October 6, 2020
Volume 27
Number 2
ISSN: 2458-8644
bilnews.bilkent.edu.tr

BİLKENT NEWS

Tuesday: Partly Cloudy 29°C / 15°C
Wednesday: Rainy 29°C /15°C
Thursday: Partly Cloudy 28°C / 16°C
Friday: Rainy 20°C / 14°C

Weekly Newspaper of Bilkent University

Scientists Discover Common Genetic and Immunological Causes of Life-Threatening COVID-19

COVID HUMAN GENETIC EFFORT

More than 10 percent of young and healthy people who develop severe COVID-19 have misguided antibodies that attack not the virus, but the immune system itself, new research shows. Another 3.5 percent, at least, carry a specific kind of genetic mutation. In both groups, the upshot is basically the same: the patients lack type I interferon, a set of 17 proteins crucial for protecting cells and the body from viruses.

The findings, appearing in two papers in the current issue of the journal Science, are the first results being published out of the COVID Human Genetic Effort, an ongoing international project involving more than 50 sequencing hubs and hundreds of hospitals around the world. Prof. Tayfun Özçelik, dean of the Faculty of Science at Bilkent University, is a member of the project's steering committee.

"A clear understanding of life-threatening COVID-19 is emerging now. Disruption of type I interferon is central to the process," says Prof. Özçelik. "Understanding this opens up treatment strategies that rely on interferon."

The effort is being co-led by Jean-Laurent Casanova at The Rockefeller University in New York City and Helen Su at the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. The participants in the recently published studies included members of various nationalities from Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.

The way SARS-CoV-2 affects people differently has been puzzling. The virus can cause a symptom-free infection and go away quietly, or it can kill in a few days. Research over the past two decades has shown that unusual susceptibility to certain infectious diseases can be traced to single-gene mutations that affect an individual's immune response.

Since February, a team of collaborators has been enrolling

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Bilkent Symphony Orchestra 2020–2021 Season to Open on October 11



With some changes made in venue and scheduling to suit current conditions, the Bilkent Symphony Orchestra will be starting its 2020–2021 concert season on Sunday, October 11. While in the past most concerts have taken place in the Bilkent Concert Hall on Saturday evenings, the first concerts of this season will be held in the semi-open Bilkent Odeon on Sunday afternoons at 3 p.m. The BSO has also adjusted the seating layout for both the audience members and the musicians to allow for greater distancing.

Introducing this year's concert season, BSO Music Director Nusret İspir made the following statement:

"As we write these lines, we cannot know exactly how we will proceed with the concerts we have imagined and devised. It seems that this season will be an extraordinary one in many ways. We have been required to change the artistic content time and time again. Still, all the restrictions we have been compelled to work with have enabled us to use our intelligence and creativity more effectively.

"We will divide our season into short periods and share the schedule with you as it becomes available. Our concerts will take place at 3 p.m. on Sundays in the Bilkent Odeon. We have redesigned the seating plans in our halls to protect the health of musicians and audience members.

"Our concert schedule will include the works of the great Turkish composer İlhan Usmanbaş, whose centenary we will celebrate next year, as well as the works of the Turkish Five, Yalçın Tura, Muammer Sun, and a number of younger composers.

"We wish this season to be an expression of the hope, optimism, and determination shared by both the musicians, who have not been able to perform on stage until now, and the members of our audience, who have not been able to attend cultural events for months."

(See the concert schedule on Page 4)

CS Faculty Members Receive NIH Grant





A project proposed by Asst. Prof. Ercüment Çiçek of the Department of Computer Engineering and Dr. Erman Ayday, an adjunct faculty member in the department, has received a four-year grant from the US National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The project, on the topic "Privacy-Preserving Genomic Data Sharing," is being funded in the amount of 1.2 million dollars through the NIH's R01 Research Project Grant Program.

New Book by Efe Tokdemir



A new book coauthored by Asst. Prof. Efe Tokdemir of the Department of International Relations and titled "Battle for Allegiance: Governments, Terrorist Groups, and Constituencies in Conflict" was recently released by the University of Michigan Press.

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An Update to No-Smoking Rules

The use of cigarettes, electronic cigarettes and other tobacco products is prohibited on the entire Bilkent University campus, except within limited smoking areas indicated by signs and delineated with blue outlines.

In line with COVID-19 precautionary measures, a minimum social distance of 2.5 meters must be maintained between individuals in smoking areas.

Students, employees, alumni, guests and all other persons who violate no-smoking rules are subject to penalties and sanctions. You can report rule violations by phoning **(312) 290 6666** or via email to **ssgm@bilkent.edu.tr**.

Living With COVID-19

By Dr. Mete Salih Aker



Since the beginning of March, all of us have been going through a difficult period due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over time, we've learned what we need to do with respect to improving hygiene, wearing masks, and following social distancing guidelines. By adjusting our lifestyles to comply with those requirements, we can to a great extent protect ourselves and those around us.

But is that enough? Is there anything else can we do? What issues should we be aware of?

First of all, we can start by reducing possible risk factors. If we use tobacco products, if we have chronic lung or heart disease, diabetes, or uncontrolled high blood pressure, our risk of developing COVID-19 and of experiencing more severe symptoms of the disease may be higher than that of the general population.

For those of us who use cigarettes or other tobacco products, there isn't a better time to quit. For those of us who don't smoke, let's try to stay away

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NEWS

Living With COVID-19

(Continued from Page 1)
from environments where smoking takes place. In or near the few places where smoking is permitted on our generally smoke-free campus, let's keep at least 2,5 meters of distance between us and those who smoke regular or electronic cigarettes.

For those of us with diabetes, high blood pressure, or heart or lung disease, we should continue to take the medications prescribed by our doctor as directed.

Controlling our weight can also help us stay healthy, so let's adopt a Mediterranean type of diet that has a low glycemic index and features balanced proteins, healthy fat and plenty of fiber, without a lot of preservatives.

Although we know that SARS-CoV-2 is not transferred through food, we still have to take off our masks while eating. So, when we temporarily forgo the protection of a mask in order to meet our basic need for nutrition, if we're eating with friends and family, we're putting each other at risk. For the time being, let's refrain from unnecessary conversation while eating, and, especially, let's not socialize indoors. In restaurants, eating indoors will increase the risk of infection, especially if the air-conditioning is on. If possible, it's better to eat alone; if that's not possible, sitting at least two meters apart, eating without talking, and leaving the table as soon as possible will reduce our risk.

Let's not drink tea and coffee together in enclosed, shared office spaces; let's not get together just to chat.

The amount of virus a person is exposed to (the virus load) has a great effect on the severity of the disease. This winter, let's be sure the indoor areas we spend time in are well ventilated so that the amount of virus per unit volume is reduced, and let's also dress with this in mind.

In order to reduce our potential exposure to the virus while riding on public transportation, in addition to obeying rules regarding mask wearing and social distancing, let's keep the windows open, and let's not have unnecessary conversations, especially at a loud volume and in a way that projects respiratory droplets and particles.

Let's not neglect exercise; let's take a walk outdoors at least three days a week, at least 50 minutes each time.

Let's consult our doctor with regard to keeping our vitamin D at an ideal level.

Let's not forget that getting enough sleep is one of the most important ways to keep our immune system strong. In order to get a full, uninterrupted night's sleep, let's not drink caffeinated beverages in the afternoon, and let's stay away from blue light for at least an hour before bedtime.

Also, those of us who are over 65 years old, or who are under 65 but have risk factors, should be vaccinated for seasonal flu this year; we should also be vaccinated against pneumonia.

If, despite taking all precautions, we develop symptoms of COVID-19, let's be sure to isolate ourselves and contact the Health Center.

If we're tested and the result is negative but our symptoms continue, let's not ignore the possibility that the result may be a false negative (the incidence of false negatives can be as high as 40 percent). Eleven of the 79 patients followed up by the Health Center had a negative result on their first test but a positive result on subsequent tests. Such false negatives can give people a false sense of confidence, making them think it's okay to return to their normal routines; and this could have a serious impact on the health of the entire campus community. For this reason, if we have symptoms or may have been exposed to the virus, please, let's follow the rules and remain in isolation for the entire period required.

The struggle to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic is a war that we have to fight on all fronts; we should all do our part, not only for ourselves and our loved ones, but also for the community we live in.

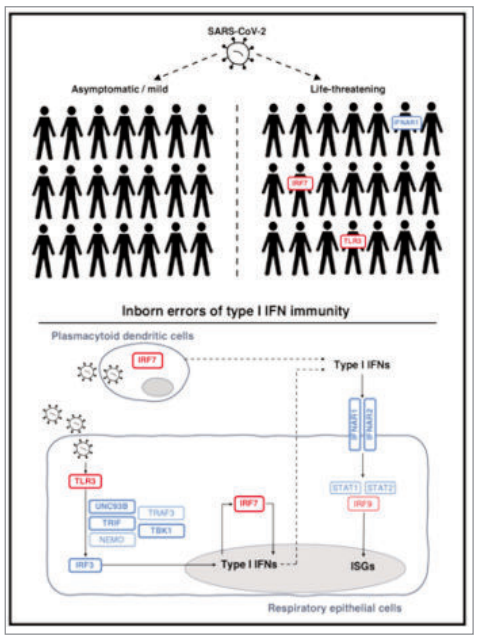
Finally, let's remember that laughter is the most beautiful act of resistance, and one that sets our immune system in motion. The best thing you can do is keep a smile on your face.

We at the Bilkent Health Center wish everyone a healthy, happy day.

Scientists Discover Common Genetic and Immunological Causes of Life-Threatening COVID-19

(Continued from Page 1)
thousands of COVID-19 patients to find out whether something in their genetic make-up drives the disparate clinical outcomes the disease produces. The findings that resulted from their investigations help explain why some people develop a disease much more severe than others in their age group—including, for example, individuals who required admission to the ICU despite being in their 20s and free of underlying conditions. They may also provide the first molecular explanation for why more men than women die from the disease.

Significantly, the findings point to certain medical interventions to consider for further investigation. For example, there are already two types of interferons available as drugs and approved for use to treat certain conditions such as chronic viral hepatitis.



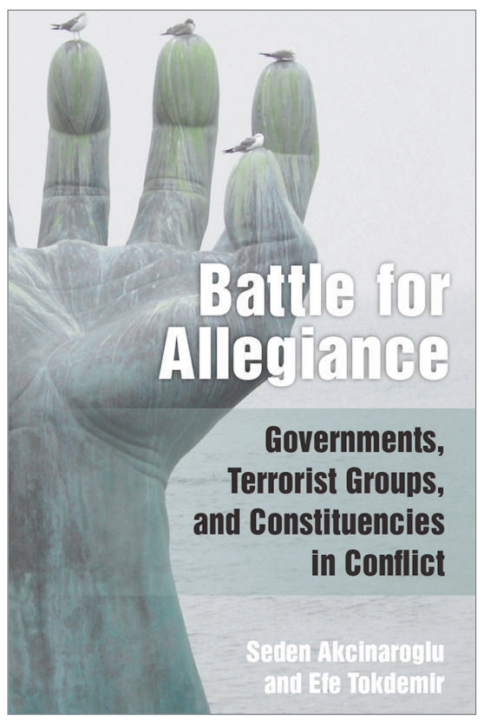
The team continues to look for genetic variations that may affect other types of interferons or additional aspects of the immune response in COVID-19 outliers.

New Book by Efe Tokdemir

(Continued from page 1)
In the book, Dr. Tokdemir and coauthor Seden Akçınaroğlu (a faculty member at SUNY Binghamton in the US) examine what the authors describe as a long-neglected aspect of conflict processes, specifically investigating the nonviolent strategies both governments and terrorist groups employ to win the allegiance of their constituents.

As noted in the publisher's description of "Battle for Allegiance," the book "shows violence is neither the only nor the most effective way in which nonstate actors and governments work to achieve their goals….In fact, the competition between the two actors goes far beyond who is superior in terms of military force and tactics. The hardest battles are fought over the allegiance of the citizens."

Employing a three-pronged methodological approach combining large-N quantitative analysis of original data, a public opinion survey conducted in Turkey, and qualitative analysis of focus groups as well as in-depth interviews, the book presents "the first systematic empirical analysis of the ways in which terrorist groups, the government, and the citizens relate to each other in a triadic web of action."



The study, notes the authors, "offers a complete depiction of conflict processes by introducing the nonviolent aspect of conflict as well as by highlighting the importance of constituents in the strategic battle to gain legitimacy and support."

Take Steps to Compete in the Sports Center's New Challenge

Are you ready to compete in the "Sports as a Way of Life" Step Challenge? This new, four-week event organized by the Sports Center kicks off on **October 12**, and will run through **Sunday, November 8**.

Designed to take place outdoors on the Bilkent campus, the event is open to all Bilkent students, and challenges everyone to take at least 12,500 steps on the days they have chosen to make walking or running their exercise activity.

You will need to record the number of steps you take by using your smartphone's health app and then send an image of the total to the email address **spor@bilkent.edu.tr**. One of the great things about this event is that you can participate on the days and at the times most convenient for your schedule.

Participants are to walk/run at least three times and at most five times per week; they need to take at least 12,500 steps on each day they choose to exercise, and will get 5 points each time this is done.

Students taking GE250-251 who collect points in the challenge will also receive points for the course: 30 points for 75,000 steps, 40 points for 112,500 steps, and 60 points for 150,000 steps.

The first 50 people to indicate (by emailing the image of their step totals) that they are participating in the activity will each receive a T-shirt; the second 50 people will each receive a mask.



For more information, please call the Sports Center at **ext. 1993** or email **spor@bilkent.edu.tr**.

NEWS & OPINIONS



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

Vienna Waits for You

Slow down, you crazy child…

The course registration/add–drop period is now behind us. Every semester, I think long and hard when trying to arrange my schedule, but this time I had even more to consider, because I was trying to decide not only what I would take this semester but also the next one, so that I'll be able to graduate without any problem.

In addition to that, being a senior often prompts you to think about the future. I guessed it would be like that, but I started to feel it in all its reality only at the beginning of this semester. On the other hand, I remind myself, it's my last year at Bilkent; I love being here, I like being a student, even though I can't be on campus due to the pandemic. I want to enjoy this last year, at least in the quiet times when I can take a break from thinking about the coming years and "the rest of my life."

So what does Vienna have to do with all this? "Vienna" is the title of a song that's been on my mind lately. It's featured on the 1977 album "The Stranger" by American soft rock musician Billy Joel. You may know his famous song "Piano Man." Although "Vienna" isn't as well known, it is, according to a July 2008 New York Times article, one of the artist's two favorites among his songs, along with "Summer, Highland Falls."

The song was inspired by a visit Joel made while in his mid-20s to see his father, who lived in Vienna. This was a city very different from the ones he was used to in America: a city where people seemed calmer, acted as if they knew where they belonged, and weren't struggling to survive (or at least not that much).

As he walked the streets of Vienna with his father, Joel suddenly noticed that a woman who looked to be around 90 years old was sweeping the streets. When he questioned the situation, his father answered that the woman was at peace, and by continuing to work, felt like she was making a useful contribution to society. This, again, was a different point of view than Joel was used to encountering in America. It made him realize that he could still be useful even when he got old, and suddenly, he was relieved from his worries about aging. In that way, the famous line "Vienna waits for you" came about. The young man realized that in the end, Vienna would always wait for him, that getting old wasn't going to be that bad – that he didn't need to be in a hurry for anything, because every stage of life has its benefits and he would be able to contribute to the world at any age.

So, Vienna becomes a metaphor that he uses for "the rest of your life." It's in fact a good metaphor for other reasons, too. Throughout its history, Vienna has always been a crossroads for different cultures and empires, a place of exchange (as Joel noted in his interview for the article mentioned above). It's a place that he believes we'll all arrive at; it won't matter what road we've chosen. In short, he reminds us all that a Vienna will always wait for us, so it's pointless to be so hurried and worried while we're young.

The song therefore comes back to what I said about trying to enjoy the moments I still have at Bilkent this year and not be so occupied with worrying about plans for the future.

I've also started to realize why I sometimes focus on the future. Worrying about the future can be tough at times, but you have to admit that there's also something romantic about it. Dreams, plans, what could be's, maybes...they all can make you live with your head in the clouds, and sometimes that feels good. There's an overwhelmingly huge potential ahead, when you think about what the future can bring. That's also why it's so easy to think too much about it. Consequently, I can relate to the part of the song that says "it's so romantic on the borderline tonight," although the following lines bring me back to reality: "Too bad but it's the life you lead/ You're so ahead of yourself that you forgot what you need."

What we need right now should more often be a question: What do we need at this very moment, for the sake of this moment? We always try to prepare ourselves for "one day." So, we often try too hard to plan for the rest of our life as if it were something we could miss, like a train. But in fact it's actually right there in front of us; we don't need to rush to get to it, we don't need to run a marathon. As long as we enjoy the journey, it's somehow going to be okay. We'll find a place at any age, we'll find something to do at any age, at least in Vienna. So, the rest of our life, aka Vienna, waits for us. There's no need to rush; we can slow down.

Indoor Sports Facilities Now Open

Since June 8, the outdoor sports areas on campus have been open for use. As of Thursday, October 1, the Dormitories and Main Campus Sports Halls were opened as well.

The Physical Education and Sports Center has made all preparations required as per the COVID-19 Guide issued by the Ministry of Health; facilities with a central ventilation system are ventilated according to the standards stipulated by the Ministry, and all facilities are disinfected daily.

Bilkenters are welcome to use the above-mentioned campus sports facilities; to maintain a safe environment, the indoor facilities are now open by reservation only.

During the current period, outdoor sports and exercise are especially recommended. Additional information and updates on both indoor and outdoor activities may be found at **https://w3.bilkent.edu.tr/bilkent/physical-education-and-sports-center/**.

Sports Hall Hours

Dormitories Sports Hall
Every day 9 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Main Campus Indoor Tennis Courts
Every day 9 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Main Campus Outdoor Sports Area
Every day 9 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Swimming Pool
Closed Monday
All other days 9 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Main Sports Hall
Weekdays 9:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Closed weekends

East Sports Hall
Closed

East Campus Outdoor Sports Area
Weekdays 4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Closed weekends

Current Guidelines for Use of the Sports Facilities

The maximum number of individuals who can use the sports halls at the same time is:
80 in the Dormitories Sports Hall;
45 in the Main Campus Sports Hall.

The number is also limited to 1 individual per 6 square meters in any area of activity, with a minimum of 2 meters of social distancing.

Wearing a mask in the sports facilities is mandatory, and the mask may not be taken off during exercise. N95/FFP2 masks should not be used.

You must show your ID card when entering and exiting the facility.

It is recommended that users bring their own gear – for example, exercise mats. In cases where personal gear is not used, all such items provided by the facility will be disinfected after use.

Locker Rooms

• Dormitories Sports Hall
- A limited number of lockers have been marked as available for use, in accordance with social distancing rules.
- Showers are available for use.
- Hair dryers and other styling implements may not be used.
- The showers and dressing rooms will be cleaned after each use.

• The Main Campus Sports Hall locker rooms are closed, because adequate social distancing cannot be provided.



Fitness/Conditioning Rooms

• Cardio training machines (treadmills, bicycles, etc.) have been spaced at at a minimum distance of 2 meters.

• Weightlifting stations, dumbbells and bars may not be used jointly, i.e., a second person may not use the equipment during the intervals between another user's sets. The next athlete may use a station or weightlifting equipment only after the previous athlete completely finishes their workout.

Group Exercise Programs

Participation limits for group exercise activities are set so as to maintain social distancing.

Cardio-based exercise programs are being conducted as outdoor activities.

Programs such as yoga, Pilates and stretching can be conducted inside the halls.

Team Sports, Racket Sports and Martial Arts

Competitive sports and martial arts for which it is not possible to maintain social distancing may not take place in the campus sports facilities.

The basketball and racquetball courts may be used only on an individual basis, with one basketball player per hoop, and one racquetball player per court.

Other racket sports may be played only as singles matches.

Martial arts, including aikido, karate, taekwondo and kendo, may be practiced only without physical contact.

General Rules

As always, to use any sports facility or participate in a sports course, you are required to have your Bilkent University ID card with you every time you enter a facility.

To use any of the sports facilities, you can make reservations in person at the reception desk in the Physical Education and Sports Center or by phone at the numbers below:
Dormitories Sports Hall and Outdoor Sports Facilities: **ext. 1993** or **3255**
Fitness/Conditioning: **ext. 3255**
Main Sports Hall: **ext. 3186**
Fitness/Conditioning: **ext. 3310**
East Campus Outdoor Sports Facilities: **ext. 5351**

Bilkent CALENDAR



New Walking/Running Routes on Campus

To help everyone stay healthy and fit by taking advantage of Bilkent's extensive outdoor spaces, running and walking routes of 5, 7 and 10 km have been created on campus. The routes were plotted out with the assistance of Department of Psychology student Aysel Yalaç.

To see the routes, please click on this link:
https://w3.bilkent.edu.tr/bilkent/running-walking-routes/

BİLKENT NEWS

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Prof. Dr. Kürşat Aydoğan

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Hande Seçkin Onat

Yayının Türü: Yerel Süreli Yayın

Yayın Aralığı: Haftalık

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*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.*

100% Post Consumer

EXHIBITIONS

The Department of Communication and Design website is hosting COMD Eye 2020, an exhibition of student works from the 2019–2020 academic year. It includes a selection of short films, music videos, documentaries, design works and many other projects produced during the previous two semesters. COMD Eye 2020 may be viewed at **comd.bilkent.edu.tr/comdeye2020**.

Department of Graphic Design senior students are also holding an online exhibition. To visit the exhibition and explore their works, please go to **http://gra.bilkent.edu.tr/sergi2020/**.

SEMINARS

Tuesday, October 6
"A Note on the Planar Skorokhod Embedding Problem," by Maher Boudabra (Monash University), **3 p.m.** Organized by MATH. Please send a message to **goncha@fen.bilkent.edu.tr**.

Friday, October 9
"Counting 2-Planes in Cubic 4-Folds in P^5," Alexander Degtyarev (Bilkent Univerity), **3:40 p.m.** Organized by MATH. Please send a message to **sertoz@bilkent.edu.tr**.

Interview Adventure With Talent Hunters Begins

The Career and Alumni Office is inviting all third- and fourth-year students to participate in its Interview Adventure With Talent Hunters program for the fall semester. In the 2019–2020 academic year, 418 Bilkent students were paired with representatives of 32 companies from various sectors, giving them the opportunity to experience an online interview and take a first step toward life after graduation.

During this year's program, students will have the chance to interview with talent hunters from companies that will include the Amadeus IT Group, Amgen Biotechnology, Arçelik, Armut.com, Arvento Mobile Systems, the B/S/H Group, Bilkent Holding, Deloitte, Eczacıbaşı Monrol, Eczacıbaşı Tüketim Ürünleri, Ezcacıbaşı Yapı Gereçleri, Eczacıbaşı VitrA, Esen Sistem Entegrasyon, Eti Gıda, Ford Otosan, Garanti BBVA, HSBC Bank, ING Bank, Itelligence, Logo Yazılım, Mavi Jeans, Milsoft, MSC Gemi Acenteciliği, Norm Holding, Renault Türkiye, SNI Technology, Vestel Elektronik and VL Media.

Students who want to participate will need to have visited the **https://stars.bilkent.edu.tr/srs** Other Services/Interview Adventure with Talent Hunters (IATH) menu by September 30, uploaded a CV and made an appointment with the



Career and Alumni Office.

After the completion of an initial interview with the Career and Alumni Office, students will be paired with company representatives for the company interview stage. These interviews with talent hunters will take place between **November 16** and **December 18**, and will be set up by the companies as Skype, Zoom, Teams, Hangout or telephone meetings.

Students who complete all steps of the program will be issued an Interview Adventure certificate by the Career and Alumni Office.

Bilkent Symphony Orchestra 2020–2021 Season to Open on October 11

Sunday, October 11, 3 p.m.
Bilkent Odeon
Season Opening Concert
Yevgeniy Kostrytskyy, violin
J. Haydn | Concerto for Violin in C major
J.S. Bach | Concerto for Violin in A minor, BWV 1041
A. Piazzolla | "The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires"

Sunday, October 18, 3 p.m.
Bilkent Odeon
"From the Baroque to the Present"
Elşad Bagirov, conductor
Irina Nikotina, violin
Albena Sezer, flute
Ebru Aykal, flute
Y. Tura | Suite for Small Orchestra No. 3
J.S. Bach | Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 in G major
G.F. Handel | Music for the Royal Fireworks

Sunday, October 25, 3 p.m.
Bilkent Odeon
Republic Day Concert
Elşad Bagirov, conductor
M. Sun | "Başlangıç Müziği" from "Cumhuriyet"
N.K. Akses | Scherzo on the "Neva Kar" by Itri for Orchestra
M. Sun | "Sevda Çiçeği" from "Kurtuluş"
C.R. Rey | "Türkiye" Suite
A.A. Saygun | Overture to "Özsoy"
U.C. Erkin | Festival Overture
M. Sun | "Bozkırın Sesi," from "Cumhuriyet"
H.F. Alnar | İki Dans
F. Tüzün | "Çayda Çıra"

Sunday, November 1, 3 p.m.
Bilkent Odeon
Halloween Concert*
Bilkent Brass Ensemble
G. Richards | "Champagne"
D. Elfman | "The Nightmare Before Christmas"
C. Hazell | "Three Brass Cats"
C. Hazell | "Kraken"
J. Parker | "A Londoner in New York"
A. Piazzolla | Suite from "Maria de Buenos Aires" (Arr. S. Verhelst)
G. Richards | "Fundador"
**This is a concert for children age 6 and up; everyone is encouraged to wear a costume, or at least a funny hat!*