

Saturday, October 20, 2012, 8pm
 First Congregational Church

Ensemble Basiani

George Donadze, Gela Donadze, Zviad Michilashvili, Zurab Tskrialashvili,
 George Mekvabishvili, Elizbar Khachidze, Shota Abuladze, Irakli Tkvatsiria,
 George Gabunia, Sergo Urushadze, Lasha Metreveli, Batu Lominadze

PROGRAM

Mravalzhamier	“Long Life” (table song), Kakheti (eastern Georgia)
Elesa	Work song, Guria (western Georgia)
Chona	Ritual song, Kartli (central eastern Georgia)
Didebata	Circle dance, Svaneti (northwestern Georgia)
Kali gadmodga mtazeda	Lyric-love song
Guruli Ferkhuli	Circle dance, Guria (western Georgia)
Shen khar venakhi	“You Are a Vineyard”—The Iambus of the Holy Virgin, Kartli-Kakheti (eastern Georgia)
Shen khar venakhi	In the tradition of Guria (western Georgia)
Shen gigalobt	“We praise Thee,” Hymn of the Liturgy, Imereti (western Georgia), Gelati school
Angelosi ghaghadebs	“The Angel cried,” IV refrain to the IX canticle
Ganatldi, ganatldi	“Shine, shine the New Jerusalem,” IX Irmos in Tone I
Jvansa shensa	“Thy cross,” Kartli-Kakheti (eastern Georgia)
Netar ars katsi	“Blessed is the man” (Psalm 1), Hymn from Vespers, Gelati school
Odoia	Work song, Samegrelo (western Georgia)
Khasanbegura	Historical ballad, Guria (western Georgia)
Chela	Bullock-cart-man’s song, Samegrelo (western Georgia)
Chakrulo	Table song, Kakheti (eastern Georgia)
Naduri, Shemokmedura	Work song, Guria (western Georgia)

Cal Performances’ 2012–2013 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Mravalzhamier

The Georgian *supra* (“table party”) usually begins with *Mravalzhamier*. This lifts the spirits of everyone at the table and creates a festive mood. As the voices rise, so does the collective enthusiasm and spirit of those sitting at table, making them feel that their meeting will become a celebration.

Text

Let us sing together brothers while we see
each other,
There will be time for mourning, when we will
be lying under the ground
With earth on our chests.

I love you sweet Kakheti, big grove on the bank
of the Alazani River
Deer on the pastures, straw on the banks of the
Iori River.

Elesa

Elesa was sung in Guria while hauling a large log to be used for carving a wine press or for lumber. The second part was sung after the weeding and hoeing of the corn had been completed.

When the *nadi* (an assembly of neighbors and villagers assisting in field work) performed *Elesa*, it signaled the completion of the work, and was also a wish for bountiful harvest for the owner of the field.

Text

Elesa—and let us sing, esesa, esesa, hey!
Elesa—and let us sing, esesa, kirio, hey!
Elesa, hey
Ei sai, eleso,
Ei-sa kirio,
Ei sai, eleso!

Each phrase is repeated several times. Only one understandable word (meaning “let us sing”) is discernible in the song, all the rest being either interjections. However, two words—*kirio* and *esesa*—are clearly of Greek origin. Together,

they are remarkably similar to the obligatory address in Christian divine service: *Kyrie, eleison* (Lord, have mercy upon us).

Chona

Chona was a ritual performed on the night before Easter. The singers would go through the village, visiting each household and congratulating everyone on the occasion of the brilliant holiday and the resurrection of Christ. Baskets of presents awaited them at each household. The host made preparations in advance; a festive table was laid heavy with food and with eggs dyed red on Good Friday.

Chona was an inseparable part of this ritual. The above-mentioned tradition of its performance has been observed only in eastern Georgia (Kartli).

I was at *Chona*—I saw *Chona*, but I saw
no profit.

Alatasa-balatasa, I put my hand into the basket,
Girl, put an egg in it, and God will give
you bounty.

We have come to congratulate you on Easter.

Didebata

Circle dance songs are among the oldest surviving forms of Georgian musical folklore in traditional performance characteristics and form. This is corroborated by dances, which have become inseparable from their songs.

Text

Glory! May it have mercy on us!
May the icons ornamented with gold and silver
have mercy on us.
They have oxen for sacrifice,
Oxen with golden horns
They had a young bull to sacrifice
Let us beg for mercy.

Kali gadmodga mtazeda

Songs of the lyric-love genre convey human spiritual experiences with extraordinary candidness and immediacy. This song is from Georgia's northeastern mountain region, and lyric songs from different regions of Georgia differ significantly in their musical structure. Many lyric masterpieces created in the mountain regions of eastern Georgia are, as a rule, solo songs accompanied by the *panduri*, while Gurian lyric-love songs are structurally closer to Gurian drinking songs, characterized by polyphony, improvisation and dissonance.

This song has an amorous-natured text.

Guruli Ferkhuli

A circle dance genre song from the Guria region of western Georgia. No fixed text.

Shen khar venakhi*Text*

You are a Vine, newly flourishing,
Beautiful sapling, planted in Eden,
A fragrant poplar, grown in Paradise,
God has adorned you, there is none like you,
And you yourself are the sun shining!

Shen gigalobt*Text*

We praise Thee, we bless Thee,
We give thanks unto Thee, O Lord,
and we pray unto Thee, O our God.

Angelosi ghaghadebs*Text*

The Angel cried unto her who is full of grace:
Hail, O Pure Virgin! And again, I say: Hail!
Thy son is risen from his three days' sojourn
in the grave, and hath raised up the dead:
Rejoice, O ye people!

Ganatldi, ganatldi*Text*

Shine, shine, O New Jerusalem
for the glory of the glory of the Lord
is risen upon Thee. Keep high holiday now
and be glad, O Zion! And rejoice thou,
O pure Birth-giver of God, in the rising again
of him whom thou didst bear!

Jvarsa shensa*Text*

Thy cross do we adore, O Master,
and thy Holy Resurrection do we glorify.

Netar ars katsi*Text*

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step
with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners
take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose
delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates
on his law day and night. That person is like a tree
planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit
in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever
they do prospers. Not so the wicked! They are like
chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore the wicked
will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the
assembly of the righteous. For the Lord watches
over the way of the righteous, but the way of the
wicked leads to destruction.

Odoia

Popular *nadi* song, sung during hoeing and weeding a cornfield. No fixed text.

Khasanbegura

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*—Khasanbeg (*bey*)—and was appointed commander of a military unit. This song is told from the viewpoint of Khasan-beg's brother:

Text

Khasan-beg Tavdgiridze who rejected God
Sought the Turkish title of pasha, completely
forgetting God.
He entered Shekviteli, 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.

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.

Chela

While this is a Bullock-cart-man's song, it should not be considered a work song. This is a typical sample of lyrical three-voiced song, which tells about cart-man's thoughts and sorrows. Chela and Busca are bull's names.

Text

Here *Chela!* there *Busca*, you're so used to
the slavery
You poor, you weak-willed, you heartless,
you neck-dropped.

Chakrulo

The crown of Georgian folk songs. Like *Mravaljamier*, 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: strong, reliable, loud, charming song, requiring a singer with a high voice, which is certainly true of *Chakrulo*. In the view of some researchers such as Joseph Jordania, however, the name of the song implies strongly linked or intertwined voices.

Shalva Aslanishvili noted: “*Chakrulo* 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 tenth to twelfth centuries. Aslanishvili observed reflections of ancient traditions dating to feudal times in such table songs. *Chakrulo* has come down to us in several forms.

Text

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.”

Naduri, Shemokmedura

Shemokmedura is a work song—more precisely, a *Naduri*. *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.

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

Text

I was a noble woman
A peasant's son took my hand in marriage
I won't go with him by choice unless he forces me



The patriarchate folk **Ensemble Basiani** was created in 2000, under the blessing of his holiness and beatitude Ilia II—Catholicos Patriarch of all Georgia. The Ensemble is part of the Tbilisi Holy Trinity Cathedral Church choir and it 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.

The Ensemble sings Georgian folk songs and chants by researching and reviving them from the ancient phonological and notated recordings, while studying songs directly from the famous singers and conductors of elder generations active in different regions of Georgia. It also works with many world-renowned ethnomusicians. In little more than a decade, Basiani has already performed at numerous international festivals and has visited some 20 countries. In that time, Basiani has also recorded and released seven CDs. In January 2012, Ocora Radio France released *Géorgie: Polyphonies vocales profanes et sacrées*, the most recent album recorded by Basiani.

In recent years, Basiani has received international acclaim and recognition, giving performances in some of the world's best known concert halls and international festivals, including Auditorio Nacional de Música (Madrid), the Gulbenkian Great Hall (Lisbon), the Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), the Aldeburgh Music Festival (Aldeburgh, England), and St. John's, Smith Square (London).

In August 2010, Basiani participated in the Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, performing for New York audiences on a program that presented traditional Georgian polyphony along with masterpieces of J. S. Bach and other European classic composers. The above event was praised widely in the American press. The ensemble will return to New York at the conclusion of their current American tour to perform in 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, at this location, Georgian royal troops defeated the Turks with the victory consolidating Georgia's position in Asia Minor.

David Eden Productions, Ltd. (*tour producer*) has been one of the leading American organizations devoted to producing international work in the United States for more than 25 years. Most recently, David Eden Productions has produced American tours of Gate Theatre Dublin's *Krapp's Last Tape*, *Endgame*, and *Watt*; Galway's Druid Theatre in *The Cripple of Inishmaan*, *The Walworth Farce*, and *DruidSynge*; and the Georgian folk music Ensemble Basiani. Other recent tours include the Gate Theatre Dublin's *Waiting for Godot*, Declan Donnellan's *Twelfth Night*, Propeller's *The Winter's Tale*, Piccolo Teatro di Milano's *Arlecchino*, the Russian Patriarchate Choir of Moscow, Batsheva Dance Company, and the State Ballet of Georgia with Bolshoi prima ballerina Nina Ananiashvili.

For David Eden Productions

President: David Eden

General Manager: Erica Charpentier

Visa Coordinator: Elise-Ann Konstantin

Travel Agent: Lori Harrison, Atlas Travel

Company Management: Tanya Scott

Consultant: Scott Watson