

National "Purism" in Georgian Ethnomusic

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National traditional music is one of the calling cards of Georgia, a country where tourism is a very significant economic unit. "Georgian polyphonic song" together with "Georgian wine" and "Georgian hospitality" is always mentioned first and foremost by Georgian officials, representing the homeland, and is often the main component of the concept of Georgian culture.

Thus, we can consider this concept if we rely on Zemtsovsky's "ethnic sound ideal" (Zemtsovsky, Song as a historical phenomenon 22), in this case - as an "ethnocultural ideal". Therefore, it seems that Georgian traditional music should have acquired political significance. But that's not the case for the most part. However, in recent decades, the question of how traditional music should participate in national cultural policy and whether or not we are losing our identity has become a constant problem among Georgian connoisseurs of traditional music. It should be noted that a survey I conducted in 2018 shows that generally Georgian folk singers do not welcome the novelty in folk music (Gabisonia, 2019b: 123). In general, "music revival" (Lomsadze, 2021:12) as a separate direction has not yet been seriously considered.

In this regard, I would like to draw the attention of listeners to the heightened tendency to preserve traditional Georgian music, which I would call "folk music purism." In this paper I will focus on different angles of this particular position. This view is especially problematic in the folk branch of Georgian traditional music, in relation to the second branch - church chants, given the imperative regulations of the Orthodox Church, this issue is not worth discussing due to the lack of prospects.

However, apart from the church, the functioning of traditional music in Georgia is institutionally regulated in other ways too. In this respect, the functions of the Department of Georgian Folk Music of the Tbilisi State Conservatory and, especially, of the Georgian State Folklore Center are very significant. The latter, during various music competitions, was often guided by purist criteria and often ignored the non-conservative trends of ethnic music. Leading Georgian folklore ensembles in this regard support these officials. and in this way they also play an important

role in stigmatizing non-traditional ethnic music. On the whole, purism in Georgia is not so relevant in the emic sense, that is, it is less cognizant by the primary performer than by the secondary performers.

Is purism today a more or less important problem in the sphere of ethnic music in Georgia? I think - yes, because such a vision hinders the development of ethnic music in a freer and larger direction. We think that this kind of purism is the reason for the creative shortage and stagnation which Georgian popular rhythm music still experiences today, despite the youth's penchant for the popular Euro-American cultural vector.

I think I will not be mistaken if I say that the trend of purism in Georgia is to some extent connected with the aspirations of messianism. My country has been independent for only a short time in the past few centuries. Because of this, activism towards the protection of Georgian cultural identity has always been in the first place in the national program of action for Georgian leaders. The search for priority in such areas as language, alphabet, the origin of peoples, belonging to great personalities, cultural phenomena, chronological priorities motivate patriotic self-realization, as well as an increased desire to preserve identity. At the same time, it is clear that the purist point of view is also a consequence of the fear of the cultural influence of foreign invaders.

Another factor that motivates purist sentiments in Georgia is the Orthodox faith, which is distinguished by its devotion to tradition. At the same time, a significant proportion of the Orthodox Church's parish is prone to conspiracy theories; In particular, there are often apocalyptic fears (including, in the current situation, with anti-vaccination sentiments), as well as hostility to globalization as an equalization along ethnic lines. We can say that today in Georgia there is not a "hot" or "cold" culture, but a "warm" culture.

It is quite obvious that full adherence to tradition is reflected in Georgian church art, in particular, in one of the tributaries of Georgian traditional music - chants. According to a 2003 resolution, the Synod of the Georgian Church prohibits the singing of other music in Georgian churches, except for the traditional Georgian three-part chants (exceptions are allowed only for the hymns composed by the current Patriarch Ilia II). It is clear that reasoning in this direction from the point of view of purism, authenticity or development does not make sense. Purism in Georgian church music is represented almost unconditionally.

The reflection of such conservative views in Georgian church architecture is symptomatic. Hundreds of temples have been built since the 1980s, and the design of each of them fully obeyed traditional stylistic, one might say canonical norms. Consequently, today it is rather difficult to identify these temples.

It is interesting that in this respect the picture is different in other spheres of Georgian ethnic culture, who are not so close to church themes: the famous Georgian cuisine explores old recipes, but on their basis develops new samples, Georgian wine is made both "European" and - traditionally; The famous traditional dramaturgy of the Georgian table fest - "Supra" usually takes place according to tradition (often for showing to foreigners), but also with many innovations; And one more thing: the famous Georgian dance comes not only from old real samples, but was formed as a kind of "canon" by the ensemble of Sukhishvili and Ramishvili in the 30-40s of the last century (which the ensemble, by the way, offers the most novelties on this area today).

It should be noted that with purist sentiments are also associated certain myths, which for many Georgians exist in parallel with reality. For example, the myth that only the Georgian song "Chakrulo" was sent into space by "Voyager" as an example of folk music.

We do not emphasize the more or less problematic nature of the striving for national musical and stylistic purity. We raise this question more because we find in it the reason for the relatively meager artistic palette of today's Georgian ethnomusic.

In addition, in the current paradigm, we do not view purism as a somewhat perfectionist point of view. In this concept, we rather mean the boundaries of the traditional old repertoire than the requirements for the performance of this repertoire in a traditional way, which position is more suitable for authenticity. However, we can say that purism prioritizes ethnic values based on authentic motives (Gabisonia, 2014: 28) and focuses less on the socio-functional dimension. In parallel with purism, other concepts can be used that indicate most of its abundance. It may be "conservatism", "traditionalism", but the term "purism" was chosen because it indicates the exacerbation of the problem.

Many Georgian scholars have been commenting on the problem of the existence of Georgian traditional music since the 19th century, when Georgian leaders painfully perceived the process of loss of the originality of Georgian music. However, for the first time we meet in detail with the problem of an authentic approach in Georgian musical folklore in the studies of Edisher Garakanidze. Since then, this topic has been discussed by the following scientists: Rusudan Tsurtsunia, Natalia Zumbadze, Gigi Garakanidze, Nino Tsitsishvili, Nino Kalandadze, Irina Ebralidze, Sofio Kotrikadze, Teona Lomsadze, Tamaz Gabizonia (The Concept of Purism - also: Andrea Kuzmich, Jeremy Fauts).

The issue of the vision of the nationality of Georgian traditional music in performing practice was still basically at least monotonous - with a vector of preservation. It is interesting that in Soviet times the principle of "national in form, socialist in content" was in effect in Georgia, so that the ethnic component was not so ignored, as it sometimes seems today. And the "Georgian Songwriters

Song", which took shape during this period (Gabisoniya, 2019: 195), was quite imbued with devotion to tradition. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the famous "Georgian Horo" that operated before the Soviet revolution (led by Josef Ratil) was more European-style than the Georgian teams of the Soviet era.

In general, even when the musical notation of a Georgian song begins, a rather significant corpus of hybrid songs can be traced in Georgian traditional music. These are European, Eastern, less often Russian influences. However, since by the term "hybrid" we mean spontaneous, unintentional synthesis, such structures were not eclectic and are not perceived as such today. This is a kind of "polyphony" of the Georgian and non-Georgian strata mainly in the Tbilisi culture (Kavtaradze, 2011: 84).

The subsequent rise of foreign, this time clearly European intonation is already associated with a kind of "national musical modernization" of the Soviet era (1950s). At this time, the emotional contrasts of the major-minor structure invade the dominance of the Georgian predominantly modal structure, as well as - the horizontal development of musical material with an emphasis on melody.

In this process, we can say that the main role was played by Fanduri, a kind of "creative machine" (Gabisonia, 2019: 200) - the most democratic Georgian string instrument, chromatically modified in the 40-50s. 20th century (like other instruments - under the direction of Kirile Vashakidze). As a result, a number of Georgian "Songwriter's songs" have been formed, which are still very popular, but rejected by authenticists or, if you like, purists. It is interesting that even today the aforementioned repertoire has been performed with the accompaniment of Fanduri - like to the guitar accompaniment of "Urban Songs".

A kind of "authentic revival" has been taking place since the 80s of the last century under the leadership of Edisher Garakanidze and his ensemble "Mtiebi". At the same time in the Georgian Church the process of recreation of traditional Georgian hymns by the "Anchiskhati" ensemble is under way. I would formulate Garakanidze's concept in three main points: connection with traditional function, traditional manner of performance and democracy. We can say that this authentic direction still remains one of the main trends in Georgian folk music. However, less attention is paid to the third factor, so the mentioned authenticity carries more signs of purism.

In this regard, it is interesting that the "canonical versions" of the Georgian song, which E. Garakanidze considered one of the main obstacles on the way to authenticity (E. Garakanidze, 2007b: 79), has survived to this days - this time in the name of "authenticity". It is here that you can see an example of calling the puristic view as "authenticity." It is particularly interesting that the trend towards "academic" performing along with "authentic" is also marked by purist loyalty to the old repertoire.

By the way, we also have the opposite pole of the view of authenticity - for example, Teona Lomsadze considers sincere performance to be the main feature of authenticity in her doctoral dissertation this year. It is clear that sincerity is a very fragile criterion. In my opinion, when it comes to authenticity, stylistic originality, unity and natural combination with other stylistic elements should come to the fore. It is with this concept that the concept of "purism" is clearly separated.

It must be said that the puristic position to some extent correlates with the great interest of foreign music lovers in Georgian songs. It is noteworthy that the Georgian word "excellent" ("saitskhoo") is translated as "for a stranger." Obviously, the host always wants to offer the guest something special, original, that he has. In this regard, the Georgian song is divided into two utilitarian streams: "presentation" (concert, tourist event, restaurant, local dinner) and "work shop" (with groups of foreign amateur musicians - in different regions). In this regard, in addition to the four main musical dialects (Gurian, Kakhetian, Svan, Megrelian - (Gabisonia, 2018: 384), the musical folklore of Tush and Ajarian is also popular (the latter also attracts the interest of tourists with other respects).

Let's touch a little on the stylistic features of Georgian traditional and ethnic music. The main symbol of traditional music is polyphony, and the main vector of ethnic music in our country today is the melody (Gabisoniya, 2019: 199). This is not surprising: the joint functioning of mass and new styles of singing is based on the melody. That is why mass festival gatherings are rarely held in Georgia, where people can participate in music making without restrictions.

In particular, ethno-jazz in Georgia is a space where oriental melody is sometimes used to a greater extent than folk polyphonic melody (groups "Egari", "Iriao"). In this choice, in my opinion, a more comfortable implementation of improvisation with one voice plays a big role than with different voices. At the same time, this is a legitimately perceived phenomenon under the auspices of Georgian ethnomusic - after all, oriental motives are one of the main features of the old Tbilisi folklore.

In general, the concept of Georgian urban music is characterized by several aspects (Gabisoniya, 2015: 28-19). And unlike its eastern branch, its second branch - songs of European urban chord polyphony and European harmonious structure - is still a kind of "unadmitted folklore" (like the songs of "Bayat" and "Songswriter's"). However, it is difficult to establish a clear time limit when an old "legal" city song has grown into an "illegal" city song.

It is interesting that when Georgian singers sit down at the table for fun, "real folk" village polyphonic songs always sound from the very beginning, and towards the end, when alcohol grows stronger, guitar and urban songs are heard.

Also, songs of songwriters composed in the 50-60s of the last century, which are still sung during expeditions to the regions, are still not considered as a folklore, despite the their clear Georgian intonation. Nevertheless it is unnecessary to talk about the "bayats" with the eastern, non-Georgian intonation.

The mood of the purists with its dynamics today is ineffective and inadequate, as evidenced by the spontaneously created but most popular Georgian group Mandili. These three girls undoubtedly look a little kitsch, but thanks to their skillful production and their sincerity, they have attracted millions on YouTube.

In general, it can be said that today music lovers or specialists with a purist mood are satisfied with the result of using national authentic intonations and performances in only the following four modes:

- Original - a layer that has been preserved with a very small fraction;
- Copying - which means faithfully reproducing old recordings on a stage or elsewhere (this practice is highlighted in the Authenticists)
- Variant - this creative vector rarely goes beyond the precise performing technique (except for the songs of the Gurian trio, where improvisation is a prerequisite);
- Reconstruction - especially adding voices - such experiments become especially remarkable when the goal is often called the restoration of "lost polyphony" (Meskhetian, Lazov, Tush songs);

In general, the main criterion for the diversity of today's Georgian ethnomusic should be considered not a stylistic factor, but a situational and social one. In particular, if music is made together for themselves somewhere in Georgia, this is the mainstream of folklore. This is music at the table, in transport, at corporate meetings. Stage traditional music is only the reproductive side of folklore. These two layers can be called presentational folklore ("representative folklore" (Gabisonia, 2014: 30) and co-creative, spontaneous, functional, self-righteous, "for oneself" and even more - all-sufficient folklore, respectively.

In my opinion, the main phenomenological features of Georgian traditional music - the developed structure and diversity (Gabisonia, 2018, 389-390) cannot be symmetrically embodied in Georgian ethnic music as a whole due to puristic positions - the vector to diversity is not relevant here; on the contrary, it is limited.

It seems that purism also coexists with a kind of inadequate nihilism - in the sense that Georgian musical intonation seems to be unable to adapt to contemporary popular rhythmic music. But obviously, this is not the only reason for the lack of original creative experiments in Georgian

ethnomusic. In this regard, the fears of young people about the unacceptability of the Georgian ethnic intonation for foreign listeners are also important.

But the main thing is that purist groups cannot believe that the self-directed development of musical folklore will not harm the historical achievements of traditional culture, but will only add new interesting colors to the Georgian ethnomusical culture.

We think that along with the purist tendencies, the time has come to give more legitimacy to the free interpretation of folk intonation. And - the boundaries of the concept of the same "traditional Georgian musical folklore" should be expanded. Just as in the past, when the "urban" song was recognized as a folk song - next to the "rural" song, today, when discussing this topic, we must oppose traditional, real, habitually stylistic songs that people sing - on the one hand, and on the other - innovative songs, relying on traditional Georgian musical and stylistic patterns. And if their separation from the old forms requires a specific name, let it be "new folk music".

Thus, Georgian musical-folk purism, as if it should be against the trend of globalization and should be characterized by the vector of glocalization, but with its isolationism, contributes to the emergence of "carte blanches" and giving them to inexperienced musicians in the development of local musical folklore. This, along with the "flourishing" of Georgian musical folklore, is causing a crisis in Georgian ethnic music in general.

It is hoped that sooner or later in the field of folk music in Georgia, the creative initiatives of reviving music will be taken into account with the aim of creating new samples by preserving and developing a quasi-authentic folklore style. Also - fusion or other genres saturated with folk intonations will be perceived as closer to folklore.