

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

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Festivals, Conferences, Competitions

10.04-2.06.2019 – The 5th National Competition of “Children’s and Juvenile Collectives” held by the Choral Society of Georgia revealed the best performing collectives throughout the country in the following categories: A – academic choral singing; B – Georgian folk song; C – Georgian sacred chant.

30.04.2019 – Scientific Conference dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Vladimer Akhobadze – a renowned Georgian ethnomusicologist at Tbilisi State Conservatoire.

4.05 – 6.06.2019 – The 14th International Festival “From Easter to Ascension” at the Grand Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire

10-14.05.2019 – On the initiative of the Folklore State Center of Georgia the Tbilisi ensembles – Anchiskhati, Didgori, Sakhioba, Adilei, Ertoba, Ialoni and Nanina held solo concerts in different parts of Georgia within the framework of the celebration *Georgia the Virgin Mary’s Hereditary Possession*.

22.05.2019 – Student Scientific Conference “Issues of Christian Theology and Musicology” dedicated to the memory of Prof. Manana Andriadze at Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Chanting University.

27-28.05.2019 – The Festival “Voices of the Future” for Choir master’s schools with the participation of choir master’s school choirs from different parts of the country at Ozurgeti Folklore Center.

12.06.2019 – Round Table discussion on “Current State of Ethnic Music” organized by Music Direction of Ilia State University.

14-20.06.2019 – Festival “Mravalzhamier” of children’s folk ensembles at Jansugh Kakhidze Tbilisi Center of Music.

Lectures, Meetings, Master Classes, Presentations, etc.

4.01.2019 – For her particular contribution to the revival of Georgian ecclesiastical chants and folk song Lia Salaqaia was rewarded with St. George’s Order – the highest award of the Georgian Church, by Ilia II, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia

15.02-15.03.2019 – Competition of folk ideas “Your Folklore Idea”, which implies realization of scientific-educational and creative projects in Georgian folklore and ecclesiastical chanting, as well as in that of ethnic minorities.

13.03.2019 – Presentation of the State Academic Ensemble of Georgian Folk Song and Dance Rustavi’s anniversary anthology at the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia.

15.03.2019 – Ethnomusicologist Gia Baghashvili’s public lecture “The Idea of Eternity in Georgian Folk Song” at Dimitri Aleksidze Theatre organized by Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgia State University.

19.03.2019 – Opening of the exhibition of 18 craftsmen from Zugdidi at the exhibition hall of the Folklore State Center.

29.03.2019 – Presentation of eight-volumes of Georgian Traditional Chanting at the Georgian Patriarchy.

1.04.2019 – Giorgi Kekelidze’s public lecture “Literature and People” at Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Chanting University.

15-17.04.2019 – Tbilisi State Conservatoire, the Folklore State Center and Georgian Chanting Foundation jointly held the concerts “The Singing of the Chveneburebi of İnegöl” at Tbilisi Rustaveli Theatre and Batumi Drama Theatre, together with the presentation of the four-language book “Georgian polyphony in Western Turkey: in the footsteps of Peter Gold”.

23.04.2019 – Associate professor of Ilia State University Nino Kalandadze’s public lecture “The Wardrops and Georgian Tradition Music” at the State Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Musical Instruments.

27.04.2019 – A cultural-educational tour in Samegrelo and Svaneti organized by Nino Naneishvili together with ensemble Ialoni .

10.05.2019 – Ethnomusicologist Malkhaz Erkvani's lecture-concert "Georgian Ecclesiastical Chanting and the Holy Virgin's Chants", with the performance of chanter-singers' choirs Sakhioba and Sathanao in the concert part at the State Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Musical Instruments.

18.05.2019 – Art-Café "Zoestan" hosted the presentation of ensemble Kimilia's first audio album and concert, with the performance of Georgian folk songs and examples of medieval French polyphony.

2.06.2019 – Presentation of ethnomusicologist Maia Gelashvili's mythological-folklore fairy tale "Shukipe" at a pavilion of Expo-Georgia.

3.06.2019 – Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Chanting University hosted the public lecture "Giorgi Mtatsmindeli's Hymnographic Heritage" of Ia Ghadua, Doctor of Philology, an invited lecturer.

7.06.2019 – A seminar "The role of women's music in religious services of Roman migrant communities" (on the example of Georgian, Polish and Ukrainian communities) by Blanche Lacoste, a Doctoral student in ethnomusicology at Aix-Marseille University (France) at Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Chanting University.

13.06.2019 – Presentation of the book "Grimaud and Georgian Song" at the Grand Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire with participation of the folk ensembles: Basiani, Anchiskhati ensemble, Mtiebi, Adilei, Sakhioba, Kimilia, Ialoni, Shilda, Mcheli, and the Chanting University choir.

14.06.2019 – Ketevan Jervalidze's public lecture "The Forgotten Georgian Instrument *Tsintsila* and its Etymology" at the State Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Musical Instruments.

Expeditions

24.02.2019 – A field expedition to Gurjaani district (Kakheti) to seek for and revive Kakhetian dances organized by the Folklore State Center of Georgia.

Concert Tours

15.03. 2019 – State ensemble Basiani participated in the opening ceremony of the exhibition "Georgia – the Home of Wine" in Tokyo (Japan).

23.03. 2019-3.04.2019 – Ensemble Didgori's concert tour in Austria and Germany.

03-29.04.2019 – Ensemble Adilei's concert tour, master classes and lecture-seminars in different cities of the USA.

8-12.04. 2019 – Ensemble Ialoni held master classes for the Master students at Rose Bruford College (UK)

9-12.04.2019 – State Academic Ensemble of Georgian Folk Song and Dance Rustavi's solo concerts in Strasbourg as part of the 20th anniversary of Georgia's membership in the Council of Europe.

8.05.2019 – Concert of Ensemble Anchiskhati together with the Conservatoire Rector Rezo Kiknadze in the city of Lublin (Poland).

20-23.05.2019 – State Academic Ensemble of Georgian Folk Song and Dance Rustavi participated in the concerts dedicated to Georgia's Independence Day in Ashgabat (Turkmenistan).

28.05.2019 – Ensemble Didgori participated in the Festival of Choral Music (Edmonton, Canada), held master classes and lecture-seminars on Georgian polyphony and culture in different cities.

6-8.06.2019 – State Ensemble Basiani participated in the festive event dedicated to Georgia's Independence Day at the Georgian Embassy in Madrid (Spain).

7-9.06.2019 – Ensemble Ertoba held solo concerts in several cities of Wielkopolska region (Poland).

22-24.06.2019 – State Academic Ensemble of Georgian Folk Song and Dance Rustavi participated in the Days of Georgian Culture in Minsk (Belarus).

Concerts, Evenings, Exhibitions, Jubilees

2.01.2019 – Tbilisi folk ensembles participated in New Year's folk concert, in the First Republic Square (Tbilisi).

16.01.2019 – Christmas concert of chanting and singing at the Recital Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire, with the participation of singer-chanters' choirs from Tbilisi.

24.01.2019 – Ensemble Sakhioba's solo concert at the Grand Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire.

2.02.2019 – Singer and chanter choirs from different churches of Tbilisi participated in the anniversary liturgy at Kashueti St. George Church on the memorial day of Worthy Father Ekvtime the Confessor (Kereselidze), one of the saviours of Georgian traditional chanting.

27.02.2019 – Anniversary concert dedicated to 30 years of friendship between old generation of ensemble Kartuli khmebi (Georgian voices) and folk ensemble Shvidkatsa from Ozurgeti at Ozurgeti regional branch of the Folklore State Center of Georgia.

7.03.2019 – Concert dedicated to the 60th anniversary of Vakhtang Kakhidze at Jansugh Kakhidze Music Center, with the participation of the State Academic Ensemble of Georgian Folk Song and Dance Rustavi.

8.03.2019 – Concert for the members of "Winner women's Club" at the Folklore State Center of Georgia.

13.03. 2019 – Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Chanting University hosted joint concert of the choirs of Dusheti choir master's school and host choir.

31.03.2019 – State Academic Ensemble of Georgian Folk Song and Dance Rustavi participated in the concert dedicated to the 80th anniversary of Zviad Gamsakhurdia – the first President of Georgia, at K. Marjanishvili Tbilisi Drama Theatre.

14.04.2019 – Opening of the star of Tataraidze sisters – Tushetian tradition bearers in front of Tbilisi Grand Concert Hall, followed by the sisters' creative evening at Tbilisi Event Hall.

14.04. 2019 – Writers' House of Tbilisi hosted the event dedicated to mother tongue, with the participation of State Academic Ensemble of Georgian Folk and Dance Rustavi.

1.05.2019 – Dimitri Aleksidze Theatre of Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgia State University hosted an evening with Merited Artist of

Georgia Ramin Mikaberidze, dedicated to his 75th anniversary.

2.05.2019 – The evening dedicated to the 100th anniversary of renowned Georgian ethnomusicologist Vladimer Akhobadze at the Grand Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire.

7.05.2019 – Opening of ensemble Shvidkatsa's star in the park of Ozurgeti Drama theatre, and anniversary concert at regional Folklore Center, with participation of ensembles Kartuli Khmebi, Rustavi and Basiani together with Shvidkatsa.

18.05.2019 – Evening of traditional music "A Night at the Museum" to celebrate International day of Museums with the participation of ensembles: Mcheli, Chanting University student choir, Ialoni, Instrumental group from ensemble Egari.

22.05.2019 – Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Chanting University hosted Easter ethnographic-musical performance "Chonas viqav" of the first year students from the girls' workshop of University.

26.05.2019 – Musical event dedicated to Georgia's Independence Day, organized by the Folklore State Center in Ozurgeti district, with the participation of folk ensembles from different parts of the country.

26.05.2019 – In the village of Nikozi Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Chanting University organized the event dedicated to Georgia's Independence Day with the participation of the Chanting University student choir and village Nikozi children's choir of Georgian Chanting Foundation.

26.05.2019 – Joint concert of ensemble Ertoba and local ensemble Orbeli in Bolnisi dedicated to Georgia's Independence Day.

29.05.2019 – Presentation and concert of Revaz Shanidze's traditional music studio at the Recital Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire.

31.05.2019 – Ilia State University hosted Easter ethnographic-musical performance "Chonas viqav" with the participation of the first year students from the girls' workshop of Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Chanting University and the children's folk ensemble Kirialesa.

31.05.2019 – Solo concert of Kutaisi State Ensemble of Georgian Folk Song and Dance at Tbilisi Griboedov Theatre.

10.06.2019 – Concert-exhibition “The Folklore of One Gorge – Chvana” at the Grand Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire; at the evening were presented the examples of traditional vocal, choreographic, and oral folklore and ethnographic exhibition.

11.06.2019 – Solo concert of children’s folk ensemble Kirialesa at Merab Berdzenishvili International Center of Culture “Muza”

11.06.2019 – Concert of ethnic music “On Folk Motives”, with the participation of Tbilisi ensembles and individual performers in the Music Center of Ilia State University.

18.06.2019 – festive reception at Tbilisi City Assembly dedicated to the State Academic Ensemble of Georgian Folk Song and Dance Rustavi’s 50th Anniversary.

Publications

Ensemble Sakhioba’s audio album
“Georgian Traditional and World Music”



Second part of ensemble Adilei’s electronic educational audio recordings



Ensemble Kimilia’s first audio album



A collection of the State Academic Ensemble of Georgian Folk Song and Dance Rustavi

“400 Georgian folk songs. Ensemble Rustavi”
dedicated to the ensembles 50th Anniversary.

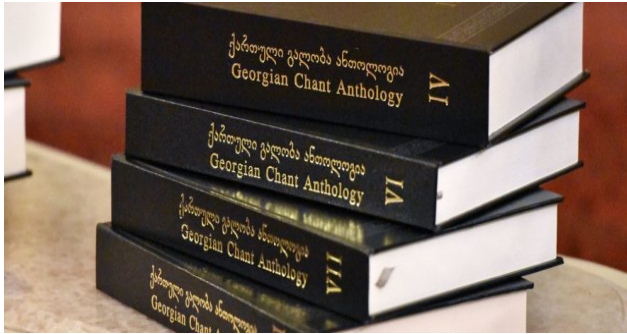


Folklore State Center of Georgia
published folk ensemble Gorda’s
first audio album

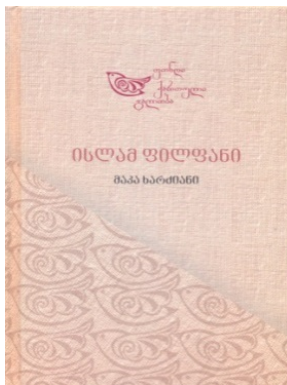


**Folklore State Center of Georgia with
Georgian Chanting Foundation published**

Eight volumes of Georgian Chant anthology

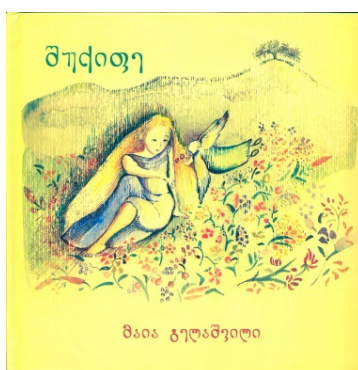


Georgian Chanting Foundation published
Monograph about Islam Pilpani



Pegasus published

Fairy tale on folklore motives “Shukipe”
by ethnomusicologist Maia Gelashvili



Prepared by **Maka Khardziani**

In Memory of Guri Sikharulidze



Guri Sikharulidze

Guri Sikharulidze, an incomparable performer of Gurian folk songs, passed away a few months ago. In 2013 Georgian Chanting Foundation awarded him for his “particular contribution to the revival and promotion of Gurian song”, later in his book dedicated to Guri Sikharulidze Anzor Erkomaishvili referred to him as a singer with divine talent. “Marvelous ear, pure intonation, strong sense of old Gurian mode, free and easy ornamentation of the colourful voice, amazing skill of improvisation, virtuoso technique, inventiveness, unlimited number of variants, distinguished performance manner is continuation of old tradition and expression of stunning talent – exemplary for contemporary singers” – Anzor Erkomaishvili writes.

Guri Sikharulidze was born to the family of traditional singers in the village of Makvaneti (Ozurgeti district) in 1930. Guri learned songs from his parents – Natasha Goliadze and Ipolite Sikharulidze; and his grandmother Elisabed. After his father’s passing he learned songs from his uncle Ilarion – a member of Varlam Simonishvili’s choir over the years.

In 1950 Guri was accepted to Makvaneti collective farmers’ choir, directed by Artem Erkomaishvili. At the same time, he was a soloist in the ensemble of song and dance directed by Vladimir Erkomaishvili at Ozurgeti House of Culture. In 1978 Vladimir Erkomaishvili created en-

semble Elesa, in which Guri Sikharulidze sang until 2002.

Trio Shalva Chemo: Guri Sikharulidze, Tristan Sikharulidze and Merab Kalandadze, was created with businessman Shalva Tsetskhladze's support in 2004. The trio toured in many countries of the world and released 2 audio albums (37 Gurian songs) in 2006.

However, as Guri Sikharulidze recollected for him especially memorable was audio album "Chven mshvidoba" (with rare improvisation variants of 26 Gurian songs) recorded together with Anzor Erkomaishvili and Tristan Sikharulidze. In the annotation for the CD renowned folklorist Kukuri Chokhanelidze writes: "These recordings are distinguished in deep knowledge of Gurian songs, rare mastery, unique performance manner, improvisation. Anyone with awareness and subtle hearing will recognize the intonations of old generation variants as well".

Guri Sikharulidze passed away at the age of 88; generations will be raised on rare variants of the songs recorded with his participation...

Foreigners about Georgian Folklore

Yvette Grimaud and Georgian Song

Presentation of the book *Yvette Grimaud and Georgian Song* held at the Grand Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire on June 13, 2019.

Yvette Grimaud a legendary French ethnomusicologist, who after 7 years of correspondence with Conservatoire professors Shalva Aslanishvili and Grigol Chkhikvadze and despite interference from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, managed to overcome the obstacles of the KGB and come to Georgia to record unique folk songs.

Grimaud was a composer raised in the best traditions of European musical culture and a pianist who was predicted to have a brilliant artistic career. But to the surprise of French society she

made an unexpected decision, refusing the accolades and admiration of fans in favour of researching exotic folk music of "East European Georgia".



Yvette Grimaud

She justified these hopes: Grimaud visited almost all parts of Georgia together with Prof. Grigol Chkhikvadze, in a "fractured" epoch "full of controversies" and as she notes, she discovered the values that had been lost in the West within the "harmonious and refined forms" of Georgian song.

Before coming to Georgia, Grimaud fundamentally studied our country's ancient history. In her essays about traditional music she writes not only about the ancient origin of Georgian songs, but also about the Pelasgians, ancient Colchis, Chaldea and the Kardukhs, the connections of Georgian culture with ancient Assyrian, Hittite, Babylonian and Sumerian cultures, and finding in it traces of the mythical Hyperboreans...

In the 1970-80s Grimaud actively publishes academic articles in multilingual "Kartvelology Review" and regularly participates in programs on "Radio France". Her texts carry the pathos of a true artist, musician, painter, and of a mystic philosopher as well. They metaphorically tell about the eternal tradition of oral legacy and present it as a medium connecting the heaven and earth, the message of which is understandable only to those who can "listen with heart".



The book *Grimaud and Georgian Song*

The Georgian-English book presents Yvette Grimaud's original works about Georgian traditional music and 331 folk examples which she recorded in 1967 together with Prof. Grigol Chkhikvadze in different parts of Georgia. The reader will also learn interesting details from her biography and read an interview recorded from her in 2010 showing vivid nature of her Impressions, her encounter with people, who in the 1960s, still lived "in the Old Testament".

The presentation was organized by Tbilisi State Conservatoire, International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony, the Folklore State Center of Georgia. The book was prepared for publication with the financial support of Georgian Chanting Foundation. It was published for the Frankfurt Book Fair as part of a special project by the Georgian Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport.

At the concert unique repertoire recorded in 1967 was performed by ensembles *Adilei*, *Anchiskhati Ensemble*, *Basiani*, *Chanting University Choir*, *Ialoni*, *Kimilia*, *Mcheli*, *Mtiebi*, *Sakhioba*, and *Shilda*.

Rusudan Tsurtsumia
Director of the IRCTP

Ensemble Didgori is 15 years old

This year chanter-singers' choir Didgori celebrates its 15th anniversary. Singing is the mode of life for Didgori, they can't imagine themselves without it. The listeners, certainly, feel this; each performance of the ensemble is an event. Givi Abesadze, a member of the ensemble, tells about Didgori's creative life and jubilee events.

M.K. – When did the ensemble begin its activity and how did its creative life develop?

G.A. – Our gathering started in 2003-2004, at the late Guram Tamazashvili studio, where the young people willing to learn folk songs usually gathered. We learned folk songs from Tsiuri Mchedlidze and Levan Tsitaishvili. Soon Levan offered to study traditional chants as well. I think it was in the process of learning chants that we become a team and made friends. We, then 16-20-year-old boys went to rehearsals full of desire and love; sometimes we even rehearsed 4-5 hours every day.

M.K. – The battle of Didgori is national pride for the Georgians. Is the ensemble's name dictated by such an attitude.

G.A. – In 2005 father Ioane (Kikvadze) heard us during the overnight Christmas Service at St. Father David Church. With his blessing we started chanting during Easter Lent at St. Ilia the Prophet Church and, have been chanters of this church since then. It was father Ioane who gave us the name Didgori and warned us, this is such a name that you will always have to be in the battle. This is a truly responsible name identified with victory and devotion. I think this name was one of the main stimuli during these years; the name that always reminds that there is no victory without devotion and love.

M.K. – How many members are there in the group currently? Let us know about them.

G.A. – It should be noted that since 2005 the membership of the ensemble has not changed. From October 2007 we sing and chant without a director. Currently, there are 16 members in the ensemble: Givi Abesadze, Davit Kudashvili,

Gedevan Jincharadze, Givi Bakradze, Grigol Katsitadze, Nodar Kartsivadze, Kakhaber Changashvili, Kakhaber Chkhikvadze, Karlo Alavidze, Archil Gurgenidze, Nodar Turdzeladze, Nikoloz Ivanashvili, Lasha Pruidze, Giorgi Kartsivadze, Giorgi Kipiani, Davit Maghularia.

We rehearse in the evening after a busy working day, three times a week. On Saturday and Sunday, we chant at the church. This activity has brought us so close to each other, that I cannot imagine even a day without Didgori.

M.K. – What is the age and professions of the members?

G.A. – We are people of different professions. None of us is a musician. The youngest of us is 27 years old, the “oldest – is 38. The age difference is balanced by common values and the love of singing. We try to keep ourselves busy with singing, as it was in old Georgia and like them we sing what we feel, experience and have inherited from the ancestors. We spend much time listening to old recording, which is very helpful.

M.K. – As I know you have a rather diverse repertoire in terms of dialects and genres.

G.A. – Like other Tbilisi ensembles, our repertoire is also diverse. We try to present Georgia's all musical dialects. Our repertoire is strongly affected by that fact that most of us are from West Georgia, mostly from Gurian, and we have two Gurian *krimanchuli* singers (Gedevan Jincharadze and Kakha Chkhikvadze). Consequently, our desire to sing Gurian songs never lessens. But we are no worse in East Georgian repertoire – Davit Kudashvili, Nikoloz Ivanashvili and Gia Katsitadze sing Kartli-Kakhetian songs with particular love and disposition.

M.K. – With particular interest, the listeners await Abkhazian songs which you sing inimitably. What explains such attraction to this dialect?



Solo concert at the Grand Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire

G.A. – All started from Noko Khurtsia's “Sharatin”, which we first heard as performed by ensemble Georgika. 15 years ago old recordings were not so accessible. I remember in 2006-2007 we were preparing for our first solo concert at the Grand Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire when I found a recording of Abkhazian song “Azamat” on the internet. I was enchanted immediately; I let the boys listen to it. We found the text and soon performed the song. The audience who came to the concert was especially impressed by “Azamat”. Thus our interest to Abkhazian repertoire gradually increased. I would also like to note that the so-called “old recording” of the Abkhazian song turned out to be recorded by Canadian ensemble Darbazi, more precisely sung by (now our friend) Andrea Kuzmich (smiles).

M.K. – As I know, the ensemble has a very busy artistic life. What can you say about this?

G.A. – From the day of its inception Didgori does its best to participate in as many concerts and festivals as possible in Georgia and elsewhere.

Ensembles should often sing on the stage, otherwise their progress is impossible. Audio recording sessions at the studio also contribute to ensemble's improvement. We have already released 3 audio albums. Our long-awaited album of Megrelian-Abkhazian songs will be released at the end of the year with the support of “Georgian Chanting Foundation”.



Ensemble Didgori in Switzerland

From international projects I would like to note “Georgian Motives”. This project, realized together with State Ensemble of Latvia brought Didgori to a new stage of development.

Just recently we had a 23-day tour in Canada. This was Didgori’s first visit to North America. We participated in a number of festivals, held solo concerts and workshops in different cities.

During 15 years we had concert tours in France (Corsica, Normandy, Bretagne), Poland, Latvia, Turkey, Israel, Czech Republic, Great Britain, Russia, Uzbekistan, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Canada. We are grateful to our ancestors – thanks to their heritage we have visited many countries and presented our polyphonic culture there.

M.K. – What about the activities related to the 15th anniversary?

G.A. – Half of the jubilee year has already passed, during this time we held several interesting events, visited Germany and Austria, took part in various events and TV programs in Georgia. We are planning an anniversary solo concert at J. Kakhidze Music Center, as part of the Festival “Autumn Tbilisi”. We have invitation from Latvia in October. We are planning to hold a presentation of the audio album later this year.

M.K. – In the introduction for one of your recent audio albums, I read that in the future you would like to perform for the audience together with your children. I'm sure you are already working on this...

G.A. – It can be said that Didgori’s main mission is to transmit folk songs to future generations. We hope that our children will continue the work that we started and we are sure that they will sing and chant much better.

M.K. – On behalf of the International Research Center for Traditional polyphony I congratulate you once again with the anniversary and wish long life to Didgori’s large family!!!

G.A. – Thank you very much.

Interviewed by Maka Khardziani

Foreign Performers of Georgian Folk Music

Ensemble Maspindzeli from UK

In 2019 Maspindzeli will celebrate 20 years of singing folk songs and chants from the ancient polyphonic tradition of Georgia. This London-based group was originally formed by Helen Chadwick, following the tragic death of Edisher Garaqanidze in 1998, in order to raise money for his son Gigi. Venice Manley took over as musical director in 2000, and soon after the name “Maspindzeli” (meaning “host”) was chosen. In those early years, most of the choir's repertoire came from workshops led by Edisher and Joseph Jordania in the UK in the 1990s.



Ensemble Maspindzeli

Whilst the group were rehearsing to perform at the 2nd International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony in Tbilisi (2004), sadly Venice

died. Three leaders from the ranks of the choir: Geoff Burton, Sally Davies and Lucy Gibson, stepped up to jointly take on the role of Musical Director. Although the trip was tinged with sadness at the absence of Venice, it was wonderful to return to the Symposium and share a trip to Guria for the “Chven Mshvidoba” festival.

In August 2009 Maspindzeli gained its first Georgian Musical Director – Tamta Turmanidze who jointly took over the role with Mark Thomas. During their leadership we celebrated our tenth anniversary and created our first CD from live recordings. Tamta took us to the International Batumi Festival of Folk and Sacred Music dedicated to Giorgi Garaqanidze in 2013.



Ensemble Maspindzeli

In the UK, we have performed in Cambridge, Oxford and Brighton, but most often in London. Recently, it was a great thrill to sing a welcoming Mravalzhamier to Katie Melua at the 2018 Summer Song Festival with Mrs. Liana Jikia-Gogritchiani of The First Georgian School in London. On two memorable occasions we have alternated in a two-choir song performance with Georgian choirs – in 2009 with Shavnabada, and in 2011 with Basiani for the visit of the Patriarch Ilia II.

Over these many years we have been a nexus of Georgian culture in London, connecting with the Georgian community, the school, the church, the Georgian Embassy, Georgian Film Festivals, the British Georgian Society, and the dance group Pesvebi, as well as with Georgian restaurants and wine importers. For many non-Georgian audience members, we have been their

first introduction to Georgian music, and some of these people have in turn come to sing with us.

Bernard Burns has been Musical Director since late 2014. Bernard continually seeks creative ways to adapt and transmit the wonderful folk songs he has learnt directly from Georgian *lotbari* (song masters and mistresses). Bernard has pioneered two-choir songs with alternating bass variations to be sung by an all-female bass and an all-male bass – e.g. Qanuri.

The choir has studied with many visiting Georgian teachers and choirs - most frequently with the late Gigi Garaqanidze, Nana Mzhavanadze, Malkhaz Erkvandze and Nino Naneishvili. The work of Frank Kane has had a very formative influence on both our repertoire and approaches to song learning and performance.

Maspindzeli has always been an open “community choir” rehearsing once a month for 4 hours on a Saturday afternoon. This structure is rather different from an ensemble of music students or a family of singers and presents an interesting challenge for the Musical Directors, but it does allow our 30 members to attend from as far away as Brighton and Birmingham. We range in age from 20 to 80 and still have one member who started with Helen Chadwick.

Members who learned from Edisher often repeat his inspiring belief that “everyone can sing” – we find that Georgian folk songs are very accessible and enjoyable for those with limited singing experience. Maspindzeli offers a “way in” to Georgian folk singing for those whose interest and passion has been ignited - for example, a Georgian gentleman who had been living in the UK for many years met Maspindzeli members at a presentation by Caroline Bithell. He joined Maspindzeli and is now learning to sing the folk songs he never had a chance to learn as a child in Georgia.

Leaders of ensemble Maspindzeli:

Susan Thompson, Chair of Maspindzeli;

Geoff Burton, Former Musical Director;

Bernard Burns, Current Musical Director.

Website with more information and details of performances: www.maspindzeli.org.uk

Telavelebi

(Part II)

Shakro Lomidze was “discovered” by Vaso Mamukelashvili: “Shakro was 16, when I saw him hoeing tobacco in Zuzumbo, I was so charmed by his voice, that I immediately took him to Tito Mgaloblishvili and Shakro Chelidze. They listened to him and were amazed.



Shakro Lomidze

Lia Lomidze, Shakro’s daughter, tells: father was a very generous man by nature. He loved everyone: relatives, friends, colleagues, choir members, but most of all he admired singing. He attended the choir rehearsals for love to singing, rather than for duty. He would stop doing anything and go to the rehearsal. He sang with the power of a true artist and put all his heart and soul into singing. We – his children were also infected with love for singing.

Everyone sang in our musical family: mother Mariam Bochoridze, my brothers Anzor and Robert. Father would seat us beside him and teach folk songs. Robert followed father's path – he sang in the State Ensemble and State Choir of Georgia. Father taught Georgian folk songs to many young people, and would have done a lot of good, if not his untimely passing.

Shakro Lomidze was born in Telavi on 10 May, 1910. His father Iagora Lomidze was a blacksmith, who supported his family (wife and

three children) with honest work. My grandmother Malutsa was from the village of Kondoli; she had clear voice and taught songs to her children. Probably it was thanks to his mother’s voice that Shakro fell in love with Georgian folk song and remained in its service until his passing.

Due to poverty Shakro received no secondary education. He completed only four grades. At the age of sixteen he already sang in the ethnographic choir and it was when he attracted choir masters’ attention. His clear voice made indelible impression on listeners. He always was a leading soloist in the choir and never had a competitor. The Kartli-Kakhetian songs, particularly “Mravalzhamier”, which he sang together with Giorgi Amuzashvili are preserved in the golden fund of Georgian folk songs.

Ethnographic choir had very interesting membership in the 1930s. Together with my father its members were: Shakro Chelidze, Vaso Mamukelashvili, Giorgi Amuzashvili, Giorgi Peikrishvili, Aleksi Guliashvili, Giorgi Chikvaizdze, Piruz Makhatelashvili, Gaioz Bakradze, Vakhtang Zaalishvili, and my uncles – Mathe, Luka and Mito Bochoridze...

Ethnographic choir of Telavi was very successful in 1936, it won first place at the Olympiad of Amateur Art. My father was awarded for “the best performance of Kakhetian song”.

Shakro Lomidze was a wonderful singer and a very good choir master. During years he directed ensembles and choirs at schools, village (Kurdghelauri, Akura, Kisiskhevi) houses of culture and institutions (Telavi medical school). Every success made him happy like a child; his face would brighten when his work was appreciated. Shakro’s singing and friendship with Giorgi Amuzashvili is another topic. The audience enjoyed listening to this duet for years; thank God their songs are recorded. Otar Chijavadze recorded many songs from Telavi singers (Lomidze-Amuzashvili-Peikrishvili) and published as a collection in 1961.

Both, Shakro and Giorgi Amuzashvili passed away unexpectedly. Shakro at the age of 50, Amuzashvili – 48. This was a huge blow for

Telavi choir. Fortunately, Giorgi Peikrishvili, whose voice decorated Shakro's voice, remained in the choir. Shalva and Davit Markozashvili, Shalva Bidzinashvili, Avtandil Shashurashvili and Jemal Chotalishvili continued the traditions of these unique singers”.

Giorgi Peikrishvili was born in the village of Kondoli, Telavi district in 1898. He never received any education. From young age, he had good voice and loved singing. He listened only to folk songs and learned from renowned old singers with big interest and love. As he said, there was hardly any song in Kakheti that he did not know and did not sing. He sang top part which was beautifully tuned with Giorgi Amuzashvili's voice.

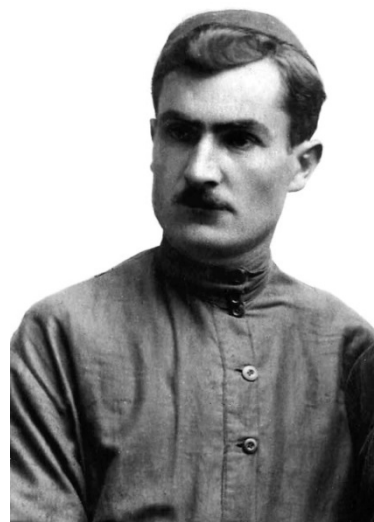


Giorgi Peikrishvili

In 1927 Peikrishvili was invited to Telavi choir then-directed by Tito Mgaloblishvili. In 1936 he moved to the State Ensemble in Tbilisi directed by Sandro Kavsadze. However, when Piruz Makhatelashvili revived Telavi ethnographic choir in 1940 and collected the best singers from Telavi district, Peikrishvili returned to Telavi. In 1944 the ensemble was conferred the status of State ensemble and there was no republican Olympiad in which it did not participate. In 1952 State Ensemble was abolished in the regions, but Giorgi Peikrishvili continued working with the amateur collective at Telavi regional House of Culture.

Giorgi Peikrishvili sang in Telavi choir until 1976. He passed away at the age of 82 and was buried with great honour in his native village Kondoli.

Giorgi Amuzashvili was born in the village of Kondoli, Telavi district in 1906. His mother passed away when Giorgi was 8 months old. He was a beautiful, lively child and the neighbours loved him very much. When an elderly neighbour had guests, little orphan Giorgi was called to sing.



Giorgi Amuzashvili

He loved elderly people, little Giorgi learned songs from them. Giorgi was a member of Telavi song and dance ensemble first under the direction of Shio Babalashvili, later – of Piruz Makhatelashvili. Grigol Kokeladze from Tbilisi recorded the songs “Chakrulo”, “Supruli” and “Shashvi-kakabi” as performed by Amuzashvili and Peikrishvili. Kokeladze was so impressed by Giorgi's velvety voice, that he took Giorgi to Tbilisi and enlisted him in Sandro Kavsadze's choir, where Giorgi sang for 2-3 years.

The man who missed his vineyard and native village could not stay in Tbilisi longer, returned to his native Kondoli and continued singing in Telavi choir.

Together with Giorgi Peikrishvili he enriched the choir's repertoire with the songs he had learned from Kondoli singers, especially noteworthy is “Shashvi-kakabi” and the Kondoli variant of “Shemodzakhili”.

In 1941 Amuzashvili went to the war, he returned with wounds and continued creative activity. Even the death of his 21-year-old son could not make him give up his favourite job. The man downtrodden by life wept and sang. He returned with deeds, diplomas and medals from all inspection-Olympiads. He sang in Piruz Makhata-lashvili's choir until death, he sang middle part in all songs, except for "Zamtari".

Giorgi Amuzashvili passed away unexpectedly at the age of 48. The wreath brought from Tbilisi for the funeral had a panduri with broken strings woven in it with the inscription "Alas, it was very early to lose such a nightingale".

Giorgi Amuzashvili is interred in Telavi.

Baia Asieshvili

*Main Editor of the
Folklore State Center of Georgia*

"Georgia is the most mysterious country" – - from the diaries of the Tbilisi Chanting University and Notre Dame University exchange program

On 7-15 May, 2019 Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Chanting University hosted 7 students of Ecclesiastical music program from Notre Dame University (USA). The exchange program between the Chanting University and Notre Dame University has already been implemented for two years.

Everything started in May 2016, when renowned Georgian pianist Lekso Toradze, a member of the Chanting University Supervisory Board, visited the University. He was accompanied by American guests – Alice and Rex Martin and Elisabeth Borger, whose charity foundations are the sponsors of Notre Dame University. The visit to the Chanting University and warm welcome provoked the idea of future cooperation. Later, with Alice Martin's donation a workshop for women was created at the Chanting University, from 2017 this cooperation segued into exchange program, the Universities signed an agreement for five-year cooperation and 4 students of the Ecclesiastical music program of Notre Dame University came to Georgia in the spring of 2018, with Alice Martin Scholarship.



**The students of Notre Dame University at
Chanting University**

During 2 weeks the students had intensive lessons of Georgian songs and chants and history of culture, visited Kakheti, Mtskheta. Their program included all possible means for familiariza-

tion with Georgian material culture. Together with their peers from Chanting University American students visited the Dioceses of Nikozi and Tskhinvali on May 26 and marked Georgia's Independence Day near the Occupation Line. American students left Georgia emotionally overwhelmed and promised warm hospitality to Georgian friends in America.

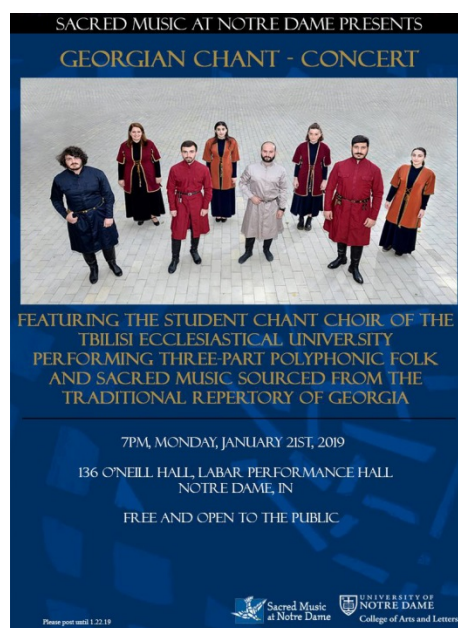
8 students of Chanting University went to the United States in January 2019. These were: Zurab Mamukelashvili, Zaza Zuriashvili, Ana Lolashvili, Nino Bekauri, Nino Rekhviashvili, Davit Tsertsvadze, Mariam Bokuchava and Davit Kolelishvili. From Georgian side, the exchange program was financially supported by Georgian Chanting Foundation.

Notre Dame University holds the 18th place among the US Universities and is distinguished in rich past. It was founded in 1842 by Edward Sorin – a French catholic missionary, priest of the Congregation of Holy Cross. Consequently, main purpose of the University's Department of ecclesiastical music is to prepare musicians – chanters, conductors, organists, for Catholic cathedrals. Entire training program is adjusted to ecclesiastical practice. The module of theoretical subjects includes music of the people of Western and Eastern Christianity, and world peoples.

The University has separate halls for organ and organ music; organ is also heard at the University cathedral. Two renowned professors - Peter Jeffery and Margot Fassler work at the University. They were directors and direct coordinators of the exchange program. The plan provided by Prof. Margot Fassler in May 2018, implied a four-day visit to the USA, a solo concert and lecture-master classes of only Chanting University students. Later the program was enriched with cultural and sporting events.

In the end, one week in America was very interesting and busy. Georgian students attended lectures, participated in the master classes held for Notre Dame students and children's choir. A concert-meeting was organized for the specialists of the Institute for European Studies. Georgian

students attended the mass, with the participation of Notre Dame students' united choir; they also attended two lectures about world musical culture and world Christian and Renaissance vocal traditions.



Poster of the concert of Tbilisi Chanting University Student Choir at Notre Dame University

It is noteworthy that the American researcher of Georgian chants, Dr. John Graham and his wife Ekaterine Diasamidze are involved in the program. Both of them delivered interesting papers about the history of Georgian chant for the Notre Dame audience. The teachers from Tbilisi Chanting University – Zurab Tskrialashvili and Teona Rukhadze held master classes of Georgian song.

Solo concert of Georgian student choir was met with delight by American students and professors. The concert repertoire included the examples of almost all dialects of Georgian music, as well as the pearls of Shemokmedi, Gelati Chant Schools and Kartli-Kakhetian mode.

Professor Clayton Parr, who currently works in Michigan and has directed a Georgian choir for many years, specially came to Notre Dame University to attend the concert. As the American executives of the program noted at the end of the concert, the concert of the Chanting University students was one of the most distin-

guished, successful and exciting events in the Hall of Notre Dame University over the past 3 years.

Also noteworthy was American students' great interest to Georgian chanting, they attended all lectures without exception and asked many questions about Georgian polyphony. With particular interest and delight they listened to *krimanchuli*. Round dances and dance songs also deserved approval and interest of the Americans. As the students of the Chanting University recollect at the meeting following the master class, American students and their teachers tried to participate in round dances, learn dance movements and perform them as accompanied by singing. The visit of the Chanting University students made such strong impression on the American hosts evoking friendship, respect and love between them, that this time, the number of students willing to visit Georgia was incredibly large. In the end, they had to draw lots to decide who would go to Georgia.



The students of Notre Dame University at Tbilisi Chanting University with presents and certificates

Seven students of Notre Dame University came to Georgia and visited Chanting University on 7 May 2019. The two-week program was busy and interesting for them. The guests were offered interesting lectures and workshops in Georgian chant, script, history of literature, polyphony, dance and culture in general. The guests visited Old Tbilisi, Mtskheta, Uplistsikhe, Ateni Sioni and other ancient monuments of Georgian cul-

ture; attended concerts of symphony music. They were also hosted by the US Embassy. The young people could hardly hide emotions. "Singing is in the Georgians DNA", – they noted with admiration – Georgia is the most mysterious country in this region and the world. This country was previously unknown to us, but now we love it, its culture, people, music, traditions ... We see how the Georgians are proud of everything in this country".

on 15 May, at the end of the two-week program, Chanting University hosted a traditional farewell party for the American guests. At the party, the host University handed certificates for successful completion of the exchange program course to Notre Dame University students.

American young people enchanted by Georgian culture and hospitality could hardly hide emotions and love. "The Georgians pay much attention to relationships. This is not common in America. Of course, there is friendship in America, but here this connection is stronger. This is the experience we can take with us to America", – they said.

The exchange program between the two universities continues and more interesting activities, scientific as well as educational are planned in the future.

prepared by Tamar Asatiani

Revaz Shanidze's Studio of Georgian Traditional Music

I started creating the studio in 2011, after graduating from Tbilisi Theological Seminary and Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Chanting University (School for Ecclesiastical Chant and Folk Song at the time). Despite my age I had already been experienced in working with ensembles. But, working with children was a new challenge for me; so I didn't set any specific purpose – I simply started doing my job, without compulsion, thoroughly and without haste. With God's help, the number of those who wished to study Georgian traditional music gradually increased and the work started with 1 child, increased up to 3 groups. Currently, there are 13 members in the ensemble – 7 boys and 6 girls.



**Revaz Shanidze's Studio
of Georgian Traditional Music**

Initially, I wanted the children to feel the “taste” of the examples from all parts of the country. I teach them 4 songs of each dialect to let them get familiarized with all basic characteristics of the given dialect. For instance, from Svan folklore we learn round-dance songs and the songs with instrumental accompaniment (*changi, chuniri*), dance songs (with clapping) and a choral song without accompaniment. We learn the examples from other regions in similar way. I select the examples which the children will handle. So

far I refrain from Gurian *krimanchuli* and Kakhetian ornamentations.

All songs are performed by mixed membership. However, I am already distributing sharply pronounced female and male examples among the girls and boys.

Proceeding from the Studio's name, I try to teach the songs in traditional – oral way. We never use sheet music in the teaching process. As soon as the group deals well with the song I teach, I start to give them audio recordings, to better feel the song character, performance manner and the spirit of Georgian traditional music. For me, it is important that the children sing as naturally as possible.

As for teaching ecclesiastical chants; in Tbilisi we were first to use neumes in the teaching process, initially on a simple level but with the perspective of complication.

We rehearse regularly 3 times a week. But if we prepare for an important event we add another rehearsal. During the week before mandatory concert we rehearse every day. The ensemble's rehearsal space is located in the yard of Andrew the First Called Blue Monastery, for what we are grateful to Deacon Davit Sharashenidze, prior of the Monastery.

We plan to release the first audio album and hold its presentation. The students have already learned full repertoire of Paraklesis and are planning to chant it at the church once a week. In September parallel to recording sessions we are starting to revise the song repertoire. As for chanting, after practicing the Paraklesis service, the children will learn chants for Liturgy.

Revaz Shanidze
Director of the Studio

One Valley's Folklore on the Stage – Ensemble Chvana

On June 10, a concert and exhibition “The folklore of one gorge - Chvana” was held at the Great Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire. Work songs, dances, and oral folklore from the unique tradition of Chvana Gorge in Shuakhevi Municipality and ethnographic exhibition was presented at the evening.

Since 2017 Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Chanting University and the Georgian Chanting Foundation has implemented student employment program enabling the university students to work with regional choirs on the restoration of local traditional songs.

The following students of the Chanting University worked on restoring the local traditional songs of Chvana Gorge: Natia Azarashvili, Nino Rekhviashvili, Ilia Khvichia, and Giorgi Jolbordi with the Supervisor Teona Rukhadze.



Ensemble Chvana at the Grand Hall
of Tbilisi State Conservatoire

Traditional polyphonic songs preserved in the archives at Tbilisi State Conservatoire, the Ivane Javakhishvili Institute of History and Ethnology, and the Niko Berdenishvili Research Institute and recorded in the 1930s, 1950s, and 1970s in Chvana Gorge will come to life on the stage. The project was organized by Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Chanting University, Georgian Chanting Foundation, The Folklore State Center of Georgia, administration and Cultural Center of Shuakhevi

Municipality and Nino Razmadze - Specialist of the IRCTP with the support of the International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony of Tbilisi State Conservatoire, TSU, Ivane Javakhishvili Institute of History and Ethnology, Niko Berdenishvili Institute of Batumi State University, “Ertulovneba” Television of the Georgian Patriarchy and “Shilda” Winery.

Mixed Georgian-Foreign Families on Guard of Georgian Traditions (Part II)

The Interest of foreigners in Georgian traditional culture has a long history; however, in the last decades, Georgian folklore attracted an unusual number of foreign musicians, researchers and singers. It was thanks to Georgian song and chant that our Georgian and foreign respondents met, who later got married and continue with love the family tradition of music performance established in Georgia.

Family of Shalva Makharashvili and Andrea Kuzmich

Shalva Makharashvili an interior and exterior designer is from the city of Rustavi; Andrea Kuzmish – an English language teacher and musician (teacher, performer, researcher, and composer) is Canadian. They met and got married in Canada. Since then they live and work in Toronto.

Shalva Makharashvili: Andrea and I met in the autumn of 1999. She was a member of the Toronto-based Georgian choir Darbazi, I was on a concert tour in Canada together with ensemble Hereti from Rustavi. We did not speak English, they did not speak Georgian. But the compensation was joint singing, which both the Georgians and the Canadians enjoyed very much. Later we

planned more concerts and our roads crossed again. Thus, Georgian song a decisive role in the development of our relationship. In 2001 we got married and settled in Toronto.

Georgian folk song is an integral part of our lives. We especially feel this when we have concerts and workshops. We have two children: Luka (16) and Gabriel (10). Luka was 2 when he followed all fifteen songs from trio Zari's audio album. Gabo could tell "Kobulehuri naduri" from other songs from infancy! Since we both sang in the ensembles our children also attended our rehearsals. So naturally, they learned most Georgian songs at the time. Today, both of them have the opportunity to test the forces in different directions of music. At various times Luka sang in Toronto's youth choirs, where he mastered different techniques of music performance.



**Family of Shalva Makharashvili and
Andrea Kuzmich**

Both Luka and Gabo participate in Andrea's summer camps. They play the piano and guitar. As for Georgian songs Andrea explains general outline to them, I try to help them with the peculiarities of authenticity in their performance.

Recently the elder intensively started studying Georgian songs and participates in the festivals held in Toronto. As for the younger, Gabriel (Gabo), he sang at the Tbilisi International Symposium as a member of Gabo's trio.

This story began in 2016. Andrea and her colleague Mario Morello agreed to present papers at the Eighth International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony, but as they had sung together for more than 4 years, they decided to participate in the concert program of the symposium together with Gabo (8 years old, then), who already knew many Georgian songs. After the symposium, following the trip to different parts of Georgia; Nino Naneishvili referred to the group as "Gabo's trio" after the concert in Bolnisi, we liked the name and did not change it. However, after this, the trio met only in August, 2018 when it was invited to the ninth symposium in Tbilisi. If it was me who selected the repertoire for 2016, this time Andrea herself selected the songs, including two Ukrainian examples. Also important were 4 concerts a month before departure to Tbilisi, as they played the role of full-fledged rehearsals.

Our repertoire comes mainly from the audio albums of Georgian ensembles, and from various digitized field expedition materials; YouTube and Sound cloud are also helpful. Besides, when we are in Georgia we also record the songs from famous Georgian singers (Tristan Sikharulidze, Islam Pilpani, Malkhaz Erkhvanidze, Ketevan Mindorashvili). This year after the Symposium Andrea travelled to mountainous Achara and recorded the examples from Jemal and Beso Turmanidze, also recorded several songs from Levan Bitarov in Tbilisi. We listen to these recordings, different variants of songs, and try to select those which are especially "close" to us.

In my opinion, we sing Gurian and Megrelian songs best, however, we try to encompass all regions of Georgia, as well as urban folklore and the so-called "fusion" songs such as "Doluri".

Bistritsa Babi – Shopluk female drone polyphony

Mountainous region Shoplukin Bulgaria is characterized in female vocal genre “lazaruvane” – young women’s song for spring initiation and round-dance “Horo”. This and other ritual examples are successfully performed by Bistricsa Babi – a group of elderly female singers created in 1939, proclaimed by UNESCO under this name in 2005 as Shopi region female multipart singing with a round dance. Currently the ensemble has young members too and the choir with complete membership is referred to as The Bistritsa Grannies and their Grand-daughters.



Bistricsa Babi

In Bulgaria Shopluk polyphony is called “diphonia”. Here soloists sing on the background of sustained, bass drone. They sing “izvivka”, also “bouchi krivo” (squirmed singing); these soloists sometimes alternate, sometimes sing with parallel vocal movement. Meanwhile, the others keep sustained sound which branches into two or three to produce a fuller accompanying sound. It is noteworthy that in singing they apply guttural articulation, which Bulgarian musicologists consider one of the characteristics of archaism.

The songs are basically three-part and are sung antiphonally. The melody is rich in melismata with augmented (the so-called oriental) secondal soundings. This traditional style is characteristic for various ritual genres; these also include the songs accompanying work in the field.

When singing varied stanzas in round dancing, the performers move with small steps counter clockwise.

Shopluk singing is particularly characterized in the so-called “Shopluk seconds” – cluster soundings, achieved via the stratification of minor and major seconds. The cluster effect is strengthened by original folk vibrato (which often echoes choir bass from the position of lower second) and breakthrough cadences of the antiphonal sides. The phrase frequently ends in the “upward wag” of the top voice typical for Slavic women.

Even though the repertoire of Bistritsa Babi is currently performed only on the stage, it is still considered one of the main cultural achievements of the region. The name itself indicates that this very important element of archaic singing tradition has survived in this village near Sophia, as on the “island of culture”.

It should be noted that in the past decades some fragments of this singing tradition were removed from the repertoire or consolidated in order to be more mobile and effective on the stage.

Tamaz Gabisonia

Associate Professor at Ilia State University

The Singing of Chveneburebi from İnegöl: In the Footsteps of Peter Gold

The International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony of Tbilisi State Conservatoire, the Folklore State Center and “Georgian Chanting Foundation” held the concert-presentation “The Singing of Chveneburebi from İnegöl” at Tbilisi Rustaveli Theatre (April 15) and at Batumi Drama Theatre (April 17).

The evening also included the presentation of the book “*Georgian Polyphony in Western Turkey: In the Footsteps of Peter Gold*” which was presented at the Frankfurt Book Fair last year.

Prior to that, in January, Peter Gold attended presentation of the book in Bourgas (Turkey), in the provincial town of İnegöl.

Due to the well-known circumstances, the Georgians of İnegöl (Bursa province of Turkey) had no contact with their motherland, thus it can be said for sure that the songs and dances recorded in the 1960s by Peter Gold and performed at the concert are at least 150 years old. Thus, İnegöl is the oasis, where preserved are ancient Acharan songs and dances with serious potential to be proclaimed the masterpiece of intangible cultural heritage.

In collaboration with Trabzon Technical University the IRCTP organized expeditions to İnegöl in 2015 and 2018. Expedition recordings have been included in the book together with the materials collected by Gold and Melashvili.

Besides, in 2018 joint project of Tbilisi State Conservatoire and the Georgian Chanting Foundation contributed to the creation of a youth choir in İnegöl and a mixed-age choir of local singers in the village of Hayriye (İnegöl district), which are the descendants of old singers and some of them used to sing at young age. *Chiboni* tradition has also been revived.

The purpose of the project was to introduce the unique culture invariably preserved by the İnegöl Georgians (*Chveneburebi*) for over 150 years to Georgian audience. Even though a young generation of İnegöl Georgians are not fluent in Georgian, they always sing and dance with enthusiasm at *Chveneburebi's* gatherings. Devotion of the Turkey Georgians to native traditions deserves special respect and needs more popularization in Georgian society, who should know how well the descendants of the muhajirs have preserved their ancestors' heritage.

At concert held as part of the project, in addition to unique songs from the presented book, *Chveneburebi* also performed traditional dances. In Tbilisi the event was held at Rustaveli Theatre, where theatre artist Mirian Shvelidze created the environment characteristic to village Hayriye on the stage. The presenter at the concert was Mr. Guram Kokoladze (Ergun Atabai) – a

singer, businessman and Maecenas. Other participants of the Tbilisi concert were ensembles Eleska (Keda) and Bermukha (Khulo); ensembles Eleska (Keda) and Pesvebi (Shuakhevi) of the Batumi concert.



**“The Singing of Chveneburebi
from İnegöl” at Shota Rustaveli Drama Theatre**

We think that the presented project will significantly contribute to the deepening of cultural relations between Turkey and Georgia.

The collaboration continues. The Folklore State Center and Georgian Chanting Foundation plan a joint project “Comparative study of traditional dances and dance melodies of the Acharans from İnegöl (Turkey) and Achara (complex expedition to Achara)” for August 2019; in the framework of the project dancers from İnegöl will spend 10 days in Achara and meet local dancers in different municipalities of Achara.

The project was organized by the International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony of Tbilisi State Conservatoire, The Folklore State Center of Georgia, Georgian Chanting Foundation, Georgian Culture and Tourism Association of Hayriye village, İnegöl with the following supporters: Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Georgian Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, Tbilisi City Hall, Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of Achara, Achara regional municipalities, Embassy of Turkey in Georgia, Shota Rustaveli State Drama Theatre, Ilia Chavchavadze Batumi State Professional Theatre and İnegöl Association of Caucasian Folklore and Culture.

Chonguri

Chonguri is a string instrument, disseminated in West Georgian lowland regions, such as Samegrelo, Guria and Achara.

Chonguri has the shape of a lengthwise cut pear. Unlike *panduri* it has four strings, is bigger in size and has no frets.



Chonguri

Chonguri strings have original arrangement. Three of the strings are long; with one end they are attached to the tuning pegs on the top of the instrument, with the other – to the bottom of the instrument. The length of the fourth is about 1/3 of the other strings, it is located between strings I and II and produces the sound with only one pitch. Its one end it is attached to the tuning peg in the middle of the instrument, the other end is attached to the bottom of *chonguri* together with the others strings. Accordingly, it is never touched with left hand and does not change pitch. It produces extremely high sound of *chonguri* pitch, and probably for this it is called “zili” or “high sound”.

It is interesting, that people called *chonguri* strings as singing voices: *mtkmeli*, *modzakhili*, *bani* and *zili*, which can be explained by the influence of vocal music. In V. Akhobadze’s opinion “zili” appeared thanks to the influence of four-part songs and this explains its location between strings I and II like *shemkhmobari*.

Chonguri can be tuned in a few different ways, unlike *panduri*; most common tunings are:

f-g-c1-f1 and f-a-c1-e1; lesser common: f-g-c1-g1 and d-a-c1-a1; as well as other tunings: f-as-c1-es1, f-b-c1-f1, f-b-d1-f1, f-c-es1-f1. Such a variety of *chonguri* tunings was determined by the harmonious diversity of the songs, performed with its accompaniment.

Avksenti Megreliдзе notes that first tuning was for joyous and dance songs; second tuning was referred to as “getting to sleep” and was used for lullabies and sorrowful-sad songs. The other tunings were intended for few songs. Most extensive is the repertoire performed in first tuning; this is why it is considered a principal, universal tuning (f-a-c1-f1).

The range of *chonguri* is within the lowest sound of the third string and the highest sound of “zili”. With multiple tunings it can be a seventh, octave or ninth.

Unlike *panduri*, *chonguri* is often played by both strumming and plucking the strings. Virtuoso *chonguri* players parallel to strumming the strings imitate percussion instruments via knocking the instrument body with middle or ring finger.

Chonguri produces separate sounds as well as two-, three- and four-part chords. Thanks to the abundance of tunings, the stock of *chonguri* sounds is far larger than that of *panduri*.

Chonguri is played by both women and men, but more frequently by women. *Chonguri* was a necessary item for the family; it was hung on the wall to be seen by everyone. It basically is an accompanying instrument for single-part humorous, love or epic songs; however examples of other genres are often sung with its accompaniment.

Chonguri would accompany women’s singing during needlework to ease and refresh the work; it was also played to calm “batonebi” when a child had infectious disease and to help the child recover; during the ritual when a son was born to the family; it accompanied the singing at the barren tree, thus, supposedly, addressing the Goddess of Fertility.

Chonguri was part of a traditional ensemble together with *doli*, particularly in Achara.

Usually only one *chonguri* was played at a time in everyday life.



Polikarpe Khubulava – master of playing the *Chonguri*

Chonguri stands on a higher level of development than *panduri*. This is expressed not only in its improved construction and consequently in the equality of timbre, abundance of harmonious opportunities and ways of playing it.

Alongside having a number of similar features *panduri* and *chonguri* principally differ from each other. The similarity is manifested, firstly in external form: both are string instruments, both have bulging shape and narrow handle; besides, both are basically accompanying instruments and only dance tunes are played on them as solos; both play significant role in rituals. All this allows saying that these two may have been one instrument in the past, but as they correspond to different levels of development, it can be said that *chonguri* originated from *panduri*.

It is interesting what played decisive role on the way from *panduri* to *chonguri*? To answer this question, we should consider the distinctive features between these instruments. The most significant difference is the fourth string - "zili". Its emergence is the most decisive moment in the origin of *chonguri* from *panduri*. Here raises the question, why should four-string *panduri* be named *chonguri*? According to some scholars, the word *chonguri* comes from *changuri* i.e. *changi*-like and this is also associated with "zili". The thing is that originally all four strings were of the same length, "zili" was shortened subsequently to facilitate playing the instrument. In order not to

change its pitch, it should not be touched by left-hand fingers, which led to playing it by plucking the strings like *changi*, instead of strumming. Thus, the name *changuri/chonguri* may have been associated with this.

If *chonguri* resulted from the development of *panduri*, the development stages of Georgian strumming string instruments can be as follows:

1. two-string *panduri* with fourth tuning;
2. three-string *panduri* with fourth tuning;
3. three-string *panduri* with secondal-thirdal tuning.
4. four-string *chonguri*, with the tuning currently referred to as first tuning (f-a-c1-f1).

It can be said, that the development of Georgian strumming string instrument reflects the basic stages which Georgian multi-part folk song passed from two- to four-part singing.

The material processed by Maka Khardziani basing on Manana Shilakadze's work "Georgian Folk Instruments and Instrumental Music"

About One Traditional Ritual

Lamproba Ritual in Georgia

Following the dissemination of Christianity in Georgia, naturally, many pagan rituals were reconsidered according to the worldview of the religion. One of them is a *Lamproba* (*torch festival*), which was supposedly replaced by The Presentation of Jesus at the Temple after the introduction of Christianity.

According to historical-ethnographic sources, *Lamproba* is confirmed in many parts of Georgia, e.g. Pshavi, Khevsureti, Mtiuleti, Guria, Imereti and Svaneti. Renowned Georgian ethnographer Apolon Tsuladze provides information about *Lamproba* in Guria. Torch was made from the stem of elderberry, bark of cherry tree, straw, etc. On 1 February, i.e. "a spring welcoming evening", when it got dark, all members of the family young and old would go out holding a lit

torch, thus the whole vicinity was illuminated, children had fun, their laughter, the sound of a torch striking a torch was heard everywhere”. In olden days, people used the word “*galamproba*” instead of “*gazapkhuli*” (spring)... In Tusheti this was a day off referred to as “*bashanaurt ukme*”. In Khevi and Gudamaqari it was called *Amparioba*.

The holiday has been best preserved in the life mode of Svaneti. Main attribute of this holiday is a torch made of oak, beech or mostly, birch tree. In Svaneti the holiday underwent transformation over time and was formed as the following three:

1. *Detse Lamprob* – the Heaven *Lamproba* (movable);
2. *Svimni Lamprob* – The Presentation of Jesus at the Temple (immovable);
3. *Jgraag Lamprob* – St. George’s *Lamproba* (movable).

At *Detse Lamprob* the heaven was entreated to protect the family from illness. On this celebration one torch was lit for the God on the threshing-floor, in the yard, as in people’s belief it was him who sends them smallpox and thus they tried to please him, so that he would send them light form of the disease and children would not die, also, to protect the population from various diseases.



Detse Lamprob in Svaneti

Svimni Lamprob/Svimnob/Svimnish. After the dissemination of Christianity *Lamproba* was

apparently replaced by The Presentation of Jesus at the Temple; the name of the holiday *Svimni* testifies to this. The word *Svimnob* should be associated with Simon from the Gospel. Ancient Georgian historical sources also report that in the reality of ancient Georgia the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple was known as *Lamproba*, which is mentioned together with other holidays in old parchments. This mystical marching is linked to the history of the Messiah, who would free the Jewish people from Roman domination, as it was written by Bible prophecies. After presenting Jesus at the temple, Jewish Rabbi Svimeon, waiting for the birth of the Messiah, went to the ancestors' graves to inform them of the appearance of the Messiah. According to the legend, this ritual became a tradition; every year believers gathered at their ancestors' graves and celebrated the Messiah's appearance with this ritual. "On this day all people of Svaneti lit torches made of birch tree on the graves of the deceased. People believed that burning torches lit the way for the souls of the dead. – Besarion Nizharadze writes. On this day in some villages of Svaneti, people take preliminarily blessed food to the cemetery and spend all night praying and chanting.

Jgraag Lamprob – St. George’s *Lamproba* was held on the day after *Svimnoba*. On this day all men from the family lit up torches in the village square near the church. One torch was made for the family, the others – for all male members of the family. People say that in ancient times this showed how many soldiers Svaneti could provide in the case of need. Lit torches were taken to St. George’s shrine before dawn, where they prayed, glorified St. George by chanting “Jragish”. The celebration continued around the bonfire, with songs and chants, round dance “Lampruli”, wrestling and even snowballing. When it was time to burn the torches the families would bring trays with bread and three pieces of cheese on each. An elder (or a few elders) of the village would bless the bread: “God, bless (the name of the family head), his life, his work, his arable land and crops, young members of his family, help him walk on the right path”. The blessing of each family was

followed by a meal and ritual drinking of the wine specially preserved for this occasion. In olden times after returning from the church people sang glorifying hymns at home as well, walking around the hearth with lit candles in hands, which they attached to the bulkhead of the dwelling for domestic animals.



Svinmi Lamproba in Svaneti

Interestingly, *Lamproba* celebration is very similar to the ritual dedicated to the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple of neighbouring countries, for example, in Armenia *Tiarnindaraj* (Presentation of Jesus at the Temple) is celebrated on February 14. This day is accompanied by a pre-celebration ceremony. *Andastani*, during which four sides of the world are blessed as well as the candles – as the symbol of Christ's light, is performed after the evening service. This is followed by lighting a *Terndezi* bonfire, accompanied by traditional round-dance songs, similar to Svaneti, where ritual fire and round-dance songs are mandatory during *Lamproba*. As Georgian public figure, ethnographer and publicist Egnate Gabliani notes with fire ancient Georgians worshipped the moon and *Lamproba* could be considered its survival. Ivane Javakhishvili also was of the same opinion and believed that the ritual was

a reminder of the glory and service of the moon and is approximated to similar celebrations of the Assyrians, Charanians and Sabians.

In Russia, prior to the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple, there was a tradition of lighting candles, thus they protected themselves from evil souls, natural disasters, also remembered their ancestors' souls and entreated the deities to protect livestock. Today in Russia, 6 hours before beginning the liturgy the priest blesses candles, which are then distributed among the people in the church. The parish keeps these candles all year round. This also shows that the tradition has old roots and is combined with a new one.

Various researchers believe that in Rome introduction of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple should have eradicated *Luperkalia* – the so-called pagan tradition of fertility. According to some Georgian ethnographers and basing on various sources, *Lamproba* was aimed to entreat abundant harvest, reproduction of people and livestock; to this testifies the early-spring performance-merrymaking similar to *Berikaoba* after *Lamproba* celebration, i.e. the tradition of celebrating the festival of fertility. Thus, it can be said, that pagan *Lamproba* was replaced by the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple, however, the remainders of pre-Christian views could not be completely eradicated from the people's consciousness.

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ჯგრაგიშ Jgragish

First system of the musical score. It consists of three staves (treble, alto, and bass clefs) with a key signature of two flats and a 2/4 time signature. The melody is written in the treble clef. The lyrics are in Georgian and Latin script.

ჯგ - ი - რა - გი - დე - ჰა ლა - ი - გვი - უო -

Jg - i - ra - gi - ie - ha la - i - gvi - uo -

la - i - gvi - uo -

Second system of the musical score. It consists of three staves (treble, alto, and bass clefs) with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written in the treble clef. The lyrics are in Georgian and Latin script.

შე - ი - ვო - და ი ჰა ი ჰა ი უო

she - i - vo - da i ha i ha i uo

Third system of the musical score. It consists of three staves (treble, alto, and bass clefs) with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written in the treble clef. The lyrics are in Georgian and Latin script.

ი ჰო ჰა ი ჰა ი ა ვო და

i ho ha i ha i a vo da

Fourth system of the musical score. It consists of three staves (treble, alto, and bass clefs) with a key signature of two flats and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written in the treble clef. The lyrics are in Georgian and Latin script.

ი ჰა ი ჰა ი ლა - ი - გვი - უი -

i ha i ha i la - i - gvi - ui -

შე - ნ - ვო - და ი ჰა ი ჰა ი

she - i - vo - da i ha i ha i

უო ი ჰე ჰა ი ჰა ი ა

uo i he ha i ha i a

ვო და ი ჰა ი ჰა ი უო

vo da i ha i ha i uo

დი - დაბ აჯ - ხად ჯგ - რაგ სი ლა - გვეშ - დი - უო.

di - dab aj - khad jg - rag si la - gvesh - di - uo.

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