

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

B U L L E T I N

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Ethnomusicological Life of Georgia

(January-June, 2018)

Festivals, Conferences, Competitions, Seminars

12.04-17.05.2018 – The 8th International festival "from Easter to Ascension" dedicated to the 85th anniversary of Ilia II the Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia celebrated throughout the country

15.04-30.09.2018 – Folk festival "Our Country is a Garden" is being held as part of Checkin Georgia, with the participation of 6 folk ensemble from Tbilisi: Anchiskhati, Adilei, Didgori, Shav nabada, Nana and Ialoni. The Festival included 5 concerts of each ensemble in different regions of Georgia

20.04-1.06.2018 – Choral Society of Georgia held "IV National Competition of Children's and Juvenile Collectives", which revealed best collectives in the following categories: A – Academic Choral Singing, B – Georgian Folk song, C – Georgian Church Chanting

26-29.04.2018 – Children's folk ensemble Kirialesa participated in the International Pera Festival in Istanbul, the ensemble also held a solo concert as part of the Festival.

1-9.05. 2018 – Ensemble Didgori participated in the opening and closing of the "5th International festival of Georgian Film" in London, and other events held as part of the Festival

12.05.2018 – Ensemble Didgori participated in "New Wine Festival" held at the Wine Club in Tbilisi

19.05.2018 – Folk ensembles Mcheli, Akriani and folk-ethnographic studio Amer-Imeri participated in the event "Night at the Museum" at the State museum of Georgian Folk Song and Musical Instruments

22.05.2018 – Chant University hosted students' scientific conference "The Issues of Christian Theology and Musicology" dedicated to Prof. Manana Andriadze's memory

28.05.2018 – Georgian Folk Music Department of Tbilisi State Conservatoire held Republican Conference of young Ethnomusicologists and folk music concert dedicated to the memory of Edisher Garakganidze

7.06.2018 – Church Music direction of Tbilisi State Conservatoire held St. Ekvtime the Confessor's Seminar

15-23.06.2018 – Festival "Mravalzhamier" of children's folk ensembles was held at J. Kakhidze Tbilisi Centre of Music

Lectures, Meetings, Master-classes, Presentations, etc

14.01.2018 – Charity concert was held at Florence "Aurora" Theatre with the blessing of Metropolitan Abraham (Garmelia) of West Europe, among the participants was Georgian emigrants' ensemble Nana (directed by Zaza Zuriashvili – a student of the Chant University) of saint Nino church in Florence.

2.02.2018 – Presentation of the CD "15 Abkhazian Songs" (from ensemble Rustavi's repertoire) and collection of sheet music was held at Valeri Arkania Art-gallery as organized by the Centre of Abkhazian Spirituality and Culture

13.02.2018 – Presentation of Ensemble Kirialesa's second audio album at the Gallery of the Folklore State Centre of Georgia

9.03.2018 – Presentation of the first audio album of ensemble Moqvare from village Merisi of Keda municipality at the Gallery of the Folklore State Centre of Georgia.

15.03.2018 – the University of Chant hosted the public lecture "Georgian Garmoni" of Nikoloz Jokhadze a historian and ethnomusicologist and practical course for learning this instrument was introduced for the University students

State Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Musical Instruments hosted:

20.03.2018 – Nikoloz Jokhadze's public lecture "The Road of Garmoni to Georgia".

19.04.2018 – Maia Sigua's public lecture "Opera – Four Centuries in an Hour".

24.05.2018 – Public lecture "On the Study of One Group of Georgian Traditional instruments" by Nino Makharadze, associate professor of Ilia State University.

20.03.2018 – A lecture-meeting of ensemble Mtiebi with the University students at St. Andrew the First-called University of the Georgian Patriarchy

3.04.2018 – A memorandum for cooperation was legalized between the University of Chant and S. Chiaureli Tbilisi School #54, and a folk choir was created in the framework of the memorandum

4-13.04.2018 – Giorgi Jolbordi, a student of the University of Chant, held master classes in Georgian folk song and chant for Georgian emigrants at "Kavkasia" – the Centre of education and culture in Athens

26.04.2018 – The University of Chant hosted a lecture and master class "Byzantine Ecclesiastical Music" of Professor Emmanouil Giannopoulos – an expert in Byzantine ecclesiastical music from the University of Thessaloniki

17.05.2018 – Presentation of ensemble Ialoni's fourth CD was held at the "Public Hall of Holy Mount Athos"

26.05-08.06.2018 – As part of the exchange program realized by "Georgian chanting Foundation" 4 students of the Department for Church Music Studies at the University of Notre Dame (USA) studied Georgian chanting and singing at the University of Chant thanks to Alice Martin scholarship.

28.05.2018 – Renowned Georgian folk singer and choirmaster Tristan Sikharulidze held a master class at the University of Chant

29.05.2018 – John Graham – an American ethnomusicologist living and working in Georgia delivered the public lecture "Transmission History of Georgia Chant"

3.06.2018 – the jubilee evening dedicated to the 45th anniversary of local ensemble Sagalobeli and presentation of the book "Rostom Gogoladze" was held at Ambrolauri Culture Centre of Ambrolauri Municipality with the support of the State Folklore center of Georgia and "Georgian Chanting" Foundation

9.06.2018 – Sound recording studio "Georgian Chant" recorded three vocal examples, for student's audio album, performed by ensemble Salaghobo in Tsageri as part of the students' employment projects of the University of Chant

25.06.2018 – Batumi state Centre of music hosted presentation of the book "Expeditions in Ajara. Shuakhevi 2016" about Shuakhevi folklore

30.06.2018 – Presentation of the audio and DVD album "Songs that Move Mountains" of the joint concert of ensemble Adilei and singers from Premana was held at Tbilisi "Folk Garden"

Expeditions

11-15.05.2018 – Giorgi Kraveishvili, co-founder and director of Non-entrepreneurial (Non-commercial) Legal Entity "Heyamo" organized field expedition to the village Saphi.

Concert Tours

21.01.2018 – State ensemble Basiani's solo concert at St. Petersburg Grand Concert Hall

1-4.02.2018 – State ensemble Basiani held three solo concerts as part of the festival "Sacrees Journees de Strasbourg" in Strasbourg (France)

3.02.2018 – State Ensemble of Folk Song and Dance Rustavi held a concert dedicated to its 50th anniversary at Bostancı Gösteri Merkezi (Istanbul, Turkey)

1.04.2018 – Anchiskhati Choir performed a concert "I Dare Sing" at Elbphilharmonie Hamburg

5-11.04.2018 – ensemble Ialoni held concerts and master classes in London and Cambridge (UK)

– Ensemble Shavnabada toured in Turkey, held a solo concert at the Anglican Church and a master class of folk song for Georgian emigrants and descendants of Georgian Muhajirs in Istanbul.

10-14.05.2018 – Ensemble Ertoba held two solo concerts and also participated in various events dedicated to the 100th Anniversary of Georgia's Independence in Poland

13.05.2018 – A group of the Chant University ensemble participated in the evening of Georgian music organized by Association "Tamarioni" at ASIEM (Paria)

17-21.05.2018 – Ensemble Basiani participated in International "Belt and Road" Symposium of Music in the framework of "World Music Exhibition" at Shenyang Conservatory of Music (China)

16-21.06.2018 – Ensemble of Georgian folk song and dance Zedashe (Sighnaghi) participated in "Riga International Festival" (Latvia)

Concerts, Evenings, Exhibitions, Jubilees....

6.01.2018 – Ensemble Mcheli of the State Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Musical Instruments organized "Alilooba" ritual in village Patardzeuli, Sagarejo district

23.01.2018 – Ensemble Shvanabada held a solo concert for the graduates and listeners of Tbilisi School of Politics on the territory of Bodbe Convent

21.01.2018 – Ensembles Mtiebi, Anchiskhati, Adilei, Didgori, Sathanao, Ialoni and Mcheli from Tbilisi participated in charity concert at the exhibition hall of the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia

10.02.2018 – Anniversary evening and concert dedicated to Tristan Sikharulidze's 80th birthday was held at the Grand Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire

24.02.2018 – Ensemble Didgori presented Georgian traditional music at the evening of Megrelian wine at the restaurant "Polyphony"

9.03.2018 – Study room researching Abkhazian folklore named after legendary choir master Dzuku Lolua, was opened at Sokhumi State University

4.04.2018 – Ensemble Mcheli of the State Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Musical Instruments organized "Chona" ritual in the villages Natakhtari and Misaktsieli

15.04.2018 – Ensemble Didgori's solo concert at Zestaponi House of Culture with the participation of the choir of Zestaponi choir master's school

22.04.2018 – Ensemble Didgori's solo concert at the Grand Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire

21.04.2018 – Ensemble Nanina's solo concert at Kaspi Municipality Centre of Culture, with participation of the choir of Kaspi choir master's school

22.04.2018 – Ensemble Anchiskhati's solo concert at Kote Marjanishvili Kvareli amateur theatre with the participation of the choir of Kvareli choir master's school

27.04.2018 – Concert of the students from Telavi, Oni and Poti choir master's schools at the concert hall of Ilia State University

27.04.2018 – Anchiskhati's solo concert, dedicated to the choir's 30th anniversary, at the Grand Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire

29.04.2018 – Ensemble Ialoni's solo concert at Borjomi Municipality Centre of Art and Culture in which also participated the choir of Borjomi choir master's school

29.04.2018 – Joint concert of ensemble Sathanao and Dutch ensemble Angels at the State Museum of Georgian Folk song and Musical Instruments

29.04.2018 – Concert and presentation of the CD dedicated to Tariel Onashvili's 70th anniversary at J. Kakhidze Tbilisi Centre for Music and Culture

4.05.2018 – Concert of the students from Lentekhi, Zestaponi and Gori choir master's schools

5.05.2018 – Ensemble Adilei's solo concert at Mtskheta Municipality center of Culture "Sveti"

6.05.2018 – Ensemble Didgori participated in Giorgoba festive liturgy at the Georgian Orthodox Church in London together with local chanters' choir

7.05.2018 – Ensemble Gorda's solo concert at Tbilisi Royal District Theatre

8.05.2018 – Solo concert - performance "Khatoba " of Mtiebi ethnomusic theater at Rustaveli State Theatre

11.05.2018 – Ensemble Ialoni's solo concert at Bolnisi Municipality Centre of Culture with the participation of female ensemble Alilo of Bolnisi Municipality

15-18.05.2018 – Concert of the students from Ambrolauri, Kaspi, Kvareli, Akhalkalaki, Batumi, Dusheti, Tsalenjikha, Borjomi, Mestia and Sachkhere choir master's schools in the courtyard of the State Folklore center of Georgia

18.05.2018 – Ensemble Nanina's solo concert at Sachkhere Youth House with the participation of the choir from choirmaster's school

20.05.2018 – Ensemble Anchiskhati's concert at Ilia Zakaidze Dusheti Centre of Culture with the participation of the choir from Dusheti choirmaster's school

28.05.2018 – Ensemble Dzveli Mtiebi's solo concert at Ilia State University Centre of Music

Events dedicated to 100th anniversary of Georgian Republic:

26.05.2018 – Anniversary concert with the participation of State ensemble Basiani at Tbilisi Opera and Ballet Theatre

24.05.2018 – Choir of Ensemble Rustavi performed in concert at Bratislava Municipal Palace, organized by the Georgian Embassy in Slovakia

26.05.2018 – Concert in village Nikozi with the participation of Chant University students and children's choirs from the representations of Georgian Chanting Foundation in village Nikozi and Kalauri

26.09.2018 – Anniversary concert in Rustaveli Avenue, Tbilisi with the participation of Tbilisi folk ensembles

26.05.2018 – Joint concert of ensemble Ertoba and local ensemble Orbeli in Bolnisi

31.05.2018 – Ensemble Sakhioba's solo concert at the State Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Musical Instruments

1.06.2018 – Gala concert and Award ceremony of the winners of the IV National Competition of Georgian Children's and Juvenile Choral Collectives at the Grand Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire

2.06.2018 – Ensemble Didgori's solo concert at Archil Khorava Poti School of Art with the participation of the choir from Poti choirmaster's school

4.06.2018 – Joint concert of ensemble Basiani and Georgian pianist Elisso Bolkvadze – UNESCO Ambassador of Peace at UNESCO headquarters (Paris).

7.06.2018 – Event dedicated to ensemble Dariali's 30th anniversary and the opening of the ensemble' founder, choir-master and singer Temur Kevkhishvili's star at Rustaveli State Theatre

9.06.2018 – Choreographers' Union of Georgia organized the concert dedicated to the 80th anniversary of Tengiz Utmelidze (People's Artist of Georgia, a soloist of the legendary Sukhishvilebi's first generation) and ceremony of opening the artist's star at Tbilisi Concert Hall

9.06.2018 – Ensemble Shav nabada's solo concert at N. Shengelaia Cinema (Tslenjikh) with the participation of local choirmaster's school choir

13.06.2018 – Folk concert of the students of Tbilisi Boarding school #200 at the State Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Musical Instruments

16.06.2018 – Ensemble Adilei's solo concert at Mes-tia Museum of Svaneti History and Ethnography, with the participation of Mestia choirmaster's school choir

17.06.2018 – Ensemble Anchiskahti's solo concert at ArtArea TV

17.06.2018 – Joint concert of ensemble Ertoba and folk-ethnographic studio "Voices of Future" at the State Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Musical Instruments

18.06.2018 – Ensemble Nanina's solo concert at Erosi Manjgaladze Centre of Culture (Samtredia Municipality) with the participation of Samtredia choirmaster's school choir

19.06.2018 – Ensemble Nanina's solo concert at Kutaisi State Opera and Ballet Theatre with the participation of folk ensemble Nai-Nai of M. Balanchivadze Kutaisi Central Music school

22.06.2018 – The representatives of the Folklore State Centre visited Ozurgeti within the framework of the inspection of choirmaster's schools, and attended the concert with the participation of the pupils from Ozurgeti choirmaster's school

24.06.2018 – Ensemble Anchiskhati's solo concert at R. Laghidze House of Culture (Baghdati), with the participation of Baghdati choirmaster's school choir

As part of the project "Amer-Imeri singing" the blue monastery Children's folk-ethnographic studio Amer-Imeri presented mythological performance

"Chechetoba ghame" in a number of schools in Tbilisi and different cities of Georgia:

15.02.2018 – author's school #6 (Tbilisi)

27.02.2018 – Rustavi

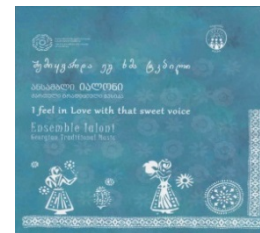
16.03.2018 – Dedoplistsqaro

22.03.2018 – Kaspi

14.06.2018 – Public school #144 (Tbilisi)

Publications

Fourth audio album of ensemble Ialoni "I am in love with that sweet voice"



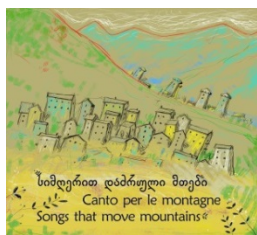
Second audio album of ensemble Kirialesa



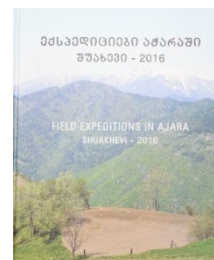
First audio album of ensemble Dziriani



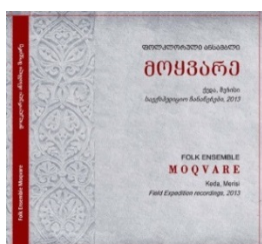
Audio-DVD album of ensemble Adilei and singers
from Premana “Songs that Move Mountains”



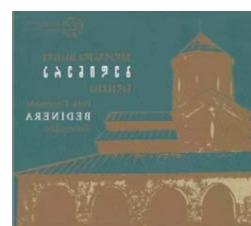
A book of Shuakhevi expedition 2016



First audio album of ensemble Moqvare



First audio album of ensemble
Bedinera from Tsalenjikha



Collection “15 Abkhazian Folk Songs”



First audio album of female folk ensemble
Mapshalia from Tsalenjikha



Tariel Onashvili’s audio album



First audio album of ensemble Guria
from Chokhatauri



prepared by **Maka Khardziani**

Maro Tarkhnishvili

Female and male repertoires are marked off in Georgian folk music, but traditional performance does not contradict joint singing of men and women when it comes to family music-making or public celebrations. As for the performance of men's songs by women, this phenomenon is directly related to the stage and the first precedent of this occurred in Gori in 1910. For the first time in Georgian reality, the history of Georgian folk song performance a woman became a choirmaster and women sang leading voice-parts in the seven-member choir. These were sisters Maro and Ekaterine Tarkhnishvili.



Maro Tarkhnishvili

First woman choirmaster, renowned performer of Georgian folk songs, People's Artist of Georgia Mariam (Maro) Tarkhnishvili was born to the large family of Esthate Tarkhan-Mouravi and Natalia Mekanarishvili in the village of Kavtiskhevi, Kaspi District in 1891, the family was famous for particular musical talent and love of Georgian song. Maro was the ninth, last-born child of the family. The daughter of the noble family revealed particular musical hearing, voice and showed interest in true peasant songs. Whenever she heard singing she was immediately there: she would stand beside the peasants during ploughing, reaping, hoeing, threshing and follow their singing. She gathered village children and held "Maro's feast". She knew all songs from Kavtishkhevi and neighbouring villages, as

people said Maro's "magic singing" captivated everyone.

One of her senior sisters Ekaterine was distinguished with excellent voice, she was known for her singing long before Maro's birth. The sisters' voices sounded harmoniously.

Maro got married very early – at the age of 13 and moved to Akhalkalaki. Here she created the first choir.

In 1910 Maro's family moved to Gori, where her sister Ekaterine lived with her family and here the sisters first performed for the public on the stage. In 1917 the Tarkhnishvilis moved to Tbilisi, where Maro created a new folk choir. The choir held its first concert at Georgian club in 1919. "It was really nice to watch and hear this little choir ... The listeners were enchanted by exceptionally musical, natural and the purely national sound of our precious folk examples. The performance was free, easy and sweet, with medium strength, devoid of artificiality and unjustified effects" (Pavle Khuchua. Maro Tarkhnishvili, Tbilisi, 1962).

Maro had one vocation: to learn as many Georgian folk songs as possible in the primary, natural form. That's why she walked Kartli and Kakheti, collected folk pearls, processed and arranged them with her creative knife. "Zamtari", "Kakhuri nana", "Grdzeli kakhuri mravalzhamieri" have been enriched with melodic ornaments by Maro. "Sweet mother of Georgian song" as she was called in her life saved many other songs, un-notated treasure. The name, respect, love, recognition and appreciation came from the very beginning. She was highly respected by the leading figures of Georgian music – Dimitri Arakishvili, Zakaria Paliashvili, Meliton Balanchivadze.

During Niko Sulkhani-Shvili's visit, seven-year-old Maro, heard one of the arias "Daigvianes" from his opera "Patara Kakhi" as performed by the author himself. Later, she created her own version of this aria and included it in her repertoire. By the way, it is thanks to her that this brilliant aria was not lost as were other fragments of Sulkhani-Shvili's opera. It is noteworthy that 20-year old Maro performed "Daigvianes" at Akaki Tsereteli's jubilee and made the poet cry! With this aria she bid farewell to the "Nightingale of Georgia" in 1915.

Dimitri Arakishvili invited Maro as a teacher of Georgian folk songs at the Conservatoire. Fasci-

nated by her contralto he offered her vocal training and also promised to send her to Italy. But the mother of three young children rejected the offer, she continued collecting, arranging Kartli-Kakhetian songs and performing them for the audience. “I did not lose anything and finally I remained beneficent of folk songs”.

Tours and concerts became an inseparable part of Maro's life: Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Telavi, Sighnaghi, Senaki, Zugdidi were captivated by her velvety voice. In Georgia, No much or less important event was held in Georgia which was not beautified by Tarkhnishvili's voice.

In 1924 Maro's husband was executed, with difficulty she managed to save her son from death. Only children and singing comforted the woman widowed at the age of thirty-three. Born to sing could not be silent and she held an unprecedented folk concert in 1925. This was followed by the concerts at Tbilisi theatres, schools, parks, clubs, commercial or charitable evenings. Maro worked selflessly and created choirs of Tbilisi tram, water-piping and railway workers..... But her main concern was a small choir, which from a 7-member group had turned into 35-member ensemble and successfully performed at Olympiads and ethnographic concerts.



The choir of Maro and Ekaterine Tarkhnishvili

In 1927 “The canaries from Kavtiskhevi” (Ioseb Noneshvili) crossed the Caucasus and toured with concerts in the Soviet republics of Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia.

They had numerous invitations and tours. The media and television systematically covered her creative work. She was greatly respected by the society and the government for her merit in the popularization of Georgian song. In 1933 the songs per-

formed by Maro Tarkhnishvili were recorded on Gramophone records in Moscow.

In 1935, Tbilisi State Opera and Ballet Theatre hosted 25th jubilee of Maro and Ekaterine Tarkhnishvili's activity, Maro was conferred the title Honored Art Figure of the Republic, and Ekaterine – Honored Artist of the Republic.

In 1956 Rustaveli Theatre saw the celebration of Maro Tarkhnishvili's 65th birthday and the 45th anniversary of her creative activity.



Sisters Maro and Ekaterine Tarkhnishvili

Tarkhnishvili directed State Ensemble of Kartli-Kakhetian songs until 1949; she was choir master and artistic director of Folk Song and Dance Ensemble of industrial workers' Union.

In addition to being a choirmaster and singer Tarkhnishvili also significantly contributed to the training of singers. She transmitted her knowledge and experience via correct pedagogical approach and methods.

Maro Tarkhnishvili served Georgian art for six decades and became a truly public singer. “Daigvianes”, “Chona”, “Namgluri”, “Berikatsi var”, “Kakhuri mravalzhamieri”, “Tamar kali” and many others as performed by her are still popular today. The talented singer and choirmaster left talented posterity. Her children Vano and Tamar followed their mother's footsteps, as also did her daughter-in-law – Babulia Tarkhnishvili. Tamar's daughter is a renowned composer Marika Kvaliashvili, who recorded 50 songs performed by her grandmother and saved them from being lost. Renowned popular singer – Eka Kvaliashvili is the daughter of her brother – Piran.

Good singers were always valued and given proper love in Georgia. But rare is the popularity, reputation and respect which Maro Tarkhnishvili

had. Nature had gifted her with talent, amazing voice, excellent appearance, diligence, persistence, devotion and love to folk song; and above all a rare thing at that time: woman-choirmaster, woman – incomparable performer of male repertoire. “Gushin shvidni gurjanelni”, “Berikatsi var”, “Bicho, mamal-ma iqivla”, “Urmuli”, “Orovela”, “Saiatnovas mukhambazi”, “Ortav tvalis sinatlev”, “Nakhevari tskhovrebis gza gavlie”, “Mshveniero, shen getr-pi”.... performed by Maro and her choir was heard everywhere during fifty years. The admirers of her talent counted: during her creative life Maro Tarkhnishvili participated in over 900 (!) choral concerts as a performer, and choirmaster.

Maro Tarkhnishvili passed away in 1969 at the age of 78. She is interred at Didube Pantheon of Writers and Public Figures.

The material from the book:
 “Maro Tarkhnishvili. 50 Kartli-Kakhetian Songs”
 Tbilisi, 2008, prepared by *Maka Khardziani*

Foreign Performers of Georgian Folklore

Seattle’s Georgian Choir Onefourfive

When I left Village Harmony Oregon Singing Camp in 2008, I told Frank Kane, my first teacher of Georgian songs, “Well, when I go back to Seattle, I’ll just join the Georgian choir there!” “I’m pretty sure there’s no Georgian choir in Seattle”. He smiled, knowingly, and said, “If there were, I’m sure I would know. You’ll just have to start one!” I looked at Frank wide-eyed. How would I, a person who didn’t know Georgia was a country a week ago, start a Georgian choir? I knew 8 simple Georgian folk songs and had been introduced to the idea of a supra, but that was all I knew! I did also know that I had fallen deeply in love with the passion of Georgian singing and of sharing heartfelt moments at the table, but I wasn’t sure what to do with that feeling.

When I returned home from that camp, I listened to everything I could get my hands on. I found a video of Aurelia Shrenker playing and singing Lale on YouTube. I searched desperately for a Georgian music teacher in Seattle who could teach me songs on panduri and chonguri. At that time, Seattle had about 50 Georgians, including some classical pianists

and even a dancer who studied in Sukhishvili’s ballet, but no folk singers.

Around that time (2009), I had a fortunate chance meeting with a Japanese-Turkish woman, Izumi Fairbanks, who was interested in drumming from various Eastern European and Central Asian countries. She had just returned from Georgia studying doli with Vano Chincharauli in Signaghi. Like me, she didn’t speak a word of Georgian before visiting, but by the time she arrived back in Seattle, she had learned the Mkhedruli alphabet and had decoded parts of a letter Vano had written to her in Georgian. Her passion for learning how to play doli and learning about Georgian songs and culture was inspirational. She introduced me to my first Georgian language teacher, a woman who had moved from Tbilisi; Lia Shartava. The two of us teamed up with four other students who were interested in learning to speak, read and write in Georgian. We met once a week over cucumber-tomato salad and pages and pages of notes.



Jen Morris – director of the group

I was also in contact with Carl Linich, who became the folk singing teacher I had been looking for. I hadn’t considered that my teacher might be all the way across the U.S. in New York. We met through Facebook when I sent him a message saying, “Can you help me? I can’t sleep! I can’t eat! I love Georgian music so much and I don’t have a teacher or a way to sing this beautiful music with anyone in my city!” He replied with some parts recordings and word sheets for a song to learn. Fortunately, I had a group of singing friends who were open to singing new folk music. Many of us sang together in the

Phinney Neighborhood Community Chorus. We had been meeting to sing American a cappella (gospel, shape-note, Appalachian) and some Corsican, Georgian, and South African songs that we had learned from Village Harmony. As we sang, I brought Georgian songs that I had learned in the group. I discovered that I could line out the parts for singers to learn by ear, even though I did not have formal training as a choir director. I later went to Scotland for a week-long workshop with Frank Kane where I learned 10 more songs to bring home and teach the group.



Ensemble Onefourfive

I had spent about a year studying the Georgian language informally when I went to Georgia for the first time. Carl had invited me on his Georgian song masters tour, a trip for Georgian music enthusiasts who wanted to immerse themselves in song learning for two weeks. I was so excited to finally go to Georgia, almost two years after I had first discovered how much I loved the music. We stayed at a guesthouse in Telavi for two weeks, and the song masters came to us. Suliko Tsimakuridze taught us songs from Imereti, and Andro Simashvili taught us Kakhetian songs from Artana. It was an honor to learn from such masters, who were 81 and 87 at the time. I brought back new songs and taught them to my singing friends. It was also around this time that I sent an email to these 12 people saying, “I want to be a Georgian choir. I want us to rehearse once a week, singing one on a part, and only sing Georgian songs. Who is with me?” Eight of them agreed, and we began our adventure as Seattle’s foremost Georgian choir in the fall of 2010.

As for the name, Onefourfive was named after I/IV/V chord which frequently appears in Georgian traditional folk music. Many Americans don’t understand this concept, as they often think it is a chord progression, like that of traditional American blues songs. When we explain that the one, four and five happen all at once, in a chord, rather than one, three, five, which is much more common in Western music, they can’t imagine such a thing! The group’s name is really a bit of music humor, and usually, only musicians really understand it.

In the beginning, we only had a few songs with sheet music – but really, the only way we could learn new songs was by me learning the parts from a master teacher and bringing them back to teach the group.

I went to Georgia again in 2011, this time to Merisi, Ach’ara, to study with Jemal Turmanidze’s family and Polikarpe Khubulava. Again, I brought back songs to teach. The group was thrilled to learn two choir songs with clapping and dancing, songs with *chonguri*, and to hear stories from way up in the high mountain village of Merisi. They were delighted to hear about the surprising supra that had been thrown for us foreigners in the middle of the road – that had blocked traffic, and led to dancing and toasting with homemade ch’ach’a, something that would never have happened in the United States.

As we learned more songs, I also told my singers stories of the great teachers I worked with. That same year, I had also gone to visit Islam Pilpani in Lenjer, Svaneti. He had been so patient with me, as I struggled to place my fingers in the correct position for the chuniri, saying, “It’s okay. You’ve only been playing chuniri for one day. I’ve been playing for 60 years”. I like to think that some of that patience I acquired for teaching new singers came from experiencing his teaching style. I was humbled and inspired by how difficult it was to learn to speak a new language and play new instruments, and because of that, I brought back the joy of being a student and incorporated it into my work with onefourfive.



Singing lesson with Polikarpe Khubulava and Carl Linich

In 2013, I was finally able to really share the experience of learning from talented Georgian singers with onefourfive when Zedashe Ensemble from Sighnaghi came to visit Seattle on their tour. We finally learned how to tie our women's Acharuli sashes that I had gotten made for us in 2011. We learned so much about intonation, breath support, and Kakhetian ornaments when we worked with Ketevan Mindorashvili and Shergil Pirtskhelani. Malkhaz Erkvanidze also came to work with us, and we spent four days and nights learning everything we could from him. My basses do not always sing in tune, and they do not naturally push the songs sharp, as traditional Georgian basses do, but after Malkhaz worked with us and tapped "the stick" at the basses, they fell right in line, standing up tall and proud (and singing sharp!) My first and second voice singers got the experience of learning by ear, and learning both parts at the same time. This is something I had experienced often in Georgia – to really know the song is to know ALL the parts, not just your own. This is not common for western singers. They are typically handed their sheet music and are expected to learn only their part, often without ever putting their music down. Unless they are quizzed on their part or practice singing in small groups or on their own, singers can rely on the other voices in their section and never know what is happening in the rest of the choir, or how the parts fit together. Singing polyphonic music requires us to know what is happening in the other parts so we can sing it more authentically, and in tune.

It has now been ten years since I fell in love with Georgian music. I fall in love with it a little more each time I attend a supra (in Seattle this happens only once or twice a year!) or answer a question

from a singer who has never been to Georgia about why the music is the way it is.

I certainly have learned a lot in my ten-year relationship with Georgian folk singing, but the biggest thing I've learned is how much more there is to learn. I think I could probably quite happily spend the next 50 years doing just that.

Jen Morris

director Onefourfive, Seattle's Georgian Choir

One Georgian Folk Ensemble

Shilda

Shilda – one of the most beautiful villages in Kvareli municipality is located in the heart of Kakheti, at the foot of the southern slope of the Caucasus Mountains. The soil rich in minerals provides best conditions for cultivating Saperavi – a unique variety of grapes, for making highest quality red wine naturally semi-sweet *Kindzamarauli*, and makes this region a distinct viticulture area.



Ensemble Shilda

It is noteworthy, that the names of many beneficients and incomparable performers of Georgian folklore are related to the village Shilda, among them: the founder of Georgian Ethnographic Choir – Lado Aghniashvili (1860- 1904); brilliant singers Nazara (unknown surname), Levan Asabashvili ("Dedas Levana"), AleksI Elovshvili ("Ostati Aleksa"), Mikheil Iremashvili, Ninia Elovshvili, and others, a

performer of urban songs Meri Michilashvili (Shildeli). Luckily their voices have survived on Gramophone records, in wax cylinder collections from the 1920s-1950s, in the expedition materials of Tbilisi State Conservatoire, radio recordings.

Particular attention should be paid to Levan Asabashvili. Wide audience heard about this incomparable performer of Kartli-Kakhetian song after his meeting with Zakaria Paliashvili in 1909. The coryphaeus of Georgian professional music visited Kakheti to record folk songs. The concert held on Ioseb Mchedlishvili's initiative at Shota Rustaveli State Theatre initiated the theme of "Dedas Levana" in Georgian poetry. Giorgi Kuchishvili, Titsian Tabidze, Giorgi Leonidze immortalized the name of this great singer in their poems.

In 2015 Wine Company "Shilda" (Winery Shilda) was founded in this historical village, thus suggesting a very interesting concept – Wine and polyphony: two generations of Chkhartishvili family of Maecenas turned the centuries-old experience of viticulture and Georgian vocal polyphony connected to it into the product of cultural tourism.

Mr. Vano Chkhartishvili is also the founder of the charity "Georgian Chanting Foundation". The Foundation was created in 2012 with the blessing of Ilia II – the Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia. The Foundation aims at preservation, promotion and scholarly research of Georgian traditional culture in Georgia and elsewhere.



Audio album of ensemble Shilda

The beneficent of Georgian folk music, brilliant performer and choirmaster Anzor Erkomashvili has long wanted to restore ancient traditions in this village of Kvareli region. "Georgian Chanting Foundation" and Wine Company "Shilda" realized Erkomashvili's initiative and created Dedas Levana Folk Ensemble Shilda on the basis of the

memorandum legalized on 23 March 2017. Directors of the ensemble, brothers – Beka and Gocha Bidzinashvili are the alumni of Giorgi Mtatsmindeli High School of Chanting, the representatives of Bidzinashvili dynasty of singers from Telavi, they grew up singing in the boys' choir "Patra Kakhi" created by late Levan Abashidze in 2002. Recently Beka successfully defended Master's Degree at Tbilisi State Conservatoire. The brothers revived "Patara Kakhi" in 2012; the ensemble unites different generation singers and actively promotes Kartli-Kakhetian songs. It can be said that the membership of ensemble Shilda is mainly composed of the senior generation of Patara Kakhi. Elderly singer – 94-year-old Andro Simashvili from village Artana is the consultant to the group.

Ensemble Shilda appeared in front of a wide audience in May, 2017 and performed at several concerts, international festivals and events after that, including Caspian Week in Davos (Switzerland) on 22-26 January, 2018, where Shilda Winery and ensemble Shilda presented Georgian polyphonic singing, wine and cuisine as part of the cultural event "Caspian night".

Currently, there are 12 members in the ensemble: Beka and Gocha Bidzinashvili (directors of the ensemble), Avtandil Zatikashvili, Guram Gurgenchashvili, Zurab Mamukelashvili, Levan Gigauri, Giorgi Elizbarashvili, Bachana Kakonashvili, Giorgi Zuroshvili, Giorgi Toliauri, Goga Mtvarelishvili, Giorgi Abramishvili. They mainly sing Kakhetian songs from the repertoire of Levan Asabashvili, Giorgi Amuzashvili, Vano Mchedlishvili; they also try to select song variants from village Shilda.... Georgian and foreign listeners are fascinated with the talent of the ensemble members, proximity to traditional performance manner, which, is the result of tireless work, great love, sense of responsibility, and devotion to the work.

Ensemble Shilda has already released an audio album, which includes native Kakhetian songs, mainly the variants from Shilda. It should be noted that in five songs of the album ("Alilo", "Mumli mukhasa", "Shashvi-kakabi", "Tamar-kali", "Sopleli glekhis shvili var") Beka Bidzinashvili sings solo part together with Andro Simashvili. In near future, it is planned to release the audio album with the songs performed by Levan Asabashvili and the same songs revived by ensemble Shilda.

The Ensemble plans to hold a solo concert in autumn, in summer they are invited to Tuscany region of Italy, where they will present Georgian polyphony together with female folk ensemble Mzetamze. Wine tasting will also be part of the concerts.

Nino Kalandadze-Makharadze

Ethnomusicologist

Associated Professor at Ilia State University

Foreigners about Georgian Polyphony

My Life with Georgian Polyphony

As a young boy I was always intrigued by world music, I listened to rock, jazz, blues like most American youth, but every time I had a chance to hear everything from Gamelan music from Indonesia to Flamenco from southern Spain I felt an energy and vitality I didn't get from more popular forms of music. When I was 16, living in Richmond, VA I had a girlfriend that was half Georgian but who grew up in Moscow and knew Georgia from stories and tales. She told me about the amazing three-part singing the Georgians were known for. In 1991 I skateboarded to my favourite music shop and went to the world music section, and saw an evocative looking cd with exotic writing on it. When I looked closer it was a compilation CD called "Georgian Folk Music Today" showcasing three ensembles, Soinari, Mzetamze and Mtiebi, albeit it was urban polyphony. The music stuck a chord in me unlike any other. I played guitar and classical flute, and was very curious about music in general but also loved to paint and was torn between paths and what to pursue in the future. I traveled that summer to Russia as the turmoil in 1991 in Georgia made it difficult for foreigners to visit. In Russia, I bought dozens of older Melodia LP recordings of Georgian folk and sacred music, and the more I heard the more I was mesmerized. Also oddly enough on that first visit I bought a bottle of long skin macerated Rkatsiteli from Tibaani, which looked and tasted like nothing I had ever encountered, little did I know I would one

day have a vineyard in that village making that style of wine.

Despite my love of music, I felt my talent as an artist was far greater, and I began studies at the Maryland Institute, College of Art, in Baltimore, MD. I continued to read anything I could find on Georgia including the Knight in Panther Skin about 25 times, in addition to the poetry of Vazha-Pshavela and anything else I could find in English which wasn't much in the early 90's. In 1994 I transferred to commence a Master's Program in painting at the Surikov Institute of Art in Moscow. During that first year, I studied Georgian with local Georgians and went to many performances of Georgian polyphony. I met Rajden Ghvamichava in 1995 in Moscow and he invited me to Tbilisi. I was thrilled at the chance to visit the country that intrigued me so deeply. When I arrived it was autumn and I was invited by Rajden and his friends to a restaurant straight from the airport. I'm a vegetarian and living in Moscow in those years it wasn't the easiest diet to follow, all of a sudden I find myself at a supra with fresh herbs, all kinds of salads, mushrooms, cheese pies, aubergines, eggs simmered in tomatoes and many other delights, but most of all I was intrigued by the amber flowing wine, and eloquent toasts. About 10 or maybe 15 toasts deep into the Supra, I don't remember the hosts invited a group of singers to serenade us, after the first song or two I realized I recognized some of them from pictures in the liner notes of that first cd I purchased back in 1991. I then knew my life in Georgia and with polyphony would not be a simple one, seemed like full-on serendipity.



John H. Wurdeman

I came back in 1996, traveling this time through Kakheti, looking for material for my final project in Moscow, in epic painting I envisioned would be about Georgia and its feasting traditions. After spending a few days with Vano Iantbelidze in Telavi, enchanted by his family's hospitality, storytelling and songs from Vano and his friends, I took a bus to Signaghi. I got there late at night and the next morning looking from the balcony of my hotel, I felt an artist would be insane to not want to live here. Two weeks later I bought a small home there. From 1996 to 1998 I had to spend most my time in Moscow studying but would travel to Georgia for rest and to do research for my painting, looking for singers whenever possible. In 1998 I defended my diploma work, a painting showing a family feasting after the grape harvest, engaged in song and dance uniting multiple generations across the table. That autumn I met Ketevan Mindorashvili, a young singer living almost next door to me and we got married in August of 1999, a common love of Georgian polyphony was a big part of our initial friendship and desire to get to know each other. From 1999-2006 I focused on painting, but travelled with Ketevan across Georgian recording music and meeting folk singers and chanters, during those years we made many tours with her ensemble Zedashe to Europe and the US and hosted since 2002 Village Harmony a Vermont based singing program that sends singers around the world to study indigenous polyphonic traditions. I learned a lot about Georgian polyphony but was more involved in recording and helping Ketevan in her pursuit, I sing but only if there is no one better to sing the part, my talent for singing is not equal to my passion for the music. The pursuit of authenticity in polyphony, however, led me to my next chapter in life.

In 2006 I met Gela Patalishvili a multi-generation vigneron, who asked me why I was only concerned about the authenticity of Georgian singing when the singers need authentic wines. I had noticed doing field work that the most exciting food and wine experiences I had were in the more remote villages, and was always curious why these vibrant styles of food and wine were difficult to find in the cities let alone outside of Georgia. So we bought vineyards and founded a winery, called Pheasant's Tears with the hope that we could find similar resounding chords in wine using Georgia's ancient

winemaking methods and by attentive farming. Ketevan is still recording and touring with Zedashe, as well as has a small school for polyphony in Signaghi. Today we have multiple restaurants in Kakheti: *Pheasant's Tears* Restaurant and the *Crazy Pomegranate* and a couple in Tbilisi that I am involved with *Ghvino Underground*, *AzarpheSha* and *Polyphony*, all of which often showcase traditional folk ensembles, and with the cooking trying to echo the enigmatic overtones in the music that initially brought me to Georgia.

John H. Wurdeman

Traditional family ensemble

Mikaberidze Family of Singers

*Our guest **Maia Mikaberidze** is a representative of a dynasty of singers, daughter of **Ramin Mikaberidze** - a renowned singer, laureate of Paliashvili Prize, a soloist of ensemble Rustavi, a founder of ensemble Martve, Merited Artist of Georgia, decorated with the Order of Honour. Maia herself is actively involved in promoting traditional folklore and brings up her children as successors of Georgian singing traditions.*

M.K. First of all, please tell us about your attitude to the tradition of family singing.



Mikaberidze family

M.M. Family ensembles have played important role in the development of Georgian folklore. Such traditional families preserved unique song examples, which our nation is proud of. Singing families created their own song variants. Fortunately, this tradition still continues.

M.K. How did the singing tradition start in Mikaberadze dynasty?

M.M. The Mikaberidzes are considered as the dynasty of traditional singers. My great-grandfathers Aleksandre and Pilimon Mikaberidze sang in the choir of renowned choirmaster Sandro Kavsadze, grandfather Shalva and his siblings – Grisha, Noe, Veriko and Anna Mikaberidze were known for beautiful voice and musical talent. Shalva and Liudi Mikaberidze's large family (11 children) suitably continued the tradition. Ramin Mikaberidze's particular musical talent was revealed in this family. Luckily, our family still actively pursues this valuable work.



Ramin Mikaberidze, with daughter Maia and son – Rami-ko Mikaberidze

M.K. Please tell us about your father, Ramin Mikaberidze from the daughter's position.

M.M. Thanks to father I got to know Georgian song at the early age. Despite busy schedule, he always managed to take an active part in my education. Now he shares his experiences with his grandchildren. He is as warm and loving grandpa. As a professional, I'll dare evaluate his artistry - he is a true figure. Parallel to successful singing career, Ramin managed to bring up the generations, who are at the service of Georgian folk song today. His

pupils successfully direct children's choirs and various state ensembles throughout Georgia.

M.K. As I know, you started singing at early age and you were the only girl in Martve boys' choir, who I always thought was a boy.

M.M. As I have always been told I started singing earlier than speaking. With my father's friends – Anzor Kavsadze, Hamlet Gonashvili, Anzor Erko-maishvili, Jemal Chkuaseli and others, who were frequent guests to our family I often sang songs with *krimanchuli*. When my father and Anzor Erko-maishvili decided to create boys' folk ensemble, they took me as a member to sing *krimanchuli* part. So, I was the only girl in Martve.

M.K. Please tell us about Mikaberidze family ensemble in your childhood?

M.M. Our family ensemble consisted of: uncle- Yuri Mikaberidze, cousins: Lasha and Khatuna, my father and me.

M.K. How did your future develop?

M.M. My future is a logical continuation of family traditions. I studied music theory at Z. Paliashvili School for Talented Children and then majored in Choir Conducting at V. Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire.

M.K. I know that you are currently teaching at the State University of Theatre and Film; besides you direct several choirs. Tell us about this.

M.M. In 1993 I created children's folk ensemble Sagalobeli, in 2017 – ensemble of Georgian Patriarch's godchildren which I still direct. At various times I directed: Children's State Folk Choir of Batumi (together with father), the music seminary choir of Tbilisi State Conservatoire, since 2005 I have been associate professor at the Department of Georgian Folk Music and Church Chant at Shota Rustaveli State University of Theatre and Film, I have headed Music Department since 2017.

M.K. What is your repertoire like; what is your principle to select songs and which examples do you prefer?

M.M. Our repertoire includes folk songs and sacred hymns from different parts of Georgia, examples of urban folklore and works of Georgian composers, as well as music from Georgian films. I select the repertoire according to complexity, considering the possibilities of individual performers.

M.K. As far as I know Ramin Mikaberidze is still actively involved in Georgian folklore. What can you say about this?

M.M. Currently, he directs male ensemble Krtsanisi at the Society of the Blind, he is also a consultant to Batumi State Ensemble of Georgian Folk Song and Dance and ensemble Sagalobeli.

M.K. As I know, you are the mother of five children and the grandmother of two grandchildren. How do they continue the traditions of the Mikaberidzes?

M.M. Current members of our family ensemble are: father – Ramin Mikaberidze, I, my brother – Ramin junior, my children: Tornike, Giorgi, Nino and Anastasia Mantskava. My children sing in the family ensemble and Sagalobeli.

M.K. Please tell us about your family ensemble's creative activities.

M.M. Our family ensemble is a frequent guest to television and radio programs. We have one audio album. We actively participate in various cultural events.

M.K. What can you say about the achievements of your choirs?

M.M. The choirs under my direction successfully participate in various events, festival, competitions in and outside Georgia, to this testify numerous awards and certificates of honour.

M.K. What are your future plans?

M.M. We continue promoting Georgian folk songs.

M.K. As far as I know, recently Ramin Mikaberidze had an anniversary. On behalf of the IRCTP, I wish him health, longevity and active creative life for many more years.

M.M. Thank you.

Interviewer ***Maka Khardziani***

Björn Isfält's music for the movie Ronja Rövardotter (Ronja robbers daughter) and its resemblance with georgian polyphony

The fantasy-film *Ronja Rövardotter*, based on children's fantasy book written by the Swedish author Astrid Lindgren, was directed by the Swedish film director Tage Danielsson and adapted for a screenplay by Astrid Lindgren herself. The film completed in 1984 was a major success, becoming the highest-grossing 1984 film in Sweden, and winning a Silver Bear at the 1985 Berlin International Film Festival. The music for the film was composed by Swedish composer Björn Isfält (1942–1997).

The site of Swedish database (in the section about Björn Isfält and his music) writes: “In *Ronja Rövardotter* he succeeds in capturing both the past and the eternal through his rhythmic and dance-like, yet emotional music”.

A couple of years ago a friend of mine called Lars with whom I sometimes play folk-music told about the impression he had received when listening to Georgian polyphonic song. “Yes, indeed, It's a little bit like the music in *Ronja Rövardotter*“, he said when I asked if he liked the CD of Georgian polyphonic song that he had received and listened to recently.



It was interesting for me why Lars said that the music was like the music in *Ronja*?

The music composed by Isfält is partly modal, some of the songs have the form of a medieval ballad. Some of them are vocal-composition on some vowels or syllables, without lyrics. But why Lars didn't mention anything about the resemblance with medieval music for instance? I

think that there is much resemblance between the 14th-century French polyphony and West Georgian polyphony. For instance, there we can also find three voices, modality chords in fifths, fourths similar modes as in Georgian song in general.

Could it be that Lars, as a Swedish-Finnish, immediately associated Georgian polyphonic song with the songs from the Swedish movie in Swedish language, because of his mother tongue (Swedish) rather than polyphony sung in medieval European languages? Or could it be that because medieval polyphony is categorized into Western art music and therefore there is a boundary between Georgian folk song and early Western polyphony in peoples minds? but does it have to be like that?

I thought this and came to the conclusion that there is something in Isfält's music of *Ronja Rövardotter* that echoes more archaic peasant way of singing than what could be associated with medieval art poetry/music?

During the time I noticed that other people also associated Georgian polyphony with *Ronja* music. For instance, a lady called Auli whom I met in Georgian singing camp here in Finland in the summer-autumn 201). She had been a friend of the music of *Ronja Rövardotter* for many years. This lady who has several decades experience of choir and ensemble singing had already been searching for Isfält's music several years ago; last year she started actively singing Georgian music. When I asked, what attracts her to Georgian polyphonic song and the music of *Ronja Rövardotter*, she answered: "It's archaism...that kind of power. The fourths and fifths".

This I could notice, for instance, when searching for the writings about the music in *Ronja Rövardotter* movie, I entered into some discussion forums in Swedish language. Sometimes when describing Georgian song they mentioned the resemblance with the music of "*Ronja Rövardotter*". The singing technique was mentioned several times as the indicator of resemblance.

Respectively in another forum in which the subject of discussion was the music of *Ronja*, someone compared the singing style of *Ronja Rövardotter*'s music with Scandinavian Kulning and Joik, but more with Georgian song.

The resemblance with Georgian polyphony

So what were the things that create the resemblance with Georgian music? Why do some people associate it with Georgian?

It's in three voices, it's modal, there are open chords used in fourths, fifths, modalities. In some songs, there are also triadic chords and thirds.

Something that seems to play a very significant role, too, is the peasant but also a hilarious way to sing? Often also straight voice technique when singing. Sometimes ornaments in the leading voice.

I suppose that it also brings the impression of spontaneity and naturality rather than a kind of sophisticated art music of the middle ages.



Björn Isfält - composer

One thing that makes me associate the polyphonic song of *Ronja* is the use of different vowels or syllables when singing some of the melodic lines. Some of the songs have only those vowels and syllables instead of words. This is the case in some Georgian songs too.

Some of the songs have partly lyrics and partly vowels and syllables. In the opening scene, the song is based only on vowels and syllables. The opening scene of *Ronja Rövardotter* film with its polyphonic singing brings to my mind in a way a Svanetian *zari*, a lament in the funeral ceremony. On the other hand, I feel Kakhetian plain fields in the ornamental way to sing.

When I was a child and didn't have any experience of Georgian song yet (before 1990) I remember the kind of nostalgic feeling that I got when seeing the landscape and hearing the singing of the slowly riding thieves of Mattis (the chief of the thieves) in the beginning of the film *Ronja Rövardotter*. Nowadays, even I try, I can't prohibit that immediately the concept of Georgian song come

to my mind. Maybe it's also the landscape of mountainous forest in the opening scene of the film, which makes me associate it with mountainous areas of Georgia like Svaneti or Racha.

As often in Georgian polyphony, middle voice in this song seems to be the leading. Often the chords are sung for shorter time – not as stable drone as in East Georgian song. Or if I listen very carefully I start to feel that the ornamented singing and leading melody is more like Katli-Kakhetian. The function of the top voice *modzakhili* (as it's often called in Georgian song) can be seen here too. Drone and top seem to have accompanying role, but in some cases, they seem to have a responding role. In some of the songs, there is a soloist singing the lyrics and the other voices accompany with chords joining in the last phrase or repeating it. For instance, in the song Jag ser en hövding (“I see a chief”), there is a soloist singing the verse and middle voice is joining in the last phrase.

Also in one of the songs called “Mattis och Borka” the range between tops and bases is very wide. According to my knowledge, this rarely happens in traditional Georgian polyphony.

One difference when comparing with Georgian song, if thinking traditionally, is that sometimes in some songs they sing in unison. Female voices are heard less in this movie than males voices. Those are the voices of Ronja, her mother, Louisa and one noble lady. At the end of the film, the theme song finishes in an impressive way (I would say) with modulation. In this way resembling Kakhetian table song too.

When searching for more information about Ronja, I managed to find more references to the resemblance of Ronjas music with Georgian. The advertisement of a concert of Swedish ensemble of Georgian song “Doluri”(July, 2003 in Mariakyrkan in Båstad) wrote: “This time it’s Ensemble Doluri from Gothenburg that stands for the music guarantees a great experience in the style of Ronja Rövardotter”.

Surprisingly in Swedish Wikipedia, it says that in Sweden it's not uncommon that those who hear Georgian male choir associate it with the songs of the film Ronja Rövardotter.

Really? So it is, in a way, an already established concept in Sweden. Not something rare. What about Björn Isfält? Was he familiar with Georgian polyphonic song before he composed music for Ronja Rövardotter? Or can it be explained by consciousness about the early form of European folk polyphony? Isfält seemed to have the knowledge of a different kind of music as well as artistic vision. If Isfält was still alive, I would contact him and ask.

Meri-Sofia Lakopoulos

Finnish freelance musician

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Traditional Polyphony in Premana

An Italian documentalist Renato Morelli – has visited Georgia many times – he often participates in the international symposia on traditional polyphony with his films. During these visits he became friends with Sandro Natadze – a student of Ilia State University, a member of ensemble Adilei, a young man interested in Italian culture; he frequently visits Italy and is the desired guide to the Italian visitors in Georgia. They got acquainted at the 7th International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony in September 2014 and immediately became friends. In the December of the same year, Renato invited Sandro (then-being on a visit to Italy) to the presentation of his book and DVD in Premana. On 6 January, I attended the feast of “Three Wise Men”, which made a strong impression on me – says Sandro.

So, we decided, to ask Renato Morelli write a few words about traditional polyphony in Premana.



Renato Morelli and Sandro Natadze

Renato Morelli: Premana, the highest village of Valsassina (Lecco, Northern Italy), is the leading world producer of scissors. Besides producing knives and other metal products it is also known for its peculiar choir singing tradition, performed on certain days in the yearly cycle. Premana’s specific and exclusive multi-part singing style is known as *Tiir*. This is the way of singing verging on shouting. It is powerful though slow with a high-pitched texture.

During year there are several occasions for this traditional polyphony. In particular, most significant occasions are: Past (in the period June-July-August), Corpus Domini (6th June), The Three Kings (5th January).

Past

In the mountains above Premana, there are twelve Alpeggi, the settlements in the high meadows where women and children spend the summers herding the cattle, milking and producing butter and cheese. At the end of the season, each Alpeggio throws the past, grand collective meals after which a major feast ensues marked by loud singing lasting well into the night.

Corpus Domini

On the occasion of Corpus Domini procession, the entire route of the procession is lined with fresh flowers, banners, flags and other decorative device. The procession celebrating the Holy Host is lead by ancient confreres singing liturgical hymns. At the end of the procession, before lunchtime, the decorations are quickly dismantled.



Ritual Corpus Domini in Premana

The Three Kings

On the eve of the Epiphany, twenty-year-old mates lead a group of singers through the village streets. At every stop by each household, they perform the traditional alms-begging song, backed by the entire community. On the day of Epiphany the song of the “Tre Re” the “Three Kings” resounds high and loud for the last time inside the village parish church.

Sandro Natadze: In the Premanians I saw the same values which our choir Adilei also has. This was the reason why Renato and I started thinking about Adilei’s possible tour to this village.



Ensemble Adilei and Premanians in Georgia

In 2016 Adilei went to Premana, in 2017 a group of 30 from Premana visited Georgia. Together we traveled to Imereti, Achara, Guria and Svaneti; on 4 September 2017 we performed in a joint concert at the Recital Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire. We have already published the video-audio recording of this concert and had a presentation in Georgia. We are planning the presentation in Italy, as well. The film shot during the Premanians' visit in Georgia is being edited.

Prepared by ***Maka Khardziani***

Old Press Pages

A Few Words about Chanting-Singing

We'd like to say a few words about chanting and singing, how they are related to people's lives, what pedagogical, national, artistic and general meaning they have, what influence they have on human spirit and education; where we should seek for "folk", native voices and sing, how we should value them and discern from other "non-folk" or artificial singing. Chanting was always in harmony with people's lives and character. It brought and still brings pleasure to people: at large celebrations, always: in winter and summer, autumn and spring our people, young and old, men and women would get together, they had good time singing and dancing, the latter was always inseparable from the former. Who has not watched women's "Dideba" at the celebrations, when Georgian women, distributed in two groups would walk singing around the church eulo-

gizing the saints in song lyrics. Who has not heard beautiful, soothing the grief (although full of grief) melody of "Dideba"! Except for celebrations, who has not seen women walking on "Dideba" during long drought or rainy weather singing a song on "Iavnana" melody? Georgian women have a song for grief: they sing beautiful "Iavnana, vardo nana" for the ill (with smallpox, measles, etc) and what is weeping over the deceased if not singing in the time of grief. Those who have heard the lament of good weepers will agree that even the best known "Requiem" has no better harmony and grief melody than our Georgian lament. Men's singing is heard always and everywhere. Listen, how diverse Georgian folk songs are: sometimes loud as if flying in the skies, sometimes humming, full of grief... During Khatoba celebration men also walk around the church glorifying St. George; after having walked three times around the church, the singing segues into round dance. Listen to peasants singing "Hop-hop" in the process of reaping, "Mushuri" upon completing the work....How sweetly the Georgians sing old, long "Mravalzhamier", which does not end sometimes... And of course, "Urmuli" – a sad song sweetly sung by a cart driver driving the sheaf cart particularly at night...

All the afore-mentioned shows that singing and chanting are inseparable from Georgian people's life. And if there is such a connection between people's lives and songs, chanting-singing obviously has a great influence on people. Remember ancient Greek singers – *Rhapsodes* including immortal Homer; *Troubadours* in France and Spain; German *Minnesang* and our *Sazandari*, how significant they were.... It is easy to understand the pedagogical significance of chanting-singing and music, in general, considering how strongly feelings affect our spiritual life: music and, of course, mode/melody, speech, is the language of feeling, not only of individuals but of all mankind. Because feeling comprises human joy and grief, thoughts and hope, goal and aspiration, faith, so human spirituality is revealed in song.... Listening to native voices and melodies fills a person with emotions and makes him remember the past. And if singing influences human feelings so strongly, it obviously ennobles them and makes them understandable for humanity. Human spirituality is manifested by feelings, chanting makes man's character better, soft and healthy. Singing and chanting can

have great national importance. Native tunes, native songs should be the basis, the cornerstone of musical education. Song embodies people's lives and history; it is the foundation of national upbringing. In song people remember their past, speak about their vision of life, it is one of the means to unite separated parts of the nation! Who does not know the significance of choirs for bringing different tribes of Germany together! Songs remind people of their ancestors' heroism, love and devotion to homeland, and relieve the pain of suppressed people; for example, the songs "Tamar mepe", "Erekle m chvenma batonma", "Leksi sologhazed", "Arsena" and others. Practical side of people's musical education is also good: hardworking people do not know how to spend holidays. Here song assists a peasant and becomes his friend. In this case, the person trained in singing will sing and merrily spend holidays....

Our people have musical talent. To this testify the beautiful melodies of our songs, they are not inferior to many composers' works in sweetness and harmony. If our people had musical education, we could also have Mozart, Rossini, Beethoven, Turchaninov, Bortnyanski... Thus support of folk song will be very important for the development of ecclesiastical chanting...



Song can be folk and non-folk (artificial, *bayati*, *mukhambazi* and other melodies). True folk songs are heard only in the village, not in the city (especially in Tbilisi). If they sing a folk song here it is either so distorted that it has completely lost the sense which village people put in it, or it is a single-part song of the *kintos* or Persian *bayati*.

Thus "folk" song is only sung in the village and composed by village people. Even in olden time folk song was not so disseminated in the city, because some kings of Kartli-Kakheti had singers from Persia! Since the second half of the 16th century, when the Persians took over Kartli-Kakheti, most of our kings grew up in Persian belief and tradition at Persian Royal court. This is why, when they came to Georgia as kings, at Georgian Royal court they introduced the same rules as in Iran where they had grown up. In a word, most Muslim kings of Kartli-Kakheti gave priority to Persian morals, customs and education. Talented Persian poet Hafiz was very honoured at the Royal court. Georgian songs composed on his verses were sung delightedly with the accompaniment of *tar*, *chianuri*, *duduk*, etc. *Hafi*, *bayati*, *mukhambazi* and others were introduced at that time. It is not surprising, that Persian melodies significantly affected *tar-chianuri* and were so deeply rooted that they completely banished Georgian melodies on various musical instruments!..

Luckily, "people", the people who always were and still are defenders of their national, village people defended and preserved their own purely Georgian melodies! Yes, peasants always defended the interest of their beloved homeland; they always sensed their country's upcoming misfortune and warned the elite, but the latter's pride and self-interest changed everything... - Of course, those who want to study and transcribe folk songs – should go to the village, get closer to people, stay long with them, get good knowledge of "folk melodies".

Roman Dzamsashvili - Tsamtsievi

"Imedi" newspaper, 1881, September, #9, pp.86-96

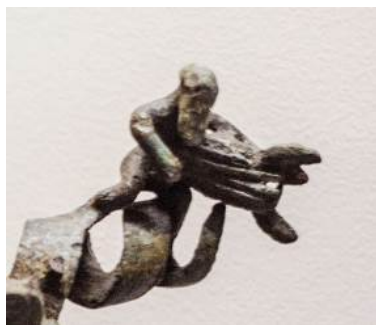
The article is taken from the book: *The Chronicle of Georgian Chants in the Periodicals of 1861-1921* (editor and compiler: David Shughliashvili).

National Parliamentary Library of Georgia. Tbilisi, 2015

Svan *changi*

Svan *changi* is an arched harp-type instrument of chordophone group. It is one of oldest in Georgian instrumentarium.

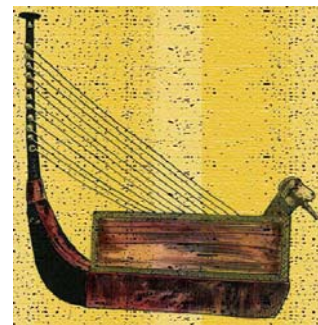
Harp-type instruments are disseminated in Asia, Africa, Europe and South America. In the North and Central Caucasus arched harps: Abkhazian *ayuma*, Kabardinian *pshina*, *dequaqua*, Karachai *pshedegequaqua*, Balkarian *qil-qobuz/qanir qobuz*, Ossetian *daudastanon* existed until the end of the 20th century, however unlike Svan *changi* the aforementioned instruments are no more encountered in everyday life.



Bronze statue from the so-called “Qazbegi Treasure”

In Georgia local tradition of ancient harp/lyre-type instruments is confirmed by the well-known bronze statue dating back to the VII-VI cc B.C. from the so-called “Qazbegi treasure” unearthed by archaeological excavations. Some scholars believe that the instrument is *changi*, others think it is lyre. In G. Chkhikvadze’s opinion it is surprising how *changi* and lyre can be confused, in addition to different external form, they have different size strings, whilst lyre/*knari* have the same size strings. M. Shilakadze thinks the instrument on the figurine can be instrument kindred to *changi*, the ancestors to which were Sumerian harps and lyres.

Foreign and Georgian scholars note that the harps of Mesopotamian civilization discovered in Ur dating back to 2700 B.C. are analogous to Svan *changi*.



Sumerian harp

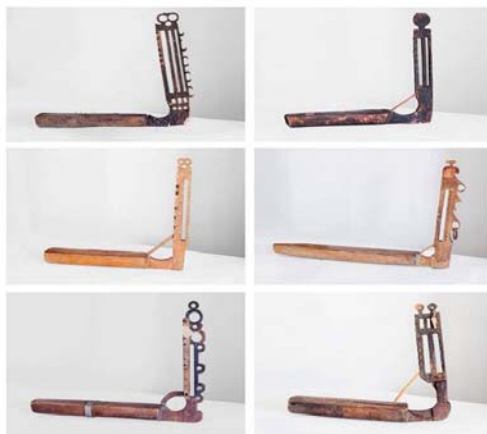
In addition to the statue from “Qazbegi treasure” also interesting is the lantern discovered during archeological excavations in Vani (2007), dating back to III century B.C. The lantern has four male figurines; one holding a lyre, which has the same form as the instrument in “Qazbegi treasure”.

R. Tsurtumia notes that the sources unearthed by archeological excavations or surviving in written or oral way testify that Georgian culture of this period is characterized by the occurrences typical to Asia Minor. In M. Shilakadze’s observation, to the close and long historical-cultural links between ancestors of the Georgians and an ancient population of Asia Minor testify not only similar constructions but also the names of musical instruments. The term *changi* is of Sumerian/Babylonian root word, disseminated among others peoples. I. Javakhishvili noted that in Georgian written sources the term *changi* appeared later in the 10th-11th centuries. He supposed that the term was introduced from Persia.



Bronze lantern

In addition to *changi* another Georgian name for arched harp is *shimekvshe*. This is local, Svan name of the instrument, denoting “broken arm” and connected to the legend about the instruments’ origin common in the Caucasus.



Svan *changis*

In Georgia the legend about the origin of *changi* is documented in two regions Svaneti and Kakheti. According to the legend the instrument was made by an old man whose son had died. The arched body of the instrument corresponds to his bent hand, the strings – to his hair, its melancholic sound – the old man's lamentation.

In Hornbostel's and Sach's classification, there are two kinds of harp: arched and angular, bow harp. As we have mentioned above, Svan *changi* is arched. According to the same classification harp can be open (open harp) and closed (frame harp). Mostly open harps are widespread in the world, including the Caucasus; the exception is European harp. In Georgia, framed harp implies only the forms reconstructed for folk instrument orchestras (since the middle of the 20th century).



The so-called "framed" *changi*

In general, all types of triangular harps consist of three basic components: a resonator, handle (neck), and strings. The instrument also has auxiliary parts – tuning pegs and sticks on the resonator to hold the strings. Horizontal and vertical parts of some *changi* are connected with a small stick parallel to the shortest string.

The names of various *changi* parts exist in both Georgian and Svan languages. In scientific literature, Svan terms for the instrument parts were introduced by M. Shilakadze.

As a rule, in the ensemble *changi* is united with *chuniri*. There is no repertoire only for *changi*. Together with *chuniri* it basically has the function of accompaniment. Song starts after the introduction part (or a few chords).

Changi and *chuniri* accompany three-part as well as single-part songs. They are played by both men and women, mostly by men.

Changi like *chuniri* was considered the instrument of misfortune, with melancholic sound. This is why they are logically present in the rituals related to the cult of the deceased, namely in "Lipanali". The practice of playing the instrument during this ritual is still alive.

Another important ritual, also connected with the cult of the deceased is "bringing the soul", "catching the soul". M. Shilakadze describes the ritual and the function of *chuniri* in it; however, the informants also confirm the participation of *changi* in this ritual.

Like other Georgian instruments of chordophone group (such as *chonguri*, *panduri*), *changi* and *chuniri* were used in the rituals for the ill with infectious disease (chicken pox/"batonebi"). In Svan beliefs, the sounds of instruments helped the ill to recover. The informants also confirmed that like the aforementioned instruments, *changi* and *chuniri* were hung on the wall near the diseased, so that the souls of "batonebi" could play for the diseased at night. According to Givi Pirtskhelani – the grandmaster of *changi*, the instrument was also played when putting a child to sleep, but, sadly similar practice has not been known in scientific practice.

Nowadays mostly ballad-type songs with epic texts and multiply repeatable couplet form are performed with *changi* and *chuniri* accompaniment ("Mirangula", "Vitsbil-Matsbil", "Sozar Tsioq", etc).

Georgian scientific literature contains information about *changi* with 6-13 strings; however, the analysis of *changi* repertoire revealed that traditionally it can have only 6-9 strings, but only 8 strings can be used within one musical example.

Changi is played in the seated position with the instrument on the lap; its vertical part on the

right lap is held with the left hand, supporting the horizontal part of the instrument with the right hand.



Ensemble Riho from Mestia

Musical regularities of instrumental pieces for *changi* fully reflect intonation and mode-harmonious peculiarities of Svan song.

From ancient time the sound on harp-like instruments was produced either with fingers or with plectrum. Plectrum is never used for Georgian musical instruments.

Thus, Svan *changi* is the only kind of ancient harp-like instrument surviving in the Caucasus to this day.

This ancient instrument is still inseparable from the life mode of Svan community and is an expression of common Georgian identity. However, over time, it obviously lost its initial sacral meaning, the function of the “instrument of misfortune” and today it is also played during feast, family performance and at concert.

The material from the paper “Svan Changi” by Doctoral student of Tbilisi State Conservatoire **Nino Razmadze**, prepared by **Maka Khardziani**

Full version of the paper is available at:

http://www.gesj.internet-academy.org/ge/ge/list_artic_ge.php?b_sec=muz&issue=2016-09

About One Traditional Ritual

Dalaoba

Georgian traditional funeral music is a rare part of Georgian folklore, which has survived and maintained its social function to this day.

Musical examples of this genre are diverse and are presented in both female and male repertoires (see the article dedicated to Georgian funeral music in Bulletin #17). Now we will draw the readers' attention to one of the distinctive rituals of this genre and the unique music example connected to it, surviving only in Tusheti – a region in East Georgian Mountains: *Dalaoba* male funeral ritual, the musical example *Dala* connected to it, performed on the death anniversary.

Mourning and grief always accompanied the Tushetians' life mode, because their life was full of danger (natural calamities, robbery of shepherds by neighbouring peoples, enemy raids, fights to defend their homeland, etc). Correspondingly, mourning holds an important place in Tushetian folk music.

Relatives and family would mourn over the deceased every Saturday during forty days after passing. Particular ritual *Dalaoba* was held on the anniversary. Female weepers would gather around the clothes of the deceased brought into the courtyard and weep over him. Five horsemen would appear during the lament, the weeper (modalave) praised the deceased with sorrow, and the other weepers would monotonously tune their voices with the words: “*dala, dalaee*”.

Dalaoba was celebrated for the man (mostly young) who had died bravely, not so often for elderly men and rarely for women. The text of *Dala* depended on for whom it was performed.

Dala is a unique example of men's unison mourning in Georgian folk music. Unlike the three-part *Zari*, constructed only on mourning interjections (*vai, voi*, etc), encountered in almost all highland and lowland regions of West Georgia *Dala* has a verbal text and is performed on the anniversary of death, it is single-part and unison. Rachan *Zruni* also has verbal text, but is performed by women and unlike *Dala* it is multi-part.

The participants of *Dala* are: five horsemen, “*modalave*” – a soloist telling the verbal text, and

“*amqolebi*” (unison choir). The horsemen would stand in a row near the mark of the deceased. “*Modalave*” – would sit on the horse of the deceased. Each phrase told by him was followed by the refrain sung by “*amqolebi*”. Upon completing *Dala* the horsemen would go three times around the clothes of the deceased. After this “*modalave*” could be sent to the mother’s brother (possibly to another village), where the ritual was repeated, after this, they would return to the house of the deceased. This was followed by horse-race for the horsemen.



Dalaoba ritual in Tusheti (2014)

Interesting is what “*Dala*” means. In scientific literature there is an opinion that *Dala* could be related to Dali – the goddess of hunting. Some consider it the name of the Dawn Star. Giorgi Chitaia believed that *Dali* was a Georgian-Caucasian name, related to Sumerian and ancient Oriental “*Dilba*”, or “*Dilbat*”. In Ivane Javakhishvili’s opinion *dila* (morning), did not necessarily imply time but could also be the name of a deity, to which *dalai* is related. According to ethnologist D. Giorgadze’s research, the cult of Dali was also encountered among other Caucasian peoples, for instance, the Vainakhs referred to the highest deity as “*Dela*”, “*Deila*”, for the Chechens “*Dele*” is a general name for God. The Tsova Tushetians, Chechens, Ingushs denote a deity, a saint, a cult object with “*dal*”, “*dele*”, and similar dialectal forms. Besides, the Chechens used the refrain “*dalai*” during grief.

The oldest recording of Tushetian *Dala* was made by Shalva Mshvelidze in 1929. K. Rosebashvili’s expedition materials show that funeral traditions had survived in Tusheti until the 1970s. *Dalaoba* is still celebrated, however not so often. For instance, in 2014 this ritual was held in honour of Giorgi Antsukhelidze, who heroically died in the August 2008 war. In Kvemo Alvani *Dalaoba* is traditionally a part of folk celebration “*Zezvaoba*” honoring Zezva Gaprindauli – a Tushetian hero.

Thus to this day, the Tushetians are doing their best to restore this ancient ritual the way they have seen or heard from the elderly. This holiday is common for all Tushetian communities and villages and is greatly honoured.

The material is processed by **Maka Khardziani**
basing on the works of
Iv. Javakhishvili, N. Maisuradze, K. Rosebashvili,
D. Giorgadze, K. Baiashvili

This example of “Dala” was recorded and transcribed by Shalva Aslanishvili in 1947.

Dala

Soloist



da - lad tkvit, da - lad, mkhe - dre - bo.

Musical notation for a soloist part in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody consists of quarter notes, half notes, and a final half note with a fermata.

Choir



da - - - la, da - la.

Musical notation for a choir part in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody consists of half notes and quarter notes, with a fermata on the final note.


Soloist



dzne - li - a da - la - o - ba - o.

Musical notation for a soloist part in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody includes a second ending bracket over two eighth notes.

Choir



da - a - la, da - la.

Musical notation for a choir part in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody consists of half notes and quarter notes, with a fermata on the final note.

Soloist



de - dan gt'i - ri - on shvi - le - bit.

Musical notation for a soloist part in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody consists of quarter notes, half notes, and a final half note with a fermata.

Choir



da - a - la, da - la - o.

Musical notation for a choir part in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody consists of half notes and quarter notes, with a fermata on the final note.

Soloist



da - ni gt'i - ri - on dzmo - bi - ta.

Musical notation for a soloist part in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody consists of quarter notes, half notes, and a final half note with a fermata.

Choir



da - la, da - la.

Musical notation for a choir part in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody consists of half notes and quarter notes, with a fermata on the final note.


Soloist



she - ni - so - pli - sa zal - ka - li.

Musical notation for a soloist part in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody consists of quarter notes, half notes, and a final half note with a fermata.

Choir



da - la, - da - la.

Musical notation for a choir part in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The melody consists of half notes and quarter notes, with a fermata on the final note.

Soloist



sha - vit ro i - mo - se - bo - des.

Detailed description: This block contains the first musical staff, labeled 'Soloist'. It is written in G major (one sharp) and 8/8 time. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, and G5. The lyrics 'sha - vit ro i - mo - se - bo - des.' are written below the staff, with hyphens indicating the syllables are spread across the notes.

Choir



da - la, da - la.

Detailed description: This block contains the second musical staff, labeled 'Choir'. It is written in G major and 8/8 time. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, and G5. The lyrics 'da - la, da - la.' are written below the staff, with hyphens indicating the syllables are spread across the notes.

Soloist



eg she - ni de - da bed - sha - vi.

Detailed description: This block contains the third musical staff, labeled 'Soloist'. It is written in G major and 8/8 time. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, and G5. The lyrics 'eg she - ni de - da bed - sha - vi.' are written below the staff, with hyphens indicating the syllables are spread across the notes.

Choir



da - la, da - la.

Detailed description: This block contains the fourth musical staff, labeled 'Choir'. It is written in G major and 8/8 time. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, and G5. The lyrics 'da - la, da - la.' are written below the staff, with hyphens indicating the syllables are spread across the notes.

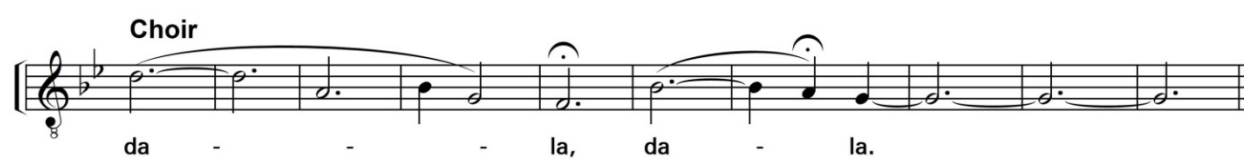
Soloist



san - tle - bur cha - mo - dne - bo - - - -

Detailed description: This block contains the fifth musical staff, labeled 'Soloist'. It is written in G major and 8/8 time. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, and G5. The lyrics 'san - tle - bur cha - mo - dne - bo - - - -' are written below the staff, with hyphens indicating the syllables are spread across the notes.

Choir



da - - - la, da - la.

Detailed description: This block contains the sixth musical staff, labeled 'Choir'. It is written in G major and 8/8 time. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, and G5. The lyrics 'da - - - la, da - la.' are written below the staff, with hyphens indicating the syllables are spread across the notes.

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