

The  
V. Sarajishvili  
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Conservatoire  
International  
Research  
Center for  
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## *The News*

### **Ethnomusicological Life in Georgia (July-December 2016)**

#### *Festivals, Conferences, Seminars*

**27-29.06.2016** – Final round of the National Folklore Festival was held at Rustaveli Theatre.

**6.06-10.09.2016** – Folklore State Centre of Georgia organized Days of folklore as part of the festival “Hit Batumi” within “Check-in Georgia” at the colonnades of the Batumi Boulevard, with the participation of folk ensembles from across Georgia.

**10-17.07.2016** – Tbilisi Ethnographic museum hosted traditional ArtGeni 2016 Festival, among the festival participants were folk ensembles from Tbilisi and various regions of Georgia.

**24-25.07.2016** – “Pilimonoba 2016” dedicated to St. Pilimon Koridze was held in Ozurgeti, together with local singers and chanters choirs, the collectives invited from Tbilisi took part in the event.

**1-3.09.2016** – Folklore State Centre of Georgia and Black Sea Arena jointly held International Black Sea Festival, among the Festival participants were folk ensembles from Italy, Switzerland and Turkey.

**26-30.09.2016** – Tbilisi state Conservatoire hosted International the 8<sup>th</sup> Symposium on Traditional Polyphony.

**4-5.11.2016** – Giorgi Garaqanidze XI International Festival of Folk and Church Music was held in Batumi.

#### *Lectures, Meetings, Master-classes, Presentations, etc.*

**13.07.2016** – Presentation of new CD and DVD albums of ensemble “Ialoni” was held at Folklore state Centre of Georgia.

**30.09.2016** – Renowned specialist of Byzantine music Achilleas Chaldeakes delivered the public lecture “Byzantine Chant – how the tradition

is formed” at Giorgi Mtatsmindeli High School for Chant.

**1.10.2016** – Researcher of Melbourne University, renowned ethnomusicologist Joseph Jordania delivered the public lecture “Phenomenon of traditional polyphony” at Giorgi Mtatsmindeli High School for Chant.

**28.10.2016** – Svan ethnographer, renowned choir master and performer Islam Pilpani held a work-shop at Giorgi Mtatsmindeli High School for Chant.

**31.10.2016** – Vasil Zhovakin – a Folk Department student of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kiev visited Giorgi Mtatsmindeli High School for Chant, presented Ukrainian traditional instrument *bandura* to the students and performed folk songs with its accompaniment.

**9.11.2016** – Ketevan Jervalidze – writer, linguist and essayist delivered the public lecture “The Georgian refrains: *O, dela; aba deli, deli,dela; odila-ovdila; oranina-ranuni*” at the State Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Musical Instruments.

**15.11.2016** – Giorgi Mtatsmindeli High School for Chant hosted a meeting with Doctors of Ethnomusicology – Davit Shughliashvili and Nino Kalandadze-Makharadze dedicated to the notation problems of Georgian traditional music.

**16.12.2016** – The TBC gallery hosted solo concert and presentation of the CD of Shav nabada State Ensemble of Abkhazia.

**22.12.2016** – Giorgi Mtatsmindeli High School of Chant hosted a meeting with Giorgi Mikadze – a successful Georgian pianist and composer from the USA.

#### *Expeditions*

**6-7.08.2016** – Expedition of the Conservatoire’s Doctoral Student Giorgi Kraveishvili to Klarjeti: Guelishi – the village of Murghuli Province, villages of Artvini Province: Kartala

and Omana, villages of Borchkha Province: Arkhva and Trapeni.

**24.12.2016** – Expedition of the Conservatoire's Doctoral Student Giorgi Kraveishvili to Lazeti: Sarpi – the village of Khelvachauri Province.

### *Concert Tours*

**14-17.07.2016** – The choir of Giorgi Mtatsmindeli High School for Chant participated in the International Folk Festival “Parbeg laivelis” in Klaipeda, Lithuania.

**30.08-4.09.2016** – Ensemble “Adilei” participated in the concerts of Georgian-Italian traditional and church music in Cagliari, Sueglio and Premana (Italy).

**19-27.08.2016** – Ensemble “Sakhioba” was on a concert tour in Poland and participated in two International festivals: “Song of Our Roots” (Jarosław) and “Retrospektywy 2016” (Łódź).

**24.09-10.10.2016** – Ensemble “Adilei” held concerts and master-classes in the German cities of Hamburg, Bad Bodenteich, Köln and Munich.

**27.09-6.10.2016** – State Ensemble “Basiani” was on a concert tour in Russian Federation.

**1-5.09.2016** – Ensemble “Sakhioba” was on a concert tour in Sicily (Italy).

**15.10-4.11.2016** – State Ensemble “Basiani” was on a concert tour in the USA.

Within the project of the Georgian Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection Ensemble “Ialoni” held solo concerts and master-classes in different regions of Georgia for local choirs:  
July – Zugdidi (Samegrelo)  
August – Shuakhevi (Achara)  
September – Mestia (Svaneti)  
October – Telavi (Kakheti)

State Academic Ensemble of Georgian Folk Song and Dance “Rustavi” was on concert tours in several countries:

**1-4.06.2016** – Festival of the Voice Cardiff (Wales).

**7.06.2016** – Festive reception at the Georgian Embassy dedicated to the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Georgia's independence; degustation of Georgian cuisine and wine-tasting, exhibition of Georgian products were held alongside the concert.

**4-10.07.2016** – Ensemble Rustavi was invited with special status to the III International Festival “Masterpieces of UNESCO in Olonkho Land” in Sakha (Yakutia) Republic.

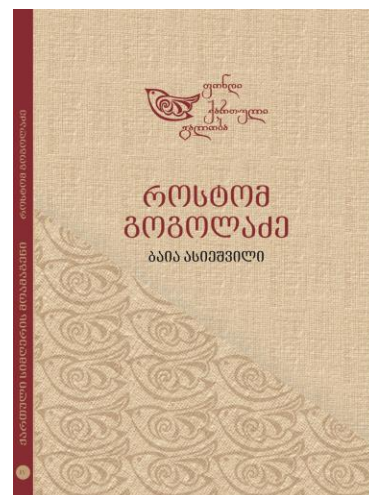
**25.10-12.11.2016** – Ensemble Rustavi was hosted by “Cloud Gate” in Taipei, Nantou, Kaohsiung, Miaoli, Taoiuan (Taiwan).

### *Publications*

Ensemble “Shavnabada” released its 9th CD.



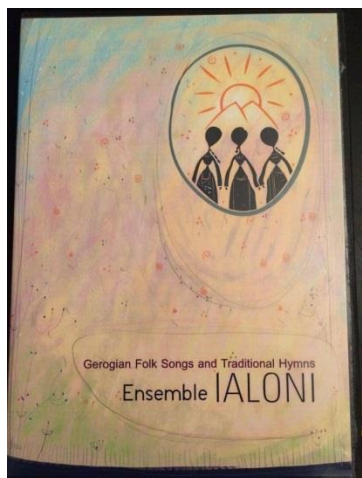
Georgian chanting Foundation released the monograph about the merited choir master, a beneficent of Rachan song Rostom Gogoladze.



Ensemble “Adilei” released its first audio album.



Ensemble “Ialoni” released the CD and DVD of its concert.



### *Concerts, evenings*

**3.07.2016** – Ensemble “Nanina” held solo concert “Nanina’s Large Family” accompanied by the presentation of the ensemble’s new audio album at the folk-bar “Zoestan”.

**9.07.2016** – Open graduation exam-concert of the students of Giorgi Mtatsmindeli High School for Chant, was held at the recital hall of Tbilisi state Conservatoire.

**13.08.2016** – Ensemble “Adilei” held solo concert in the village of Mtispiri, Ozurgeti district.

**25.10-5.12.2016** – As part of the regional tour State Ensemble “Basiani” held solo concerts in different cities (Qvareli, Gori, Bolnisi, Poti) of Georgia.

**13.11.2016** – Ensemble “Ialoni” held solo concert at the folk-bar “Zoestan”.

**21.11.2016** – Ensemble “Ialoni” held solo concert in Bolnisi.

**13.11.2016** – Evening dedicated to Shota Rustaveli’s 850<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the participation of ensemble Didgori was held at Hermitage Theatre, St. Petersburg.

**6.12.2016** – Ensemble “Ialoni” held solo concert “From Birth to Death” at the Grand Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire accompanied with the Levan Vaznareli’s photo-exhibition in the foyer of the Hall depicting fragments of the ensemble’s regional project.

**9.12.2016** – Female folk ensemble “Nanina” and Didgori choir of singer-chanters performed in a concert at the hall of Khashuri Municipality School of music.

**10.12.2016** – Grand Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire hosted the charity concert dedicated to the memory of young singer and choir master Zviad Beriashvili, with the participation of folk ensembles and chanter choirs from Tbilisi.

**19.12.2016** – Folk studio Amer-imeri held folk performance “Chechetoba ghamé” at M. Tumanishvili Film Actors Theatre.

**20.12.2016** – The Grand Hall of the Conservatoire hosted ensemble “Adilei’s” first solo concert and presentation of the CD.

**27.12.2016** – Traditional ritual “Alilooba” was held at Giorgi Mtatsmindeli High school for Chant.

*Prepared by **Maka Khardziani**  
Specialist of the IRCTP*



## 8<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony

This year the International Research Centre for Traditional Polyphony hosted the 8<sup>th</sup> symposium. The forum was held with the financial support of the Georgian Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection and Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation, and traditionally, under the patronage of the President of Georgia. It is noteworthy, that this symposium boasted a record number of scientists: 44 scholars from 22 countries of the world; this fact is an undisputed confirmation of the growing interest in research of polyphony.

In various years world's unique polyphonic cultures of the Ainu people (Japan), native Americans, Lithuania, Africa, Tibet, Corsica, Austria, Taiwan and others were presented at the symposia, which significantly expanded the scope of Georgian ethnomusicologists and their knowledge of the world centers of polyphony. This scientific forum is particularly important for young researchers; allowing them to personally meet representatives from Western schools of ethnomusicology, to learn about the latest research approaches and methods which is a kind of impetus for their future scientific activities. This year among the participants were eight young scientists: 4 – Georgian and 4 – foreign.



Scientific session

As in previous years, this symposium was distinguished in the diversity of themes.

The sessions dealt with general theory and musical-aesthetic aspects of polyphony, its genesis, regional styles and musical language of traditional polyphony, polyphony in instrumental and sacred music, performance and transmission of the tradition, historical recordings, etc.

At traditional “Round Table” held after the completion of scientific sessions and led by Joseph Jordania and Daiva Račiūnaitė-Vyčinienė participants of the Forum discussed forms, structural types and cartography of traditional polyphony.



Opening concert

Separate session was dedicated to poster presentations, in which young Georgian and foreign scholars made short presentations of their works.

Awarding permanent participants of the symposia with the title “Honorary Professor of Tbilisi State Conservatoire” has become a tradition. This year the award went to two merited scholars: Daiva Račiūnaitė-Vyčinienė (Lithuania) and Susanne Ziegler (Germany).

As always, a featured event at the symposium was projection of films on traditional polyphony; presented were three documentary films: “Sacred Voices – Two Generations of a Cuncordu During Holy week in Culieri (Sardinia)” and “Mravalzhamier” by Renato Morelli (Italy); and “Table Songs of Kakheti” by Hugo Zemp (France) and Nona Lomidze (Austria/Georgia).

The symposia have acquired particular charm by the concerts of Georgian and foreign traditional music, which, this year, were held at Tbilisi State Opera and Ballet Theatre, Rustaveli Theatre and Recital Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire. Together with the ensembles from Tbilisi and various regions of Georgia among the concert participants were: Melbourne Georgian Choir, ensembles “Gorani” and “Utskho suneli” (Australia), ensemble “Marani” (France), and “Cuncordu Lussurgesu” (Italy), the latter presented polyphonic songs of Sardinia.

Particularly interesting for the guests was the concert of the ensembles from Achara, Guria, Imereti, Kakheti, Samegrelo, Svaneti and Kvemo kartli where the participants revived rural atmosphere on the stage, making the genre diversity of Georgian folklore more clearly understandable for foreign guests.

Also noteworthy is the concert of family ensembles held as part of the symposium. Generally preservation of Georgian folk music was largely thanks to the tradition of family music performance, this is why the performance of thirteen family ensembles at Rustaveli Theatre aroused the sense of joy and hope in the listeners.



**Excursion to Shiomghvime Monastery**

Traditionally one day of the symposium was dedicated to cultural program. For the symposium participants the IRCTP organized excursion to Mtskheta and Shiomghvime Monastery. The visit to the ancient capital city of Georgia and the monastery founded in the

VI century by an Assyrian father filled the guests with respect to Georgian Christian culture. The cultural day ended in traditional Georgian banquet accompanied with cheerful singing of the hosts and guests...

**Maka Khardziani**  
*Specialist of the IRCTP*

## **The 2015-2016 Georgian National Folklore Festival**

With the support of the Ministry of Culture and Monument protection the Folklore State Centre of Georgia held National Folklore Festival 2015-2016. The Festival included folk music, traditional church music, choreography, oral folklore, fine and applied arts. Among the Festival participants were almost all ethnic groups of Georgia.

The Festival comprised regional and final rounds. The event encompassed all Georgia – all regional municipalities were involved in it.

The Folklore State Centre of Georgia, with 80 years of experience in holding similar events, developed recommendations and sent them in advance to the potential participants of the festival. Main requirement and a necessary condition for the participants was proximity to the folk original and presentation of regional traditions.

National Folklore Festival started in Telavi in June 2015, followed by the first regional rounds in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Racha-Lechkhumi, Kvemo Svaneti, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Shida Kartli, Guria and Achara. First stage of the Festival ended in Tbilisi with the audition of the participants

from the capital city in November. Hearings of folk poets and exhibitions of fine and applied art were held in parallel with concerts. Second regional rounds of the Festival continued from 6 April until 24 May, 2016. The concerts were held in Tbilisi (participants from Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli, and Tbilisi), Gori (participants from Shida Kartli, Mtskheta-Mtianeti and Samtskhe-Javakheti), Kutaisi (participants from Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi, Kvemo Svaneti and Achara: Khelvachauri, Batumi, Kobuleti) and Poti (participants from Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Gurua, Achara: Khulo, Shuakhevi, Keda).

Closing, final concerts were held in Tbilisi on 6, 27, 28, 29 June, 2016 at Shota Rustaveli State Drama Theatre.



The Festival jury revealed 282 laureates, out of these 76 in music, 13 in choreography, 18 in oral folklore, 175 in fine and applied arts; the jury selected the best from the winners, they were awarded I, II and III degree diplomas and cash bonuses; 42 winners were awarded altogether.

The winners in singing and choreography were revealed in the following nominations: folk song ensemble, authentic group, family ensemble, female folk ensemble, youth folk ensemble, choreographic ensemble; in oral folklore cash bonuses were awarded in the nominations: author-narrator, *kapia* (satirical-humorous verse), collector, humour, debut; masters of applied art were awarded in the nominations: ceramics, academic painting, naïve painting, making traditional household

items and models, artistic processing of wood for *machubi* (lower floor of old Svan house), church doors, traditional weapons, miniatures and manuscripts, traditional embroidery.

National Folklore Festival of Georgia showed the real picture of live folklore in Georgia via documenting folk art examples of all ethnicities of the country. From this standpoint, Georgia's two regions – Svaneti and Achara showed the highest results in choreography. Apparently, folk traditions are best preserved here, whilst East Georgian Mountains had no equal in oral folklore. Noteworthy was a large number young singer-chanters' groups and high quality of performance. It was pleasant to listen to family ensembles, who maintain the tradition of transmitting folk songs from generation to generation. Also interesting was the performance of ethnic minorities, some of whom were among winners.

National Folklore Festival of Georgia aimed to promote and popularize its participant folk ensembles, church choirs, masters of oral folklore, fine and applied arts. After completion of the festival, following the decision of Folklore State Centre majority of its participant ensembles performed in the festival "Hit-Batumi" 2016 as part of "Check-in-Georgia" project in Batumi, and at Black Sea International Festival in Ozurgeti and Shekvetili, and at the 8<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony in Tbilisi. Currently Folklore State Centre is preparing the booklet of the Festival laureates and a DVD album a– the 2015-2016 for publication.

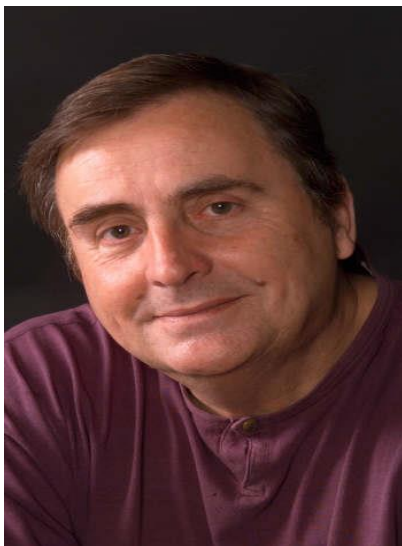
**Teona Rukhadze**

*Coordinator of regional project service  
at Folklore State Centre of Georgia*



## Renowned Foreign Ethnomusicologists

### Eno Koço



Eno Koço

*The guest of our headline is Merited Conductor of Albania, Associate Professor of the Academy of Arts in Tirana, researcher of Balkan music, ethnomusicologist Eno Koço, who participated in the Tbilisi Symposium of Polyphony for the second time. Mr. Koço is a great admirer of Georgian traditional music. Particularly precious is Mr. Koço's attitude to Georgian polyphony, which he expressed at the "Round Table" held at the end of the symposium scientific sessions. He thinks that Georgian polyphony is such a unique phenomenon that it cannot be referred to as polyphony or multipart singing as in the case of the world folklore, but its Georgian name "mravalkhmianoba" should be maintained instead.*

Eno Koço was born in Tirana in a musical family. His father was a baritone and his mother a prominent soprano with international reputation. He began violin studies at the age of seven, first in Tirana and then in Leningrad before graduating as a violinist in 1966. After his graduation in conducting in 1977, he was appointed conductor of the Albanian Radio-Television Symphony Orchestra (1977-1991). In

1984 the Albanian state nominated him *Honoured Artist*. In 1998 he was awarded his PhD from the University of Leeds and in 2005 was nominated Associate Professor by the Academy of Arts in Tirana.

From 1992 has been the principal conductor of the orchestra of the School of Music at the University of Leeds (England) for 19 years directing many major works of the symphonic and vocal repertoire, and has worked with several local orchestras and choirs. Apart from the Albanian Radio Symphony Orchestra and Tirana Opera Theatre, he maintained regular contact with several musical institutions such as, Skopje Opera Theatre, *George Enescu* Philharmonic in Bucharest, Music Academy in Wroclaw (Poland), Philharmonia of Kosova and others. Albanian Radio and Television has recorded 10 audio albums as conducted by him.

Besides that, Eno Koço is a renowned ethnomusicologist. He is the author of several books and articles in Albanian and English. He has given papers on the music of Albania at different universities and institutions such as Limerick, Leeds, London, Tiranë, Struga, Bologna, Palermo, Cagliari and Tbilisi. He appears in recent international editions of *Albanian Encyclopaedic Dictionary*, *Who's Who in the World*, *IBC* (International Biographical Centre, Cambridge), and *ABI* (American Biographical Institute).



Eno Koço at the scientific meeting



## Artistic and Academic qualifications

1984 – Honoured Artist of Albania (conducting award).

1998 – Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (The University of Leeds, England).

2005 – Associated Professor (The Academy of Arts, Tirana, Albania).

## Artistic Appointments

1966 – Graduated from the Tirana Conservatory as a violinist.

1966-1972 – Violinist with the Tirana Opera Orchestra.

1972-1978 – Conductor of the Tirana Music School.

1977 – Graduated from the Tirana Conservatory as a conductor.

1977-1991 – Conductor of the Albanian Radio and Television Symphony Orchestra.

1992-2010 – Principal conductor of the University of Leeds Philharmonia.

1993-1995 – Conductor of the York Symphony Orchestra.

1994-1997 – Conductor of the Harrogate Philharmonic Orchestra.

1994-2002 – Principal Conductor of the Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra.

## Publications

### Books in Albanian:

- *Orchestration*, Treatise, with Gj. Simoni, for secondary schools, 1977, Tiranë, *Sh.B.L.Sh.*, pp. 212.
- *Albanian Musical Life in the 1930s* (Tefta Tashko Koço and Her Contemporaries), Tiranë, *Ditura*, 2000, pp. 256
- *Kënga Lirike Qytetare Shqiptare në vitet 1930* (Albanian Urban Lyric Song in the 1930s), 2002, Tiranë, Toena, pp. 480.
- *Kënga Karakteristike Korçare* (The Korçare Distinctive Song), 2003, Toena, Tiranë, pp. 120.
- *Shostakovich and Kadare—Articles on Albanian Art Music*, Uegen, Tiranë 2005, pp. 200.
- *Familja dhe jeta* (Family and Life), 2010, Globus R., pp. 197.
- *Vëzhgime kritike* (Critical Surveys), 2010, Globus R., Tiranë, pp. 188.
- *Gaqo Çako, legjenda e gjallë e tenorit* (The Living Legend of the Tenor), 2013, Neraida, Tiranë, pp. 171.
- *Udhëtim i isos vokale* (A Journey of the Vocal Ison), 2014, Neraida, Tiranë. pp. 450.

- *Orkestra Simfonike e Radios, e Sotme dhe e Djeshme, po e Nesërme?* (The Radio Symphony Orchestra of Today and Yesterday, what about of Tomorrow?), 2015, Neraida, Tiranë, pp. 64.

- *Athanas Tashko (and the Albanian Colony of Egypt)*, 2015, Flesh, Tiranë, pp. 556.

- Tefta Tashko Koço – Her Family and Contemporaries in Images, Album, 2016, Flesh, Tiranë, pp. 232.

### Books in English:

- *Albanian Urban Lyric Song in the 1930s*, Scarecrow, 2004, Chicago, USA, pp. 400.

- *A Journey of the Vocal Ison*, 2015, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, pp. 205.

### Articles in Albanian:

- *Periodical articles*, published between 1970-1991 and from 1998 onwards, in Albanian newspapers and magazines.

- “Mbi këngët e përmbledhjes ‘Lyra Shqiptare’ (*On the Songs of ‘Lyra Shqiptare’*) (Albanian Lyre)”, the first compilation of Albanian urban songs, in *Kultura Popullore*, 1999, Tiranë, No.1-2, pp. 7.

- “Për traditën muzikore shqiptare dhe veprat muzikore për Skënderbeun” (About the Albanian Musical Tradition and the Musical Works on Scanderbeg), 2006/1, Perla, Tiranë, pp. 10.

- “Simfonia ‘Dy lule mbi vorr të Skanderbegut’” (“The Symphony ‘Two flowers on Scanderbeg’s Grave’”), 2007, in *At Martin Gjoka*, Shkodër, ed. R. Prendushi, pp. X–XX.

- “Injac Ndojaj, pararendës i etnomuzikologjisë shqiptare” (Injac Ndojaj, the precursor of the Albanian ethnomusicology), 2010/1, Hylli i Dritës, Shkodër, pp. 17.

- “Çesk Zadeja, kompozitori mendimtar” (Çesk Zadeja, the Composer and the Thinker), 2010/3, Hylli i Dritës, Shkodër, pp. 7.

### Articles in English:

- “A Family of Song: Reflections of Albanian Urban Lyric Song in the Mediterranean”, 2005, Scarecrow Press, Inc., Chicago, USA, pp. 23.

- “Albanian Urban Lyric Song Tradition”, published in *Studia Albanica*, Tiranë, 2001, pp. 23.

- “Shostakovich, Kadarë and the nature of dissidence: an Albanian view”, in *Musical Times*, England, 2005, 16 pages.

- “Reflections of Albanian Urban Lyric Song”, 2006, in *The Balkan Peninsula as a Musical Crossroad*, Tiranë, pp. 20.

- “Vocal Iso(n)”, Struga, 2008, Macedonia, SOKOM.

- “Byzantine Albania and the Vocal Ison ‘Question’; The Preservation of an Ancient Tradition in the Arbëresh Ecclesiastical and Secular Musical Practice”, 2008/2, *Studia Albanica*, Tiranë, pp. 12.

- “Vocal Ison”, in *Studia Albanica*, 2010, Tiranë, pp. 20.

- “Vocal Iso(n)” in *Dating and interpreting the past in the western Roman Empire: essays in honour of Brenda*

Dickinson, *Edited by David Bird*, 2012, Oxbow Books, Oxford, UK, pp. 11.

- “Styles of the Iso-based Multipart Unaccompanied Singing of South Albania and North Epirus and among the Arbëresh of Italy”, 2012, in *Multipart Music, A specific mode of musical thinking, expressive behaviour and sound*, I. Macchiarella, ed, Nota, Udine 2012, pp. 237–278.
- “The Iso(n)—A Participatory Component in the South Albanian Multipart Unaccompanied Singing and in Byzantine Chant”, 2013, Tbilisi, f. 333–338.
- “Byzantine Chant, the Ison, and Arbëresh Liturgical Chant”, in *Local and Global Understandings of Creativities*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, ed. A. Ahmedaja, pp. 16.

*On behalf of the IRCTP we wish success to Mr. Koço and hope that our friendship and collaboration will continue in future.*

## *Beneficents of Georgian Song*

### **Humming of Aketians – the Khukhunaishvilis**

Best performers of folk songs lived in the village of Zemo Aketi, Lanchkhuti district at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this beautiful, mountainous village the knowledge and love to song was transmitted from generation to generation. Among the renowned dynasties of singers were the Tqebuchavas, Kantarias, Tokhadzes, Pipaishvilis, Kukulavas and others. But, particularly distinguished were the Khukhunaishvilis. This is where the celebrated ensemble “Shvidkatsa” was created; the Khukhunaishvilis constituted majority of its members.

According to Dimitri Imedaishvili “of the Khukhunaishvilis in the village one – Teopile was a poet, the other thirty were all wholehearted *krimanchuli*, *mtkmeli* and bass singers”. Alongside Zemo Aketi, the Khukhunaishvilis also lived in Zomleti, Lanchkhuti, Chochkhati and other villages. According to Anzor Khukhunaishvili from Zomleti in this village nine Khukhunaishvili families out of ten were singers. There exists information about the Svan origin of the Khukhunaishvilis, related to the singer Khukhuna Nizharadze from Ushguli.

#### **Ensemble “Shvidkatsa”**

Sadly only scanty information is available about the members of ensemble “Shvidkatsa”. There were many singers in Aketi, who were actively involved in the ensemble’s creative life, however when the group was finally formed it was comprised of seven members. These were: Konstantine (Kotsia), Almaskhan, Besarion, Ioseb (Esopi) and Razhden Khukhunaishvilis; Serapion Kukulava and Zakaria Pipaishvili.



**Aketian singers. From left: Serapion Kukulava, Kotsia and Almaskhan Khukhunaishvili (seated), Zakaria Pipaishvili, Razhden, Besarion and Esopi Khukhunaishvili (standing)**

Kotsia Khukhunaishvili (1872-1941) – director of the ensemble, organizer, choir master, was best *krimanchuli-gamqivani* singer. He grew up in a family of singers. His father Ese Khukhunaishvili was a renowned singer of his time. His brothers were singers too. Kotsia made fire-places and often had to walk from village to village. Alongside making fire-places he met singers in the neighbouring regions and learned songs from them. He collected talented fellow villagers and created ensemble “Shvidkatsa” in 1912-1913. Rehearsals were held in families, which often segued into feast.

Kotsia was friends and had creative relations with celebrated performers of Gurian song such as Samuel Chavleishvili, Varlam Simonishvili, Giorgi Babilodze, Ermalo Sikharulidze, Vladimer Berdzenishvili, the Erkomaishvili brothers, Iliko Morchiladze, Noe Sarjveladze, Ermalo Ormotsadze, Aleksandre Makharadze, Evgeni Koroshinadze.

Kotsia was a man with artistic nature. Alongside singing, he was a virtuoso *chonguri* player: he accompanied the *chonguri* song *Dia-konma utkhra mghvdelsa* with peculiar gestures and mimics, when singing at some point he would cross himself, and at the same time press and pluck the strings with the left hand, so that, the perfect sound of *chonguri* was not lost. His children also played *chonguri* in this manner, being good singers as well. According to his

descendants Kotsia also composed songs and sang them with *chonguri* accompaniment. He had an amazing talent: he imitated bird singing and chirping with absolute accuracy.

Kotsia was also a good connoisseur of *naduri* songs and composed verses for them. He often taught songs to young people; he knew all three voice-parts and generously shared his knowledge with his pupils.

Almaskhan Khukhunaishvili (1885-1930) – a distinguished member of the group, incomparable *krimanchuli*, he was known for the purest intonation and particular performance manner. Almaskhan and Kotsia were cousins; Kotsia would sing *krimanchuli* for one choir, Almaskhan – *krimanchuli* for the second choir. Both of them had their own unique performance manner. Matchless is Almaskhan’s *krimanchuli* in “Khasanbegura”. As Anzor Erkomaishvili says “Almaskhan exhausted possibilities of improvisation, and segued into “laughter”, thus providing unlimited space to singing”. We do not know whether he did the same in other songs. During his visit to Aketi Zakaria Paliashvili made Almaskhan sing the song with laughter so many times that the singer’s voice became hoarse.

Mikheil Shavishvili – a renowned singer, grandmaster of *krimanchuli* said that no one ever did and will never be able to repeat Almaskhan’s “singing”, as it is only his.

Serapion Kukulava – a wonderful middle part singer, was a carpenter; sadly there exists scanty information about him. The Kukulavas had moved to Aketi from their native village of Chibati.

Ioseb (Esopi) Khukhunaishvili (1870-1961) – was the best singer of top parts, in the village he was known as a hard-working and kind person. All of Esopi’s five children sang, but most distinguished among them with the talent of singing was Parmen, who despite being exiled twice and having gone blind, never stopped singing till the end of life. Film director Soso Chkhaidze filmed shot Parmen’s sing-

ing in the film “Shvidkatsa” which he never finished.

After war the village youth studied singing from Esopi. One of his pupils Valenti Khukhunaishvili recollects: “First Esope taught us middle part, and then the other parts. He would sing and we would repeat. Initially he taught a simple variant, than a more complicated one. To facilitate the learning process he taught us without improvisation. When the song was completely learned, he himself improvised and each of us would sing according to his talent”.

There were three bass singers in the ensemble, Besarion and Razhden Khukhunaishvilis, and Zakro Pipaishvili. In antiphonal songs Besarion would sing one side, Razhden and Zakaria would sing the other one.

Razhden Khukhunaishvili (1879-1969) – was a big lover and appraiser of songs. He was Esopi’s cousin and neighbour. His brother-in-law was Zakaria Pipaishvili – a kind man, song-lover. It is thanks to Zakaria that the recordings of the Aketians have survived. He was a wealthy man, had a timber warehouse in Tbilisi. Zakaria made contacts with Gramophone record Society “Amur-Riga” and in 1913 brought “Shvidkatsa” to Tbilisi at his own expense. At the studio the group recorded twenty songs.

Besarion Khukhunaishvili (1883-1942) – one of the best bass singers. Strong voice, manly timbre, broad range and amazing skill of improvisation distinguished him from the others. In the early 1930s on Shalva Mshvelidze’s initiative celebrated singers gathered in the family of the well-known singer Iliko Morchiladze in Lanchkhuti. Besarion was among the guests. Mshvelidze was amazed with Besarion’s talent and often told his students about him.

Besarion was a well-known toast-master in Lanchkhuti district; he was appreciated and invited everywhere. Besarion Khukhunaishvili also deserves decent place beside renowned Gurian song masters.



**Descendants of the Aketian Khukhunaishvilis: Jemal, Giorgi and Nikoloz Khukhunaishvilis**

The ensemble members had warm and friendly relations with each other. They were each other's relatives and friends, respected and appreciated. No holiday was celebrated in the village without them. They were often invited to other villages. They were the so-called folk professionals. Their art was based on the local traditions of Aketi. They were on friendly terms with famous singers of the time, learned songs from them, arranged them in their own way and transmitted their knowledge to others. When listening to the recordings the listener will notice peculiar performance manner, which is Aketian and does not sound like anyone else’s.

Well-known musicians visited Aketi, in 1909 Zakaria Paliashvili was in Aketi twice, recorded songs on the phonograph and later included them in the collection of folk songs.

The Aketians continued their activity until the late 1930s. They also performed later with incomplete membership. In the village they had many followers, who admired and greatly appreciated them.

Unfortunately, after the onset of the war, the songs recorded by the Aketians at “Amur-Riga” sound recording studio in 1913, were scattered in various archives outside Georgia. Later, on the initiative and with the efforts of Kotsia’s son – Davit Khukhunaishvili the recordings were found and the songs



“Khasanbegura”, “Adilei” or “Mgzavruli”, “Dedoplis simghera” or “Vakhtanguri”, “Kalos khelkhvavi”, “Maqruli” or “Gorjaspiruli”, “Alipasa”, “Aketlebis ghighini”, “Pikris simghera” “Supris khelkhvavi”, “Aida odelia”, “Qaranai qanashia”, “Bebia”, “Nanina” were restored, and released as LP by the sound recordings studio “Melodiya” in 1964.

Anzor Erkomaishvili found the originals of “Shvidkatsa’s” audio recordings in Moscow (1978) and London (1990), which are described in the book “Georgian Audio recordings abroad” (2007). Levan Veshapidze’s book and CD “Gurian Folk Songs” (2006) include notated and audio versions of “Shvidkatsa’s” songs.

In 2004 the International Centre For Georgian Folk Song published series of books “Masters of Georgian Folk Song”, the first volume of which provides a comparatively full review of “Shvidkatsa’s” creative work.

It is a delighting fact, that today many folk ensembles sing the songs of “Shvitkatsa” from Zemo Aketi.

**Marina Khukhunaishvili**  
**Giorgi Khukhunaishvili**

## ***Foreign Performers of Georgian Folk Music***

### **“Zurmukhti” – Irish-Georgian Folk Ensemble**

“Zurmukhti”, Irish-Georgian Ensemble is a relatively young choir based in Dublin and currently has 14 members who come from Ireland, UK, France and Georgia. The group came together in 2011 after Frank Kane and Nana Mzhavanadze visited Dublin to give Georgian Singing workshops. Louise Brennan-Moroni, the current director and founder of the ensemble attended both workshops, experiencing Georgian folk music for the very first time. It was love at first sight for Louise and four months later in May of 2011 she (having managed to contact some of the other people who had attended Frank and Nana’s workshops) set up a singing group by way of continuing to study and sing the songs she had learned from Frank and Nana.



**Ensemble “Zurmukhti”**

A year or so later the group began the search for a name. The name Zurmukhti was suggested by Frank Kane who had both encouraged and supported Zurmukhti from the very beginning. At first the name was difficult for people to relate to, mostly because it was a foreign word. Over time they learned the significance of the name and it became much easier for the group to pronounce and accept. In the Georgian language the word *zurmukhti*

means emerald. Irish people refer to their homeland as the Emerald Isle as do many Georgians so it's no surprise why Zurmukhti members today are proud of their name.

In 2013, with the help of Frank Kane and Maia Kachkachishvili, some Zurmukhti members along with some friends from other UK & American based Georgian choirs, made their first trip to Georgia. They travelled by private Marshrutka from Tbilisi to Lenjeri (Svaneti) to study with Islam and Vakhtang Pilpani.



**Ensemble “Zurmukhti” with Vakhtang Pilpani’s family in Svaneti**

The trip took about 10 hours and the group still remember it with great fondness. Maia Kachkachishvili’s mother, Natela had made a packed lunch for the bus ride. The excitement on board was tangible and there was a real feeling of journeying to mecca. The group enjoyed everything about their time in Svaneti; their hosts the Pilpani family, their Teachers Vakhtang and Islam, their interpreter Maia Kachkachishvili, the landscape of Svaneti, the songs, the food, the air, the local character, the local history etc... The experience was so great that they returned the following year to continue their studies with Islam. In 2014 a smaller group of Zurmukhti members travelled to Svaneti again and were invited to stay at the home of Besiki Tchitanava in Zugdidi where

they had the good fortune to meet the late great Polikarpe Khubulava

While “Zurmukhti” are not strictly a performance based ensemble they have enjoyed performing ‘Singing Medicine’ at the Five Lamps Arts festival for 4 years running, singing at River Fest in 2014 where they met Rustavi Choir, singing at the Georgian Independence Day Annual Celebrations in Dublin, and having Alilo concerts at Christmas time. They also enjoy when opportunities arise informally to sing and share songs with people who are interested in the Georgian folk repertoire. Louise has organised public workshops in Ireland for teachers such as Frank Kane, Malkhaz Erkvandze and Carl Linich and “Zurmukhti” members have really enjoyed hosting the European participants who come to study and sing with them. Being part of the international family of Georgiaphiles is something that the group cherishes very much. Another highlight of the groups learning was when Taniel Vachadze, director of “Marani” Ensemble came to work with them exclusively. It set a new pace for the group and they have since had exclusive coaching with Malkhaz Erkvandze and Frank Kane.

The group often talk about a time in the future when they will have a retirement home in the mountains of western Georgia. A place where they can be together every day and sing the songs they love while eating the food they crave. It might sound like a crazy idea to outsiders but for “Zurmukhti” it’s a real ambition! At least for the crazy members.

One of the biggest influences on “Zurmukhti’s” repertoire was a video that Louise found on YouTube of Islam Pilpani teaching Kviria. The video provoked her interest in the Svan repertoire as well as giving the group the understanding that learning melodies was only a fraction of what it means to sing a Georgian folk song. The group hopes to continue its studies and enjoyment of the Georgian Folk repertoire for many years!

**Louise Brennan-Moroni**

## **One Georgian Folk Ensemble**

### **“Mcheli”**

*Folk Ensemble “Mcheli” was founded at the State Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Musical Instruments in 2010. It is directed by ethnomusicologist Ketevan Baiashvili – a senior scientific worker of the Museum and Givi Ksoveli – a soloist of the first generation of ensemble “Mtiebi”, “Mcheli” aims to revive forgotten songs and rituals accompanied with singing. So far the Ensemble’s repertoire includes only folk songs of East Georgia. “Mcheli’s” creative principle is to align with traditions and authentic performance manner, thus continuing the path of its predecessor ensembles “Mtiebi” and “Mzetamze”.*

*About “Mcheli’s” activities we talked to one of its directors **Ketevan Baiashvili**.*

**K.B.** Ensemble “Mcheli” was created at the State Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Musical Instruments. When we started thinking about the creation of the ensemble, it was necessary to consider the specificity of museum and to create the group which would meet the museum requirements with its performance. Many problems were identified in performance at this time. Most ensembles were focused on West Georgian repertoire and the songs from Kartli and East Georgian mountains had almost been buried in oblivion. We decided that the ensemble of the museum would aim at reviving the variants unknown to the audience.

**S.K.** How did you select the ensemble members? Who are they and what do they do?

**K.B.** The members of “Mcheli” are young people of different professions: a doctor, an actor, a camera man... some of them study at Giorgi Mtatsmindeli High School for Chant to become choir master. Of course, in the beginning the membership was unstable. Young people wishing to study the folk songs expected to find a

standard folk ensemble. Having heard about our plans, many of them left, but those who remained had to pass preparatory stages. Initially we started with the so-called popular songs later we continued with the repertoire that “Mcheli” sings today. Of course the ensemble members are modern young men, and we had to work hard on performance manner as well. But the most important thing is that the guys are well-aware of the purpose and significance of what they do.



**Ensemble “Mcheli” with its director  
Ketevan Baiashvili**

**S.K.** What is your repertoire and what sources do you use?

**K.B.** Our repertoire is mainly nourished by old audio recordings: these are examples revived from wax cylinders, audio recordings from the archive of Georgian Folk Music Laboratory of Tbilisi State Conservatoire and my private expedition material. In the case when we have only notated variant of an interesting song, we use notes. Of course it is more difficult to learn a song from notes, than from a recording. When working on old expedition recordings we discovered the layer of folk songs, which was beyond modern performers’ attention, for instance, one part of Kakhetian songs recorded by Tamar Mamaladze and Shalva Mshvelidze, which, in terms of performance, significantly differ from other Kakhetian examples. We were delighted and surprised to discover absolutely different variants of the well-known Kakhetian



songs – “Gushin shvidni gurjanelni”, “Berikatsi” and a few work songs. The same can be said about the songs recorded by Mindia Zhordania in Tianeti. So far our repertoire comprises only East Georgian songs, we plan to encompass all Georgia, but there is much to be done in terms of performance.

**S.K. Please tell us about the working process**

**K.B.** Learning songs is the most interesting and creative process. We do all this together; I bring an audio recording, the boys listen to it, then we discuss and decipher it together. As you know deciphering old material is quite difficult, sometimes we have creative debates on various issues. Also interesting is that in old recordings the performers sing in high register. We try to sing the songs in the register as in the original. Naturally, this is a great challenge to a modern man. In this regard, there is still much to do. It is noteworthy, that there are no fixed voice singers in our ensemble everyone can sing all voice parts. We have the practice of recording our voices at the rehearsal, which allows evaluating our performance.

**S.K. How free is your performance manner?**

**K.B.** We pay most attention to performance manner. Of course we learn songs from old recordings, but we do not copy them accurately. For us it is important that the ensemble members are well-aware of the examples they perform. They are modern people, individuals, almost a century far from old performers. It is also important that they may create their own variants when performing. Otherwise, there is no sense in reviving folk songs. This, of course, is very difficult. We work hard on improvisation as well. In our practice there are also cases when different soloists sing the same song. In such process of search, we realized that when singing a particular song different variants are created within the ensemble. This is the fruit of

joint, collective work, which is so characteristic of folklore.



**At the rehearsal**

**S.K. How active is your creative life you and what plans do you have for the future?**

**K.B.** Ensemble “Mcheli” leads active creative life. We periodically participate in the events organized within the museum, hold lecture-concerts, organize expeditions, etc. We are planning to hold a solo concert, however this not the ensemble’s end in itself. As you know, scene has its own laws, which performers should obey. We get much pleasure by bringing our art to listener in other way, for example, one of Mcheli’s aims is to revive forgotten rituals. In this regard, we annually participate in “Alilo” and “Chona” rituals. The boys also participated in “Lasharoba”, which was a complete surprise to the locals. We are planning to revive work ritual, but this will be much more difficult and labour-consuming process. We think that such direct contact with the audience is much more pleasant than singing in the academic environment. A lot of people attend our rehearsals; we try to share our experience with everyone and to introduce the ensemble’s principles. We have many plans for the future, I believe in the boys’ great commitment and enthusiasm.

*Interviewed by Sopo Kotrikadze*



## One Foreign Folk Ensemble

### “Svetlana Spajić Group” from Serbia

“Svetlana Spajić Group”, in Serbian *Пјевачка дружина Светлане Спајић*, is Belgrade based a cappella women's ensemble dedicated to cherishing traditional Serbian singing. The Serbian word *дружина* means the gathering of friends, the fellowship. Svetlana Spajić established the group in 2009 with Minja Nikolić, Dragana Tomić and Zorana Bantić. Few years later, young ethnomusicologists Jovana Lukić and Suzana Arsić joined it. For 25 years Svetlana has been adopting songs from the village singers from regions of Dalmatia, western Bosnia, Ozren mountain region in central Bosnia, Slavonia, western Serbia and eastern Serbia. She has embodied her knowledge and experience into the working process of the ensemble. It actively includes the best village singers from diverse regions who also publicly perform together with the group.

The rehearsals are being held at Svetlana's home in Belgrade. This home is one of the meeting points of the village singers and the young who are interested in adopting traditional singing and learning more about the past and traditional culture in general.



“Svetlana Spajić Group” concert in Belgrade  
Student's Town

Olga Krasojević, a legendary singer from Rudnik mountain, Smilja Kotur from Jasenovac in Slavonia (Croatia), Bokan Stanković from Eastern Serbia, the masters of ancient two-part singing known as “iz vika”, Miloljub Šaković and Miroljub Raketić from southwest Serbia are some of the names with whom the group is working and perfecting diverse traditional forms.

The repertoire of the group is broad and includes the songs from Serbia, as well as ex-Yugoslavia, from regions where the Serbs live or used to live such as *potresalica* (“shaking song”) from western Bosnia, multi-part singing from Slavonia and Banija, *kantolica* from the Drina river area, two-part singing in intensive intervals of a second from Ozren (central Bosnia), western and central Serbia, ballads “na bas” from Eastern Serbia, different forms of *kolanje* (singing in the ring dance) etc. One of the members, Dragana Tomić, plays the kaval (shepherd's flute) from Kosovo and Metohija and the repertoire includes the songs from the region of Sirinička župa in Metohija accompanied by the instrument. Some of these ancient vocal forms, *groktolica* from Dalmatia and *iz vika* from south-western Serbia, have been included in the UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage of the world.

The group regularly sings in the villages, at people's gatherings, celebrations among which one of the most important is “Sijelo Tromedje” in the village of Strmica (Croatia), the biggest singing gathering of the Serbs from Western Bosnia, Lika and Dalmatia.

The group gave concerts at Concertgebouw, Wiener Konzerthaus, festivals of traditional polyphony and folk music all across Europe. The performances and albums have met high critical acclaim in the country and abroad. The concerts were broadcast live at Serbian national TV and radio program.



**Recording and photo session at radio Belgrade**

“Svetlana Spajić Group” is part of the theatre play “The Life and Death of Marina Abramović” by visionary American director Robert Wilson.

Personal bond and human attachment is the core of their approach to traditional singing. This is from where every field recording, score or written anthology of songs can become a living well of knowledge and understanding.

### **Chosen discography:**

**ŽEGAR ŽIVI**, Žegar Živi, traditional singing and playing from the village of Žegar, Dalmatia, Cloudvalley London, 2008

**POD OZRENOM SVIRALICA SVIRA**, (DVD) Serbian traditional singing, dancing and playing from the region of Ozren mountain, Bosnia, Culture Association “OZREN” (Karanovac, Petrovo), Doboј 2010

**“SVETLANA SPAJIĆ GROUP”** - Grey Falcon (CD), Multimedia Records 2012.

**SVETLANA SPAJIĆ AND BOKAN STANKOVIĆ** – Ancient ballads and airs from Eastern Serbia, live at Todo Mundo, Belgrade, World Music Association Records, Serbia, 2013

**OLGA KRASOJEVIĆ AND “SVETLANA SPAJIĆ GROUP”** - The Falcon flies from Rudnik Mountain, traditional songs from the village of Crnuća, Wmas Records, 2014

**SMILJA KOTUR** - Songs from Jasenovac, Wmas Records, 2014

## ***Foreigners about Georgian Folklore***

### **Matthew Knight**

Hello, I’m Matthew Knight, a Ph.D. candidate in Ethnomusicology at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. I have been deeply interested in Georgian music for about 5 years, and lived in Georgia with my family for a year and a half. We just returned home to Winnipeg, Canada, but of course I now feel that Georgia is in my blood (along with lots of ghvino and chacha!) and I hope that we will visit again many times.



**Matthew Knight with his daughter**

I grew up with parents who loved amateur music-making and singing. After discovering choral music as a teenager, I studied music and worked at a high school for several years. Later I began studying ethnomusicology and became seriously interested in Georgian folk music. I first heard Georgian polyphony on a CD by Carl Linich’s “Trio Kavkasia” about 12 or 13 years ago. I greatly enjoy singing complex harmonies in small groups with one singer to a part—barbershop, gospel, jazz, folk, classical, and world music—and thought that singing Georgian music would be interesting

one day. When it later came time to determine a topic for my Ph.D., I wanted to choose some kind of vocal music and I remembered the striking sonorities of Georgian song.

I first visited Georgia in September 2012, where I attended the polyphony symposium and spent a week in Svaneti at the home of Islam Pilpani with a group of Australian singers led by Joseph Jordania. I returned to Georgia 2 years later with my wife Yok and our one-year-old daughter Rosa, again visiting Svaneti. In February 2015, we moved to Tbilisi, where I initially studied folk music, Georgian culture and language through the IRCTP, with much help from Rusudan Tsurtsumia, Maka Khardziani, Nino Razmadze, Teona Lomsadze, Nino Ghambashidze and Tiko Tabidze. After that we spent several months in Svaneti. We lived with the Pilpani family in Lenjeri for much of this time, where I learned to play the chuniri and changi from Batoni Islam, as well as studying all three voice parts to many songs. A highlight was spending last winter in Svaneti, where I attended a number of Svan rituals and festivals including Lipanaali and Lamproba, and sang the Zari at several funerals with old village singers. I have learned much of the Upper Svan repertoire, and in the future I hope to expand my knowledge of Lower Svan music, to learn more round dances, and maybe even to start learning the Svan language! While I enjoy singing and listening to songs from all over Georgia (especially Samegrelo, Guria, and Achara), Svan songs are my special passion. I am drawn to the rich harmonic progressions, the non-tempered tuning, and the archaic feel of the vocables, particularly in the old hymns like “Lile,” “Elia Lrde,” “Jgraagish,” “Kviria,” and others. Additionally, as an ethnographer, I want to write about how the current touristic boom in Svaneti is affecting music-making and traditional notions of hospitality. While here, I have had many conversations about the effects of money, which many people see as negative, but I also recognize that local people need to make a living and

that in some cases tourism gives incentive to preserve customs that would otherwise be discarded for being obsolete.



**With Islam Pilpani**

Besides Tbilisi and Svaneti, we have visited and learned songs in many other parts of Georgia, and travelled to Achara numerous times. In October 2016 we moved back to Canada, but we will always have very fond memories of our time in Georgia. We made many friends, and learned that in addition to being wonderful hosts in general, Georgians absolutely adore small children. Rosa (now 3 years old) especially loved Islam’s grandchildren and she still talks about them every day. I could easily thank a hundred wonderful people who helped us and made our Georgian experience memorable, but for reasons of space, besides the Pilpanis and Dr. Tsurtsumia, I will only particularly mention two employees of the IRCTP, Nino Razmadze and Teo Lomsadze and both of their families, for being such generous and helpful hosts and friends. Also the Turmanidze family (Jemal, Manana, Rezo, Beso, and Khatia) from Merisi, Achara, who are the best possible example of mountain hospitality and make the best food in the world, and finally our dear friends the Chamgelianis (Madona, Ana, Eka, and family), along with Nana Mzhavanadze, with whom we spent many wonderful days in Lakhushdi, Svaneti, singing together for hours.



My next focus will be writing my dissertation on Svan music and its place in contemporary Georgia, and I greatly hope to find a group of singers nearby with whom I can continue to sing the songs I have come to love so much. We already miss Georgia and look forward to returning.

### About One Traditional Instrument

## Chianuri

Georgian bowed instrument *chianuri* has survived to this day in Svaneti (*chuniri*), Racha (*chianuri/chianhuri*) and Tusheti (*chianuri*). At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries the instrument was known in Guria, Khevsureti, Meskheta, Achara and Samegrelo. Its existence is also confirmed in Tianeti – among the population displaced here from Khevsureti.



Rachan chianuri

*Chianuri* has survived as a simple instrument with round body, open in the bottom, with leather stretched on the top, it has horse-hair strings. Boat-shaped *chianuri* made of a whole piece of wood is encountered in Racha.

Khevsuretian and Tushetian *chianuri* also have round bodies. *Chianuri* with pumpkin body is documented in Guria. Also known is bowl-shaped *chianuri*.

*Chianuri* is played seated, resting on the performer's knee; the sound is produced with the bow. Before playing a piece of resin is rubbed on the bow hair, to make the bow slide across the strings without resistance. The bow is pliable (made of cornel, hazelnut or birch trees), the strings are made from horse-hair.

*Chianuri* mainly has three strings; however two-string *chianuri* is also encountered in Racha. Three-string *chianuri* has second-third tuning; two-string instrument has either third or fourth tuning.

*Chianuri* is made of coniferous trees – spruce, Caucasian fir and pine-tree, rarely of deciduous trees such as birch. Boat-shaped Racha *chianuri* is made of linden; plank is thinned up to 3mm thickness, put into hot water until it becomes flexible, then it is bended and tied with wire or thick thread. Goat or cow skin is stretched on top, and then flat handle, made of birch or oak, is attached. The handle runs through the instrument body.

The strings of *chianuri* and *chuniri* are made of horse-hair (with the exception of Gurian *chianuri*, which had silk strings). The strings are of different thickness: I string is made of 9 horse-hairs, II string – of 10 horse-hairs, III string – of 12 horse-hairs. I String of a two-string *chianuri* consists of 15 horse-hairs; II string – of 20 horse-hairs. I String of Tushetian *chianuri* consists of 4 horse-hairs, II string – of 5 horse-hairs, III string – of 10-11 horse-hairs, the colour of horse-hair is not so important, however white is considered more beautiful. The strings are attached to the tuning machines.

In some regions *chianuri* is played by women and men (Svaneti, Tusheti), only by men in some regions (Racha). *Chianuri* is an accompanying instrument and is mainly played to accompany single-part songs, however in Svaneti many three-part songs are performed with *chuniri* accompaniment ("Mirangula",



“Vitsbil-Matsbil”, “Dala kojas khelghvazhale”, “Lazhghvash”, “Irinola-Marinola”, etc). Several dance melodies for *chuniri* have also been documented. It should be noted that Svan tradition bearer Islam Pilpani – a legendary *chuniri* player composes three-part songs to be performed with *chuniri* accompaniment, creates instrumental compositions where the three strings of *chuniri* correspond to three voices in a choir.



**Svan chuniri**

Sometimes Svan *chuniri* accompanies three-part songs in ensemble with *changi*. It never participates in other ensembles.

Before playing *chianuri* is heated, as according to performers cold and humidity negatively affects the skin and the instrument makes unpleasant sound. In Racha and Svaneti the weather used to be forecasted according to the instrument sound.

In Racha *chianuri* was played at any feast, wedding party or other celebrations. In Racha the custom of playing *chianuri* for an ill person has also been documented, particularly for a person ill with infectious disease. But as the saying goes “*Chianuri* is for sorrow”, which is justified for Svaneti: as a rule, *chuniri*, was played in the rituals related to the cult of deceased, more precisely: during the night of funeral day, during “Lipnali”, when the family

“hosted” the souls of the deceased; also in the ritual of the so-called “catching the soul” or “liberation of soul”, which accompanied the process of bringing home the soul of a person, who passed away outside the home... This is an ancient tradition and participation of *chuniri* in it testifies to the antiquity of the instrument.

According to archaeological data, existence of bowed instrument in Georgia is believed to date back to the I-II centuries A.D., written sources testify to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, ethnographic material allows presuming its existence from the period, to which corresponds the astral step in Georgian people’s religious thinking.

*prepared by* **Maka Khardziani**  
*basing on* **Manana Shilakadze’s** works

## ***Foreign Musical Folklore***

### **Vocal Polyphony in Nuristan**

Vocal polyphony has a long history in Nuristan, the easternmost province in Afghanistan. Documentation owes in particular to the Danish explorer, Lennart Edelberg, who did his fieldwork supplied with a tape-recorder in the years 1953-1954, 1964 and 1970. Audible documentation has also been done by Austrian scholars in 1968. Ever since, fieldwork in the mountainous province has been absent due to the Russian occupation in the 1980s, the Taliban rule in the 1990s and the occupation by the Western coalition in the 00s.

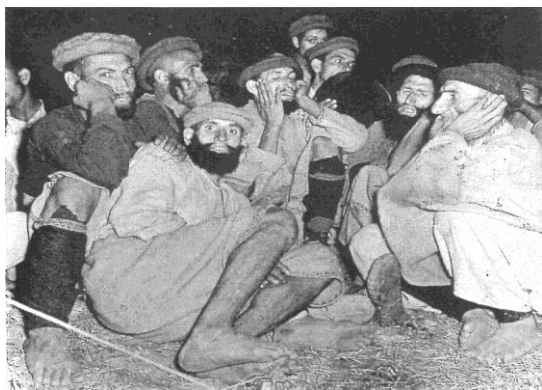
The Edelberg documentation comprises 220 recordings from the valleys Waigal, Parun and Bashgal.

Vocal polyphonic traditions have in particular been strong in Waigal valley. The most recent documentation is a video made in 2009 with a large group of singing and dancing men on a pasture in Waigal. This proves that the tradition still exists, despite restrictions and submission to Muslim rule.

Previous to the forced conversion to Islam which took place from 1895-96, all of Nuristan had a strong polytheistic religion reaching at least 2000 years back. The province was then called Kafirstan, referring to the designation for infidels, the *Kafirs*. The name Nuristan, *land of light*, was imposed by the Emir of Afghanistan then, Abdur Rhaman.

Although the conversion to Islam was harsh, including killings of many indigenous people, deportation of a great number of inhabitants of the valleys of Ashkun and Parun, the inhabitants of Waigal submitted rather fast to Islam, and thus, the new rule was relatively tolerant towards music and dance traditions. Waigalis were allowed to keep up traditions as long as texts with Kafir content were omitted, and even at the times of Edelbergs expeditions these traditions were diverse and practiced. Recordings from a school in 1964 proves that traditional singing was passed on to the pupils.

Almost half of the Edelberg recordings have vocal polyphony. Of these are 63 even musically almost the same song. Only the texts of the songs differ.



Process of singing

This type of song which is designated the *standard* song, has to lead vocals, a drummer and a choir. Sometimes, a singing session is accompanied by a harp (*wadzh*) and a fiddle (*saringi*). The choir follow the second lead singer rhythmically and the vocables seems like chanting.

A song always start out with the first lead singer giving the his line to the second, who then keeps repeating this line melodically. Then the first lead singer begins a contrapuntal line in the pause of the second lead singer overlapping the second line, starting out on a tone a second lower than the starting tone of the second singer. Then the choir joins in along with the drum. In most songs, the rhythmic meter is in 9/8, in a combination of 3 times 3 beats. The first lead singer sings a continuous text and the second lead singer's answers have a refrain-like text. In the song "Kamale kimile" the song text describes the visit of a foreign visitor. The song can be heard at

[http://christerirgensmoller.dk/20\\_nuristan/waigal.html](http://christerirgensmoller.dk/20_nuristan/waigal.html)

470-08 Kamale kimile  
Mondesh 1953  
transposed up a small second  
poetry by Sune'ya (d. 1952)

leadvocal, supportvocal, choir and drum

lead vocal  
mīl-alōl  
kō - ma - li ka - me - lē im

support vocal  
āl-alōl  
kā - ma - li ka - me - lē im

choir  
āsamchlog

drum  
dāb

2  
ta-to techē - lē mēlā wākulu sā-ne - ra mēli dō-su di parē sema gō du - nuj ērēnjā-ma

wō dā ju mō na wō dā ju mō na

The harmonic relation between the two lead vocals is characterized by a number of secondal clashes, as well as the choir often sings in parallel seconds, underlining the character of chant and may be a result of chance. It is remarkable that the accompanying instruments, if present, also make use of secondal clashes. The harp is

tuned diatonically, the strings tuned in equidistant secondal intervals. Though the harp player damps the strings with varying fingers of his left hand, all strings are played synchronically with the right hand. The left-hand damping is mostly inaudible, resulting in a cluster sound of the four strings. The fiddle has at times a corresponding harmonic output, with two strings sound continuously.

This falls in line with the sound of the lead singers and the choir, and all in all the harmonic output is not characterized by natural overtones or triadic sound. This cluster-dominated harmonic concept is rare around the world, but has a parallel in the Lithuanian *Sutartines*. Since the singing traditions of the Nuristan is a couple of thousand years old, it contradicts the dominating Western concept of the harmonic development of music, as pointed out by Georgian Joseph Jordania in the book "Who asked the first question?"

**Christer Irgens-Møller**

## *About One Genre*

### **Traditions and Music Related to Weather Management in Georgia**

Rituals for weather change are encountered throughout Georgia; however their accompanying songs have not survived everywhere. The examples we have at hand were recorded in Kartli, Kakheti, Achara, Imereti, Lechkhumi, Meskheta and Hereti, these are: "Lazare", "Gonja", "Elia", "Dideba da madlyghmerts'a", "Gutanze datireba", "Acher-macher", and others. They are related to the rituals of Lazaroba, Gonjaoba, Dideba and magical acts of "water ploughing" and turning over *kalkva* (ritual stones). These are not songs literally, but beseech, entreat, incantation, begging addressed to the God, its power. Their basic function is to get compassion, and by this means to request dew or good weather.

To get the desired weather Lazaroba, Dideba and "water ploughing" were common in Kartli. Often Lazaroba and Dideba are considered two names of the same ritual: Lazaroba is also referred to as *Didebaze davla*.

Lazaroba is the remainder of Elia's (a pagan deity of the sky and clouds) worship. In drougthy summer to ask celestial powers for rain and good harvest women would make a wooden or clay doll, and walk door to door with the doll singing "Lazare" (sometimes one of the ritual participants would replace Lazare). The host of the house they went to would give them flour, eggs, candles, money whatever they afforded, and splash the women and Lazare with water. The women then would sell what they had collected and buy a lamb and a kid. They would sacrifice the lamb to God, and the kid – to Elia, light candles in the church. When excessive rain threatened to spoil the harvest, they entreated the deity to clear away the clouds and sang "Lazare" with different text. Sometimes this action was accompanied with the so-called "water ploughing" ritual; in Liakhvi Gorge women would harness them-

selves in the plough, pull it in the water singing “Lazare” and splashing each other with water, later they would have party at Lazare’s table.

“Ploughing water” and splashing each other with water is related to sympathetic magic, which aims to provoke similar, desired natural phenomenon by means of certain action (rain, in this case).

Narration about Lazare’s coming and entreats to the deity alternate in the verbal text of “Lazare”. The text changes according to what the deity is begged for – rain or sun.

In recent years mostly young people participate in “Lazare”, but they do not sing any more.

The ritual for weather called “Lazare” in Kartli, is referred to as “Gonjaoba” or “Gonja-gonja” in Kakheti. The doll carried by the singers throughout the ritual as well as the accompanying song is both called “Gonja” (*gonji* a synonym of *ugly* in Georgian). The rituals for weather (sunny or rainy) are less encountered in today’s mode of life, with the only exception of Kakheti, particularly Qvareli, despite numerous changes that the ritual underwent later, the examples of “Gonja” recorded in Qvareli district have preserved early version of the song much better than anywhere else in Georgia.

According to some information weather monitoring songs existed in Racha, but their musical side is unknown. Like other parts of Georgia, traditional beliefs and rituals connected with them have survived in Racha: during long rainy season “Kokhinjroba” is held: people entreat Elia – ruler of clouds, to protect their cornfields from hail. In order to please this redoubtable deity people would sacrifice a kid, and hang its head and skin in the highest place.

Of weather monitoring rituals the custom of “Dzidzava” was common in Samegrelo: during drought young girls would make a doll (“Mochqudua”, “Kenchai”, “Dzidzikvakva”), dress it like a woman, walk it through the village and then drown it in the water. Sometimes they would sacrifice domestic animals and entreat the ruler of the sky and clouds to give

them dew. Unfortunately, the corresponding musical material has not survived.

In Achara “Lazaroba” ritual was accompanied by the song “Lazare”; this song is from female repertoire – as a rule, only women participated in weather monitoring ritual. However, in Achara it developed into children’s ritual game, which children played during drought or frequent rains: they would gather and walk around the village singing and praying. The fact that this ritual turned from female repertoire into children’s game may be determined by the change of local population’s religion; the ritual, which women would not be able to perform under these conditions, could only be performed by children on the adults’ instructions. Apparently, to this significantly contributed the fact that the rich spectacular side of the ritual also contained the elements of playing (making a doll, walking door to door, splashing water, etc.), which may have been presented as a game. The switch to children’s repertoire significantly stamped the ritual’s musical side: entreating songs were simplified according to children’s singing tradition. They are mainly constructed on simple, two-three sound motives; these are weather entreating “Lazare”, “Lazaria”, “Lazariko”, “Nazare”. In this regard interesting is the song “Ah, emine, emine” which almost exactly replicates one variant of Kartlian “Lazare”.

The weather monitoring ritual called “Khatareshoba” occupies significant place in Lechkhumi; according to one tradition bearer during the drought village women would gather at the local chapel, take the Virgin’s icon and wash it in the river accompanying the process with a chant to the Virgin. Upon completing the ritual they would take the icon back to the chapel, they believed that thanks to washing the icon the God would drop tears to the earth as rain. According to other data, when washing the icon elderly women, barefoot, dressed like beggars (to make nature more pitiful), gloomy, unhappy, would entreat the God with tears to save the crop. As the tradition bearers ex-



plained women were gloomy, to make the nature overcast and cause rain to fall.

In Meskheta alongside legends and tales related to weather monitoring the ritual referred to as *didebaze davla* was also documented until recently. During this ritual the song “Lazare” was sung.

Of weather monitoring songs only the examples for sunny weather such as “Acher-macher”, “Koti-koti” have survived in Hereti (this festival is celebrated every spring and autumn). The song is, for the most part, sung in Azerbaijani language. Supposedly, the text is translated from Georgian.

The entreats included in weather monitoring ritual are characterized by different lev-

els of development. Among them are simple, comparatively developed and more complex song examples: single-, two- and three-part variants. The songs of unison performance, one-choir and two-choir examples have also survived.

Under contemporary conditions weather monitoring rituals have become irrelevant and the songs related to them have survived only as archival recordings and examples for stage performance.

*The material processed by **Maka Khardziani**  
from the works of N. Zumbadze, O. Kapanadze,  
G. Kraveishvili and R. Chitauri*

# Gonja

I Choir

go - nja - vo - bai mo - i - a - re, go - nja mi - d - ga ka - rsa,

II Choir

ka - rsa,

a

I Choir

ka - rsa, da

II Choir

go - nja - vo - ba mo - i - a - re, go - nja mi - d - ga ka - rsa,

a

a

I Choir

ga, mo - d - ga ta - ro - sa, de - e - msga - vsa mtva - re - sa,

mi - d - ga, mo - d - ga ta - ro - sa, de - e - msga - vsa mtva - re - sa,

II Choir

mtva - re - sai,

a

a

I Choir

II Choir

mi - dga, mo - dga ta - ro - sa, de - e - msga - vsa mtva - re - sa,

a a

დასასრული

I Choir

II Choir

nja - vo - ba mo - i - a - re, go - nja mi - d - ga ka - rsa,

go - nja - vo - ba mo - i - a - re, go - n - ja mi - d - ga ka - rsa,

a a

ka - rsa,

a

II Choir

go - nja - vo - ba mo - i - a - re, go - nja - mi - dga ka - rsa,

a a

abarbare, barbare,  
tsas ghrubeli aiq'are,  
tskhavi atskhavebula,  
darits dachqarebula.

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