really not to be missed, but it’s also true that they’re endless. Not being able to turn down an opportunity makes you overly stressed, always running from one project to the next. You can’t do all the things that you think might be beneficial for you. In the end, having a lot on your plate will do more harm than good.



Desiring to please others all the time
We learn from a very young age that we should do what authority figures tell us to. This core lesson makes us tend to always accept “big favors” in order not to let others down, especially if we think they have

authority over us. We also overcommit in order to show others our capabilities and dedication. However, never using the word “no” creates the opposite effect, by hiding our values and priorities as an individual.

Being afraid to seem selfish
Especially in social contexts, we have a way of not making ourselves a priority so that we don’t feel or appear “selfish.” The truth is that we can’t pour from an empty cup, and looking after ourselves should always be a priority. Self-care does not equal selfishness.

Believing you should just because you can
Many obligations we think we have

creates all those high expectations that cause you stress.

How to say no
First, ask, “How are we going to do this?”

This question can help you avoid unreasonable demands and remind others to take a second look at what they’re asking and whether it’s doable.

Say “Let me think about it” instead.

Especially if you feel like you’ve been put on the spot, buy yourself some time and think about whether saying “yes” will do you more harm than good. Also, by asking for time to think first, you can give the matter more consideration and avoid acting on impulse.

Remember to keep it simple.
Saying a simple “no” is much more powerful than giving a hundred excuses. You don’t need to explain your reasons for saying no in great detail, and you don’t need to make up excuses for others’ validation. Just give your reasons confidently and, of course, courteously.

Build mutual respect.
Don’t leave others hanging. If you can’t give the answer they want, be direct about it. Don’t give them false hopes. Tell them that you appreciate their offer very much, but unfortunately have other obligations at present.

Faces on Campus

BY AYSU YURTER (TRIN/IV)



Name: Sabri Eren Dağdelen (CS/I)
What’s your favorite quintuple?
a) Movie: “The Shawshank Redemption”
b) Book: “The Brothers Karamazov” by Fyodor Dostoevsky
c) Song: “Girl” by the Beatles
d) Food: Manti
e) City: Moscow
What would be your dream job? “CEO of a tech company”
If you were a superhero, what super power(s) would you have? “Mind reading”
What I like most about Bilkent: “Its opportunities for students”
The place on campus where I feel happiest is... “the place where I secretly play the saxophone”
My favorite thing about Ankara: “Snow”
If I were an animal, I would be... “a honey badger”
I have never... “been anywhere in Ankara except Bilkent”



Name: Seçil Akkurt (IE/I)
What’s your favorite quintuple?
a) Movie: “Kimi no Na wa”
b) Book: “The Catcher in the Rye” by J.D. Salinger
c) Song: “If I Ever Feel Better” by Phoenix
d) Food: BBQ chicken wings
e) City: Amsterdam
What would be your dream job? “Artist”
If you were a superhero, what super power(s) would you have? “Matter transmutation”
What I like most about Bilkent: “Its diversity”
The place on campus where I feel happiest is... “the open space next to the Faculty of Business Administration”
My favorite thing about Ankara: “Bahçelievler”
If I were an animal, I would be... “a cat”
I have never... “broken any of my bones”



Name: Onat İpekyün (PSYC/III)
What’s your favorite quintuple?
a) Movie: “The Dark Knight” trilogy
b) Book: “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy” by Douglas Adams
c) Song: “Invincible” by Tool
d) Food: Spinach
e) City: Seattle
What would be your dream job? “Professor”
If you were a superhero, what super power(s) would you have? “Super speed”
What I like most about Bilkent: “The campus is a breath of fresh air in the midst of the crazy world”
The place on campus where I feel happiest is... “the area between FC Building and the Main Campus Sports Hall”
My favorite thing about Ankara: “The cold here”
If I were an animal, I would be... “a hawk”
I have never... “gone skydiving”

SPORTS & FEATURES

Horizon 2020 to Fund Two Bilkent Faculty Members

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classes, virtual tours, improved gaming experiences and simulators for robotics; as the digital world has gained more prominence, especially during the pandemic, the utility of such technologies has become ever more evident.

In his project, Dr. Tatar proposes to couple the acoustic resonance in a mm-sized cavity with a microresonator and use the coupled

resonance and damping as a gas sensor. Existing technologies have resulted in the development of sensors that target only a specific type of gas. The proposed sensor will be universal, for use with any gas; it is also inexpensive to fabricate and therefore has the potential to expand the public's access to gas sensors. This technology could, for example, allow every home to have the capability for early detection of

natural gas leakages.

The MSCA program promotes innovative research training as well as career and knowledge-exchange opportunities through cross-border and cross-sector mobility of researchers, with the goal of preparing them for current and future societal challenges and enhancing the attractiveness of research centers in Europe and beyond.

The TDP Children's Festival Will Go On – Online

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they decided to base the first part of the festival on activity kits that will be sent to all of the 400-plus children who, in normal years, would have come to campus for the event.

In the weeks leading up to the festival, the volunteers will be preparing and sending kits that include supplies and instructions for craft, music and recycling activities that the children can do at home, as well as presents and snacks for them to enjoy.

The second part of the festival will take place on Zoom, with TDP volunteers and the more than 150 children who have access to Zoom participating. It will start with a morning exercise session for everyone. Then, in breakout rooms, children and volunteers will together do the activities provided for in the kits. Wanting to create as festive an atmosphere as possible to celebrate National Sovereignty and Children's Day, the volunteers have also planned a mini-

concert and a magic show for the children.

Explaining why they were so committed to holding the festival this year despite the difficulties of doing so, TDP representatives said, "By organizing our Online Children's Fest, we hope to make the children feel remembered in these days when everything has fallen apart, and to provide an environment where they can celebrate their holiday and forget the hard times we're all going through."

In Place of Concerts, Turkish Classical Music Society Offers Lectures and Interviews

In normal times, the Turkish Classical Music Society, a Bilkent student club founded in 1999, holds a concert at the end of each semester, with club members performing as vocalists or instrumentalists. But, as in so many aspects of life, the pandemic changed that.

Since the society is unable to hold concerts for the time being, they are instead presenting lectures and seminars on Turkish classical music, as well as conducting interviews with musicians known for their work in the genre. On February 28, the club welcomed members of İncesaz, an ensemble devoted to promoting the greater recognition and further development of Turkish music.

İncesaz founders Murat Aydemir and Cengiz Onural and soloists Bora Ebeoğlu and Ezgi Köker talked about a variety of topics, including the establishment of the ensemble, their careers in music, the process of composing a new song and their sources of inspiration. They also answered questions that came via social media from club members and other listeners.

The members of the Bilkent Turkish Classical Music Society are



eager to give a concert as soon as the pandemic is over. Meanwhile, they will continue to conduct interviews, lectures and lessons. Information about these events can be found on the GE250/1 lists, in BAIS emails and in the social media accounts of the club at linktr.ee/ktmt.bilkent.

The Sporting Life



Name: Ahmet Berke Gökmen

Department: CS

How often do you exercise?

I try to exercise at least four times a week.

How has regular exercise affected your life?

Before I started exercising regularly, I actually didn't have much order in my life. I ate junk food, stayed up late and didn't care about my health. After I got into the habit of exercising, I became more social, stopped staying up late and started eating healthy food. The good thing is that it affected not only my daily life, but also my academic life. Since I now had the habit of waking up early and eating healthily, I always felt energetic. This allowed me to study more and more without getting bored so easily during the university exam period.

What are the first three things that come to mind when you hear the word "sports"?

- 1- Fitness
- 2- Food
- 3- Feeling alive

Which Bilkent sports facilities do you use, and what activities have you participated in?

I mostly use the gyms in the Sports Halls; I haven't participated in any activities yet, but I'd love to.

The International Chronicles

BY YAREN SAĞLIK (TRIN/IV)

Bilkent News

Name: Yassin Mohammed Ayman Alsawas

Department: Psychology

Country of Origin: Syria

Are there any similarities between Turkey and your home country?

To me, one of the most fascinating things about Turkey is the Islamic architecture in different mosques all around Turkey.

What do you like best about Turkey?

My home country and Turkey share a few aspects, such as the mildly cold weather and the extent of green areas and landscapes.

What will you miss most about Bilkent/Turkey?

The things that I'll miss most about Turkey are its natural beauty and the wide variety of foods that Turkish cuisine offers.



What's your favorite place on campus, and why?

One of my favorite places on the Bilkent campus is outside the basketball court; the view from there is amazing, especially at sunset.

What's your favorite Turkish food and/or favorite part of Turkish culture?

One of my favorite Turkish foods is dolma, which actually is a dish common to Turkey and my home country.

Where do you expect to see yourself 10 years from now?

It's hard to predict the future and set such long-term goals; nevertheless, I see myself as a renowned

academician.

What's the hardest challenge you've handled in Turkey?

One of the hardest challenges I've faced and handled in Turkey was breaking the cultural and social barriers between me and my Turkish friends.

What cities have you visited in Turkey, and which one is your favorite?

I've visited İstanbul, Bursa and Ankara; İstanbul is my favorite. Each corner there tells a different story.

Describe yourself in three words. Conscientious, understanding, curious.

What's an interesting question or comment you hear frequently about Bilkent/Turkey?

Among the most frequently asked questions about Turkey are those concerning its interesting Ottoman history and culture.

Bilkent CALENDAR



CONCERTS

Recent Bilkent Symphony Orchestra concerts are now being broadcast online on the Bilkent Symphony Digital platform. They may be accessed at <https://ticket.bilkent.edu.tr/>.

“Classic Brass”

Bilkent Brass Ensemble
P. Dukas | Fanfare to precede “La Péri”
R. Premru | Five Movements from Divertimento
G. Gershwin | “An American in Paris”
G. Rossini | “Largo al factotum”
G. Gershwin | “Rhapsody in Blue”
G. Bizet | “Carmen” Suite
 Recording: November 29, 2020, Bilkent Concert Hall

“Vestiges of the Past”

Bilkent Symphony Orchestra
 Ayrton Desimpelaere, conductor
 Dritan Gani, double bass
C.P.E. Bach | Symphony in D major, H. 663 (Wq. 183/1)
C.D. von Dittersdorf | Concerto for Double Bass in E major
P.I. Tchaikovsky | “Souvenir de Florence,” Op. 70
 Recording: December 10, 2020, Bilkent Concert Hall

“Horn, Horn”

Ayrton Desimpelaere, conductor
 Mustafa Kaplan, horn
 Hasan Erim Hacat, horn
G.F. Handel | “Messiah” Overture
A. Rosetti | Concerto for Two Horns

and Orchestra, RWV C60
I. Stravinsky | “Pulcinella” Suite
 Recording: December 17, 2020, Bilkent Concert Hall

SEMINARS

Tuesday, March 9

“Hydrazine Oxidation Electrocatalysis on Multi-Doped Carbons: Who Does What?” by David Eisenberg (Israel Institute of Technology), at **12:30 p.m.** Organized by CHEM.

Tuesday, March 9

“Regional Migration Governance: Soft Law and the Diffusion of Policies on Integration and Inclusion (Focus on South America Regionalism),” by Dr. Verónica Ruiz Abou-Nigm (University of Edinburgh School of Law), at **12:30 p.m.** Organized by LAW.

Tuesday, March 9

“Still Exiting From Hegemony: Why the Biden Administration Can’t Rebuild the American Global Order,” by Prof. Alexander Cooley (Columbia University), at **5:30 p.m.** Organized by IR.

Wednesday, March 10

“Extraterritoriality and the Capitulations in the Ottoman Empire: An Overview,” by Berke Törünöğlu (University of Tennessee, Knoxville), at **5 p.m.** Organized by HIST.

Thursday, March 11

“Çeviri Sosyolojisi: Yeni Çeviri Pratikleri / Yeni Eyleyenler / Yeni Sorumluluklar,”

by Prof. Emine Bogenç Demirel, at **12:30 p.m.** Organized by TRIN.

Thursday, March 11

“Should Ontology be Explanatory?” by Amie L. Thomasson (Dartmouth College), at **4:30 p.m.** Organized by PHIL.

Thursday, March 11

“Identifying Hybrid Spaces and ‘Makeshift’ Spatial Practices Within The Byzantine Period of Transformations (6th–9th centuries): the Potential of Archaeology and Textual Evidence,” by Myrto Veikou (University of Uppsala), at **6 p.m.** Organized by HIST.

Friday, March 12

“Dynamic Asset-Backed Security Design,” by Kathy Yuan (London School of Economics), at **1:30 p.m.** Organized by FBA.

For information about meetings and activities of university departments or student clubs, please see their websites or social media accounts, or contact them directly via telephone or email.

Spring Break

Dear Bilkent News Readers,
 Due to the spring break, Bilkent News will not be published next week. The next issue will appear on **Tuesday, March 23**. We wish you a wonderful break!

BİLKENT NEWS



Bilkent Üniversitesi

Adına Sahibi:

Prof. Dr. Kürşat Aydoğan

Sorumlu Yazı İşleri Müdürü:

Hande Seçkin Onat

Yayının Türü: Yerel Süreli Yayın

Yayın Aralığı: Haftalık

Yayın Kurulu: Kürşat Aydoğan, Reyhan Ayfer, Hande Seçkin Onat, Örsan Örgü, Kamer Rodoplu

Editör: Diane Ewart Grabowski

Yönetim Yeri: Bilkent Üniversitesi Rektörlük, İletişim Ofisi, 06800 Bilkent, Ankara

Telefon: (312) 290-1487

Basıldığı Yer: Meteksan Matbaacılık ve Teknik Sanayi Tic. A.Ş. 1606. Cad. No:3 06800 Bilkent, Ankara

Bilkent News (ext. 1487) welcomes feedback from readers. Please submit your letters to bilnews@bilkent.edu.tr. The Editorial Board will review the letters and print them as space permits.

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