

The
V. Sarajishvili
Tbilisi State
Conservatoire
International
Research
Center for
Traditional
Polyphony
BULLETIN

Tbilisi, December, 2022

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The News

Ethnomusicological Life in Georgia

(July-December, 2022)

Festivals, Conferences, Competitions

6-8.07.2022 – Ozurgeti hosted Giorgi Salukvadze International Folklore Competition-Festival

14-15.07.2022 – Polikarpe Khubulava II International Folklore Festival “Kolkhi” was held in Zugdidi

15-17, 22-24.07.2022 – “ArtGeni” Festival in the Open-air Ethnographic Museum

26-30.09.2022 – Tbilisi State Conservatoire hosted the 11th International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony

8.10-14.11.2022 – the 6th National Competition of Children’s and Juvenile Collectives as organized by the Choral Society of Georgia

9.10.2022 – The Kaspi Municipality village of Akhalkhalaki hosted the Festival of Kartlian Traditional Singing and chanting

10.10-8.11.2022 – Second Round of the National Folklore Festival in Akhaltsikhe, Batumi, Ozurgeti, Telavi, Tbilisi.

25.10-8.11.2022 – Festival of Choral Music in Tbilisi

4-6.11.2022 – The Giorgi Garakanidze Festival of Folk and Church Music in Batumi

6.11.2022 – Children’s First Folklore Festival in Tbilisi

9-12.11.2022 – Georgian ethnomusicologists Lolita Surmanidze and Nino Razmadze participated in the International Symposium on Traditional Music Research held at Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts

Lectures, Meetings, Master classes, Presentations

16.07.2022 – As part of the project “Folklore for everyone”, Nanina the creative group of ethnomusicologists held a concert and a master class in round dance for the beneficiaries of the Blind Union of Achara, at Batumi Art Teaching University.

4.08.2022 – Ozurgeti Folklore Centre hosted the presentation of the music collection “Georgian Folk Songs – Guria”

1-10.09.2022 – ethnomusicologist Nino Naneishvili held masterclasses of Georgian traditional music

16.09.2022 – The Church Music Laboratory of Tbilisi State Conservatoire organized and held Ekvtime Kereselidze online scientific seminar.

29.09.2022 – The Star of Tristan Sikharulidze was opened in Ozurgeti.

6.11.2022 – Presentation of ensemble Ialoni’s audio album and Archival Recordings of Achara Radio was held at Giorgi Garakanidze Festival of Folk and Church Music in Batumi

17-19.11.2022 – Master classes of Ossetian dance at the Folklore State Centre

20.11.2022 – Mikheil Javakhishvili’s lecture “Restoration and Introduction of Georgian folk song tradition among the Georgians” within the framework of the Tbilisi Baroque Music Festival.

21.12.2022 – Nino Naneishvili’s public lecture “Christmas Musical Tradition in Georgia” at Zakaria Paliashvili’s Memorial House.

28.12.2022 – The Theatre and Film Georgia State University hosted choirmaster Tornike Skhiereli’s masterclass “Rachan Musical Dialect and its Characteristics”

28-30.12.2022 – Ethnomusicologist Nino Naneshvili’s master classes of Georgian traditional music in Belgium

Concerts, Evenings, Exhibitions, Anniversaries

12.07.2022 – Creative evening of Ensemble Rekheuli in the Hall of Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University

14.07.2022 – Reporting concert of the University of Chanting in the hall of the Folklore State Centre

15.07.2022 – Concert of ensemble Margaliti and Dutch friends at the Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Musical Instruments of the Palace of Arts

15.07.2022 – Ensemble Erisioni’s solo concert in Batumi

- 20.07.2022** – Joint concert of ensemble Ubisa and Dedas Levana folk ensemble Shilda at Kharagauli movie theatre
- 21.07.2022** – Ensemble Erisioni’s solo concert in Ambrolauri
- 23.07.2022** – Ensemble Erisioni’s solo concert in Oni
- 25.07.2022** – The event “Pilimonoba” dedicated to Pilimon Koridze in Ozurgeti
- 4.08.2022** – Ensemble Didgori’s solo concert in Mestia
- 5.08.2022** – Ensemble Didgori’s solo concert in Lentekhi
- 25.08.2022** – Concert of Georgian traditional music with the participation of ensembles Ialoni, Mareti and Nai at the Keda Centre of Culture
- 1.09.2022** – Ensemble Sameba’s solo concert at the Youth Centre of Tbilisi Holy Trinity Cathedral Church
- 9.09.2022** – Ensembles Ialoni, Musikeli and Kolkhuri trio participated in the concert of Georgian traditional music at Senaki Theatre
- 24.09.2022** – Ensemble Basiani’s solo concert within the framework of the “Autumn Tbilisi” Festival at Jansugh Kakhidze Music Centre
- 26.09.2022** – Tbilisi State Conservatoire hosted the opening Gala concert of the 11th International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony with the participation of female folk ensembles
- 27.09.2022** – Student ensemble of the Theatre and Film Georgia State University and ensemble Madara from Estonia participated in the concert of world and Georgian polyphony at Tbilisi State Conservatoire
- 28.09.2022** – Kutaisi State ensemble and ensemble Lamazika from France participated in the concert of world and Georgian polyphony at Tbilisi State Conservatoire
- 29.09.2022** – Ensembles Rikhi (Georgia) and “Kartuli ansambli” (Holland) participated in the concert of world and Georgian polyphony at Tbilisi State Conservatoire
- 30.09.2022** – Mama Daviti Church choir; ensembles Bolnela and Perkhisa participated in the concert of world and Georgian polyphony at Tbilisi State Conservatoire
- 30.09.2022** – Closing Gala concert of the 11th International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony in the hall of the Folklore State Centre
- 1.10.2022** – Tristan Sikharulidze’s anniversary concert at the small hall of Rustaveli Theatre
- 12.10.2022** – Joint concert of Gori women’s choir and ensemble Shavnabada within the framework of the “Autumn Tbilisi” Festival
- 23.10.2022** – Joint concert of ensemble Zedashe and Nanina the creative group of ethnomusicologists at Signaghi theatre
- 23.10.2022** – The concert dedicated to the memory of Anzor Erkomaishvili was held as part of the “Autumn Tbilisi” Festival
- 23.10.2022** – Ensemble Tutarchela’s concert in Rustavi
- 24.10.2022** – Joint concert of Nanina the creative group of ethnomusicologists and Dedas Levana folk ensemble Shilda in Ilia Chavchavadze’s Memorial house in Kvareli
- 29.10.2022** – The jubilee concert of the Achara State Academic Song and dance ensemble Arsiani in Batumi
- 18.11.2022** – Ensemble Sameba’s creative evening at the Youth Centre of Tbilisi Holy Trinity Cathedral Church
- 25.11.2022** – Ramin Mikaberidze’s jubilee evening at Chokhatauri Centre of Culture
- 25.11.2022** – The students of the University of Chanting held a concert at Sachkhere Centre of Culture
- 27.11.2022** – The evening of traditional music dedicated to the memory of Tinatin Zhvania at Tbilisi State Conservatoire
- 5.12.2022 – The event “University of Chanting Today” organized by the University of Chanting at Radisson Blu Iveria Hotel Tbilisi
- 6.12.2022** – Closing concert of the National

Folklore Festival at Tumanishvili Theatre
7.12.2022 – Closing concert of the National Folklore Festival at Griboedov Theatre
9.12.2022 – The concert of ensembles Rustavi and Martve in Vakhtang Salaridze concert hall
9.12.2022 – Concerts of the Patriarchy choir of the Holy Trinity Cathedral church at Jansugh Kakhidze Music Centre
10.12.2022 – The evening “Maghla mtas modga” of “Amer-imeri” Children’s folk-ethnographic studio in the hall of the Folklore State Centre
11.12.2022 – The concert of the choirmaster’s schools from Kakheti at Tbilisi State Conservatoire
11.12.2022 – The Final of the competition of family ensembles at Batumi Music Centre
13.12.2022 – Closing concert of the National Folklore Festival in the grand hall of Rustaveli Theatre
13.12.2022 – Closing concert of the National Folklore Festival in the small hall of Rustaveli Theatre
19.12.2022 – Ensemble Basiani’s solo concert in Tserovani IDP settlement
21.12.2022 – Ensemble Basiani’s solo concert in Akhmeta House of Culture
21-22.12.2022 – Ensemble Erisioni’s concerts at Tbilisi Concert Hall
23.12.2022 – Ensemble Basiani’s solo concert in the public school of Ozurgeti municipality village of Nasakirali
23.12.2022 – Ensemble Erisioni’s solo concert in Nokalakevi
24.12.2022 – Ensemble Margaliti’s concert at the Folklore State Centre of Georgia
24.12.2022 – Ensemble Martve’s concert in the village of Variani
25.12.2022 – Ensemble Martve’s concert in the village of Nikozi
25.12.2022 – Ensemble Erisioni’s solo concert in Martkopi
26.12.2022 – Ensemble Martve’s concert in the village of Karaleti

28.12.2022 – The New Year’s concert of Ozurgeti choirmaster’s school at the Folklore Center of Ozurgeti.

Concert Tours

8.07.2022 – State Folk Song Ensemble Basiani participated in the international sacred music festival in the city of Fribourg, Switzerland
19.08.2022 – Ensemble Rustavi participated in traditional music festival in Sion, Switzerland
26-27.08.2022 – Ensemble Rustavi participated in the international music festival in Belgium
9.09.2022 – Ensemble Basiani participated in Draaimolen Festival in Tilburg, the Netherlands
12-17.09.2022 – Folk Ensemble Perkhisa participated in the 41st International Competition-Festival of Sacred Music in Hajnowka, Poland
7-12.10.2022 – Trio Khelkhvavi participated in the international festival “Baltic Wave 2022” in Tallinn, Estonia
13.10.2022 – Ensemble Chveneburebi’s concert in Jerusalem
3-10.11.2022 – Ensemble Basiani’s concerts in different cities of the USA.
4-6.11.2022 – Ensemble Erisioni’s concerts in Switzerland
11.11.2022 – Folk ensemble Gorda and Nino Nakeuri held a concert in Milan
20-24.11.2022 – Khelvachauri municipality folk ensembles Kolkha and "Atdzali" participated in the 8th International music and dance festival-competition in Istanbul.
23-24.11.2022 – Ensemble Basiani’s concerts in Estonia
25.11.2022 – Ensemble Chveneburebi’s concert in France
26.11.2022 – Ensemble Didgori participated in the closing concert of „Musas e Terras“ Festival in Nugoro
29.12.2022 – Ensemble Ialoni held a concert in Belgium

Expeditions

22.07-24.08.2022 – Giorgi Kraveishvili, Tamaz Kraveishvili and Giorgi Alimbarashvili were on an expedition to Tao, Shavsheti, Klarjeti and Lazeti as funded by the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation

25.07.2022 – Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University of Chanting organized an expedition (headed by Maka Khardziani) to the village of Kistauri, Akhmeta district

02.08.2022 - Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University of Chanting organized an expedition (headed by Davit Shughliashvili) to the village of Shilda, Kvareli district

28.08-1.09.2022 – Ethnomusicologist Giorgi Kraveishvili was on an expedition to the village of Sarpi, Khelvachauri district

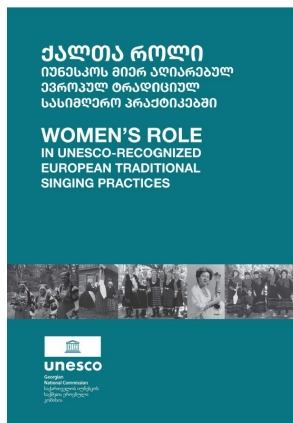
11-12.09.2022 – Ethnomusicologist Giorgi Kraveishvili was on an expedition to the village of Sarpi, Hopa district

18, 20.09.2022 – Ethnomusicologist Giorgi Kraveishvili was on an expedition to the village of Sarpi, Hopa district

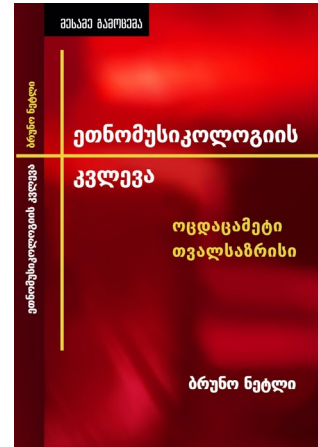
2-14.10.2022 – The Folklore State Center organized an expedition (headed by Natalia Zumbadze) to Zemo Achara

Publications

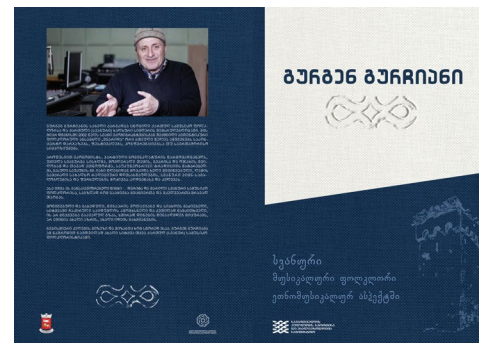
With the support of UNESCO the International Research Centre for Traditional Polyphony of Tbilisi State Conservatoire published the collection “Women’s Role in UNESCO-Recognized European Traditional Singing Practices”



The International Research Centre for Traditional Polyphony of Tbilisi State Conservatoire published the Georgian translation of Bruno Nettles’ book “Ethnomusicology research: thirty-three points of view”



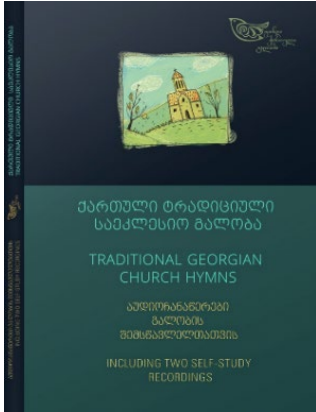
The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia published Gurchiani’s book “Svan Folk Music from Ethnomusical Aspect”



Folk ensemble Kirialesa released an audio album



“Georgian chanting” foundation published the collection “Georgian traditional church hymns – audio recordings for the learners of chanting”



The Folklore State Center of Georgia published volumes of the Anthology of Georgian chanting



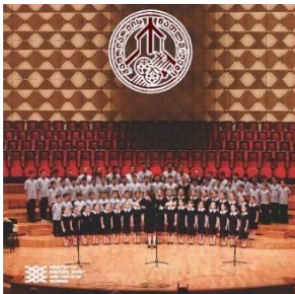
The Folklore State Center of Georgia published Georgian translation of Timothy Rice’s “Ethnomusicology, a very brief introduction”

“Georgian chanting” foundation published Nino Pirtskhalava’s book “Ioane Petritsi and Georgian Aesthetic Musical Thought”



The Youth Union of Valerian Gunia Theater Workers published “Collection of Georgian folk songs – Robert Gogolashvili’s expedition materials”

Folk ensemble Sagalobeli of the Patriarch’s godchildren released an audio album



Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University of Chanting published a collection of students' scientific works



Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University of Chanting released the audio recordings of the student expeditions from 2019-2021



Prepared by Sopiko Kotrikadze

11th International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony

On September 26-30, 2020, Tbilisi State Conservatoire and the Folklore State Center of Georgia hosted the 11th International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony, which was held under the patronage of the President of Georgia and the support of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth.

The international conferences initiated in the 1980s have continued to exist since 2002 under the name of the International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony. Twenty years have Already passed, with the participation of over 450 scholars from 38 countries and about 250 folk ensembles.



A scientific session at the 11th symposium

Following the UNESCO proclamation of Georgian polyphonic singing a masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible cultural heritage of humanity in 2001, the first Tbilisi symposium aroused great interest among ethnomusicological circles and since then, it has hosted many world-renowned researchers of polyphony. The Tbilisi symposia present modern trends in polyphony research and contribute to the integration of Georgian ethnomusicology with Western science, stimulate interest to Georgian po-

lyphony among foreign researchers, who unanimously recognize its particular place in the world musical culture.



An afternoon concert at the Conservatoire

The 11th symposium boasted the participation of 36 scientists from 16 countries, including 28 Western scholars, up to 25 Georgian and foreign folk ensembles.

The symposium opened with the concert of female performers, which was attended by Salome Zurabishvili the President of Georgia and Thea Tsulukiani the Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth.

Examples of Georgian, Azerbaijani, Estonian and Ukrainian traditional music were performed at the concert. Andrea Kuzmich – a Ukrainian singer and researcher from Canada, together with ensemble Ialoni dedicated the folk songs of this country to Ukrainian people's heroic struggle. The concert audience included the citizens of Ukraine, internally displaced as a result of the war.

Presentation of the book “Women's Role in UNESCO-recognized European Traditional Singing Practices” prepared as part of UNESCO's 2020-2021 “Participation Program” (author of the idea and compiler of the collection, Teona Lomsadze, a specialist at the IRCTP). The book presents the UNESCO-recognized singing practices in Europe and shows the role they play in contemporary processes of women's liberation. The collection includes 13 articles by female authors about Bulgarian, Estonian, Lithuanian,

Portuguese and Georgian practices, in which female repertoire plays an important role. Among the participants were female performers from Georgia, who are represented in the above collection, and women's ensemble Madara from Estonia.

Presentation of the new publication Bruno Nettle: “Ethnomusicology Research: Thirty-three Points of View” (in Georgian) prepared by the IRCTP was held on September 27.

The podcast presentation “Voices of the Ancestors: Voices of Our Grandmothers” of British singers Suzanne Thompson and Holly Taylor-Zuntz, and the film “Voices of Conviviality” of an Italian ethnomusicologist and director, which tells about the evening spent by the singers from Premana (Italy) together with ensemble Adilei in the village of Lakhushdi (Svaneti, Georgia) were shown as part of the symposium.



closing concert of the Symposium

The scientific sessions of the symposium were held in a hybrid format.

On the closing day of the symposium, the Round Table was held on a fairly significant topic of modern ethnomusicology: “Musical Folk Tourism”. The presenter of the Round Table was Professor Caroline Bethell of the University of Manchester; co-speakers: Marina DeCristoforo, Geoff Burton, Nino Naneishvili, Madona Chamgeliani.

The symposium was solemnly closed with the concert of world polyphony, held in the hall of the Folklore State Center. At the concert, Caroline Bithell (UK) and Frank Scherbaum (Germany) were conferred honorary doctors of Tbilisi State Conservatoire for their special contribution to the research of Georgian polyphony.

Team of the IRCTP

To the 85th Anniversary of Tristan Sikharulidze

Tristan Sikharulidze – the outstanding performer of Gurian song, improviser, honored choir-master, first laureate of the Order of Merit and the first National Folklore Prize-winner, turned 85 this year. On 29 October, 2022, jointly organized by the Education, Culture, Sports and Youth Service of the Ozurgeti City Hall and the Center for Culture and Youth, Guria regional branch of the Anzor Erkomaishvili State Folklore Center hosted the ceremonial event, which was crowned with the unveiling of the singer's star. At the opening of the Star, ensembles Shvidkatsa, Shemokmedi and trio Shalva Chemo performed a number of songs. The students of Ozurgeti Choirmaster's School also congratulated the choirmaster on his anniversary. A surprise for the singer was the video congratulation of his foreign colleagues on this important day from several countries of the world. And on 1 November, his 85th anniversary was celebrated with a concert on the small stage of Rustaveli National Theater in Tbilisi, with the participation of ensembles Erisioni, Rustavi, Marani, Didgori, Adilei, Shvidkatsa, Rekheuli and Shalva chemo. The event was attended by Thea Tsulukiani the Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia, who presented Tristan Sikharulidze with Honorary Diploma of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia for his special contribution to the development and popularization of Georgian

(Gurian) folk song. Vano Chkhartishvili, the philanthropist and founder of the “Georgian Chanting Foundation” presented him with a miniature golden sculpture – “Bird of Gratitude”.



Tristan Sikharulidze

It is a blessing that in our century there still is a great performer of Gurian songs and young generation has the opportunity to hear and appreciate Tristan Sikharulidze – the living legend of old generation.

There always were distinguished performers in Guria in different periods. For old singers, singing was a live creative process: they never repeated what they had sung once, and each time they surprised listeners with new variants. Tristan Sikharulidze is the successor of such singers' traditions; he, like his great ancestors, has made his own mark on Gurian song and enriched it with his own variants.

Tristan's teacher was his father Ilarion Sikharulidze – a renowned singer and choirmaster. Ilarion himself was Artem Erkomaishvili's and Varlam Simonishvili's student, he had passed their most difficult and strict school of singing. Ilarion had thorough knowledge of all Gurian songs with their most complex variants.

At different times Tristan Sikharulidze sang in Ladiko Erkomaishvili's choir, later in Amiran Toidze's choir in the village of Makvaneti. In 1966, he

was invited to the State Merited Ensemble of Georgian Song and Dance (now Erisioni), then-directed by Professor Grigol Chkhikvadze. Choirmasters were Vasil Makharadze and Dato Balanchivadze. Two years later, Tristan moved to the Ozurgeti ensemble Shvidkatsa, directed by Mikheil Shavishvili. After Shavishvili's passing the ensemble was practically disbanded, Tristan collected the members and revived ensemble Shvidkatsa. In addition, at Ozurgeti Theater he restored ensemble Sakhioni, the members of which were actors.



Trio "Shalva Chemo". Tristan and Guri Sikharulidze, Merab Kalandadze

In 1982 and 1985, Anzor Erkomaishvili twice invited Guri and Tristan Sikharulidze to Tbilisi, to the Melodiya company to record educational discs, where all voice-parts of Gurian songs were to be recorded separately and together. Sheet music were enclosed with the educational CDs.

In 2003, the International Center for Georgian Folk Song released a unique CD of 26 Gurian songs, entitled "Chven Mshvidoba", including many forgotten examples.

In 2004 together with Merab Kalandadze Tristan and Guri Sikharulidze created the trio "Shalva

Chemo". Gurian songs performed by them are distinguished in the abundance of variants, smooth timbre coloring, creative ingenuity, deep knowledge of songs, different performance manner.

On 12 June, 2017, at the evening held at Rustaveli State Theater, Georgian Chanting Foundation awarded Tristan and Guri Sikharulidze Honorary title "The Beneficent of Folk Song", the Certificate of Honor signed by the Ilia II – Catholicos-Patriarch of Georgia and Mr. Vano Chkhartishvili; the best prize and a cash prize; in 2018 Tristan Sikharulidze was awarded the title of the Patriarch of Arts.

Tristan Sikharulidze continues to serve Georgian (Gurian) folk song with great enthusiasm: he directs ensemble Shvidkatsa, is a consultant at the Guria regional branch of A. Erkomaishvili Folklore State Centre, where he shares the charm and secret of Gurian song with young generation. For him singing is the way of life in which he has put his heart and soul.

Maia Gelashvili
ethnomusicologist, Head of the folk music department at Ozurgeti Folklore Center

Achara State Academic Ensemble of Song and Dance Arsiani

Achara State Academic Ensemble of Song and Dance Arsiani is 100 years old.

Its creation is connected with the name of Meliton Kukhianidze – the renowned musician and choirmaster, who created the first ethnographic choir in Achara in 1921. A year later, in 1922, the choir held its first solo concert, and from 1923, it started touring the cities and regional centers of Georgia. Great Georgian composer Zakaria Paliashvili, who attended one of the concerts, was impressed by the choir's sound, scenic culture and academic performance level of the repertoire.

The first tour revealed the need to include Georgian dances in the repertoire, which was implemented by the famous choreographer Davit Javrišvili, thus creating the first precedent of performing mass dances on stage.



First generation of the ensemble directed by Meliton Kukhianidze (1928)

Subsequently, the ensemble's group of dancers was directed by: Aleksandre Jijeishvili, who enriched the repertoire with the dances "Kartuli", "Mtiuluri", "Apkhazuri"; and Enver Khabadze, recognized as the "patriarch" of choreography, the author of the dances "Gandagana", "Gadakhveuli khorumi" and "Lazuri". Enver Khabadze's activity is associated with the introduction of a female-male duet consisting of Patman Kobaladze and Zhani Rezelian in the dance "Gandagana", which was a historical event in the Acharan reality of that time. Later, Patman Kobaladze performed unforgettable solo parts in dances: "Acharuli satrpialo", "Mtiuluri", "Parikaoba", "Tebrone midis tsqalzedo", "Ossuri", "Samaya" and others. Over the years, her partners were: Zhani Rezeliani, Temel Mikeladze, Iacob (Yasha) Khalvashi, Givi Chichua, Soso Chanturishvili, Tamaz Jakhutashvili, Tamaz Bezhanidze, Temur Pagava.

In 1925, the choir was conferred the title of academic ensemble; In 1929, the ethnographic choir received the status of the State Ensemble of Folk Song and Dance. It was the second state ensemble in Georgia.

In 1961, in connection with its 40th anniversary Achara State Academic Ensemble of Song and Dance was awarded the honorary title "Merited Ensemble of Georgia" and named after its founder Meliton Kukhianidze.

After Meliton Kukhianidze, at different times, the ensemble was directed by choirmasters, choreographers and conductors: Petre Sulaberidze, Nikoloz Chavleishvili, Mery Vepkhvadze, Anzor Ananidze, Lia Topuridze, Gulnara Noghaideli, Murman Kamadadze, Temur Bibileishvili, Tamaz Bezhanidze, Amiran Paichadze, Ruslan Gvazava, Irakli Sharadze, Avtandil Choladze, Temur Koridze, Rapiel Mikeladze, Otar Mikeladze, Giorgi Parsenadze, Iason Khomeriki, Giorgi Chkhartishvili, Giorgi Nagervadze, Giorgi Chachava, Giorgi Chanishvili...



Enver Khabadze at the ensemble's rehearsal (1970s)

Throughout its long history, the Achara State Ensemble of Song and Dance always actively participated in local and all-Union days of arts, folk music festivals, and went on tours to many countries of the world such as: Egypt, Denmark, Iran, Italy, the Canary Islands, Cyprus, Syria, Turkey, Sudan, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Estonia, Russia, the USA, Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and others, where it participated in international festivals, exhibitions, competitions, days of culture, charity events; It won a number of highest awards, was the Grand Prix and first place winner.

In 2011, the ensemble's 90th anniversary was grandly celebrated, as part of which the star of Patman Kobaladze, the soloist of the "Gandagana" first duet, Merited Artist of Georgia and Achara, was opened.

In 2012, thanks to the efforts of Amiran Paichadze, children's groups for singing, dancing and instrument making were created; they continue the traditions and participate in international festivals, both in and outside Georgia.

It should be noted that in 2014, when at the grand opening of the ensemble's rehabilitated building, the museum of the ensemble was opened, and the documentary film "From the creation to this Day", about its history, premiered. Director of the film is Irakli Kacheishvili, the author of the script Irine Chakhvadze –PR-manager of the ensemble. It was on the initiative of Irine Chakhvadze and with the support of the ensemble's current director Otar Mikeladze, that the museum was opened, which is a repository of the ensemble's history.

In 2016, with the support and petition of the Ministry of Culture, the Folklore State Center and the Union of Choreographers, the State Ensemble was conferred the status "Academic". It should also be noted that this is the first regional academic ensemble in Georgia. The same year, Kutaisi, the hometown of the ensemble's founder, hosted its first jubilee concert to mark 95th anniversary from its creation. Arsiani's star was opened in front of the ensemble's office in Batumi.

In 2017, the ensemble was named Arsiani. This is the name of the mountain that overlooks, Tao-Klarjeti on the one hand, and, Georgia on the other hand. The ensemble was given the name Arsiani on the initiative of its director Otar Mikeladze. In 2018, for his contribution to the development of Georgian culture, Otar Mikeladze was awarded the highest award of culture – the title "Patriarch of Arts".

In 2019 a choreographic group of the ensemble veterans was created. This idea, which also belonged to Otar Mikeladze, aimed at employing distinguished

elderly dancers of the ensemble. The choreographer of the veteran group is Rapiel Mikeladze, a merited figure of Achara.



Patman Kobaladze

In 2021, the celebration of Arsiani's centenary was interrupted by the pandemic. However, on 29 October, 2022, with the support and organization of Tornike Rizhvatze – the Chairman of the Achara Autonomous Republic Government of and Maia Khajishvili – the Minister of Education, Culture and Sports of Achara, an evening (producer Bakur Bakuradze) dedicated to Arsiani's 100th anniversary was held at Batumi State Center of Music; the exhibition of the ensemble's dance costumes, photo exhibition "From the foundation to this Day", and presentation of the anniversary book-album were held as part of the evening.

Minister of Culture of Georgia – Tea Tsulukiani, composer Marika Kvaliashvili, film directors Eldar Shengelaya and Merab Kokochashvili, director of Sukhishvili Georgian National Ballet Nino Sukhishvili, journalist Tengiz Utmelidze and actor Imeda Kakhiani congratulated the ensemble on the anniversary with a video address.

At the end of the concert, Chairman of the Achara Government Tornike Rizhvatze awarded the current director of the ensemble, Giorgi Chanishvili with the "Tbel Abuseridze II degree" Order for his special contribution to art, and the members of the ensemble were conferred the title Merited Art

Worker. In addition, a number of titles, medals, certificates, and orders were awarded to the singers and dancers of the ensemble. Such as: the title “Merited Choreographer-Tutor”, the “Beneficent” medal, the “Gratitude” certificate, the “Georgian Art Excellence” Order, the “Beneficent of Georgian Art” Order, the title “Merited Dancer”, the title “Merited Musician-Accompanist”, the title “Artist of the Year”, “Alamdari” Order and for the first time in the ensemble’s history – the Zurab Bagdadishvili prize.

The evening ended with fireworks and traditional “Mravalzhameri”; one of the stars in the space was named after Arsiani.

In 2022, on the initiative and organization of Giorgi Chanishvili – director of the ensemble, the foundation was laid for the Georgian Folk Song Festival named after Meliton Kukhianidze – the founder and director of the ensemble. In 2023, the Festival will be held symbolically on 19 September –Kukhianidze’s birthday, with the participation of all academic ensembles of Georgian.

Over the long history of its existence, the composers Zakaria Paliashvili, Revaz Laghidze, Shalva Mshvelidze, Sandro Mirianashvili, Mikheil Chirinashvili, Shota Milorava, Grigol Kokeladze, Alexandre Partskhaladze, Levan Shengelia, Giorgi Moistsrapishvili had close creative relations with Arsiani. Many of their songs were performed at the concerts of the ensemble.

In 2023, tours are planned to different regions and the capital city of Georgia. The tours around the world will also continue.

Thus, after a century, the Meliton Kukhianidze State Academic Ensemble of Song and Dance Arsiani devotedly continues to popularize Georgian traditional musical culture.

About the ensemble “arsiani” see in full:

<http://www.ajarafolk.ge/index.php>

Irine Chakhvadze

PR manager of ensemble Arsiani

Foreign Polyphony

Overtone polyphony of the Xhosa people

The Xhosa people of South Africa have rich musical traditions. They speak a language similar to Bantu. Xhosa language, like many other African languages, is tonal, which means that the melody is formed from the content of the text – the same word, i.e. combination of letters, acquires different meanings with different intonation.



Male singers of the Xhosa tribe

Interestingly, South African President Thabo Mbeki, as well as the legendary Nelson Mandela, belong to the Xhosa people. This ethnic group, itself part of the Nguni ethnos, consists of twelve ethnic units, the dominant among which are Thembu Xhosa, living in Lumko district near Queensland. Its traditional culture has been greatly influenced by its neighborhood with the Hottentots and Bushmen during the past two centuries (It is interesting, that the 1497 Vasco da Gama’s logbook record reads that he was met by the Hottentots, who played harmonic music on 4-5 pipes).

Musical instruments of the Xhosa are not very diverse, but among them there is *uhadi* - a very interesting single-string pumpkin *chianuri*-type instrument; attention-worthy is the musical bow *umrhubhe*, a string mouth-bow instrument. Sometimes they use vargan *Isitolotolo*. All these instruments have a rich overtone palette. In many cases, the Xhosa imitate these instruments with their voice. But the most interesting cultural phenomenon of the

Xhosa people is their overtone polyphony, called *umngqokolo*. This is a voice-variation technique, when the singer sings in a low “muffled” voice (as if he has a catarrh, flu). In the *umngqokolo ngomqangi* style, the singer makes two sounds: supportive and melodic. Overtone performance means exactly this – one singer produces low voice rich in overtones, to which the same or another singer adds an upper voice constructed on these overtones, mostly a whistling melody. Especially famous for this style are the Mongols, Tuvans, Bashkirs, Siberians, North American Innuits, etc.

Xhosa refer to low voice, whose overtones are emphasized, as *iping*. Upper voice singers use its overtones to “lay” rhythmically distinct melodic phrases on top of bass. In this technique, special attention is paid to the ability of singers to improvise (typical for Africa), thus the overtone sound of the Xhosa differs from say the overtone psalmody of the Tibetan monks. It should be noted that *umngqokolo* can be performed by one singer.



Female singers of the Xhosa tribe

Each song has its leader *hlabela*. The singers responding him either follow the leader (*landela*) or “agree” (“vuma”). The leader repeats a short melody in an ostinato pattern, often followed by other voices with a delay. Such kind of sequence creates the cases where the follower’s part intersects the beginning of the leader’s next phrase. In general, this kind of leader-responder alternation is similar in style to the well-known “call and response” technique, quite typical for entire Africa.

In such overtone singing, polyrhythm is also manifested, a kind of “rhythmic hemiola” – the co-existence of two- and three-part rhythms, when movement and clapping do not match the rhythm expressed by words. It is interesting that the *umngqokolo ngomqangi* technique, which today is mastered by only one singer NoWayyilethi Mbizweni, is sometimes associated with the buzzing of *sumkang* the insect, which boys would pierce with a thorn, bring it to the mouth and use it as a mouth resonator to make different sounds.

Umngqokolo songs are mostly performed with dancing. In terms of genre distinguished are the songs of “Prophecy”, initiation songs for boys and girls, the female-male *umtshotsho* dances, *amagwijo* songs for men’s fights with sticks, etc. The song “Nondelehaya” is especially distinguished in its overtone technique, in which several performers intone overtonally.

In addition to the tradition described above, interesting in Thembu folk music is the complex rhythmic figuration and unlimited number of voice parts in some songs, which creates a fairly complex polyphonic texture. According to Dave Dargie – the Xhosa polyphony researcher, such polyphonic articulation may partly be conditioned by its proximity to Bushman culture.

Ngqoko – Female group of *Umngqokolo* performers, turned out to be especially successful, the group’s leading soloist Zaidel-Rudolph developed her own style of overtone singing. Very popular is Modisani, known as the “Queen of chianuri of the Xhosa”.

Unfortunately, little by little the Xhosa people are forgetting their unique musical traditions, which is mainly due to the disappearance of traditional rituals. Overtone polyphony of the Xhosa is gradually being limited to the stage space only.

Tamaz Gabisonia
Associated Professor of Ilia State University

An Experimental Project of the Group Nanina - “Folklore for Everyone”

On 16 July, 2022, Nanina the creative group of ethnomusicologists won the “grant competition for the support of new creative projects” of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of the Autonomous Republic of Achara and realized the project "Folklore for everyone", which implied holding a lecture-concert in folklore and a master class in round dance for the beneficiaries of the Blind Union of Batumi (Achara), and active involvement of the beneficiaries in the process.

The meeting was held in the hall of the Batumi Art Teaching University. Nanina held an educational lecture about Georgian traditional music and a folklore concert, performing songs from almost all parts of Georgia for the beneficiaries of the Union of the Blind.

The most experimental and emotional part of the meeting was holding a kind of master class in singing and round dance for the blind and involving them in round-dance songs, to which the beneficiaries agreed with joy and enthusiasm and participated with great pleasure.



Poster of the project

The experiment was realized! The meeting evoked positive emotions and created a positive

mood to the beneficiaries. After the meeting, they noted that they felt happy thanks to the support of Nanina members, took the group's initiative as an expression of love for them; got to familiarized with and felt the traditions of their country through folk music and expressed their desire to participate in such projects in the future, the group members were also asked to implement similar projects for the blind in other parts of Georgia.



Group Nanina and the blind beneficiaries involved in the project

As we know, special art therapy courses for people with disabilities are being created in the world today, which give incredible results. We think that the master class conducted by Nanina for the blind was an art therapy lesson. Along with hand clapping a round dance requires rhythmic synchronous movement with singing.

Participation of the beneficiaries in this process gave them the sense of security, closeness and care from the strangers holding their hands and caring for them, because singing and dancing together have the strongest impact on everyone, especially people with disabilities. This helped them recharge with positive energy and feel that nothing is impossible - there are no limited abilities!

Each member of Nanina has a good understanding of the power of folk examples to influence people, their emotions and mood in general. The

members of Nanina have experience of creative interaction with children, the elderly and the disabled (they work in children's studios and schools, they have held a number of events in Tbilisi boarding houses for the elderly, for the disabled, as well as for the Red Cross beneficiaries, etc.). Holding a lecture-concert for blind beneficiaries was an interesting challenge for them, which they coped with successfully.

The successful implementation of the project gave an incentive to Nanina to conduct similar events for the blind and other disabled people, also in orphanages and shelters for the elderly in both Tbilisi and different regions of Georgia, which will contribute to the integration of even more people into society through traditional art.

The mentioned project is an interesting precedent, which is likely to be followed by artist associations of different directions; this will contribute to overcoming the social isolation of people with disabilities, their integration into society, breaking negative stereotypes about them and presenting their real capabilities.

Maka Khardziani

Director of the group Nanina

National Folklore Festival of Georgia – 2022

The Anzor Erkomaishvili Folklore State Center has been in the middle of vibrant folklore life of Georgia for over 85 years, is its main beneficent and guardian. One of the main priorities of the Center is the well-established tradition of holding Olympiads, inspections, festivals, which most clearly demonstrate the pulse and vitality of Georgian folklore at a particular time; showing that its heartbeat is still strong...

Festivals were held at different times with different frequency. In 2022, the Folklore State Center held the National Folklore Festival of Georgia with the support of the Ministry of Culture, Sports

and Youth of Georgia. Traditionally, the festival encompassed all regions and municipalities of Georgia and united all branches of folk art: music, choreography, oral folklore, fine and applied arts.



The Festival started in April and was held in three stages: municipal, regional and final rounds. In all three stages, the jury staffed by competent specialists of the Center worked in “live” mode, evaluating the level of the participants according to the pre-agreed criteria: to what extent the requirements of the festival regulations were considered, to what extent the presented repertoire corresponded to main features of the folklore tradition, to what extent it reflected the folklore-ethnographic traditions of this or that region (singing, instruments, dancing, costumes, rituals...), how much the regional performing manner was preserved.

In terms of music, among the participants were folk and family ensembles, choirs of chanters and chanter-singers, individual performers on folk instruments.

About 500 participants of the regional tour became the festival laureates and were awarded corresponding diplomas, and the best of the best 103 participants, including 51 in musical direction, were awarded medals and winner diplomas.

Final concerts of folk music, choreography and oral folklore rounds were held in Tbilisi, on the stages of Tumanishvili Film Actors, Griboyedov and Rustaveli theaters. As for the winners in the field of

folk crafts and applied arts, their personal exhibition will be held in Tbilisi, in 2023.

Both the creative-concert and informational-advertising sides of the Festival were highly organized, by the organizing team (team leader Irakli Chelidze). It should also be said that the festival was supported by most of the municipality authorities, which also contributed to the success of the festival.



Final concert of the Festival at Rustaveli Theatre

Of particular note is the abundance of family ensembles and youth performing groups at the festival. This is an important fact, because it is the activity of families and young people that is a solid guarantee for the continuity and vitality of folk tradition.

The benefits and merits of the festival are largely associated with Giorgi Donadze – director of the Folklore Center and best team of specialists. Their experience, professionalism, objective and correct approach to folklore led to the huge success and popularity of the festival and paved the way for new victories.

Nana Valishvili

*Head of folk music direction
at The Folklore State Center*

Foreign Performers of Georgian Traditional Music **Trio Lamazika from France**

We are French amateur singers. Even if we do not speak (or very poorly) the Georgian language, we have been lovers of Georgian polyphonies for a quarter of a century. Thrilled by Georgian singing sounds, we have embarked on the perilous exercise of 1 per voice: Mireille, *meore* (or *pirveli* on occasion), Claire, *pirveli* (or *meore* on occasion), and Romain, *bani*, sometimes associated with Yves (Claire's companion) because the solid and ample bass is so fundamental in Georgian polyphony.

With the *a cappella* exploration in trio of secular and sacred Georgian repertoires, of all kinds and from different regions, the pleasure as well as the difficulties are there, and this in an intense way! Such an observation echoes Georgian polyphony: lukewarmness is not appropriate... We taste Georgian human and voice warmth particularly when we have the chance to go to Georgia, to meet singers, and to attend *supras*. Our participation to the Ethnomusicology Symposium in Tbilisi in September 2022 has been a wonderful experience and gave us unforgettable memories. We are very grateful to the organizers.

Lamazika was born in 2017 in Brittany (France) from our common and deep passion for Georgian polyphonic repertoires, as you may already have understood it. We also approach another tradition with 3 voices, much alive and demanding too: Corsican singing. Without classical training, each of us was attracted by traditional polyphony, where transmission is based on orality. In France, many choirs practice “songs of the world” with varied repertoires from different countries. One day, we “stumbled upon” a Georgian song from which emerged an unknown or even a little strange flavor... We wanted more. Luckily, in Rennes, where we live, the Mze Shina ensemble has been offering, for over twenty

years, workshops dedicated to Georgian songs that they collect and pass on with passion. This was the beginning of the adventure and our own passion for Georgian polyphony has only grown since. With this passion came the desire and even the need to go to Georgia, to really get to know its culture, in short to go back to the source of the Georgian sound!



Trio Lamazika

What is absolutely unique? What do we really like? Our ears guide us. They are particularly attracted by the harmonic richness of mostly untempered songs and by the association of timbres. More so, when it comes to Georgian singers, we perceive a very specific way of producing those polyphonies that sound like no others. Added to this is the diversity of styles according to the types of song, according to the territories and the expression of strong identities. For us singers, the holy grail consists of nothing less than seeking and approaching these sounds as much as our foreign ears allow us. The path is exciting even if it is not easy when you have not been immersed in this culture and in the music of the language since childhood.

With each stay in Georgia and in any region whatsoever, we admire the vitality of traditional singing. Singers generously share it during concerts, *supras*, workshops, or impromptu. The involvement

of young generations, girls and boys, and their talent make the tradition all the more alive and creativity possible. We have been very impressed and moved by the quality of the ensembles, mixed or not, made up of young people, who performed at the Symposium. We feel privileged and grateful to have had access to Georgian singing, a UNESCO World Heritage and an art of living that continues in the country whatever the circumstances. We feel humbled and ready to continue this love story!

Lamazika's interactions with two strong musical traditions are above all punctuated by human encounters. In Georgia, we had the honor of working with the Chamgeliani and Turmanidze families, Malhaz Erkvanidze, Polikarpe Khubulava, Soso Kopaleishvili, Carl Linich, Nana Mzhvanadze, Zoé Perret, Tornike Skhiereli. In Corsica, Jackie Micaelli and Jean-Etienne Langianni taught us their tradition. In France we worked with the Mze Shina Trio, and more specifically with Laurent Stephan.

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Claire Vuillermoz, Mireille Ducassé and Romain Sagnimorte

One New Ensemble **Folk Ensemble Lalkhori**

The tradition of creating folk ensembles of different parts of Georgia in the capital city has existed for several years. Such ensembles are: Rachan Dziriani, Megrelian Odabade, Mokhevian Jvaruli and others. Recently Svan ensemble Lalkhori became one of them. We talked about the ensemble's creative principles and goals with its director Lika Liparteliani – a student of Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University of Chanting:

– **When was Lalkhori created and why did the idea of creating a new folk ensemble arise?**

– I decided to create an ensemble in 2019, when I became a student at the University of Chanting.

Since I moved to Tbilisi from Svaneti I had an idea of collecting girls and performing Svan lullabies, as I had relatively unknown variants of lullabies at hand. Along with the Svans, my fellow students at the University, also helped me to implement the idea. At the first stage I made enquiries among my surrounding, who could sing and thus I gathered about 10-15 girls. We named the ensemble Irinola and started with female repertoire. After about a year, we decided to accept boys. I also shared the idea on the Internet. There appeared the wishing, and the guys joined us. Among them, I would especially mention the grandchildren of Jumber Mukbaniani, an outstanding tradition bearer from Kvemo Svaneti. Initially, we were even scared to make the decision, however, in the end, the result showed that it was a correct one.



Ensemble Lalkhori

– **What does the word “Lalkhori” mean and why did you decide to give this name to the ensemble?**

As I have said, the ensemble originally existed under the name Irinola. When the group was joined by male members, it became necessary to come up with a new name. We discussed this a lot in the ensemble. We wanted the name to be interesting, authentic and express everything that the ensemble aimed at. Finally, we chose “Lalkhori”. The idea belonged to Giorgi Mukbaniani – one of our choir members. *Lalkhor* means a gathering in Svan language. *Lalkhor* was a common occurrence when some important

decision had to be made in Svaneti. I think the name really lives up to the idea we had when creating the ensemble: the goal of our collective is to revive and popularize Svan songs.

– **Who are the ensemble members and how did they get together?**

– Most of the ensemble members are Svans: from Balszemo and Balskvemo, as well as Kvemo Svaneti. Representatives from other parts of Georgia in the ensemble are mainly the students of Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University. We try to add new members from time to time. The first they attend the rehearsals, listen to us, and then become full-fledged members of the ensemble. There are about 30 of us.

– **Please tell us about the repertoire of the ensemble; from what sources do you learn the songs?**

– Our repertoire includes Svan songs and church hymns. We have not yet tried to perform songs from other parts of Georgia. Since the ensemble’s creation our goal has been to cover the entire repertoire of Upper and Lower Svaneti. We, basically, use archival sources. These are the archives of the Folklore State Center of Georgia, archival recording of Tbilisi State Conservatoire, the examples included in the anthology published by Anzor Erkomaishvili and others. The lecturers of our university also help us a lot in seeking for recordings. I would especially like to mention Beso Pirtskhelani, who provides us with the materials at his disposal. In addition, we also feed on the recordings from family archives. With the help of Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University of Chanting, we conducted an expedition: we visited entire Kvemo Svaneti, also went to Ushguli. It can be said that we have thoroughly studied women’s repertoire. Naturally, we have significantly enriched our repertoire with these materials. We have a lot of dance examples in the repertoire, but, sadly, we are experiencing the shortage of choreographic recordings.

– **What is the working process on songs like in the ensemble and how often do you meet?**

– We all, Svan as well as non-Svan members, actively work on archival recordings. I am not the sole leader

of this process. Everyone contributes to the process of selecting songs. I am mostly in charge of the performance manner, so as not to go beyond the Svan dialect. We try to hold rehearsals on a daily basis. Sometimes, during rehearsals, we come across several variants of a song and discuss them. There are times when we use the variants of different singers in one song.



Ensemble Lalkhori at the final concert of the National Folklore Festival of Georgia

– How free are you in terms of performance manner and do you have to work specifically in this direction?

– I think main problem in terms of performance manner is that we, young people do not speak Svan language, which prevents us from pronouncing the words correctly. Of course, we specifically work on the performance manner. I would especially like to single out one of our ensemble members, Tamar Naveriani, who is the oldest among us. She often helps us pronounce certain words correctly. I often have to specify with elderly tradition bearers how this or that Svan word is pronounced. In order to better convey the Svan hue, we try upper voices to be sung by the Svans; however, all members of the ensemble know all three voice-parts of the songs.

– How active is the ensemble’s creative life?

– Under the name Lalkhori the ensemble has existed for only a few months, so our creative life is not very rich. Nevertheless, there are about 30 songs in our

repertoire. Shortly after its creation, Lalkhori participated in the project “Women’s Traditional Life and Music” of the female ethnomusicologists’ creative group Nanina (directed by Maia Gelashvili). The first stage of the project implied presentation of lullabies from different parts of Georgia. A special incentive for us was that we studied 14 lullabies specially for this project. In addition, we sometimes have small outings where we chant together on church holidays. From our concert life, I would like to highlight participation in the concert of the scientific conference of young ethnomusicologists and National Folklore Festival.

*Interviewed by Sopiko Kotrikadze,
a doctoral student of Ilia University*

Beneficents of Georgian Song and Chant – Andria Benashvili

The second half of the 19th century was a new page in the history of our country. The ideals of Ilia Chavchavadze and his like-minded people gave impetus to the processes that played an important role in the further development of Georgian culture.

It was from this period that the society began to learn and understand its own identity in a new way. It is not accidental that traditional music plays an important role in this process. Writing Georgian church hymns in musical notation was one of the most topical issues at the time, also on the agenda there was searching for folk songs in the countryside, giving them new scenic life and bringing them to the international arena. All these large and time-consuming processes were managed by the people with relevant interests and skills. Andria Benashvili holds an important place among them.

Andria Benashvili was born in Zemo Machkhaani in 1852. Biographical information about him is quite scarce. It is known that after graduating from

Tbilisi theological seminary, his activity was connected to Kutaisi. Benashvili taught Georgian language at Kutaisi Theological School, chanting at women's diocesan school, and directed Bishop Gabriel's choir of chanters.



Andria Benashvili

Benashvili's collection "Georgian Voices", published in Tbilisi in 1885, comprised the hymns of John Chrysostom liturgy in Kartli-Kakhetian mode; and folk songs collected and recorded by Benashvili himself. It should be noted that his field of interest was not only music. Later, in 1894, Benashvili published the textbook "Short Grammar of Georgian". It is also noteworthy that Andria Benashvili was a teacher of chanters' training courses in Martvili along with Dimitri Chalaganidze, Pilimon Koridze, Anton Dumbadze and others. Among those who passed those courses were Dzuku Lolua, Avksenti Megrelidze and others.

Andria Benashvili's active work as a collector, choirmaster and teacher are reflected in the press of that time.

In 1904, Andria Benashvili wrote in the "Iveria" newspaper that 25 years earlier i.e. in 1879, he started working as a choirmaster of Bishop Gabriel's choir in Imereti. Benashvili's goal for the choir was to chant in Georgian, along with the already-established, at the time, Russian chanting. Andria had known the liturgy and prayer hymns since early age,

but in order to once again test his knowledge and be able to achieve his goals, he invited the best connoisseurs of chanting - deacons Karaman and Gigo Menteshashvili and others to Kiziqi - his native region, and from them wrote down the hymns into musical notation. Benashvili arranged the transcribed hymns from three- into four-part. As he himself writes, he did not change national mode, quality or tempo of the hymns.

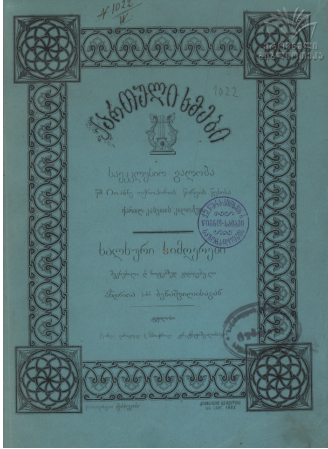
From the article in the "Shroma" newspaper (April 1882), we learn that on 25 April, under Andria Benashvili's direction Georgian hymns were chanted at Kutaisi Cathedral. Many people came to listen. Some liked them, while others did not accept them as Georgian chanting.

In his response letter Andria Benashvili explains that this is the same chanting as at St. Nino Monastery in Kiziqi. If someone does not understand this chanting, it is because hardly anyone in Western Georgia has heard Karbelashvili's chanting, which is completely different from what people are used to. In 1885, the "Droeba" newspaper wrote: "Andria Benashvili has compiled musical notations of Georgian church hymns (in Karbelashvilis' mode) and folk songs". From the article we learn that Benashvili was in Tbilisi, looking for a pianist to check the notes, after which he wanted to publish them. According to the author of the article, Benashvili was a smart and knowledgeable person who could publish these notations.

Indeed, as a result of long work and great determination, "Georgian Voices" was printed at Melikishvili typography in Tbilisi in 1885. The collection was supplied with the introduction from the author, which clearly showed the author's spirit and the great love with which he served this national deed. In his words: "Over time, Georgian hymns and songs, especially songs, weaken and disappear", as a reason, he pointed to the influences of European and Russian songs.

To the musical material Benashvili enclosed traditional rules for singing and church chanting, the

names of voices. All this is of particular importance, given that at the time, musical folkloristics had not yet been established as a scientific discipline.



Benashvili's collection "Georgian Voices" (1885)

In the introduction to the collection, Benashvili tries to exhaustively explain some performance peculiarities of Georgian folk songs. Among them is the most common rule of antiphonal performance – connecting the choirs with intruded cadences.

In the collection, Benashvili has included the songs, distinguished in both genre and dialect diversity. Most of the examples are Kakhetian, collected in Kiziqi. This is natural, because Benashvili, a man from Kiziqi, had better knowledge of the folklore of his native region, however, here also are songs from Kartli, Imereti, Guria and Samegrelo.

The author pays special attention to the lyrics of the songs. In many cases, he has included extensive lyrics. Among them, the examples with artistic value, which are lesser known today.

Andria Benashvili made a significant contribution to the awakening and kindling of Georgian identity in the difficult era full of contradictions.

Andria Benashvili passed away in Kutaisi in 1908. He was interred in Bagrati Cathedral; later, together with Meliton Balanchivadze, he was reburied to the Kutaisi Pantheon.

Teona Benashvili

Master student at Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University of Chanting

A Foreigner's Essay on Georgian Traditional Music

In 2010-2011, I was studying traditional music from various regions of Georgia at the International Research Centre for Traditional Polyphony at Tbilisi State Conservatoire, with professors Natalia Zumbadze, Rusdan Tsurtsunia and Tamaz Gabisonia.

I may not be qualified to talk about Georgian traditional music, because I cannot even play *pan-duri* well. But to borrow an idea from John Blacking (1928-1990), the famous ethnomusicologist who wrote "How musical is man?" (1973) I may be excused: unlike Georgians and some European musicians who are skilled on folk instruments, I did not grow up in an environment that allowed me to acquire such musical techniques.



Kae Hisaoka

From youth, my interest in the traditional music of the Silk Road region and other parts of Central Eurasia brought me to Georgia, as I was interested in the traditional polyphony of the "mysterious" Caucasus region, but after staying in Georgia for a while, I discovered that there is wonderful and interesting

music besides polyphony. For example, there is accordion singing by women of Tusheti, - North-eastern mountainous region, and the melody of Kintauri by *duduk* from Tbilisi. I also like Caucasian dances such as “Lezginka”, including staged performances. And I’m also interested in the works of the 20th century Georgian composers such as Shalva Mshvelidze (1904-1984) and Andria Balanchivadze (1905-1992), whom Prof. R. Tsurtsunia introduced to me. More recently, I have become interested in the epics and myths of various ethnic groups in the Caucasus, one of the most important themes of traditional music.

In my doctoral dissertation, I discussed the study of traditional songs and cultural policy in Georgia, during the 20th century. The reason why I decided to write on such a theme is that I noticed that “Art-Geni” and other folk song festivals are flourishing in Georgia today, and I wanted to know why these festivals are organized spontaneously by the citizens of the country. In talking with various people of Georgia, it also became clear that the festivals were aimed at preserving the old traditions of different regions.

In Georgia, the importance of preserving old songs has been insisted since the early 20th century by ethnomusicologists, including the composer Dimitri Arakishvili (1873-1953), who collected folk songs in various regions of Georgia and North-Caucasus; Arakishvili and Grigol Chkhikvadze (1898-1986) and others. They judged the Olympiad, a national folk song competition, during the Soviet era. From the reviews in “Komunisti” and other newspapers of that time, it is clear that even during the socialist era, when cultural innovation was emphasized, among Georgian ethnomusicologists, the preservation of tradition, including harmony of natural third, was a high priority.

Also, during the Soviet era, for example, there was a tendency among Tbilisi’s intellectuals to disfavour regional choirs, singing the repertoires from other regions. Since that time, the value was placed on authentic music. They were trying to preserve their traditions while successfully circumventing censorship.

In the post-perestroika period, the charismatic ethnomusicologist Edisher Garakanidze (1957-1998) tried to discover new, authentic music. This movement can be seen as synchronized with the New Age movement that emerged in the Western world during the same period, including the Beatles. It is a movement that seeks to find the truth that has been obscured by the influence of modern Western material civilization.

I was also particularly struck by the cultural activities of the Meskheta and Tusheti people, which are not included in “60 Georgian folk songs of Rustavi choir”. These are the activities of the Meskheta choir formed by Valerian Maghradze (1923-1988), and the activities of Lela Tataraidze and other female singers from Tusheti. Performers of these regions are proud of their homelands, embrace it, including its negative aspects, and try to pass on the traditions to future generations. I would also like to express my respect for the steady research activities of young scholars at the Tbilisi Conservatoire and other research institutions, who support the traditional music of Georgians, not only in the local regions, but also in the world.

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Ethnographic Letters

Engagement and Marriage in Samegrelo
(Part 2)



Ethnographer Sergi Makalatia

A woman's engagement was soon followed by church wedding and wedding party, for which a day was selected, any week-day would do except for Monday and Friday, it was impossible to be married at the church on these days. Church wedding was preferred to be held on Sunday, which was considered a happy day and it was on Sunday that church wedding usually took place in the groom's village. Sometimes church wedding would take place in the bride's village. Groom's father or uncle, and their men, would go to get the bride from her parental home. A table would be laid for the guests in bride's family, the bride would hide, so as not to be seen by the groom and his men. Women would start "mochqudu" – dressing up the bride, they would put wedding dress on her, cover her head with a scarf and lead her out. The bride was accompanied by the bridesmaids. Before taking the bride away, the groomsmen demanded that the dowry and bribe be handed over to them. One man would make a dowry

list. The second would count the money, and all this would be handed over to the groom's father. If something was missing from the dowry or money, an alarm would immediately be raised and the groom's side demanded that the dowry and money be given in full, then the weeping bride would be brought out; she said goodbye to her parents and friends. The bride was put on a horse, she was accompanied by her bridesmaid, brother and uncle. Everyone would head to the groom's village, where they were married in the church." Here they would be met by the groom and his men; the bride and groom would be taken into the church. If there was no church, or it was far away, bride and groom had religious marriage in the wine cellar, where clay pots with the wine for offerings had been dug into the ground. The priest would conduct the ritual according to church rules, put crowns of branches on their heads, called *mafemia* in Samegrelo. The priest would lift the bride's veil, give her a drink from the bowl and then cover her again. The newly-weds would pass under the swords crossed by two groomsmen standing in the doorway of the church. At that time, the groomsmen would start shooting from the guns, and everyone would head to the groom's house singing "Kuchkha bedniera." A herald would get to the place before the others, and shooting the gun he would shout: we are bringing the groom and bride, rejoice the family, may she bring good and happiness. He was treated with drinks and barbecue.

Soon the groomsmen and the newlyweds would arrive; the groom's mother would meet them at the door of the house, bless and treat them with sugar or honey, and also give them water to drink. With one kick of foot the groom would break the plate lying upside down near the door, the bride would pour wine from the glass standing at the door, and the newlyweds would enter the house. The bride would be given a bowl full of hominy corn, on which there was also an egg. With the bowl, the bride would walk around the hearth and "sow" the hominy seeds, she was followed by the groomsmen singing

“Kuchkha bedniera”. Finally, the bride would touch the hearth hanger and turn away from the hearth. She would receive blessing from her mother-in-law. After that, she would be seated on a chair, given *khachapuri*, and a little boy was put on her lap. One of the groomsmen would grab the *khachapuri* from her hands and throw it up, the person who would catch it would run away. The others would run after him, tear the *khachapuri* into pieces and eat it up. The bride would take the child off her lap and gave gifts to him.



A Megrelian woman

Wedding table would be laid. If it was a big wedding party, they built a shed – a *sepa*, where women and men sat separately. Bridesmaids and groomsmen would first bring in the bride and seat her at the table. Then it was the time for gifts, the bride was given money and items. The guests would put their contribution money on the tray. Everyone gave gifts to the newly-weds, except for the bride's people, who were not required to give gifts. Then, a bridesmaid would lift the bride's veil, everyone could see her for the first time, observe her well and shoot guns as a sign of joy. After that, the groom would be brought in, he would treat the groomsmen with drinks and tobacco. The newly-weds would be seated side by side and their blessing would start.

The bride and groom were looked after by a bridesmaid, who would accompany the bride, straighten her clothes, give her something to eat, drink, etc. The toastmaster of the wedding party would be elected. The people of the bride and groom sat separately and drank wine with long toasts. This was followed by singing and dancing. They sang in two groups, told funny and love verses. The side that drank most and sang best was the winner.

Before leaving, the groom would gift his men with 2-3 horses, depending on how much he could afford. From the bride's family the groom would receive a saddled horse, a felt cloak and arms as gift. The son-in-law would give about 10-20 manats to his mother-in-law. The intermediary – *marebeli* would receive slaughter skins and a tenth of the monetary bribe; a purse, a towel and other things from the bride.

On the second night, a bed was made for the bride and groom in a separate dwelling called *amkhara*. *Khemantsqu* (helper) would walk the bride to *amkhara* and put to bed. Then one of the groomsmen would escort the groom to *amkhara*, leave him there and fire from the gun when returning. *Khemantsqu* would hang around *amkhari*, eavesdropping on their conversation and if they needed anything, he would bring it to them. Bride and groom would stay there three days and nights. The groom would gift money to *khemantsqu*.

The bride and groom would not talk to each other in public during the year, as it was considered a shame. In the past, in Samegrelo, husband and wife would never call each other by their real name, instead, they called each other a nickname. The bride would not even say the names of her parents-in-law, but referred to them as mother and father. Brother-in-law and sister-in-law were also called other names. In general, the bride referred to the eldest brother-in-law as “batoni”, the middle one as “bata” and the youngest as “chiche boshi”. If, for some reason, the bride had to tell the true name and surname of her brother-in-law, she would go to the neighbor's

house, bring someone from there and the person would say the name and surname. At the same time, the bride had to respect the elders, which was expressed by washing their feet during 3 years. If a guest came to the family, the youngest woman or daughter-in-law was obliged to wash the guest's feet, take off his pants and put him to bed. If the bride died before giving birth to a child, her parents would take her dowry back.

After a year, the bride would be returned to her parents' family. The family would hold a party for the bride and groom, the family and relatives would give gifts to them. After that, the stage of bride hood was over and she would start being the housewife to the family. Now everybody expected a child from the bride, so that she would become a real and honorable member of the family. Childlessness was considered an unpleasant fact in Samegrelo. If the bride turned out to be childless or gave birth only to girls, first she was taken to pray to her family shrine - *Jinji khati*. If this did not help, the husband and wife would go to the village of Tsachkhuri and pray to the Archangel of Tsachkhur to give them a child and brought candles and an image of the cradle as an offering. If they did not have a child even after that, then they resorted to such a simulation: a childless woman would put a pillow on her stomach, pretending she was pregnant. When the "pregnant woman" was due, she would lie down on the bed and moan like a woman in labor. At this time, a newborn baby would be brought and put into her bed, this was called "mitorginapa" and the baby was considered to be her real child.

The material is taken from the book:
Sergi Makalatia. *History and ethnography of Samegrelo.*
Tbilisi, 1941

One Traditional Holiday **Kvirikoba**

Holy martyrs Cyricus and Julitta lived in the Lycaonian city of Iconia in Asia Minor at the end of the 3rd century. Julitta was a Christian. She was widowed young and raised her only son Cyricus to be God-fearing. When Emperor Diocletian (284-305) started persecuting the Orthodox, Julitta, together with her son, fled to safety. However, soon they were denounced to the ruler and were summoned to the court.

Julitta came to the court holding her three-year-old son and boldly announced her Christianity. By the order of the enraged judge, Julitta's son was pulled out of her hands and was mercilessly beaten. Watching her mother's torture, Cyricus wept, wringing his hands, kicking the tyrants with his feet, and trying to free himself from them. Fascinated by the child's beauty, Alexander ordered to bring the child to him, put him in his lap and started caressing him, but the child cried out: "I am a Christian too!" and was drawing towards his mother. The furious ruler threw the child on the ground and kicked him. Cyricus rolled down the stairs and died.

Julitta thanked the Lord for her son's blissful passing, the ruler ordered to intensify the torture: they tormented her with sharp things, poured melted resin into the wounds, finally, when they couldn't break her, they cut off her head.

The martyrdom of the saints took place around 305. Julitta's and Cyricus' corpses were thrown outside the city to the beasts and birds, but the faithful guards managed to secretly inter them at night.

Cyricus and Julitta are prayed for family happiness and quick recovery of sick children.

In the village of Kala, Mestia municipality (Upper Svaneti) there is the 11th-century church of Saint Cyricus on the top of one mountain. Initially, this was a convent for "noble" and not "noble" nuns from all over Georgia.

From the foot to the top the mountain of Cyricus is forested with spruce, which is considered divine and no Svan will ever cut even a switch there.



Church of Saint Cyricus In the village of Kala

The feast of Kvirikoba is celebrated here on July 28 (July 15 in the old style) and is related to the martyrdom of Saints Cyricus and Julitta. Kvirikoba in Svaneti is called “Ligurke”, and the church – “Lagurka”. On this day, the Svans offer to the church a white sheep specially raised for this day.

Here preserved are one of the most valuable icons of St. Cyricus and St. Julitta of the 11th -12th centuries and an example of Byzantine art – an enameled icon of the crucifixion, the so-called “Shaliani” icon, in which inserted is a part from the cross on which Christ was crucified.

The Svans consider this icon to be the most powerful and, therefore, those suspected in committing a grave crime have to swear on this icon. No case is known that the suspect did not plead himself guilty under the oath.

Nowhere in Svaneti did a church have guards. Only the church in Kala was guarded day and night by two armed men. Shaliani icon was kept wrapped in a silk kerchief in an iron chest. Twice a year, on Cyricus and Julitta Day (July 28) and on Holy Saturday the Svans performed the ritual in Lagurka.

In Kala community, several honorable men would take Shaliani Icon out of the church with great respect in the morning and wash it. After that,

they walked around the church with candles and bowls full of wine to offer. The ritual was accompanied by a Svan hymn. The bell was ringing on the bell tower. Hatless men knelt near the church wall, while women stood together, separate from the men. Worshippers from other villages waited for the end of the prayer away from the church. At the end of the ritual, the chosen men would return Shaliani icon back to the church. With the icon, the elder would bless all of Georgia, Svaneti and the people who had gathered there. In the end, the elder would bring holy Shaliani icon into the church, where it rested until the next Kvirikoba celebration.



Shaliani Icon

The water with which the icon was washed was considered holy water, which healed everything. This water was poured into a special copper jug and carried around the village. Sometimes, instead of the icon, people swore on this water. These two items, Shaliani icon and the exquisitely decorated copper jug, were the main and priceless treasure of this church. Not only people, but also clergy were rarely allowed into the church in Lagurka. Even Ekvtime Takaishvili had a hard time studying this church.

Like the majority of Svan churches, this is a hall-type church.

The inscription on the West wall reads that the church was painted by Theodore, the artist, who worked at the court of King Demetre in 1112.



The palm of Saint Cyricus

On the Western wall of the church, above the entrance door, along the entire width of the wall, there is an inscription in three lines written in

white paint on the blue background: “In the name of God.

This holy church of St. Cyricus was painted and decorated as a place of praise and prayer for the nobles of this gorge, who constructed it. St. Cyricus have mercy on them all!”

Currently, all the treasures of the churches of Kala community are kept at Lagurka church.

The icons with the image of Cyricus are preserved only in Svaneti. Lagurka church holds ten icons of St. Cyricus dating to different times; they traditionally depict him as a martyr with a cross in his hands. These icons were made specially for this church. Only one icon depicts St. Cyricus together with his mother St. Julitta.

The palm of Saint Cyricus is preserved at Dadiani Palace Museum in Zugdidi, Georgia.

*The material edited by
Maka Khardziani
basing on Internet resources*

მონამეტა შენთა, უფალო
 წმიდა კვირიკეს და ივლიტას ტროპარი. ხმა დ
 Thy Martyrs O Lord
 Troparion of St. Kvirike and Ivliita. Tone 4

28 (15) ივლისს - 28 (15) July

მონამეტა შენთა, უფალო,
 მონამეტა შენთა, უფალო,
 mo - ts'a - me - ta shen - ta, u - pa - lo,

კვირიკე და ივლიტამ ღვანლსა შინა თვისსა გვირ -
 კვირიკე და ივლიტამ ღვანლსა შინა თვისსა გვირ -
 k'vi - ri - k'e da iv - li - t'am ghvats'l - sa shi - na tvis - sa gvir -

გვინი მოიგეს, უხრწნელე ბისა,
 გვინი მოიგეს, უხრწნელე ბისა,
 gvi - ni mo - i - ges, ukhr - ts'ne - le - bi - sa,

შენ მი - ერ, — ღვთი - სა ჩვე - ნი - სა; რა - მე - თუ,
 შენ მი - ერ, — ღვთი - სა ჩვე - ნი - სა; რა - მე - თუ,
 shen mi - er, — ghvti - sa chve - ni - sa; ra - me - tu,

აქვნ-დათ მათ შენ - მი - ე - რი ძა - ლი, და მძლავ-რი
 აქვნ-დათ მათ შენ - მი - ე - რი ძა - ლი, და მძლავ-რი
 akvn - dat mat shen - mi - e - ri dza - li, da mdzlav - ri

და - მხვეს და შე - მუს - რეს კერპ - - - თა ი -
 და - მხვეს და შე - მუს - რეს კერპ - - - თა ი -
 da - mkhves da she - mus - res k'erp' - - - ta i -

გი უ - ძლუ - რი ძა - ლი;
 გი უ - ძლუ - რი ძა - ლი;
 gi u - dzlu - ri dza - li;

მა - თი - თა მე - ო ხე - ბი - თა,
 მა - თი - თა მე - ო ხე - ბი - თა,
 ma - ti - ta me - o khe - bi - ta,

ქრის-ტე ღმერ - თო, ა - ცხოვ - ნენ სულ-ნი ჩვენ-ნი!
 ქრის-ტე ღმერ - თო, ა - ცხოვ - ნენ სულ-ნი ჩვენ-ნი!
 kris - t'e ghmer - to, a - tskhov - nen sul - ni chven - ni!

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