

The  
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*The News*

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The song “Kalo, Kalta Mzeo”

## **Ethnomusicological Life in Georgia** **(January-June, 2023)**

### ***Festivals, conferences, competitions***

22.04.2023- 2.06.2023 – Olympiad of children's folk song and dance ensembles in Achara.

24.04.-9.05.2023 – The Tbilisi International Festival of Choral Music.

25.04-13.05.2023 – The 7<sup>th</sup> National Competition of Children's and Juvenile choirs of Georgia organized by the Choral Society of Georgia.

1-2.05.2023 – The First Festival "Nanina" of Georgian Women's Traditional Music at the Folklore State Center.

19.05.2023 – Scientific conference of young ethnomusicologists at Tbilisi State Conservatoire.

20.05.2023 – Festival of Georgian traditional music "Native Voices" at Kisiskhevi House of Culture.

12.06.2023 – Scientific conference dedicated to the memory of Manana Andriadze at the University of Chanting.

### ***Lectures, meetings, master classes, presentations, etc.***

27.01.2023 – Presentation of Giorgi Svanidze's collection of Georgian songs at the Folklore State Center.

31.01.2023 – Presentation of ensemble Chela's audio album in Zugdidi.

20.02.2023 – Presentation of the sheet music collection compiled by Robert Gogolashvili at the Folklore State Center.

21-23.02.2023 – Trainings for choirmasters and choreographers organized by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of Achara in Batumi.

22.02.2023 – Presentation of the book translation and electronic scientific journal at the Folklore State Center.

6.03.2023 – A meeting with Giorgi Mukbaniani at the Folklore State Center.

13.03.2023 – A meeting with Japanese kartvelologist Hayate Sotome at the Folklore State Center.

15.03.2023 – A meeting with Bulat Khalilov and Temur Kodzoko at the University of Chanting.

17.03.2023 – Presentation of the results of the ethnomusicological expedition to Khulo municipality at the Folklore State Center.

22.03.2023 – A meeting with Tamar Buadze at the Folklore State Center.

4-6.04.2023 – Master classes of Rachan dance at the Folklore State Center.

7.04.2023 – Presentation of the new audio album "Nanina's Big Family – the Singing Posterity" of the creative group of ethnomusicologists "Nanina" at the Folklore State Center.

10.04.2023 – A meeting with ethnomusicologist Levan Veshapidze at the Folklore State Center.

12-22.04.2023 – Ethnomusicologist Nino Naneishvili's master classes in Tbilisi, Kakheti, Samegrelo and Svaneti.

25.04.2023 – Tristan Sikharulidze's master classes of Gurian song at the Achara School of Folk Art.

29.04.2023 – Ethnomusicologist Otar Kapanadze's lecture "Georgian folk music today" at "Tamara's space".

10.05.2023 – Malkhaz Erkvanidze's master class at the University of Theater and Film

11.05.2023 – Ekaterine Oniani, Associate professor of Tbilisi State Conservatoire, presented a paper at the Ekvtime the Confessor Scientific Seminar at Tbilisi State Conservatoire

15.05.2023 – Ethnomusicologist Ketevan Baiashvili's lecture "Folklore in Ancient Georgia and Today" at the University of Chanting.

22.05.2023 – A lecture and master class on Finnish music at Ilia State University.

23.05.2023 – Rikka Patrikainen's lecture "Ethnography of Karelian and Greek laments" at Tbilisi State Conservatoire.

24.05.2023 – Public lecture "Aspects of Finnish church musicians' service at Finnish Orthodox Church" at the University of Chanting

25.05.2023 – Public lecture "Traditions of

present-day Finnish church music” at Ilia State University.

30.06.2023 – Magda Sukhiashvili, Head of Manana Andriadze Laboratory of Church Music, presented the paper “The hymns called ‘minasipi’ in Georgian liturgical Practice” at Ekvtime the Confessor Scientific Seminar at Tbilisi State Conservatoire.

***Concerts, evenings, exhibitions, anniversaries...***

11.01.2023 – A folklore concert, as part of New-Year events, in Orbeliani square, Tbilisi.

27.01.2023 – A charity concert at the Youth Center of the Trinity Patriarchal Cathedral in support of a shelter for the elderly in Khurvaleti

2.02.2023 – Events dedicated to Ekvtime Kereselidze’s commemoration day in Ambrolauri.

27.02.2023 – The first concert as part of the project “Let’s sing to our peers” at Ozurgeti Folklore Center.

14.03.2023 – Opening of the exhibition dedicated to Dimitri Arakishvili’s 150<sup>th</sup> at the folklore hall of the National Library.

24.03.2023 – Concert of the students of Khoni and Telavi choirmaster’s schools at the Folklore State Center.

24.03.2023 – Concert dedicated to his Holiness, the Catholicos Patriarch Ilia II at the Holy Trinity Youth Center.

30.03.2023 – Concert of the students of Kareli and Vani choirmaster’s schools at the Folklore State Center.

2.04.2023 – Joint concert of Khoni choirmaster’s school and Ensemble Bichebi in Khoni.

5.04.2023 – International folk music concert at Keda Center of Culture.

5.04.2023 – Concert of the students of Ozurgeti, Senaki, Abasha and Poti choirmaster’s schools at Ozurgeti Folklore Center.

7.04.2023 – Ensemble Ialoni’s concert in Dusheti.

13.04.2023 – Ensemble Rustavi’s concert at Tbilisi Concert Hall in support of Monk Andria’s Charity Foundation

18.04.2023 – Ensemble Ialoni’s solo concert in Tsageri.

28.04.2023 – Concert of the students of Ozurgeti choirmaster’s school as part of the project “Let’s sing to our peers” at Ozurgeti Folklore Center

3.05.2023 – Ensemble Ialoni’s solo concert at Tbilisi Griboyedov Theater

4.05.2023 – Concert of the students of Zestaponi and Kvareli choirmaster’s schools at the Folklore State Center.

9.05.2023 – Ensemble Sathanao’s solo concert in Kondoli

10.05.2023 – A concert of the students of Ozurgeti, Shuakhevi, Batumi, Kobuleti and Samtredia choirmaster’s schools at Giorgi Salukvadze’s Memorial house

12.05.2023 – Ensemble Sathanao’s solo concert in Martkopi.

16.05.2023 – Ensemble Sathanao’s solo concert at the Folklore State Center.

19.05.2023 – Folk concert at Tbilisi State Conservatoire

19.05.2023 – Ensemble Tutarchela’s concert of world folk music at the Folklore State Center.

20-21.05.2023 – Ensemble Erisioni’s concerts at Tbilisi Concert Hall.

21.05.2023 – Concert of the students of Baghdati and Khoni choirmaster’s schools in Baghdati.

21.05.2023 – Ensemble Didgori’s concert in Kobuleti.

22.05.2023 – Ensemble Didgori’s concert in the village of Merisi, Keda municipality.

23.05.2023 – Ensemble Didgori’s concert in the village of Khabelashvilebi, Shuakhevi municipality.

23.05.2023 – Concert of the students of Kharagauli, Akhaltsikhe, Samtredia and Zestaponi choirmaster’s schools in Kharagauli.

24.05.2023 – Ensemble Didgori’s concert in Khulo.

25.05.2023 – Ensemble Didgori’s concert in the village of Acharistkali, Khelvachauri municipality.

27.05.2023 – Joint concert of the Creative Group of Ethnomusicologists Nanina and folk ensemble Mzeshina in Borjomi.

28.05.2023 – Joint concert of the Creative Group of Ethnomusicologists Nanina and folk ensemble Meskheta in Akhaltsikhe.

29.05.2023 – Ensemble Bolnisi's solo concert in Kazbegi

31.05-1.06.2023 – Solo concert of Anzor Erkomaishvili State ensemble of Georgian folk song Martve in Ozurgeti and Batumi, dedicated to Martve's 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary

2.06.2023 – Solo concert of the State folk song ensemble Basiani as part of the Toradze International Festival, at the Grand Hall of the Conservatoire

5.06.2023 – Solo concert of Achara State Academic Song and Dance Ensemble Arsiani at Tbilisi Rustaveli Theater.

19.06.2023 – Ensemble Bolnisi's solo concert in Tetrtskaro

22.06.2023 – A concert of singer-chorists ensemble Perkhisa at "Muza" Center of Culture

24.06.2023 – Charity folk concert with the participation of ensembles Binuli, Shavnabada, Patara kakhi, Gurjaani, and the ensemble of the National School of Folklore at Tbilisi Kote Marjanishvili Drama Theater

25.06.2023 – Premiere of the folk performance "Always Georgian" of Anzor Erkomaishvili State Ensemble of Georgian Folk Song Martve and its studio "Theatrali" at G.Chitaia Ethnographic Museum in Tbilisi.

26.06.2023 – A concert of the Holy Trinity Patriarchal Cathedral Choir at Tbilisi Rustaveli Theater.

29.06.2023 – A creative evening of Ensemble Rekheuli at Ozurgeti Folklore Center

30.06.2023 – Solo concert of ensemble Sameba at the Holy Trinity Youth Center.

### ***Concert tours***

9-12.02.2023 – Ensemble Rikhi participated in the International festival "Unity Days of Orthodox Youth" in Poland.

12-15.02.2023 – Ensemble Rustavi's concerts in Berlin, Warsaw and Hamburg.

15.02.2023 – Ensemble Me rustveli's solo concert in Lithuania.

26.02.2023-5.03.2023 – Ensemble Musikeli's concerts in Latvia and Lithuania.

6.03.2023 – Ensemble Rustavi participated in the opening ceremony of ITB Berlin 2023.

15-17.03.2023 – Master classes of Nino Naneishvili and ensemble Ialoni in Finland.

18.03.2023 – Ensemble Ialoni's concert in Finland.

15.04.2023 – Ensemble Me rustveli's solo concert in Poland.

21.04.2023-27.04.2023 – Ensemble Basiani's concerts in Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Germany.

3-7.05.2023 – Ensemble Basiani participated in the annual Gala event planned by the Asian Bank in South Korea.

10.05.2023-23.05.2023 – Master classes of ensembles Ialoni and Musikeli in Great Britain.

25-28.05.2023 – Folk-ethnographic studio "Amer-Imeri" participated in the Festival "Skamba skamba kankliai" in Lithuania.

26.05.2023 – Concert of Folk-ethnographic studio "Amer-Imeri" in Vilnius on the occasion of Georgia's Independence Day.

26.05.2023 – Ensemble Musikeli's solo concert in Riga

28.05.2023 – Ensemble Basiani's concert in Stockholm

31.05.2023 – Ensemble Basiani's concert in Innsbruck

1.06.2023 – Ensemble Shavnabada's concert in Denmark

19-20.06.2023 – Nino Naneishvili's master classes of Georgian traditional music in Finland.

19-21.06.2023 – Concerts of ensemble Gorda and Nino Nakeuri in Paris.

### ***Expeditions***

6.01.2023 – Ethnomusicologist Giorgi Kraveishvili's expedition to the village of Sarpi, Khopa district.

13-16.03.2023 – Sandro Natadze's expedition to the Azerbaijani villages of Keshalo, Sadakhlo and Gachaghani.

19.04.2023 – Expedition of the Folklore State Center employees in the footsteps of Tamar Mamaladze to the villages of Karaleti, Rekha, Berbuki.

21.04.2023 – Expedition of Folklore State Center employees in the footsteps of Tamar Mamaladze to the villages of Mejriskhevi and Kheltubani

4.05.2023 – Expedition of the Folklore State Center employees in the footsteps of Tamar Mamaladze to the villages of Bershueti, Tkviavi and Ateni

14-23.05.2023 – Expedition of Sandro Natadze of the Folklore State Center, to the Azerbaijani villages of Keshalo, Iormughanlo, Marneuli, Kapanakhchi, Chapala, Marneuli, Mamkhuti, Amamlo, Bolnisi.

9.06.2023 – Expedition of ethnomusicologist Maia Gelashvili to Guram Berdzenishvili in Chokhatauri District and to the family of Tsikho Imedaishvili in the village of Vani

### ***Publications***

Creative Group of Ethnomusicologists Nanina released a new audio album “Nanina’s Big Family – The Singing Posterity”



Ensemble Ialoni released a new audio album of Christmas hymns



Folk ensemble Chela released an audio album



*Prepared by Sopiko Kotrikadze*

## **Nanina is 20**

In 2023, women's folk ensemble Nanina celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with several important events. Before we touch on these events, here is a brief history of Nanina.

Women's folk ensemble Nanina was created in Tbilisi under Tea Kasaburi's direction in 2003. It aimed at seeking for, researching and performing women's repertoire. Majority of the ensemble members were ethnomusicologists. They graduated from Tbilisi State Conservatoire under the guidance of Edisher Garakanidze, Kukuri Chokhanelidze, Ioseb Zhordania and started their activities in Folk music, when authentic trends were introduced in scenic performance. Following in the footsteps of women's ensemble Mztamze and men's ensemble

Mtiebi, which were created on Edisher Garakandze's initiative, Nanina continued to popularize performance of Georgian traditional music in non-academic manner, as close to the source as possible, searching for songs in expeditions, brought to light the examples of all genres of women's repertoire, maintaining the peculiarities of their performance (dance, round dance, instrumental accompaniment), etc.

Over 18 years of work, they accumulated extensive experience in seeking for, researching, performing and popularizing examples of women's traditional music. In 2021, on the basis of the ensemble and under Maka Khardziani's leadership the "Creative Group of Ethnomusicologists" was created; the group focused on the research of Georgian folk music, especially, women's traditional repertoire.

The first serious project – **Georgian Women's Traditional Music Festival "Nanina"** was held on the initiative and organized by the creative group of ethnomusicologists "Nanina" and with the support of the Tbilisi City Hall and the Azor Erkomashvili Folklore State Center of Georgia on 1-2 May, 2023.



Poster of the Festival Nanina

This was the first precedent of this kind of festival in Georgia. Such a large-scale research of traditional female repertoire had not been conducted in Georgian folklore.

The topic of the 1<sup>st</sup> festival was "Lullaby". In a narrow sense, "lullaby" comprises the examples of one of the most archaic genres of Georgian folklore – the songs for putting children to sleep, in a broad sense, it combines the traditions, rituals, beliefs related to the most important moment in a woman's life – birth of a child – which are reflected in all fields of folklore.

The festival comprised conference, presentation and concert segments. At the scientific conference presented were ethnomusicological, ethnological, historical, literary, music-therapeutic, linguistic works related to the birth of a child; thus, the genre of women's traditional music "lullaby" was studied via a multidisciplinary method, which is a novelty in Georgian ethnomusicology; the presentation segment presented video clips depicting musical, folklore and ethnographic traditions associated with the birth of a child, preserved in Georgia's 14 regions, the concert participants included 30 female ensembles from Tbilisi and the regions, as well as invited guests. The first festival was dedicated to the memory of Nino Kalandadze, the first researcher of lullabies, a well-known ethnomusicologist, the author of the first fundamental work dedicated to lullabies in Georgian ethnomusicology. This was the topic of her doctoral dissertation: "Georgian *Nana*: the Issues of Genre, Semantics and Articulation", which is a reference book for the researchers of this genre.

Group "Nanina" plans to hold a festival every year and gradually expose all the genres of Georgian women's repertoire (healing, labor, weather change, wedding, funeral, amusing); on the basis of the materials accumulated at the festival, to publish the "Anthology of Georgian Women's traditional music" which will contribute to filling the gap in this field in Georgian ethnomusicology.



Within the framework of the anniversary events, with the financial support of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia, Nanina released the audio album “Nanina’s Big Family - The Singing Posterity”, the presentation of which was held at the Anzor Erkomaishvili Folklore State Center on April 7.

Folk song is known to have survived thanks to the tradition of oral transmission from generation to generation. Joint musicking of generations was the most natural form for the existence of folklore and one of the main means to preserve musical traditions. This is what Anzor Erkomaishvili implied when he said: “To save a song, you need to teach it to children!”

It is this deeply national spirit that became the source of inspiration and main ideological concept of the project **“Nanina’s Big Family - The Singing Posterity”**. Main idea of the audio album is to preserve traditions, basing on the unity of generations. Family musicking is one of the most important traditions, which is an important guarantee for the vitality of Georgian folk music. The phenomenon of a family, especially a large family, inspires the faith that something can be done better thanks to unity; considering all this, main message of Nanina’s big family for the society is that each of us, together with our own family, is an integral part of one big family. We are many, we sing together, love unites and helps us strengthen each other.

The second idea is that today, when there are new technologies and thanks to them huge distances can be overcome at the touch of a button, we can be musicking together from anywhere in the world. Nanina’s audio album is an example of realizing these possibilities. The point is that we started working on the audio album during the pandemic, for which we recorded family performances as separate voice-parts in home environment. Some of the ensemble members were abroad, which is why they had to sing remotely with their families and with us in Georgia. Then we combined the voices, recorded

in different geographical locations, using software, and despite the distance, we still sang together.



Presentation of the audio album

It should be noted that “Nanina’s Big Family – The Singing Posterity” is the first precedent of an audio album recorded by remote method in the audio space of Georgian folk music.

Nanina’s third project **“Let’s go around Georgia with singing”**, also implemented with the financial support of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia, included two concerts in Samtskhe-Javakheti region, namely in the cities of Borjomi and Akhaltsikhe, together with local ensembles and students of the choirmaster’s schools.



Poster of the Borjomi concert

Nanina has implemented similar projects many times in different parts of Georgia. It is aimed at reviving and popularizing the ancestors' heritage

through the joint efforts of different generations of urban and regional ensembles. This will inspire young people to love their traditional music and motivate them to strive for its preservation.



Poster of the Akhaltsikhe concert

For us, as ethnomusicologists, it was especially important that polyphonic songs be heard on the territory of Meskheti, where Georgian polyphony was lost due to historical difficulties – wars, migrations or religious oppression. Genuin Meskhetian song was saved from oblivion by individual persons. Fortunately, in recent decades, folklore life in this region has been revived and Meskhetian songs, surviving as single-part examples, have been polyphonized. Ensemble Mzeshina of female singer-chanters from Borjomi and male ensemble Meshkheti from Akhaltsikhe are aimed at finding-restoring-preserving-popularizing traditional Meskhetian music, which is evidenced by their diverse repertoire, as well as the abundance and activity of students at local choirmaster's schools.

Creative Group of Ethnomusicologists  
Nanina continues to serve traditional music and plans to implement many more interesting projects.

**Maka Kharziani**

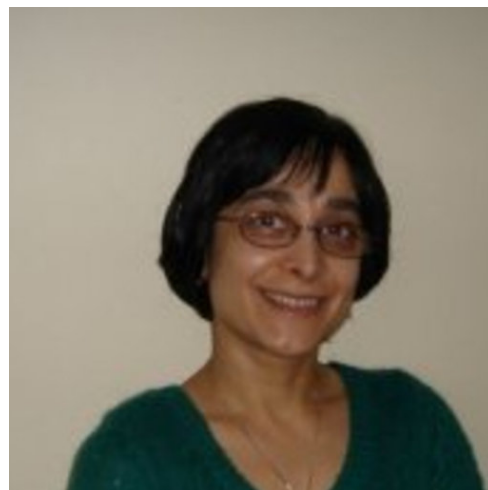
*Director of Nanina the Creative  
group of Ethnomusicologists*

## *Renowned Georgian Ethnomusicologists*

### **Nino Tsitsishvili**

Nino Tsitsishvili is an Australia-based Georgian ethnomusicologist. She, together with her family, has lived in Melbourne – the cultural and scientific capital of Australia, since 1995.

The daughter of composer Givi Tsitsishvili and musicologist Makvala Gugeshashvili, Nino, had musicality in her genes, but along with her love of music, from early age she was interested in scientific research of the past.



**Nino Tsitsishvili**

It is difficult to find a purely ethnomusicological example among Nino's publications.

In her works, ethnomusicology is usually only one aspect of the research. Other aspects include sociology, gender, ethnography, archaeology, biology, genetics, and interest in evolutionary issues in recent years.

Nino showed this propensity for interdisciplinary research from the very first course of specialization at Tbilisi State Conservatoire. From the very beginning, she chose comparative study of ethnomusicological material and intensively started searching for Georgian-Bulgarian folk and ethnographic parallels. Her works dedicated to this issue were first published in Georgian (1987-1988), then



in Russian, in the advanced Soviet ethnographic journal "Soviet Ethnography" (in 1991). After that, it was immediately translated by Bulgarian colleagues and published in the journal "Bulgarsky folklor" of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (in 1991).

In addition to Bulgarian-Georgian parallels, Nino's scientific interests encompass several thematic areas. One of them is the analysis of monophonic songs of Eastern Georgia, *Orovela-urmuli* and polyphonic table songs in folk-ethnographic comparative context of the Middle East, and in the light of the migration of ancient Indo-European tribes in particular. Nino got interested in this issue while still in Georgia, but with full energy plunged into the work on this topic in Australia, as a Master student at Monash University. As a result of Nino's study, using the original method of eight-factor research developed by herself, she analyzed in detail the stylistic characteristics of *Orovella-urmuli* and table songs, namely: the results of the research in melody, meter-rhythm, modal system, form, social environment, archeology and genetics; basing on all this, she convincingly substantiated musical traces of the invasion of ancient Indo-European tribes in East Georgia, which is not observed in the musical folklore of West Georgia.

The supervisor of Nino's Master thesis, renowned Australian researcher of Indian music Rees Flora was so impressed by Nino's work that advised her to publish it in the leading American journal "Ethnomusicology".

The works on this topic were published in Georgian, and later in English, including the collection of scientific works "17 arguments about Georgian polyphony" prepared by the American "Nova Science" Publishers (2010).

It can be said that the issue of gender studies is one of the most important topics of Nino's research work. It is noteworthy that Nino became interested in this topic after moving to Australia, and in 1999, when it came to writing Doctoral disserta-

tion (under the supervision of Australia's most eminent ethnomusicologist, Margaret Kartomi), Nino and Margaret together decided to pay attention to gender issue in Georgian music.

Here I would like to note that the issue of gender is broader than it is often understood. At that time, it was interpreted in Georgian ethnomusicology as the study of folk genres related to women and men. Gender research concerns artificial (cultural) or natural (objective physiological) barriers, which exist in virtually all countries, both traditional (such as, e.g. Georgia) and the most seemingly progressive Western countries (USA, Britain, Australia).



**Nino Tsitsishvili with her family –  
Jozeph Jordania and Sandro Jordania**

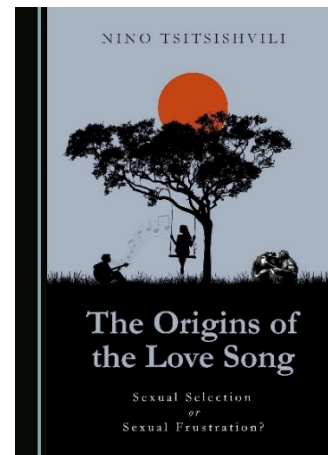
Nino's doctoral dissertation "National Unity and Gender Division: Ideology and Practice in Georgian Traditional Music" was highly estimated by the reviewer Tim Rice of UCLA, Los Angeles. Soon the thesis was published as a book in English by "Lambert Academic Publishing House", Saarbrücken. Shortly thereafter, from 2006 to 2011, Nino was a co-chair of the ICTM Group for Gender Studies.

Nino's article "Men can play and sing better than women: singing and patriarchy at the Georgian feast" prepared basing on the material of her

doctoral thesis, remains the only article by Georgian ethnomusicologists published in the American magazine “Ethnomusicology” in 2006. By the way, “Lambert” academic publishing house published Nino’s two books at the same time: her Doctoral dissertation and collection of works “Cultural Paradigms and Political Changes in the Caucasus”, prepared with the participation of well-known Georgian and foreign scholars working on Georgian issues.

A topic for separate conversation is Nino’s research on modern popular music genre. By the way, Nino taught the course “American Music and Popular Culture” at Monash University, one of the leading universities in Australia. This interest of Nino was intensified by the appearance and success of Georgian female rock ensemble Embrioni in 2002-2006. She presented and published papers and articles about this rock group, in which she discusses the relation between rock music and gender; particularly, how feminism and anti-patriarchy ideas are realized by female rock group Embrioni. By the way, while in Australia, Nino studied playing electric guitar with passion, and probably this explains that she was offered to write a review article on Georgian popular and jazz music genres for “Encyclopedia of Modern Music” published in Italy.

Frequently cited is Nino’s 2009 article “National Ideologies in the Age of Global Confluence: Georgian Polyphonic Singing as an Intangible Masterpiece Proclaimed by UNESCO”, in which Nino observes and analyzes negative ideological consequences of the official recognition of Georgian vocal polyphony which is hardly noticeable for the other genres of national music; this, along with publications, was expressed in a film shot together with Hugo Zemp – renowned Swiss ethnomusicologist. Nino’s collaboration with Hugo Zemp continued in the film “Polyphonic Lullabies of Kakheti” directed by Zemp and Nona Lomidze in 2019, which also uses the results of Nino’s scientific research.



Nino Tsitsishvili’s monograph “The Origin of Love Songs: Sexual Selection or Sexual Frustration?”

Nino, as a Georgian ethnomusicologist, who has blood relation to Giorgi Babilodze – the legend of *krimanchuli*, who herself perfectly sings Gurian *krimanchuli*, naturally had an interest and inclination to delve into the depths of Gurian polyphony. So, this topic is well reflected in her research work. Most recently, the collection dedicated to Anzor Erkomaishvili, published in Cambridge in 2023, includes her letter, which analyzes the song “Mival Guriashi mara” in terms of improvisational mastery, basing on the improvisation variants of two great masters, Anzor Erkomaishvili and Vazha Gogoladze, both recognized legends of Gurian improvisation.

In her letter included in the recently published (Cambridge 2023) collection dedicated to Anzor Erkomaishvili, the song “Mival guriashi, mara” is analyzed from the standpoint of improvisation mastery, basing on the improvisation variants of two great masters Anzor Erkomaishvili and Vazha Gogoladze, recognized legends of Gurian improvisation.

Another noteworthy topic of Nino’s research is human evolution. Here, two important areas of Nino’s interest the past and gender issues seem to organically merge with each other. In this regard, Nino presented the results of her research at a number of international conferences. Just recently,

in November 2022, her monograph “The Origin of Love Songs: Sexual Selection or Sexual Frustration?” was published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing. The book proposes a completely new model for the formation of human culture and sociality. Basing on the in-depth study of social-sexual relations in human groups at various development stages of human society, she comes to the conclusion that, the stricter sex regulation and religious taboos in a society, the more love songs in this culture. In this regard, Nino also refers to Alan Lomax's ideas about music and sexual taboos. At the same time, from the book we learn that in a number of human cultures, mostly among collectors, sexual life is not strictly regulated, and it is in such cultures that love songs are either absent or very few and insignificant, and are often borrowed from neighboring cultures.

In addition to scientific work, Nino Tsitsishvili, like other professional ethnomusicologists, has conducted a number of expeditions, has recorded valuable material in Guria, Svaneti, Kakheti, Khevsureti, Racha, Khevi; apart from Tbilisi she has delivered papers at international conferences in Chicago, Melbourne, Honolulu, Toronto, Cagliari, Vienna, Sofia, Atlanta; has held master classes and workshops in New Zealand, Canada, Australia, USA, France, Great Britain. As a performer of Georgian folk songs (a member of the ensembles Golden Fleece, Nana and Bebia), Nino has performed at virtually all major festivals in Australia, besides, with concerts she has been to England, Wales, Scotland, Chicago, Paris, Los Angeles.



**Nino Tsitsishvili with Australian women's ensemble "Utskho Suneli"**

I would like to make special mention of Nino's great contribution to the popularization of Georgian music in Australia. For many years, ensembles Alilo, Breathing Space, Utskho Suneli, Melbourne Georgian Choir studied Georgian songs with Nino's help; With her assistance, the students of the University of Melbourne get familiarized with the polyphony of Georgia and other countries. I would especially like to note formation of the subject "Georgian choir" under Nino's direction at Melbourne Polytechnic University, which enjoys great success among the students and for 8 years now, "Georgian Choir" has been a subject of the undergraduate music curriculum at this university.

In conclusion, it can be said that Nino Tsitsishvili is an extremely active Georgian ethnomusicologist in Australia; her restless nature and constant strive for self-improvement explains her constantly growing authority among Georgian and foreign colleagues.

**Joseph Jordania**

*Doctor of Musicology, Honorary fellow  
of the Melbourne Conservatorium of  
Music at the University of Melbourne*

## **The Project “Network of UNESCO Cultural Spaces” – a Meeting Place for an International Family**

This project showed me the defenders of traditional culture, scattered worldwide, as one big family. The members of this family are people who deeply believe in the eternal value of ancient cultures and their elements, and are lost in the search of adequate forms for its preservation in contemporary environment.

“Network of UNESCO Cultural Spaces” brought together European enthusiasts of this family to share with each other the elements of their intangible culture and the experience of their preservation and dissemination.



**Participants of the project in Portugal**

This project, initiated by the Latvian “Ethnic Culture Center Suiti Foundation” and supported by Erasmus+, involves Georgian ethnomusicologists along with their Estonian, Macedonian, Italian, Croatian and Portuguese colleagues, folk performers and cultural figures. The Georgian partner the “Centre of Georgian Art and Culture” together with the employees of the “Folklore State Center of Georgia” and “International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony of Tbilisi State Conservatoire” (including me) visited the project member

countries in the last 2 years and also hosted them in Georgia in October, 2022.

Main goal of these mobilities is to share the practices and individual experiences in the preservation forms of European cultural heritage with the direct involvement of UNESCO, and finally, to find more effective ways for this. However, the friendship developed in this process and overlapping of creative interests laid foundation for many international joint projects. And most importantly, it brought together the members of the common family scattered throughout European countries in one space. All project participants seem to feel the exclusiveness of this fact, and, probably, this is why, during such mobility, any moment free from the activities determined by the project goals (seminars, lectures, meetings) turns into an international folklore holiday. Even a seemingly boring bus ride transforms into an improvisational folk concert. It’s a true jam session, when a group singing in the back of the bus often responds to another group singing in the front of the bus. Sometimes all this turns into a real folklore competition, which was typical of old folklore practice. In our country, especially in Guria, such improvisational “competitions” were often held among singers. Anzor Erkomaishvili, the renowned figure in Georgian folk music, recalled this many times.

For me, the Project “UNESCO Cultural Spaces” and similar initiatives are the best examples of how the idea of internationality and preservation of intangible cultural heritage can coexist harmoniously in the modern world. And that it is really possible to preserve the world’s cultural diversity in current globalized environment, and at the same time in natural and adequate forms for modernity.

**Teona Lomsadze**  
*Specialist of the IRCTP*



## **Folk Ensemble Meskheti**

*Folk ensemble Meskheti of Akhaltsikhe municipality counts over 70 years of history. Currently, it exists on the basis of Akhaltsikhe city Union of cultural institutions. The ensemble's repertoire includes folk songs of Meskheti and other parts of Georgia, as well as church hymns and compositional examples.*

**Zaza Tamarashvili** – director of the Meskheti talks in detail about the creative life of the ensemble:

Ensemble Meskheti was created in 1949. According to one report, the ensemble was initially directed by Noko Khurtsia. I have this information from Guram Zambakhidze, the oldest member of the ensemble. Subsequently, the ensemble changed its directors: these were Ketevan Ghogheridze, Valerian Maghradze, Shota Altunashvili, Ala Munjishvili... In the beginning it was a mixed female-male choir, which performed both folk and composers' songs. From 1993, it was a male ensemble. At that time, the choir was directed by Shota Altunashvili. This is when I joined them. I have directed the ensemble since 2005 after Shota Altunashvili's passing.



**Zaza Tamarashvili** – Director of ensemble Meskheti

The ensemble members represent different generations. Three of them: Eduard Sadaterashvili,

Tariel Zumbadze and Tamaz Kuchadze, are the old generation representatives, who also sang in old choir. Sadly, some of the elderly members of the ensemble are no longer with us. We also have middle-age and young generation representatives: Zura Inasaridze, Vasil Begishvili, Archil Kapanadze, Dato Okromelidze, Goiko Gabedava... There are about ten of us in total. None of us have special musical education. I am a mathematician. I currently work in my profession. I am also director of Rabati – the castle of Akhaltsikhe. We have a puppet theater actor, a rescue service employee, etc. Along with singing in the ensemble, they are engaged in different fields.



**Folk ensemble Meskheti**

Of course, Meskhetian songs occupy a special place in our repertoire. We sing the songs, or variants of songs, which are practically not sung by other ensembles. For example, our repertoire includes a distinctive variant of Meskhetian "Mravalzhamier", also the song "Dzmano", which Shota Altunashvili recorded in the village of Ude. Of other distinguished Meskhetian examples noteworthy are: "Samkrela", "Avtandil Gadinadira", "Samnive Sheviqarenit", Meskhetian "Mze Shina", etc. We have learned most of the songs from Shota Altunashvili – a great benefactor of Meskhetian songs. Also invaluable is Valerian Maghradze's merit. We have his musical notes that we still use as guidelines. In addition, when expeditions come to



Meskheta, I am lucky enough to accompany the specialists. Of course, today the number of ethno-phores in Meskheta is quite small, although we have information about certain songs that are still performed in villages. One such is the wedding song “Otkhi tsqaro dis”. As for the manner of performance, we try to very carefully follow the legacy of our ancestors. In terms of performance I, to a certain extent, consider the remarks and advice of the senior members, although it is me who leads the process of analyzing and teaching a new song. Along with Meskhetaian songs, our repertoire includes songs from almost all parts of Georgia: Kartli-Kakhetian, Imeretian, Megrelian, Svan examples, etc. In 2020, we released an audio album which comprises Meskhetaian repertoire and examples from other parts of Georgia, as well as original authorial songs on Meskhetaian themes. Such songs are Gomar Sikharulidze’s “Himni meskhets” also “Simghera Vardziaze”, etc. We also play folk musical instruments: we have several songs with *panduri* accompaniment. We perform church hymns as well. The members of our ensemble are chanters at various churches. On big holidays, we try to chant together at Akhaltsikhe Cathedral.

It should be noted that Ensemble Meskheta has always led and still does an active creative life. The ensemble is funded by the municipality, so it actively participates in both municipal and country-wide important events. Taking this opportunity, I would like to thank the Akhaltsikhe municipality for assisting the ensemble in its active creative life, in every possible way.

Meskheta has toured many countries, such as Russia (1978, 1982), Romania (1981), Bulgaria (1987), Turkey (1999, 2017, 2018), Armenia (2009), Holland (2018, 2019), Poland (2019). I would especially single out Poland, where we held a solo concert at a theater festival. Meskheta has released two audio albums. The ensemble is a permanent participant of the National Folklore Festival. In 2022, we

were among the winners of the Festival. Meskheta annually participates in “Art Geni” Festival.

In the near future, together with the dance ensemble of Akhaltsikhe Public School #1, we are planning a solo concert at the Big Concert Hall in Tbilisi. We are also going to participate in annual “Art Geni” Festival in summer. We also have a proposal from Holland, which we will probably visit in November.

*Recorded by Sophiko Kotrikadze*

### *Foreigners about Georgian Traditional Music*

#### **The intensity of impressions of Georgian songs are far beyond any expectation...**

When, in 2007, I met Nona Lomidze at the ICTM World Conference in Vienna and heard from her about the opportunity to participate in the 4th International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony in Tbilisi, I was very excited, because I had already heard a lot about famous Georgian conferences when I was a student at St. Petersburg State Conservatory in the 1980s. At that time I was researching heterophony in ritual songs of the Russian-Belarusian borderland and, naturally, was very interested in everything connected with traditional polyphony. Among St. Petersburg ethnomusicologists much was talked about the revolutionary conferences in Borjomi, which raised the study of folk polyphony in the then Soviet Union to a new level and which was attended by leading local and Western scholars.

After I moved to Estonia in 1992 and started working at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, I found a new intriguing subject of study – polyphonic songs of the Seto, a small people living in South-East Estonia and having an extremely original ancient tradition of vocal polyphony.



**Zanna Partlas**

Seto songs amazed me with their uniqueness and beauty and became main topic of my research for many years, as well as the subject of many of my papers at Tbilisi symposia. My first symposium, in 2008, was overshadowed by the invasion by Russian troops into Georgia in August of that year.

However, despite the alarming situation and the absence of some foreign participants, I was very enthusiastic about the symposium, both for its scientific level and excellent concerts. Of course, I knew and loved Georgian singing before, but the intensity of my impressions of Georgian songs and some other polyphonic traditions during the symposium was far beyond my expectations.

Afterwards, I participated in almost all Tbilisi symposia and each time I discovered something new about both ethnomusicology and traditional music.

One attractive feature of the Tbilisi symposia is that there is a group of regular participants which includes prominent scientists from different Countries. This provides an opportunity to follow several research projects as they develop. Going to another symposium, I always look forward to continuing the discussions of past symposia. I am particularly interested in research on Georgian polyphonic songs, with different theoretical and technical methods. Here it is interesting to compare the approaches and research results of Georgian and foreign ethnomusicologists. There are also “continuing themes” on other ethnic traditions. The variety of topics and

large geographical coverage of musical traditions is another attractive aspect of the Tbilisi conferences. I am happy that, over the years, I have been able to fulfil the mission of presenting various aspects of Seto polyphonic singing to international ethnomusicological community.

Recently I have also started to actively research other Finno-Ugric polyphonic styles. Since 2015, in cooperation with Mordovian State University, I have repeatedly conducted fieldwork in Mordovia, making multi-channel recordings of Moksha and Erzya songs. In 2018 I presented the first results of my Mordovian research in Tbilisi. I spent the 2021-2022 academic year at the Ohio State University (USA), where I learned the method of corpus analysis using Moksha songs. Applying corpus analysis to traditional polyphonic singing, as far as I know, has not been practiced by ethnomusicologists before. This might be the topic of my next paper in Tbilisi. At a future symposium in Tbilisi I also hope to present Udmurt polyphonic songs, basing on the recordings made by our expedition to northern Udmurtia in 2017.

Returning to the attractive features of the Tbilisi symposia on traditional polyphony, I cannot fail to mention their special warm friendly atmosphere and incredible hospitality and care of the organisers. The unique and irresistible vibe of Tbilisi and Georgia plays its part here. Despite intense intellectual work at numerous scientific sessions, I always perceive and anticipate the Tbilisi symposia as celebrations of music, science, friendship and sunshine. I must confess that I have long had a pleasant addiction to them, which I do not intend to fight against.

**Žanna Pärtlas**

*Estonian ethnomusicologist, Senior Researcher at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre*

## *Beneficents of Georgian Song*

### **Beglar and Kionia Akobia**

Beglar Akobia and Kionia Baramia are among those who preserved Georgian musical culture for the posterity. Their names are closely related to traditional Megrelian folk song. It was immense love to folk songs that bound them together.

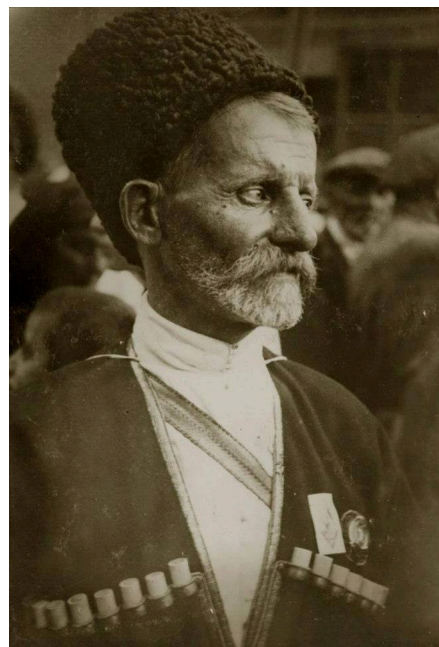
Beglar Akobia (1881- 1947) was born in the village of Kakhati, Zugdidi district. Due to the family hardships, he only finished two-class school in Zugdidi. Despite great determination, he entered the public arena with this little knowledge. Kionia Baramia (1892-1964) – his life companion, great master of playing the *chonguri* was born in the city of Zugdidi. She had musical talent from childhood. She was especially attracted to *chonguri*. At the age of 7 she beautifully played this complex instrument. As she herself recalled, she was so small that she could not reach the handle of *chonguri* with her hand.

Beglar met Kionia at the age of 16. The young man fell in love with Kionia's musical talent and voice, and soon, in 1910, they got married. The wealth of Akobias' modest family was the *chonguri* of their ancestors, on which both of them played with amazing skill. This humble couple, surprisingly fond of folk songs, is considered a pioneer in restoration and popularization of Georgian *chonguri*.

Together with their close friend Solomon Markosia, the young couple formed a small ensemble. Initially, the ensemble consisted of five members; then it gradually increased to 12. At that time, it was fairly difficult to form an ensemble and put it on its feet. But, Beglar and Kionia worked tirelessly and created their own variants, which soon bore fruits.

The ensemble debuted at the Zugdidi club in 1922. The audience heard Kionia's and Beglar's lyrical voices for the first time. Soon the story of their virtuoso performance reached other regions and cities, far beyond Zugdidi district.

This was followed by the concerts in: Tsqaltubo, Kutaisi, Tbilisi, in various cities of Guria and Abkhazia, in Armenia. The Akobias were welcomed with warmth and love everywhere; the audience rewarded each of their songs with thunderous applause.



**Beglar Akobia**

From 1930, the ensemble was officially called the Ensemble of Megrelian Chonguri players. Its youngest member was Beglar's and Kionia's daughter, 7-year-old Nutsa Akobia. The ensemble's main supporting force was Kionia; director and organizer – Beglar Akobia.

In 1931, Beglar Akobia's chonguri players' ensemble was inspected and approved by the special commission of the People's Commissariat of Education. The commission was particularly impressed by Kionia's virtuoso playing the *chonguri*. Composers and musicologists such as Dimitri Arakishvili, Kote Potskhverashvili, Grigol Kokeladze, Prof. Grigol Chhikvadze were interested in the ensemble's activity.

The ensemble of Beglar and Kionia Akobia took part in many Olympiads, wherever they went they enchanted everyone with magical Megrelian melodies on *chonguri*. They performed their reper-

toire in almost all parts of Georgia. The ensemble was great success everywhere and always. This is confirmed by numerous reviews that have survived in the press.

The ensemble was greatly supported by Grigol Chkhikvadze, musicologist, Honored Worker of Arts, who was music editor at the Radio Committee in those years; thanks to him Beglar Akobia and his choir were frequent guests of the Georgian Radio Committee. In addition, the ensemble took part in the Radio Festival, and boasted great success and victories.

In 1936, a gramophone expedition visited Tbilisi, they aimed at recording the best examples of Georgian folk and professional music on gramophone records. The expedition recorded a number of choirs and individual performers. Among them: East Georgian choir – directed by Sandro Kavsadze; West Georgian choir – directed by Kirile Pachkoria; the choir from Guria – directed by Varlam Simonishvili; the choir from Samegrelo – directed by Rema Shelegia; Ensemble of Gurian-Acharan folk song – directed by Artem Erkomaishvili. Along with these excellent ensembles, the commission also recorded two ensembles of *chonguri* players: directed by Beglar Akobia and Avksenti Megreldze; it also recorded many folk songs with *chonguri* accompaniment from the repertoire of Akobia's choir.

Beglar and Kionia Akobia revived and included twelve completely forgotten Megrelian folk examples in the choir's repertoire and also created seventeen new songs on folk motifs; among these were: "Sesia", "Chela", "Veengara nana skua", "Qazakhishi obireshi", "Rkinashi khoji", "Pirveli mesi", "Chaishi kultura", "Chita jari", "Si soul, si tsira", "Mapshalia", "Dida vainana", "Chkim toronji", "No diantili", "Gachireba qurdelishi"; "Zari", "Simghera gmir Kantariaze", "Egeb kortuli gagachkile", "Simghera utu mikavaze", "Simghera stalinze", "Simghera rustavelze", "Moskopi", "Nana samshoblo midzakhuna", and others.



**Kionia Baramia-Akobia**

The songs created by the Akobias were later performed by various ensembles. By the way, Pavle Akobia, the author of the text for Megrelian "Chela" was a member of Beglar Akobia's choir. As soon as "Chela" was published, it was noticed and turned into a song by renowned choirmasters Dzuku Lolua and Rema Shelegia. The song immediately became popular. But not everyone could perform it at a high level. Pavle himself noted: "Sadly the choirs sing "Chela" with distortions. It is performed in an acceptable manner by Beglar Akobia's ensemble of *chonguri* players". Pavle Akobia also wrote the texts for other famous Megrelian songs: "Erekheli", "Gepshvat ghvinis kharatia", "Geshvia-geshvia", "Ula moko kakhatisha", "Nanaia nana skua", "Sisatuta", "Uchardia ucha kochi".

Beglar Akobia's ensemble enthralled the audiences everywhere with the perfect combination of the *chonguri* and vocals; by masterly performance of old Megrelian, Abkhazian and Svan songs. Noteworthy is the fruitful work of the choir and its director on the correct pronunciation of song lyrics. Thanks to Kionia Akobia's talent and flexible voice, the entire choir would become real Svan and Abkhazian when singing the songs of these regions.



They performed Svan hunter's song "Betkilis simghera" with round dance particularly well.

Beglar Akobia's choir always boasted a rich repertoire, which included about one hundred songs. Of these about forty were choral songs with *chonguri* accompaniment. The choir's repertoire was diverse in genres as well. As the press of that time noted great advantage of the choir as compared to other, similar choirs was that it "performed not only Megrelian, but also Svan, Abkhazian, Gurian and other folk songs in natural, unedited and unvarnished way".

Beglar Akobia, who was deeply in love with folk songs, passed away unexpectedly on 18 April, 1947. His wife, Kionia Akobia, worthily directed the ensemble over the years. The virtuoso Georgian *chonguri* player passed away in 1964. She is interred in Zugdidi, next to her husband.

*The material processed by* **Maka Khardziani**,  
*from the book: Masters of Georgian*  
*Folk Song. Samegrelo. Part III*

## Ensemble Ialoni's Tour to the UK

Women's ensemble of Georgian traditional music Ialoni (artistic director Nino Naneishvili) was on tour in the UK on 9- 23 May, 2023. Ialoni held 7 concerts and 6 master classes in different cities. It was delighting that there were Georgians among the audiences. Along with Ialoni, ensemble Musikeli of traditional music (artistic director Dimitri Kakulia) also held concerts.

We share the travel diary and impressions exclusively with the readers of the Bulletin, for which we would like to thank Mrs. Maka Khardziani – the compiler and editor of the publication.

The story went like this:

9 May. Tbilisi. Our plane soon disappeared into the clouds. Who did not like in childhood (or

still does not) to soar in the clouds?! This is how I was – when I was sinking in my colorful and magical dreams, I would sometimes find myself on this cloud, sometimes on that one. Dream is a dream... some dreams come true, some – do not, but this journey of Ialoni is more than a dream – at that moment my dream came true and I am in the clouds.

Let's put the dream aside, our trip has a special and responsible goal – popularization of Georgian folk music. We were well-aware of this before departure, but the way to the place of destination is filled with the emotions of joy and anxiety.

Lancaster – the first stop. A cozy town with beautiful houses and flowers, with caring hosts. The coziness of our host's garden is disturbed by the sound of raindrops, and I hum in my heart: "We don't want rain and water anymore, God, give us a glimpse of the sun." The rain did stop soon, though I can't say whether it was thanks to me.

10 May. Lancaster. A workshop. A lot of people are in the hall. They have gathered to learn Georgian traditional music. Wherever you look, you see curious eyes and warm gaze. The workshop went well. The goal has been achieved – another new example of Georgian traditional music will be sung in Lancaster.



Poster of ensemble Ialoni at the King's Place concert hall

Concert: "Dig out the pearls from the depth of ignorance and make the church of the Georgians



stronger through the angelic voices ..." – is heard with low voice, modest and full of hope. These words accompany all our backstage performances. These words are uttered by Nino, director of the ensemble, surrounded by Ialoni members – for the good performance of our work, in gratitude for every opportunity, for every day.

At the concert, through the songs from different parts of Georgia we shared our spoken or unsaid joys and sorrows with the listeners. In return, we received a lot of love, emotions and words of joy and admiration from them. All this made us infinitely happy. For the next concerts and workshops, we headed to Edinburgh, Hebden Bridge, Manchester, Empingham, Melton Mowbray, Chipping Warden, Cambridge and London.

Since we cannot tell you the story of every day of Ialoni's British tour due to the format of the publication, I will share only a few magical days with you.



One of the concerts of Ialoni in UK

16 May. Cambridge. "It's as if Georgian song is the only way to spread peace in the world in these troubled times," says our hostess Mrs. Miranda Armour-Brown. Miranda's and Ashlin's family has hosted many Georgian musicians in Cambridge. Georgian traditional music has become an integral part of their lives for several decades. Along with singing, they have also learned Georgian language. We spent many memorable moments with our

hosts in Cambridge, and I would like to share one with you.

Miranda's and Ashlin's guest room. There are some books on the grand piano. Fascinated by the beauty of the piano, I decided to approach it and touch the keys. Coming closer, I noticed Georgian inscriptions on the books. There were the books of Edisher and Giorgi Garakanidze in front of me. Those were very happy moments that I will never forget... From our teachers at the University of Chanting we knew that Edisher Garakanidze lectured in Cambridge and other cities and popularized Georgian traditional music abroad (not to mention Georgia). At that time, I somehow could not understand how this precious person managed all this and in such a quality..... So, when I saw these books, I remembered the conversations from the University of Chanting and everything became clear... After Edisher's passing, probably, like us in Georgia, they pinned all their hopes on Gigi, but... Despite time and distance, Miranda's and Ashlyn's love for them has not faded, because at the mention of Edisher and Gigi Garakanidze's names, their eyes twinkle with boundless love.

18 May. London. Today, the "Songlines Encounters Festival" was opened with Ialoni's concert program at the King's Place concert hall. This historic concert was a full house. Every emotion, every word that we received from the listeners, old and new fans, is our most precious treasure.

23 May. Tbilisi. We returned home extremely happy. I am sure, that the experience gained during the UK tour, will be of special importance for each Ialoni member and will be used for our professional growth.

**Teona Benashvili**

*A member of ensemble Ialoni,  
Master of Musicology*

## **A little about Our Folk Songs**

The topic we are going to talk about is not so easy... Much has been said and many opinions have been expressed about it. But it won't be redundant if I discuss some of its aspects, at least I, as a choir-master and folk singer, have the right to do so because if I cannot fully cover the issue, I will, at least, express my hidden thoughts.

Specifically, we deal with main branch of art called music ... Which everyone loves so selflessly.... We know that development of music has achieved many results. If once started from a single hempen string, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has reached a more accomplished form in the form of multiple keys, today the notes of Beethoven, Mozart and Wagner-Chopin can drive the world crazy, but let's not forget that they are accompanied by an inseparable twin – “folk music”, which comes from people's heart, which remains strong despite the “lack of culture”.

Here we will touch upon “folk music” ... main part of folk music is singing and chanting. In Georgia, it exists in seven forms: Kartli-Kakhetian, Svan, Abkhazian, Pshav-Khevsuretian, Imeretian, Megrelian and Gurian. In all seven regions, as everywhere, it has one protector, the people who experience joys and sorrows the same way. Our folk music speaks freely to everyone...

Initially, we will discuss the music of East and West Georgia.

All Georgians know that Kutaisi, the beautiful city of Imereti, embraced all West Georgia in its heart and listened to all its joys and woes. Our folk music is a rich, meaningful and beloved... But sadly, if once in the capital of Imereti one could hear various songs from different parts of Georgia, and Kutaisi itself produced very rich and charming Georgian tunes, both secular and sacred, today (unfortunately) their place has been taken by foreign tunes; our own ones have disappeared, and the place of our

songs has been taken by different tunes, completely unknown to us. The same fate befell the church chanting and this is one of the main criteria for characterizing our nation's high culture and such a treasure is imperceptibly lost for us.



**Dzuku Lolua**

Both singing and chanting have the past, and this is main criterion to characterize our people's high culture and we are losing such a treasure without noticing.

Some may even ask why we pester with these songs of ours, which remind more of a cat's mewing and a dying man's cry, we should go forward and not backward, we should imitate the music of Europe, etc.

I don't think it is possible to move forward empty-headed, without own property. I don't look back to stop there. No, let me remind you, we leave behind the precious treasure, the like of which, in my opinion, is not found even in Europe. Let's collect them, load with our own culture and move forward. It is true that today, both in general and in our country, there is more love, passion for foreign music. Unfortunately, ours is being buried in oblivion and it should be noted that the songs that are heard at our market today and which our adolescents learn is not Europeanization, but, on the contrary, lagging far behind, humiliating oneself, un-

derestimation of one's own, and mastering the songs that have nothing to do with European music.

Well, listen to the *Mravalzhamier* altered from Russian-Slavic church, cheap Asian tunes, this is not Europeanization... The saddest and most pitiful thing of all of the above is when an Imeretian hears a Megrelian song, he does not take it as his own, but rather considers it something foreign. This is the case with Gurians, Svans, Abkhazians and others. What is the reason for this? The former bureaucratic Russification policy. We all know and remember, that at that time Akaki our beloved bard called out on us from Sachkhere: "Chonguri is Georgia, we all are the strings. Why do we sing separately?" and called us to unity.

**Dzuku Lolua**

*1923. Material is taken from the book:  
"Masters of Georgian Folk Song". vol. I. Tbilisi, 2005*

#### **About One Song**

#### **Kalo, Kalta Mzeo**

The village of Kheltubani is located 8 kilometers from the city of Gori. There is a church at the entrance to the village. Near the church there is a small cone-shaped elevated place. It looks like a mixture of stone and lime. Here, in ancient times, two young people were stoned to death for incest, and boiling lime was poured over them. Petre Petriashvili tells about the couple: "In olden time, a well-to-do peasant named Tsuka lived in the village of Kheltubani. He was a good speaker; a hospitable and respected man in the village. Tsuka had a young wife, Nino, known for her beauty. They had no children yet, but hoped not to remain childless. A Jewish merchant named Shalva used to come to this village. He lived in a small room allocated by Tsuka as an accommodation space for him. Shalva sometimes stayed in this room overnight when he could not go to his wife and children in Tskhinvali. Shalva was like a member in Tsuka's family. He called Nino, Tsuka's beautiful wife, "Sun-Woman" ("Kalta

Mze") for her beauty. This new name spread to the whole village; everyone called Nino "Sun-Woman"...

In the same village there lived a peasant named Sandala. Sandala was a good dancer and *panduri* player. He often went to Tsuka's house, even stayed overnight there, because he had some kinship with Nino. Everyone knew this. This is why Sandala's overnight stays in Tsuka's family did not raise any suspicion among the villagers, even though Sandala's house was a few steps away from Tsuka's.

The fire of love flared up between Sandala and Nino – the "sun-woman". They fell in love with each other. Sandala was the first to feel some discomfort. It was as if something was happening to him. He turned joyless, thoughtful, but he didn't pay attention. Later he started being restless when he did not see the "sun-woman", and he understood that he loved her. Insomnia and overthinking completely ruined poor boy. The face of the "sun-woman" loomed before his eyes. He quitted going to Tsuka's house. Tsuka explained this by Sandala's busyness. He's probably busy since he has not visited us lately. Poor Sandala cooled his sorrow by playing the *panduri*.

After a lot of correspondence, the lovers started meeting secretly. Shalva could see everything and was heartbroken by the expected rebuke from Tsuka. He was thinking how to expose the behavior of "sun-woman" and Sandala. In the end, he decided to reveal the story at any cost and once said to Tsuka: your "sun-woman" has disgraced you, she is in love with Sandala, when you are not at home, there is a big turmoil there. Initially Tsuka was speechless, but then he brutally beat both "sun-woman" and Sandala. The neighbors gathered at the noise and screams. The beaten Sandala and the "sun-woman" were taken to the church and left inside the fence of the church like dead, then the doors were closed and guards were posted.

The next day, a meeting was called and the verdict was passed: “those who dishonored the village, who stirred up blood, to be stoned and doused with hot lime.” The people carried out the sentence. In the place where the pillar stands now, they dug a large and deep hole. “Sun-woman” and Sandala with their hands tied, and pale faces, were brought to the edge of the pit. Suddenly there was a roar of stones, people threw stones at the “Sun-woman” and Sandala. The poor fell into the pit. When the pit was filled with stones up to the middle, boiling-hot lime was brought in large pots and poured over it. Lime and stone mixed together. This was followed by terrible screams and weeping. Many peo-

ple could not stand watching this, and fell down fainted. Everybody wept, big and small. Exclamations like: what kind of godlessness is this? What did they do to get tortured like hell? Were heard around. But it was too late.

At the place where the two poor were tarred, erected was a pillar several cubits high. Dusk fell, people dispersed heartbroken.

*The material processed by **Maka Khardziani**,  
from the book: Giorgi Svanidze. Kartlian  
Folk Songs. Tbilisi, 2021.*

ქალო ქალთა მზეო  
Kalo Kalta mzeo

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

		გი - ცნობ ა - თი gi - tsnob a - ti	თვე - ო tve - o
ქა - ლო ქალ - თა ka - lo kal - ta	მზე - ო mze - o	გი - ცნობ ა - თი gi - tsnob a - ti	თვე - ო tve - o

Second system of the musical score. It consists of three staves (treble, alto, and bass clefs) in a 2/4 time signature with a key signature of two flats. The lyrics are written below the staves.

მე - თერ-თმე - ტე me - ter - tme - t'e	და - მი-ბნე-ლე da - mi - bne - le	წუ - თი გახ - და ts'u - ti gakh - da	დღე - ო dghe - o
მე - თერ-თმე - ტე me - ter - tme - t'e	და - მი-ბნე-ლე da - mi - bne - le	წუ - თი გახ - და ts'u - ti gakh - da	დღე - ო dghe - o

Third system of the musical score. It consists of three staves (treble, alto, and bass clefs) in a 2/4 time signature with a key signature of two flats. The lyrics are written below the staves.

მე - თერ-თმე - ტე me - ter - tme - t'e	და - მი-ბნე-ლე da - mi - bne - le	წუ - თი გახ - და ts'u - ti gakh - da	დღე - ო. dghe - o.
მე - თერ-თმე - ტე me - ter - tme - t'e	და - მი-ბნე-ლე da - mi - bne - le	წუ - თი გახ - და ts'u - ti gakh - da	დღე - ო. dghe - o.



ქალო, ქალთა მზეო,  
გიცნობ ათი თვეო,  
მეთერთმეტე დამიბნელე,  
ნუთი გახდა დღეო.

ქალო, ქალთამზეო!  
ამ ჩემს სახეზეო,  
ქარაგმაი ნაიკითხე,  
მაუნყე რიგზეო.

ქალო, ქალთამზეო,  
განმინათლე დღეო,  
შეხვედრა ნუ დამიზამთრე,  
ნუ გამხადეტყვეო!

ქალო, ქალთამზეო,  
ჩემო გრძნობის მზეო,  
რომ მოგიკვდე, რასა ფიქრობ  
საიქიოზეო!

ქალო, ქალთამზეო,  
ხედავ, გავხდი ბზეო,  
ქარმა რომ შემომიბეროს,  
ამისვრის ბანზეო.

ქალო, ქალთამზეო,  
გიცნობ ათი თვეო,  
მეთერთმეტეს ნუ გაიყვან,  
მომიდექ გვერდზეო!

kalo, kalta mzeo,  
gitsnob ati tveo,  
metertmet'e damibnele,  
ts'uti gakhda dgheo.

kalo, kaltamzeo!  
am chems sakhezeo,  
karagmai ts'aik'itkhe,  
mauts'qe rigzeo.

kalo, kaltamzeo,  
ganminatle dgheo,  
shekhvedra nu damizamtre,  
nu gamkhadet'qveo!

kalo, kaltamzeo,  
chemo grdznobis mzeo,  
rom mogik'vde, rasa pikrob  
saikiozeo!

kalo, kaltamzeo,  
khedav, gavkhdi bzeo,  
karma rom shenomiberos,  
amisvris banzeo.

kalo, kaltamzeo,  
gitsnob ati tveo,  
metertmet'es nu gaiqvan,  
momidek gverdzeo!

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