

**The  
V. Sarajishvili  
Tbilisi State  
Conservatoire**

**International  
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Center for  
Traditional  
Polyphony**

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**Vano Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire**

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## News at the International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony

**Dr. Rusudan Tsurtsunia, Professor,  
Director of IRCTP**



Ongoing reforms of Higher Education in Georgia have touched the Tbilisi State Conservatoire as well and hence, also caused some changes at the International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony. Our readers know that the centre was established in 2002 by the initiative and support of Georgian specialists and outstanding ethnomusicologists all over the world who had participated in the 1st International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony. From the very beginning, UNESCO provided significant help to the centre: in 2003-2006, they financed a number of important projects such as the development of an electronic data base, the purchase of modern equipment, field trips, publications. The regular publication of the bilingual bulletins is one such project.

Before September 2007, the main base unit of the centre, according to its regulation, was the Folk Music Department of the Tbilisi State Conservatoire. The department was equipped with the lab of scientific research of church and secular music. As the deputy rector of the conservatoire, and later deputy rector in the scientific unit, I led the work of the Folk Music Department. Since the last autumn, because of the structural reorganization of the conservatoire, I have been continuing my career as a director of the centre. The Folk Music unit became a Department, and the centre has its own staff – Maia Kachkachishvili, whose responsibilities are organizational activities, international con-

tacts and translation work. The centre specialists, Tamaz Gabisonia and Maka Khardziani are carrying out ethno musicological work.

The purpose of our centre is to uphold polyphony as a category of musical thinking and to provide studies of polyphony types in different regions of the world. Given that Georgian ethnomusicologists do not research the polyphony of foreign countries, and since we can not send our scientists abroad to study outside of Georgia, we consider this as our long term purpose rather than our current goal. Furthermore, because of a lack of specialists we are limited to provide research even into the polyphonic cultures of different nations living in our country, such as, for example, Abkhazian and Osetian polyphony.

Therefore, when the talk is of scientific work, the centre projects are designed for polyphonic issues. Along with the centre staff, this work is carried out by the Folk Lab staff members. For example, we are proud of the project “Echoes from the Past” about the Phonograph Wax Cylinder Catalogue preserved in Georgia and CDs, the first stage of which was realized through the cooperation with a foreign partner – Vienna audio archive and thus had an International resonance.

However, we believe that the centre has

already acquired international authority. The International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony gives us the courage to think so. The symposium is somehow unique as well, given that unlike international scientific forums of other countries, our symposium is not limited in terms of regional (for example, European or African) polyphonies. Here the highly qualified experts from different regions and parts of the world meet and share their knowledge and experience. At Tbilisi symposiums the so called overtone singing of South-East Arabia, Bulgaria and Central Asia were all represented. Also, the polyphony of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Lithuania, Albania, Ukraine, Austria, Italy, France, Perinea, Baskia, Khorvatia, Russia, Pygmea, Tanzania, Indonesia and Guinea. This is a major point for us as the geographical reach of the symposium is one of the most important aspects to nourish in order to achieve fruitful and effective mutual relationships in the field of world polyphony.

Dr. Ioseph Jordania is one of the initiators of the symposium and a head of the foreign division of the centre, and well aware of the world practice of scientific forums on polyphony. In his opinion, the Tbilisi symposi-

um is an excellent place, giving the opportunity for the results of a number of studies about different regional styles the world over, to be shared. In our opinion, the success of the Tbilisi international forums played an important role in the increased interest and work of modern ethnomusicologists in polyphonic issues. We want to show polyphonic traditions of the world in the wider context of ethno musicological and cultural issues. Therefore, any paper related to polyphony can be represented at any symposium in Tbilisi.

Everything mentioned above is responding well to the goal of the International Research Centre of Traditional Polyphony to promote a dialogue between traditional cultures for the purpose of preserving the world cultural diversity.

One more important piece of news: with the support of the Swiss Development Foundation, we are starting to update the website of the centre: [www.polyphony.ge](http://www.polyphony.ge). Once it is done, the website will be more flexible and easy to manage and enable us to provide more interesting, attractive and detailed information about the world's polyphony to all who are interested.

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## Outstanding Representative of the Erkomaishvili Name

**Nino Naneishvili**

On the October 30, the remembrance evening celebrating the 120th birthday of the highly respected and well-known sacred and folk music singer Artem Erkomaishvili was held in the great hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire.

The musical traditions of Erkomaishvili family are three centuries old. The family's ancestors preserved some information about the grandfather of Artem Erkomaishvili, Ivane Erkomaishvili. Artem's father, Gigo Erkomashvili learned singing from his father. Three of Gigo's ten sons: Artem, Anania and Vladimer

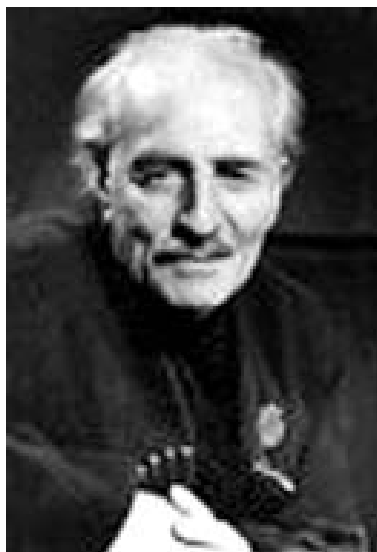
dedicated their whole lives, talent and energy to the development of Georgian folk singing.

Artem Erkomaishvili is a master singer of sacred music – a perfect expert in and master of three part chanting, which has been preserved up to the nearest historical past in practice.

In 1966, with the initiative of Grigol Chkhikvadze, the ethnomusicologist Kakhi Rosebashvili recorded more than 100 church hymns in which all the three parts were performed by Artem Erkomaishvili.

It is important to state that Artem Erko-

maishvili composed songs himself. One such song, “Davkarget Sami Momkheni”, was performed at the above-mentioned evening by the well-known trio of Tristan and Guri Sikharulidzes, and Merab Kalandadze. A DVD with recordings of the brothers Erkomaishvili (Artem, Anania and Vadimer) from 1965 year was produced in honour of this remarkable day. The DVD comprised one hymn and four songs:



“Siqvarulma Mogviqvana Upalo”, “Shavi Shashvi”, “Grdzeli Ghighini”, “Didi Khnidan Gagitsami”, and Madlobeli”).

The conference was initiated and organized by the International Research Centre for Traditional Polyphony. The scientific works were represented by the students and scientists of Tbilisi Conservatoire. Anzor Erkomaishvili opened the meeting and talked about the life of his famous grandfather. Then the following papers were represented: *The life of Artem Erkomaishvili* – Nino Razmadze; *The Book of Musical Notes of the Master of Chanting Artem Erkomaishvili* – Manana Andriadze; *Musical-Linguistic Links of Chanting Traditions of Different Chanting Traditions of Shemokmedi School* – Davit Shughliashvili, *Georgian Vision of Traditional Polyphony* – Rusudan Tsurstumia;

*Characteristics of Performance Reglament of Gurian Songs* – Tamaz Gabisonia; *Artistic Peculiarities of Gurian Polyphonic Cradle Songs* – Nino Kalandadze; *Principle of Polyphony in Georgian Instrumental Music* – Manana Shilakadze; *About Teaching Methods of Georgian Chant* – Magda Sukhiashvili; *Regulations of Easter in Philimon Koridze’s and Artem Erkomaishvili’s Notebooks* – Svimon Jangulashvili; *“Homo Polyphnicus” in Georgian Environment* – Nino Chitadze; *The 20-th Century Tradition of Keeping Note Records of Georgian Chants* – Baia Zhuzhunadze; *Chanting Tradition of the Erkomaishvili Name and Modern Practice* – Nino Naneishvili.

The following folk ensembles were participated in the concert program: “Rustavi”, “Mtiebi”, “Anchiskhati”, “Didgori”, “Basi-ani”, “Shavnabada”, “Batumi”, “Iadoni”, “Elesa”, “Shalva Chemo”, “Vakhtanguri”, men’s choir of the Saint Trinity Cathedral Church. The repertoire mainly included Gurian songs. Also the old recordings of Erkomaishvili brothers were represented through the recently published DVDs.

It is important that the concert was organized by the initiative of young musicians with the help of the Tbilisi State Conservatoire.

## Festival of Georgian Church Hymns in Sachkhere

Nana Valishvili

The Georgian Festival titled “Georgian Church Hymns” was established in 2001. The idea of this festival was born from a desire of the Eparchy of Sachkhere and Chiatura. Co-founders of the festival are the Department of Education, Culture, Historical Monuments, Sport, and Youth Affairs, and the Folklore State Centre. The project director is Lia Veshapidze, head of Imereti Department of

Artists’ Union of Cultural-Educational Organizations of Georgia. Ms. Veshapidze is an active member of Saint Nino church choir in Sachkhere. She briefly explains the goals of the Festival as: “The festival aims at researching, restoring, and bringing the unique Georgian church hymns and traditional part-singing back in regular church service.”

One other of the founders of the festival is

Archimandrite Bartlome (Pirtskhalaishvili) a high priest of Tbilisi Tabori Monastery, and the head of Psycho-social Rehabilitation Centre “Tabori” which operates at the monastery. At the beginning of the festival he was a high priest of the Chorvili Easter Church. His comments on the creation of the Festival According are as follows:

“In the period of material progress of the 21<sup>st</sup> century people often forget that not only body, but also soul is essential part of a human being. We have to feed the soul as well. Hymns are the special food for our souls. We have to warm our icy and severe age.”

In this third year the Festival hosted over 700 people during two days. Approximately 50 church choirs and folklore ensembles from different regions and towns of Georgia participated in the festival. As customary, each participant church choir or ensemble was presented with sheets of music and CD collection of church hymns (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> volumes) published by the Centre of the Patriarchy. Generously, the Ministry of Culture of Georgia donated these collections to the Festival participants.

The Folklore State Centre of Georgia recorded the outstanding concerts. Director of the Centre Giorgi Ushikishvili stated, “The centre plans to produce CD albums with booklets and give them out to all participant groups for free.”

Within the frameworks of the festival a photo exhibition was prepared by the head of Department of Culture, Levan Chkheidze.

The Episcopo of Tskhum-Abkhazia and Chiatura-Sachkhere Daniel blessed the festival.

A group of event experts comprised of Malkhaz Erkvanidze, Koba Beriashvili, Ketevan Matiashvili, Nana Valishvili, Tea Kasaburi attended the festival. They provided professional advice, notes, and recommendations to the organizers and participants concerning repertoire selection, chanting style and performance matters.

Ethnomusicologist Ketevan Matiashvili, the manager of the Folklore Lab at Tbilisi State Conservatoire, stated:

“The repertoire of the 1<sup>st</sup> festival was not rich and participants also were mainly choirs of departments of culture. Today the majority of the participants are active singers of church choirs, and the repertoire includes more hymns from church service. Our purpose is to observe the general situation about church music in Georgia. It is desirable that choir leaders do not conduct the choirs as it is accepted in classical music. Choir members have to feel each other regardless of their number and conductors must not guide them with hands.”

The overwhelming success of the most recent Festival generated the desire and idea for future expansion to the International realm.

## **Ensemble *Mzetamze* in Venice**

**Nino Makharadze**

In November 2007 the ensemble “Mzetamze” was invited to Italy.

Since 1997, the program of the polyphonic cultures of Italy and other regions of Europe “In Viva Voce”, organized by Jorjo Chini charity foundation, has been taking place in the city of Venice on the island of Saint Maggiore. Music amateurs, experts and scientists have the chance to be introduced to the best examples of polyphonic works through concerts and seminars. Georgian traditional music was represented in

the 11<sup>th</sup> seminar. The seminar was prepared by the departments of Art History and Heritage of Venetia University.

“Mzetamze” represented one section of the program and represented different genres of Georgian women’s repertoire. Ethnomusicologists Mauritio Agamenone (Italy), Nato Zumbadze (Georgia), Simha Arom (France) and Polo Valeho (Spain) presented theses on Georgian polyphonic music.

The seminar facilitator Mauritio Agamenone

gave a short talk on Georgia, “the cradle of polyphony”, as it is considered by many scientists.

The topic of Nato Zumbadze’s thesis was “Georgian Folk Polyphony and its Regularities”.

In the shared work of Simha Arom and Polo Valeho, the authors discussed the social environment of polyphonic intoning in present-day Georgia, issues of Georgian language, religion and dialectology, as well as the types of polyphony. Special attention was paid to accord (consonance and dissonance) and sound structure issues.

The papers were illustrated by audio and video materials.



Georgia and Georgian polyphony was deserving of great interest from the audience.

## In the Folklore State Centre of Georgia

**Nana Valishvili**

### News of the Centre Archive

Computerization of the basic archive materials of the Folklore State Centre of Georgia has been finished. 61,200 sheets of music, including folk songs, church hymns as well as historical photos have been preserved at this stage.

### National Festival of Georgian Folklore – Echo of the Festival

Results of the National Festival of Georgian Folklore, established according to the Presidential Order # 682 on August 29, 2005, have been summarized as follows:

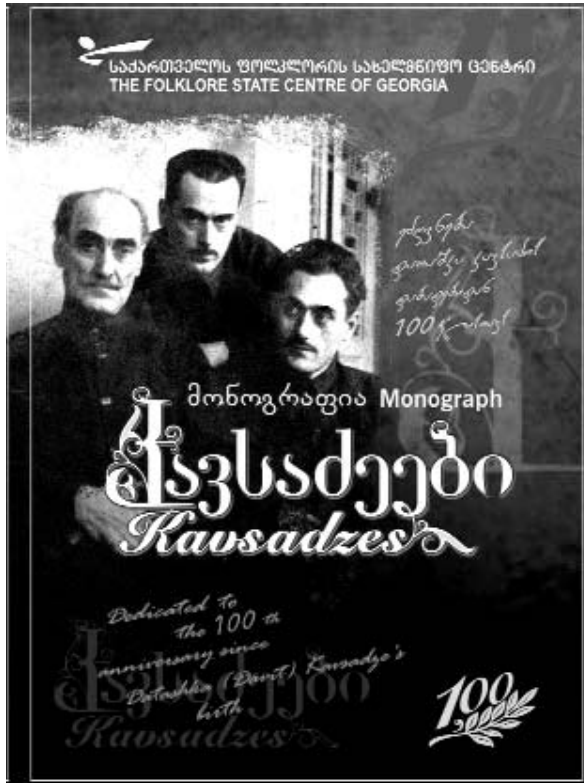
“Analysis of the Festival” prepared in April – May stated that letters of support and encouragement were sent to the laureates of the festival in different regions of Georgia in February thru May. Based on these letters, a majority of the laureates have been provided better working conditions and regular disbursement of salaries; other laureates of the festival received one-time allotment of financial support. The significant findings from this communication helped the specialists of the Centre develop general assessment criteria for the musical choirs and individual performers (excluding the laureates); also the video-materials from Festival

events were distributed and approximately 500 individual packages of notes and recommendations were provided to different regions of Georgia.

### National Presidential Program for Support of Georgian Folklore

Within the frameworks of this program, the project – “Program for Support of Georgian Folklore Groups in Turkey”- was realized in 2007. The project aimed to provide professional support to traditional Georgian musical and dance groups which operate in the various towns and cities of Turkey. In particular, the project aimed to teach the groups new songs and dances. To accomplish this purpose two choir conductors and five choreographers visited seven cities in Turkey: Istanbul, Hendeki, Duzje, Guljuki, Orhangazi, Goneni, and Gebze. In addition to this, the leaders of five choirs and dance groups were provided monthly salaries.

The project “Master Classes in Choreography” was prepared and realized to provide master level classes to 12 districts in 10 regions of Georgia from May 27 to November 13. Ucha Dvalishvili, head of Chorographical Department at University of Theatre and Cinema, led



### Kavsadzes. Monograph

the theoretical and practical master courses. Additionally in Tbilisi, from May 29 to June 3, eight elderly dancers, invited from Achara, provided a 5-day master class in Acharian dances in accordance with the special program.

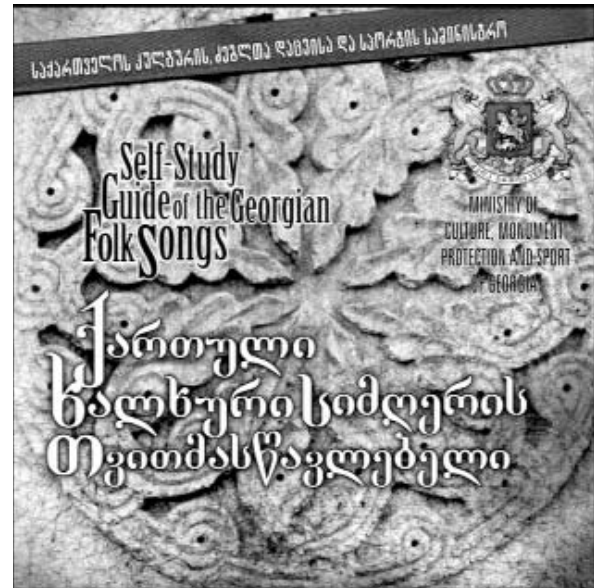
An expedition was funded into the upper Svaneti region and the following publications were prepared: “Self-Studying Guide of the Georgian Folk Songs” (CD), “Archive Recordings of Georgian Dances” (DVD), and the brochure “Georgian Church Hymns”.

#### Publications

Within the frameworks of the project “The Kavsadzes” a brochure was published dedicated to the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Datashka Kavsadze (For more details please see enclosed English resume) and a CD album recorded for distribution in May-October.

The project “Archive Recording of Georgian Dance” developed and realized by the National Presidential Program created the first part of a DVD collection album (including the songs recorded in 1938 -1960 years) in December 2007.

Organization and participation in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Georgian Festival “Georgian Church Hymns” held September 25-26<sup>th</sup>. In collabora-



### Self Study Guide. The Georgian Folk Songs

tion with the festival founders, creation and production of a CD album along with the publication of a festival brochure took place in December 2007.

Preparation and publication of an electronic version of the project of Nana Paliani titled “Self-Studying Guide of Georgian Folk Songs” in December 2007.

#### Concerts and Presentations

Evening of Kartli Music held in the main hall at Tbilisi State Conservatoire on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2007. An accompanying CD from the evening is scheduled to be produced in the 3<sup>rd</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2008.

On October 26<sup>th</sup> 2007, an evening of remembrance honored Edisher Garaqanidze’s 50<sup>th</sup> birthday with the presentation of the book titled “Collection of the Best Articles” in Tbilisi.

#### Expeditions

In 2007 the Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport gave a mobile audio recording studio to the Folklore State Centre of Georgia. The studio enabled expeditions throughout Georgia to share and record various ensemble groups as well as individual participants and notable laureates from the National Festival of Georgian folklore in 2005-2006. For the purpose of preservation of these talents expeditions were organized in upper Svaneti (August), Imereti (September), Kakheti (October), Megrelia (November), and Achara.



## In the Museum of Georgian Folk Songs and Instruments

**Eka Shoshiashvili**

The Museum of Georgian Folk Songs and Instruments was established in 1975 using as a base of the collection of mechanical instruments of Arkadi Revazishvili. The museum was given the name of 'Museum of Mechanical Instruments'. Revazishvili's collection was well-known in Tbilisi as well as throughout Georgia. In 1984, the museum was renamed the State Museum of Folk Instruments. In accordance with the Presidential Order on December 7, 2005, it has become a juridical entity and was given the name "Museum of Georgian Folk Songs and Instruments".

4500 exhibits have been preserved in the museum. Amongst them: unique examples of Georgian folk, Eastern, mechanical, and European instruments. Also, photographs, donated by people's personal archives, audio and video materials, old audio recordings, manuscript notations of Georgian folk songs and instruments, examples of applied art, etc.

Among the museum displays, the most remarkable are: a copy of a swan's-bone pipe,

Akaki Khorava's chonguri, drum (dip-lipito) from Ilia Chavchavadze and Olgha

Guramishvili's family archive, the oldest Laz instrument – pilili, lyre (changi), made by a master of wood-cut Vaso Saghliani, the oldest tambourines, decorated with Georgian ornaments, bone incrustations, and bells.

A part of the Eastern instruments are decorated with nacre's incrustations (thari, sazi, kamancha, दौरا).

The beauty of the museum are the European mechanical musical instruments, which were brought to Georgia in the middle of the 19th century and which have been inculcated in Georgian urban life.

Collection of street-organs, including ones made by Czech master Nechada, have been kept in the museum.

Also, keyboard instruments including portable mechanical pianos from the 19th century, several phisharmonies (including the smallest hand made rare ones), accordions of different size and shapes, Caucasian and Central Asian accordions, and a royal piano are of significant importance.

The museum systematically provides expeditions to collect museum materials. Also, it plans to create an exchange foundation, which will enable the establishment of close contacts with the respective museums all over the world.

In the damaged building of the museum on the Erekle II Square,



it was impossible to provide exhibitions. Therefore, for almost over 10 years, the museum displays were closed to a broad group of visitors. In 2007, based on a tender of exchange, the museum moved into a new building in an old part of Tbilisi, at the bottom of Nariqala Castle. The current location of the museum

is very adapted to being included in the tourists' route. At the moment a temporary exposition is open. In the case of respective funding, there are plans to provide the museum with modern museum equipment and arrange a live, "sonorous" exhibition with the use of audio-visual materials.

## Georgian Ethnomusicologists

# Otar Chijavadze

1919-1998

Otar Chijavadze, researcher of Georgian music history and folklore, honoured art worker of Georgia, senior lecturer, worked for almost 50 years.

He was born on March 19th 1919 into a traditional Georgian family. His father, Longinoz Chijavadze, an engineer by profession, had gotten his higher education in Belgium. Among the buildings constructed by him, Khrames hydro electric station is one of the most distinguished. In 1937 he was arrested and shot by communists. His mother – Anna Agladze-Chijavadze was a highly educated woman, a celebrated opera singer and the first performer of Eteri's role in Z. Paliashvili's opera "Abesalom and Eteri". Among her students were famous opera singers: Lamara Chqonia, Iveri Kavsadze, etc. Together with Giorgi Takakishvili, Anna Agladze led the first groups of gifted children, formed at the conservatoire. at present this is known as special musical secondary school. Anna Chijavadze was in charge of the teaching process for many years.

Famous representatives of Georgian culture and art such as, Zakaria Paliashvili, Konstantine Gamsakhurdia (who introduced Anna and Longinoz to each other), Revaz Natadze, Vakhtang Kotetishvili, later Gr. Chkhikvadze, Sh. Aslanishvili, L. Donadze, Sh. Mshvelidze, B. Chiaureli, M. Chirinashvili, etc. were often brought together in their



house. It is significant that Otar Chijavadze's godfather was the Patriarch of the Georgia Kalistrate Tsintsadze.

It is natural that all of this influenced Otar Chijavadze's world outlook a great deal as he and his brothers Givi and Merab were brought up in the atmosphere of high national culture and intellect. In addition, the Chijavadzes were distinguished by their love and devotion to Georgian folk music culture.

Otar Chijavadze's uncle, Irakli Chijavadze was an agronomist (wine specialist) who had gotten his higher education in France. He played violoncello and some folk instruments. Also, his uncle, Shakro Chijavadze was a perfect folk singer. The celebrated opera singer Vano Sarajishvili once said to him: "What are you doing in Kakheti? You have got such a wonderful voice that you must sing in Italy". Otar's cousin Aleksandre was a violoncellist, the first Georgian laureate, well-known musician throughout USSR and abroad. He was honored art worker, and professor at the Tbilisi and Kairo conservatoires.

Otar's favorite grandmother Vera had a great influence on the child's personality.

Despite her sad life experience (the death of her son, her daughter's emigration to France, where she died), she brought up her sons on her own.

In 1937, Otar Chijavadze graduated from the 18th secondary school in Tbilisi and entered the faculty of Mathematics at Tbilisi State University. For some years he worked as a Mathematician. His interest in Georgian music and folklore was not accidental. Since his early childhood years he was in close touch with Georgian culture. But his further professional interest in music was encouraged by his newspaper article about a newly published book. His professional notes made him famous in Georgian music society. In 1948 he entered the faculty of Musicology at the Tbilisi State Conservatoire. He completed the course of music history and folklore and then the full post-graduate course in the same specialties under the guidance of professors L. Donadze (music history) and Gr. Chkhikvadze (folklore).

He then began his scientific career. His scientific works are still of high importance for Georgian music art. They are distinguished by their professionalism and high scientific value. He always remembered the words of celebrated Georgian composer Zakaria Paliashvili: "National habits and character are reflected in singing which is created and transmitted from generation to generation over hundreds of years".

Big love and devotion to the mother land and unique folk songs made Otar Chijavadze walk around the whole of Georgia. He recorded and published collections of Georgian folk songs which are the precious assets for scientists in terms of research and preservation of Georgian musical heritage. Since 1955 O. Chijavadze provided 53 expeditions, recorded, and deciphered about 2000 Georgian folk songs. Based on collected materials, the existence of Imeretian labor songs ("nadurebi") has been proved. In 1969, during the expedition in Achara, Otar Chijavadze recorded four-part "naduri"

songs. In Svanetian expedition in 1969, he made a record of rare Svanetian table songs, secular chant "O krisdesh" and some labor songs. Also, he proved that Lechkumuri songs should be recognized as a dialect. The most interesting and important was the Kakhetian expedition in 1957-1958, when he found six versions of "Chakrulo", which had been deciphered by Paliashvili.

Otar Chijavadze was also an author of the following works: "Kakhetian Labor songs" (1962), "Georgian Folk Songs" (1964), "Megrelian Folk Songs" (19..), "Musical Culture of the 19th Century", "Georgian Musical Notation", "About Some Issues of Georgian Multipart Singing", "Georgian Folk Instruments", "About Mikael Modrekili's One Remark", "Georgian Legends About Amiran", "Variations of Georgian Chants", "The First Russian Collectors and Researchers of Georgian Folk Songs", "Georgian Soviet Music for 50 Years", "Ia Kargareli's Musical Views", etc. Most important is Otar Chijavadze's fundamental work "Georgian Musical Culture of the 19th Century", which has become a guide book for students of Tbilisi State Conservatoire. Unfortunately, Otar Chijavadze could not publish many studies including "Old Georgian Encyclopedic Lexicon" (together with Vazha Gvakharia). The work evoked great interest among the academicians Giorgi Akhvlediani, Akaki Shanidze, Shota Dzidziguri, and professors Iado Donadze, Grigol Chkhikvadze, Shalva Aslanishvili, who considered the Lexicon the most significant property of Georgian musicology. The book still waits for to see the light of day. The same can be said about unique "Gurian labor songs" (naduri), which were also recorded and deciphered by Otar Chijavadze.

Here we want to quote the letter by Shalva Aslanishvili, older friend and teacher of Otar Chijavadze: "My dear Otar! I was very happy about your paper which you read on September 29. Everybody acknowledged the

importance of the main idea of your thesis - the discovery and proof of national heritage. Let everybody learn about our national spirit. Many thanks. Yours, Shalva Aslanishvili".

Besides expeditions and studies, O. Chijavadze's pedagogical work and experience is also very interesting. His high intelligence, erudition and perfect knowledge of Georgian language was reflected in his lectures. He was equally loved by his students, colleagues, teachers, and a wide circle of friends: Ioseb Noneshvili, Ketevan Burjanadze, Jemal Gokieli, Vladimer Akhobadze, Misha Chirinashvili, Kakhi Rosebashvili, Tengiz Chochua, Otar Gordeli, Eleonora Eksanishvili, etc.

In addition to the conservatoire, O. Chijavadze ran the course of lectures in Music History for students of the faculty of Art History at Tbilisi State University. Also, he provided translation and editorial work. He regularly cooperated with the printed media, was an author of important articles, led public work at the Union of Composers where he was a member of the board, worked in the folklore department of the union, and in the Musical-Choreographic Society. He often participated in scientific sessions and conferences.

Otar Chijavadze's poetic gift was mirrored

in his poems. It is significant that Georgian musical society celebrated Otari Chijavadze's scientific achievements several times: on April 26th 1969 in Tbilisi State University, in honor of his 50th birthday, on May 28th 1979 in honor of his 60th birthday, March 30th 1990 honored his 70th birthday and the 45th scientific and public work anniversary.

For his significant contribution to development of Georgian culture and musical art, on December 7th 1979 he was awarded the Honored Art Worker of Georgia. Radio and TV programs were dedicated to his work.

Years ago, when a correspondent of the newspaper "Akhalgazrda Komunisti" asked him why he gave up being a mathematician in favor of folklore and music, his answer was as follows: the cultural spirit of Georgian people and its rich heritage is best reflected in folklore. Science will not be real if it does not add more value to the national root; a formula is just a formula and nothing else. As for spirit and nature, it's something different. That is what helped me give up mathematics."

Otar Chijavadze died on March 21st 1998, after a long and hard illness. He left a lot of ideas to be realized.

**Elisabed Ninua**

### Published by Otari Chijavadze:

Chijavadze, Otari. (1962). Kartuli Kakhuri Khalkhuri Simgherebi (Georgian Kakhetian Folk Songs). part 1. Tbilisi: Tsodna. (in Georgian, with Russian and English resume)

Chijavadze, Otari. (1969). Kartuli Kakhuri Khalkhuri Simgherebi (Georgian Kakhetian Folk Songs). part 2. Tbilisi: Ganatleba (in Georgian, with Russian and English resume)

Kartuli Khalkhuri Simgherebi. Samegrelo. (Georgian Kakhetian Folk Songs). (1974). Otari Chijavadze (compiler). Tbilisi: Khelovneba (in Georgian, with Russian and English resume)

Chijavadze, Otari. (1991). For the Issue of Teaching Methods of Georgian Chanting in Old Georgia. In the collection: Tsurtsunia, Rusudan

(responsible editor). Old Georgian Professional Music. Issues of History and Theory (pp.61-66). Tbilisi: Tbilisi State Conservatoire. (In Georgian)

Chijavadze, Otari. (1997). Enthusiasts of Georgian Song. Scientific issues. (63-77). Tbilisi: Tbilisi State Conservatoire. (In Georgian, with Russian and English resume)

Chijavadze, Otari. (1964). *Old Georgian Professional Music. Issues of History and Theory* (pp.61-66). Tbilisi: Tbilisi State Conservatoire. (In Georgian and Russian)

Chijavadze, Otari. (1985). *Enthusiasts of Georgian Song. Scientific issues*. (63-77). Tbilisi: Tbilisi State Conservatoire. (In Georgian, with Russian and English resume) (pp. 59-60). Tbilisi: Tbilisi State Conservatoire. (In Russian, with English resume)

Chijavadze, Otari. (1991). *For the Issue of Teaching Methods of Georgian Chanting in Old Georgia*. In the collection: Tsurtsunia, Rusudan

### Annual Scientific Works:

- Labor Songs in the Western Georgia (1970-1971) (p.87)
- Kakheti (historical review) (1980) (p.18)
- Kartli-Kakheti (historical-ethnographical work) (1981) (p.47)
- Megrelian Folk Singing (1982) (p.25)
- Lechkhumi Dialect of Georgian Folk Singing (1983) (p.45)
- Intonation Basis of Kakhetian Dialect of Georgian Folk Singing (1985) (p.60)
- Intonation Basis of Kakhetian Dialect of Georgian Folk Singing. Part 2. Labor songs (1986) (p.47)
- Abkhazian-Georgian Musical and Folklore Relationships. Part 1. Historical-Societal Basis of Abkhazian-Georgian Relationships (1987) (p.51)
- Abkhazian-Georgian Musical and Folklore Relationships. Part 2. (1988) (p.47)
- Folklore Work of D. Araqishvili (1989-1990) (p.190)
- Place of Svanetian Folk Songs in Georgian Folk Singing (1991) (p.43)
- The Oldest Music Culture of Georgian People (1993-1994) (p.93)
- Views of Georgian Musical Folklorist. (1994-1995) (p.189)
- Georgian Folk Singing/Lechkhumi Songs/. 1990. Sheet music collection. Manuscript. Kept in the lab archive of Folk Music Department of Tbilisi State Conservatoire
- Knight in Tiger's Skin and Georgian Folk Instruments. Scientific Work. Manuscript. kept in the State Museum of Instruments
- Georgian Folklore Lexicon. Manuscript. kept in the archive of the Folklore State Centre of Georgia
- Labor Songs in the Western Georgia. Sheet music collection. Manuscript. kept in the Folklore State Centre of Georgia

### Expeditions held by

#### Otar Chijavadze:

- 1954 – Racha (Oni)
- 1955 – Lechkhumi (Usakhelo, Zubi)
- 1957 – Kakheti (Sighnaghi, Qvareli, Lagodekhi, Tsiteltsqaro)
- 1958 – Kakheti (Sighnaghi, Akhmeta, Qvareli, Telavi)
- 1959 – Tbilisi (Maro Tarkhnishvili choir)
- Samegrelo (Tsalenjikha, Chkhorotsqu, Zugdidi)
- Svaneti (Mestia)
- 1960 – Kakheti (Gurjaani)
- Samegrelo (Khobi)
- 1961 – Kakhri (Qvareli)
- Imereti (Vani, Maiakovski/Baghdadi)
- 1962 – Imereti (Zestafoni, Tqibuli)
- Tbilisi (Sisters Ishkneli)
- Kakheti (Sagarejo, Qvareli)
- 1963 – Imereti (Chiatura, Sachkhere)
- 1964 – Guria (Lanchkhuti, Chokhatauri)
- 1965 – Guria (Chokhatauri)
- Kakheti (Gurjaani)
- 1966 – Guria (Ozurgeti)
- 1967 – Samegrelo (Zugdidi, Senaki/Tskhakaia)
- Borjomi (Akhdaba, Tsaghveri, Kortaneti, Mzetamze)
- 1969 – Achara (Batumi, Kobuleti, Khulo, Shukhevi, Keda)
- Kartli (Bolnisi)
- 1970 – Samegrelo-Abkhazeti
- 1971 – Lechkhumi
- Racha
- 1972 – Imereti (Kharagaurli)
- 1973 – Imereti (Tqibuli, Baghdadi/Maiakovski)
- Kakheti (Akhmeta)
- 1978 – Samachablo (Leningori district/Akhalgori)
- 1979 – Kakheti (Tsiteltsqaro, Sighnaghi)
- Samachablo (Java, Znauri)
- 1980 – kartli (Kareli)
- 1982 – Lechkhumi
- 1983 – Kvemo Kartli (Tetristsqaro)
- 1984 – Kakheti (Telavi)
- 1986 – Kakheti (Akhmeta)

## Georgian Polyphony and the Polyphony of the European Middle Ages

### Otar Chijavadze

The issue of mutual relationships between Georgian folk polyphony and European polyphony of the middle ages is not new. In his letter “Georgian Music”, written in 1886, Ilia Chavchavadze was discussing the links between East and European music and concluded that: “Georgian songs and church hymns

are different from European ones. This is evident and does not need any verification.” Then he follows up: “But it is close to Asian musical culture. Here we’re talking about Georgian secular and church songs and not only prayers and sayings.” (“Kartuli Khalkhuri Musika”. Tkhzulebani. 1941. volu-

me 2, p.131). Hence, Ilia Chavchavadze logically recognizes the unique context of Georgian song.

Although the talk here is about folk music, this does not reduce the importance of Ilia Chavchavadze's statement, as the same had been stated about the church music. In 1864, in the article "Georgian Habits" (Magazine "Tsiskari"), Davit Machabeli wrote that Georgian religious chanting lies in the middle between the mono-part Greek and polyphonic Italian (catholic) church chanting. He also considered that three-part structure was typical for Georgian church singing.

This issue was discussed in more detail by the famous German scientist Zigfrid Nadel, who made recordings of Georgian folk songs from Georgian prisoners in Germany after the 1st World War and, drew some conclusions based on these recordings.

The scientist paid major attention to the issue of Georgian polyphony and its relation to the European polyphony of the middle ages. In his opinion, the Georgian polyphony had nothing in common with its cultural neighbors. The Eastern, Greek and Armenian Church music did not create any related forms. This comparative uniqueness is obvious evidence against western influence, which must have occurred in Armenia, Greece or Syria in the same ratio. After that, as we know, Georgian Church music obtained the features of secular music which is related to the strict devotion of the nation to their pre-Christian habits and traditions" ("Kartuli Simgherebi". 1933. pp.44-45. in German). Thus, thanks to Georgian folk singing, Georgian church could drive out Greek one-part church singing through practicing the national multi-part chanting during the church service. It is completely clear that over the short historical period of 400 years, it is impossible to create multipart style without having strong and relevant roots in musical practice.

These roots turned out to be the Georgian folk songs which were used by representatives of the Georgian church for the Christian

church's own purposes. "As a result of long-term and fruitless struggles against pre-Christian holidays (celebrations) and songs, the Georgian church gave up fighting and tried to use the secular tunes in church music" (P. Karbelashvili, "Qartuli Saero da Sasuliero Kiloebi". 1898. p. 10-11).

Therefore, we can conclude that the concept of church music was conditioned by folk songs. Furthermore, along with secular tunes, pre-Christian customs, such as liturgical drama, also became rooted in the life of the church. All this promoted the strengthening of national elements in church practice. The following statement is not accidental: "Kartli is the country where the liturgy is carried out in Georgian language and only "Kiria Eleison" is said in Greek" (Giorgi Merchule, "Life of Grigol Khandzteli". "Qartuli Proza". Book 1. "Sabchota Sakartvelo". p.46-47).

It is well known fact that a delegation of the Antiokia patriarchy who visited Tbilisi in the 10th century, stated to the governor that he was impressed and surprised by listening to multipart chanting in Tbilisi Soboro (Z. Nadel. "Georgian Songs". In German 1933. pp. 46-47).

Here the issue of Georgian-European links is raised.

Since the 13th century the western European countries were closely introduced to Georgia. The trade capital expansion in the 12th century promoted the creation of the Venice and Genoa colonies in the Black Sea area. Their influence soon spread to the Caspian Sea. Therefore later the Georgian trade roads became of international importance.

Political and economical strengthening of Western Europe was supported and promoted by catholic missions.

In the 16th century the relationships were weakened but in the second half of the 17th century the trade relationships began to strengthen as well. This kind of relationships were forged by missionaries, trades people and travelers. Missionaries were found on Georgia's fertile soil as Georgian governors prepared to subordinate the Georgian church

to Rome in order to get the help and support in their fights against Muslim world.

Missionaries were actively involved in the political and cultural life of Georgia. They were secret political advisors to the kings of Georgia. Their work in Georgia had a political outcome as they promoted the unification of the Georgian kingdom for the purpose of lessening the influence of Islam.

Though the political links between Georgia and Europe were not constant, they were still very important in terms of introducing Georgia to Europe and Georgia's cultural progress.

These relationships had a significant influence on the cultural life of Georgia. European literature, art and music became accessible for Georgians. But fifth organum, which was created in the 10th century in church musical theory as well as free techniques of organum, descant, and use of the intervals of third and sixth (12th and 13th centuries), and three-part singing in general, or all those forms which enriched the European church music, could have had its influence on Georgian music only in the 13th and 15th centuries. However, before this influence arrived, organum and

multipart (three-part) singing already existed in Georgia. These forms had been born in Georgia much earlier than western sacred music itself. In Georgia, church songs were being sung when the European music (still one part singing) was beginning to transfer into multipart structure. On the other hand, in the case of European influence, other forms of European music also had to come to Georgia such as, mensural intonation, canon techniques, etc. And yet another point, because of the hardships for Georgian monasteries, they could not make the effort to establish the western polyphony in practice.

It is worth taking into account that trochei-accentuated measure-variable rhythm in Georgian songs should be considered as the comparatively old part, the Christian metro-rhythmic structure.

Considering the above mentioned statement, we can conclude that the polyphony was not adopted by Georgia from the Indo-Germans, but it was born in the fertile soil of Georgian culture. This is clear also given that the type of polyphony in Georgia has nothing common with imitative polyphony of European music.

## Georgian Folk Song Ensembles

### The Folk Song Ensemble *Zedashe*

**Mariam Khardziani**

The folklore ensemble "Zedashe" was established by Ketevan Nadirashvili in the town of Signaghi in 1998. The ensemble consists of eight people – six Kakhetians and one Svan. The repertoire of the choir includes both village songs and church hymns. It is significant that the members of "Zedashe" come from traditional musical families. Three of them, including the head of the ensemble, are experienced church hymn performers. Therefore, the level of performance of village songs as well as of church hymns is highly professional. The choir also consists of two qualified dancers. Some of the choir members play different folk musical instruments and hence, they are able to perform

a wide range of Georgian song, dance and instrumental music.

Ketevan Mindorashvili's husband John Vurdeman is an American. He is an artist by profession. A few years ago he visited Georgia as a guest and was so impressed and touched by both the natural resources of our country and the cultural richness of our musical heritage in particular that he decided to buy a house in Signaghi, and carry on his successful artistic career in Georgia. Later, he was christened in the Georgian Orthodox church, and married Ketevan Mindorashvili, thus creating an American-Georgian family. It's interesting that some other Americans followed Jon's example



and now several American-Georgian families live in the town of Signaghi. These people are big enthusiasts and promoters of Georgian traditions and culture.

John played a crucial role in formation of the ensemble “Zedashe”. Ketevan had been expanding her creative work before she met John, but with his great financial and moral support they organized some expeditions in different provinces of Georgia, gave concerts throughout Georgia and also abroad, and recorded and produced CDs. Very soon, the ensemble “Zedashe” established its own unique place among other folklore choirs.

An interview with the leader of “Zedashe” Ketevan Mindorashvili:

**M. Kh.** – Please, introduce us to the members of the choir.

**K. M.** - Currently our choir consists of: Ketevan and Shalva Mindorashvili, Tamila Sul-khanishvili, Shmagi and Shergil Pirtskhelani, Tamar Beridze, Erekle Kintsurashvili and Ekaterine Tamarashvili. As the most of them are relatives of each other, we can say that the choir is one big extended family!

**M. Kh.** – Why did you name the choir as “Zedashe”?

**K.M.**- Zedashe in Georgian is a place whe-

re, historically, the ancient family name of “Esatui” has lived since ancient times. Sometimes, because of natural disasters or wars, the family of Estau were forced to move to other places but they never forgot their historical source village of Zedashe. On wedding days or when beginning a new business, people would return to Zedashe to receive blessings from their ancestors. Besides, almost every household had a big container kept underground near their houses. In the containers people used to keep oil for sacred service, wheat, and wine. The latter was also named Zedashe. Zedashe vineyards are still grown in present day Signaghi hillsides in memory of the ancestors of the owners of those vineyards.

As respect, devotion and care for our old traditions is the main driving force of the choir, the members named the choir as Zedashe.

**M.Kh.** – What distinguishes Zedashe from other choirs in Georgia?

**K. M.** – First of all, all members of “Zedashe” were raised in traditional singing families. The choir members still maintain everyday relationships with local villagers. Besides, most choirs in Georgia consist of either women or men. “Zedashe” is a mixed ensemble comprising of women and men and its repertoire is not limited by genres or context of performance.

**M.Kh.** – This is an unusual feature in comparison with other ensembles. Do you select a special repertoire for a mixed group?

**K.M.** – Initially, we also thought that Georgian songs had to be performed by uniformed groups of women or men. Later, our experiences as genuine folk singers as well as the choir members who come from traditional families of singers proved that women and men in Georgia used to sing together since ancient times. Family members used to come together around the hearth, or “Supra”, or in the fields. For example, Andro “Papa” (Simashvili) was surprised by this question and told us: “In the mornings we used to go to fields together with women, harvest the wheat, and sing labor songs. We used to share “Supras” together and come back home tired. There were not enough men to deal with field work completely and therefore, we could not afford to keep women at home only to cook”. Ilia Apshilava told us



the same. Expedition materials collected from every part of Georgia also support this view.

Of course, there are songs which belong to exclusively women's or men's repertoire due to the social functions of these songs. For example: "Nanebi" is the group of songs for women, and marching or military songs – for men. However, the majority of Georgian folk songs were performed by mixed groups of women and men. We try to select this type of songs for our repertoire.

**M.Kh.** - Your repertoire consists of both village songs and church hymns. Do you sing during church services?

**K.M.** – Both Shalva - my brother and I, and my cousin Tea Mindorashvili, began to sing in Bodbe monastery in 1994 with Mother Theodora (the monastery prioress). At that time it was impossible to get sheet music for church hymns. With the help of the Patriarch we learned many church hymns. Besides, Mother Theodora had a small book of manuscripts of church hymns which she had written herself. We began to study from this book. Later, when nuns began to sing in the monastery, we moved to Saint George church in Signaghi where other choir members joined us. We still sing in this church. Consequently, church hymns hold a special place in our repertoire.

**M.Kh.** - How are your village songs selected?

**K.M.** – We have been traveling intensively throughout Georgia. We are very happy when we find new rare examples during our expeditions. With these songs we significantly enrich our repertoire. Besides this, we have made friends with famous singers in some regions of Georgia. They teach us the songs with pleasure. We also learn songs from the oldest records and add them to our repertoire. I want to mention one more fact. We have sometimes found fragments of Georgian village songs in records of Russian composers with references about genre and region. Such references and recordings were, however, not always precise and accurate. In such cases, we were trying to compare these examples with typical songs of these particular regions, restore their genuine content and shape and perform them.

Once, a member of a trio of old singers died and the others could not remember the tune of one of the songs. We often manage to restore



such songs and therefore, often get experts' praise and approval.

**M.Kh.** – Which part of Georgia do you give preference to?

**K.M.** – As you know, the ensemble is comprised of Kakhetians and Svans. Therefore, it's natural that our repertoire consists of songs from these regions. It is also noteworthy that the historical regions of Kiziqi and upper Svaneti were both regions which enjoyed relative freedom, with no external dominating political power, over centuries. Despite differences in their singing cultures, people of these regions are quite close in spirit. Therefore, choir members could find and perform the songs of these parts of Georgia as their own culture. Though, we also perform Megrelian, Gurian, Mokhevian, Tushetian songs and those of other parts of Georgia.

**M.Kh.** – We know that the choir members play almost all folk instruments which still are in use in present day Georgia: chonguri, panduri, chuniri, change, chiboni, garmoni, and doli.

**K.M.** - It is noteworthy that one of these instruments – chuniri – is being made by our choir members, the Pirtskhelani brothers. We think that among their peers, they are the best chuniri players.

**M.Kh.** – What can you say about the ensemble “Jlekha”?

**K.M.** – About four years ago by the initiative of me and my brother Shalva MIndorashvili, the dance ensemble *Jlekha* was founded. Alongside with other, five members of “Zedashe” also dance in “Jlekha”. “Zedashe” performs Dances as well but only as much as our singing repertoire allows to. As for “Jlekha”, this is purely choreographic ensemble performing only dances.

**M.Kh.** – Your husband is an American, who has been living and working in Signaghi for years. His modest estimation of his own role in the establishment of “Zedashe” choir does not seem to be objective. What would you say about it?

**K.M.** – If you want to hear the truth, John played a central role in the establishment of our group as an ensemble. He had us look at the things, which were natural and typical for us, from outside, and helped to draw our attention to the uniqueness of our folklore. Before this, we used to sing Georgian songs just because we loved it. John had listened to many Georgian songs before he met us and tried to convince us that our singing manner was exclusive. Then he offered to record our songs. If John had not supported us, our work would not be so productive. He has his own recording studio where he made five CDs of our choir. With his help and support we organized a lot of expeditions throughout Georgia, thus bringing Georgian folklore out of the country. In addition, I want to say that one of our CDs with the title “Khidebi Ghvtaebrivisken” (Bridges to Divineness) including only church hymns, was designed by John.

**M.Kh.** - Among your CDs, we have been interested most in two of them: one with sheet music, and another - CD ROM. Where this idea has come from?

**K.M.** – Our foreign friends and especially those, who are interested in Georgian folklore, often ask us to provide them with sheet music or other complementary materials to simplify them the process of learning of Georgian songs. Therefore, we published our CD in the following form: we enclosed sheet music to the CD named as “Lazares Aghdgineba” (Bringing

Lazarus to Life) with Georgian and English texts, comments and illustrations of techniques to play Georgian instruments. For Georgians it is less useful, because it is easier for them to learn Georgian traditional songs in oral way. But it is not realistic to teach foreigners orally quite complicated, unusual polyphonic Georgian songs, or to teach them to play Georgian folk instruments ordinarily. We enclosed the CD ROM to the disc named as “Tsetskhlshi Natsrtobi” (Forged in Fire). This is a computer version of sheet music of Georgian songs which is included in the CD. We think that this way we made 22 Georgian folk songs and instrumental pieces more accessible to foreigners. I have stated here that we dedicated the disc “Tsetskhlshi Natsrtobi” to our friend Kakhaber Zarnadze, who recently passed away. He had us watch the amazing process of forging iron. The association was born with Georgian folklore which really has been forged into the historical hardships of our country. That’s why we called the CD “Tsetskhlshi Natsrtobi” (Forged in Fire).

**M.Kh.** – In this collection, besides the standard sheet music samples, some of the songs are marked with “strange notes”; how would you explain this?

**K.M.** – I have worked out these special notes to simplify the process of learning Georgian songs for foreigners. I made my mind up to develop this “system” after I had encountered some challenges during the workshops abroad especially when I was teaching them Kartl-Kakhetian songs. You know that Kakhetian songs are characterized by complicated ornamental melodies which are quite difficult to perform even for Georgian singers. It was not practical and realistic to write in standard notes each pitch which is sung by a performer in these songs. Therefore I developed a simple system of notes. For example: lines of different length, various ornaments of different shapes, arrows, etc. These notes indicate the initial pitch, direction, duration of motives and phrases and are written together with dismembered words (illustration from CD ROM). It is noteworthy that compared to the process of learning through standard musical notation, it is impossible to learn songs through such notes if you

don't listen to the audio record of this song. Actually, it is, in fact, the oral method of learning songs but with the help of these special notes.

**M.Kh.**- What can you tell us about the concerts and public performances of the ensemble?

**K.M.** – It might sound strange but we have given only a few concerts in Tbilisi. Our purpose is not, in itself, the popularization of Zedashe choir. We want to develop an interest and kindle the Georgian spirit in a new generation. The same purpose has made our friends go to remote parts of Georgia and teach songs to young people but their attempt was fruitless and they could not generate an interest among our young people in Georgian folklore. This was the main motivation for us to go to Qvashda, Ushguli, Karkuchi, Shenako this time, not only to give concerts there but to provide educational meetings with youth about the richness of our Georgian cultural heritage. We tried to convince them that the real treasure, for which they usually search outside our own country, is lives inside them, in Georgia; that we have to conserve the richness of our

cultural heritage. After such lectures the number of young people willing to learn Georgian songs, has increased.

As for concert tours, the choir has traveled several times in the USA, also Holland, Belgium, Great Britain. . .

**M.Kh.** – What are your plans for future?

**K.M.** – We have a lot of excellent plans and projects in the pipeline, but I'd rather not talk about them until they are further developed.

**M.Kh.** – Thank you. I wish you a lot of success!

### “Zedashe” CDs:

“Sadats mtebi samotkhes uertdebian” (Where Mountains Join the Heaven). Zedashe cultural centre. 2000

“Lazares aghdgineba” (Bringing Lazarus to Life) Zedase Cultural Centre. 2002

“Tsinaparta nakvalevze” (On the Trace of Ancestors). Zedashe Cultural Centre. 2006

“Khidebi ghvtaebrivisken” (Bridges to Divine World). Zedashe Cultural Centre. 2007

“Tsetskhlshi natsrtobi” (Forged in Fire). Zedashe Cultural Centre. 2007

## Georgian and North Caucasian Singing-Creative Relationships

Maia Gelashvili

Since the ancient times Georgian and the North Caucasian people have been in close contact. The population of the Georgian highlands has kept up permanent and regular relationships with their neighbors: Khevsuretians and Tushetians with Vainakh people, Rachians with Qabardoans and Osetians, Svanetians with Abkhazians. These relationships have had a certain influence on their musical traditions.

In his work “Basics of Harmony of Georgian Composers”, Shalva Aslanishvili was the first to observe the similarity of non-third harmonies in Chechnya and Georgian music and raised the question of relationships and links between Georgian and north Caucasian musical cultures. ( ^ . . ° ° 1957)

In his thesis “Abkhazian Folk Music”, V. Akhobadze discusses the influence of Georgian (Megrelian and Svanetian) music on that of Abkhazia and the close links between these people (pp.11-3).

V.Gvakharia shares his views about the common multipart structure of the songs of these people. He observes common harmonic thinking. He explores analogies between mode structure, rhythmical rotation, performing traditions and forms of presentation. (V.Gvakharia. “The Oldest Relationships Between Georgian and North Caucasian People”).

N. Maisuradze discusses this issue in the scientific work “The Fourth Cadence in Georgian-Abkhazian Songs”. The author

identifies the common harmonic elements in cadence formulas of the songs of these people and hypothesizes about the genetic relationships between Georgian, Abkhazian and Adighees folk music.

In his book "Georgian Traditional Polyphony in the International Context of Multi-part Cultures", I. Zhordania highlights the issue of the Caucasian and Abkhazian polyphonies. He states that the traditions of multipart singing are found in almost all Caucasian cultures (pp. 171-177).

Beliefs and rituals of Georgian and North Caucasian people are quite similar which makes us suppose the existence of close contacts between them in the old past. We will talk about the oldest songs which have kept their function and content all the time. Cradle songs and laments have preserved in their archaic structures and tunes.

The view of V. Bardavelidze about the origin of cradle songs is very interesting. In her opinion the cradle songs are related to the spirit of Great Mother: "The deity Nana was worshiped by many Asian and Caucasian people. It is natural that people used to practice the songs to the deity Nana in their creative expression - in cradle rituals, which have always contained the features of motherhood" (V. Bardavelidze, 1957).

It is interesting that Kist people call housewives "Tsiin Naan" which stands for "Mother of Fire" (L. Margoshvili "Habits of Pankisian Kists and Modernity"). Also, Nana is a pet name for mother in the Ossetian language.

Many tunes of Nana (Georgian as well as the North Caucasian) belong to the oldest type of melody: "Singing of upper main tone and then moving down to the lower main tone. During the intoning, often the fifth interval is the second and not the first tone of the melody and is taken through skipping up. The jump to the peak contains different versions" (Mazel-Tsukkerman "Analyses of Musical Work").

Sometimes it happens when the frame gets broader and a song starts with the VI, VII, or VIII steps. Together with the fifth frame, the

fourth frame also occurs. We often meet such one-part songs in Georgia as well as in North Caucasian music such as: cradle songs, ritual songs, or laments.

Ex. 1. Khantseguashe (Adighe)

This kind of tune included in the fourth and the fifth frames can be found in the songs of all people. But another fact is more significant: in the songs of Georgian and the North Caucasian people the fourth and the fifth intervals can be perceived as the main tones and they hold equal positions in the mode of thinking.

Ex. 2. Lament Song (Qabardo)

Such move of the tonic centre often occurs in Kartl-Kakhetian labor songs (urmuli).

Ex.3. Urmuli (Labor song)

In the North Caucasian people's songs it often happens that the song unexpectedly ends up with the tone which does not take any part in the creation of melodic tissue in the song. This also is common in the melodies of Eastern Georgia and the North Caucasus. Based on everything described above, we can summarize as follows: similar melodic types existed in the musical traditions of Georgia and the North Caucasian people (considering the oldest cradle songs, ritual songs and laments). In the North-Western Caucasus there existed tunes of the same and also a different type. (Rotation of the main tones, fifth and fourth skip at the ending part, the eighth frame is typical in such songs).

No doubt that the variety of tunes has originated different types of polyphony.

In the North-Eastern Caucasus as well as in Eastern Georgia we meet the drone (burdonuli) polyphony.

Ex.4. Alilo (Kakheti)

In Kistian cult songs we encounter polyphony which is not found in Muslim "chanting" (Muslim religious song is one-part). This demonstrates once again that the traditions of the North Caucasian multi-part singing come from the oldest times.

Today the similar melodies are met in Tushetian, Kistian, Chechnya, and Daghestnian songs.

Sh. Aslanishvili noted that Tushetian folk songs have enriched their musical heritage with new intonations and melodies – particularly, North Caucasian and Azerbaijani tunes.

As for Western Georgia, the similarity can be observed between Abkhazian, Cherkezian, Ossetian, and Western Georgian (particularly, Megrelian) humor songs. Such form of songs in which a part of soloist comes after basso-ostinato, are typical for Abkhazian, Adigee, and Ossetian folk songs.

However, the polyphony of North-Western Caucasian music is special in that here the fifth and octave parallelism is common.

New line in three-part songs was born as a result of doubling-up the upper line in octave interval down. The Ossetian song is clear evidence of this:

Ex.5. Tsarazonti (Ossetian)

Through the parallel movement of lines such songs are like Svanetian songs. If in Svanetian songs the parallelism of the fifth occurs between the bass and upper part, here

this movement often is met in the neighbor lines.

Ex.6.Lile(Svanetian)

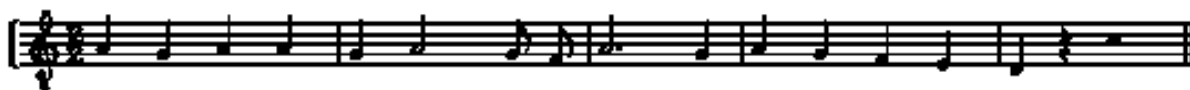
Ex.7. Heroic song (Adighe)

Usually, in the Northern Caucasus as well as in Georgia, the western and the eastern parts of the country are being divided. At the same time, the connection is observed between Eastern Georgia and the North-Western Caucasus and on the other hand, between Western Georgia and the North-Western Caucasus. Drone polyphony is common in the North-Eastern Caucasus and Eastern Georgia whereas parallel polyphony is typical though somehow different for the North-Western Caucasus and Western Georgia. In this case Svanetian multipart singing represents the polyphony of Western Georgia.

At the end we conclude that such typological similarity and relationships are the result of distant contacts and cultural relations between these people.

## Sheet Music Examples

Ex 1



Ex 2

A three-part musical setting in 2/4 time, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The first staff features a melody with a triplet of eighth notes. The second and third staves provide accompaniment, with the second staff also containing a triplet of eighth notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Ex 3.

მე - ნი ქი - რი-მე კა - მე - ნი (და)

შენ საყ ვა - თრი - თ მარ - ხი-ლო (და)

აგ - რე - თა ხა - ვიე არ - ნი - ყო ვა - თე - ნე - ხამ - დი

ხელ - ხი - ნი (და)

Ex 4.

ოც - და - ხელ - ხა

ამ ოცე - ხა

Ex 5.

Ex 6.

ო, ღი-ღე-ო

ახ-გვა - ნი

ღი-ღა - ბი-ო,

ჩინ-გო - თა

შე-ღე და 0

Ex 7.

# I Would do this job Even if I was Given Another Life

## Interview with a head of the choir "Shgarida" Gurgen Gurchiani

**I cordially welcome you. I have wanted to meet you for a long time. Could you please share your biography and tell us how you became interested in singing?**

- First, I want to express my gratitude for inviting me for this interview. There are some people who pay special attention to our work and our attempts.

I was born in the village of Etseri in the district of Mestia. My parents were singers. Since my early childhood, I have been singing. My father was the head of one of the most famous ensembles in Svaneti and a dancer as well. In addition, my aunt was a teacher of singing in our school. She has brought up many singers.

After graduating from school, Platon Dadvani invited me to join his big and famous ensemble. It was a big honor for me. However, that year I entered the university and I didn't have the chance to join Dadvani's choir. It was 1967-1968.

In the university I joined the famous boy's ensemble, led by Temur Kevkhishvili. He played a big role in the transformation of my personality. I was not a soloist but I was a master of the base part (bass). "Mirangula" was the only Svanetian song that I sang with the ensemble. It was the generation of Temur Chkuaseli and Levan Ghvinjilia. We had a concert tour in Germany. My friends advised me to stay on the same course in order to keep singing in the choir.

**You sang with different choirs. At the same time you are a master of Svanetian songs. When and how did you get interested in learning of Svanetian songs?**

-"Ga" was the first oldest Svanetian song in which I was interested. People heard and



talked about it. Something in this song inspired me as well. When my father restored the song, his ensemble was mainly comprised of singers with the Gurchiani family name. They were real masters of Svanetian singing. None of them are alive now.

I would like to tell you how this song was restored. I, my father, and my uncles –Moshni Gurchiani and Chicho Gurchiani, also Airongo Gurchiani was brought together around "Supra". I categorically asked for singing only "Ga" and nothing else. I had one old and almost destroyed audio recorder and tried to record the song. The process of remembering of the song lasted till late evening. At last, they sang the song. Later, with the help of Islam Pilpani, I deciphered all the three parts of the song. We brought the song to Svaneti and had local singers listen to it. They guessed that it was "Ga" and were very happy as they had never heard its full version before.

**Was this ritual song connected with agriculture?**

I knew that "Ga" was the old deity of our ancestors. "Ga" in Svanetian language stands for earth and the content of the song is related

to fertility. Only the Gerlianis in our village could say "Ga". Yes, "Ga" was to be said and not sung. The Gerlianis used to say "Ga" in a church of the Archangel Gabriel before the beginning of pre-Easter fast. Then they sang "Ga" at Easter day's "Supra". Nobody would start eating until "Ga" was sung.

Since the song was related to fertility, the first part of it "Sadam" was sung during the wedding ceremony as well.

**How did you go about your search for Svanetian songs?**

I began to look for old singers. I walked throughout Svaneti and founded local folk choirs. Soon after this we held a district festival of singing. That time I was the first secretary of the district committee of the communist party. A head of the department of culture was exhausted with my endless initiatives and ideas. The festival revealed new pearls of Svanetian music heritage. These songs were not included in neither the Dadvani nor the Meshveliani choirs' repertoire. They were choosing more attractive songs than the real pearls such as "Ga". I cut the way to performing less known songs including Saint George chant. Choirs established by me tried to restore and give new life to songs which had been already forgotten. Maksime Gergiani and Giorgi Pirtskhelani taught me a lot of songs including the song to glory the God "Diadeb". Even now you can meet old people who remember old songs.

**There are different opinions existing about the song "Lile". If it is a chant to a pagan deity or the Sun. Some people say that the song is dedicated to God the Father. In your opinion, what does "Lile" mean?**

"Lile" was a child of "Ani" and "Gi", the great life maker. "Ani" is the sky and "Gi" is the earth. "Lile" separated them from each other. This was the god who punished people



with great flood. It is the deity of agriculture.

**What can you tell us about Svanetian Christian chants?**

Christianity played a big role in Svaneti. Andria the apostle made great changes in Georgia, especially in the western part of Georgia and Svaneti, where he stayed for a long time. There was not big confrontation between Christian and local religions.

In the song "Tskhau Kriste", "Tskhau" is the epithet of deity. The song "O Kriste" also is the oldest Christian chant made in the shape of "Lile" and "Kviria". Its content is "Let's pray". "Gabriel the Herald" is also a Christian chant. In Svaneti the Saint George day is called "I Gergi" and over the process of praying we say "Jgrag". "Jgrag" in Svaneti means "cxebul". In Ivane Javakhishvili's works we read that "Jgrag" had more power than god. "Jgrag" is a hero who always helps a human being and never leaves him/her alone. Christ is a prayer. The texts of chants also prove this view.

Let us discuss Svanetian "Supra" and its process. For sure the Svanetian "Supra" included traditional table songs.

"Tamada" always made the first three toasts to Christ, archangel and "Jgrag" together or one by one. If "Tamada" said the toast to all of them together, he would drink three small portions of wine. "Tamada" drank wine from a special pot and then passed it to the person to his right (or his assistant). So, the



pot was handed out to every "Supra" member. Some researchers thought that Svanetian people did this because of lack of glasses (vessels for wine). But actually it was certain imitation of "secret (great) supper". People used to start singing and dancing only after the toast to Saint George. "Supra" usually ended up with the song "Lamarea".

**Could you please tell us about your choir?**

You mentioned that I am a master and teacher of singing. It is not the truth. It takes one's whole life and energy to achieve the professionalism. So, I am only an amateur singer and not master. I have realized a number of projects in my life and I've done everything as a volunteer. I've built temples in Svaneti as well as in Dmanisi. When the "Green Movement" started its operation in Georgia, I brought Zurab Zhvania to Svaneti where we had a meeting with local population. The ex-prime minister of Georgia told me: you have to lead this work. I refused and stated that singing was more important to me.

Then I took my audio recorder and cassettes and came here to Dmanisi. Once Anzor Erkomaishvili called me and said that during his trip to Svaneti he was told that only I had the old recordings. I told him that I was going to work on the recordings. Anzor was happy with this and encouraged me to realize my idea. I brought together some boys and established the choir. All of us were volunteers and were working for four years without money. Now our choir comprises of 15 people. The repertoire consists of 14 chants and about 25 songs including round dance songs.

**Have you released any CDs?**

We have already made the recordings and soon the CD will be released. There is one

good person Malkhaz (he means the interviewer and laughs). He helped us a lot and introduced us to people who could help us with CDs.

**I suppose that the first and middle parts are each sung by one singer in your choir, right?**

Yes, anyway, if upper parts are sung by many singers, it makes problems for the basses. We call the upper part "Kivani". The middle voice is much stronger. The stronger the bass line the better.

**Thank you for this fascinating interview. I wish you great success and finally I would like to ask you the last question: what are your plans for the future?**

All my life I have been volunteering and experiencing quite difficult times. I don't mean that I'm a special person as I did everything with my whole heart. In the past we had more support from local government but anyway I am happy as I've led a creative life and achieved my goals.

I had recordings of old singers in separate parts. You can imagine what an exhausting job it was. All my life I was learning these songs and then taught them to my choir members. Sometimes we made some changes to them. We have our own style of singing. It's important to maintain the traditional intonation and basis. I would love it if scientists became interested in my work. I want to publish my thesis about the concepts, meaning, and history of Svanetian songs. I want to dedicate the rest of my life to this work and I would do this job even if I was given another life as well.

**Interview was conducted by  
Malkhaz Erkvanidze**

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# მისდევს მეფა ღომსა (აჭარია)

## Misdevs Mela Lomsa (Acharian)

Andante

მისდევს მეფა ღომსა-ა და, ტურა მდელსა, მით კორსა-ა და, მუნროსდევს დავს

lom-m -da, -tu-ra mel-m- ohi-ti kor-m-a -da, - munro mdev - des

მი-მი-ნო-სა ნო-სა ნო-სა ნო-სა ნო-სა და, რის ა -

mi - mi - no - sa, no - sa no - sa no - sa no - sa da, ris a -

ქლე-მი და, რის ა-ქლე-მი ცა-სა სდევს-დევს და, სა-სა-სა-დავ

khe-mi da, ris a-khe-mi ca-sa sdevs-ddevs da, sa-sa-sa-dav

მი-ქი-ნო-სა, ნო-სა ნო-სა ნო-სა ნო-სა და.

mi - khe - no - sa, no - sa no - sa no - sa no - sa da.