



ENSEMBLE BASIANI

Tuesday, November 1, 2016, at 7:30pm
Foellinger Great Hall

PROGRAM

ENSEMBLE BASIANI

Folk Songs

Mravalzhamier (Long Life)
Orira (A Traveling Song)
Tu ase turpa ikavi (You Were so Pretty)
Circle Dance
Shavi Shashi (The Black Thrush)

Religious Hymns

Tsmidao gmerto (O, Holy God)
Saidumlo utskho da didebuli (A Mystery, Strange and Most Glorious)
Tkveta ganmatavisuflebelo (As the Deliverer of the Captives)
Motsikuli kristesagan gamorcheuli (Apostle Distinguished by Christ)
Akebdit sakhelsa uplisasa (Praise Ye the Name of Lord)
Sashot mtiebisa (Out of the Womb)

Folk Songs

Imeruli nadir (work song from the Imereti region)
Tsintskaro (name of a village in the Kakheti region)
Gandagan (comic song from the Aadjara region)
Khasanbegura (historical ballad from Guria)
Veengara (lullaby from Shmegrelo)
Chakrulo (table song from Kakheti)
Chochkhatura (Gurian work song)

This performance will be presented with no intermission.

Ensemble Basiani is presented on tour in the United States by David Eden Productions and Pemberley Productions.

THANK YOU TO THE SPONSORS OF THIS PERFORMANCE

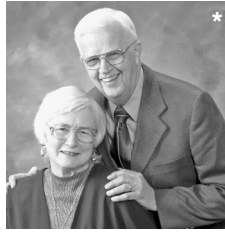
Krannert Center honors the spirited generosity of these committed sponsors whose support of this performance continues to strengthen the impact of the arts in our community.



Through their previous sponsorships and this year's support, Endowed Sponsors Carole & Jerry Ringer continue to share their passion for the beauty and emotion of classical music with our community. Krannert Center is grateful for their ongoing support and dedication to the performing arts.



These anonymous Endowed Co-sponsors have generously made a deep commitment to the arts through this and previous sponsorships. Krannert Center thanks these sponsors for their fierce dedication and ongoing support of world-class artists in our community.



LOIS & ERNEST GULLERUD
Nineteen Previous Sponsorships
Two Current Sponsorships



MILES KLEIN
Fifteen Previous Sponsorships



ERICA MCCLURE
in memory of Malcolm McClure
Two Previous Sponsorships

*PHOTO CREDIT: ILLINI STUDIO

JOIN THESE INSPIRING DONORS BY CONTACTING OUR DEVELOPMENT TEAM TODAY:
KrannertCenter.com/Give • development@krannertcenter.illinois.edu • 217.333.1629

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

FOLK SONGS

MRAVALZHAMIER—“long life”—is a Kakhetian *supra* song. The Georgian *supra* (table party) usually begins with *Mravalzhamier*. It lifts the spirits of everyone at the table and creates a festive mood. As voices rise, so do the enthusiasm and spirit of those sitting at the table, making them feel that their gathering will become a celebration.

Text

*nurtsa ikharos mterma chvenzeda, arts ara
gauxarnia!
Tsutisofeli ase, dges game utenebia
rats mtrobas daungrevia, sikvaruls ushenebia*

Translation

*May no enemy defeat us—and it hasn't yet!
The world is like this—day follows the night;
Love restores everything destroyed by enmity*

ORIRA is a traveling song that uses the voice *krimanchuli* (which is the name for yodel in Georgia). This song is from Guria, a region in Western Georgia. The road and its travelers have stirred thoughts since ancient times. The traveler has considered God to be his guide, and his trust in God has helped him to overcome everyday difficulties. Very often Georgian folk songs are full of “texts-words” or “*glossolalias*” that have no definitive meaning. The word *orira* is among them. There is no fixed text for this song.

TU ASE TURPA IKAVI—“You were so pretty”—is a lyric-love song that is accompanied by the *panduri*, a traditional string instrument. Songs of the lyric-love genre convey human spiritual experiences with extraordinary candidness and immediacy. Lyric songs from different regions of Georgia vary significantly in their musical structure.

Text

*tu ase turpa ikavi, rad ver gamchnevdi iao,
imad, rom sikvarulistvis, guli ar gagigiao.
akhla sxva mebage shemxvda, alersit gamagviao
tkviladats mamigurgura, kaltazed damartsiao*

Translation

*Why couldn't I notice that you were so pretty,
little violet?
Because your heart is closed for love.
Now I met a new gardener who filled me with
cares and love. He talked to me sweet and sat me
in his lap.*

CIRCLE DANCE is from Svaneti, the northwest mountain part of Georgia. Circle dance songs are among the oldest surviving types of Georgian musical folklore, both in terms of traditional performance characteristics and form. The accompanying dances have become inseparable from their songs.

The song is sung in Svanetian language. Aside from the main Georgian language, there are two different languages in Georgia—Megrelian and Svanetian—which people speak in the Samegrelo and Svaneti regions. They have no special scripts and belong to the Kartvelian languages. *Kartveli* means a Georgian (man, woman).

SHAVI SHASHVI—"the black thrush"—is a hunters' song from the Guria region.

Sung by a trio, the song tells the story of hunters who, following the voice of a thrush, come across a deer. The story of the hunt is accentuated by the imitation of the dog's barking.

Text

*shavi shashvi chioda, netav rasa chioda?!
"mtai dautovia, arsad aris savali."
moukepe chemo mura, deichire iremi*

Translation

The black thrush tells the dog, "Here comes a deer! Bark and catch it!"

RELIGIOUS HYMNS

TSMIDAO GMERTO—"O, Holy God" is the hymn of liturgy.

Text

*Tsmidao gmerto, tsmidao dzliero, tsmidao
ukvdavo, shegvitskalen chven!*

Translation

*O, Holy God, o, Holy Mighty, o, Holy Immortal,
have mercy on us!*

SAIDUMLO UTSKHO DA DIDEBULI—"A mystery, strange and most glorious"—Irmos of Nativity. Shemokmedi Monastery chanting school—a major center for this particular style of folk singing. This hymn is sung by a trio.

Text

*Saidumlo utskho da didebuli vikhilet. kvabi tsata
emsgavsa, kaltsuli kerubimta, kholo бага sakhe
ikmna samkarosa, rametu daitia dghes kriste
ghmertit dautevneli, romelsats vadidebt.*

Translation

*A mystery, strange and most glorious I behold:
The cavern, Heaven: the Cherubic Throne, a
Virgin; the manger, the receptacle wherein lieth
Christ our God, whom nothing may contain. Him,
therefore, do we magnify, praising him in song.*

TKVETA GANMATAVISUFLEBELO—"As the deliverer of the captives"—Troparion of Saint George, the great Martyr. Svetitskhoveli Monastery chanting school.

Text

*Tkveta ganmatavisuplebelo da glakhakta khelis
aghhmpkrobelo, sneulta mkurnalo da mepeta
udzlevelo, tsinambrdzolo, ghvatslit shemosilo
dido motsameo giorgi, evedre kristesa ghmertsas
chvensa shetskalebad sulta cheventatvis.*

Translation

*As the deliverer of the captives and protector
of the poor, as the physician of the feeble and
combatant of the kings, champion and great
martyr George, intercede with Christ our God to
save our souls.*

MOTSIKULI KRISTESAGAN GAMORCHEULI—
“Apostle Distinguished by Christ,” Kontakion
of St. Nino—equal to Apostle, enlightener of
Georgia (who converted Georgia to Christianity).
Shemokmedi Monastery chanting school.

Text

*motsiquli kristesagan gamorcheuli, kadagi sitqvisa
ghvtisa, ganstsvluli, makharebeli tskhovrebisa,
tsinamdzhvari kartvelta erisa gzata simartlisata,
dedisa ghvtisa sakutari motsape Nino shevamkot
dghes qovelta dznobita saghvtota. meokhi
mkhurvale, mtsveli daudzinebeli.*

Translation

*Let us glorify St. Nino today, the apostle
distinguished by Christ, the preacher of the word
of God, the enlightened herald of life, the leader
of the Georgian people’s way of justice, the
disciple of the Mary the blessed Virgin, the ardent
toiler, the sleepless guardian. Let us glorify Nino
with all divine chanting.*

AKEBDIT SAKHELSA UPLISASA—“Praise Ye the
Name of Lord”—Hymn of Matins, Psalm 135 (134).
Gelati Monastery chanting school.

*Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the name of the
Lord; praise him, O ye servants of the Lord. Ye
that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts
of the house of our God, Praise the Lord; for the
Lord is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is
pleasant. For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto
himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.*

SASHOT MTIEBISA—“Out of the Womb”—
religious hymn. Introit of Nativity. Shemokmedi
Monastery chanting school.

Text

*sashot mtiebisa tsina gshev shen, hputsa upalman
da ara sheinanos. shen khar mgvdel ukunisamde
tsesta mas melkisedekissa.*

Translation

*Out of the Womb, before the morning star have I
begotten Thee: the Lord hath sworn and will not
repent: thou art a Priest forever, after the order of
Melchizedech.*

FOLK SONGS

IMERULI NADURI is a work song from the
Imereti region.

Nadi (hence *naduri*) is given special significance
in Guria. If a family hoed its field without a *nadi*, it
would be called inhospitable. If the village had no
singers for the *naduri*, they were specially invited
from other villages. The people gladly worked
together with the singers of the *nadi*, as the work
then became more cheerful. Apart from easing the
work, the *naduri* was entertaining as well. By the
end of the 19th century, the song had become so
popular that it was often sung in the churchyard
after divine service.

TSINTSKARO—“name of the village”—is a lyric-love song from the Kakheti region.

Text

*tsintsqaro chamoviare.
tsin shemkhvda qali lamazi, koka rom edga
mkharzeda.
sitqva vutkhar da itsqina, ganriskhda, gadga
ganzeda.*

Translation

*I went past the village of Tsintsqaro,
I met a beautiful young lady, carrying a pitcher on
her shoulder,
I said a word to her, she was offended,
She got angry and stepped aside.*

GANDAGAN is a comic song, with dancing, from the Aadjara region.

Gandagan is accompanied by the traditional instruments *chiboni* (wind instrument) and *chonguri* (string instrument). It includes comic text about girls and boys in love, which then ends in dancing.

KHASANBEGURA is a historical ballad from Guria (western Georgia).

In the second half of the 19th century, Georgia’s provinces of Guria and Achara were caught in a political conflict between Russia and Turkey. Some nobles decided to use the conflict for their own advantages. One such figure is Khosro Tavdgiridze, who had a falling out with Prince Gurieli and emigrated to Turkey. There he was promoted, receiving the title of *bey*—Khasan-beg (*bey*)—and was appointed the commander of a military unit.

Some researchers believe that the music of *Khasanbegura* was created earlier, and this historical text was set to it later. Romain Rolland and Igor Stravinsky were fascinated by *Khasanbegura* and its remarkable polyphony.

Here follows the popular text, told from the viewpoint of Khasan-beg’s brother.

Text

*khasan-begi tavgiridze, gariskhuli ghvtisgan erti,
tatrish pashoba ishova, sul mtlad daavitsqda ghmerti.
shekvetilshi shemovida, idzakhoda: “olan geti”;
lanchkhutamde mas vatsalot, mere chven
gviquros, erti.
chven gakhlavart gurulebi, brdzola gvkonda
shukhut-perdshi,
mteri ise davamartskhet, mtkhroblad ar goushvit
erti.
chemi dzmai khasan-pasha tavmochrili devinakhe,
radgan chemi dzmai iqo, vai metki, devidzakhe.
tsina ghamit man gadagvtsva, mit deigo tsudi
makhe,
radgan chemi dzmai iqo, bolos maints me
davmarkhe.*

Translation

*Khasan-beg Tavdgiridze who rejected God
Sought the Turkish title of pasha, completely
forgetting God.
He entered Shekvetili, crying in Turkish, “I have
come.”
We’ll allow him to pass as far as Lanchkhuti,
Then let him see what we do.
We are Gurians. We had a battle near Shukhut-
Perdi.
We defeated the enemy leaving no one to tell the
tale.
I saw my brother, Khasan-Pasha, beheaded.
As he was my brother, I cried out, “Woe is me!”
The previous night he had fought us, snaring
himself in the process.
Because he was my brother, I buried him.*

VEENGARA is a lullaby from Samegrelo (western Georgia).

Veengara is sung in Megrelian language.

Text

*“veengara nanasqua nanashi chirima
chkolir gursu vamichua, nanashi chirima
dzudzus qirafili mafu bzhashen mutul vamitsua”*

Translation

*Don't cry my baby, you my love;
My heart is burning when you cry;
Eat from my breast and go to sleep calm.*

CHAKRULO is a table song from Kakheti (a region in eastern Georgia).

Chakrulo is the crown of Georgian folk songs. Like *Mravalzamier*, it belongs to the family of long Kakhetian table songs. Various explanations exist as to the origin of the song's name. The literal meaning of the word in Georgian is “intertwined.” One theory cites everyday farming activity as the possible source, “As *Chakrulo* needs a strong resounding voice, in the same way, a load placed on an oxcart needs to be tightly bound.” Hence, it is concluded that *chakrulo* means a strong, reliable, loud, charming song that requires a singer with a high voice. In the view of researchers such as Joseph Jordania, however, the name of the song implies that the voices are strongly linked or intertwined.

Outstanding Georgian music researcher Shalva Aslanishvili noted, “*Chakrulo* is characterized by noble content and high spirits. It features flawless modulation, developed polyphony, strict architectonics of form, rich ornament and profound ethical content.” Some researchers believe that songs like *Chakrulo* date from the 10th-12th centuries. Aslanishvili observed reflections of ancient traditions dating to feudal times in such table songs. To date, *Chakrulo* has come down to us in several forms.

Text

*gamkhiaruldi, bukharo,
gulchamtkhrobili nu kharo.
shvili mamas eubneba:—daberdi, chemtan nu
kharo.*

*—a gitkhra, shvilo, mokhutsma,
tavs bevri gadamkhdenia,
sul damivlia mta-bari,
is udaburi kedia.
movkal, khmlit movkal, chem dzmebo,
khval dilit mival sikvdilsa,
top-iaraghis tsamali mashin virchivot tsol-shvilsa,
movkal kidev.*

Translation

*Cheer up, fireplace,
Do not be morose.
The son says to his father,
“You have grown old, do not stay with me.”
“Son, what can an old man like me tell you?
I have had many adventures.
I have crossed all the mountains and plains,
That desolate ridge.
I have killed with my sword, brothers, I have killed.
I am going to war tomorrow.
At war it's better to have gunpowder
Than a wife and children.”*

CHOCHKHATURA is a Gurian work song—more precisely a *naduri*.

Like *Imeruli naduri*, this is a *naduri* work song. Field *naduris* are the longest and most sophisticated antiphonal work songs, and they number in the dozens. Most antiphonal *naduris* of this region are four-part, an unusual phenomenon in world musical folklore. Their texts have nothing to do with the work process.

ENSEMBLE BASIANI AND GEORGIAN SONG

Ensemble Basiani, the choir of the Georgian patriarchate, comes from Tbilisi, Georgia. Formed in 2000, the choir has been active in researching and reviving traditional songs and sacred hymns both from archival recordings and transcriptions and from its own fieldwork with singers throughout Georgia. The choir has performed internationally to great acclaim, and made its US debut at the 2010 Mostly Mozart Festival.

Georgian polyphonic song is one of the world's musical treasures, admired by such visionaries as Igor Stravinsky, Alan Lomax, and Werner Herzog. It is unlike any other traditional music in the world, with unique scales and voice structures, and progressions that seem unexpected, almost impossible. And while it may sound modern to our Western ears, Georgian music also has a primal appeal, speaking to our hearts and souls just as it delights and perplexes our minds. Where did this remarkable music come from? And who are the Georgians?

Our story begins . . . well, in the beginning. According to legend, when God created all of the Earth's peoples, he instructed them to come to him at a designated hour to receive a place to live on the Earth. The hour arrived, and true to his word, God carefully divided up all of the land on the Earth and gave it to those who came. The following day, the Georgians arrived. "We're here for our land, O great and generous God!" The Lord shook his head and said, "I'm very sorry, but I've given all of the land away. I told you to come yesterday—why have you arrived so late?" The Georgians replied, "We are so sorry! We were having a banquet in your honor, and

we got caught up in our toasts to you and your generosity in giving us land on the Earth. We toasted you till dawn and lost track of the time! Please forgive us! Isn't there some small corner somewhere that we might still have to live on . . .?" God realized that he could not leave the Georgians without a place of their own, and so he gave them the one place on the Earth that he had been saving for himself. And thus, the Georgians came to live in the most beautiful place in the world, nestled in the Caucasus Mountains.

Legend aside, it's true that the earliest historical accounts of the Georgians places them right there, in what is still Georgia. They speak a language that is unrelated to any other, and foreigners who choose to explore their culture will find it a Pandora's Box. Georgia is the fabled land where Jason and the Argonauts traveled in search of the Golden Fleece, and home of Medea, the sorceress. Many archaeologists agree that Georgia is probably the birthplace of wine, with the earliest evidence of winemaking dating to around 6000 BCE. Any visitor to Georgia will be sure to taste Georgian wine at a ritual banquet, or *supra*, where hours are spent in fellowship, merriment, and reflection on "this fleeting world." It's a time for everyone to stop, look around, and acknowledge the things that are important in life: family, country, love, beauty—but it's not a free-for-all; there is always one person who leads the toasts, according to protocol. The *supra* remains one of Georgia's richest living traditions, and it is closely linked to song. Historically, Georgians have had songs for all occasions, many of which are represented on our program this evening. Although few of these survive in their original

context (work songs are no longer sung in the fields, for example), they are still sung, and new generations of Georgians will pass them on to their children. Polyphonic singing is a source of national pride in Georgia, and it has enjoyed renewed interest since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In close parallel to this, the Georgian Orthodox Church has also experienced a revival. Georgia adopted Christianity as its state religion circa 327 CE. Significantly, the Bible was translated into Georgian soon thereafter, and a liturgy was created in common Georgian language that all churchgoers would understand. Georgia reached its pinnacle as an empire in the 12th century under Queen Tamar, and monasteries nurtured the composition of hymns for the liturgy. However, this golden age did not last. After centuries of struggle with other invaders, Georgia was annexed by Russia at the dawn of the 19th century, and the Russian Orthodox Church restricted the use of Georgian liturgy. In the Soviet period, during the height of Communist atheism, the church went underground.

Today Georgians enjoy freedom of religion, and Georgian liturgies are heard throughout the country, both in restored and in newly built churches. As Ensemble Basiani is directly associated with the Georgian patriarchate, the choir also devotes careful study to the practice of Georgian sacred chant, several examples of which we will enjoy this evening. Since gaining independence in 1991, Georgia has been struggling to rise from the ashes of its Soviet and post-Soviet past. Things are certainly far from

perfect, but Georgia's hope lies in its rich and unique culture, its wonderful heritage of arts, and its breathtaking natural beauty. Tourists who visit Georgia are guaranteed an unforgettable experience, and many return again and again, overwhelmed by the famous Georgian hospitality and spellbound by the land that God almost kept from us all.

—by Carl Linich

*This article is reprinted by the kind permission of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.
Copyright © 2012 by Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.*

ENSEMBLE BASIANI

ENSEMBLE BASIANI was created in 2000 under the blessing of his Holiness and Beatitude Ilia II, Catholicos-Patriarch of all Georgia, to perform and promote Georgian Traditional Polyphony home and abroad. It became the Folk Ensemble of Georgian Patriarchate and is part of the Patriarchate Choir of Tbilisi Holy Trinity (Sameba) Cathedral, which participates in services conducted by the Patriarch. Ensemble Basiani is composed of singers from different parts of Georgia. Most members come from families that perform traditional singing and many members have sung folk songs in different ensembles since childhood.

In 2013, after 13 years working and performing Georgian folk music all around the world, Basiani was given the title of The State Ensemble of Georgian Folk Singing by the government of Georgia!

The Ensemble's repertoire consists of the oldest folk songs and traditional religious hymns from all parts of Georgia and diverse Monastery Chanting Schools. It completes the program by researching and reviving songs from ancient archives phonological and notated recordings, or by studying songs directly from famous singers and conductors of older generations that are active in different regions of Georgia.

Basiani has recorded and released nine different albums, one of which was exclusively published by Ocora Radio France in 2012 to spread Georgian polyphony all around the world. The Ensemble's last recordings, the four-CD album *102 Georgian Folk Songs and Traditional Hymns*, was published in 2013 as the landmark work of Basiani.

Ensemble Basiani has performed at numerous international festivals and visited some 20 countries. In recent years, the Ensemble has received special international acclaim and recognition, giving performances in some of the world's most well-known concert halls and international festivals, including Auditorio Nacional de Musica (Madrid); the Gulbenkian Great Hall (Lisbon); Concertgebouw (Amsterdam); Aldeburgh Music Festival (Aldeburgh, England); Grand Hall of D. Shostakovich and St. Petersburg Academic Philharmonic; Kilkenny Arts Festival (Kilkenny City, Ireland); and in the United States at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival where their 2010 Georgian Traditional Polyphony concert titled "Bach and Polyphonies" was widely lauded by the American press including *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*; Church of St. Mary the Virgin; and Lincoln Center's White Light Festival.

"Basiani" is the name of one of the regions in Southwest Georgia, in what is now modern-day Turkey, northwest of the town of Erzurum. In 1203, Georgian royal troops defeated the Conqueror there; the victory consolidated Georgia's position in Asia Minor.

Members of the Ensemble:

Zurab Tskrialashvili	Giorgi Khunashvili
Irakli Tkvatsiria	Zviad Michilashvili
Tornike Merabishvili	Lasha Metreveli
George Gabunia	Batu Lominadze
Elizbar Khachidze	Zaza Zuriashvili
Sergo Urushadze	Paata Tsetskhladze

ZURAB TSKRIALASHVILI (Director) was born in 1980 and was part of Martve, the children folk's choir, from the age of nine to 16. He attended music school and college in Tbilisi before studying at the Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire for a Master's in Choir Conducting. Mr. Tskrialashvili has been part of the Tbilisi Holy Trinity Cathedral Patriarchate Choir since 2000, first as a singer and, since 2013, as the director.

In 2002, he was the conductor at the Folk Ensemble Kolkheti. In 2007, he also became Assistant Professor at the G. Mtatsmindeli Church Chants Institution of Higher Education. From 2011 until last year, he was a choir teacher at Kiketi I. Gogebashvili school, and he is currently the Children's Folk Choir Conductor at Folklore National Palace.

GEORGE DONADZE (Artistic Director) was born 1979 and was a member of Bichebi Children's Folk Choir and studied at Tbilisi Music College between 1995 and 1999. Mr. Donadze was the Children's Choir Conductor at Tbilisi Music School between 1997 and 2000, prior to becoming both the Conductor of the Tbilisi Holy Trinity Cathedral Patriarchate Choir and founder and conductor of Ensemble Basiani. He studied for a Bachelor's and Master's in Choir Conducting at the V. Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire and, in 2006, become the choir conductor of G. Mtatsmindeli Church Chants Institution of Higher Education. In 2012 he became the Georgian Chanting Foundation's Projects Chief and in 2014, the Folklore State Center of Georgia's Director. In 2013, Mr. Donadze became the Artistic Director of Ensemble Basiani.